

**Rittman City Council Met in a
PUBLIC HEARING
Monday, July 11, 2022
7:00 p.m.**

2023 Tax Budget Hearing

Discussion was held regarding the 2023 tax budget. Bulp stated that this is a first blush look at what the budget might look like for next year so that the county auditors will levy our property taxes for us. There is a deficit in general funds of about \$460,000.00 for next year, the biggest cause for that is the EMS and Fire funds are going to require transfers of about \$400,000.00 from the general fund just to break even next year. That's nobody's fault, it's the nature of the beast. That's the only big thing I want to make note of on this tax budget. A great deal of it is just being conservative with revenue expectations and adding an inflation expectation onto most of the expenditure line items.

**Rittman City Council Met in a
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, July 11, 2022
7:04 p.m.**

Members Present: Chuck Wyatt, Amanda Nelson, Dave Williams and Melissa Shows
Members Absent: Ken Park and Josh Carey
Presiding: Mayor William Robertson

The invocation was given by Dave Williams followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes – June 13, 2022

Nelson so moved, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

Workshop

a. Windfall Funding, LLC Regarding Analyzing Recurring Expenses and Potential Revenue Streams for the City.

The company analyzes expenditures to see where we could be saving money and where we might be overspending. Mike from Windfall was present to inform council on the service they provide. They look at overhead expense and then determine what if any savings could be found. They guarantee results; they provide a 125% guarantee. If they don't reach the 125% recoup, they will refund the difference. It usually takes one year to see any results. Windfall ascertains that there is no way to lose money on this. The initial cost would be approximately \$22,500.00 for a year contract. The contract could then be renegotiated after the first year.

Josh Carey arrived at 7:29 p.m.

Citizens Forum

Doug Stewart – 152 Matthew Drive – Mr. Stewart was surprised that the Finance Director has not mentioned the Rec Center at all with it being a cash cow and all. Also, last meeting he brought up the possibility of opening the Rec Center up to the people of Rittman one day a week to bring people in. He hasn't heard anything about this. He sees the city is farming services out, this scares him. Now he sees it with the tax structure, those were actually Rittman people doing Rittman jobs. Is the tax increase a result of going to a different service to collect taxes? Not sure if anyone did their homework on that.

Old Business

a. **Ord. No. 8296 An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, Amending Section 735.05 Affidavit Required of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Rittman and Declaring an Emergency. Third Reading.** Ord. No. 8296 was read on third reading. Nelson moved to adopt, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

b. **Res. No. 8299 A Resolution of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, Amending the Provisions of the Municipal Income Tax Ordinance to Provide for a Permanent Increase in the Amount of One-Half Percent (.5%) in the Income Tax Rate Effective January 1, 2023, for the Purposes of General Municipal Operations of the City of Rittman and Declaring an Emergency. Third Reading.** Res. No. 8299 was read on third reading. Williams moved to adopt. Carey inquired if it was determined on how much we would get if we were to reduce the credit as opposed to raise the rate. Bulp replied that it would be somewhere around \$150,000.00 per year in increased revenues if we lowered the credit by one-half (1/2 %) percent rather than raising. The increase would generate around \$500,000.00. Shows stated that the voters have the right to decide, but she has issues regarding the increase only going into the general fund. She would like to allocate that money somewhere specific so the voters can see this is what we are doing with it. After discussion with the Finance Director the safest way is probably Safety Services where we can guaranty that money is utilized for what we say. This would free up the general fund to be used other ways. She would like to see this amendment made. Shows made the Motion to amend wording to state that the one-half (1/2%) percent increase will go to Safety Services which will be Police, Fire and EMS and anything related to them directly. Carey inquired if that was the case why didn't they just do a property tax levy? Bulp stated the levy also hits citizens who are on fixed incomes. This only affects people who are actively working. The other reason is the dollar amount that we expect from the tax increase, a Safety Services levy would have to be for about 5 mil. That would be on top of the EMS and Fire levies that already exist. Wyatt stated we need to work on getting businesses in town. Bulp stated he is trying to get ahead before it is an emergency. Williams stated that if we show the citizens, we are making the best of what we have – the rec center is always losing money. He thinks we need a group to examine the rec center to determine what they can do different. It just bleeds money, it always has. He gets tired of people saying that's what they do. They don't get into the business of making money. That's true but we can stop the hemorrhaging at the same time.

Upon Shows' amendment to place the one-half percent increase to be allocated for Safety Services. Upon roll call – Carey – Yes, Wyatt – Yes, Nelson – No, Williams – Yes, Shows – Yes and **motion carried.** Motion to Adopt Resolution 8299 as Amended upon roll call – Williams – Yes, Wyatt – Yes, Carey – Yes, Shows – Yes, Nelson – No and **motion carried.**

New Business

a. **Ord No. 8303 An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, Amending the Annual Appropriation Ordinance No. 8258, as Amended According to the Attached Sheets(s) and Declaring an Emergency. Three Readings.** Ord. No. 8303 was read on first reading. Shows moved to suspend the rules, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.** Wyatt moved to adopt, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

b. **Res. No. 8304 A Resolution of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio Declaring Certain Personal Property of the City Surplus Property no Longer Needed for Public Use and Authorizing the City to Sell Said Property on Govdeals.com. Three Readings.** Ord. No. 8304 was read on first reading. Shows moved to suspend the rules, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.** Nelson moved to adopt, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

City Managers Remarks

Medina Meow Fix (new feral cat program) - We are going to be working with Medina Meow Fix, a non-profit that will assist the city with our feral cat situation (please see attached information from Meow Fix). Chief Shows and I have spoken to one of the co-founders, Keri Huff, and I have spoken with Michelle Mayer, as well, and are looking forward to begin controlling our feral cat population in Rittman. Medina Meow Fix has worked with several cities but most notably with Medina County where they have a TNR (Trap/Neuter/Release) program that has been very successful. Chief Shows and I will meet with Jesse Robertson, our local Animal Warden to discuss the program with him.

How Meow Fix works is that they will educate the citizens of Rittman and their first opportunity will be at Sleepwalker where they will have a table set up to meet with our residents. Meow Fix supplies the traps and the education and works with Mission Possible Vet Hospital in Medina. I look forward to working with all of the wonderful volunteers and residents who want to participate in this extremely humane program. Heather Swank, one of our Rittman residents has been very instrumental in trapping cats and tending to sick cats, working with Meow Fix and I want to thank her for her assistance over the years.

Wayne County Community Foundation Grant Award - Thank you to the trustees of the WCCF for awarding the city with \$48,391.15 to be used toward the purchase of our new Ventrac Tuff Cut brush hog, boom mower and contour mower with the possibility of purchasing more attachments out of these grant dollars. This is to help maintain our parks and Nature Preserve. Thank you to Garrick for putting in the application. We appreciate his hard work in obtaining this grant

Splash Pad update - Garrick has sent to Council the different configurations of the water attachments for our new splash pad. We anticipate this going in Fritz Park on Industrial...exact location to be determined. As a reminder, we received a \$40,000 grant from Senator Kristina Roegner's office to go toward the purchase.

Police Officer Jared Holtzman - Rittman Police Officer Jared Holtzman has taken a full-time position with the City of Barberton. Jared is a very fine officer who will be truly missed. We do wish him the best of luck in Barberton and I am very happy that Chief Shows has reported that Officer Holtzman will work part time for the city, when his schedule permits. Part time officer Chance Sigler has been promoted to full time and we wish him the best in his full-time role.

Sleepwalker - The Fire Department will have blood pressure checks and other safety programs that the Fire Department offers. Both Police and Fire will have vehicles at the intersection of Ohio and Main Streets for our citizens (and especially our children) to see and experience. Thank you ahead of time to the Recreation and Service Departments for their ongoing assistance to Sleepwalker.

We look forward in showing our citizens (and hopefully potential new citizens!) all that Rittman has to offer so we will be manning a table and have a raffle for a kayak that was donated anonymously by one of our fine citizens. Kris Fetter will be asking for an hour of Council's and staff's time to help at the table. She will be sending out an email later this week with available times.

Finance Director's Remarks

Responded to concerns stated in Citizens Forum regarding the losses at the Rec Center weren't called out as part of the budget hearing. That is correct. The Rec Center runs at a deficit somewhere of \$200,000.00 to \$250,000.00 per year. It is not a radical change happening with the operation of the Rec Center. Fire and EMS issues are starting to get

exponentially bigger year over year. As far as the taxes go, with RITA, the income tax department was one person and nobody lost their job as a result of the transition. The Income Tax Administrator moved into the Deputy Treasurer position. As far as the cost, we did our due diligence and found that the RITA retainage is lower than running the cost of the income tax department. There is no contract with RITA. Costs are down and income tax collections are up.

The tax budget has been presented, and over the next couple of months the capital budget will be worked on in conjunction with the department heads and city manager. In September we will be working on a permanent budget for 2023. The 2021 audit is complete. The results are published online and available to view.

The turnout for the Capital Plan meeting night was pretty good. There were good responses and ideas from residents. Some things I was aware of other things have never been mentioned to me before. I don't have all of the data from the event and the suggestions we got compiled yet, but I will report on them when I do.

a. **Approval of Financial Report for June, 2022.** Wyatt moved to approve, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

Council Remarks

Carey – my yes vote on the tax ordinance was not a vote for me to be in support of the tax increase. It was just the opportunity to let the voters make that decision and not have us do something unilaterally. I've been pretty vocal about not wanting to increase the tax rate based on comparative with other cities in the area as well another increase burden on our citizens for not a great deal more in return.

Wyatt – ditto what Josh said. I appreciate you coming down Doug and talking straight, I appreciate that.

Williams - I echo what the other councilmen have said however, we are just in a tough spot and putting it before the citizens is the way to go. I hate to see anymore increases, but we have to pay bills at the same time. People have brought up to me that they would like to see the Nature Preserve represented on our city website. More information if they googled rittman.com or the city they would get more information about what the Nature Preserve has to offer. Beshara stated we are getting a renewed website in October; we are working with Civic Plus. I would like the Nature Preserve to have its own page. Williams replied regarding remark about the agenda, every ten years we would do the Charter update for the city, that's one of the issues that comes up, it's in the Charter as to how it is formatted. Maybe when we have the Charter Review it would be nice to have yourself participate in that process. Property maintenance legislation needs to be revisited to be able to hold people accountable for their property. Things are slipping. Beshara stated that they were working on updating and adopting the property maintenance code. It is hard for Bob to prosecute; it is a vicious circle. Simpson stated that a few years ago that Wooster adopted the International Property Maintenance Code and that is what we are looking at doing. The nice thing about it is when updates come, they just pass a resolution stating they are adopting all of the updates. The County is prosecuting all of the them.

Nelson – Sleepwalker is coming up.

Shows – I want to briefly thank the community for coming again. The tax is not a popular thing but I really hope that the community thinks hard about it and lets their voices be heard. That's part of what this whole process is. Matt's community capital improvement went well, I was pleasantly surprised. I want to thank Garrick and his crew, they worked hard with Matt helping to set up, helping get things ready and tearing everything down. It was a very productive night and it was nice to sit there and hear not only what the citizens want to see, but a lot of positive feedback. It was nice to hear the positive and the negative and have conversations with citizens. I saw a lot of new faces.

a. **Approval of Voucher #'s 15897 thru 16031 and Memo Expense #'s M62201 thru M62218.** Shows moved to approve, upon roll call Shows – Yes, Williams – Yes, Wyatt – Yes, Nelson – Abstain, Carey – Yes and **motion carried.**

Adjourn: 8:19 p.m. Carey moved to adjourn, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

Mayor

Clerk of Council