

Canal Winchester

*City Hall
Council Chambers
45 East Waterloo Street
Canal Winchester, OH 43110*



Meeting Minutes - FINAL

April 17, 2023

6:00 PM

Council Work Session

*Bob Clark - Chair
Laurie Amick
Jill Amos
Steve Buskirk
Chuck Milliken
Patrick Shea
Mike Walker*

- A. Call To Order** *Clark called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.*
- B. Roll Call** *Present 7 – Amick, Amos, Buskirk, Clark, Milliken, Shea, Walker*
- C. Also In Attendance**
Mayor Ebert, Matt Peoples, Lucas Haire, Amanda Jackson
- D. Reports of City Staff**

Bill Sims

Discussion started at 3:37 on YouTube Channel

Sims – The 2023 Street Program contract has been awarded and signed. We’re working on getting the pre-construction meeting scheduled for next week. Typically, they’ll get started in May. Usually, the sidewalk program is the first thing to occur. I’m looking forward to that project. For the Three Seasons Shelter at McGill Park, we’re working with Ferguson on a basic timeline for that project. They just signed contracts with the pre-engineered structure contractor. He’s getting the dates plugged into the schedule. We’ve got everything pretty much centered on that item as a critical path item. The anticipation is that they’ll be in probably in June to get site work stuff done and some concrete and maybe get working on footers, and then there’ll probably be some lag until the building arrives later in the summer. The water line replacement project is currently out to bid. The bid opening is on Friday, the 21st, at 1:00p.m. We have 30 plan holders, and about 10 of those are general contractors. I’m anticipating that we’ll hopefully have some pretty competitive pricing on that project. The expectation is that we’ll have legislation to bring to council at the first meeting in May. McGill Park Phase 2, EMH&T, has been working on the preliminary design items. They’re currently pricing some of the detailed design tasks that we’ve asked for, so we’re just continuing to work on that project. I think we’ll be focusing primarily on pickleball, the dog park, and then the connector trail between Phase 1 and the dog park, which would include getting over the river on the existing bridge. On the private end of things, we’re still anticipating further development in Greengate this summer. We have sections four and six, as well as a small section seven. It ties the two together. Evans Farms; they are continuing to work there. They’ll probably have utilities wrapped up on Robinette Way this week, with the exception of the actual build-out of the pump station. We’re probably looking at getting back on the road here in about two weeks. Sheetz is still under construction. They’ve been doing great there with the building and getting their facilities in. Now that the weather is breaking, we’re anticipating they’ll want to work on the drop-right turn lane off of Gender Road into the Sheetz here pretty soon. From the right-of-way perspective, I’m sure you’ve seen the work downtown. AT&T has installed new conduits in a couple places on Waterloo Street to connect to their system in the manhole there by Corner Smith’s. The conduit is in, and I think they’ve actually started pulling the fiber as well. They’ll be in there this week, filling in the holes that are in the pavement. There are three roughly two-foot-diameter holes in the road under those plates. They’ve got to get those back filled, and then they can put the pavers back in place, but they’ll be working on that this week.

Amick – I was at McGill Park this weekend, and I was kind of examining the McGill house. It’s in pretty poor repair at this point. Do we have plans this year to do anything with the house?

Sims – I’ll let Mr. Peoples address that, but yes, we’ve certainly been looking at that and identifying some things that need to be accomplished with that building to tighten it up.

Peoples – Our painting contractor has taken a look at it. The good news is that it’s not lead paint, but it is in rough shape. Right now, he’s working on a proposal for us. From a budget standpoint, we don’t know if

it's going to be able to be done this year or if we'll put it in for next year.

Amick – It looks like someone's done a really good job keeping rodents out with screening and that sort of thing. Will that all be part of the proposal?

Peoples – Yes. Those were holes, missing siding, and everything else. There were birds getting inside and that type of thing. So yes, that'll all be buttoned up with a nice fresh coat of paint on there.

Milliken – I don't know if this is a Mr. Sims or Mr. Peoples question, but I've had some questions regarding the acoustics in the Interurban and the Community Center. It had never been brought up to me before. I've been in the community center a couple times now for some of the chamber events and things. I don't know if it's a sound system issue over there. I know those circles hanging from the ceiling are supposed to help, but those are the two acoustical issues that I'm hearing. I didn't know if you were aware or what the situation was.

Sims – I think we both probably have something to add to that, but certainly the Interurban has been something that's been very obvious, the acoustical limitations inside that room. I'll let Matt address that. We've talked a lot about possibilities there to help resolve that. The community center, I have heard that comment but not very frequently. I have attended some things there, different events as well, quite frankly I really haven't noticed that big of an issue. It seems like table conversation can take place pretty easily. There is an audio system in there so I can't say if someone was trying to use that and it wasn't set properly or something of that nature. They do have the ability to use a microphone and so forth.

Milliken – It seemed more like a sound system issue. There wasn't really an echo or anything. The sound seemed very abrasive. Depending on where you were in the room, it sounded like you couldn't hear the person speaking clearly.

Sims – It very well may be the equipment, out of whack, or something of that nature. We really kind of limit access to the sound controls. Basically, you can turn things on and only use a preset level from outside the cabinet. If someone gets in the cabinet—we've run into this in other places as well—people start fiddling with the dials and the levers. The next thing you know, the sound is terrible. We can take a look at that, but we've tried to set it up so it's kind of plug-and-play and you can't really mess with the volume and so forth.

Peoples – We actually had an architect take a look at the Interurban, and we have a plan to put that together. We just don't have any pricing on it at this point.

E. Request for Council Action

RES-23-015

Council

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE COMPENSATION FOR THE OFFICE OF MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CANAL WINCHESTER FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2025

- Tabled

No discussion or vote occurred during this meeting.

RES-23-016

Council

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE COMPENSATION FOR THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CANAL WINCHESTER FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2025

- Tabled

A motion was made by Amos, seconded by Shea to untable RES-23-016. The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes 6 – Amos, Shea, Walker, Amick, Buskirk, Clark

No 1 – Milliken

A motion was made by Shea, seconded by Walker to table RES-23-016. The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes 7 – Shea, Walker, Amick, Amos, Buskirk, Clark, Milliken

Discussion started at 15:13 on YouTube Channel

Amos – I think my main concern as we start to take this vote tonight is for the city administrator to not prohibit things from being delayed too much more. We've talked about these salaries, and I want to ensure what the path is or what the general concession is from council as far as the salary of the mayor. If we are looking to reduce it so that we don't have two top-heavy salaries, I just kind of want to feel the council out to see what the general concessions and thoughts are before we do our vote tonight.

Clark – I feel that if the city administrator position goes forward, then the mayor's responsibilities would diminish, and I think the compensation should come down.

Amick – Would you like to put an idea on the table of what you think it should come down to?

Clark – \$30,000–\$50,000. I agree. I think with the other compensation that was included, it did jump up there. I don't know. \$40,000? As a compromise between \$30,000 and \$50,000.

Amos – Yes. I was thinking \$30,000–\$40,000 because of the extra things that we were offering.

Walker – I also was thinking \$40,000.

Buskirk – We also discussed the insurance benefits for a family. It was very high, but if you reduced it to a single, it'd reduce that overall compensation package quite a bit. I don't know if we want to discuss that at all.

Amos – I agree with the single package. Because I think that's what the council has the ability to do. I don't think we have the ability to do family. Mrs. Jackson, can you correct me if I'm wrong? She said, yes.

Amick – The benefits package currently sits at almost \$42,000. That's substantial.

Amos – We had originally tabled this because we said we kind of needed to put them in order. So with us looking to approve the city administrative position tonight, taking out the piece of the charter amendment that we know is going to have to be discussed, when do we feel comfortable moving forward with shifting this back to the plate of voting? Coming up with the salary that we feel is appropriate, coming up with the package that we feel is appropriate, and pushing it forward.

Amick – I think after this evening's vote we will feel comfortable.

Amos – So, we're looking at next meeting.

Amick – I would feel comfortable with that.

Amos – Do we have anything that we want to kind of have them start marking up so that we have something to bring to the table?

Shea – I think the salary is too low at \$50,000. I'll say that, and I'll say it again. Because what kind of person are you going to get at that level? We want a good, responsible mayor. You need to have enough money and enough incentive to make the position worthwhile for somebody to possibly leave their career or switch jobs. I think we're playing with fire if we drive this thing down too low.

Milliken – Is it July that we have to have the salaries done?

Amos – July 1st.

Milliken – My suggestion would be, I agree, after we vote on the administrator position, we can move forward, but I see no rush in trying to come up with something tonight. Because how that vote goes is going to change people's calculus. Let's save that discussion, I think, for the next meeting. We'd still have time to pass or not pass that based on how that discussion goes.

Amos – I will add to your comment, Mr. Shea, that each one of us sitting behind this desk is a good person, and we don't do it for the money. I do see your part about how they couldn't leave their full-time job for this—at least most couldn't. I see your point on that, but I hope they're doing it not just for the money but because the city means everything to them.

RES-23-020

Public Service

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR THE PARTICIPATION IN THE ODOT ROAD SALT CONTRACTS AWARDED IN 2023

- Request to move to full Council

A motion was made by Amos, seconded by Walker to move RES-23-020 to full Council. The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes 7 – Amos, Walker, Amick, Buskirk, Clark, Milliken, Shea

Discussion started at 21:45 on YouTube Channel

Peoples – This is an annual ordinance that we enter into a cooperative purchasing agreement with ODOT. We've had a pretty light year from a snow and ice removal standpoint, so we're only going in for 250 tons. Just a reminder, our barn will hold 1,200 tons, so we kind of factor in that if we had no salt or ice at all next year, we would still have room in our barn.

ORD-23-016

Council

AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENTS TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF CANAL WINCHESTER AT THE NOVEMBER 7, 2023 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

- Tabled

A motion was made by Amick, seconded by Shea to untable ORD-23-016. The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes 6 – Amick, Shea, Walker, Amos, Buskirk, Clark

No 1 – Milliken

A motion was made by Shea, seconded by Clark to withdraw ORD-23-016. The

motion carried with the following vote:

Yes 7 – Shea, Clark, Milliken, Walker, Amick, Amos, Buskirk

Discussion started at 23:40 on YouTube Channel

Amick – I looked at Section 7.06 of our current charter, and we have in our history established this provision to allow for a charter commission. Part of the charter commission’s role and responsibility is to do the research and present a proposal to council or a recommendation to council for any charter changes. This ordinance would not go into effect until January 2028. The charter commission would likely be formed in late 2024 for their work to be done in 2025, which will give us plenty of time to change our form of city government should that be the desired state. I guess I’m just stating my feeling that I think the timing is not right for this. We have a charter commission for a reason, and I would like to allow them time to be formed and do their work.

Amos – Mr. Boggs, are we allowed to request the charter commission meet earlier, or does it have to fall on the five-year schedule? Like, if we had a reason that we thought they should reconvene or convene.

Boggs – I suppose the council could create an ad hoc commission. I’ll admit I haven’t studied that question, so I’d hate to give you the wrong answer off the top of my head. I can’t immediately see any reason why the council, by resolution or ordinance, couldn’t put together some sort of advisory committee on that.

Amick – Even though the charter clearly states every five years? Are you saying there’s a difference between a charter commission and an advisory group?

Boggs – Well, the charter review commission is itself an advisory group, really, because council can take or leave or modify anything that the charter review commission puts in front of them. The charter review commission has to be formed at least every five years. I don’t see why that means the council couldn’t seek that kind of input more frequently or off that schedule if it desired.

Amos – Would it be too much to ask you to verify?

Boggs – Of course.

Walker – Along with what Mrs. Amick had mentioned, isn't it less than two years before the charter commission meets again?

Clark – Yes. I kind of had the same thought. My thought is to just let the charter play itself out and let the charter commission make their recommendations to council.

Milliken – I also agree with that.

Amick – Let’s say we get to 2028, and let’s say that the city administrator is approved this evening or in a subsequent meeting, and now we have this city manager label. We also have a city administrator label. The forms of government are different, but is there a way to migrate the role from one title to another? Does that make sense? We talk about having a top-heavy government, which we don’t necessarily want, but what do you do if you get to that date and you have a city administrator and your charter change says now we’re going to allow for a city manager? Does that by default become the same person, or does it now create two top-heavy positions?

Ebert – I would think it would have to be somebody that the council wants to hire, because that's what it's going to come down to. You're hiring somebody.

Boggs – Right. That's exactly right. It could be the same person who had been serving as city administrator, but it wouldn't necessarily have to be. At that point, it would be a matter of council entering into a contract with somebody to take over as city manager. That sort of transition is contemplated in the final section of the proposed charter amendment. A city manager is an employee, but they wouldn't be governed in the same way as everybody else. They would be directly contracting with the council. The terms and conditions of their employment would be determined by that contract rather than by your personnel code.

Walker – Since we're talking about the city administrator versus the city manager, I believe that the charter commission introduced the city administrator around 2010. It was taken to council and then to the citizens for a vote for the city administrator position. Correct me if I'm wrong.

Boggs – Right. The language that governs the city administrator today was voted on by residents in 2010. The charter review commission discussed mayor versus city manager, and the commission's recommendation was to leave the mayor, but they didn't touch the administrator position. What was on the ballot then in 2021 were only those specific items identified by council to go to the ballot.

Shea – It sounds like there are a lot of folks who aren't really interested in this, and that's acceptable. I'm not going to argue with the rest of the body. I would offer a couple points for consideration: one, the charter commission is appointed by the mayor and by council, and those are not always representative of our entire community. There are people in the community who like this idea and have expressed that to me. If the rest of the body doesn't feel that it's the right time, then it's not the right time. I'm not going to change anybody's minds, but I think it's something that, like I said before, will ensure the continuity of government. That's something we need to look at strongly going forward. I got breakfast over in Groveport and happened to be sitting across the counter from the mayor. We were talking, and I asked him how he liked to see an administrator, and he said, I don't know how anybody could do this job without an administrator. He was very clear about that. I think it's like 28 years since he's been mayor or something like that. If you have that continuity of leadership at the top, I think the administrator is a great way to go. I'm not going to disagree with the will of the voters that was expressed in 2010. My concern with the city administrator is that it is absolutely tied to who the mayor is and can come and go, which could lead to less continuity than we're hoping to achieve. Thank you for listening.

Clark – I would like to point out that Groveport has had multiple city administrators over the years. It happens everywhere.

Shea – At least I want to make sure we're getting the best operational continuity plan for our residents because we are very blessed to have a city government that functions very well.

Clark – We are. Very much. In my past roles, I've interacted with a lot of city governments all over the state of Ohio. I've seen this type of system work very well, and I've seen this type of system that we have in Canal Winchester not work so well. It's the people you elect and the people you hire. It comes down to the people, not so much the system that you have.

Milliken – We all agree that we're blessed by the form of government and how well it's worked. I'm just curious as to what people think about the old adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." I mean, could we be overthinking this potentially?

Amick – Can you be more specific?

Milliken – With regards to the city manager position specifically. I'm sitting back and listening to the discussion, and I believe that this is a healthy discussion. I think it's great, but like we said earlier, I think we're putting the cart before the horse a little bit. We're having the charter review come up. I'm not saying I'm really for or against it, but as we said in previous meetings, you throw it on top of the administrator position, the mayor's salary, and all this stuff floating around. There's a part of me that's concerned; we're going through all these motions, and it's really muddy in the waters. If we were talking about a city administrator standing alone, yes, I could probably get on board with that, but reducing the mayor's salary at the same time, talking about the city manager, I was just curious what everybody's thoughts were. Like I said, going back to my original point, we all agree that we're blessed by what we have, and it works. It's doing well. I just wanted to know what everybody's thoughts were because, again, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Ebert – Can I say something?

Milliken – Yes. Sure.

Ebert – We have four directors right now. We've had four directors since I've been mayor and before I was mayor. In a lot of cases, they're getting loaded down. My whole thought behind a city administrator was to help those four out. Add a fifth body that can speak their language, if you know what I mean. They do speak a different language. That was my whole thought because, again, and I'll say it again, if someone gets voted in as mayor and they don't have any government experience, maybe they're the greatest person in the world, who knows, but if they don't have any government experience, they're not going to help these four. They're constantly going to have to tell the new mayor what's going on in the world, how it goes, and how it works. They're drawing themselves back and overworking themselves. That's my whole idea behind the city administrator. In today's world, we all see what's happening around us. It's not that far away, and it's getting closer to us every day with development. I gave you all a copy of the Newark Advocate a couple months ago; it was crazy. It was all because of development that stirred that up. I don't want that to be Canal Winchester.

Amos – I think for me, the start of the conversation is that the city has asked for this. I mean, there's a reason, and thank you, mayor, for chiming in. There's a reason they're asking for it, which then leads to our questions. We are 9,000 people, and when you hear him, we're going to have our four directors, and then this person will serve on top. Now you have five leaders and the mayor's salary, so for me, it's just balancing. It's balancing it out to make sure that we're aligning our leadership correctly. We don't know. We don't serve in the capacity that they do every day, so for me, I take the advice of what they're saying and then just try to figure out how we find the balance for our residents as well.

Milliken – I think too, if we dial back the clock a little bit, we did already vote on this once, and I'm not saying that has to be the end-all be-all; I'm okay with revisiting issues. Again, I just go back to coupling it with the mayor's salary, and that's my biggest trip. When this was first brought to us, it was brought along with four or five other positions. Not all of those positions were going to be filled right away; I understand

that, but I think for me at least, that was kind of a shock to the system. Maybe I could have done a better job of understanding that situation, but for me, had those been spread out to some degree, I think I could have gone on board the first time. That's just been my whole issue. I think this whole thing has just been convoluted. We turned it down once this year. I think we should have waited until after the election to bring it up again.

Amos – Can I ask what your hesitation is about the reduction of the mayor's salary?

Milliken – Yes. Again, coupling the reduction of the mayor's salary with adding the administrator position, in my mind, is an inadvertent or roundabout way of changing the form of government without going through the charter. I understand that the administrator is allowed through the charter, and that's fine, but I think when you add the reduction of the mayor's salary, it just seems improper to me.

Ebert – Personally, I think the residents of Canal Winchester would rather see a well-oiled machine, and as long as it's working fine, they don't care what you're getting paid.

Milliken – That's understandable. I think the other side of that coin is, you know, I can't really say that I'd be comfortable paying a city administrator the salary that it requires on top of the current mayor's salary. It is a lot. I think there could and should be a better system for that. I think that approaching this down the path we were initially on should have just stayed there. Bringing all this stuff back up and introducing the city manager just makes it more difficult.

Walker – At this point, are we keeping this tabled and moving on?

Shea – I'm going to withdraw it.

F. Old/New Business

OTH-22-021

Pedestrian Safety

Discussion started at 46:12 on YouTube Channel

Peoples – They are out there working on the Washington and Waterloo intersection with the striping. The contractor did tell us they'd be done by the end of the month. They snuck out today and were working on some of that.

Milliken – I know you've mentioned this before, and I struggle to remember your answer, but at the intersection of Groveport and Washington, are we or are we not able to put some kind of barrier along the right-hand side to prevent people from going along the right-hand side of traffic and making that right-hand turn? I know there's a house there, and somebody parks there. We talked about it, but can you refresh me on that?

Peoples – We're going to continue evaluating and seeing how the traffic situation changes with the intersection at Washington and Waterloo being a three-way stop. We think we'll improve that condition so that the left-hand turn movements from Groveport onto Washington will be able to move through faster just because there's not such a backup.

OTH-22-022

Police Study

Discussion started at 47:28 on YouTube Channel

Amick – The Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police came in and gave us their report. Their assessment is that we're currently staffed appropriately. I'll be honest, I did not find a lot of value in their study because it

ranged from plus eight down to minus three from a staffing perspective if you looked at all the different models that they used. To me, it was kind of like, I don't know that I felt like I got the value out of it that I was hoping for. If we're going to continue to keep this as an open item, I think it might be appropriate to have someone from the Fairfield County Sheriff's Department come in and give us their view on staffing and how they calculate what is appropriate staffing for a city of our size and how they approach that.

Buskirk – I would agree with that.

Shea – I think I was the one who requested that it be on the agenda. I think it's something that we can't lose sight of with the growth that's happening in and around our community. I want to keep our eye on it because I'm concerned that at some point in the near future we're going to need an upper body count on the officer side.

Amick – Mrs. Jackson, can you reach out to the appropriate person, whether that's Chief Collins or Sergeant Walker, or whomever can come and address council?

Jackson – Yes. I can do that.

Buskirk – I think it's very important to have their input on trends, and if we start to see an increase in certain types of crime, I think at that point we need to have some serious conversations about the timing of adding a new officer.

Amick – Again, to sum it up, we just want to hear from them about their approach for now and how they look at it 12 months out, 24 months out, what they see in five years, and how they plan for that.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Discussion started at 51:02 on YouTube Channel

Shea – I was going north on 71 the other day, and I looked over, and there's Berliner Park. It is beautiful, spacious, and has ball fields galore. I know that is quite a tourism activity, as it brings in lots of tournaments over the summer and things like that. I picked up the phone and called Mr. Boggs and asked if we could take some of that bed tax money and use it for recreational facilities and stuff. He said we could, so I just wanted to plant that seed in everybody's head as we go forward in this bed tax pool that continues to hopefully grow. It may be an avenue we can use to direct some of that money to improve our sporting facilities that are used for tournaments. For example, lights at Hanner's or different things that come up over there I just wanted to put that in everybody's mind.

Amick – I appreciate that, Mr. Shea, because every dime counts after hearing the price tag of what it costs to create ball fields. It was sort of staggering for me. I've never created a ball field, so I had no idea. I believe the number was \$5.5 million to create a handful of ball fields. I appreciate you addressing that because every little bit will help.

Shea – How's the bed tax tracking so far in the first quarter?

Jackson – I don't know. I'll have to look it up. The amendment that council passed last year to Section 185.02 puts 15% of bed tax money into the operation, maintenance, and construction of City-owned parks. 30% is currently going towards the city's bicentennial celebration. Once the celebration has been

completed, that 30% also goes towards the parks.

Walker – While Mrs. Jackson is looking that up, can I bring up some old or new business?

Clark – Sure.

Walker – The speed limit from Ashbrook Village is currently 35mph. I would like to consider dropping that to 25mph. As we're approaching the school and there are also golf carts coming from that area, the speed would drop long before you got to the school.

Clark – I think we discussed this before.

Walker – That's why I brought it up again.

Amick – I happen to live there. People come around that bend, and I don't think they realize they're coming up on a residential area, especially with parks and walking paths. They just come flying through there. Not to add on, but we have a problem with people stopping at stop signs in this community. So, that kind of makes it even worse because people are not stopping at the stop sign. You've got a car coming too fast through there, and you've got walkers, bicyclers, strollers, and all that. It's a mess.

Peoples – It is going to be difficult there. As Sergeant Walker can attest, people don't do 25mph now, where it starts at 25 mph. We have the flashing sign there as well. It's one of the main places the deputies like to sit, and they keep picking them off as they come down through there. Given that the roadway configuration is an open section road with no curbs or gutters, it's pretty wide down there. It is not conducive to going slower. That is a faster roadway. We have that situation out on Groveport Road as well. There will be challenges with that.

Amos – Mr. Peoples, this may not be a question you can answer; it might be Sergeant Walker. We have a lot of golf carts in this town. If we have a golf cart going down the road on a 35mph road, is that illegal?

Sgt. Walker – Yes.

G. Adjournment @ 6:58 p.m.

***A motion was made by Amos, seconded by Buskirk to adjourn. The motion carried with the following vote:
Yes 7 – Amos, Buskirk, Clark, Milliken, Shea, Walker, Amick***