

**MINUTES – REGULAR SESSION**

**PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Monday October 25, 2021

6:00 p.m.

The City Council of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio met in regular session on Monday October 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order. A moment of silent prayer was observed followed by The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call showed the following members to be present:

Sean Dunne	1 <sup>st</sup> Ward
Charlotte Gordon	2 <sup>nd</sup> Ward
Kevin E. Johnson	3 <sup>rd</sup> Ward
Lyvette Mosley	4 <sup>th</sup> Ward
Edwin Martell	5 <sup>th</sup> Ward
Dennis Packard	6 <sup>th</sup> Ward

Also, present was, City Manager Sam Sutherland, City Clerk Diana Ratliff, Solicitor John Haas and Auditor M. Trent Williams.

Council dispensed with the reading of the Journal for the Regular Session of October 11, 2021 on a motion by Vice President Dunne. **The motion carried viva voce: VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays.**

**STATEMENTS OR REMARKS FROM CITIZENS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

**Benny Blevins – 1018 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Apt. B – Portsmouth, OH** – He is one of the Pastor’s at the Portsmouth Welcoming Community and he’s here with two other members of his congregation to address the letter that had been distributed to residents living in the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Ward in Portsmouth. He said that it doesn’t matter who wrote the letter, but he felt that the letter was full of misinformation. Nowadays you hear CNN and FOX news call it disinformation, but people in his generation they call them “lies”. He said the letter brought up all kinds of things specifically about the discrimination ordinance that was passed in 2020 prohibiting discrimination against the LGBTQ Plus community in terms of housing and employment. He stated that he was an educator, and taught at Shawnee State University as well as Ohio University, he is a Pastor, he is a husband, he is a gay man that grew up in Portsmouth. He grew up as a scared closeted teenager hearing people using the typical slurs that were used for gay men as well as local Preachers and Televangelist talking about the gay agenda and within that agenda “us gay men” specifically were hiding under bushes and in the darkness of the night trying to lure young boys and men into their evil cult, which was completely ridiculous. He said that it seemed like in 2021 that had changed to where it now encompassed transgender persons, specifically transgender women and the letter in question spoke about the idea that transgender women were out to sexually assault women and girls in bathrooms and other nonsense. He asked if everyone was tired of this and tired of the division, tired of the hate and lies. Transgender people were 3-4 times more likely than heterosexual counterparts to be victims of violent crimes toward sexual assault. Between 2020 and 2021, 250 transgender women were murdered in the United States. The letter painted a picture that those of us in the LGBTQ Plus community were sexual predators. He said that he happened to be sick of it, he’s a Christian, he’s a Pastor and his relationship with Jesus Christ was the most important thing in his life and why he was representing his church and congregation. He doesn’t care who wrote the letter or distributed it, but they needed to start speaking out against this type of hate and against the narrative being taught because what’s going to happen, it would produce more fear, more hate and more violence against a group of people who simply want to live their lives. There was a verse in the bible from Matthew - 22 verses 34-50 where Jesus was accosted by the religious leaders of the day and they ask him what the most important commandment and he said to love your neighbor as you love yourself. He asked for them to choose love over fear and hate.

**LEGISLATION**

The clerk gave a **third reading**, to an Ordinance amending Section 947.06 (a)(1) – Permit Fees of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio to establish a user fee of \$250.00 for use of the stadium and a \$100.00 deposit for keys to the facility.

Vice President Dunne moved that this legislation be passed.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, the Ordinance was passed.**

The clerk gave a **second reading**, to an Ordinance authorizing the appropriation of \$25,000.00 from Capital Improvement Fund No. 301 to be paid from Land Improvement Recreation/Grounds Line-Item No. 301.335.5502 for new playground equipment for York Park.

**Ord. #68 2021  
Fees for the  
stadium usage**

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitutes a second reading.

Mayor Johnson asked if this was the normal playground equipment and Manager Sutherland replied “yes”.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, a second reading was declared.**

The clerk gave a **second reading**, to an Ordinance authorizing the appropriation of \$30,636.00 from General Fund No. 101 for the purpose of installing an electric vehicle charging station capable of charging two vehicles concurrently.

Vice President Dunne moved that the three-reading rule be waived due to time restraints.

The role was called. **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays, the rule was suspended.**

Vice President Dunne moved that the ordinance be passed.

There were no questions or comments. The role was called. **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, the Ordinance was passed.**

The clerk gave a **second reading**, to an Ordinance authorizing the Auditor of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio to extend and modify the current contract with BHM CPA Group, Inc., an independent public accountant (IPA), to perform the annual financial and compliance audits of the City of Portsmouth and the Portsmouth City Health Department for the period of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2025.

Vice President Dunne moved that the three-reading rule be waived.

The role was called. **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays, the rule was suspended.**

Vice President Dunne moved that the ordinance be passed.

There were no questions or comments. The role was called. **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, the Ordinance was passed.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, an Ordinance authorizing the City Manager to enter into a purchase agreement with Peoples Bank to obtain three (3) parcels of property located at 4th and 5th Streets and authorizing the appropriation of \$100,000 from CIP Fund No. 301 for said purchase.

Vice President Dunne moved that the three-reading rule be waived.

The role was called. **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays, the rule was suspended.**

Vice President Dunne moved that the ordinance be passed.

There were no questions or comments. The role was called. **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, the Ordinance was passed.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, an Ordinance authorizing an additional appropriation in the amount of \$45,000.00 from CIP Fund No. 301 to be paid from ODOT Transportation-Multipath Line-Item No. 301.661.5507 to cover the additional cost of the project. Pursuant to Council Rule 5, this legislation is requested to be passed as an emergency in accordance with Section 10 of the Charter for the City of Portsmouth in order to facilitate administration, daily operation and avoid practical and legal entanglements.

Vice President Dunne moved that the three-reading rule be waived.

The role was called. **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays, the rule was suspended.**

Vice President Dunne moved that the ordinance be passed.

There were no questions or comments. The role was called. **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, the Ordinance was passed.**

Ord. #69 2021  
Electric  
Charging  
Station

Ord. #70 2021  
Extend  
contract with  
BHM CPA  
Group

Ord. #71 2021  
Purchase of  
Property from  
Peoples Bank

Ord. #72 2021  
Additional  
Appropriation  
for Multi-Use  
Path

The clerk gave a **first reading**, an Ordinance authorizing the City Manager of the City of Portsmouth to enter into a lease agreement with Cornerstone United Methodist Church for the alley east of their parking lot as detailed in the attached Lease Agreement and Exhibits A and B.

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitutes a first reading.

Mayor Johnson commented that having children and grandchildren that have played organized sports at Cornerstone, this was a win, win and he commended Pastor Roth, Jennifer Roth and he looked forward to what they're doing in expanding their fields.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, a first reading was declared.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, an Ordinance authorizing the City Manager of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio to advertise for bids and to enter into contracts with the lowest and/or best bidder for required supplies, materials and services for 2022 in accordance with Ohio Revised Code section 735.05.

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitutes a first reading.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, a first reading was declared.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, an Ordinance authorizing the City Manager of the City of Portsmouth to apply, accept and appropriate funds in the amount of \$800,000 from CIP Fund No. 301 for Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for the rehabilitation of McKinley Pool.

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitutes a first reading.

Mayor Johnson asked how much of the \$800,000 was grant money. Manager Sutherland said that none of the \$800,000 was grant money, but the city had to apply for the grant and front the money and if the grant came through it would be approximately \$400,000 in grant funds, but if the grant doesn't go through the ordinance would just go away. Mayor Johnson asked if Council denied funding, would the pool open next year, Mr. Sutherland said "yes". Mayor Johnson asked if there were a possibility of other grants if they denied moving this legislation forward? Mr. Sutherland said that they were hoping that some of that does happen but this was worst case scenario. Mr. Johnson said this money was coming from CIP Budget and they have Firefighters that were wanting them to add three more Firefighters, but that funding comes from the General Fund so there's no argument there when people say "you can build a pool, but you can't fund Firefighters", Mr. Sutherland said that it was a whole different pool of money. Mr. Johnson asked about the roads and people talking about how bad the roads were, Mr. Sutherland said the majority of that money comes from the CIP fund. Mr. Johnson said that we could choose to cannonball or choose to have better roads. He asked if anyone had done a study on how many people actually go to the pool on average, Mr. Sutherland replied that the city had not, but Community Action may have some data on that because they managed the pool this past summer. Mr. Johnson asked if CAO was willing to help with the expenses of the pool and Mr. Sutherland said he couldn't speak for them. Mr. Johnson said that he understood that there was an informational meeting coming up for the pool and asked who organized that meeting? Mr. Sutherland said that would have been he and Tracy Shearer. Mr. Johnson asked if the County Commissioners were informed of the meeting because we will be asking them for funding also and Mr. Sutherland said that he has had discussions with the Commissioners. Mr. Johnson said he spoke with a commissioner today that said they weren't even informed about the meeting until they saw it on facebook. Mr. Sutherland replied that the intent was to get everyone together that would be involved, whether it was donations or a grant. Mr. Johnson said that he was in favor of the pool, but was in favor of being fiscally responsible. He said he wasn't sure how the city couldn't afford additional Firefighters or to fix our roads but yet we could afford a pool.

Vice President Dunne said that scoring criteria for a grant was based on a number of different categories. He said that one of the things was to have a public meeting and in that public meeting, members of the community that have kids that go to the pool or have gone to the pool, basically to get comments about the pool and its importance to the city; the comments and record of that meeting would be included in the grant application. He said that as far as this being an information gathering session, it was being directed towards the panel that judges the grants and part of the assessment of the grant. The main thing was the short notice to find a host for the meeting because the grant deadline was coming up and he thanked the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center for agreeing to host. He said the overall purpose of the meeting was to show panel of grant judges, the pools importance to the community. The meeting was not to cause drama of who was or was not invited, but important to look at the assessment criteria and to make Portsmouth's grant the most competitive in the state and he applauded Manager Sutherland and Director Shearer for making the grant as competitive as possible. He said that what their seeing

was a much larger asking of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the current climate trying to get grants were extremely competitive. Coronavirus had limited the funding opportunities and other grants, so there will be a lot of communities vying for this grant. He would like anyone that has had a positive experience at the pool, or that the pool had been part of their childhood to come and talk to the city about it. He said that this wasn't meant to hurt the feelings of Politicians, but more to get the most competitive grant possible. He said we're trying to get \$400,000 put into our city and county. He replied to the Mayors comment about cannonballs or roads and emphasized that the city wanted to stretch dollars as much as possible and turn \$200,000 of city money into \$800,000 of work and one way to do that was through grant funding. He added that they had looked at various ways to renovate the pool and one of things they measured was the fact that it had been ignored for decades. He said a previous Council had discussed closing the pool down and after all this time in a compromise the city knew it wouldn't get funding overnight, they would incorporate grant funding and stretch dollars as much as possible because this would be a massive project for the city and a major investment in a facility that would be enjoyed by residents of the city.

Councilwoman Gordon said that it wasn't accurate to name it as a new pool, this is an existing pool and the cost of building a new pool would be exponentially larger. The pool attendance was probably down for a lot of reasons and one being the condition of the pool. The pool was in very poor condition, the ladders were rusty, the optics were really bad and the baby pool was totally unusable. If there was a young mother who had a very young child and/or other children, going to the pool would be very difficult because there was no wading pool for the younger children. She said that payroll money should not be compared to this money, because this was one-time money. In looking at our city bank account as well as other cities, we've received a lot of one-time monies that had filled our bank account. It was best to use one-time money on one-time projects and not to commit to ongoing payroll costs that once the money was gone would get us further into debt, our goal was to get out of fiscal watch and the covid money must all be used or it would have to be returned. She said the pool had been neglected for a very long time and she was aware that the city had not had the money in the past, but this was not a new pool but repairing the existing pool.

Auditor Williams asked when the grant deadline was and Manager Sutherland stated that it was November 15<sup>th</sup>. He said that as far as encumbering \$800,000 which was a lot of money, but he may not be able to carry it over into next year and the worst-case scenario would be that it would need to be voted on again next year.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 5 ayes – 1 nay (K.E. Johnson), a first reading was declared.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, an Ordinance authorizing the City Auditor to amend appropriations to reflect actual revenues and expenditures in order to balance and close the City's books for the fiscal year 2021.

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitutes a first reading.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, a first reading was declared.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, an Ordinance authorizing the appropriation of \$35,000.00 from CIP – Health Line-Item No. 301.440.5529 for labor, materials, construction and equipment to expand the Portsmouth City Health Department Clinic.

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitute a first reading, however he withdrew the motion and moved that the three-reading rule be waived.

The role was called. **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays, the rule was suspended.**

Vice President Dunne moved that the ordinance be passed.

There were no questions or comments. The role was called. **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, the Ordinance was passed.**

The clerk gave a **first reading**, an Ordinance to amend the Zoning Map of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio, by rezoning 2016 Robinson Avenue and 2032 Robinson Avenue from its current zoning of Residence to "Business A".

Vice President Dunne moved that this constitutes a first reading.

Ord. #73 2021  
Appropriation  
for expansion  
of Health Dept.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, a first reading was declared.**

**STATEMENTS OR REMARKS FROM CITIZENS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

**Joseph Pratt -Director of Main Street Portsmouth - 342 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Portsmouth, OH** – He said that at the last meeting he commented on the nature of MSP’s program with it being a downtown entity-based group that only focused on development and preservation of the downtown. He said that they were one of the very few Main Street’s in Ohio that focused on the outside of the downtown because they have so many talents and skills that they could lend. He updated Council on some of the things that they had done lately. He said that recently Sue Burke met with the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Councilman to do some plantings in Sciotoville and worked with him on doing some seasonal decorations. Main Street also donated 199 Halloween costumes to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center to be dispersed and last year Main Street gave them 117 costumes. They’ve worked with the Tree Commission to plant approximately 50 trees at McKinley Pool and received a discount from Lowe’s and they also planted a few trees at the Arbor Day celebration at Bannon Park and also worked with the Unity Project to have murals painted at McKinley Pool. He said that he and his father as well as some others served food to the kids at the pool and it was very exciting to have well over 100 kids coming and going during those events. He said those were just some of the things they love doing for the city. He said that the pool was very important to them and he was glad to see it on the agenda. He said according to Engineer Prosch \$400,000 was only 2 miles of road and getting us ahead one-year versus decades of enjoyment for kids seemed like a reasonable thing to think about, because the pool was dear to his heart, the hearts of kids and the city’s history.

**MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND REPORTS:**

**City Clerk’s Report** – Clerk Ratliff reported the following:

1. She received via email on October 11, 2021 from the Auditor’s office, for the following summary statements of the Combined MTD/YTD reports for the period ending September 30, 2021: Expense, Revenue and Fund reports.
2. She received today an Oath of Office for the following Police Officers:  
Kaleb Kidd  
Nicholas Avery Adkins  
Joshua Wayne Gullett  
Charles Krekeler  
Tyler Messer
3. She advised that she had signed Council up for the Christmas Parade which will be on November 18, 2021.

**Oath of Office  
Police Officers  
Kaleb Kidd  
Nicholas Adkins  
Joshua Gullett  
Charles Krekeler  
Tyler Messer**

The City Clerk’s report was received, filed and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Dunne. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

**City Manager’s Report** – Manager Sutherland reported the following:

1. He said that recently they had been getting a lot of folks not going through the Design Review Board for projects that were taking place west of Washington Street. The folks were down there painting and making improvements and we’re glad to see that but there were specific rules that needed to be followed which must be done through the Design Review Board. He said that it might stop some headaches from happening, and with approval the projects could proceed, but approval must be received first. Councilwoman Gordon asked what the boundaries were, he replied that it was everything West of Washington Street, from Front Street to 10<sup>th</sup>. Councilman Dunne asked how do we make people aware that they have to do this and Mr. Sutherland said that they needed to start providing some education and he believed that Nathan had been working on getting things in place, but usually it was through permits.
2. He said that he and Mayor Johnson had a conversation about the local teams that were going to the playoffs this coming weekend and most of the games were scheduled for Saturday night which was also Trick or Treat night and they wanted input about moving Trick or Treat to Friday night so that the kids could get out and Trick or Treat and then on Saturday they would be able to go to the ballgames. He said the bad thing was that it was supposed to rain Friday night. Mayor Johnson said that Portsmouth City School, Notre Dame and Portsmouth East were all going to the playoffs on Saturday night and Portsmouth Peewee Football had playoffs on Saturday afternoon into the early evening and they were running into scheduling conflicts. He said that the county was keeping their Trick or Treat night as Saturday He added that if Portsmouth moved their Trick or Treat to Friday night to accommodate the playoff games on Saturday and if for some reason the kids couldn’t go on Friday, they could still Trick or Treat in the county on Saturday before the games. Councilwoman Gordon suggested moving it to Sunday night which was actually Halloween and Mayor Johnson said that conflicted with church services. Councilman Dunne said that there’s always going to be some kind of scheduling conflict, if they move it to Friday, it’s supposed to rain, if they leave it on Saturday, there’s ballgames and Sunday it’s a religious conflict. Clerk Ratliff said that she has had people call in her office months ago to inquire when Trick or Treat in the city would be, simply because they had to make their schedules ahead of time and ask for the day off and some of these people have already requested the day off. Councilwoman Mosley said that she doesn’t do Halloween but if it’s important to a person, they will do what they want to do regardless which day it was held. Manager Sutherland decided to leave it on Saturday.

3. He said that on Tuesday morning there will be a partnering meeting with the contractor and the U.S. Army Corp of engineers on the floodwall project. It is by invite only with himself, the Director of Wastewater, Flood Defense Supervisor and will be an all-day event. They will be hammering out the details of the project that will begin soon.
4. He said on a sad note, one of his mentors at the Water Treatment Plant, Denny Frankell from the Sciotoville area passed away yesterday. He was a long-time city employee and had molded him in his water career when he first started with the city; he was a mentor who taught him a lot. He was a great guy and would on a whim call every once in a while, to check in to see how things were going. He will be missed and would remember his family in prayers.

The City Manager's report was received, filed and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Dunne. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

**Mayor's Report** – Mayor Johnson reported the following:

1. He met with Chris Smith Commissioner of the Health Department and Vice President Dunne on October 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss budget, personnel and building modifications.
2. He had the opportunity to attend the Portsmouth City Schools Board of Education meeting on October 21<sup>st</sup> and delivered their opening prayer. He heard more about their Threetown community and encouraged all of Council to contact Portsmouth Elementary and go see Threetown, as it was unreal what they've accomplished in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. He got to hear from Threetown Mayor Kalan Johnson and the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Council.
3. He extended his condolences to the family of Rich Noel who recently passed away. Mr. Noel had served as 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Councilman.

The Mayor's report was received, filed and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Dunne. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

**Solicitor Haas Report** – Solicitor Haas reported the following:

1. He reminded everyone to get out and vote as there is a Municipal election on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and there is also early voting currently open.

The City Solicitor's report was received, filed and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Dunne. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

**Auditor Williams Report** – Auditor Williams reported the following:

1. He said that it had been one of those months in which he warned Council could happen in the world of General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund revenue from tax collections. He said that after a record high month of income tax collections for August, it was followed by the month of September that dipped to approximately \$1,000,000 less than the previous month and was also the lowest collection month since August 2019. He said that last month's income tax was around \$1,400,000 range for general fund collections and in September it was \$721,376 which was about half and was down \$262,320 from the previous September, but the total compared to last year was up \$720,301. The total income tax collection was \$819,746 for the month of September which was down \$298,107 compared to last year, but still up overall at \$819,422. The six major fund balances for the end of September were: General Fund \$11,165,905, Streets \$480,551, Water \$1,444,391, Sewer \$135,286, Sanitation \$173,910 and Insurance Fund \$4,291,982. He stated that for the remaining three months of the year, stabilizing out after the highs and the lows of the previous two month, he hoped to be over \$13,000,000 in the General Fund and just over \$15,000,000 total.

The City Auditor's report was received, filed and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Dunne. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

**MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS FROM CITY COUNCIL**

**1<sup>st</sup> Ward** – Councilman Dunne reported the following:

1. He thanked Reiser Construction Company and the entire community for their In-Kind donations to the development of the Skate Park in Portsmouth and they just finished work last week that allowed us to keep within the budget. He said in telling the story of the Skate Park, the Reiser Construction Company and other members of the Portsmouth Skate Park project would be included and we're extremely grateful for their generosity. The crew should be moving forward quite quickly.
2. He toured the Health Department and said that they use every inch of the building. He said it was good to go through the building and put names with the faces of the people that work with the city and to see the overall layout of the operation of the health department.
3. He encouraged people to take a tour through the downtown to witness all of the work that was being done, it was great to see the momentum continue.
4. He spoke with the Supervisor of the River Recreational Trail which was a trail that went from Portsmouth, Ohio into Indiana. It was one of the best discussions about Portsmouth, Politics and the area as this individual was very much invested in our city and in trying to start a lot of different

activities that would begin in Portsmouth and continue down river. He looked forward to meeting with them in the near future and to continue the discussions. He said that a project like this wasn't just merely river activities but his vision would be to travel along the river and stop at different places along the way and do different activities.

5. He had received a lot of questions about the anonymous letter that was circulating in the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Wards. He said the concerns that he had received from members of the community that had moved our community forward in so many different ways and he would invite people to look at the presentation that Portsmouth gave for the All-American application. Manager Sutherland, Councilwoman Lyvette Mosley, Councilwoman Charlotte Gordon, himself, Councilman Edwin Martell, the Chief of Police, a Baptist Pastor, members of Friends of Portsmouth, members of the Skate Park Project, Friends of Greenlawn Cemetery and Main Street Portsmouth was in the written portion, but all represented our town. He said that moving all of these things forward and the energy that was in the city over the past two to three years were groups that had worked with the city in a collaborative effort. He advised that the letter related it to Marxism. This was part of the overall economic illiteracy that he had seen in the past few weeks when people were talking about local politics and economic development without really knowing what economics was and this letter was par for the course. He said the idea that the Chamber of Commerce would support a move into Marxism was moronic. He said that as a community and for those that were upset about the letter, look at those who attacked the community and what they say they stand for and use it to congratulate the people that were actually involved in community and economic development and to not give too much attention to those that were there to troll, attack or be a toxic presence. He said to remember the energies and efforts of all of these different organizations and individuals and what they were a part of. He said there was a collaboration between the public and private sectors in the All-American presentation and application. He added that many things downtown were prompted by the energy of Jeremy Burnside who had mentioned to him to apply for the All-American City award because of all the different things that have happened in the downtown. He stressed that as a community "we're not stupid" and this letter was void of intellect and "we're not cowards" to not put your name to something was cowardice. To the people that were upset by the letter, he encouraged them to not emphasize too much on the cowards behind the letter or the cowards that stay silent, but we should instead say that we celebrate all those that put so much time into the work that was acknowledged by the All-American City award.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Ward** – Councilwoman Gordon reported the following:

1. She gave a shout out to Abby Spears who is a smart woman that works for the Health Department. She held two energy meetings with factual information regarding the issue on the ballot. She said the first meeting was at Port City Pub and the second meeting was at Coffee at the Lofts. She hoped that everyone got their questions answered and encouraged everyone to get out and vote.
2. She said that she and her husband went to the Health Department and got their flu vaccines and to say that every inch of space is used in that building was an understatement.
3. She attended a space making meeting and they're trying hard to carve out space for every department which was requested at the meeting in February.
4. She gave a shout out to code enforcement for cleaning out underneath the viaduct, it looks amazing.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Ward** – Councilman Kevin E. Johnson reported the following:

1. He commended our City Manager because any time that he reached out to him about issues or problems, he was right there to help correct the problems, as well as the City Service Director Jack Tackett. He said that we have a good workforce in our city, our Police and Fire Departments, Code Enforcement and he thanked all city employees for all their hard work.

**4<sup>th</sup> Ward** – Councilwoman Mosley reported the following:

1. She thanked Code Enforcement and the City Manager for the work done underneath the viaduct and it was remarkable that tons of trash that was removed.
2. She attended a meet and greet at the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center as they welcomed the Shawnee State Women's Basketball Team and she believed that all of the women were from other states. She and her husband became the host family for Jasmine Davis who is from Baltimore Maryland while she's attending Shawnee State University. The University was looking for hosts for the girls on the team because they are from all over the country and even the Basketball coach was from Baltimore, Maryland. She said it was a great event and the coach said that he had coached before and never had he seen the hospitality that they had received in Portsmouth.
3. She advised that there had been a man sleeping on a mattress in some bushes and she had notified the City Manager who took care of it. The Manager and Code Enforcement contacted the property owner and the owner gave them permission to remove the bushes.

4. She said that on October 17<sup>th</sup> they formed a cleanup committee at Mound Park and she was amazed at the residents that came out. She thanked Andy Cole and his wife for coming out to help, but she found out that Mr. Cole and his wife clean the park on a regular basis. She said there were bags of trash and grass. She said that the grass had been growing over the activity path that Connex worked so hard to get. She added that they didn't get all of it, but as much as they could. She was able to meet a lot of the residents that she hadn't yet met.

**5<sup>th</sup> Ward** – Councilman Martell reported the following:

1. He thanked Pastor Blevins for speaking about some very important issues that clearly, we're still facing in 2021.
2. He was very surprised to see a picture of himself on Serve Ohio which was a State Organization that recognized volunteerism in communities and was very proud and honored to make it on that page. He said that it was great to see that some of the hard work that's put into our city uplifted instead of being trashed.
3. He thanked Code Enforcement for all of their hard work underneath the viaduct and said it was a great example of what could be done when there's collaboration with others. He said the joint effort with the Commissioners and the Railroad and we all need to work together to achieve these great things. He said that it would be equally important to keep it cleaned up
4. He encouraged people to get out and do their due diligence and vote, and he advised that early voting has begun.
5. He thanked Vice President Dunne for addressing that letter in such a formal and professional way.

**6<sup>th</sup> Ward** – Councilman Packard reported the following:

1. He extended his thoughts and prayers to the Burnside family with the struggle that they're going through.
2. He gave a shout out to all of the volunteers that had been coming out on Wednesday's and Saturdays in the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward. They've made quite the dent and he was looking forward to keeping it going.
3. He thanked the Municipal Court for sending three additional helpers as they were able to clean the Little Scioto Bridge from end to end and on both sides.
4. He thanked Mr. Pratt, Mrs. Giannetti and Mrs. Burke for the upkeep of the flower pots in Sciotoville along Harding and Gallia Streets.
5. He addressed the letter that Pastor Blevins and Mr. Dunne had spoken of and apologized for laughing at the joke about the Halloween costume. He said that he shouldn't have laughed as it was inappropriate because it's not a funny topic and was a very serious topic and it came about over the friction and discussion of speaking out against the substance of the letter. He stated that the letter assumed that people would believe a certain way which was completely unreasonable, in his opinion, and that anybody who would think that if you spoke out against hate, then you would want your student athlete to be molested at school, and that's what that letter seemed to imply.

Vice President Dunne moved to recess into Executive Session with the City Manager, City Engineer and City Solicitor to discuss new real estate acquisitions.

The role was called and the motion carried: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays**, Council recessed into Executive Session at 7:35 p.m.

**Executive  
Session**

Vice President Dunne motioned to reconvene from Executive Session. Council reconvened with all still in attendance except Auditor Williams at 8:29 p.m.

Councilman Edwin Martell advised that there will be an event this weekend called "JB", which was a 5K walk/run and was very dear to his heart and to many citizens of this city. He encouraged everyone to participate in honoring someone who had been so selfless and an inspiration to everyone in this city. He said the details were on Facebook through the Friends of Portsmouth page; click on the link to make a donation and a lot of the proceeds were going to brain cancer awareness and research. He said that they were all hurting for the Burnside family and one way to help would be to attend the event as it is a great cause.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:33 p.m. on a motion by Vice President Dunne.

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City Clerk

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Mayor