

**MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES**  
**Portsmouth City Council Meeting on**  
**February 10, 2025 – 8:02 p.m.**

Members present:

Sean Dunne	1 <sup>st</sup> Ward
Charlotte Gordon	2 <sup>nd</sup> Ward
Andy Cole	3 <sup>rd</sup> Ward
Lyvette Mosley	4 <sup>th</sup> Ward
Joey Sandlin	5 <sup>th</sup> Ward
Dennis Packard	6 <sup>th</sup> Ward

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

1. **Advance Payment of Taxes**

**CM-25-01**

Manager Sutherland said that this was something the city does every year and is requested by the City Auditor.

Vice President Mosley motioned to accept alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, legislation moved forward.**

2. **2025 Budget and Forecast**

**CM-25-02**

Manager Sutherland apologized for getting this out so late, but the schedules between he and the State Auditor have been crazy and he couldn’t get everything lined up. He said that he will be coming back to Council after the State Auditor finished his review and hopefully the next presentation will be the budget with the financial recovery plan which included the steps to get out of fiscal watch. He said that there wasn’t a lot of escalated cost in the proposed budget and it basically took care of the union contracts; there were a few things as far as increased operating expenses. He asked that Council pass it at the next meeting to honor what the charter says and then know that he will be coming back asking for it to be amended to include the recovery plan which will move us toward getting out of fiscal watch. He asked Council to call him if they have questions and they can meet up to answer questions.

Councilman Cole said he was curious about what the charter says that puts Council on such a deadline. Manager Sutherland said that the charter stated that a temporary measure could be done for one-sixth of the year which was what had been done for January and February. By the end of February beginning of March, there had to be a permanent budget in place. He said on the record that it **will** need to be amended, but this time with the recovery plan, after which the plan could not be changed unless the State and Council approves it as a unilateral amendment. Once it is set, we’re locked in until they release us from fiscal watch. Mayor Gordon asked if it was a five-year plan and Manager Sutherland replied “yes.” VP Mosley asked if she could come to his office to review any questions she might have before the next meeting and he responded “yes.”

Councilman Cole asked if it would be worth amending the charter to give Council a little extra time because each year he's been on Council, looking at the budget was overwhelming and he's used to looking at budgets. Manager Sutherland responded that once we're out of fiscal watch, the problem shouldn't exist any longer. He said the recovery plan had five-years' worth of budget in it, however there will be some small tweaks, but not having to go through the State every year, will help tremendously.

Vice President Mosley motioned to accept alternative #2 to modify the request to include emergency language.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, legislation moved forward.**

### **Discussion Items**

1. **Community Grants (Gordan)** – Mayor Gordon stated that every year the hotel/motel tax was tallied from the previous year and applications were completed by Non-Profit 501-C3 organizations and submitted to the Clerk who sets up a date for the Cultural Affairs to meet and review the applications and disburse the money. She said this was a very good and fair committee and they've been doing this for a long time. She suggested taking an average of the community grant money that was allotted for 2022, 2023, and 2024 based on the budget and what Manager Sutherland could project and that could be used for community grant money. The Manager could then include it in the 2026 budget under community grant money, however after speaking with the City Auditor, the city cannot blend the community grant money with the hotel motel tax money. She said that there was already an application for the community grant money and if those applications were used and suggested that instead of applying throughout the entire year, have a set time to apply and submit, like the way the hotel motel process was handled. She would like either the same committee or another group to be appointed in the same fashion which was one person per ward with the mayor appointing an extra person. She said that this way Council would know up front how much money the city would be spending in community grants. This would be project based and only cover 25% of the budget and the other 75% would have to be applied to the project money and not in-kind services as a match. This could be a way to stream-line the process as a lot of time had been spent on the community grants and was hard to project out.

VP Mosley said that it asked the grant not to cover the operational cost, rent, utilities, salary, benefits, and fundraisers. Mayor Gordon said that it would be for a capital project, an event project or an educational project whatever would be mission driven by the 501-C3 and within the City of Portsmouth. Solicitor Haas thanked Mayor Gordon for putting this in writing for everyone to look at so that Council could prepare ahead of time with any questions they might have had because the whole idea behind the discussion items was for it to be done in this fashion instead of dropping ideas when no one had a chance to review anything. Mayor Gordon said that she spoke with Tracy Shearer who currently takes the applications and to Manager Sutherland and Auditor Williams. She asked Clerk Ratliff if she was the one who did the disbursement of the Hotel Motel recipients and she replied yes, however if Council wanted the Cultural Affairs Committee to handle these applications, there would need to be separate legislation for that because the original ordinance putting the Cultural Affairs Committee in place was specific for only the Hotel/Motel matters. Mayor Gordon said that they would have to agree to do it and she spoke to the chair of the committee, but she wouldn't speak for the whole committee. She state that depending on how it moved forward,

she would communicate with that committee to see if they would be interested in taking on a second round. Clerk Ratliff said that they will be meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> to review the Hotel Motel applications and that might be a good time to come and speak to them as a whole unit. Mayor Gordon said that it could be run in the same fashion as the hotel/motel procedures, but Council would have to rely on Manager Sutherland's forecasted amount and then look carefully at how it fit into the exit strategy for fiscal watch. Clerk Ratliff said that the process would basically be the same, because we depend on Auditor Williams to give us the number for the Hotel/Motel total disbursement amount. She said that usually towards the middle to end of February Auditor Williams will have the amount to be disbursed.

Mayor Gordon asked Clerk Ratliff if this time of year would be a good time to accept applications and Solicitor Haas said that his initial thought was for later in the year while the budget was being constructed. Councilman Cole said that he loved having something set so that people that were doing good things and need funds, have an expectation ahead of time and they know the reality and realm of what could happen and having something in place. He would like to see a voice from each ward and some of the things that Council dealt with was that their phone numbers and emails were online and people could go to the city and find out who their councilperson was and could ask questions. He felt that having a committee that had accessibility to voice the specific wards thoughts or concerns about how the money would be dispersed would be better than putting it into a committee that was segregated from the voice of the community. Mayor Gordon said the committee was made up of one person from each ward and every ward was represented. Mr. Cole said that he guessed that no one would know how to get in touch with that representative for the tax money to voice their concerns. Solicitor Haas stated that it was online and Mr. Cole asked if the individual committee members phone number was online? Mayor Gordon said that they could reach out to the clerk and she could put them in touch with that committee representative. Clerk Ratliff said that the committee member would have to be alright with being contacted as they are a volunteer group and she wasn't sure that Council wanted to put committee members in that predicament. Mr. Cole agreed that it was his concern and that Council had taken on the responsibility to be available to the public and he felt that should be similar. Clerk Ratliff said that was something that Council could still do as far as taking the concerns and show up to the Cultural Affairs meeting or whatever committee was over the community grant funds. Solicitor Haas stated that ultimately Council had the final say on the amounts being dispersed to each organization. Mr. Cole loved the way that it was laid out and having a set amount of money put aside for good things was the right way to go. Clerk Ratliff said that in the past, people with concerns or presentations have shown up to the Cultural Affairs meetings and voiced their concerns to the committee and this could be handled in the same manner.

VP Mosley asked if a 501-C3 could apply for both the Hotel Motel money and the Community Funds grant and Mayor Gordon said that yes that could be done if the standard qualifications were met.

Vice President Mosley motioned to move this matter to the conference agenda.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, item moved forward to Manager's conference agenda.**

2. **Expansion of Water Credit** (Dunne) – He said the next three items were from discussions with a variety of people in the community and with different individuals that had been working on a variety of issues in the community and he thanked everyone who had met with him over the past two weeks.

**Water Credit** – Councilman Dunne said that they’ve heard that certain types of spending don’t have to be either-or and suggested that the same arrangements that have been proposed for the Splash Pad could also be applied to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center, Salvation Army, and the Homeless Shelter. By providing a water credit, it would allow a variety of other parts of their budget to be freed up to spend elsewhere for the groups doing valuable work in the community. He said both the Homeless Shelter and the Salvation Army were now getting a lot more credit for all the great things that they do, especially during the winter months. He would replicate the same language that we’ve seen in the contract for 10-years and provide the same service for those that were directly benefitting such as some of the more vulnerable members of our community. This water credit would allow them to further benefit people.

Councilman Cole asked if Councilman Dunne had any thoughts on how it would play out as far as amounts or what their needs would be? Mr. Dunne suggested the total amount be \$125,000 for each organization spanned out over 10 years and it could be used until it was depleted, and it could be a pilot project for each of the three. VP Mosley asked if they would be getting free water and Mr. Dunne said yes, it would be like the Splash Pad deal because if we’re able to give it to the Splash Pad, the city should be able to give it to people that were working directly with community members and providing support for those without housing.

Councilman Sandlin said that the idea had merit but at the same time, how does the city even know that they would use \$125,000 worth of water over 10-years and he felt that further information was needed. He’s not against helping the social services and wasn’t sure how they were linked together, but doesn’t want to throw a credit that wouldn’t be utilized because it would be more than they would ever need. He would like to hear from these non-profits to know what their needs might be and the amount of water they use, rather than linking it to the economic development project that has been spoken about this evening. Mr. Dunne suggested removing the 10-year period and make it a flat \$125,000 and Mr. Sandlin asked why that number would be relevant? Mr. Dunne believed these entities could use \$125,000 elsewhere other than a water bill and if the city was able to support certain organizations, then the city should allocate similar amounts to other organizations because these organizations are watching as funding goes elsewhere, people were saying they also want to support different community groups and specifically those seeking to address the homeless community and this would give the city the opportunity and he further suggested that the amount could be limited per year. He added that this would give funds to organizations that were under staff and underfunded. Mr. Sandlin felt that this was a knee-jerk reaction to Council’s support of the Market Street Park, he reiterated that he wasn’t against supporting any of these worthy causes, but he didn’t want it to be because the city could potentially give money to the Splash Pad Park without knowing what the entities needed or wanted.

Councilman Packard said that the private/public partnership being discussed had caused this reaction and Council had anticipated that reaction, and set examples for a comparison that could be reviewed if the Splash Pad legislation passed. After his meeting with Dr. Raies, he felt that if the water meter was separated with one being private and the other public and the

funding only used for the public that would be a solution. Manager Sutherland said that he believed it was already separate with one being private and the other public. The majority of Council agreed with that statement liked the idea of a proposed multi-disciplinary task force because they would address things that the city lacks currently which was legal, emergency housing, and healthcare (mental or physical).

Councilman Cole felt that he tried to think outside the box to everyone that brought an idea and the general overall concept from him was that the three entities that Councilman Dunne mentioned would get a water credit. He felt that all of Council supported the entities mentioned and putting it into funding was a hard thing to do, but felt grants could be a part of something like this. He used an example that if “the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center was filling a pool everyday and they needed help with the water, it would make sense to him.” He said that with no documentation for Council to review and \$125,000 thrown out as a figure for three different entities, he didn’t believe was the right answer and felt that a needs assessment would be inline. He made a generalize statement that as Council passes legislation, they couldn’t always have everyone think, that if the city did it for one entity, they would do it for all. Each situation needed to be looked at individually and assess the need versus a specific amount as in this case \$125,000.

Mayor Gordon said that she felt the one-sized Band-Aid doesn’t fit all needs and remembered working with the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center (during COVID) on their water bill. They had called her and she spoke with Manager Sutherland and they were able to help. She said that she didn’t know the \$125,000 would help unhoused people because they have no water pipes. She felt they should ask these organizations what their needs were, because she had spoken to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center and they were struggling with their HVAC system. She said that perhaps the city could help other groups with things they’re struggling with or that would be more meaningful, if it was water, then there could be a conversation but if it’s other things maybe the community grants could help if the stipulations in the community grant guidelines were met.

Abby Spears (audience) asked how the \$125,000 amount determined for Market Square Park? Councilman Cole said that originally the amount requested was \$250,000 and the city thought that was a big asked from our general fund, and many ideas were tossed around about how the city could help and support the project without putting a strain on the general fund budget. It was decided that the water bill being stretched out over a 10-year period seemed to help offset that initially one-time check. He said that there were some generic numbers tossed around but ultimately that amount was determined to be the best fit. Mayor Gordon said that \$125,000 was structured as a loan at Councilman Packard’s suggestion and would be paid back to the city. She said there had been concerns about the parks overall budget and there was money set aside for water bills, but there was still a question on how much it might be; they will be applying money to the water bill, but if there were overages during hot or busy months they could tap into the credit.

Councilman Dunne answered Councilman Packard’s question about getting a committee together with people who knew the most about the current situations throughout our city. He would agree an open-ended not time restricted credit, but he didn’t believe there was anyone on this Council that would say that none of these organizations could use the support if their water bills were covered with City Council’s support. He asked Council to support the three

organizations by covering their water expenses. He didn't feel that it was a knee-jerk reaction because these groups have been talking for years.

Vice President Mosley said that Maureen Cadogan from the Homeless Shelter had asked for additional space because she could not house all the people that were out on the street and she would like to house as many people as possible. Ms. Cadogan would like a building and if it came to housing more people over giving a water credit, she would take a building which was covered in your 3<sup>rd</sup> request of Emergency Housing. Councilman Dunne said that it was a multi-step process to provide the support through water credit which would provide \$125,000 support for these organizations and he understood her point on needing more space.

Carlton Cave asked what three organizations he was talking about and Councilman Dunne replied that it would be: The Salvation Army, The Homeless Shelter, and the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center. Mr. Cave said that he was the President of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center Board. He said that any type of credit that could be given to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center would be of great benefit. They made an application to the city for \$20,000 and they denied the request because he felt the application was misread, misunderstood or they may have completed it improperly. He felt that the water credit would help and would free up monies for other utilities. Their HVAC system was bad and only one unit worked.

Councilman Dunne motioned to move this matter to the conference agenda.

Mayor Gordon asked to see something in writing before moving it to the conference agenda because sometimes things change from meeting to meeting. Councilman Dunn said it would be in writing at the next meeting and it would be a \$125,000 water credit for these organizations. VP Mosley asked if it was for each organization and Mr. Dunne replied "yes."

Councilman Cole said that he doesn't like \$125,000 for three different organizations. When they spoke about the needs-based assessment, it was to form a committee that would listen to the concerns of the community and he felt that would be a well-planned out budget and there would be a process. He stated these were three great groups, but having it attached to \$125,000 amount was wishy-washy \$125,000. He said just because it was being offered to one organization, he could not follow that line of thinking; these were three great groups, but there were other great organizations that needed help. He said that this motion wasn't a plan, a plan was having something in place to address the needs and not just a \$125,000 for three different organizations. He added that Council needed to prioritize the needs and where it would be best utilized with an outlined plan.

Councilman Packard said that regarding the rules, they realized that the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center had ask and there was a rule that said that the money couldn't be used for operating expenses which was why the city didn't grant that money to the center. He stated that in looking at the Salvation Army, 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center and the Homeless Shelter he was curious if they had already budgeted for their water bills through other grant sources. He knew that HUD supported the Homeless Shelter and asked if it would be legal for the city to grant this money for that specific purpose. Councilman Dunne agreed that there were other organizations in Portsmouth doing great work, but the decision was in the process of being made to select a Non-Profit and provide this amount of money operating within the city. He said the funds could be used for other things if the water utilities were covered. He added that once the selection process was started for a Non-Profit to receive

\$125,000 the action was done and it would benefit these non-profits. He added that by moving it forward it says that the city supports organizations as well as the Splash Pad and would be an easy chance by voting it forward.

Mayor Gordon said that the city didn't select the Market Street project, they approached the city with a shovel ready project. She had two questions for Councilman Dunne: 1. How were these three organizations chosen? 2. Have you had communications with all three organizations? Councilman Dunne replied that the answers to those questions were based on meetings that were held with different people that had been working with the unhoused. The way other municipalities were addressing the housing crisis, was that there was a housing first policy which was a great benefit to those that were suffering with living outdoors, but he knew it had to be a multipronged approach. Mayor Gordon asked the question again and wanted to know if he had spoken to them before the meeting tonight. Mr. Dunne said that he had spoken with different members of the groups but not the head of each group.

Councilman Sandlin said that since being on Council they had helped multiple groups with different things, such as Friends of Portsmouth, Main Street Portsmouth in Bloom, and Friends of Greenlawn and at no time, were we approached and told that since we helped these organizations, that we had to help others for the same amount, which was exactly what was going on here. He felt that these three groups were great and worthy of the city's support but the way this was coming at Council with a total amount of \$375,000 when they hadn't approached the city with a plan for the request, nor had the city considered the city's budget to extend that amount of money. He doesn't like the fact that these requests were trying to be connected to the Splash Pad request.

City Manager Sutherland said that he would lay it out there but knew there would be retaliation. He asked Council to put a levy on the ballot to see what the public wanted the city to do with their tax money to take care of all these problems. He did believe the city should help, but not take care of the entire problem and it wasn't the city's responsibility to take on some of these tasks that was happening nationwide. He said the city provides services: water, sewer, trash, police, fire, court systems, road systems, health department and the city couldn't take on every obligation that comes before Council. He said that eventually the well would run dry and we need to take a hard look at what we're doing, and to Mr. Cave's point, he was told several times by the city that the money could not be used for operations and the application came in again and still said operations. He stated that if Council wanted to give 14<sup>th</sup> Street Community Center the money, he's alright with it, but the rules needed to be followed. Councilman Dunne said that if this goes on the ballot, then all things should go on the ballot.

Councilman Sandlin called for the question and the debate ended.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 4 ayes (D. Packard said that he would be for seeing how it would be applied before he said "no", C. Gordon said that she agreed with Packard and wanted to see how it was written)– 2 nays (L. Mosley, J. Sandlin), item moved forward to Manager's conference agenda.**

3. **City Funding of Emergency Housing (Dunne)** - Councilman Dunne said that the Homeless Shelter wasn't only limited as far as where people could sleep, but Ms. Cadogan was wonderfully organized because of space concerns. He said that the city should start with

seeing how other municipalities handled emergency housing and done with pallet shelter programs that would provide reviews to show this type of policy was data driven. They provide a variety of different sized housing for individuals to be able to get into the first level of housing. One of the benefits a smaller unit of housing could provide was the separate units. They could start with a one-two person residential unit and certain common rooms and larger spaced housing. He had other members of the community on a zoom talk with the company and for approximately \$250,000 they could expand the space at the homeless shelter by providing 10 units in proximity to the current shelter. He requested approval from various first responders that this would be helpful for them. He added that this had been an assistance to first responders and felt it would help with their overall response to the issue of the housing crisis.

Mayor Gordon asked Councilman Dunne what fund the \$250,000 would use? He replied that he would let everyone go through it and then answer all the questions at the end. Councilman Packard stated that he would like to see Council in support of helping Ms. Cadogan and for asking Tracy Shearer what funds would be available, and supporting legislation for a needs assessment. Mayor Gordon said that Ms. Selby's name came up in conversation and she asked if the group she was involved in was still active? Mr. Packard said that Ms. Selby had searches from key players in each of those disciplines, a continuing care committee, one of them was Southern Ohio Ministries which was a 501-C3. Mayor Gordon said that she knew this task force was formed and they had been meeting, but she didn't know how far along they were in their quest and she would like to hear what she had to say because \$250,000 was a lot of money and was a multipronged issue, and people were unhoused for many different reasons. She asked if there were other funds available, such as grants or other funders and who supports the houses after they're built, because the construction cost was a one-time cost; where would they be located and who covers the utilities and the operations afterwards. Mr. Packard said the whole committee had agree to tackle the issue and begin to devise a plan.

Councilman Cole asked how the amount was arrived at for the emergency housing being 10 units of 10 people? He asked also if the \$250,000 was a quote from that company?

Councilman Sandlin said that again Council was being asked to allocate \$250,000 with no plan. He wanted to see details and how would it be allocated and asked how they could have an opinion on something without having any paperwork. He stated that \$250,000 for the units would be the least most expensive thing for the homeless because the homes would still have to be taken care of, utilities had to be paid, they had to be cleaned, and managed and all those expenses would far outweigh the initial cost and where would that funding come from and because he doesn't want to allocate money without seeing something that made logical sense. He said that everyone wanted to help the homeless, but there needed to be a plan. Councilman Dunne replied to some of the questions as follows:

- a) He said that 20 unhoused people was just scratching the surface and at last count there were approximately 230 unhoused people. He said in looking at the different units, they estimated between \$20,000-\$25,000 per unit which would include possible cost for installation and they explored a variety of other options they provide. He would be receptive to having it open for bids and get more than one company to provide a proposal.
- b) He said that the monies would come from the general fund. Abby Spears stated that One Ohio provides or the Settlement Funds would help to provide some long-

term funding and they could also look into Ohio in HUD, the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services which offers a variety of different funding options to help address provisions, services and potential support of housing. She said that this was a tiered response to a multi-faceted issue. Emergency housing to deal with immediate needs and this would be the base to aid with support to the Homeless Shelter.

- c) Councilman Dunne said the first person he met with was Ms. Selby and they went through the three ideas and she had voiced her support to Mr. Dunne in having this as the first step to emergency housing. He said they looked to her as a consultant on the issue. He would be happy to show the documents that were sent to give people an idea of what was a stake. He was supportive of an idea of opening the bids getting the best rate possible.

VP Mosley asked if Peggy Rice was a part of this committee that you all were working with and Abby said that Peggy was part of the continuum of care board, which Councilman Packard had mentioned was a part of the taskforce. It consisted of herself and several other members of the community and the Scioto Christian Ministry which was over the homeless shelter and the continuum of care board which was Peggy and her group to work with PMHA and Craig Gullion who was the head of the continuum of care board. Ms. Mosley said that she had spoken with Ms. Rice last year about houses and explained that the Ironton Community Action Organization had built affordable homes and Ms. Rice said that Portsmouth was not eligible for that grant money because she had tried to get it. Abby said that there were a variety of things that could preclude the city from certain funding, but there was a lot of criteria and the economic distress that the community experiences as well as the vulnerable communities that was part of the unhoused community in Portsmouth.

VP Mosley reiterated what the City Manager had said about the city not being in the real estate business or being a landlord. She asked if this committee that Councilman Dunne was a part of was going to be overseeing the cleanup of the houses that were built? She said that Council knows that there was a shortage of staff in the Service Department. Abby said that they have private business owners and people within the community that were interested in providing financial support, building support, and potential ongoing maintenance. She said those things were ultimately things that could be structured into a grant proposal.

Mayor Gordon reiterated that there was no paperwork, nothing, no outline of the project or overall budget or if there were other funders available who needed to be mentioned. She said that the \$250,000 was just Mr. Dunne providing a number without anything in writing. Were there quotes, were there other companies that provide this service and where would the land be to build on? She said if we're building an entire eco-system, there needed to be more facts and figures before allocating this amount of money.

Councilman Dunne motioned to move this matter to the conference agenda.

VP Mosley said that she was all for housing people that were homeless as it was needed in our city, but she doesn't like that the \$250,000 matched that of the Splash Pad and she felt Councilman Dunne was playing tit-for-tat and bringing it here and getting people all stirred up in the community instead of doing what he was voted to do. The city knew housing is needed, but Mr. Dunne knows the situation of the city and how many employees the city has and the City Manager said that he wasn't looking to be in the real estate business and

that's where Mr. Dunne was trying to put the city. She stated that Dr. Raies has many people that have financially contributed to the Splash Pad Park than what he's asking from the city. She said "you're not for the water park, we got that" but there's a lot of things that Mr. Dunne had turned down while sitting as mayor.

Councilman Dunne responded that VP Mosley had gone way off topic and a lot of the recent attention had been given to this crisis. He wasn't at the meeting in December when there were discussions about the proposal for banning tents which ignited citywide discussions about this current issue. He was contacted while he was in Ireland about the issue of the tent ban and this was something that had been talked about for years and recent months. He said as far as tit-for-tat in discussions of funding, that's what city politics was about, being the allocation of funding and debate.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 2 ayes (D. Packard, S. Dunne) – 4 nays (J. Sandlin, C. Gordon, A. Cole, L. Mosley), item was not moved forward to Manager's conference agenda.**

4. **Community Development Block Grant (Dunne)** – He said other cities had used the CDBG for Emergency Housing to Transitional Housing and the response was multi-faceted with the need to address transitional housing. He asked for Council's support and suggested passing a resolution that the next application for CDBG be aimed towards transitional housing.

Mayor Gordon reiterated that there was nothing in writing for this discussion item either. Manager Sutherland said that with the CDBG funds there needed to be two public hearings with public input and then the city made the decision on which project to move forward. He said that the city could not just whip out a resolution to do what had been suggested. He said the city was planning on using the funds to rejuvenate the floodwall stars, paint two additional murals on the river side of the floodwall pertaining to black history and then a welcome to Portsmouth mural. He said it wasn't set in stone, but it was a way to fund the issues with the floodwall stars, but there was a process that needed to be followed.

Councilman Dunne said Council could voice their support for a resolution stating they would allocate funds from the CDBG to transitional housing with the understanding of the process. Mayor Gordon said that the city had already been working on the CDBG for over a year. Manager Sutherland said they had chosen the floodwall stars and the murals based off the Appalachian Community Grant, but the state struck it out, and the city had been working with the murals board and community members to find money to get the additional murals, but the city must follow the process. Councilman Sandlin reiterated that Council was being asked to vote on or show support for something that wasn't in writing, he's aware of the housing crisis and would support anything that would help us get out of it, but Council's being asked to vote for something in which we have nothing to review other than a statement and nothing will work without a detailed plan.

VP Mosley asked where the people would be transitioning from; being homeless? Councilman Packard asked if Council would be voting on what to have the public hearing about, whether it's what had already been discussed or transitional housing? Councilman Dunne said that there were different levels of housing that was identified as what the city would be working on with a limited budget, but making first steps towards trying to address the housing issue would be voicing support and a CDBG was used towards housing which

had been done in other communities. He said if the public stated that they were for the floodwall mural stars to get funding instead of transitional housing that would be part of the public process.

Mayor Gordon said that this time last year, all Council heard from Councilman Dunne was about the floodwall stars and how irresponsible Council was for not keeping up with them and that Jeremy Burnside needed his star to be erected on the wall and that Jeremy's mother came down, but he couldn't show her the star because it hadn't been done. The fact of the matter was that the entire wall needed to be scrubbed and refurbished. The Art Commission met and went over new designs, but there wasn't money available for it. They had applied for a couple of grants, but the money wasn't available and now this CDBG money had been identified to help achieve the floodwall star project. She said that not everything could turn around on a dime. She added that Mr. Dunne's issue with the floodwall stars a year ago was coming to fruition now, but this wasn't Sean's grant. She said that several years ago they had this grant allocated and another group came forward and said "no, we want it for Bannon Park" and she added "does Bannon Park need work, yes" and the city did give them money to help with their park and the state had funneled money for their park too. She said the city had spent a lot of time, effort, and staffing hours on putting forth projects that were identified by Council as being high priority and now that it was coming to fruition, she didn't think we should drop everything and do what Councilman Dunne wanted. She continued and said that things take time in the city and there were a lot of things Council wanted to get done. She felt that when things weren't voted on the way that Councilman Dunne wanted, there were a landslide of repercussions. She concluded by saying that now Councilman Dunne was requesting that the block grant be changed after it had already been worked on and for something he was so adamant about twelve months ago.

Councilman Dunne said that the question about the floodwall mural stars was twofold: 1. The meetings weren't being held and there was no opening of the application process and it had nothing to do with connecting the floodwall mural stars with the CDBG which was in the minutes and was clear. 2. The CDBG being his grant, this was the opposite of what he was saying with regards to listening to others that knew far more about this subject than he does and had worked much more than he had and he wouldn't claim to have anything remotely close to expert knowledge or fulltime involvement with addressing the homeless issues, but there were people around that did have that knowledge. The idea to pass a resolution for Council's support was supported by people that were doing more on this issue than any of Council combined. He said if people wanted to support it to move it to the conference agenda to hear more about, vote yes, and if you don't want it, vote it down.

Mayor Gordon reiterated what VP Mosley had said about there was no definition as to what was transitional was, nothing on paper to vote on. She said that there would be a presentation by Maggie Selby and the others that had worked on this issue and at that point, they could see where funding was and where it should come from and who else would be funding it and where it would be located as well as many more questions that Council may have concerning this issue.

Councilman Dunne motioned to move this matter to the conference agenda.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 3 ayes (D. Packard, S. Dunne, A. Cole) – 3 nays (J. Sandlin, C. Gordon, L. Mosley), item was not moved forward to Manager’s conference agenda.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:54 p.m. on a motion by Vice President Mosley with all in favor.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk - For the full audio version of the Manager’s Meeting, please go to [www.portsmouthohio.org](http://www.portsmouthohio.org) under City Manager 2025 “Audio”.