

LUDLOW COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES

February 13, 2025

Mayor Chris Wright called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Laurie Sparks called the roll, which showed the following council members present: Steve Chapman, Paula Graszus, David Ziegler, Sarah Thompson, Julie Terry Navarre, and Abigail Miller.

ALSO ATTENDING: City Attorney Todd McMurtry, City Administrative Officer Scott Smith, City Clerk Laurie Sparks, Fire Chief Mike Steward, Public Works Director Shane Hamant, Code Enforcement Officer Jamie West, Police Chief Bart Beck

Presentation of Audit for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 by John Chamberlin of Chamberlin Owen CPAs

John Chamberlain presented and discussed the audit and advised that the City has seven months of cash in reserves.

Presentation by Andrew Brunsman, Executive Director of Be Concerned Food Pantry

Andrew Brunsman discussed the history of Be Concerned Food Pantry, which is located in Covington, and advised that they are looking for a location to build a warehouse for food distribution. Mr. Brunsman inquired whether the City would welcome their organization and be supportive if they moved their operations hub to Ludlow. Discussion on the possibility of building a 40,000 to 50,000 square foot warehouse on the property at 800 Elm Street or on one of the sites owned by the railroad.

Motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, second by Ms. Graszus, to approve the minutes from the council meeting on January 9, 2025. Following a voice vote, motion carried: all ayes.

STAFF REPORTS

Fire Department

Chief Steward discussed several recent weather-related events and advised that the Fire Department applied for a \$20,000 grant for self-contained breathing apparatus. Discussion on the status of the internship program.

Public Works

Mr. Hamant advised that Fischer Homes has installed signage at the Cityview Station development. The small parking lot at the entrance to Station Drive should be finished by the end of March. Discussion on the possibility of purchasing a snow shovel for the skid steer. Mr. Hamant and Ms. Terry Navarre will attend an orchard class on Sunday, February 16, 2025.

Code Enforcement

Mr. West advised that Riverside Marketplace will be installing a new sign in front of the store. Discussion on 233 Oak Street, which was a vacant property that was purchased, renovated, and is now listed for sale. Discussion on drainage repairs to the Norfolk Southern Underpass to divert

the water to the side so it is no longer dripping into the middle of the street. Mayor Wright applauded Mr. West for his work in getting Norfolk Southern to complete the underpass repairs.

Police Department

Chief Beck discussed a shooting incident that occurred on the evening of the Super Bowl and thanked Detective Justin Edwards, Officer Brian Koenes, and Officer Zach Lindsley for coming in to assist. Discussion on the number of police calls for the month. Chief Beck advised that the Police Department scored over 90% on a recent audit conducted by the Kentucky League of Cities. Discussion on golf cart guidelines and setting a specific due date for golf cart permits, rather than making them valid for one year from the date of purchase.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Wright advised that the Cabin Fever Music Festival will be on Saturday, February 22, 2025. It is a family-friendly event that engages all the shops and venues along Elm Street.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance – The Committee did not meet.

Parks and Recreation – The Committee has not met but plans to work on the Memorial Day Parade and other events soon.

Public Works/Code Enforcement – The Committee will meet with Public Works and Code Enforcement next month.

CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT

Mr. Smith advised that the lease agreement for the riverwalk behind the football stadium is waiting for Ludlow School's approval. Mr. Smith thanked Ms. Sparks for her work on the personnel policy revisions. Once Mayor Wright signs off on the personnel policy it will be sent to Kentucky League of Cities for review and then presented to council for approval. Mr. Chapman inquired about the status of purchasing a digital sign for the city building. Mr. Smith advised he has not yet checked into prices for a digital sign because he has been working on other projects, such as estimates for new lights at Hollingsworth Field. Mr. Smith would like to meet with the Parks and Recreation Committee to discuss plans for a fundraiser for the fireworks festival.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Samantha Frank, 2 Euclid Street, inquired about the City's liaison with Rumpke and advised that she is having an issue with her trash cans. Mr. Hamant advised that he would provide Ms. Frank with the representative's contact information.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2025-2

Mr. McMurtry read Resolution 2025-2 *A Resolution of the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, Opposing Any Action by the Kentucky General Assembly, in Full or in Part, That Provides for the Centralized Collection of Local Occupational Business Fees/Taxes by the Commonwealth of Kentucky.* Mayor Wright explained that the state is looking to switch from local collection to state collection of occupational taxes and

the issue of accountability that comes into question. Currently, Kenton County collects the occupational taxes on the City's behalf. Many local cities have passed a resolution opposing the state centralized tax collection. **Motion by Mr. Chapman, second by Mr. Ziegler, to pass Resolution 2025-2. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: five ayes, one abstention (Ms. Miller).**

Resolution 2025-3

Mr. McMurtry read Resolution 2025-2 *A Resolution of the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, Renewing the Term of the Non-Exclusive Telecommunications Franchise Agreement Between the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, and MCIMetro Access Transmission Services, LLC, Doing Business as Verizon Access Transmission Services*. Mr. Smith advised that the franchise agreement is for a five-year term, and nothing has changed from the previous agreement. **Motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, second by Ms. Thompson, to pass Resolution 2025-3. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: five ayes, one abstention (Ms. Miller).**

Discussion on Proposed Smoke-Free Air Ordinance

Ryan Salzman of the OneNKY Alliance discussed the proposed Smoke-Free Air ordinance, which has been passed by several local cities. Following discussion, council members agreed on two amendments to the ordinance, including allowing a designated smoking area on City properties and setting the approved distance for outdoor designated smoking area for businesses at least ten feet from the entrance. Brent Cooper, President of the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, discussed the importance of having a smoke-free ordinance in a city and how it could be used in promoting the city.

Discussion on Complaint Filed by Scott Smith Against Councilmember Abigail Miller

Mr. McMurtry read the complaint that Mr. Smith filed against Councilmember Abigail Miller stating that following his interview for the city administrative officer position on October 24, 2024, he reached out to shake Ms. Miller's hand and Ms. Miller grabbed his hand and licked the back of it. Mr. McMurtry advised that the action constitutes battery, at minimum, under Kentucky law. Mr. McMurtry advised that council must choose one of three options in response to the complaint, including: Option #1. – Vote to hold a removal hearing where council would serve in a judicial capacity and would have an opportunity to hear evidence from both sides and cross examine; if council decides to remove Ms. Miller from office, it would require a unanimous vote; Option #2. –Refer the issue to the Northern Kentucky Regional Ethics Authority (NKREA) for investigation into the matter; or Option #3 – Do nothing. **Motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, second by Ms. Thompson, for Council to discuss the complaint filed by Mr. Smith and whether to hold a removal hearing.** Mr. Ziegler advised that he hoped that the issue would not get to this point and that he is not prepared to vote to remove Ms. Miller from office. Mayor Wright advised that the current motion is only on whether to have a hearing to discuss the issue. Mr. McMurtry instructed council not to discuss the issue outside of a proper public forum. Mr. McMurtry reminded everyone that only council has the authority to discipline another councilmember and that Mr. Smith was not an employee at the time the incident occurred. Mr. McMurtry advised that if council votes to hold a hearing, he would work with Mr. Edmondson, Ms. Miller's attorney, on the procedure for the hearing to provide adequate due process. Following further discussion, Mr. Chapman and Ms. Graszus agreed that council should move forward with a hearing. **Following a roll call vote, motion carried: four ayes, one nay (Mr. Ziegler). Ms. Miller did not vote.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Graszus encouraged everyone to attend Cabin Fever.

**Motion by Ms. Terry Navarre, second by Ms. Graszus, to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m.
Following a voice vote, motion carried: all ayes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Sparks, City Clerk

Attest: _____
Chris Wright, Mayor