

LUDLOW COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES

September 14, 2023

Public Hearing—6:45 p.m.

Mayor Chris Wright called the Public Hearing to order at 6:45 p.m. for the purpose of hearing comments from the public regarding the institution of proposed tax rates for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year. Bob Cook, 610 Oak Street, inquired about the increase in the property and tangible taxes this year. Discussion on the tax rates over the past several years and the increase in assessed property values last year. Mr. Chapman advised that the homestead exemption increased by over \$5,000.00 this year. Cindy Jones, 143 Highway Avenue, thanked mayor and council for speaking to her about the tax rates at the previous council meeting; however, she advised that she still had questions about the open financials on the website and why the City is not saving up money for large purchases, such as a new fire truck. Chief Smith advised that the City almost went bankrupt in 2019, and in the past four years has slowly accrued \$500,000 in reserve. The goal is to have at least \$2 million in reserve for emergencies. Jo Rogers, 8 Butler Street, inquired about the money the City plans to spend on the RAISE grant. Alisa Lee, 238 Park Street, inquired about how people were made aware of the public hearing. Ms. Sparks advised that the public hearing notice was published twice in the Kentucky Enquirer, per Kentucky Revised Statute requirements, and was also posted on the City's website.

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Mayor Chris Wright called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Laurie Sparks called the roll, which showed the following council members present: Steve Chapman, Lori Davenport, Ari Knight, Samantha Frank, and Abigail Miller. (Julie Terry Navarre was absent.)

ALSO ATTENDING: City Attorney Steven Taylor, City Administrative Officer/Police Chief Scott Smith, City Clerk Laurie Sparks, Fire Chief Mike Steward, Public Works Director Shane Hamant, Code Enforcement Officer Jamie West

Motion by Ms. Davenport, second by Mr. Chapman, to approve the minutes from the council meetings on August 10, 2023, and September 7, 2023. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: all ayes.

STAFF REPORTS

Fire Department

Chief Steward discussed his monthly report. Chief Steward advised that the new ambulance has arrived, and they are waiting for the installation of the radio, graphics, and an inspection before getting it into service. Discussion on the receipt of a four-year FEMA grant in the amount of \$724,000.00 toward the recruitment and retention of firefighters, including an internship program and covering the cost of paramedic classes. Discussion on the need to increase staffing over the next few years. Discussion on the need to increase the special ad valorem Fire & EMS tax, which has been the same rate for over twenty years while the operating costs have increased.

Public Works

Mr. Hamant discussed his monthly report, including upcoming pavement projects. Discussion on the costs of paving versus reconstructing the brick street in the 500 block of Linden. Discussion

on a recent meeting with LiveWell and Green Umbrella to discuss the possibility of utilizing part of Jackson Park as an orchard. Discussion on ongoing maintenance at the parks and the installation of lights at Ludlow Park. Public Works recently replaced the curbs on Kenner Street and installed ADA compliant ramps at Closson Court. Street sweeping of Route 8 will be on the south side of the street this month.

Code Enforcement

Mr. West discussed the status of Code Enforcement cases. The City has issued 357 long-term rental licenses and 32 short-term rental licenses. The Urban Design Review Board reviewed an application for the construction of a new house at 105 Hay Street and will revisit it at a later date. The Kenton County Fall Trash Disposal Days will be held on September 30, 2023, and October 1, 2023, at the Kenton County Public Works Building in Independence. The NKY Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event will be held on November 4, 2023, at Thomas More Stadium in Florence, Kentucky.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Wright welcomed the Buffalo Bar back after being closed for several years and welcomed Scarlet Rose Books, a new bookstore that recently opened. Mayor Wright thanked Mr. Chapman and Ms. Terry Navarre for their help during the Mayor's Meeting hosted at the Community Center in August. Mayor Wright advised that there were a lot of complimentary things said about Ludlow at the meeting. Discussion on the status of the Riverfront Commons project and the positive impact some of the trails have had on local communities, including passive economic impact and improving the quality of life.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance – The Committee met the day before the council meeting to review the July checks and everything appeared to be in order.

Parks and Recreation – The Committee met with Jason Reser and Chris Bovard of CORA, organizers of the annual Frienduro mountain biking event held at the Devou Park bike trails, to discuss making the after-party event bigger next year. The committee is also looking into grant opportunities for the park.

Public Works/Code Enforcement – The Committee plans to schedule meetings soon.

CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Chief Smith advised that the bonds for the Cityview Station project will be signed on Wednesday, September 20, 2023. Discussion on a recent meeting with Chief Smith, Mayor Wright, and several Ludlow business owners where they discussed what can be done to improve the business district and make it a lively area. The crime statistics in Ludlow are very low. Business and home checks are higher compared to other local agencies. Discussion on the high number of foot patrols that help keep crime rates low.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Jo Rogers, 8 Butler Street, expressed concern about the City raising taxes to cover the cost of required services, such as police and fire, and then taking on the responsibility of 20% of the matching funds for the RAISE grant to fund a bike path. Ms. Rogers urged council not to authorize the mayor to sign the letter of commitment for the RAISE grant.

Michelle Millott, 235 Elm Street, discussed an issue with her landlord and advised that she has tried to get help from several sources, including the City and the county, but has not gotten any real assistance. Discussion on the availability of free legal aid that Ms. Millott could obtain to help with her situation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Second Reading of Ordinance 2023-9

Mr. Taylor completed the second reading of Ordinance 2023-9 *An Ordinance of the City of Ludlow, in Kenton County, Kentucky, Granting and Issuing a Competitive, Non-Exclusive Franchise for a Combined Term of Ten (10) Years to, and Authorizing the Execution of a Franchise Agreement With, Spectrum Mid-America, LLC, an Affiliate of Charter Communications Inc., and its Permitted Successors and Assigns, Said Franchise Providing for: the Construction, Erection, Installation, Upgrade, Repair, Maintenance, and Operations of a Cable Television System for the Provision of Cable Television Services Within the Confines of the City of Ludlow; Retention of Police Powers and Sovereign Immunity; A \$300,000 Performance Bond to Ensure Franchise Compliance; Indemnification by Franchisee Including Adequate Insurance Coverage; Construction and Technical Standards; Compliance with FCC Technical & Customer Service Standards; Conditions of Street Occupancy; Public, Educational & Government Access Channels; Payment of Franchise Fees & Offset; Council Approval Required for Transfer of Control or Assignment of Franchise; Right to Audit Records; Default, Revocation & Termination of Franchise Procedures.* Mr. Taylor advised that the ordinance renews an existing agreement with Spectrum in which Spectrum will maintain all equipment required to provide cable services for a period of ten years and the City will receive a 5% franchise fee. **Motion by Mr. Chapman, second by Ms. Knight, to adopt Ordinance 2023-9. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: all ayes.**

Second Reading of Ordinance 2023-10

Mr. Taylor completed the second reading of Ordinance 2023-10 *An Ordinance of the City of Ludlow, Kenton County, Kentucky, Fixing the Tax Rate for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2023, and Ending June 30, 2024, Upon Real Estate, Personal, and Mixed Property in the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, and Fixing the Time for Payment and Penalty for Non-Payment of Same.* The ordinance sets the tax rate at \$499 per \$100.00 assessed value on real property and \$1.667 per \$100.00 assessed value on personal and mixed property. **Motion by Ms. Frank, second by Ms. Knight, to adopt Ordinance 2023-10. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: 4 ayes, 1 nay (Ms. Davenport).**

Second Reading of Ordinance 2023-11

Mr. Taylor completed the second reading of Ordinance 2023-11 *An Ordinance of the City of Ludlow, Kenton County, Kentucky, Fixing the Tax Rate for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2023, and Ending June 30, 2024, Upon Real Estate, Personal, and Mixed Property in the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, for the Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Special Ad Valorem Tax, and Fixing the Time for Payment and Penalty for Non-Payment of Same.* The ordinance sets the tax rate at \$.175 per \$100.00 assessed value on real, personal, and mixed property. Mayor Wright advised that the tax rate has been the same since 2002. **Motion by Mr. Chapman, second by Ms. Frank, to adopt Ordinance 2023-11. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: all ayes.**

NEW BUSINESS

First Reading of Ordinance 2023-12

Mr. Taylor completed the first reading of Ordinance 2023-12 *An Ordinance of the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, Adding Section 91.13 to the City's Code of Ordinances to Address the Registration of Vacant Properties.* Following discussion, Mayor Wright advised any suggestions for changes to the ordinance should be submitted to Chief Smith.

First Reading of Ordinance 2023-13

Mr. Taylor completed the first reading of Ordinance 2023-13 *An Ordinance of the City of Ludlow, in Kenton County, Kentucky, Amending Chapter 92 of the City's Code of Ordinances*. Mr. Taylor advised that the ordinance makes a few amendments to the City's Fire Code, including adding a section for fire lane parking and adding fines for repeat inspections on businesses.

Resolution 2023-13

Mr. Taylor read Resolution 2023-13 *A Resolution of the City of Ludlow, Kentucky, Authorizing the Mayor to Submit a Letter of Commitment for the City's Share of the Riverfront Commons RAISE Planning Grant*. The City will commit to paying 20% of the project cost on a pro-rata basis. The City's total cost of \$154,293.00 will be split between two fiscal years with the first payment due February 1, 2024, and the second due August 1, 2024. Mayor Wright advised that other cities who have completed the Riverfront Commons are already reaping the benefits. **Motion by Ms. Davenport, second by Ms. Frank, pass Resolution 2023-13. Following a roll call vote, motion carried: 4 ayes, 1 abstention (Ms. Miller).**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Miller advised that Darlene Plummer, the Kenton County Property Valuation Administrator, will be at the business meeting in October to discuss property valuation. Mr. Chapman advised that the tax rate calculations are based on state requirements. Mr. Chapman gave a presentation at a recent council meeting on property tax calculations and would be happy to review the presentation with anyone.

Mayor Wright advised that the September caucus meeting is cancelled. The next regular council meeting will be on the second Thursday in October.

Motion by Ms. Davenport, second by Ms. Knight, to adjourn the council meeting at 7:38 p.m. Following a voice vote, motion carried: all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Sparks, City Clerk

Attest: _____
Chris Wright, Mayor