

**MAY 14, 2024
PAGE ONE
MINUTES OF COUNCIL WORK SESSION
VERSAILLES MUNICIPAL BUILDING/5:30 P.M.**

ROLL CALL: MAYOR BRIAN TRAUOGOTT PRESIDED OVER THE MEETING. ALSO PRESENT WERE COUNCIL MEMBERS CHANTEL BINGHAM, MARY BRADLEY, LAURA DAKE, LISA JOHNSON, GARY JONES, AND ANN MILLER. CITY ATTORNEY BILL MOORE WAS ALSO PRESENT.

DEPT. HEADS: BART MILLER, ELIZABETH REYNOLDS, NOLA SERBER, AND ROB YOUNG WERE PRESENT REPRESENTING THEIR RESPECTIVE DEPARTMENTS.

PLANNING DIRECTOR STEVE HUNTER WAS ALSO PRESENT.

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget

Mayor Traugott opened the discussion of the draft Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget, which was distributed to council at the May 7th council meeting. He noted that there were conservative increases to the tax revenues, a cost of living increase to salaries for all departments, and a budgeted 10% increase in insurance and bond numbers. He went over the large ticket capital projects that are in the budget, including the Parks and Recreation projects, the Fire Station 1 Improvement Project, and miscellaneous water and sewer line replacements.

Council member Dake asked about the Opioid Settlement Funds which are budgeted in the current year at \$11,000 but we have actually received significantly more. Mayor Traugott stated that we yet to spend any of the funds. He referenced the Youth Engagement Project that Council member Johnson has been involved with and noted that some of the funds will be used for that.

Mayor Traugott noted that the budget includes funding for Downtown Façade Grants and Neighborhood Grants and that new municipal orders will need to be adopted to define the parameters of each grant for the new year.

Public Works Director Miller stated that expenditures continue to increase for water and sewer, particularly salaries and benefits and chemicals. Mayor Traugott noted that they are also investing in infrastructure rather than just making needed repairs. He asked the Finance Committee to plan to meet soon to discuss changing the annual water and sewer rate increases to be based on the CPI rather than a straight two percent as it is now.

Mr. Miller invited the council to attend a small lunch at the new maintenance garage on Thursday, May 23rd 11:30am-1:00pm.

Vape Shops

Council member Dake stated that dedicated, stand alone vape shops tend to have a lot of Vegas style marketing with neon lights, large signs, flags, etc. She noted that these are unattractive and target the underage consumer. She referenced evidence that vaping is dangerous and very popular among minors. She asked what can be done to lower the appeal to underage users?

Council member Miller suggested restrictions and/or zoning changes to limit the distance between shops.

Assistant Police Chief Young noted that he had come before the council previously regarding a vape shop on Kroger Way selling to underage customers. The City revoked their business license and they were back open the next day under new ownership. Chief Young stated that the shop had been caught once again, on April 25, 2024, selling to a minor and received a fine. He noted that it can be murky and difficult to determine who the actual business owner is.

Mayor Traugott agreed that there is a problem in the underage population, but noted that the vape shop industry cannot legally be singled out and that they are a very litigious group and actually filed a lawsuit the day before the work session.

**MAY 14, 2024
PAGE TWO
MINUTES OF COUNCIL WORK SESSION
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Planning Director Hunter noted that vape shops are considered retail as far as zoning, they are not a separate category just because they sell vapes. He also stated that there are several other retail stores that sell vaping products.

Council member Miller suggested creating a committee and include council members, legal experts, and someone from the police department.

Mayor Traugott noted that we continue to have more vape shops opening because the customer base is there. Council member Jones reiterated that the problem is with the shops that are breaking the law and selling to those under twenty-one.

Council member Johnson stated that opioid settlement funds can be used for vaping prevention.

Short-Term Rentals

Council member Dake stated that the proposed draft text amendment disallows short term rentals in R-1 and R-2. She suggested only allowing the short term rentals in business districts. She distributed an article from the Lexington Herald-Leader which discusses the issues Lexington is having with short term rentals.

Council member Miller noted that short term rentals deteriorate the neighborhood “feel”, are disruptive, and cause hotels to suffer.

Council member Johnson stated that for every article against short term rentals, there are articles that detail the benefits of those rentals to the community – including value added to the neighborhood and the tourism benefits.

Council member Miller suggested incentives for owner-occupied housing.

Mayor Traugott reminded the council that there is an economic cost to disallowing short term rentals and they have to determine if the cost is worth it. He noted that it will also shut down rentals such as Mary Haven, which rents by the week to workers who are here temporarily or residents between permanent housing.

Council member Dake distributed an article detailing a program which pairs seniors with students for affordable housing. The program pairs seniors who have larger homes that they are no longer using a portion of and allows a student to rent out rooms for a fee. The student may also be expected to do certain tasks around the house such as take out the garbage or mow the yard. She noted that there is a program, nesterly, that vets the tenant and homeowner and creates the lease.

Personnel Policy Changes

Mayor Traugott distributed a draft municipal order which makes personnel policy changes including giving every employee one week of additional vacation time on July 1, 2024. Then every new hire will receive a week of vacation time immediately upon hire. The draft also changes the years of service for vacation accruals. Mayor Traugott stated that another change is making each person’s birthday a holiday which they can use within thirty days after their birthday. He stated that these changes are being made to help with employee retention and recruitment and to improve employees work/life balance.

He asked the council to look over the draft and let him know if they have any changes as he is planning to put it on the agenda for the May 21st council meeting.

He noted that the draft also includes a few other minor changes to clean up the policy.

**MAY 14, 2024
PAGE THREE
MINUTES OF COUNCIL WORK SESSION
VERSAILLES MUNICIPAL BUILDING/5:30 P.M.**

Recovery Residences

Mayor Traugott distributed a copy of a City of Elizabethtown Ordinance. He noted that there are currently two recovery residences in the Versailles city limits and neither of them are certified. They are exploiting a population of people to get funding from Medicaid. He asked the council to read through the ordinance to discuss further at the next meeting.

Mayor Traugott adjourned the meeting without objections.

APPROVED:

BRIAN TRUGOTT, MAYOR

ATTEST:

ELIZABETH C. REYNOLDS, CITY CLERK