

SPECIAL SESSION

January 20, 2022

The Council of the City of Chardon met in Special Session on Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 6:30 P.M. in Council Chambers of the Chardon Municipal Center.

Christopher Grau, Mayor & President of Council presiding.

The meeting opened with the pledge of allegiance and roll call.

Members of Council present: Andrew Blackley, Deborah Chuha, Christopher Grau, Heather Means, Daniel Meleski.

Members of Council absent: David Lelko.

Others present: City Manager Randal Sharpe, Law Director Benjamin Chojnacki, Finance Director Mate Rogonjic, Clerk of Council Amy Day, Vicki Nicholas, Kyle Martin, Todd Albright, Stella Albright, Freya Albright, Colin Wantz, Casi Vician, Molly Hegner, Madelon Horvath, Mark Purchase, Terry Hegner, Majeed Makhoulf.

Mr. Blackley moved and Ms. Means seconded to amend the agenda to add Executive Session as item #4. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mrs. Chuha moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to adjourn to Executive Session at 6:32 PM for conferences with the attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or eminent court action, and invite Randy Sharpe, Benjamin Chojnacki and Majeed Makhoulf into the session. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion occurred concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or eminent court action.

Meeting reconvened at 7:36 PM.

Mayor Grau explained the interview process to fill the vacant Council position which would be conducted in open session followed by Council deliberation in Executive Session.

Casi Vician, 447 North Street, gave her introductory remarks about why she applied for the Council vacancy.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Vician what City issues she has paid attention to over the last few years and why.

Ms. Vician stated that the issues she has been paying attention to are the City budget, lingering impacts of Covid-19 on the economy, and how the City uses its finances for the betterment of the community.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Vician what she believes Council's role is.

Ms. Vician stated that Council has to consider how acquisitions, growth and budgets comes into play. She stated that Council needs to listen and communicate, which she believes she is able to do effectively. Also, Council has to implement changes that may be necessary while preserving the City's history.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Vician what made her decide to take this opportunity to become a member of Council rather than running in the fall.

Ms. Vician stated that balancing work and life while campaigning would not have been ideal in the fall, so when the vacancy became

available, it caught her attention.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Vician if she would run for the next Council term if she is appointed to the vacancy.

Ms. Vician stated that she would run for the next term if she is appointed to the vacancy.

Mr. Blackley asked Ms. Vician what she believes is the biggest issue facing the City.

Ms. Vician stated that she will be very interested to see the lingering impacts from Covid-19.

Mr. Blackley asked about issues facing the City that are within City Council's ability to affect people's lives.

Ms. Vician stated that while she is familiar with the City's budget and finances, she would look for Council to educate her on the largest issues facing the City.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Vician if she had any questions for Council.

Ms. Vician asked what economic development looks like for the City in 2022.

Ms. Means stated that the City does not have an economic development department; however, Retail Strategies, a consulting firm that develops and implements long-term retail real estate strategies, has been hired to help provide demographics and metrics to expand commercial development.

Ms. Vician was excused.

Colin Wantz, 348 S. Hambden Street, gave his introductory remarks about why he applied for the Council vacancy.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Wantz what City issues he has paid attention to over the last few years and why.

Mr. Wantz stated that contracting with a waste hauler was an interesting topic he followed, and he enjoyed being part of the large residential developments as a member of Planning Commission.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Wantz what he believes Council's role is.

Mr. Wantz stated that he believes Council's role is administrative, and involves looking out for residents and the best interest of the City.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Wantz what made him decide to take this opportunity to become a member of Council.

Mr. Wantz stated that being part of a government body has always interested him, but he did not consider it until there was a vacancy on Council.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Wantz if he would run for the next Council term if he is appointed to the vacancy.

Mr. Wantz stated that he does not know if he would run for the next term because there are a number of variables that would affect that decision.

Mr. Blackley asked Mr. Wantz what he believes is the biggest issue facing the City.

Mr. Wantz stated that Council needs to manage budgets and operations on a broad scale, but he does not see any major issues at this time as the City does a good job already.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Wantz if he had any questions for Council.

Mr. Wantz did not have any questions for Council.

Mr. Wantz was excused.

Victoria Nicholas, 406 North Street, gave her introductory remarks about why she applied for the Council vacancy.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Nicholas what City issues she has paid attention to over the last few years and why.

Ms. Nicholas stated that she has mostly paid attention to issues affecting retired residents, noting that the taxes can sometimes be an issue. She believes the City is a wonderful place to live and raise a family and she would like to see the City move forward.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Nicholas what she believes Council's role is.

Ms. Nicholas stated that Council's role is to listen to concerns of constituents and bring them to all of Council, and to vote realistically and then once a vote is made, to stand by the decision.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Nicholas what made her decide to take this opportunity to become a member of Council.

Ms. Nicholas stated that she has always been interested in politics and since there was an opening, she applied.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Nicholas if she would run for the next Council term if she is appointed to the vacancy.

Ms. Nicholas stated that she would run for the next Council term if she is appointed to the vacancy.

Mr. Blackley asked Ms. Nicholas what she believes is the biggest issue facing the City that Council has the power to work on.

Ms. Nicholas stated that fighting Covid-19 and finances are the biggest issues facing the City.

Mr. Meleski asked which taxes Ms. Nicholas felt were too high.

Ms. Nicholas stated that she was referring to all taxes.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Nicholas if she had any questions for Council.

Ms. Nicholas asked what is the most pressing issue that Council feels the City faces.

Mayor Grau stated that there are a number of issues facing Council, but one of the most pressing is maintaining the County presence on the Square. In addition, financial improvements and increasing retail & restaurants in the City.

Mr. Meleski stated that Council is faced with maintaining the City services at an affordable cost and being wise with spending.

Mr. Blackley stated that Council is faced with maintaining City services at high standard that residents have come to expect.

Ms. Nicholas asked if the City provides a welcome packet to new residents.

Members of Council stated that the City does not provide a welcome packet to new residents.

Ms. Nicholas was excused.

Molly Hegner, 301 South Street, gave her introductory remarks about why she applied for the Council vacancy.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Hegner what City issues she has paid attention to over the last few years and why.

Ms. Hegner stated that the opioid crisis is an issue she has paid attention to.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Hegner what she believes Council's role is.

Ms. Hegner stated that Council's role is helping residents with concerns and making decisions on government spending.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Hegner what made her decide to take this opportunity to become a member of Council.

Ms. Hegner stated that she now works from home and has flexibility in her schedule to contribute in this way.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Hegner if she would run for the next Council term if she is appointed to the vacancy.

Ms. Hegner stated that she would run for Council if she enjoyed it.

Mr. Blackley asked Ms. Hegner what she believes is the biggest issue facing the City that can be dealt with by City Council.

Ms. Hegner stated that providing resources for people dealing with mental health is an issue Council can address.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Hegner if she had any questions for Council.

Ms. Hegner did not have any questions for Council.

Ms. Hegner was excused.

Kyle Martin, 442 North Street, gave his introductory remarks about why he applied for the Council vacancy.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Martin what City issues he has paid attention to over the last few years and why.

Mr. Martin stated that the sidewalk connectivity is an issue he took interest in. Additionally, the community has begun to age and he is interested in Chardon becoming attractive to young families.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Martin what he believes Council's role is.

Mr. Martin stated that Council plans development, interacts with citizens and allows them to have a voice, and makes decisions that affect departments, boards and committees. He believes that Council's role is to make Chardon a good place to live and work.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Martin what made him decide to take this opportunity to become a member of Council.

Mr. Martin stated that he has been thinking about running for Council for years, and the vacancy came at an opportune time.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Martin if he would run for the next Council term if he is appointed to the vacancy.

Mr. Martin stated that it is difficult to say what would happen in the future, but he would anticipate running again if he is selected for the vacancy.

Mr. Blackley asked Mr. Martin what he believes is the biggest issue facing the City that Council could have a direct bearing on.

Mr. Martin stated that he doesn't want to see businesses close and people move away. He wants to see people and businesses come to Chardon and stay. He would like to see the community continue to grow.

Ms. Means asked Mr. Martin about his thoughts in getting people to move to Chardon.

Mr. Martin stated that safety, schools, and amenities are areas of concerns he has heard from residents.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Martin if he had any questions for Council.

Mr. Martin asked what major capital improvement project Council will have to make a decision on in the next couple years.

Mr. Meleski stated that completing the water line loop is a major capital project.

Mr. Martin was excused.

Madelon Horvath, 111 Wynewood Place, gave her introductory remarks about why she applied for the Council vacancy.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Horvath what City issues she has paid attention to over the last few years and why.

Ms. Horvath stated that the largest issue she has been paying attention to is the County office move and its impact on the Square. She stated that she has also been following the economic development in the City.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Horvath what she believes Council's role is.

Ms. Horvath stated that Council's role is similar to the roll of a school board member which would be setting policy, looking at broader issues and dealing with finances.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Horvath if she would run for the next Council term if she is appointed to the vacancy.

Ms. Horvath stated that she would run for the next term if it was a good fit for her. This is why the vacancy was a good opportunity, because it was a two-year term and she could try it and if she felt she was making a positive contribution, she would consider running again.

Mr. Blackley asked Ms. Horvath what she believes is the biggest issue facing the City.

Ms. Horvath stated that she believes that the biggest issue is working collaboratively with constituents. In addition, she would like to see the school and community more connected.

Mayor Grau asked Ms. Horvath if she had any questions for Council.

Ms. Horvath asked what Council is looking for in the individual who will fill the vacancy.

Mayor Grau stated that he is looking for someone who is flexible, who will keep the City's best interest in mind, and does not mind asking questions of Council and staff.

Ms. Horvath was excused.

Mark Purchase, 112 Woodbridge Crossing, gave his introductory remarks about why he applied for the Council vacancy.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Purchase what City issues he has paid attention to over the last few years and why.

Mr. Purchase stated that the funding, recruitment and retention of safety forces for years to come are big issues facing the City. Other issues include homeless concerns and improving the economic development of the business district without compromising the history of the City.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Purchase what he believes Council's role is.

Mr. Purchase stated that Council's role is large and includes passing legislation, making sure the departments are properly

funded and have the tools they need to do their jobs, maintaining a budget and looking after and serving residents.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Purchase what made him decide to take this opportunity to become a member of Council.

Mr. Purchase stated that an article in the Maple Leaf prompted him to apply for the vacancy.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Purchase if he would run for the next Council term if he is appointed to the vacancy.

Mr. Purchase stated that he would run again.

Mr. Blackley asked Mr. Purchase what he believes is the biggest issue facing the City.

Mr. Purchase stated that the biggest issue facing the City is finding a balance between providing services with the funds that are available.

Mayor Grau asked Mr. Purchase if he had any questions for Council.

Mr. Purchase did not have any questions for Council.

Mr. Purchase was excused.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mrs. Chuha moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:50 PM to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, promotion, demotion, discipline or compensation of a public employee or official, and invite Randy Sharpe, Benjamin Chojnacki, and Amy Day into the session. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion occurred regarding the appointment, employment, dismissal, promotion, demotion, discipline or compensation of a public employee or official.

Meeting reconvened at 9:33 PM.

#### **APPOINTMENT TO FILL COUNCIL VACANCY**

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to appoint Kyle Martin to fill the unexpired Council term of Christopher Grau ending 12/31/23. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Sharpe noted that he is recommending the appointment of Mark Iacofono as the new Finance Director and provided some background for Council's information.

Ms. Means moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to approve the City Manager's recommendation of Mark Iacofono as Finance Director. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

#### **ADJOURN**

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to adjourn. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 P.M.

Attest:

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CHRISTOPHER GRAU, Mayor  
President of Council

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AMY DAY  
Clerk of Council