

City of Gahanna

*200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230*



Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 26, 2009

7:20 PM

Council Committee Rooms

Finance Committee

*Shane Ewald, Temporary Chair
Beryl D. Anderson
Thomas C. Evers
Thomas R. Kneeland
John R. McAlister
Nancy R. McGregor
David L. Samuel*

Members Present: Thomas C. Evers, Shane W. Ewald, Thomas R. Kneeland, John McAlister, Nancy R. McGregor, Beryl D. Anderson and David L. Samuel

Additional Attendees:

Karl Wetherholt, Mike Andrako, Jerry Isler, Gen. Jim Williams, Grant Reveal, Dep. Chief Ken Bell, Terry Emery, Dottie Franey, Brandi Braun, Anthony Jones, Tom Weber, Angel Mumma, Tony Collins, Isobel Sherwood, Press

Election of Permanent Chairman

Ewald called the meeting to order; said the first order of business was to elect a permanent chairman. McAlister nominated Ewald. Kneeland seconded the nomination. All Council was in favor.

ISSUES - From Council:

Honor Flight

Ewald said the agenda item is from a Council member who is requesting a donation to support an Honor Flight. Evers said I requested this after I was contacted by some students from the high school who are trying to raise money for an Honor Flight to send World War II Veterans to their memorial in Washington D.C.; we made a similar contribution to the Veterans' Memorial at the high school. Sherwood said \$1,000 was donated. Evers said we were able to waive building fees as well; I would like to make a motion for a similar amount to be provided for this. Sherwood said the money is available in the Council Contingency Fund; we have \$5,000 and none was used last year. McGregor said they have raised \$8,000 and the cost will be \$11,000.

Anderson asked how many will be able to go and how they will be selected. McGregor said about 35 or 40 and they each will have a guardian because of their age. Weber said it should be first-come first-served to go. Anderson said since we are giving some money, we should insure it goes to a Gahanna resident. Evers said we can't force a Gahanna resident to go and we do not have good statistics as to how many veterans live here; I did get an email that we have about 200 to 250 veterans and the high school would make a significant effort for our citizens to go. Anderson said if we give money, a Gahanna veteran should go; I agree we should support our community; as McGregor pointed out chaperones have to go; the goal would be to pay for our Veterans and not pay for the student chaperones.

McAlister asked the purpose of the Council Contingency Fund. Sherwood said for any special things not in the budget; most recently we paid for a Holiday Lights float; we also purchased City pins. McAlister said so it is used for miscellaneous items; then shouldn't this request be funded from the General Fund; it is basically a charity request and it puts me in a precarious position; he then told a story about Davy Crockett supporting a widow whose house burned down to illustrate his moral dilemma; said why should we use tax money for charity instead of running the government; are we now the Honor Flight service charity? we need to debate that question. Anderson said is this a 501c3 and what was the rationale behind the support of the Veteran's Memorial at the high school. Evers said yes it is non-profit; the City made the Memorial donation in recognition of Gahanna residents fallen in the line of duty; this is a similar project to honor men and women who have served our country from this war and this generation;

we are losing so many of them every day.

McAlister said the question is where to draw the line; I believe the purpose of government is to protect rights and provide services; I am not against honoring veterans; I tried to take my Dad but he passed away before we could go; it was not done as charity; spending this way acts as a precedent. Williams said this is not a charity request; it is a request to honor service men and women; to call it a charity demeans veterans; we are not asking for charity; this is an Honor Flight and several have already gone with a number of Gahanna residents; this is for a group of veterans who might not otherwise have the opportunity to see their memorial; we don't owe them charity; but we do owe recognition to those who lost lives. McAlister said he responds to mail solicitations from veterans' groups asking for donations which is another form of supporting these folks; you may not see it that way, but to me it is charity. Williams said it is not that they can't afford it; it is just a trip used as a way to honor them. Kneeland said he believes the Veterans deserve all the respect in the world; said he sees this as an extension of our Senior Services we provide today; there are sponsored trips for seniors out of our center; we also are helping educate kids; this is a way to give the high school kids this experience and I support it. Anderson said I support the high school effort; but the purpose of the trip is for the veterans to visit their memorial; if it costs \$300-\$400 per person a flight, we should restrict it to a Gahanna Veteran.

McAlister said if it is a Senior Service then it should be a line item in the Parks and Recreation Budget for senior programs. Kneeland said I don't care where the money comes from I would support it. Evers said I suggested the Council Contingency Fund; I did not feel a department budget expense was appropriate; since that fund has not been used in a while I thought it was a good place to get the money. Kneeland said we could transfer the money from the Council Fund to Parks and make it work. McGregor said we donated to the first project to support the students as well as the project; this is student-driven; they came up with the idea to support a total Honor Flight; the chaperones do pay their own way; our money would be going to the veterans; this is for one whole flight in the spring and, as a community project, they are trying to come up with enough money. Anderson said I am not sure if the chaperones pay their own way and our language should restrict use of our funds to veterans only.

Ewald asked Braun if she could reach out and find out more facts. Braun said she will let Council know. Ewald asked what their deadline is. Evers said the flight will be early spring so the sooner the better. Sherwood said it takes a motion resolution to implement. Ewald said but it would be an ordinance if we have to transfer funds. Evers said he wanted no additional work; if we transfer funds that adds steps; if we agree to do this then we should just do a Motion Resolution and spend the money; adding 2 steps is not necessary. McAlister asked that it be put on regular agenda. Ewald said we could wait until we have the additional information and bring it back in 2 weeks.

Recommendation: Return to Committee of Whole in 2 weeks; Monday, February 9, 2009.

Events

Sherwood said the National League of Cities has posted information for their spring meeting on their web site; the meeting will be in Washington D.C.; said I have distributed some information so please let me know if you are interested in attending.

Anderson shared some details of her inspirational experience attending the inauguration of President Obama; said she felt the message of the powerful experience was it called all of us to work in a bi-partisan way to reach out and make a difference.

Sherwood reminded all that there is the Boards and Commissions Reception from 5:30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, January 27, 2009.

Della Brandenberger, Reporting