

# THE CITY OF FREMONT, OHIO

## *Journal of Council*

*February 5, 2015*

The regular meeting of Fremont City Council was called to order at 7:30 p.m. in the form prescribed by the General Rules of Council. President Dallas Leake called the meeting to order.

The following members answered roll call: Ruiz, Gross, Knisely, Koebel, Kreilick, and Michles. Councilwoman Stout was absent.

The minutes for council meeting held on February 19th were approved.

Second reading of an ordinance to make appropriations in the amount of \$105,908,282.00 for expenses and expenditures for the 2015 fiscal year January 1 thru December 31 for the City of Fremont, State of Ohio and declaring an emergency.

First reading of a resolution authorizing the Mayor to file an application with the Ohio Development Services Agency, Office of Community Development, for up to \$850,000 for program year 2015 Community Housing Impact and Preservation Program (CHIP) Funds, and declaring an emergency. The Mayor explained to the council that the grant will concentrate on housing improvements, help with mortgages, and rehabilitation for low income families. The grant is a two year cycle grant. The city will partner with the county to get enough point in order to get the grant. On a motion to suspend Rule #4 by Ruiz, seconded by Knisely. Motion carried 6 yes votes. On a motion to adopt by Knisely, seconded by Ruiz. Motion carried 6 yes votes. (Res. 2015-1949)

### Committee Reports

Citizens Service Committee – Chairman Ruiz stated that she witnessed firsthand how the city operates during an accident. She was very impressed with all that were involved. She thanked Officer Kiddey for his quick action in helping the citizen in the accident. She said that she was very proud of the Police and Fire department.

Community Partnership Committee - Chairman Knisely had nothing to report this evening.

Finance and Labor Committee – Chairman Michles nothing this evening.

Laws, Rules, and Ordinances Committee – Chairman Gross nothing to report this evening.

Recreation Committee – Chairman Koebel thanked Molly Bauman for her update on the Rec. Department. He stated that on March 27<sup>th</sup> the department will be honoring a past employee, Jose Leal, Jr. who was killed in a car accident. The event will take place 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Utilities and Traffic Committee – Chairman Kreilick nothing to report this evening.

### Council Comments

Mr. Koebel stated that it was brought to his attention about the pot holes in the city and what was done about them. He asked the citizens to be patient and the city has been doing all that it can to start patching up the holes.

Mrs. Ruiz added to her earlier comment that Officer Wensinger was also involved in assisting with the accident she witnessed. She praised the Police Department again for outstanding work.

Mr. Gross asked Mr. Ward if there was an ordinance for snow removal from the sidewalks. Mr. Ward replied yes there was then Mr. Gross asked citizens to help out our city workers and comply by keeping sidewalks clean. He also asked that we help the street department by removing your vehicles when they are cleaning the streets. His second issue was regarding the dam. He stated that he was asked if there were going to be meeting regarding the recent events with the dam. He suggested that citizens do their research and investigate for themselves. All meeting regarding the dam where videotaped by Mr. Dan Henning and can be viewed online at [www.everydayproduction.biz](http://www.everydayproduction.biz) or at the city website.

Mr. Knisely read a statement concerning his vote on the dam. The ordinance was passed with a vote of 4-3 for removal after three readings. He said that it would cost the taxpayers a significant amount of money if the dam is not removed and grant money already used will need to be paid back. He referred to his parents teaching that a deal is a deal and lets work together to take down the dam.

Mrs. Kreilick congratulated our Economic Development Director Joe Smith on the fantastic job for the really successful event held in Downtown Fremont. She also thanked the Downtown Fremont Inc. group for all of their hard work and support to improve our downtown area.

Mr. Michles commented on Mr. Gross and Mr. Knisley stated that the citizens had a right to challenge the vote on the dam. He stated that it is a constitutional right for them to petition the government. The citizens were exercising their right.

### Elected Officials' Comments

Mr. Melle nothing for this evening.

Mr. Grahl also congratulated Mr. Smith on a well attend Charrette. He hopes that the positive energy and discussion continues to strive in the citizens of Fremont and people continue to contribute to making our Downtown Fremont better.

Mayor Ellis updated the council on the dam removal. Plans and specification are 90% complete. MWH Constructors provided the city with a new cost estimate and a new schedule. \$9,538,000, which is a saving of almost \$2 million dollars from their original estimate. The city is also looking at not removing the sea wall and cut to grade. The city crew did the work with the huge amount of dirt from the reservoir and believes that they can still achieve the recreational look saving \$600 thousand dollars. He believes the dollars that we save on this project will affect our water rates and give the citizens of Fremont a break on rates in the future. He also complimented Mr. Smith for the Charrette with over 200 people in attendance. Mr. Gross asked the Mayor what would the increase in an individual's homeowner be had the city decided to repair the dam. The Mayor said he did not have a figure but the debt to the city would be

# THE CITY OF FREMONT, OHIO

## *Journal of Council*

high. Discussion from several council members on the council questioned funding for repair of the dam in which the Mayor said there were none available for repair. Mr. Michles questioned if the Army Corp of Engineers approve the permit for the dam removal. The Mayor replied not yet. Mr. Michles asked the Mayor what was the cost was to deliver 1,000 gallons of water. The Mayor refused to answer. Mr. Michles stated that water is being giving to AMP. AMP is working with the city and has agreed to a water rate increase this year. Discussion held between the Mayor and Mr. Michles. President Leake ended this discussion and made a suggestion to the Mayor that he should have shared his news about AMP concessions with the council earlier.

### Department Heads

Mr. Ward made a statement that the street department are out patching pot holes. As soon as the weather breaks they will be out in full force. He said that another problem that the city is having is frozen water lines. He is asking for the citizens of Fremont to have patience and that they are doing their best.

Chief Wiersma thanks Mrs. Ruiz for her kind words concerning Officer Kiddey. He thanked the Street Department, along with the Fire Department for great jobs.

Chief Foos nothing to report.

Mr. Smith wanted the council to know that the Site Selection Magazine recognized Fremont-Sandusky County as one of the top 25 micropolitan regions in the country for business and investment and expansion. We were tied for the 23<sup>rd</sup> ranking with Van Wert County while Findlay-Hancock County was in the number 1 spot. A micropolitan community is a rural county whose largest city does not exceed a population of 60,000. Mr. Smith said that this was a great honor for the city of Fremont. He stated that the charrette was a huge success with a mixture of young and old. There were ideas mentioned concerning the old Joseph building, Croghan Street, an amp theater, and many, many more. The next step is to wait on a report for the architectures which will contain a computer model of the ideas that they fill feasible for downtown Fremont.

Mr. Sanchez nothing this evening.

### Public Comments

Natalie Jones 1206 Carbon Street stated that she was worried for the citizens of Fremont and wanted to know why the civil protection order cases were being sent to a special prosecutor in Bowling Green for review regarding her brother Michael Williams. She said that it amounted to special treatment for him. Mr. Melle said that every case against Mr. Williams was sent to the prosecutor Matthew Reger since July 2014. He stated that a conflict of interest in pursuing the case came into play since Mr. Williams wife, Erica Williams was an assistant city engineer.

Sarah Daniels accused Mr. Williams of past police misconduct and harassment and stated that she thought Mr. Melle was unprofessional and that his friendship with Mr. Williams affected his decision making. Mr. Melle denied the accusations and stated that everything is under review in Bowling Green. President Leake asked the Police Chief if his department was scared of Mr. Williams in which the police chief said, "Afraid, no....guarded yes."

Alicia Sanchez 706 South Street also asked why Mr. Williams received special treatment and she did not. She stated she had been arrested numerous times in which her brother had to arrest her on several occasions. He worked for the city and why was she not afforded the same treatment as Mr. Williams.

Nicole Waldo 1112 Baker St. Ms. Waldo stated that she had been sitting and listening and wanted to say that it was a poor reflection on the Prosecutors office to have allegedly 215 incidents for Michael Williams and no prosecutions. She wanted to know why it would take 10 years to take care of this problem.

William Jones accused Mr. Williams of threatening his children and threatening to put a pistol down his throat. He questioned the council and Mr. Melle what would they do in the same situation. He also stated that Mr. Williams felt he couldn't be touched.

Kari Roosen 1024 Franklin Ave. asked what happens if the officers responding are Bob Karr or Lester Daniels. They have no control over what calls they respond to. Bob Karr has been dragged through the mud with this whole situation and Bob is her friend. She feels they cannot do their job if it's Mr. Williams and believes something needs to be done.

Ed Lindsey 75 Westwood Mr. Lindsey questioned the 215 incident and if they were all valid. If they were true law enforcement should have arrested Mr. Williams and shame on them for being "guarded" and not doing their duty. He stated that he is the Chairman of the Community Relation Committee in which the Mayor appointed him. When several tough questions were asked of the Mayor, Police Chief Wiersma, and Safety Service Director Ward they refused to return to the meeting. Chief Wiersma said that they gave everyone the reports and they had not been shared with everyone within the group. Exchange of words between the Mayor, Police Chief, and Mr. Lindsey concerning the CRC.

Daniel Sanchez 113 North Buchanan Street stated he took an oath to insure public safety and uphold the law for all. When it was necessary to arrest his sister, he did. He saw no conflict of interest and would continue to do his appointed job and to treat everyone with the respect they deserve.

Mayor Ellis stated that Officer Daniels and Office Karr's investigations were presented to the CRC along with audio recording and that they were ignored. He stated that Mr. Michles, Mr. Koebel, and President Leake all had political agendas in their dealing with the CRC. He addressed the women that brought their concerns to the council and stated that he believed Mr. Melle did the right thing in sending the incidents concerning Mr. Williams to the special prosecutor.

Lorna McKinstry 827 Finemore stated that her experience in working in the department and with records lead her believe that everyone getting hung up on the 215 number that was used for the number of incidents against Mr. Williams did not mean he broke the law that many time. She stated if he was truly a menace to society she believed the officers would have done their civic duty and gotten him off the streets. She tried to explain that "Special" did not mean what the ladies where trying to state. Sending the information to the outside prosecutor meant that justice would be served and fairness would be achieved by all. She employed the ladies to let justice run its course.

THE CITY OF FREMONT, OHIO  
*Journal of Council*

Jaime Davis 719 South Buchanan stated that he's heard a lot of talk of special, special, special. He said that if he was a victim of someone harassing he wouldn't be worried about who's prosecuting as long as Mr. Williams case is being handled – let it be handled. He asked the ladies to give it time for due process to prevail.

Crystal Walker 1312 Hickory stated she was a member of the CRC and that she had seen all of the police reports but had not heard all of the recordings. She stated that if there is a problem the police should be called and the police should do their duty. She also stated that the Mayor and the Police Chief need to return to the CRC meetings so that everyone could work together to solve the problems between the community and the police.

President Leake thanked those that sent cards and condolences to he and his family in the death of his mother, it was truly appreciated. Thanks Mrs. Ruiz and Mr. Smith for stepping in during his absence and the absence of the clerk. He thanked the city crews for great work during this winter season. He wanted to take the time to clear up some misconceptions before he had to leave. The statement that he went to the Sandusky Register about the police department is totally false. No factual basis to the statement from the Mayor. For the Mayor to accuse him and two other council members is totally unprofessional. He defended the NAACP work in the community and said that they are indiscriminate when it comes to helping people in the community and not what the Mayor claimed it is. President Leake was offended by the Mayor's statements concerning the NAACP and the CRC. He believed the commission was hampered when the Mayor interfered. He accused the commission of being disrespectful to the Police Chief and the Safety Service Director. They were asked tough questions at the meeting but you would believe they would be able to handle tough questions in the positions that they hold. Now the Mayor wants to get rid of the commission and form his own task group which strikes the President as unusual when he wishes to have the same two people he excluded from the CRC to be on his newly formed task group. He suggested that the Mayor cannot solve the city's problems by shying away from tough situations or making false accusations.

There being nothing further to come before council, on motion to adjourn by Ruiz seconded by Koebel, motion carried 6 yea votes. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.