

**XENIA CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 9, 2020
6:00 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER: Vice President Wallace called the January 9, 2020, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Administration Building.

2. INVOCATION: Charlie Huff provided the Invocation.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Vice President Wallace led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. A. ROLL CALL: Councilman Wesley Smith, Councilman Thomas Scrivens, Councilwoman Rebekah Dean, Councilman Cody Brannum, Councilman Levi Dean, Mayor Sarah Mays, and Vice President Edgar Wallace.

B. SWEARING-INS: Law Director Donnette Fisher presided over the swearing-ins of Councilwoman Rebekah Dean, Councilman Cody Brannum, Councilman Thomas Scrivens, and Vice President Edgar Wallace for their terms effective January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2023. Applause followed each ceremony. The Council took a brief recess to allow for photo opportunities for each member with their family members and friends.

C. REORGANIZATION: Mayor Mays said at the first meeting of each calendar year, Council reorganizes to select the President and Vice President for the calendar year¹. She entertained nominations for Council President for 2020.

Motion by Vice President Wallace, seconded by Councilman Scrivens, to nominate Councilman Smith, who is the most senior Council member, to serve as the Council President for 2020. Hearing no further nominations, she asked for the Roll Call. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Smith, Scrivens, R. Dean, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Wallace

Nays: None motion carried.

Mayor Mays entertained nominations for Council Vice President for 2020.

Motion by President Smith, seconded by Councilman Scrivens, to nominate Vice President Wallace to again serve as the Council Vice President for 2020. Hearing no further nominations, she asked for the Roll Call. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Smith, Scrivens, R. Dean, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Wallace

Nays: None motion carried.

Mayor Mays extended her congratulations to both gentlemen.

¹ Per the Charter, the only Council members who meet the criteria to serve as Council President and Vice President are Councilmen Dean, Smith, and Wallace. Per Charter Section 4.02, the Mayor cannot serve as Council President or Vice President, and per Charter Section 4.14(B), Councilman Brannum, Councilwoman Dean, Councilman Scrivens must serve as a Council member for two or more years to be eligible.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Mayor Mays, seconded by Vice President Wallace, to approve the December 30, 2019, Regular Session meeting minutes as written. Brief discussion followed. Ms. Fisher suggested that the new members [with the exception of Vice President Wallace] abstain from the vote. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Wallace, L. Dean, Mays, Smith
Abstain: Scrivens, R. Dean, Brannum
Nays: None motion carried.

6. SPECIAL PRESENTATION(S): Will Urschel, Board Vice President, Bridges of Hope, said he was present to talk about Daytime Programming, Phase I, for Bridges of Hope, but first, he discussed loitering, camping, and homelessness issues in Xenia and how the situation evolved:

Current Situation:

- Significant increase in single adult vagrant loitering and camping in downtown area and in selected private and public areas within city limits
- Significant increase in public and business complaints to the city on this issue
- Significant increase in engagement of police with campers and loiterers, costing tens of thousands of dollars each month in lost opportunity costs with police force alone (10-15% of total shift time) - additional first responder and municipal workers (to clean out vagrant camps) lost opportunity costs as well
- No viable strategy in place to ensure this does not continue into this year and new decade

How We Got Here:

- Single adults experiencing homelessness used to be addressed by two year round county shelter programs - Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) and the American Red Cross:
 - Interfaith was a traveling shelter in county churches that housed single and family homeless for a week at a time in a particular church and then moved to another church in the county.
 - There was no limit on the number of individuals served, as participating churches were not challenged for space.
 - IHN had a daytime program to ensure clients were not loitering during the day.
 - The American Red Cross shelter in Xenia would house families or single adults (multiple per apartment) with a fixed number of seven apartments.
 - Two significant changes occurred that excluded single adults from both programs: 1) IHN moved to a fixed location with a fixed number of apartments and 2) family homelessness increased to the point that it saturated the available space at both shelters, and both shelters became family only shelters and would not accept single adults.
- In addition, the drop-in shelter at the Episcopal Church was open only on days when the temperature was below freezing and was soon overwhelmed with an influx of adults and had to close as well.
- Bridges of Hope has addressed the winter nighttime shelter needs with the closure of the Episcopal shelter and has expanded this to a year round evening shelter but has not addressed the daytime programming for single adults.
- In addition, with no consequences to behavior, many adults chose to camp in the community outside of the overnight shelter rather than abide by the shelter rules.

Proposed Way Ahead:

- Provide 24-hour shelter access to adults with programming designed to address root causes of homelessness, to be implemented in the following phases:
 - Phase 1: Extend shelter hours from 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. to ensure shelter departure after school start times; initiate daytime morning programming to three days a week with classes or shelter work teams.
 - Phase 2: Extend shelter hours to afternoons five days a week with additional shelter classes and work teams.

- Phase 3: Expand class and work programs to the weekend.
- Phase 4: Extend shelter hours to 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
- Address those who choose to camp and loiter on public and private property with an anti-loitering ordinance.
- Provide additional beds in group homes for those with mental illnesses who cannot participate in the shelter or independent living situations.

Mr. Urschel said in order to address several concerns that have arisen within the community, Bridges of Hope would like to begin phasing in daytime programming options for shelter guests, dependent upon our ability to secure the necessary funding, and he asked Council to consider supporting the initial phase as follows:

1. The shelter would change its departure time from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. This would delay the time that shelter guests are walking to town until after students have been picked up at their bus stops. The Greene CATS route diversion to Bridges of Hope would change to 8:25 a.m. instead of 6:25 a.m.
2. Three days a week (to expand to five days when funded and extended occupancy obtained), guests will be permitted to remain on the premises until 11:30 a.m. if they are participating in classes or a shelter work team. DeCoach Rehabilitation has already indicated their willingness to provide some classes, and they will work with other groups in town to add to that list. This, along with the bus schedule change, will hopefully reduce the number of guests heading downtown in the mornings.
3. This programming (three days/week) will require additional costs totaling \$511 per week, or \$2,215 per month, broken down as follows:
 - a. One part-time employee @ 20 hours/week = \$221/wk (\$958/mo)
 - b. Increase of 10 hours/week for supervisory staff = \$140/wk (\$607/mo)
 - c. Increase in building costs & supplies = \$150/wk (\$650/mo)
4. The second phase, would increase costs \$672 per week, or \$2,912 per month, as follows:
 - a. Increase to five days per week (8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.)
 - b. Additional 21 staff hours per week = \$272/wk (\$1,178/mo)
 - c. Additional building & supplies, including five lunches per week = \$672/wk (\$2,912/mo)

The Board does not believe that funding daytime operations will fully resolve the issues that some of homeless citizens are creating during the daytime hours, since there will always be those who prefer not to work or attend classes, and some participation will be limited due to inappropriate behaviors. They do, however, feel that it will serve to reduce those issues, increase their ability to help their guests move on to new opportunities in employment, housing, and treatment programming, and benefit our community as a whole. He noted the Board just passed their 2020 budget for \$250,000, which is \$100,000 more than last year's budget, and all funding is from private giving. The Board does not wish to pursue the needed funds to expand the services through private giving; however, they are looking at additional funding services including the USDA program vs. HUD. Further, this shelter serves the entire County, and all jurisdictions need to carry some of this [financial] burden. Regardless of the implementation of expanded hours, the 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. services would continue. He suggested reinstating the Community Funding Program, and Bridges of Hope could bid on receiving those funds.

President Smith said the schools start at 9 a.m. and asked if the 8:30 a.m. time should be extended. Mr. Urschel said during the initial engagement with school representatives, they said 8:30 a.m. was sufficient and a majority of students would be gone from the area by that time. However, if they determine that 8:30 a.m. is too early, they could always move it back. President Smith agreed that there is a homelessness problem in the City, and he appreciated Bridges of Hope's mission and what they have accomplished to date. However, this is a brand new Council, and the

B. President Smith presented **RESOLUTION 2019-OO APPRECIATION FOR OUTGOING COUNCILMAN DALE LOUDERBACK IN RECOGNITION OF HIS VALUABLE SERVICE TO THE CITY OF XENIA**, originally introduced by Mayor Mays, and it was read for a second time.

Motion by Mayor Mays, seconded by Vice President Wallace, to adopt Resolution 2019-OO as written. Brief discussion followed. President Smith thanked former Councilman Louderback for his 12 years of service, noting his passion for this city including his service as the City's representative on the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Wallace, Scrivens, R. Dean, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Smith
Nays: None motion carried.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

10. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Administrative Motion Reappointing Volunteers to the Civil Service Commission and Traffic Commission. President Smith asked Councilman Dean to present his reappointment request. Councilman Dean said Ms. JoAnn Garcia was originally appointed to fill a vacancy on the Traffic Commission on June 23, 2016, and her term expired on January 8, 2020. He respectfully recommended her reappointment.

President Smith entertained a motion for the Traffic Commission reappointment.

Motion by Councilman Dean, seconded by Vice President Wallace, to reappoint Ms. JoAnn Garcia to the Traffic Commission with a term expiration date of January 8, 2024. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Wallace, Scrivens, R. Dean, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Smith
Nays: None motion carried.

President Smith said Ms. Maria Newcomer was originally appointed to fill a vacancy on the Civil Service Commission on November 21, 2017, and her term expired on December 31, 2019. On behalf of the Chair of the Civil Service Commission, he respectfully recommended her reappointment.

Motion by President Smith, seconded by Mayor Mays, to reappoint Ms. Maria Newcomer to the Civil Service Commission with a term expiration date of December 31, 2024. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Wallace, Scrivens, R. Dean, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Smith
Nays: None motion carried.

Councilman Scrivens said those being appointed to City lay boards should attend the meeting to introduce themselves. City Clerk Michelle Johnson noted that the representatives are already serving as these are reappointments.

B. Administrative Motion Approving the Schedule of Bills in the amount of \$886,260.61.

Finance Director Ryan Duke requested the payment of bills in the amount of \$886,260.61. He noted the large amount was due in part to two large payments for street improvements (\$258,926.54) and the painting of the Spring Hill water tower (\$511,092.00).

President Smith entertained a motion.

Motion by Vice President Wallace, seconded by Councilman Dean, to approve the schedule of bills in the amount of \$886,260.61. Brief discussion followed. Councilman Brannum asked when the water tower painting was completed. Mr. Duke believed the painting was just completed in the last 30-60 days. Mr. Merriman noted the final payment is not made until the final inspection is completed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Wallace, Scrivens, R. Dean, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Smith

Nays: None motion carried.

11. APPOINTED OFFICIALS REPORTS AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:

A. City Manager, Finance Director, and Law Director:

Mr. Merriman shared the following:

- He congratulated and welcomed the three new members of Council; he looked forward to working with them and the other members in the coming years. He congratulated President Smith and Vice President Wallace on their nominations and elections to serve in Council leadership roles.
- A live broadcast announcement will be made online at around 8 a.m. on January 14 as to whether the City of Xenia made the top five for the television show “Small Business Revolution.” A watch party is scheduled at the Coffee Hub starting at 6:30 a.m. with a follow up event that evening at Devil Wind Brewing regardless of the outcome. He noted even if Xenia does not make the top five, the infusion of pride in the community has been very exciting. He encouraged everyone to continue promoting *#MyXenia*.
- He commented on the recent water main break that occurred on a large private water main in a somewhat obscure location. He complimented staff on their due diligence in mobilizing City resources to find it and shut off the valve before the water supply was in a critical situation. During such situations, he encouraged everyone to access the City’s website and social media accounts as well as Miami Valley news for updated information. If boil orders are issued, that information will be broadcast over all outreach platforms.

Mr. Duke said all 2019 expenditures have been posted on the Ohio Checkbook. Further, every schedule of bills is posted on the City’s website following every Council meeting.

Ms. Fisher had nothing further to share. Vice President Wallace asked about the new City Prosecutor. Ms. Fisher said she hired David Morrison as the new full-time prosecutor, who came from Greene County and was highly recommended.

B. Mayor and City Council:

Mayor Mays said she recently attended the change of command for WPAFB 445th Airlift Wing and personally welcomed Col. Raymond Smith, Jr., who is the new commander. She welcomed and congratulated the new Council members and congratulated Vice President Wallace on his reelection.

Councilwoman Dean had nothing further to share.

Councilman Brannum thanked his family and friends and the Xenia community for their support. He noted that it was Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, and they should appreciate law enforcement every day. He thanked them for their service and congratulated Xenia Police Officer Tim Roop on his retirement.

Councilman Scrivens said it is a sacred trust to serve on City Council and represent the people of the City of Xenia. He acknowledged and congratulated Officer Roop on his retirement after 22 years of exemplary service. He commented on the downtown street lighting, particularly in front of the City Administration Building and the next block, which is not well lit because some bulbs need to be replaced and some fixtures need to be added to existing poles. Mr. Merriman said he has already spoken with City engineering staff, and adding a fixture to that existing pole was a bit more complicated than expected. However, if anyone sees a street light that is out, he encouraged them to call the Public Service Department at 376-7265 or his office at 376-7232. He noted there is a number on every pole, and it is very helpful if that number is provided; otherwise, an address will suffice. He also commented on the blowing trash in the downtown area, and Public Service workers have been assigned to get that cleaned up. Councilman Scrivens said the recent high winds contributed to that trash problem. Mr. Merriman agreed. Councilman Scrivens said the leaves that have collected in front of the City Administration Building also need to be cleaned up. He commented on trash being dumped at the end of an abandoned alley that runs parallel to Stelton Road. He has been told that Rules of Council will be developed, which he agreed were necessary. He felt rules of conduct are also needed. He thanked everyone who attended the meeting. He suggested that Council meet at least once during each quarter with different entities included Xenia Township, Greene County, Xenia Community Schools, the courts, etc., in an effort to cooperate with one another and develop good working relationships. Regarding the water towers, he suggested that one be painted with "Home of the Xenia Buccaneers."

Councilman Dean had nothing further to share.

Vice President Wallace thanked Xenia voters for reelecting him to another four-year term. It was an honor to receive the highest number of votes. He thanked his colleagues for nominating and reelecting him as Council Vice President; he hopes to serve them well and not let them down. He announced the January 20th Martin Luther King Jr. service at 7 p.m. at A House of Prayer (AHOP) with speaker John Freeman who is the Pastor of United AME Church and the Chaplain at Wilberforce University. He looks forward to another great service this year.

President Smith thanked all Councilmembers, appointed officials, and staff for their service in 2019; he looks forward to working with them all in 2020. He congratulated Officer Roop on his retirement. He then stated the following:

"As a Council, we are all concerned about the growth of our City and its success. We, as Councilmembers, know that we have to contain expenses but also grow revenue. We will work on doing that as a Council and will work on attracting quality and small businesses in Xenia. Economic growth has always been a priority of Council and should remain so. They need to work on a housing market to create more home and property owners in our community. We know we have financial hurdles and challenges with our infrastructure (streets, sanitation, and catch basins) and know we have work to do on these issues while improving and maintaining safety services, which comprises about 90% of the City budget. One thing they are working on is to stop the abuse of those who are taxing our EMS department and to slow down the call volume but still reacting

quickly and efficiently to those who are seriously ill or in danger. We understand we need to retain quality police officers and provide continued support to our community partners, like Xenia Community Schools, and welcome another partner with the arrival of the Greene County Career Center and their 2020 fall launch into the upcoming school year. I would like this Council to consider working with the City Manager to consider the addition of a K-9 Officer to assist with drug and missing person cases. As a Council we will continue to be transparent in communication to our citizens through appropriate media outlets, but I ask that citizens pick up the phone, ask questions, and be correct when sharing information on social media. When you are on social media, ask yourself these questions when talking with others: Is it accurate, is it necessary, and is it kind? Treat others like your brother or sister. We are a family in Xenia, and we can continue to make Xenia the City of Hospitality but we need to look out for our neighbors. Attacking people on social media serves no purpose. As a neighbor to this community, we need to look at welcoming additional resources and revenue with Central State University. Two graduates from CSU serve on this Council, and Council needs to work on welcoming CSU into Xenia and our tax base. Those students and employees are working and spending money in Xenia, and we owe them that opportunity to be part of this community. For those watching tonight, we thank you for your interest in our community, for your encouragement, and for your confidence. Thank you Council for your vote; I will work hard as the Council President and will try to answer your questions at any time. I also ask for your prayers and support while we work on effective governance in 2020 and beyond. We need to work as a Council on consensus building and identify City weaknesses and opportunities, take them to task, and work through problems and not just talk about them. Tonight, we were presented with a homelessness problem, which is probably this City's #1 problem. We need to show kindness and compassion while establishing a safe environment for our citizens and our brothers and sisters who are down on their luck and need compassion and support. We need to help those who want to help themselves and those who are willing to work on steps to enhance their lives. We need to simply show those who have come to our community that if they are here to cause trouble and cannot make it in a shelter, then they are not welcome in our community and we will find them an exit out of our city. We need to be diligent in our preparedness for working on legislation to deal with the loitering problem. He thanked [former] Councilman Urschel for his presentation tonight. Our second major issue is streets and infrastructure. As a Council, we understand that and are working on ways to increase revenue to pay for more paving and road improvements. As a Council, we have an open mind to find ways to finance these improvements and will stop accepting the status quo. As a Council, we need to participate in discussions at every meeting, use astute judgment, and encourage our citizens to get engaged with Council and our community. We have a new Council—and a young Council—and I would remind everyone that our goal to set policies, have strong financial oversight, and create obtainable goals that will improve the quality of life for our citizens—that's why we are all sitting here.”

President Smith asked his fellow colleagues to let him know within the next week or so what Boards, Commissions, and Committees they are interested in serving on. If they have any questions, they should contact him or the City Clerk.

12. ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Vice President Wallace, seconded by Councilman Scrivens, to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Wallace, Scrivens, R. Dean, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Smith
Nays: None motion carried.

Michelle D. Johnson
City Clerk

Wesley E. Smith
President, Xenia City Council