

**XENIA CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 27, 2022
6:00 P.M.**

Pastor Greg Delaney, speaking on behalf of multiple recovery resources, provided the Invocation.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Vice President William Urschel.

B. CALL TO ORDER: Vice President Urschel called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

C. ROLL CALL: Vice President William Urschel, Councilman Thomas Scrivens, Councilman Cody Brannum, Councilman Levi Dean, and Mayor Sarah Mays were present. Councilwoman Rebekah Dean and President Wesley Smith were absent.

Motion by Mayor Mays, seconded by Councilman Scrivens, to excuse President Smith from the meeting due to a work conflict. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Urschel

Nays: None motion carried.

Vice President Urschel said President Smith informed Council well in advance of his scheduled absence.

Motion by Councilman Dean, seconded by Councilman Brannum, to excuse Councilwoman Dean due to a work commitment. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Urschel

Nays: None motion carried.

Vice President Urschel said per the Rules of Council, if a Councilmember was not able to attend a meeting, he or she should notify the Council President and not another member of Council. A minimum number of votes are required for emergency actions, and the Council President needed to know if there would be sufficient members in attendance to take action. While he realized sometimes things came up at the last moment, it was best to know ahead of time.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Councilman Dean, seconded by Councilman Scrivens, to approve the January 13, 2022, minutes of the Regular Meeting as written. Vice President Urschel entertained comments or questions. None were presented. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, Brannum, L. Dean, Urschel

Abstain: Mays

Nays: None motion carried.

E. SPECIAL PRESENTATION(S): None.

F. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: Vice President Urschel explained the procedures for Audience Comments and invited those who wished to speak to come forward. No one came forward to speak.

G. OLD BUSINESS: None.

H. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Introduction of Ordinance 2022-01 Repealing Chapter 1492, Titled Registration of Vacant Commercial and Industrial Buildings, of the Xenia City Code. City Manager Brent Merriman said staff was requesting repeal of Chapter 1492 in the Xenia City Code. Said chapter was established in 2014 by Council's enactment of Ordinance 14-11, which established the Vacant Commercial and Industrial Building Registration (VBR) program. Although well-intended, this program in practice did not live up to its original goals. As explained in the agenda report, staff believed that enforcement of this ordinance had become a distraction from, rather than a tool for, revitalization efforts, and recommended that the ordinance be repealed. Over the past several years, voluntary compliance with the program requirements often resulted in an inequitable financial burden on many property owners. Non-compliant property owners were not held accountable through the adjudicative process. Staff believes the amount of work required for enforcement and the limited successful outcomes render the program inefficient and ineffective. Passage of this Ordinance 2022-01 would remove the language/program from the Xenia City Code and would allow staff to devote more time to Property Maintenance Code enforcement to improve property owner accountability and accomplish the highest and best use of these vacant commercial and industrial properties.

Vice President Urschel entertained questions or comments.

Councilman Scrivens said he was glad this program was being repealed. However, he felt the City's greatest problem was with residential properties.

Councilman Brannum asked City Planner Brian Forschner if he had anything to share. Mr. Forschner said the inequity was the core issue; further, the program diverted building owners' resources away from rehab and reinvestment efforts. The fees could be considered overly punitive as they add up over time. For these reasons, as well as staff's lack of ability to hold people accountable through the adjudicative process, he felt they should do away with the program. Vice President Urschel said he knew the Fire Division had the ability to go into buildings for inspections and asked if there was any value for Code Enforcement to also have the ability to enter the buildings with this program. Mr. Forschner said while the program provided a provision for annual inspections, they still had to go through the process of getting permission from the Judge to enter the building if the property owner was non-compliant. If they believed there was a threatening condition inside a building, they could still work through a Court order process to get inside per the Property Maintenance Code (Code Enforcement), the Building Code (Greene County Building Regulation), or the Fire Code (Fire Division). Vice President Urschel said perhaps they could spend some time building a rapport with building owners to possibly include rescinding any fines and/or assessments. Mr. Merriman said staff would certainly entertain a more in-depth discussion with Council to get more direction on this and other code enforcement issues. Mr. Forschner said the City's Code Enforcement Officers already spend a lot of time building a rapport with property owners in an attempt to get compliance versus just issuing citations.

Hearing no further questions or comments, Vice President Urschel entertained introduction of Ordinance 2022-01 as presented.

Councilman Dean presented ORDINANCE 2022-01 REPEALING CHAPTER 1492, TITLED REGISTRATION OF VACANT COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, OF THE XENIA CITY CODE, and it was read for the first time.

2. Introduction of Ordinance 2022-02 Amending Section 452.11 of the City of Xenia Traffic Code. Law Director Donnette Fisher said on October 25, 2018, Council adopted Ordinance 2018-31, which enacted Title Eight: Parking of the City's Traffic Code. This new title created noncriminal parking violations – meaning, the City's police officers can write parking tickets for any violation of Chapter 452 and those tickets are processed through the City's Parking Violations Bureau rather than as criminal cases through the Xenia Municipal Court. Traffic violations, such as speeding, equipment violations, or OVIs, continue to be issued on an Ohio Uniform Traffic Ticket and are processed as criminal violations through the Xenia Municipal Court. While the Traffic Code contains a provision requiring all vehicles on a public street to display a license plate (Traffic Code Section 436.09, which is based on ORC 4503.21(A)), the City's current parking regulations only address vehicles parked on a public street with expired or illegal license plates. Thus, they are recommending Section 452.11 of the Traffic Code be amended to address vehicles parked on a public street where the vehicle is not displaying a valid license plate. By adding this prohibition to the Traffic Code, the City's police officers would be able to cite for this violation as a parking violation – processed through the Parking Violations Bureau – rather than having to cite the vehicle's owner for a criminal violation under Section 436.09 of the Traffic Code. This would keep a traffic violation off the vehicle owner's driving record, would cost the vehicle owner less than a criminal case, and would save officers and the Xenia Municipal Court time.

Vice President Urschel entertained questions or comments. Hearing none, he entertained introduction of Ordinance 2022-02 as presented.

Mayor Mays presented ORDINANCE 2022-02 AMENDING SECTION 452.11 OF THE CITY OF XENIA TRAFFIC CODE, and it was read for the first time.

3. RESOLUTION 2022-E SUPPORTING THE DEDICATION OF A SECTION OF U.S. 35 BETWEEN U.S. 42 AND U.S. 68 IN GREENE COUNTY TO THE LATE GREENE COUNTY SHERIFF, EUGENE FISCHER, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Mr. Merriman said under Ohio law (ORC 5511.09) highways and bridges which are part of the state transportation system can be named in honor of deserving individuals or notable local features or historical events. As part of the identified procedures to gain approval of honorary naming of a highway or bridge, the local jurisdictions through which the highway or bridge passes are asked to pass legislation to support/endorse the honorary designation. With this in mind, various Greene County leaders have come together to promote and pursue the honorary naming of a portion of U.S. Route 35 for the late Sheriff Eugene "Gene" Fischer. Sheriff Fischer was a native Xenian and a long-time law enforcement professional for the City of Xenia before appointment and multiple, successive elected terms as Sheriff of Greene County. He served faithfully until his unexpected death while in office in December 2021. Sheriff Fischer was a public servant whose strong leadership, humility, faith, and passion for the Greene County community was well respected statewide. The proposed portion of highway recommended for designation as the Sheriff Gene Fischer Highway is the section of U.S. 35 from U.S. 68 to U.S. 42, most of which traverses land incorporated by the City of Xenia. City staff felt that the proposed honorary naming of a portion

of U.S. Route 35 for Sheriff Fischer was a fitting tribute to Sheriff Fischer who served Xenia and Greene County faithfully and with great distinction. The Greene County Commission and Xenia Township Board of Trustees have likewise pursued legislative action to support this honorary naming.

Vice President Urschel entertained questions or comments. Hearing none, he entertained passage of Resolution 2022-E as presented.

Motion by Councilman Brannum, seconded by Mayor Mays, to pass Resolution 2022-E as presented. Vice President Urschel entertained comments or questions. Councilman Scrivens asked how this particular section of roadway was selected. Mr. Merriman said he did not know specifics, but he felt they wanted a significant roadway that was located both in the City and the Township/County due to his time served with the Xenia Police Division as well as Greene County. Councilman Scrivens asked who was responsible for erecting signage denoting the designation. Ms. Fisher thought that was part of the Ohio Department of Transportation's responsibilities. Mr. Merriman agreed. Vice President Urschel offered kudos to Greene County for finding a way to get this fast-tracked and for coordinating the effort. Anything they can do to honor Sheriff Fischer was a great thing. Hearing no further discussion, Vice President Urschel asked for the Roll Call. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Urschel

Nays: None motion carried.

4. Introduction of Resolution 2022-F Accepting American Rescue Plan Act Water & Wastewater Infrastructure Program Grant Funding for the Wilberforce Sanitary Sewer Sliplining Project. Mr. Merriman said on July 30, 2021, Governor DeWine announced that \$250 million was available in grant funding for water and wastewater infrastructure projects through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Eligible projects include wastewater treatment plant improvements; installation or replacement of sanitary sewer lines; infiltration/inflow abatement; water treatment plant improvements; improvements of waterlines; and water tower repair or replacement. Applications for funding initially had to be submitted to the County Engineer's Office for the development of a County-wide prioritization of projects, which was then forwarded to the State to assist its review of potential funding. The City has maintained the sewer lines in the Wilberforce community for many years. These lines are in need of sliplining to minimize the infiltration and inflow to the Ford Road WWTP, but they have put off this project due to the cost. Thus, the City Engineer's office opted to submit the Wilberforce Sanitary Sewer Sliplining Project for ARPA funding in order to get this needed project completed at minimal cost to the City. During the 4th Quarter of 2021, staff was notified that the Project was approved for grant funding in the amount of \$562,500. The City's local match is \$187,500, for a total project cost of \$750,000 (75% Grant and 25% City). Acceptance of the grant funding, which would be administered through the Ohio Department of Development, required formal action by City Council. Staff anticipated accepting bids during the Second Quarter of 2022 for this project, with construction anticipated over the upcoming summer months.

Vice President Urschel clarified this grant funding was not coming from the ARPA dollars received by Xenia as a municipality or from Greene County's ARPA dollars. Mr. Merriman said that was correct; they are dollars specifically allotted by the federal government to the State of Ohio, which established a number of programs such as this.

Vice President Urschel entertained other questions or comments.

Councilman Scrivens asked who was responsible for the Central State water tower and if they could apply to grant this program to improve it. Mr. Merriman explained the complex situation. In summary, Central State University, under the State of Ohio, was responsible for the care and maintenance of the water tower; the City of Xenia's water lines feed it and the City was responsible for the water delivery system. The Wilberforce sewer system was operating under the City of Xenia's wastewater treatment license. Mr. Duke noted that staff applied for another, more expensive project under this grant program that was not awarded. As it relates to water at Wilberforce, a lot of properties are provided water by the County and sewer service by the City of Xenia. Mr. Merriman said staff has been in communication with Central State leadership, and they are pursuing state capital budget dollars for the replacement of the water main that runs to CSU, which starts at 68 and goes down Country Club Drive, across the golf course, and out toward Stevenson Road into the Wilberforce/CSU area. There was a possibility that the City would partner with them and seek resources to help contribute toward the required matching funds.

Hearing nothing further, Vice President Urschel entertained introduction of Resolution 2022-F as presented.

Councilman Scrivens presented RESOLUTION 2022-F ACCEPTING AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT WATER & WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM GRANT FUNDING FOR THE WILBERFORCE SANITARY SEWER SLIPLINING PROJECT, and it was read for the first time.

5. Administrative Motion Appointing Council Board and Commission Assignments for 2022. Vice President Urschel said at the second Council meeting each year, the Council President recommends for approval various Board and Commission assignments. Other assignments are made by the Council President and do not require Council approval. Therefore, on President Smith's behalf, he respectfully recommended the appointments listed in the recommendation below and assigned the Mayor and Council Members to various Boards/Commissions/Committees as follows:

- **Finance & Budget Committee (3):** President Wesley Smith, Chair; Vice President Will Urschel; Councilman Levi Dean (Alternate: Councilwoman Rebekah Dean)
- **Legislative Review & Government Affairs Committee (3):** Mayor Sarah Mays, Chair; Councilman Thomas Scrivens; Councilwoman Rebekah Dean (Alternate: President Wesley Smith)
- **Property Management Committee (3):** Vice President Will Urschel, Chair; Councilman Levi Dean; Councilman Cody Brannum (Alternate: Councilman Thomas Scrivens)
- **Public Safety Committee (3):** Councilman Thomas Scrivens, Chair; Vice President Will Urschel; Councilwoman Rebekah Dean (Alternate: Councilman Cody Brannum)
- **Public Service & Utilities Committee (3):** Vice President Will Urschel, Chair; Councilman Thomas Scrivens; Councilman Cody Brannum (Alternate: President Wesley Smith)

He noted they still have to appoint a Chair to the Traffic Commission because the Commission has not been removed from the Xenia City Code yet. He then made the following motion and entertained a second.

Motion by Councilman Scrivens, seconded by Councilman Dean, to appoint the Mayor and Council members to the following Boards and Commissions for 2022*:

- **Greene County Career Center's Health Science Academy Advisory Board (1): Councilman Thomas Scrivens**
- **Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (1): Mayor Sarah Mays (Alternate: Vice President Will Urschel)**
- **Board for Recreation, Arts & Cultural Activities Chair: Mayor Sarah Mays**
- **Board of Zoning Appeals Chair: Councilman Cody Brannum (*appointed through term 12/31/2023), Alternate: Councilman Levi Dean**
- **Community Improvement Corporation Board of Directors: Councilwoman Rebekah Dean**
- **Economic Development Advisory Board Chair: Vice President Will Urschel**
- **Planning and Zoning Commission Chair: President Wesley Smith, Alternate: Councilman Cody Brannum**
- **Traffic Commission Chair: Councilman Levi Dean**

No comments followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Urschel

Nays: None motion carried.

6. Administrative Motion Approving the Schedule of Bills in the amount of \$413,753.85.

Mr. Duke respectfully requested the payment of bills in the amount of \$413,753.85.

Vice President Urschel entertained questions or comments. Councilman Scrivens asked about the payment for a music license. Mr. Merriman said the City pays for a music license, similar to an insurance policy, for when any proprietary music was used for any purpose without permission. Hearing nothing further, Vice President Urschel he entertained a motion.

Motion by Councilman Dean, seconded by Mayor Mays, to approve the schedule of bills in the amount of \$413,753.85. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Urschel

Nays: None motion carried.

I. APPOINTED OFFICIALS REPORTS

Vice President Urschel asked Mr. Merriman for his comments. Mr. Merriman did not have anything further to share. He did, however, have several subjects to discuss during the Work Session to follow.

Vice President Urschel asked Mr. Duke for his comments. Mr. Duke did not have anything further to share. Vice President Urschel extended kudos to Mr. Duke, who took the time to meet with him and a City of Fairborn Council member to discuss how municipal courts are funded in Ohio. The Ohio Revised Code dictates which municipalities must have municipal courts and which jurisdictions are served by those courts. Aside from some fees paid by Greene County for a portion of the Judge's, the Bailiff's and the Clerk of Court's salaries and less any fines that are collected for the villages and the townships, the City of Xenia was required to fund the court. Those municipalities are not required to pay anything additional for those court services. The cost to run the court was substantial, and any costs not covered by the court-collected fines are the City of Xenia's responsibility per the ORC, which was about \$600,000 per year and rising each year. The City of

Xenia cannot set the court's fee and fine structure, and they cannot allocate those costs to other jurisdictions beyond what was given back to the City with the fines that are paid. The City of Fairborn was very interested in this because they are serving the eastern portion of the Greene County including the City of Beavercreek and Beavercreek Township, which costs them about \$1 million per year and rising each year. They plan to go to other jurisdictions to understand how they are addressing those costs. He was certain there would be more to come on this subject in the future.

Vice President Urschel asked Ms. Fisher for her comments. Ms. Fisher offered additional information to what Vice President Urschel just shared. She said it was not just the Court, it was also prosecution services. State Law requires the City of Xenia to handle prosecution for any State Law violations that occur anywhere in the unincorporated areas of the Court's jurisdiction. The prosecution costs included the prosecutor as well as victim advocate services. They were lucky that Greene County helps share some of the burden for the actual prosecutor, but other costs are the City's burden. Finally, she informed Council that she received a OneOhio Toolkit regarding the opioid litigation. She planned to attend a seminar on February 4th, and she knew that Council would be required to pass some legislation in the future to permit the City's participation. As she learns more, she will keep Council informed.

J. REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES:

1. Property Management Committee: Councilman Scrivens said the Property Management Committee met on January 18th and 25th. Both times they adjourned into Executive Session. They still have a few outstanding items.

2. Board of Zoning Appeals: Mayor Mays said the January 24th meeting was canceled due to lack of agenda items.

K. COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilman Scrivens asked everyone to speak up while they are talking, noting some people have difficulty hearing when watching the meetings from home. He offered condolences to the family of Richard "Dick" Olsen, especially his caregiver, Gloria Davidson. He announced that Wendy's was scheduled to reopen on Monday, January 31st.

Councilman Brannum had nothing further to share. Vice President Urschel asked Councilman Brannum to tell everyone about the badge he was wearing. Councilman Brannum said it was in honor of Greene County Sheriff Gene Fischer.

Councilman Dean had nothing further to share.

Mayor Mays said she attended the Martin Luther King Jr. community service on January 17th and thanked the Xenia Area Association of Churches and Ministries and the African American Ministerial Alliance for their work on the event. It was a great service, and Vice President Urschel spoke. Pastor Chapman at Zion Baptist hosted the event, and they did an outstanding job. Former City of Xenia Mayor Marsha Bayless was also there and sang in a trio. At the event, they also had an opportunity to honor Pastor John Freeman and his retirement as Pastor of the United AME Church in Xenia and hear what was next for him and his vision with his new church on Columbus. On January 24th, she met with local business owners and heard their vision and ideas for downtown and

try to find ways to support them. She hosted the Mayors' lunch here in Xenia and enjoyed the company of the Mayors of Fairborn, Beavercreek, and Riverside. She loved to showcase what was going on in Xenia and eat at a local restaurant. On January 26th, she participated in a podcast at Cedarville University, and she was able to talk about what was going on here in Xenia and what she was looking forward to during her next four years as Mayor. She thanked everyone who had reached out and offered prayers and words of comfort in the loss of her father-in-law. It really meant a lot to her and her family.

President Urschel concurred with Mayor Mays' comments regarding Dr. Freeman—who was 75 years old—but he wasn't done preaching and serving yet. He was very active in this community and in Wilberforce. He noted the dedication for Dr. Freeman's new church was held last Sunday, which he was able to attend. It was a wonderful evening that included some young folks from Wilberforce. He announced that he received a call from Xenia Community Schools Board Member Joshua Day, who was looking to hold an essay and speech contest for middle school and high school students to include some patriotic themes and historical topics and asked if the City would like to encourage student participation. On Council's behalf, he said they would love to participate and do whatever they could to support the contest.

L. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Vice President Urschel said an Executive Session was not scheduled on the agenda; however, there was a need to go into Executive Session to discuss the purchase or sale of land. He entertained a motion.

Motion by Mayor Mays, seconded by Councilman Scrivens, to go into Executive Session at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the Purchase or Sale of Property per XCO §204.04(a) and ORC §121.22(G). No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Urschel
Nays: None motion carried.

They convened in Executive Session in the Training and Conference Room with the same members present. At 8:05 p.m., they reconvened the Regular Meeting to begin the Work Session.

M. WORK SESSION:

1. Discussion on Special Events for 2022: Mr. Merriman said the first subject for discussion was 2022 Special Events Expectations. He said Council approved funding for last year's events, which were very successful. The attendance was great, and they far exceeded expectations. For 2022, staff would continue to seek volunteer participation and event sponsorships and donations. Regarding a Family Movie Night event for 2022, he noted last year's

2022 SPECIAL EVENTS EXPECTATIONS

- *2021 Programming realized great success*—attendance at DT Block Party/Fireworks Festival, Harvest on Main and Christmas Station events far exceeded expectations
- *Volunteer participation* was excellent and this will continue to be a priority
- *Event sponsorships/donations* were a big help; in 2022 we are formalizing this program; Blair Davis is helping to coordinate this effort
- *Family Movie Night for 2022?*



movie night event was in partnership with Dillin for data collection on the Xenia Towne Square redevelopment. The event had fairly good attendance, and they may want to consider another event this year.

Staff was proposing four seasonal events with a budget of \$25,000:

1. Spring Carnival
 - Location: downtown, intersection of Main/Detroit
 - Scheduled for April 23 (tentatively)
 - First Fridays-like, family entertainment event
 - Trail/bicycle-themed to coincide with seasonal opening of the trail system
 - \$5,000 budget (entertainment and programming)
2. Red, White & Blue Block Party
 - In conjunction with Sonnycalb Fireworks Festival
 - Location: downtown, intersection of Main/Detroit
 - Patriotic-themed family event
 - Planning for expanded kids' activities and decorations
 - \$5,000 budget (does not include Sand Art displays)
3. Harvest on Main
 - In conjunction with Xenia Oktoberfest (instead of back-to-back weekends)
 - Location: downtown, intersection of Main/Detroit
 - \$5,000 budget (kids' programming and decorations)
4. Christmas Station
 - Location: Xenia Station extended down trail/Detroit St. to Downtown
 - Santa, carriage rides, live seasonal entertainment
 - \$10,000 budget (additional lights/decorations [reusable])

Mr. Merriman noted the budget numbers shown above do not include staff overtime. Regarding the Christmas Station event, he realized that a lot of children waited a long time to see Santa, but he did not know what they could do about that.

Additional City Events/Activities for 2022:

- *Neighborhood Night Out*—three dates (likely one spring and two late summer)
- *Lexington Park Event*—volunteer driven; scope of activities, title, etc. TBD; likely in June
- *Easter Egg Hunt*—BRACA coordinated on the day before Easter (Saturday, April 16th)
- *ORRRC 55th Marathon/33rd Half Marathon*—privately coordinated and funded; City co-sponsorship
- *Citizens Academy*—likely June

Vice President Urschel asked for details on the City's co-sponsorship of the ORRRC event. Mr. Merriman said traffic control (personnel costs), waiver of special event application fee, etc. Vice President Urschel asked if there would be a Hamvention this year. Mr. Merriman said yes; however, event organizers are anticipating a smaller event due to national/international travel concerns.

Mr. Merriman asked if Council concurred with the events and the budget presented above with regard to 2022 Special Events. Councilman Scrivens said \$25,000 was a miniscule amount compared to the budget in its entirety. Vice President Urschel said last year's events were very successful in bringing the community together, and most were located in the downtown area. He would like to see

the downtown business association to be more involved and “all in.” Councilman Scrivens asked about the Xenia Area Chamber of Commerce’s (XACC) participation. Mr. Merriman said XACC’s big event was Oktoberfest (noting they are no longer holding the Xenia Community Festival), and the City looks to partner with them to hold the Harvest on Main that same day. Councilman Scrivens said all events showcase the City of Hospitality.

Vice President Urschel said he wished the City would shut down the downtown during the events held in that area. Mr. Merriman said he realized shutting down the roads through the downtown would make things much safer from a pedestrian perspective, unfortunately, downtown road closures affect public safety and public service responses.

Vice President Urschel asked which City staff were managing the Special Events. Mr. Merriman said from a coordination and planning perspective, City staff members Community Development Coordinator Ryan Baker and Public Relations Coordinator Christina Schaefer were heading these up. Vice President Urschel wished there was one place where all City events could be shared to include events at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Xenia Community Schools, etc.

2. Discussion on Various Personnel Matters: Mr. Merriman said this next discussion includes recruitment, retention, and staffing needs in 2022. He shared general concerns as follows:

- In 2021—27 vacancies filled Citywide (of which, 7 were FD and 6 were PD), 12.5% of workforce
- 18% of current workforce was “near retirement”
- Overall applications for City employment were dramatically down
- Xenia’s experience was not unique; interest in public employment has declined nationwide

Mr. Merriman said with new/newer employees, there was a loss of institutional knowledge, and the time it took to train them also needed to be considered—especially public safety employees. Fire Chief Ken Riggsby said the average years of service for Xenia Fire Division firefighters was six years. Mr. Duke said with regard to the 27 vacancies filled in 2021, the majority of vacancies were not due to retirement. When analyzing the City’s current workforce, he realized many of the City’s 220 employees are relatively new, and many of them would likely move on after a few years.

Water Treatment Plant (WTP):

- Currently employ six full-time employees (FTE) and two part-time employees (PTE) at varying levels of certification from Level I to Level III. WTP Supervisor must be a Level III. Must have licensed operator at the plant at all times.
- In the past five years, two PTEs have left after full training and certification
- Now, there was another vacancy for a part-time position
- 10 total applicants—*none* were certified
- *Staff recommended making this position an FTE*
 - Second part-time position would be eliminated through attrition
- Recruitment and Retention benefit
- Succession planning need:
 - WTP Supervisor was youngest and most tenured plant employee
 - Average age of plant employees was 59 (industry average: 47)
 - New employees have two years to achieve certification; extended process with contact hours requirements, coursework and testing
 - Several current employees are previously retired from other careers

- OT Savings:
 - 2019: 945 hours
 - 2020: 1,063 hours
 - 2021: 920 hours
- Additional cost:
 - Immediate: \$37,737 - \$46,779
 - After reduction of second PTE, additional cost would go down to \$10,420 - \$13,279

Vice President Urschel confirmed the WTP salaries are paid from the Water Fund. Mr. Merriman concurred. He added that he felt the pay scale was competitive for this region—he did not believe salary was the issue. Councilman Brannum asked what the City was doing to encourage Public Service Department employees to get their licensure in order to promote into these positions. Mr. Merriman said they provide opportunities for exposure and training in both water and wastewater, and many have participated and been successful. Unfortunately, they are usually interested in wastewater. Mr. Duke said that could be due to the hours at the WTP, noting the swing shift was a tough shift with odd hours.

Mayor Mays asked her fellow Council members if they supported a full-time position instead of part-time positions at the WTP. Councilman Dean supported that change from two PTEs to one FTE. Councilman Brannum said he did not support any additional manning; they may need to shift positions or move people around to accommodate the need. Councilman Scrivens felt they needed to step up recruitment efforts. Vice President Urschel said the WTP was a utility and technically a business. They must have personnel for this utility by law, which can be funded through water rates. This FTE would help the City run this utility. Mr. Merriman said he felt that the majority of the Council members present supported the request; therefore, he would move forward accordingly.

Mr. Merriman said the next category was regarding Public Safety:

- 2022 Anticipated Vacancies:
 - Police Division (PD): Expected total of three (School Resource Officer, one officer retirement, chief)
 - Fire Division (FD): Expected total of four (two firefighter retirements, two likely self-terminations); two positions presently (one probationary washout, one self-termination)
 - Assuming no other openings due to other reasons or employees leaving for other opportunities!
- On-Boarding—costly and time consuming
 - PD:
 - If certified, 29 weeks; if uncertified, 55 weeks
 - FD:
 - If no certifications = 24 weeks (FF1 & FF2 and/or EMT-B schooling) + 18-20 months for paramedics school; one-year probationary period
 - If FF2/EMT-B certified = 18-20 months for paramedics school followed by one-year probationary period
 - If FF2/Paramedic = one-year probationary period
 - Pre-Certified candidates are pretty rare at this point; transfer pool exhausted
- Options to Address These Issues
 - *Vacancy Anticipation Program*—proactive hiring for “planned” vacancies; preauthorize hiring of additional staff above authorized strength of force to better align on-boarding time with expected retirements
 - NOTE: One in PD and two in FD (Nov. ‘22 and Feb. ‘23)
 - *Plus One Program*—Authorize the addition of up to one F/T employee resulting from annual testing cycles in order to secure priority candidates

- *PD Cadet Program*—P/T to F/T employment in PD/parking enforcement for law enforcement candidates who are not yet of age
- *College to Law Enforcement Program*—State pilot program with Cedarville and CSU to mentor and fast-track (to hiring) students in specific majors programs
- Other Options to Evaluate
 - *Sign-on Bonuses/Accumulated Vacation Transfers*
 - *Achievement/Certification Bonus*—Reduce up-front wage points; offer bonus upon completion of certification/probationary period

Mr. Merriman noted that when Firefighters are hired and the City puts them through the paramedic training program, they must sign an agreement stating that they will stay for at least two years. If they do not—including if they fail to pass the Paramedic test—they are required to pay that money back. There was currently one individual in that situation. He then asked Deputy Chief Mike Bogan to present the call volume numbers per population.

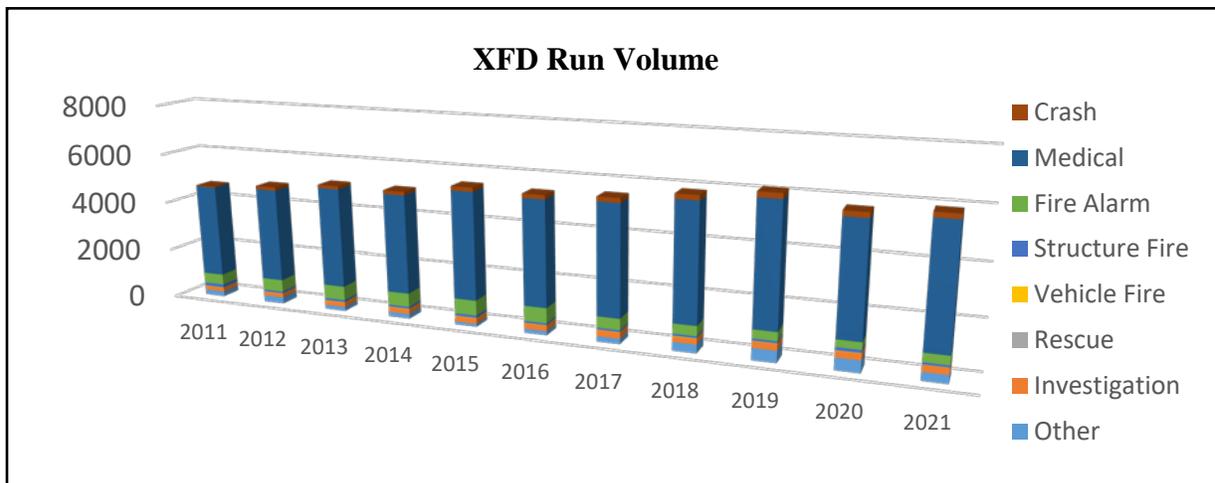
Public Safety—Fire Division: Deputy Chief Bogan said the XFD has a higher factor than that of all surrounding jurisdictions due to several factors:

- As the county seat, a higher percentage of residents that utilize county services reside in the City
- Those residents also have a higher percentage of 911 service utilization
- The City of Xenia has a higher than average number of nursing homes and assisted living facilities

Xenia	.23
Piqua	.21
Troy	.20
Fairborn	.16
Kettering	.16
Huber Heights	.15
Beavercreek	.15
Washington Twp.	.14

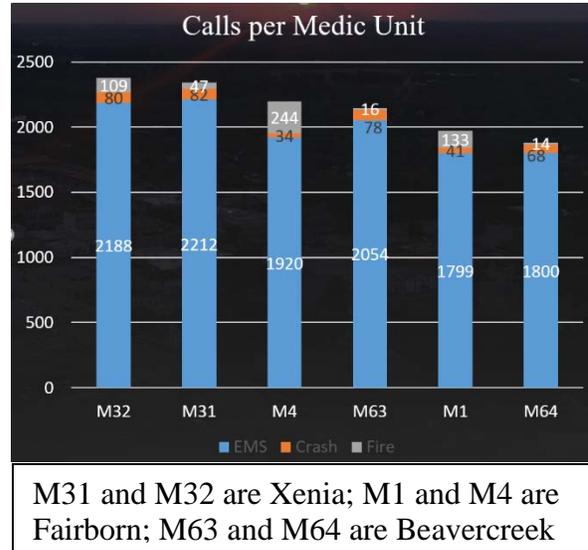
CALL VOLUME PER POPULATION ➡

Councilman Scrivens asked if the age of Xenia residents could also be a factor. Deputy Chief Bogan said yes.



Regarding the long-term outlook, Mr. Merriman said Xenia Fire operates the two busiest medics in all of Greene County. Xenia needed to have additional medics in service to handle the continual growth in demand for EMS. In the short term, the SAFER grant would allow XFD to have both reserve medics available a greater percentage of time, which would reduce the need for mutual aid and reduce delays in care. Regarding the upcoming opportunity to apply for another SAFER grant, this opportunity would allow for six FTE additions:

- 100% reimbursement for base salary + benefits for three years
- Would increase staffing on engines (NFPA standards are 4 FFs per engine) and expand medic response capacity on a regular basis
- Would reduce mutual aid reliance (neighbors are experiencing call volume increases as well, reducing availability)
- Would reduce OT expense
 - Based on 2021 numbers, 6800+ hours could potentially be eliminated
 - Cost savings of ~ \$380,000



Mr. Merriman said the biggest question with regard to the SAFER grant was whether the City could afford to sustain the program and the six employees. Staffing must be maintained during the entire grant period but not beyond the funding period. With the cost of salaries and benefits, he asked if the City could sustain those six employees after the three-year period. If not, they would have to determine how to amend service delivery after a standard and expectation had been set during that three-year grant period. Conversely, call volumes continue to increase, and they cannot continue to put that burden on existing staff without increasing staff. It would burn people out, result in slower response times, etc. He then invited Chief Riggsby and Deputy Chief Bogan for their comments.

Chief Riggsby said when surrounding jurisdictions solicit for applications for firefighter vacancies, many Xenia FD employees apply for those jobs, which could be due to one or more of the following: more money, better benefits, fewer runs/less work, etc. Regarding burn out and retaining employees, he felt that they did a great job cross-staffing calls as they try to get everything covered, but they cannot do it all. Collaboration with Xenia Township would be huge, and if that occurred, it would take time to develop a program. As call volumes continue to rise, at some point, they would hit their breaking point. He did not know when that would be, but he regularly watched the numbers and was concerned as they continue to rise noting Beavercreek and Fairborn had recently experienced big jumps. They have looked at different strategies over the years in an attempt to reduce calls, but he believed that demographics (all ages) and people’s mindset today had a lot to do with it. Mr. Merriman agreed; many people believe public safety services are “free.” Deputy Chief Bogan briefed those present on the “ambulance utilization rate,” which was the amount of time medic units were committed to runs. Xenia was between .17 and .18; anything higher contributes to firefighter burnout. Over the last two years, they have tried to make changes to reduce the ambulance utilization rate, including transporting to the nearest facility, which really

did not make much of a difference (-.01). They need to get their frontline medics down to about 2,000 runs per year. Regarding the SAFER grant employees, they are not required to keep those employees beyond the grant period, but they could reapply for the same grant at the end of the initial three-year grant period.

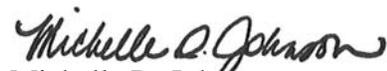
Vice President Urschel summarized that they wish to prime the pipeline with candidates for both Police and Fire as well as apply for a SAFER grant for six additional firefighters. Both options would increase personnel, and he felt there was a risk for both options. Mayor Mays noted that firefighter candidates may need to go through training, get certified, etc., which would occur during the three-year SAFER grant time frame. Mr. Merriman agreed. The likelihood of hiring fully trained and certified firefighters/paramedics was low. All new hires would more than likely require some level of training. Chief Riggsby said if Police brought on a new hire, they are in training for 29 to 55 weeks before they are on the streets by themselves. If he brought on new firefighters, after one week, they are counted as part of the minimum staffing if they have their Fire I and II certifications. At the beginning of 2021, they had eight Fire personnel who were not certified paramedics. That number was now down to two. The majority of the candidates on the current eligibility list of 17 were not paramedics. Deputy Chief Bogan said if they could on-board candidates sooner, they would be able to better time their medical training. Mr. Merriman agreed that was worth noting because there are only certain times per year that classes are offered.

Mr. Merriman said it was getting late and asked if the Council members present agreed with allowing the City to apply for SAFER grant funding for six firefighters. He noted they were not obligated to accept it if awarded (although that would not look good), and they were not obligated to retain the employees beyond the three-year grant period. Mr. Duke said the City could more than likely absorb those employees through attrition, even if they have to pay for a few positions until that attrition occurred. He did not believe they would have to lay off on day 1 of year 4. Mr. Merriman noted the application deadline was next week. All Council members present felt the City should apply for the grant. Vice President Urschel said if awarded, this grant would buy them some time; in the meantime, they need to continue to look at ways to reduce the call volume. All agreed.

N. ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Mayor Mays, seconded by Councilman Dean, to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 9:34 p.m. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, Brannum, L. Dean, Mays, Urschel

Nays: None motion carried.


Michelle D. Johnson
City Clerk


William Urschel, Vice President
Xenia City Council