

**CITY OF HIGHLAND HEIGHTS
MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING
AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
HELD: SEPTEMBER 9, 2021
Highland Heights Community Center
Following Special Council Meeting at 8 PM**

PRESENT: Mayor Brunello; Council Representatives D'Amico, DeLisio, DiLalla, Ganser, Hargate, Milroy, Stickan; Clerk of Council Cahill; Fire Chief Turner; Police Chief Cook; Service Director Belfiore; Building Commissioner Grabfelder; Finance Director Filippo; Law Director Paluf.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The reading of the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held July 13, 2021 was dispensed with. Mr. Milroy moved to accept the minutes as written; seconded by Mrs. Ganser. Ayes all; motion carried.

AGENDA

Discussion of Roof Evaluation Report
Council Chamber Renovation Update

Council Chamber Renovation Update

Mayor Brunello informed Council that the contractor performed work on the Chamber that was in addition to the contract. A meeting was to be held with Commissioner Grabfelder and Director Belfiore; however, the work was completed prior to the contractor receiving permission to perform the work. The work performed costs approximately \$7,700. A meeting was held with the Mayor, Commissioner Grabfelder, Director Belfiore, the Perspectus Group and Lawler Construction to emphasize authorization is required when work is needed outside of the scope of the contract. Mayor Brunello wanted Council to be aware that there will be additional expenses required for the Chamber renovation project due to the action of the contractor performing additional work without the approval of the Perspectus Group and the administration.

Discussion of Roof Evaluation

Mayor Brunello distributed the Roof Evaluation Report in August for Council to review during recess. The report was prepared by Envelope Consulting Services LLC and Architect James Duber and Senior Consultant Chad Helms were present at the meeting. Mayor Brunello thanked Mr. Duber and Mr. Helms for preparing a thorough and detailed report.

Mayor Brunello summarized three available options: 1) Do nothing; 2) Remodel, revamp, rebuild; or 3) demolish the buildings and build new buildings. Mayor Brunello requested Council's input on the available options. Director Filippo is prepared to provide financing options when Council agrees on a plan to proceed.

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Mr. Milroy expressed his opinion that the options are disappointing because they are very expensive. The option not to proceed with any repairs/rebuild is not viable due to the unacceptable conditions of the Police Department, Fire Department, Service Department and Finance Department. Mr. Milroy leans towards total replacement to meet the needs of the existing city. Mr. Milroy was disappointed that the report did not address temporary housing needs that would be required for the Fire & Police departments as repairs are being made.

Mr. Duber responded that the temporary staging needs were discussed but not investigated as Council had not selected a final option choice.

Mr. DeLisio questioned if the repairs will be a long-term solution. Mr. Duber stated the buildings are structurally sound. The goal is to repair the buildings and then only maintenance will be required. The repairs will bring the buildings to a maintainable standard. The current buildings were built to the standards of the time, not to today's building standards.

Mrs. Ganser stated she is not in favor of demolishing the buildings and rebuilding due to the cost that may result in increased taxes. Also, demolishing the Jail may make it unaffordable to build a new jail according to today's specifications. The current jail is beneficial to the area and provides self-sufficiency.

President Stickan stated repairing the buildings is worthwhile as the architect stated the buildings are structurally sound.

Ms. D'Amico questioned the life-expectancy of repairing the buildings versus building new buildings. Mr. Helms responded that roof replacement designs are typically forecasted for 30 years which is the same for new buildings. Mr. Helms stated the report addressed interior repairs and re-design for the Fire Department as it doesn't function well with the current needs of the Fire Department. Mr. Helms concurred that the quality of repair work would be parallel to the quality of a rebuild. There are no life-safety issues in the buildings; however, the mechanical systems need to be replaced.

Council concurred that repairs to the buildings is the path to investigate with more discussion and prioritization using the architect's report as a guide. Mr. Hargate stated a three-year plan to address the buildings' needs is a high priority as the project needs to begin soon.

Mayor Brunello requested the Finance Director to provide some funding options. Director Filippo stated the bond issue that was recently approved was for specific projects stated in the particular ordinances. Bond counsel advised the recent bond issue funds are not eligible to be used for this new project.

Director Filippo stated the city has approximately \$15 million available in debt limitations. An option for funding would be a capital improvement levy to be approved by the voters. Council may raise the millage from 4 mills up to 10 mills. Director Filippo recommended determining the specific sum of funding that would be needed.

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Mr. Duber stated the report addresses serious concerns. The repairs need to be tackled in a timely fashion so that costly emergency repair work will not be needed. Mr. Helms informed Council that all the flat roofs on the Police and Fire building are wet which means a storm may cause serious problems. It is very difficult to determine exactly when emergency repairs will be required. A detailed analysis will create an estimated cost for construction.

Mayor Brunello suggested the issuance of short-term notes to cover the initial costs to begin roof repairs in 2022. Director Filippo requested consulting with the city's financial advisor to obtain funding options.

Chief Turner questioned how to arrange the projects in priority with a three-year plan. The roof project and the HVAC system are both equally critical and require immediate consideration.

Chief Cook reiterated the architect's analysis that the buildings are structurally sound and are comparable to other structures that were built in the same time period. Chief Cook concurred that the roof and HVAC system should be addressed in the first two years of a three-year plan.

Mr. Duber stated the report is a starting point to create a master plan setting long term goals on prioritizing projects. Mayor Brunello suggested funding options also need to be prioritized along with a schedule of repairs for the roof and mechanical systems.

President Stickan suggested a Committee of the Whole meeting be scheduled with the financial advisors to determine the city's financial options. Mayor Brunello thanked everyone for the preliminary discussion this evening and future meetings will be scheduled.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Mr. DiLalla and seconded by Mrs. Ganser to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Ayes all; motion carried.