

**MINUTES**  
**WADSWORTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**MARCH 7, 2023**

*The regular meeting of Wadsworth City Council, Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 5:30 p.m., was held in-person at City Council Chambers.*

**PRESIDING:** Bob Thurber, *President of Council*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ralph Copley, Bruce Darlington, Jeanne Hines, Dan Rospert, Tom Stugmyer, Jon Yurchiak, David Williams

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Mayor Robin Laubaugh, Public Service Director Robert Patrick, Public Safety Director Matt Hiscock, Law Director Tom Morris, Assistant Public Service Director Mike Testa, Clerk of Council Tammy Guenther

**VISITORS SPEAKING:** Gary Fox, 322 High Street  
Aaron Reed, 173 Simcox Street  
Tim Edgar, 199 Baldwin Street  
Dave Densmore (last name spelling unconfirmed) 295 E. Bergey  
Christa Reed, 173 Simcox Street

**PRESS REPRESENTATIVES:** Mason Savoia, *The Medina Gazette, Fox Television News*

Mr. Thurber called the meeting to order at approximately 5:30 p.m. He asked everyone to remain standing as he led the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the Invocation. The Clerk of Council called the roll.

**MINUTES:** Mr. Williams made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Stugmyer, to adopt the Regular Council meeting of February 21 and the Special Council meeting of March 1, 2023. An all-in-favor vote was taken and majority Council members present voted in favor of the motion. **THE COUNCIL MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21 AND MARCH 1, 2023 WERE APPROVED.**

**VISITORS:** Mr. Thurber stated that he would call people forward from the sign in sheet. There was a list of only four names and after he had called those four, if someone else wanted to speak, they would be welcome to come up. Mr. Thurber noted that those coming forward should to give their names and addresses, and for brevity and time, he would ask for those from Wadsworth or Wadsworth center – the townships.

Mr. Thurber also offered a couple of thoughts for the speakers. He asked them to review any written statements or comments ahead of time because they were allotted only two minutes. Use it wisely, he said. They expected everyone to be civil and respectful of everybody. No matter what was on their minds, he asked them to say it concisely and politely. That was what they expected. Anyone who interrupted would be asked to leave or be removed.

Mr. Thurber noted the established policy of City Council. They did not debate; they deliberated. Individuals gave their thoughts and ideas to them and City Council, later on, talked about those, deliberated and discussed that among themselves. There was no back and forth with the speakers. With those thoughts, Mr. Thurber called the first person on the list.

Gary Fox thanked Council for allowing him to stand and request that they pass legislation banning the attendance of children at drag shows in Wadsworth. The vast majority of sane people instinctively recognized

this as an unacceptable harm to children; however, there were a few red herrings that caused some to question whether the City was legally able to prevent it.

The first red herring, said Mr. Fox, was that the drag queen would be clothed as he read a story to children, therefore it was not obscene. Reading a story was no the entire event, Mr. Fox said. There would also be dancing, which in the context of a drag show, would include provocative gyrations and sexual innuendos. He said he would not break decorum by describing in detail, but there were plenty examples online of drag shows for kids that could be reviewed on their own time.

The second red herring was the preventing of children from attending drag shows was a violation of the first amendments, said Mr. Fox. There were a host of activities that children were prohibited from attending, including bars and rated R movies. Children were also prohibited from owning and carrying firearms, but that prohibition did not violate the Second Amendment, he said. Children were not treated as adults in the eyes of the law.

Lastly, Mr. Fox said, prohibiting an event like this was “anti-gay.” The objections to this activity would apply the same if a group of straight people promoted a burlesque show for children.

Mr. Fox reminded the Council that they were elected to represent the interests of the City, which they did or did not do would impact not only them who were there today, but those living here in the future. No one could have foreseen this imposition upon them five years ago. If they did not have the fortitude to outlaw this now, they would be mortified and would be imposed on them in 10 years. It could rightly be said that this Council did not have the ability from this first one from happening, but that could never be said again, because they could stop the next one. Please pass legislation quickly, stated Mr. Fox.

There was some applause and Mr. Thurber asked them to please refrain applauding. He would appreciate that.

**Aaron Reed** came forward and said, “Welcome to the new satanic panic and southern strategy part two, LGBTQ ‘boogaloo’.” This was the oldest trick in the political book: target the least educated, the most superstitious and bigoted among us, and use them as a weapon to aim at whatever, fill-in-the-blank, marginalized group with no power that was invoked and discriminated again at the moment. It was divide and conquer politics to keep the educated, progressive people fighting over some silly social issue with the bigot hoards so they did not band together and do something about how entirely corrupt their government had become on both sides.

Mr. Reed said he knew they did not care. If they did, they would not so flippantly unleash seething, angry masses on marginalized minority groups with no care for their safety. What they were doing was monstrous, he said. It was LGBTQ Jim Crow. Laws already existed to prevent sexually explicit performances in front of children. This ordinance being proposed wasn’t only pointless and redundant, it was a full on frontal assault against the LGBTQ Community. This was a Fourteenth Amendment issue: equal protections. If a woman could wear a dress and makeup and read to children and dance, then so could a man. That was how equality worked.

“You people are sick,” said Mr. Reed. The creepy obsession with sexualizing everything LGBTQ was on them, not us. Being LGBTQ was how and whom they loved, not about what they did in the privacy of closed doors with consenting adults. He said he was there to preach a message of love, tolerance, acceptance and equality. “You sir,” said Mr. Reed, “are directly on the wrong side of history and you will be remembered in future history books like the segregationists of the 1960s, fighting tooth and nail to preserve white Christian privilege. It is wrong and you’re wrong. Love wins and equality rocks.”

Mr. Thurber saw that Mason Savoia of the *Medina Gazette* had signed in and asked if he wanted to speak, but Mr. Savoia did not.

**Tim Edgar** came forward and said he had been a Wadsworth resident since the 1970s. His questions – and he had a lot of questions – had to do with curiosity, as to “why now and why children.” He understood that what people did in the privacy of their own home or what consenting adults did with each other. He was okay with that. He thought the LGBTQ Community was doing a good job as far as trying to get people to understand their viewpoints. There was room for many different viewpoints.

Mr. Edgar was just curious as to why children needed to be involved. He did not understand and had never been to a drag queen event. He had seen the videos as a lot of people had. But, he wanted to look at this as dispassionately as possible because when emotions were high, intelligence was low. So Mr. Edgar said he believed that this was something that they should all look at and look at the long term. What was the endgame here, he asked. Was this a way of desensitizing kids and to sexually explicit events? He did not know. But as far as diversity and tolerance, he thought these were very noble and important causes.

His question was could they do this without the children? Could parents be responsible for teaching children and diversity and things like that, at home, as opposed to doing it in a public type of arena. These were just questions that he had and considerations that he thought they should all give attention to, and those were Mr. Edgar’s thoughts.

Mr. Thurber asked for anyone else who wanted to come forward.

**Dave Densmore** came forward and said he had a few words. He noticed that a weak argument brought out name calling and said it was interesting how that worked. He was hearing a lot of name calling. Mr. Densmore did not consider himself a bigot but did consider himself a protector of children. He believed if they were putting out a person, a man in female dress or a female in a man’s dress that was an example all by itself of not appropriate for children. They could decide that when they got older. At 17 or 18, they could make that decision. Up until then, whatever else they wanted to call it, was indoctrination, trying to get those children used to a different behavior – something that was different and not considered normal by most of the world. It should be mentioned, he said, that all three of the major religions in the world, condemned homosexuality and some even condemned cross dressing. That was where he stood, said Mr. Densmore, and that was he would like to see that passed.

**Christa Reed** came forward and said that many of the people there had seen their online advertising. People were concerned about the drag queen dance party. This was going to be nineties rock music that they were playing. They were having a couple kids onstage, a couple of adults playing air guitar, and singing. There would be a little dance pad. This was not a nightclub drag show. This was not going to be provocative. For everybody that was “oh my God, it’s a drag queen show for kids,” it was not. This was not a drag show.

It was a book being read about humanism, said Ms. Reed, which was just a worldview that did not include religion. Humans were believing humans and wanting to be better, and their moral code was not coming from a holy book. The book was about a little girl who lived a very conservative religious area and was tired of explaining to her friends,

“Hey where do you go on Sunday; what do you do for church?;

“Well, me and my family are not religious. This is what we believe in.”

That was what the book was about. It was introducing that worldview to children as opposed to “this was the only thing you have here in Wadsworth.”

That concluded Ms. Reed’s comments.

Mr. Thurber appreciated their thoughts. He said he did not want to cut anyone off, nor drag it on. Seeing no one else, he closed the public participation portion of the meeting. He took a minute and explained that there was no further legislation that night nor talk about legislation that dealt with these types of issues. If anyone came specifically to hear about that, feel free to go or be welcomed to stay. They would take a couple minutes to reset.

A number of people departed and some stayed.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** *None*

**LEGISLATION:**

*The following legislation was read for the first time and acted upon as follows:*

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-031 (1<sup>st</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL EXISTING SECTIONS 154.365 THROUGH 154.368 AND TO ENACT NEW SECTIONS 154.365 THROUGH 154.373 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WADSWORTH REPEAL THE EXISTING HIGH STREET ARTERIAL DISTRICT AND ESTABLISHING THE HIGH STREET TRANSITIONAL BUSINESS OVERLAY DISTRICT**

*Public Hearing Set for April 18, 2023 @ 5:30 p.m., with no Council Member Objection*

- Sponsored by Council Member Thomas Stugmyer
- Discussed in Economic Development & Planning Committee January 9 and February 13, 2023
- Approved by the Planning Commission February 13, 2023

Mr. Stugmyer made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Copley, to place Ordinance No. 23-031 on second reading. An all in favor vote has taken and all members present voted in favor of the motion. **Ordinance No. 23-031 advanced to second reading for the meeting of March 21, 2023.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-032 (1<sup>st</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 34.36 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WADSWORTH TO PROVIDE FOR THE ALLOCATION OF INCOME TAX RECEIPTS DURING FISCAL YEAR 2023 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by President of Council Bob Thurber
- Discussed in Committee of the Whole March 7, 2023

Mr. Stugmyer made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Darlington, to place Ordinance No. 23-032 on second reading. An all in favor vote has taken and all members present voted in favor of the motion. **Ordinance No. 23-032 advanced to second reading for the meeting of March 21, 2023.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-033 (1<sup>st</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$6,000.00 IN THE 110 GENERAL FUND FOR PERSONAL SERVICES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023**

- Sponsored by President of Council Bob Thurber
- Discussed in Committee of the Whole March 7, 2023

Mr. Williams made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Stugmyer to suspend the three reading rule on Ordinance No. 23-033. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Rospert, Stugmyer, Williams, Darlington,

Hines, Copley, Yurchiak. Nays: none. Mr. Williams called the question. Mr. Thurber called for a vote. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Stugmyer, Williams, Darlington, Hines, Copley, Yurchiak, Rospert. Nays: none. **Ordinance No. 23-033 declared to have been adopted have been March 7, 2023.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-034 (1<sup>st</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE A SPECIAL SERVICE BONUS FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE RECORDS COMMISSION IN THE CALENDAR YEAR OF 2023 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by President of Council Bob Thurber
- Discussed in Committee of the Whole March 7, 2023

Mr. Williams made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Rospert, to suspend the three reading rule on Ordinance No. 23-034. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Williams, Darlington, Hines, Copley, Yurchiak, Rospert, Stugmyer. Nays: none. Mr. Williams called the question. Mr. Thurber called for a vote. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Darlington, Hines, Copley, Yurchiak, Rospert, Stugmyer, Williams. Nays: none. **Ordinance No. 23-034 declared to have been adopted have been adopted March 7, 2023.**

*The following legislation was read for the second time, having been previously read at different meetings on different days, and acted upon as follows:*

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-016 (2<sup>nd</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE TO APPROVE THE EXECUTION OF A SCHEDULE WITH AMERICAN MUNICIPAL POWER, INC. FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY ENERGY SAVINGS SMART THERMOSTAT PROGRAM AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by Council Member Bruce Darlington
- Forwarded by Public Service Committee February 13, 2023, with recommendation for three readings

Mr. Darlington made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Yurchiak, to place Ordinance No. 23-016 on third reading. An all in favor vote was taken and all Council members present voted in favor of the motion. **Ordinance No. 23-016 advanced to third reading for the meeting of March 21, 2023.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-019 (2<sup>nd</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO ADVERTISE FOR, RECEIVE BIDS FOR, AND AWARD CONTRACTS FOR THE 2023 STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROJECTS CONSISTING OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF IMPROVEMENTS OF CERTAIN CITY STREETS AND ALL APPURTENANCES AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by Council Member David Williams
- Forwarded by Public Ways Committee February 13, 2023

Mr. Williams made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Hines, to suspend the three reading rule on Ordinance No. 23-019. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Hines, Copley, Yurchiak, Rospert, Stugmyer, Williams, Darlington. Nays: none. Mr. Williams called the question. Mr. Thurber called for a vote. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Copley, Yurchiak, Rospert, Stugmyer, Williams, Darlington, Hines. Nays: none. **Ordinance No. 23-019 declared to have been adopted March 7, 2023.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-020 (2<sup>nd</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO ADVERTISE FOR, RECEIVE BIDS AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR THE STATE STREET RESURFACING PROJECT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by Council Member David Williams
- Forwarded by Public Ways Committee February 13, 2023, with three readings suggested

Mr. Williams made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Hines, to suspend the three reading rule on Ordinance No. 23-020. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Yurchiak, Rospert, Stugmyer, Williams, Darlington, Hines, Copley. Nays: none. Mr. Williams called the question. Mr. Thurber called for a vote. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Rospert, Stugmyer, Williams, Darlington, Hines, Copley, Yurchiak,. Nays: none. **Ordinance No. 23-020 declared to have been adopted March 7, 2023.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-021 (2<sup>nd</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO ADVERTISE FOR, RECEIVE BIDS AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR THE 2023 STREET STRIPING PROJECT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by Council Member David Williams
- Forwarded by Public Ways Committee February 13, 2023

Mr. Williams made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Stugmyer, to place Ordinance No. 23-021 on third reading. An all in favor vote was taken and all Council members present voted in favor of the motion. **Ordinance No. 23-021 advanced to third reading for the meeting of March 21, 2023.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-024 (2<sup>nd</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE DETERMINING TO PROCEED WITH REPAIRING, REPLACING OR CONSTRUCTING OF CERTAIN SIDEWALKS IN THE CITY OF WADSWORTH AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by Council Member David Williams
- Forwarded by Public Ways Committee February 13, 2023, with at least two readings

Mr. Williams made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Yurchiak, to suspend the three reading rule on Ordinance No. 23-024. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Stugmyer, Williams, Darlington, Hines, Copley, Yurchiak, Rospert. Nays: none. Mr. Williams called the question. Mr. Thurber called for a vote. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Williams, Darlington, Hines, Copley, Yurchiak, Rospert, Stugmyer. Nays: none. **Ordinance No. 23-024 declared to have been adopted March 7, 2023.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-025 (2<sup>nd</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO APPLY FOR AND ENTER INTO GRANT AGREEMENTS WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF AVIATION FOR THE PURCHASE OF SNOW REMOVAL CARRIER VEHICLE AND ATTACHMENTS, FOR DESIGN SERVICES FOR PRECISION APPROACH PATH INDICATORS (PAPI), DESIGN SERVICES FOR AIRPORT PARKING APRON, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL, AND DESIGN OF AN AUTOMATED WEATHER OBSERVATION SYSTEM (AWOS) AT THE WADSWORTH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by Council Member David Williams
- Forwarded by Public Ways Committee February 13, 2023

Mr. Williams made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Hines, to place Ordinance No. 23-025 on third reading. An all in favor vote was taken and all Council members present voted in favor of the motion. **Ordinance No. 23-025 advanced to third reading for the meeting of March 21, 2023.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-026 (2<sup>nd</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO ADVERTISE FOR, RECEIVE BIDS AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR THE AIRPORT TAXIWAY & FUEL FARM CONCRETE PAVEMENT REPAIR PROJECT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by Council Member David Williams
- Forwarded by Public Ways Committee February 13, 2023

Mr. Williams made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Copley, to place Ordinance No. 23-026 on third reading. An all in favor vote was taken and all Council members present voted in favor of the motion. **Ordinance No. 23-026 advanced to third reading for the meeting of March 21, 2023.**

The following legislation was read for the third time, having been previously read at different meetings on different days, and acted upon as follows:

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-012 (3<sup>rd</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO ADVERTISE FOR, RECEIVE BIDS AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF SNOW REMOVAL CARRIER VEHICLE AND ATTACHMENTS FOR THE WADSWORTH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by Council Member David Williams
- Forwarded by Public Ways Committee January 23, 2023

Mr. Williams called the question on Ordinance No. 23-012. Mr. Thurber called for a vote. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Darlington, Hines, Copley, Yurchiak, Rospert, Stugmyer, Williams. Nays: none. **Ordinance No. 23-012 declared to have been adopted March 7, 2023.**

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-013 (3<sup>rd</sup> RDG.): AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO APPLY FOR AND ENTER INTO A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION FOR THE PURCHASE OF SNOW REMOVAL CARRIER VEHICLE AND ATTACHMENTS, FOR DESIGN SERVICES FOR PRECISION APPROACH PATH INDICATORS (PAPI), AND DESIGN SERVICES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL AIRPORT APRON AREA AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by Council Member David Williams
- Forwarded by Public Ways Committee January 23, 2023

Mr. Williams called the question on Ordinance No. 23-013. Mr. Thurber called for a vote. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Hines, Copley, Yurchiak, Rospert, Stugmyer, Williams, Darlington. Nays: none. **Ordinance No. 23-013 declared to have been adopted March 7, 2023.**

That concluded the legislation for the evening. At that time, Mr. Thurber entertained a motion for an executive session.

**OTHER BUSINESS: EXECUTIVE SESSION: LAND ACQUISITION:**

Mr. Stugmyer made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Copley, to hereby move that they hold an executive session to consider the purchase of property for public purposes and that premature disclosure of the information would give an unfair competitive or bargaining advantage to a person whose personal, private interest was adverse to the general public interest. A roll call was taken. Ayes: Rospert, Stugmyer, Williams, Darlington, Hines, Copley, Yurchiak. Nays: none. **City Council entered executive session at approximately 6:02 p.m.**

Mr. Thurber explained that they would have to ask the public to depart for the executive session.

**City Council adjourned the executive session and resumed the regular City Council meeting at approximately 7:50 p.m.**

Mr. Stugmyer made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Yurchaik, to add Ordinance No. 23-035 to the City Council agenda. Mr. Thurber took an all in favor motion and all Council members present voted in favor of the motion. None were opposed. **Ordinance No. 23-035 declared to have been added to the Council agenda March 7, 2023.**

Mr. Thurber asked the Clerk of Council to read the ordinance, which she did.

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-035: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO DO ALL THINGS NECESSARY AND PROPER TO ACCOMPLISH THE PURCHASE OF A PARCEL NUMBERS 055-34C-14-004, 055-34C-26-004, 055-34C-26-001, 055-34C-26-003, 055-34C-26-002, 055-34C-24-001, 055-34C-27-001, IN THE CITY OF WADSWORTH AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY**

- Sponsored by Council Member Thomas Stugmyer
- Discussed in Committee of the Whole March 7, 2023

Mr. Thurber asked if they wanted the first reading.

Mr. Stugmyer made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Darlington, to place Ordinance No. 23-035 on second reading. An all in favor vote was taken. Ayes: Stugmyer, Darlington. Nays: Williams, Rospert, Copley, Yurchiak. Abstained: Hines.

Mr. Yurchiak stated he thought that the ordinance was only approved for agenda and Mr. Thurber said they had done that. Mr. Yurchiak said that he was opposed to putting it on second reading that night.

Several members stated that they wanted the ordinance for first reading on the next Council agenda.

**Mr. Thurber declared that Ordinance No. 23-035 would be placed on the next Council agenda for first reading.**

There was no other business.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:55 p.m. following a motion by Mr. Darlington and a second by Mr. Williams. All were in favor.

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Clerk of Council

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President of Council