



Common Council Meeting – Minutes for March 4, 2024

Council Members in Attendance: Ben Leavitt, Austin Yoder, Amy Rosa, Dustin Geyer, Kelbi Veenstra

Also Present: City Attorney Brian Hoffer, **Clerk-Treasurer** Jeff Knight **Guests:** 3 (IP), and two members of the press (IP) were in attendance.

- Call to Order: Deputy Mayor/Council Member Rosa called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance. Council Member Leavitt offered the opening prayer.
- Roll Call: Council members listed above were in attendance in person. Mayor Jenkins was unable to be in attendance.
- Approval of Minutes from the February 26, 2024, Council meeting: Council Member Veenstra motioned to approve the minutes. Council Member Yoder seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.
- There were no petitions or comments by citizens, no reports of committees, boards, or commissions, and no unfinished business.
- New Business
 - Firefighter 1977 Plan Resolution: CT Knight presented the resolution and why there is a need to set up the new Firefighter 1977 Pension Plan. Council Member Leavitt motioned to approve the Firefighter 1977 Pension Plan Resolution. Council Member Yoder seconded. Council Member Geyer asked what, if anything, was currently in place for the firefighters. CT Knight responded that they are on civilian PERF (what all City employees are on with the exception of the Police Department). CT Geyer asked if the firefighters would have a choice of whether to stay on PERF or have to move to the 1977 Plan. CT Knight said they only have a choice at the initiation of the plan. Since there is a “buy-in” for the firefighters to join, it may not be cost effective for them. However, they do have the choice. Whatever decision they make is the one they will have to stick with going forward. They get one chance to join or not. All future firefighters that join the department will have to meet the 1977 Plan prescribed requirements in order to be hired and then will be put on the 1977 Plan with no option. Council Member Geyer asked if the existing firefighters would be grandfathered into the plan. CT Knight said yes but they would need to buy-in to the plan if they chose to do so. If it is too costly, they may stay on PERF, but this is their only opportunity to make that choice. Deputy Mayor Rosa asked if the 1977 Plan has a social security benefit. CT Knight and Fire Chief Lehman said no. Deputy Mayor Rosa then asked if those that currently have the social security benefit would get to keep what has been earned to this point. CT Knight said he would have to find that answer out from INPRS. Council Member Veenstra inquired when the actuarial report would be complete. CT Knight described what changes need to take place with regard to establishing a “First Class Firefighter” and a salary/wage that goes along with that position, adjusting the salary ordinance to match it, and then sending the actuarial study to the state for their calculations. The actuarial study will take approximately 90 days to complete. Council Member Veenstra asked if there would be another resolution coming through to adjust the salary ordinance. CT Knight said there would need to be an adjustment to the ordinance. This plan will also have its own Board similar to the Police 1977 Plan. Council Member Geyer asked what the budget impact will be. CT Knight said the City’s portion of the cost will increase from 11.2% to 19.1% (7.9%). Deputy Mayor Rosa asked if



there was any penalty for this being two years past the deadline. CT Knight said no. Council Member Geyer asked what the certified salary would be for the 1st Class Firefighter. CT Knight said whatever the approved salary on the ordinance is. Deputy Mayor Rosa asked which of the plans is preferable. CT Knight and Chief Lehman both said the 1977 Plan and gave their reasoning. Deputy Mayor Rosa asked if CT Knight will let the Council know what the cost to buy-in is. CT Knight said he will let them know as soon as it is determined, and he is informed. Council Member Geyer asked what happens if the firefighter works for the City for a few years and then leaves. What happens with the pension at that point. CT Knight said they would lose a portion of the pension based upon the vesting schedule. Chief Lehman said the firefighter would be able to get their 6% out that they put in. Once the discussion ended, the Council approved the Firefighter 1977 Plan Resolution unanimously by voice vote.

- Approval of Accounts Payable Vouchers: City 2024 APV's Totaling \$503,803.72: CT Knight presented the APV's for approval. The major expenses were \$50,000 to JPR for their work on the Downtown Master Plan Study, regular monthly contract payments to The Boys and Girls Club (\$10,416) and FCDC (\$1,667), and Beer and Slabaugh for hauling the brush to the dump (\$28,710). The rest were payroll and normal course of business expenses. Deputy Mayor Rosa motioned to approve the 2024 City APV's in the amount of \$503,803.72. Council Member Geyer seconded. The APV's were approved unanimously by voice vote.
- Reports by City Officers: There were none.
- Adjournment: With no further business to discuss, Council Member Leavitt motioned to adjourn the meeting and Council Member Veenstra seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 pm by unanimous voice vote.

Amy Rosa, Deputy Mayor

Attest: _____
Jeff Knight, Clerk of the Council