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## **JANUARY 21, 2025 – REGULAR MEETING**

Tiffin City Council met for its second meeting of the month in accordance with Codified Ordinance Section 121.03. Council President Bridget Boyle opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. The invocation was given, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL:** Clerk of Council Ann Forrest recited roll call and seven councilmembers were present: Aaron Jones (1<sup>st</sup> Ward), Scott Hoernemann (2<sup>nd</sup> Ward), Kevin Roessner (3<sup>rd</sup> Ward), Dennis Snay (4<sup>th</sup> Ward), Cheyane Thacker (At Large) and John Hays (At Large)); and John Kahler (At Large). Also attending were Mayor Lee Wilkinson, Director of Law Zachary Fowler, City Administrator, Nick Dutro and Director of Finance Kathy Kaufman.

**MINUTES:** The January 6, 2025 Regular and Committee of the Whole Meeting minutes, as well as the January 13, 2025 Special Meeting minutes, were approved as written.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Councilmember Kahler reported that the Law & Community Planning Committee met in City Chambers on January 13, 2025 starting at 6:10 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Mayor's Requests for Legislation #25-01 and #25-05, as well as any other business to come before the committee. Attending were committee members John Kahler, John Hays, and Dennis Snay. Also attending were Mayor Lee Wilkinson, Law Director Zachary Fowler, City Administrator Nick Dutro, City Council President Bridget Boyle, Council Clerk Ann Forrest, Council Members Kevin Roessner, Scott Hoernemann, Aaron Jones, John Hays, and Cheyane Thacker, and City of Tiffin Public Works Superintendent Brandon Burner. The Committee first addressed Mayor's Request for Legislation #25-01, which requested certain updates to Tiffin City Ordinances Chapter 723 - Mobile Food Unit Vendor's License. Several years ago City Council passed legislation regarding certain requirements for mobile food vendors in Tiffin. The current law provides for certain locations where mobile food vendors may set up and sell their products. Those locations include city lots 5, 6, 7, and the TSEP lot. In the past the process for a mobile food vendor to get a permit to set up and sell in Tiffin was a bit of a "patchwork" process. It often required going to several different city departments to get a permit. The process has since been streamlined so that most vendors are able to obtain a permit with just one visit to the city administrator's office. The most significant proposed change to the current law is a \$250.00 deposit that vendors would pay to ensure that their area is cleaned up and not damaged when they leave. It was suggested that perhaps this matter should be tabled so that the Committee can do further research on additional possible changes, such as whether there should be a requirement that mobile vendors maintain a certain distance from local restaurants. That research may include reviewing legislation that other municipalities have recently enacted. Councilmember Dennis Snay made a motion to table the issue for later discussion. Councilmember John Hays seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Committee then addressed Mayor's Request for Legislation #25-05, which seeks to authorize the solicitation of requests for quotes (RFQs) for engineering services and to execute a design and construction administration and inspection contract with the selected consultant for the 2025 River and Creek Wall Rehabilitation project. City of Tiffin Public Works Superintendent Brandon Burner explained that the City of Tiffin owns two miles of concrete and masonry river and creek walls with a height ranging from about 7' to over 25' tall. Cracking and spalling concrete and dislodged portions of the wall are a cause for concern. The city needs to find a contractor who can assess the condition of the walls; prioritize repairs or further investigation based on safety; program rehabilitation and maintenance; design and inspect any necessary point repairs; and provide specifications, drawings, schedules, etc. for long-term maintenance best practices. The estimated design cost is \$75,000.00 and those funds have already been earmarked for the project. Councilmember John Hays moved to recommend that the Law Director draft legislation in support of Mayor's Request for Legislation #25-05. Councilmember Snay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. With no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m. Report respectfully submitted by John Kahler, Chair.

Councilmember Snay reported that the Recreation & Public Property Committee met in City Chambers on January 13, 2025, starting at 6:42 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Mayor's Requests for Legislation #24-52 and #24-53, as well as any other business to come before the committee. Attending were committee members Dennis Snay (Chair) Aaron Jones and Scott Hoernemann. Also attending were Mayor Lee Wilkinson, Law Director Zachary Fowler, City Administrator Nick Dutro, City Council President Bridget Boyle, Councilmembers Kevin Roessner and Cheyane Thacker. The committee first addressed Mayor's request for legislation #24-52 – Sale of Louisa K. Fast Park. City Administrator Nick Dutro started with giving history/background on the sale/auction of said park. The 2.0-acre park is outside of the city limits and needs many

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repairs (badly maintained concrete pad and rarely used). We maintain the park with ground keeping which costs the city about \$2,000.00, annually. We would like to remove this property from the city's portfolio through an auction while the federal government would bear the cost of such an action. The City of Tiffin owes nothing on this property and the federal government are the benefactors of this sale/auction. A local appraiser estimated the value of property at approximately \$35,000 while the federal government thinks it is worth \$90,000 based on highest invest use. Nick also said that this legislation needs to go 3-readings since it is the sale property. This legislation needs to deem this park not useable for a park. Nick went on to say that the auction will take place sometime in the Spring. Councilmember Jones said it is outside of the city limits, eye-sore and that we do not lose sight of honoring Mrs. Fast. Councilmember Hoernemann mentioned that we ask the Mayor to request legislation when working on Apple Jack Park and to honor Louisa K. Fast, especially since she lived across the street from said park. Jones requested a motion for Law Director Fowler to draft legislation and Hoernemann 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Committee then addressed the Mayor's request for Legislation #24-53 which authorizes the City Administrator to prepare plans and specifications, advertise for and receive bids, and recommend and execute a contract for the Apple-Jack Park Project. This project is supported by funds obtained through the Community Development Block Grant program and administered through TSEP. The City Administrator explained where the money comes from and how it is to be spent. He mentioned that due to the grant money not stretching as far that we will need to use dollars from the City's General Fund. Possibly renaming Apple-Jack Park, to Louisa K. Fast Park. I mentioned that the Mayor requested this legislation be passed with an emergency and suspension of the Council's three-reading rule. Councilmember Hoernemann mentioned history that people wanted something done with Apple-Jack Park. Councilmember said that this legislation seems positive. Jones made a motion requesting the Law Director to draft legislation for #24-53. Councilmember Hoernemann 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. The motion passed unanimously. With no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 P.M. Dennis A. Snay, Committee Chair.

Councilmember Thacker reported that a Streets, Sidewalks, and Sewers Committee meeting was held on January 13, 2024 at 5:30 P.M. in Council Chambers. Attending were committee members Cheyane Thacker, Aaron Jones, Scott Hoernemann, Kevin Roessner, and Dennis Snay, along with Council Members, John Hays and John Kahler, Council President Bridget Boyle, City Administrator Nick Dutro, City Public Works Superintendent Brandon Burner, Law Director Zachary Fowler, Clerk of Council Ann Forrest, and Mayor Lee Wilkinson. Thacker called the meeting to order. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss Mayor's Requests for Legislation #25-02 (Road Salt Competitive Bid Acquisition), #25-03 (Street Sweeper Lease), #25-04 (Curb Lawn Restoration Program) and any other business that may come before them. Burner gave the committee information on the ODOT Road Salt Competitive Bid. For the last few years, the City has purchased road salt through this program. This has allowed the city to get more competitive pricing for road salt. Roessner motioned to have the Law Director prepare legislation. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0. Burner gave the committee information about a new Street Sweeper lease. The current sweeper is 10 years old and not in great condition and wasn't a great machine from the beginning. The new proposed machine is smaller and more compact. However, it has more attachment options, cameras, and is 4 wheel steering. Also, because it's smaller, it fits in our older buildings better. It is a lease to own over 5 years. Eventually, we will sell the old street sweeper once we have the new one. To capitalize on a specific interest rate, Burner asked Council to consider passing under a suspension and emergency. Snay motioned to have the Law Director prepare legislation. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0. Burner gave the committee information about the Curb Lawn Restoration Program. The purpose of the program is to restore lawn areas that are currently covered in gravel and are in the right of way. There had been 8 requests so far from citizens to restore their lawn. It is being paid for through the ODNR grant the city received and additional funds already accounted for in the budget for 2025. It is a voluntary program and is at no cost to the residents who request to be part of the program. Burner requested that it pass with an emergency and under suspension. Jones motioned to have the Law Director prepare legislation. Roessner seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0. With no further business the committee adjourned at 6:04 P.M. Respectfully submitted, Cheyane Thacker, Chairperson.

No additional Committee of the Whole was scheduled.

#### **REPORTS OF THE OFFICERS:**

##### **MAYOR LEE WILKINSON:**

The Mayor reminded the public that in this cold weather they should not to use heating devices designed for outdoor purposes in the inside. If they do use indoor heaters, all flammable materials should be removed from the area.

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He also reported that last Wednesday night he had the privilege of participating in a very informative panel discussion about housing with the League of Women Voters.

Thursday he spoke to the Kiwanis Club of Tiffin about the exciting things coming up for Tiffin in 2025.

Earlier that evening he was at the Izaak Walton League of Seneca County helping them celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They focus on conservation and education, and they also partner with the City of Tiffin Parks and Recreation Department to host the Fishing Derby for young children every summer.

He said last week he had the honor and privilege of swearing in three new firefighters. He congratulated Thomas Bland, Andrew Unangst and Austin Woods.

The Mayor introduced Debbie Schultz, Vice President of the North Ohio-Lake Erie Nurse Honor Guard. Their group service Ottawa, Sandusky, Seneca, Erie and Huron counties. The Nurse Honor Guard pays tribute to nurses at the time of their death by performing the Nightingale Tribute at the funeral or memorial service. A lit Nightingale lamp is carried up at the beginning of the ceremony and is then extinguished and presented to the family with condolences. They currently have 20 members covering all five counties but are looking for new members to meet the goal of having 10-15 members per county,

**CLERK OF COUNCIL ANN FORREST:** No report.

**DIRECTOR OF FINANCE KATHY KAUFMAN:**

Director of Finance Kaufman explained that suspension was requested for Ord. 2025-12 to put funds into the Budget to be used as soon as possible. These funds include donations to the Police and Fire Departments, as well as an insurance reimbursement for the Engineer’s Department for work on a vehicle.

Director of Finance Report for the month ending:	DECEMBER 31, 2024
Total Receipts for the month:	\$5,531,100.24
Total Expenses for the month:	\$5,413,053.42
The General Fund unencumbered balance:	\$6,050,187.96

The income tax receipts for December 2024 were \$1,127,303.99. The total annual increase in income tax collections for December 2024 compared to December 2023 is \$51,261.43. Year to date income tax receipts are up 4.98%.

The portion of income tax receipts that was transferred into fund 215 for public streets for December 2024 is \$130,855.62.

The unexpended balance for all funds is **\$40,128,048.96** which is the same as the bank balances for the same time period.

Councilmember Roessner moved to accept the December 31, 2024 financial report as presented, as well as the bank reconciliation ending December 31, 2024 emailed to Council; Councilmember Hoernemann seconded. On a voice vote motion was approved 7-0.

**DIRECTOR OF LAW ZACHARY FOWLER:**

Director of Law Fowler reported on the AT&T tariff request that the cost of relocating or undergrounding their facilities in the public right-of-way to be at the expense of the municipalities. On January 13<sup>th</sup> the City filed its resolution supporting OML opposition, and AT&T withdrew its request. The issue is over now, but it is not going away and will probably be resubmitted. He also noted that the petition to the county to match Clinton and Hopewell Township boundaries to those of the City was presented to them on January 15<sup>th</sup>, and is pending receipt of one document to be received from the Clerk to finalize.

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**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mayor's Request for Legislation #25-06 – .Allocation of Opioid Settlement Funds

*Referred to the Finance Committee*

Mayor's Request for Legislation #25-07 – Application to NOPEC Energized Community Grant

*Referred to the Finance Committee*

Finance Director's Request for Legislation #F24-1 to amend the 2025 Budget Ordinance 24-94 to appropriate funds into the Engineer, Fire and Police Budgets.

*On file in Clerk of Council's office; legislation prepared under Ord. 2025-12.*

Finance Director's letter dtd January 17, 2025 – Unclaimed Funds as per Attached List

*On file in Clerk of Council's office.*

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**MOTIONS:** None.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

**Resolution 2025-2**, introduced by Cheyane Thacker and read for the first time.

A RESOLUTION declaring the necessity of an election on the question of approving the passage of an ordinance to amend Sections 197.012 and 197.013 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Tiffin, Ohio, in order to provide for the continuation of an existing one-quarter percent (1/4%) municipal income tax increase for a continuing period of time to provide funds to pay certain costs of maintaining, repairing and improving public streets in the City, and declaring an emergency.

*Discussion: Law Director Fowler explained that this legislation would put the issue on the ballot of moving the existing levy from a five-year renewal to a continuous levy. Ord. 2025-5 will have to be tabled until after the vote.*

*Councilmember Hoernemann added that 0.25% on a \$40,000 income would be an extra \$100/year or \$9/month.*

Roll call vote were taken on the emergency and passage, and both were approved 7-0.

**ORDINANCES:**

**Ordinance 2025-5**, introduced by Cheyane Thacker and read for the second time.

AN ORDINANCE amending sections 197.012 and 197.013 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Tiffin, Ohio in order to provide for the continuation of an existing one-quarter percent (1/4%) municipal income tax increase for a continuing period of time to provide funds to pay certain costs of maintaining, repairing and improving public streets in the City.

**Ordinance 2025-6**, introduced by Cheyane Thacker and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE authorizing participation in the ODOT Road Salt Contracts awarded in 2025.

**Ordinance 2025-7**, introduced by Cheyane Thacker and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE authorizing and directing the City Administrator to negotiate and execute a lease-purchase agreement for a 2025 Bucher CityCat 5006 Street Sweeper from the MTech Company of Cleveland, Ohio through the State of Ohio Department of Administrative Services Cooperative Purchasing Program, and declaring an emergency.

Councilmember Thacker moved for suspension of the three-reading rule and passage; Councilmember Jones seconded.

*Discussion: Councilmember Thacker explained that suspension was requested in order to go for lower interest rates while available.*

Roll call votes were taken on the suspension, emergency and passage, and each was approved 7-0.

**Ordinance 2025-8**, introduced by Cheyane Thacker and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE authorizing the Curb Lawn Restoration Program using grant funds from the Urban Forestry Grant Program to assist property owners in removing gravel parking areas in the public right of way and declaring an emergency.

Councilmember Thacker moved for suspension of the three-reading rule and passage; Councilmember Roessner seconded.

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*Discussion: Councilmember Thacker stated that this is a voluntary and limited program, so if residents are interested they should contact Public Works as soon as possible.*

Roll call vote was taken on the suspension, emergency and passage, and each was approved 7-0.

**Ordinance 2025-9**, introduced by John Kahler and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE to authorize and direct the City Administrator to solicit qualifications from and enter into a contract with a professional design firm for professional design services for maintenance of the City's Sandusky River Wall and Rock Creek Wall.

**Ordinance 2025-10**, introduced by Dennis Snay and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE authorizing the sale of municipal real property on North State Route 101 known as the Louisa K. Fast Park by a public auction.

**Ordinance 2025-11**, introduced by Dennis Snay and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE authorizing and directing the City Administrator to prepare plans and specifications, advertise for and receive bids, recommend and execute a contract for the Apple-Jack Park Project, and declaring an emergency.

Councilmember Snay moved for suspension of the three-reading rule and passage; Councilmember Roessner seconded.

*Discussion: Councilmember Snay explained that the Mayor requested an emergency on this ordinance to get the program started and bids in as soon as possible in order to enjoy the park in good weather.*

Roll call votes were taken on the suspension, emergency and passage, and each was approved 7-0.

**Ordinance 2025-12**, introduced by Kevin Roessner and read for the first time.

AN ORDINANCE amending the 2025 Budget Ordinance 2024-94 to appropriate funds into the 2025 Budget. Councilmember Roessner moved for suspension of the three-reading rule and passage; Councilmember Snay seconded.

*Discussion: Councilmember Roessner explained that these funds are from donations received and an insurance reimbursement. He thanked Visconsi, the Ohio Attorney General and Tiffin Westgate for their donations.*

Roll calls votes were taken on the suspension and passage, and both were approved 7-0.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Councilmember Kahler publicly announced that effective as of the adjournment of the evening's meeting, he was officially submitting his letter of resignation due to an apparent conflict of interest between being a voting member of Council and his work as a criminal defense attorney. He said his decision was influenced by information from the Ohio Supreme Court Board of Professional Responsibility and the Ohio Ethics Commission. He added that he had enjoyed his time on City Council and wished his fellow members luck in the future. President Boyle wished him the same and thanked him for his valuable work while serving.

Since Kahler is not affiliated with a party, it falls to Council to appointment his replacement, and comprehensive discussion was held regarding the process to fill his seat. Those interested must be a registered voter and must have lived in Tiffin for at least a year. Councilmember Roessner moved that any qualified voter in Tiffin must submit their letter of interest and resume by Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 4:30 p.m., and they must be present at a Special Meeting to be held on February 10, 2025 when they will be interviewed and roll call votes taken until there is a majority vote, with the Council President as tiebreaker if required. If after five rounds no candidate is chosen, another meeting would be scheduled. Councilmember Snay seconded. Roll call vote was taken and motion was approved 7-0.

It was further discussed and decided that the self-nominations should be emailed to City Administrator Nick Dutro at [cityadministrator@tiffinohio.gov](mailto:cityadministrator@tiffinohio.gov) or delivered to Tiffin City Hall before the deadline to be considered. All letters will be submitted to City Council members for review, and the candidates will be publicly announced. If a majority candidate is not chosen on February 5<sup>th</sup>, Council will hold a vote at its regular meeting on February 18, 2025.

President Boyle announced a special Council meeting to be held Monday, February 10, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers to interview and vote on candidates for the vacant Council At Large position, and any other business that may come before them.

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Finance Committee Chair Roessner asked his committee if there was any opposition to not scheduling a Finance Committee meeting and having legislation prepared for Mayor’s Requests for Legislation #25-06 (Allocation of Opioid Settlement Funds) and #25-07 (Application to NOPEC Energized Community Grant). Law Director Fowler that the Police Department would be coming to present on the DARE Program and suggested it would be best to wait until after that before making a decision on legislation. The Mayor confirmed their presentation would be on February 18<sup>th</sup>. For the purposes of the NOPEC Grant, City Administrator Dutro said it would be helpful to get it moving earlier, as it is something that Council passes every year and it would allow him to get on the schedule to get that approved so we can receive some grant funds back. Regarding the opioid settlement funds, he suggested it would be worthwhile to have a committee meeting to spell out what Council’s intentions are, as we are potentially talking about quite a bit of funds to help the community. Councilmember Roessner requested that the Law Director prepare legislation just on the NOPEC Grant.

Law Director Fowler reminded Council that their financial disclosure with the Ohio Ethics Commission must be done, and the general deadline is May 15<sup>th</sup>. However, if you are a candidate for office you also have to do this disclosure, so if anyone is going to turn in a petition for councilmember at large or council president, you have until April 7<sup>th</sup> to submit your financial disclosures. If you are an incumbent, your deadline is a little different; if you are certified to the ballot prior to May 15<sup>th</sup> you have 30 days prior to the first election and your timeline could be moved up from May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Law Director Fowler clarified for the public that to qualify as a candidate for the vacant councilmember at large position, you must be a registered voter and a resident of Tiffin for more than one year. Once voted in, you will have to take the oath of office before you start. You will also have to have your financial disclosure submitted by 15 days after taking your oath.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Ann Forrest, Clerk of Council.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer of Council

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Council