

Council of the Whole

Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 23, 2021

Council of the Whole met at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers at the John Knisely Municipal Building. The purpose of the Meeting was to discuss the counterproposal by the New Philadelphia City Schools regarding the stadium lease.

In attendance were Councilmembers:

Mr. Dean Holland

Mr. Dan Lanzer

Mrs. Aimee May

Mr. Rob Maurer

Mrs. Cheryl Ramos

Mr. Kelly Ricklic

Mr. John Zucal

Safety Director: Greg Popham

President of Council: Don Kemp

Clerk of Council: Julie Courtright

Law Director Marvin Fete

Treasurer Tom Gerber

New Phila. Schools Supt. Amy Wentworth

Excused Absense: Mrs. Beth Gundy

President of Council Mr. Don Kemp opened the meeting at 6:30PM. Council voted to go into Council of the Whole with Mr. Rob Maurer presiding.

Mr. Kelly Ricklic read a statement to Council encouraging Council to reject the Counteroffer by New Philadelphia City Schools.

Law Director Fete stated that he sent a letter to the Board of Education and Superintendent advising that they could sent a counterproposal.

Councilwoman Ramos stated that she agreed with Mr. Ricklic's statement. Mrs. Ramos said the following:

The Stadium does belong to the residents of the City, so therefore I think the closing of it should be under the Mayor's authority as in the Resolution we approved. Now, reading the letter from Steven Craig it states the OHSAA is a private organization. They only have regulations for practices and the policies for that. At point here is opening and closing the stadium, but the way I read it is that the School Board members are solely responsible for whether they want their students to be at the stadium or not, if they want them to have shared locker spaces or not. Depending on

what these athletic organizations say. That has nothing to do with our facility or the use of it by the residents.

Mr. Lanzer asked the Mayor if we had money in the budget to take over the stadium.

Mayor Day said major repairs if it would occur this year.

Mr. Zucal had the following statement:

I can't begin to express how disappointed I am as a member of City Council, that we are back tonight as a Council of the Whole to discuss this matter. Our school district and our community have had a long-standing mutually beneficial relationship. I am confident that we as a City have negotiated in good faith. When we first came forward members of this Committee, members of Council as a Whole spoke with the very important members who've led the stadium drive, who've led to new tracks and new turf, including Mr. Farbizo. At one of the very early meetings it was discussed that we maintained a dollar lease. No one I think ever objected to that. It's been a long-standing practice and very fair to everybody involved. We were asked to consider a lengthier lease as a City Council, which was championed as part of that Committee for the 50 years. We also listened to the Board of Education, asked for vision within the administration to consider what may change over the next 50 years. So at any time we as a Council have asked for communication and dialogue between all parties in a collaborative fashion that would allow for issues that come up and need to be addressed to take place. We were asked by the Board of Education to please pass the legislation in a timely manner. My struggle is that all along we have not seen that kind of effort come out of the Board of Education. This has been in the hands of the Board of Education of three months.

President Kemp had the following comment:

I know I don't have a vote but I totally disagree with Mr. Ricklic and Mr. Zucal. I think it's the athletic facility first. I supported that stadium renovation for 27 years and still support it. The idea is it's for the kids first and the community second. They have spent millions of dollars so our athletes can have a top-notch facility to operate in. So, I don't see how we want to take it over after they've spent millions of dollars to do that. To me that's not good faith. That school has done a lot for this town.

Mr. Zucal said he would agree except for one point, they haven't signed a lease.

Superintendent Wentworth had the following comment:

The Board remains committed to a solution here. As their negotiator tonight that is my hope and my intent that we can come to an agreement that's mutually beneficial to both of us. If this proposal contains language that we need to revisit, we want to revisit that. I know I speak for the Board when they say they found the initially lease that was passed in April to be something that they felt they can't live up to. It was too restrictive. They know they saw opportunities where it would not be able to be used for students first. That is the main reason why they felt they could not sign that. We are very open to looking at this and making it work for us and for you.

Mr. Maurer had the following comment:

Let's just come together. We all live in this area. It's time for everyone to move forward.

Law Director Fete asked Council to reconvene after the meeting for a discussion with Superintendent Wentworth.

Mrs. Ramos said she thinks they said everything that needs to be said.

Mr. McAbier said he agrees that we need to start fresh now. As a Service Director he is not interested in taking over the stadium.

Mayor Day pointed out the the Article 8 Modification states that the lease can be changed or modified at any time.

Mr. Ricklic had the following question:

My question is, there is no lease, do we have the insurance coverage in the event of an accident or if a player is injured?

Mayor Day said he'll have to check the insurance coverage in the morning. To resolve this the School Board needs to sign the lease and move on.

MR. RICKLIC MOTIONED TO OPPOSE THE COUNTER PROPOSAL TO RESOLUTION 13-2021

MR. ZUCAL SECONDED THE MOTION

6 YEAS, 1 NAY (MR. LANZER)

THE COUNTER PROPOSAL WAS REJECTED BY COUNCIL

With no further matter to come before Council of the Whole the Meeting adjourned at 7:09 PM.