

**Minutes of the Special City Council Meeting**

Held on Monday, August 5, 2013

7:00 p.m.

1. CALL SPECIAL CITY COUCNIL MEETING TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

A Special meeting of the Oberlin City Council was held on August 5, 2013 in the Council Chambers of the Oberlin City Hall, located at 85 S. Main Street Oberlin, Ohio. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m., by Presiding Officer Ronnie Rimbart. Roll Call was taken:

Council Members:

Present

Absent

Charles Peterson



Bryan Burgess



Sharon Soucy



Elizabeth Meadows



Scott Broadwell



Aaron Mucciolo



Ronnie Rimbart

**Appointees:**

Belinda Anderson, Clerk of Council



Jon Clark, Law Director



Eric Norenberg, City Manager



Sal Talarico, Finance Director

**2. NEW BUSINESS:**

ORDINANCE No. 13-42 AC CMS: An Ordinance Directing the City of Oberlin Finance Director to Certify to the Lorain County Board of Elections, for Submission to the Electorate, an Initiative Ordinance Establishing a Community Bill of Rights and Declaring an Emergency. (1st)(E)

Mucciolo moved to have the ordinance read by number, title and substantive portions only, seconded by Burgess.

Roll Call: 5 Ayes

0 Nays

Motion Carried

The Clerk read as directed.

Meadows entered Council Chambers at this time.

Motion to approve the ordinance on first reading was moved by Mucciolo, seconded by Broadwell.

Law Director Clark noted that a petition had been submitted to the City of Oberlin to put forth to the electorate a proposed 'Bill of Rights' ordinance. The Ohio Revised Code (ORC) has a set of procedures for how that petition is handled by the City. Once the petition has been filed with the Finance Director with the requisite number of signatures, he then certifies it to the Board of Elections, who makes a review to determine the validity of the signatures and whether there is the requisite number. In this case, the Board of Elections made that determination and notified the Finance Director, who has reviewed the petition and made his own finding of the validity or the sufficiency of the petition which he in turn will certify to the Board of Elections with a request that this initiative ordinance be placed before the electorate in November. The ordinance before Council is simply authorizing the Finance Director to certify his findings to the Board of Elections. As stated in the ordinance, this is not a determination of how anyone feels about the underlying ordinance, whether Council approves it or not; it is simply procedural and is being done to satisfy the request of the Board of Elections.

Soucy sought clarification as to whether or not the ordinance needed to be passed on emergency. Clark responded in the affirmative noting that the deadline to certify the Finance Director's findings is August 7th, 2013. Rimbart said he spoke with Mr. Talarico who stated that he would be taking this to the Board of Elections tomorrow to have this certified, everything appeared to be in order. Meadows stated that she appreciated the explanation provided to Council. When she read it she wasn't sure what they were supposed to do with the ordinance, but she was satisfied with the Law Director's explanation.

A motion to suspend the rules requiring three readings and to elevate Ordinance No. 13-42 to emergency for reasons stated in Section 3 was moved by Burgess, seconded by Soucy.

Roll Call: 6 Ayes

0 Nays

Motion Carried

(1st, Suspension of Rules/ Emergency)

David Ashenhurst, Sumner Street raised concerns related to the inconsistencies found in the ballot language and that of the proposed ordinance. He asked that the language be reviewed with the petitioners' committee to consider adding the words "protecting those rights by prohibiting" since that language was expressly connected to the Bill of Rights which is the focus of the petition. Law Director Clark noted that he has worked with the petitioners and come up with language that is satisfactory to all parties.

He further noted that this language was not a part of the ordinance before Council or required to be approved by Council. The ultimate say would be the Board of Elections who would make a determination on the accuracy of the language which he had no reason to believe would be rejected.

Presiding Officer Rimbart noted that the language will be presented to the Board of Elections tomorrow. He asked that the Law Director take concerns raised by Mr. Ashenhurst under advisement and consider talking to the petitioners again to see if there are any additional concerns on their part.

Roll Call: 6 Ayes

0 Nays

Motion Carried

(1st, Final)

3. HEAR AN UPDATE FROM THE OBERLIN CITY LIGHT AND POWER DIRECTOR CONCERNING THE JULY 26TH CITYWIDE POWER OUTAGE

Members of Council heard a presentation from OMLPS Director Steve Dupee, regarding his August 3, 2013 memo relating to the Citywide Outage of July 26th Report. A copy of the report has been incorporated into the minutes.

City wide Outage of July 26th Report - Steve Dupee

On Friday, July 26th the City experienced a system-wide outage event. The event was caused by a broken cross-arm on a 3-phase, 69 kV transmission pole line owned and operated by First Energy and located between the intersection of Butternut Ridge Road/Pyle South Amherst and Quarry Road in a field south of Garfield Road. This section of transmission line supports two independent electric circuits serving the City and typically offers enhanced reliability since either circuit can be used for transmission service. The first circuit "Shinrock" tripped off at 10:44 a.m. OMLPS staff contacted First Energy Western Dispatch to determine the cause of the circuit failure. At that time, the City was still receiving transmission service from the second circuit, "Henrietta". First Energy crews were dispatched to investigate the cause. OMLPS staff met with First Energy staff at the City's switch station to check distance relays which showed that the fault condition was approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the City's switch station. Drew Skolnicki, OMLPS Technician, drove the circuit and discovered a broken cross-arm hanging near the ground on a pole east of Quarry Road (see attached picture). The other half of the still-energized circuit was laid against the cross-arm below it and was smoking. Drew radioed to advise the second circuit was about to trip off and within a few seconds it did.

First Energy distribution crews were dispatched to the site and their technicians prepared a switch procedure in order to isolate the fault and safely make repairs. A repair/replacement plan was executed by First Energy distribution crews including replacing all cross-arms on the pole with new polymer insulators, repairing the damaged cable and reattaching circuits to new insulators. Power was restored to the City in just over 6 hours.

OMLPS staff undertook a number of steps to notify customers including utilization of the Reverse 911 System, personal visits to downtown retail businesses, personal visits to Industrial Park and critical load customers and fielding phone calls to the OMLPS office. A number of outage follow-up activities are underway including visual inspection of First Energy's transmission pole line. If Council recalls, First Energy discovered a broken transmission pole on this same stretch of line during a helicopter fly-over inspection in August of 2010. In order to replace the pole and make other minor repairs, the City operated its power plant on a Sunday morning for a period of 7 hours in order to carry the City's load while First Energy completed repairs.

Staff has received some inquiries regarding utilization of the City's power plant during this outage event. There are a number of issues to consider before initiating a "black start" of the plant to supply power to the community and plant auxiliary equipment without prior planning and preparation. This is known as operating the plant in an "islanded mode", fully separated from the First Energy transmission grid. Unlike the outage event in 2010 which required weeks of pre-planning coordinated service transfer (no black start), adequate staffing levels, load reductions by high demand customers and operation on a clear Sunday morning, OMLPS faced a completely different set of circumstances in the afternoon of July 26th.

The power plant typically operates in parallel with the First Energy transmission grid. The process for black-starting and operating the power plant in an islanded-mode requires a coordinated staff effort through a multi-step process at the plant, at City substations, and at various switch points throughout the City's electric distribution system prior to attempting to synchronize individual electric circuits to plant generation. In addition, there are operational, manpower, and equipment risks that can occur during this type of operation which must be carefully considered and evaluated on a case by case basis. As an example, during the August, 2003, blackout event, OMLPS experienced a catastrophic failure of the alternator on engine-generator #1 due to an overcurrent situation. Finally, "black starting" and operating the City's power plant may extend an outage longer for some customers due to the distribution system switching work that must be undertaken once First Energy service is restored.

There are two major decision points on whether to "black start" and operate the power plant in an islanded mode. The first decision point is whether the City has lost its tie-line connection to First Energy. In this case, our tie-line connection was lost after the second circuit "Henrietta" tripped off at 12:26 p.m. The second decision point is based on the root cause of the outage event, the extent of damages to the transmission system and the

estimated power restoration time period. These are important precursors to implementing a “black start” procedure and operating the City’s power plant due to the inherent risks of operating in an “islanded mode”. In this case, OMLPS staff had witnessed the cause of the outage and knew the exact location. In addition, OMLPS was informed that First Energy repair crews had been dispatched and a response/repair plan was underway. Before 2:00 p.m., OMLPS was informed that power was expected to be restored within a 4 to 6 hour period.

With this information, staff considered two (2) other issues prior to its decision. First, several staff members, including all three electric superintendents who play a critical planning, coordination and operational role were unavailable due to vacation and work schedules. Second, the engine-generator that is utilized as the lead engine for syncing individual circuits was out of service due to several jacket water leaks resulting from peak-shaving operations during the previous week. Given this set of circumstances, a final decision to not operate the power plant was made and, in this case, provided the best and least risky option for public safety, employee safety, equipment failure mitigation, and outage restoration time.

Mucciolo asked Mr. Dupee to explain why the City didn’t power up the generators. Explanation pertaining to operating the plant in islanded mode was provided.

Meadows asked the Light and Power Director to explain what a polymer insulator does. Dupee said that the polymer insulator keeps the energized circuit from the rest of the pole. It prevents the voltage that is traveling through the lines from going down the pole and into the ground.

Soucy asked Mr. Dupee how his decision to handle the situation would have changed if the source of the problem would have been from a lightning storm or if the weather would have been hotter. Dupee said his decision on how to handle a major outage is based on two factors: what the root cause of the outage is and how long it will take to make repairs. Several scenarios were provided.

Soucy asked if this experience might change how he might designate vacation time or broaden the scope of abilities that can deal with emergency outages. Dupee remarked that in the future he would designate vacation time differently. Dupee reported that of the three superintendents; one was on a work related trip to San Francisco, the other two were on vacation. He added that OMLPS’s Distribution Division is currently going through a succession planning process for the replacement of their Technical and Distribution Superintendent, which means it will be even more important that staff has the knowledge and the skills to handle emergencies, like the city-wide outage, going forward.

Broadwell said the explanation provided in the aforementioned memo was helpful. He understood the situation much more clearly and appreciated how the situation was handled overall.

Burgess commented that he felt like Oberlin’s power plant had lost its bragging rights. There are a lot of communities that are jealous of Oberlin’s backup capacity, which wasn’t there when they needed it. Dupee responded that the capacity was there, but staff made the decision not to use it. They could have decided to go with the backup generators which would have extended services a little longer, but for the vast majority of Oberlin it would have extended the outage longer.

Burgess asked if it would help the utility if they identified what areas of town were considered to be a priority. Dupee answered in the affirmative. Burgess noted that there are certain areas of town that have generators that can stand on their own for many hours. For a temporary situation like the one they had last week they can live with some things not coming on, but on the other hand in a community where there is no electricity there is absolutely no place in town that they can retreat to, and as a result many people leave town and go elsewhere. He said he would like to restore their bragging rights. In 2015 they will be looking at installing two new generators. If they currently have one generator that all of the other ones sync to, then maybe they should look at expanding the capacity of the plant and ensuring that the next time this happens they do have the backup capability to bring some of the town back on line quickly.

Rimbert asked how long it would take to fire up the plant in a perfect scenario. Dupee said it wasn't a foolproof system because it is not the way that the power plant operates normally. It is used primarily in cases of emergencies so the time will vary.

Sonner said that they still have bragging rights of a sort. Having the two feeds is good. If one goes down the other one still works. He was curious to know whether they can have perfect confidence that First Energy has kept these two lines in reliable condition so that this is not likely to happen again. Whether it is here or elsewhere, they can expect that the grid is going to fail from time to time. He wanted to know how Oberlin was prepared to deal with interruptions whether it was for forty minutes or a week with electricity coming from the grid. He also asked for further clarification for what "islanded mode" was. Dupee expounded earlier remarks.

Sonner asked for a status update on the City's plans to partner with EDI for backup capacity support. Dupee responded that when EDI expanded their capacity, the City and EDI entered into an interconnection agreement, where they agreed to work with each other to install new relays between stations that would allow EDI's units to be more forgiving related to intermittent events in our system and allow that system to operate in parallel with Oberlin's generation. Unfortunately, Oberlin's power plant is on borrowed time. We are doing a \$1 million dollar emission control improvement project at the plant that will continue to get us another several years of being able to operate the plant. It is a fossil fuel plant and is under attack by the EPA, so we are making these improvements and believe that these improvements will continue to create value for the community, both as a backup resource and as a resource for peak shaving and transmission shaving. Dupee stressed that that resource would more than likely, not be there forever.

Ashenhurst expressed disagreement with having the system and the backup line running through the same pole. Dupee agreed that it would be better to separate and segregate these two lines, but noted that this construction was common in most communities comparable to Oberlin in size. He emphasized that in most instances there is only one feed, instead of two like the City's setup. But in an event like the one that occurred on July 26th, the impact to either of these feed arrangements would have been the same. Burgess said they were not like most communities because they have the FAA in Oberlin, so it is a matter of National Security to ensure that the FAA has a reliable source of electricity.

Soucy asked Mr. Dupee to review the steps that were taken to inform the public during the system wide outage. (Explanation was provided as described in the memo). City Manager Norenberg reviewed additional steps that were taken to notify the public, as well, which included: the use of social media, the City website, and the College emergency communication system. In addition, the Fire Department contacted radio stations that cover the Oberlin area to get the word out. Norenberg stated that staff meetings were held to review the City's response to the outage.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

Being that there was no further business to come before Council at this time the meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Attest:

BELINDA B. ANDERSON, CMC
CLERK OF COUNCIL

RONNIE J. RIMBERT
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

APPROVED: 08/19/2013

POSTED: 08/20/2013







