

**Village of Mariemont  
Council Meeting  
March 11, 2024**

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Mr. Ayer, Mrs. Brownknight, Dr. Lewis, Mr. Van Stone and Mr. York.

Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer to excuse the absence of Mr. Bartlett. On roll call; five ayes, no nays.

Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus addressed Council and provided a handout that outlined menus of opportunity with contact information for partnership opportunities. Currently the county is working with the City of Cincinnati on a 200 million renovation of the Convention Center. It will allow for the exhibition space to be expanded. In addition, a new hotel will be built to the south. It will allow for more program space and updated facilities. The county is presently in negotiations with the Bengals. The city and the county are participating together to pay for renovations with the Bengals paying 40%. Throughout the country, the NFL and state funds are used to help pay for renovations. They are working with a national lease expert. The stadium does not need to be replaced, just renovated which is estimated at a total 500 million dollars. She encourages partnering with the county in a variety of ways. The Village has been successful with the CDGB dollars, Mini Planning Grant, Residential Recycling Initiative Program and the ARPA stormwater grant. ARPA monies were used for emergency relief for businesses and invested in housing for homeless and seniors. They worked with LADD to serve individuals with disabilities in a way that dignifies and allows them to live independently in a smart and strategic way. She encouraged the Village to apply for the Revitalization Grant which opened today for projects. It is an annual grant that is geared towards economic growth and development.

Mr. Ayer commented that he had the opportunity to work with Cher Mohring on the Waste Reduction Innovation Grant and said she was helpful and delightful while working on the grant process. Mr. York too said he has had excellent working relationship with many who have helped with the grant process.

Ms. Brownknight asked what Commissioner Driehaus' top priorities were. Ms. Driehaus said many people are still struggling in parts of the county. More money has been put into the mortgage relief effort. She is also interested in seeing the remaining four lots at the Banks be developed and more development of the bike trails. She encourages continuing dialogue. When local governments thrive – the county thrives.

**Minutes:**

Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to accept the Council Meeting minutes from February 12, 2024, as written. On roll call; five ayes, no nays.

**Communications:**

\*From Police Chief Hines: January 2024 Monthly Report

\*From Maintenance Superintendent James: January & February 2024 Monthly Report. Mrs. Rankin commented that she liked the new format. Dr. Lewis asked if trees to be removed/location could be added to the report.

\*From Administrator Barlow: February 2024 Monthly Report

\*From Building Official Holloway: February 2024 Monthly Report. There were a few rental inspections that trickled in. There have been a few new owners applying for inspections. The next step would be to send focus letters.

\*Project List: Mayor Brown said this is a new item that will replace the Task List. Mr. Holloway will be responsible for keeping the list current. The list is for informational purposes. Should Council have any questions, they can contact the individual responsible instead of lengthy discussions during Council meetings.

Mr. York said the list should include the sidewalk at Dale Park (matching SORTA grant). The next round will be soon and the Village will need to pay and allocate funds for the design work plus the 10% match. Engineer Ertel said the grant was \$315,000 with \$35,000 match from the Village and his estimate for the design work is \$20,000. Mayor Brown said we need to decide on a list of work priorities. An engineering study would need to be performed and reviewed by the

Health and Recreation Committee for a recommendation to Council. Mr. Van Stone said he would like to see an update of the dollar amounts on the Project List once the final appropriations are made.

Mr. Ayer updated Council on the requested spending requests for maintenance and repairs at the pool. Routine maintenance and repairs at the pool \$8,867.00 and Permanent Improvements \$15,931.00 for a total \$24,798. Mr. York moved, seconded by Mrs. Brownknight to approve the spending request. Mr. Van Stone said Shamrock will need to file for any needed building permits. On roll call; five ayes, no nays.

\*From Fiscal Officer Rankin: January 2024 Financial Reports. She will prepare the operating budget for the next meeting and will send out the pre-read.

\*From Douglas Zemke: Resume – Architectural Review Board.

### **Permission to Address Council:**

Ms. Karen Fallon, 6966 Murray Avenue, was granted permission to address Council. She is not here to engage in further discussions of the 5-year saga of the utility wires and poles on Murray Avenue. However, she is here to state her disappointment in the actions or lack thereof, regarding the management of the project by the Mayor and Members of Council. She submitted copies for the record of the communications regarding her concerning regarding the unsightly and unsafe wires that were left behind after the wooden poles were removed. She also included images of said communications beginning on July 5, 2023. Sadly, 12 of those communications were continued requests for a response. As a resident, the exhaustive and unnecessary efforts on her part to secure a simple response is unacceptable, but it pales in comparison to her efforts to secure action and resolution. On December 1<sup>st</sup> she reported a safety concern, having witnessed several children playing on the loose wires that are ground level across the street from her. On January 22, 2024, she was told that the Maintenance Department would be out to encase the wires, which never happened. Within the same response, she was told that Spectrum had corrected their wire situation – which was not true. The orange wires belong to Spectrum. It was then suggested that she reach out to Altafiber on her own. For 8 months the back and forth of *nothing* has resulted in just that – *nothing*. This issue has been a continued game of Who’s on First with Smoke and Mirrors on deck. The only one person she can honestly say has provided her with a straight and honest answer is Dr. Lewis when she said in a Council meeting that she would not be engaging her efforts on this issue because she believed it wasn’t an effective use of her time. Not the answer she wanted to hear but she respected her honesty, nonetheless. On March 8, 2024, she reached out to Bob Walters at Altafiber who immediately took her call, and she then sent him images of the poles in questions. He responded within 4 hours with a concise action plan and also outlined what poles were the responsibility of Duke Energy and Spectrum. She is asking Council one last time to please pick up where she left off by following up with each utility to make sure that these issues are resolved in a timely fashion. If this is any indication of how our Village will manage and maintain the multi-use path after it is installed on Murray Avenue, she will question her support for that initiative. Please get involved, follow up, take action and clean up this mess.

### **Motion to Pay the Bills:**

Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to pay the bills. On roll call: five ayes, no nays.

### **Committee Reports:**

1. Mrs. Brownknight moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to accept the recommendation of the Safety Committee which met on Wednesday February 14, 2024, at 4:00 PM. Present were Safety Committee members Matthew Ayer (Chair), Rob Bartlett (Vice Chair), and Randy York (Member); Mayor Brown; Chief Richard Hines; and Fiscal Officer Kelly Rankin. Chief Hines presented a recommendation to hire a new officer in early 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2024. MPD has identified a highly qualified candidate for the position based on previous interviews from the last opening.

Chief Hines recommends this hire to:

- Fill in for an officer presently on an extended medical leave;
- Bring the unit to its normal full active force of the Chief + 9 + the School Resource Officer. This staffing level:
  - minimizes the need for frequent schedule shifts, which negatively impacts morale;
  - more readily maintains two officers per shift coverage in the Village;
  - minimizes the need for Village-paid overtime to cover normal shifts; and

- helps smooth the transition at years' end when two of MPD's most senior members retire.

After discussion, the Safety Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to Council the hire of a full-time officer in early 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2024 in accordance with the Chief's proposal. The meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.

It is estimated that the cost will be \$85,000 with \$90,000 being added to the permanent appropriation budget for the Police Department. On roll call; five ayes, no nays.

2. Mrs. Brownknight moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer to accept the recommendation of the Public Works and Service Committee which met on March 6th at 4:27 PM. In attendance were the Committee Chairperson Bob Van Stone, Committee Member Randy York, Village Fiscal Officer Kelly Rankin, and Mayor Brown.

The first topic of discussion was to discuss the application to the PUCO to start the Village gas and electric aggregation. After some discussion, Mr. York moved that the Village should pass a resolution to file applications for gas and electric aggregation to the PUCO. Mr. Van Stone seconded the motion.

Also discussed was the trash and recycling service needed for 2025. The current contract with Rumpke expires at the end of 2024. The Village cannot enter into an agreement with the Center for Local Government (CFLG) until the start of 2026. Mr. York moved that the Village should pass a resolution to have the Village Fiscal Officer get bids for an annual trash contract with multiple year extensions. This would permit a cost comparison between the cost of extending the Village contract with the cost of working with CFLG for a trash contract prior to 2026. Mr. Van Stone seconded the motion.

The Committee discussed the options for LED street light conversions approved by the ARB on October 3, 2023. The King Luminaire proprietary unit (bulb and globe) installation would cost \$695/unit while the alternate bulb and globe installation would cost \$300/unit. These expenses do not include the cost of the Service Department labor for installation. The replacement costs (after 10+ years of service) would be \$695 for the King Luminaire unit as compared to \$100 for the alternate bulb. The Committee needs to get the exact number of Mariemont streetlights from the Service Department in addition to the costs of any additional hardware needed to install the alternate LED lamps. The Committee will not make any recommendation on the path forward until the needed technical information is available and a well-publicized evening meeting of the Committee is convened to assure adequate community input. The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 PM.

Mayor Brown said we do not yet have an alignment on which bulb we are going with. Mr. Van Stone said that decision will not be made until the exact number of poles and cost are known. There will be a public evening meeting so residents can express their desires. May Brown said getting this decision right needs to come down to more than just a money decision. There are aesthetics and qualities that need to be considered.

Mr. Dan Deters, Energy Alliances, said once the ballot passed on the energy aggregation legislation is needed for the certification for the Village. Passing the legislation on an emergency will save the Village 30 days in the process of determining the best pricing. Mr. Van Stone did not realize that the Village had been under contract with Energy Alliances since last summer. Council agreed to have the first reading of the legislation and amend the legislation at the next meeting to include the emergency clause.

### **Miscellaneous:**

### **Resolutions:**

- "To Appoint Douglas Zemke as a Member of the Architectural Review Board for Years 2024 and 2025" had a first reading.
- "Authorizing an Increase in the Building Permit Schedule of Fees" had a first reading.
- "To Authorize Adoption of a Premium Only Insurance Plan" had a first reading.

- “A Resolution Authorizing the Village to File Applications to Public Utilities Commission of Ohio for Gas and Electric Aggregation” had a first reading.

**Ordinances:**

- “Creating Mariemont Racquet Club Board” had a third reading. Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mrs. Brownkight to adopt the Ordinance. On roll call; five ayes, no nays. Ordinance No. O-5-24 was adopted.
- “To Amend Sections 151.125 and 151.127 Relating to Signage” had a first reading.
- “To Amend Section 151.087 Permitted Obstructions in Required Yards and Add New Section 151.087.1.2.3.4.5.6 and .7” had a first reading.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

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William A. Brown, Mayor

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Kelly I. Rankin, Fiscal Officer