1. CALL TO ORDER
Council met in Work Session/Budget Hearing on Saturday, October 12, 2019 with Council members Michael Heyeck, Kathy Cocuzzi, Alex Heckman, Valerie Cumming, Tim Davey, John Bokros, Craig Treneff, City Manager David Collinsworth and staff, Law Director Bruce Bailey and Clerk of Council Mary Johnston.

2. 2020 – 2024 FIVE YEAR BUDGET DISCUSSIONS
Overview
Mr. Collinsworth welcomed everyone to the session and began with the review of the Five Year Plan Highlights. The City will meet or exceed projected 2019 turnback of $2,000,000. There is one net staffing growth across the five year plan. There will be 27th pay in 2020 accounting for $1.762 million across all fund and $830,000 in the General Fund. The General Fund annual operating expense growth averages 1.5% throughout the plan. The General Fund annual revenue growth averages 1.4% throughout the plan. The General Capital Improvement Fund tax allocation averages 23.6% throughout the plan generating $10.5 million per year for projects. Growth in TIF revenues provides $4 million in repayment of Genera Fund advances. Adjustments to non-union pay grades for 2020 is 2.75%. Employee benefits for 2020 are at a 3.0% growth in self-insured medical plan premiums and reduced growth projections for out years of the plan. Fiscal policy is met for the General Fund in all five years. Proposed utility rates remain as proposed in the current Five Year Plan. No electric rate increase, a 1.5% increase for sewer, a 5.0% increase for water and a $2.00 per month increase for refuse.

Finance Director Lee Ann Shortland reviewed the General Fund performance in the financial plan, 2020 projected General Fund revenues, projected growth and assumptions. Ms. Shortland provided information on income tax projections and reviewed the rate history of income tax. Income tax collections for 2019 are down 1.0% under 2018.

Discussion was held on the costs of the 27th pay in 2020 for all employees and that expenses should be reduced to offset the increase in wages. Mr. Davey expressed his concerns with the TIF revenues as a hidden, unvoted tax that increases resident’s property taxes.

Division of Fire
Fire Chief Brian Miller reviewed the Fire Fund revenues and levy projected revenues. Chief Miller explained the changed in expenditures included an increase in EMS equipment and expenses for increased cost for purchasing medication, increase in building repairs and maintenance, maintaining tuition reimbursement for part-time employees. There is no change in the apparatus replacement, but increased cost for the Ladder 111 replacement.

Discussion was held on overtime/staffing needs, overdoses, impact fees for senior housing to offset additional costs for EMT service and the value provided by the social worker that might be an addition to a future budget.

Division of Police
Police Chief Charles Chandler reviewed the Police Division’s budget for Original 2019 versus 2020 Request. 2018. Chief Chandler highlighted the changes in staffing. In 2019 to 2023 there are no net additional full-time staff proposed. Assistant Chief Wilson stated 22% of officers eligible are eligible for retirement in 2023. Eleven officers in the DRO program will be required to retire in the next five years. To avoid service disruption and provide seamless coverage, staff is requesting advanced hiring for 2021 to begin in 2020. Chief Chandler stated they are on track to be one officer ahead by the end of 2019. Chief Chandler reviewed the Police Divisions’ key initiatives such as pursuing national accreditation through CALEA, full implementation of integrated video recording system, gun safety and education programming, evaluation of
existing programs and increased internal collaboration with other departments. Chief Chandler presented information on cruiser rebranding that will occur as new vehicles are purchased. Chief Chandler reviewed the Communications Division 2019 Original Budget with 2020 Request.

Kudos was given for the joint efforts between departments. Discussion was held on hiring challenges for the division.

**Planning and Development Department**

Planning and Development Director Karl Craven provided the department budget overview for 2019 versus 2020. Mr. Craven displayed a slide that highlighted the development trends from 2016 to 2018. Mr. Craven reviewed the cost changes in the plan that include revised funding for the Zoning Code revisions (Legal - $90,000 and Consultant-$95,000), add partner funding to MORPC Housing Study ($10,000), additional funding for engineering services if needed for McCorkle, Westar, Brown, and Braun Farms ($100,000), and add funding for Sunbury/Central College Traffic Study ($100,000). Mr. Craven displayed information on development trends from 2016 to 2018. Mr. Craven provided the budget for the newly-created Storm Water Capital Improvement Fund for the five year plan. Mr. Craven provided an update on the development process, personnel, mobility initiatives, zoning code update, permitting process, Natural Environment Resource Protection, and long-range planning.

Discussion was held on addressing the backlog of stormwater projects and repairs. It was felt that the Special Project Coordinator position is important and should be full-time, which Council agreed. Discussion was also held on addressing the bike lane on East College Avenue and removal of ditches.

**Parks and Recreation Department**

Parks and Recreation Director Randy Auler discussed the PROS Income Tax Allocation in the five year plan. The PROS 2020 Estimated Revenue is $6,236,351 with anticipated 2020 Year End Fund Balance of $89,340. Mr. Auler provided the Parks and Recreation Special Revenue Fund – Revenue Overview. Highlands Park Aquatic Center and Everal Barn revenues continue to completely offset the facilities operating budget. Community Center cost recovery is projected to be at 65%. Mr. Auler then presented the Parks and Recreation Special Revenue Fund – Expenditure Overview. There is a 2020 projected increase of $89,628 increase in supplies and $190,506 increase in services. A request for three additional positions and on reclassification is in the 2020 budget. Mr. Auler reviewed the 2020 programs including the completion of the Community Center, expand community events, achieve re-accreditation and implement mobility plan recommendations. Mr. Auler discussed projects that include resurfacing of park drives, parking lots, sports court, Everal Homestead renovations, Sports Complex Irrigation Pump, First Responders Park, Alum Creek South Park storage building, 480 South Hempstead Road, Metzger Parking Lot and public park at Polaris Parkway and Africa Road. The proposed Sycamore Trail Park has been moved to Reserve.

A concern was expressed using TIF funds to pay for park projects. There was a suggestion of asking the Parks Foundation to assist with projects. Discussion was also held on the reduction of the Community Recreation Guide to save taxpayer dollars and asked staff to check the dollar amount in the budget.

**City Manager’s Office/Economic Development/Community Affairs**

Economic Development Director Jason Bechtold reviewed the City Manager’s summary budget for 2019 and 2020. Mr. Bechtold reviewed the division’s 202- initiatives that include the WICC Loan Portfolio Funding, BusinessWise and Uptown Improvement Program. Mr. Bechtold provided an update on the Economic Development Strategic Plan. This strategic plan includes the Comprehensive Business Attraction Program, The Point at Otterbein University, and Work Force Development Study. The 2020 Initiatives include development of Westar Place and budget for 2020. Community Affairs Director Christa Dickey discussed the initiatives for the division in 2020 that includes social media listening and intelligence reporting. Ms. Dickey reported the division will provide continued support to Economic Development, and special event
development /management. The 2020 Budget initiatives will be social media monitoring, Text/SMS service, WeConnect marketing, and special events.

Discussion was held on the value of the unsold parcels in Westar, removal of regulatory function of the Uptown Review Board, real time updates on road closures, etc., suggestion of a $10,000 transfer to the General Fund to offset WeConnect costs, WeConnect budget in the Data Center budget, Westar Place expenses such as property taxes, and reduction of the Community Guide distribution.

**WeConnect**
Information Systems Director Todd Jackson provided an overview WeConnect Operating expenses and revenues for the five year plan. Assumptions include a 3% growth for the Data Center and 10% growth in Fiber. Mr. Jackson discussed the initiatives that included the hiring of the Data Center Manager, enhance retention efforts, promote services in the region and focus on connectivity and the fiber network.

It was suggested to write a letter of acknowledgement to MDC for their cooperation during the transition. Discussion was held on the conduit funds/leases location in the budget, a request for a P&L statement and that all expenses/revenues should come out of the WeConnect budget.

**Discussion and Direction**

**Micro Transit**
Deputy Planning and Development Director Kimberly Sharp provided micro-transit options for a proposed on-demand system that would complement three COTA transit routes. This will serve residents and employees using branded smaller buses/vans. The routes would be flexible with on-demand booking. An online App would be similar to ride-share. Ms. Sharp displayed the type of service options and estimated costs. The options were: 1) city funded and operated system; 2) a private company run service; and 3) COTA provided service.

Discussion was held to ensure the micro transit vehicles are able to pick up elderly and handicapped at their front door, consider Sunday hours to church services. A majority of Council was in agreement to investigate Option 3 first then look at Option 1. Staff was directed to discuss/negotiate terms of contract to provide to Council.

**Financial Assistance Program**
Assistant City Manager Julie Colley provided information on a proposed Financial Assistance Program for city residents. This will provide assistance for parks/recreation, utilities and sidewalk/approaches repairs. Ms. Colley stated the budget for this program will be $20,000 each year of the plan from the Hotel Tax Fund. Ms. Colley discussed who would be eligible for the assistance and the program detail such as reimbursement and eligible exterior home remodeling projects.

Discussion was held on a possible name for the program and that this program should belong with charities to help lowering the cost of living. Further discussion was held on JEDZ money, over collection of fire tax levy, TIF’s, and eliminating street lighting tax. A majority of Council was in agreement with moving forward with this program.

**Transparency Hub**
Information Systems Director Todd Jackson and Administrative Services Director Adam Maxwell provided an overview of the proposed Transparency Hub and displayed how this website would provide data from each City Department. This web portal will have information on permits, accidents, Mayor’s Court cases, financial reporting, Service requests, and Parks Department programming.

It was suggested to provide a link from this hub to the City website. Council was pleased with the website
and thanked staff for an outstanding job.

4. **ADJOURN**
   There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

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Mary J. Johnston, MMC     Michael Heyeck
Clerk of Council     Chair of Council