



**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MEETING MINUTES
July 30, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

A special meeting of Powell City Council was called to order by Mayor Frank Bertone on Thursday, July 30, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. City Council members present included Jon C. Bennehoof, Frank Bertone, Tom Counts, Heather Karr, Brian Lorenz, Melissa Riggins, and Daniel Swartwout. Also present were Andy White, City Manager; Steve Hertzik, Chief of Police; Chris Huber, City Engineer; Aaron Scott, Assistant City Engineer; Karen Sybert, Finance Director; Elise Schellin, Development Planner; Silas Bowers, Interim Director of Parks, Recreation & Public Service; Kevin Moran, Chief Building Official; Karen J. Mitchell, City Clerk; and interested parties.

EXPLANATION OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES SESSION AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOME was made by Mayor Bertone. Each Councilmember refreshed the group of what priority goals each felt was important moving forward. Councilman Swartwout – maintaining the finances as we go through these challenging times; Councilwoman Karr – walkable downtown, additional parking downtown. Councilman Bennehoof – Economic development – balance economic commercial with residential, revitalization. Councilwoman Riggins – build and keep integrity of the City. Councilman Counts – Fresh start; reflection, teamwork. Mayor Bertone – vibrant downtown, housing options, staff, quality of staff. Councilman Lorenz – vibrancy of town center, keep the Keep Powell Moving Plan fluid, strategic annexation and growth, health & wellness of the residents.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR 2020-2021

Mayor Bertone introduced [Exhibit 1](#) and the following specific goals were identified:

Safety – Focus on 5-Year Strategic Plan:

- **Goal 1:** Develop a Powell Police Department (PPD) strategic plan that identifies future needs of the Department and meets the needs and expectations of the community, and incorporating that plan into future City Strategic Plans. (Administration & Police)
- **Goal 2:** Continue to maintain low city crime rate and efficiently and effectively solve crimes. (Administration & Police)

Economic Development – Craft Economic Development Strategy

- **Goal 1:** Further develop Sawmill Rd corridor infrastructure, improve and foster our valuable partnerships with governments, organizations and businesses to promote sound economic development. (Administration, Economic Development, Engineering, Finance & Police)
- **Goal 2:** Dedicate resources to recruit and retain businesses to downtown Powell (2020-2021). (Administration, Economic Development, Finance & Powell CIC)
- **Goal 3:** The Development Director will implement the Economic Development Strategy developed in 2015 to include the Sawmill Rd Growth Corridor. (Administration, Economic Development, City Engineer, CIC & Police)
- **Goal 4:** The City/Economic Development Director will promote and market the development of the Sawmill Rd Growth Corridor. (Administration, Economic Development & City Council)
- **Goal 5:** The City/Economic Development Director will continue to review zoning code, the 2015 Comprehensive Plan to improve business-zoning districts. (Administration, Economic Development, City Engineer & Police)
- **Goal 6:** Implementation of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. The 2015 Comprehensive Implementation Plan details goals, objectives and action steps with responsible parties identified for each. Timeframes are then provided; Short (0-1 years), Medium (1-3 years), Long (3+ years), and continuous. Monitor progress. (Administration, Economic Development, Engineering, Powell CIC & Police)

- Much has changed since the 2015 Comprehensive Plan was drafted. Investigate if we need to modify, change, or update the Comprehensive Plan.

Finances

- **Goal 1:** Identify uses for funds post facility debt payout (by the years listed below). (Council)
- **Goal 2:** Maintain the City's AAA bond rating as established in 2013. (Finance Department & Finance Committee)
- **Goal 3:** Maintain reserve level equal to 6 months of GF expenditures. (Finance Department & Finance Committee)
- **Goal 4:** Increase the capital reserve fund from \$1 million to \$4 million (by 2022). (Finance Department & Finance Committee)
 - The greatest risk to the rate is the income tax rate.
- **Goal 5:** Conduct Policy discussion on JEDD opportunities. (Finance Department & Finance Committee)
 - – 74% our income comes from income tax and is a threat to sustainability.
- **Goal 6:** Restructuring the Income Tax. (Finance Department & Finance Committee)

Traffic/Roads/Pedestrian Infrastructure – Keep Powell Moving Initiative/Develop CIP Plan

- **Goal 1:** Continue to pave aggressively until the annual minimum budget has improved the condition of our streets. (Administration, Engineering & Finance Committee)
- **Goal 2:** Update the Keep Powell Moving Plan. (Administration, Engineering & Development Committee)
- **Goal 3:** Create future project plans. (Administration, Engineering & Development Committee)
- **Goal 4:** Incorporate active transportation components within Capital Improvement and private development projects. (Administration, Engineering & Development Committee)

Parks & Recreation – Quality of Life

- **Goal 1: Parks and Bike Trails.** The City of Powell develops an appropriate number of trails and parks to meet the growing population and ensure equity of access for the community given available resources. (Administration, Engineering, Parks & Recreation, Public Service & Operations Committee)
- **Goal 2: Operations and Maintenance.** The City of Powell provides clean, safe, and memorable environments supported by maintenance standards and driven by policies that balance use, intended purpose, and long-term care). (Administration, Engineering, Parks & Recreation, Public Service & Operations Committee)
- **Goal 3: Recreation Facilities.** The City of Powell aims to meet community demand for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities while achieving clear cost recovery goals that keeps facilities productive, adaptable, and financially sustainable. (Administration, Parks & Recreation, Public Service Department, Development Committee & Finance Committee)
- **Goal 4: Recreation Programs & Events.** The City of Powell strives to develop, provide, and manage recreation programs and events that meet community needs in terms of topic, location, price, and service. (Administration, Parks & Recreation & Operations Committee)
- **Goal 5: Financial Sustainability.** The City of Powell balances growing community needs with strategic yet practical funding and staffing solutions. (City Council and All Departments)
- **Goal 6:** Examine usage of regional partnerships (Liberty Township, Olentangy Schools, and YMCA) for additional space and programming. (Administration, Development Committee)
- **Goal 7:** Examine continued alignment of Parks & Recs with Public Service. (Administration & Development Committee)

Quality Customer Service – 24/7 City Hall & Develop Mission Statement/Core Values

- **Goal 1:** The Administration will continue to execute the bi-annual (every two years) Community Attitude Survey. (Administration & City Council.)
- **Goal 2:** Utilize the Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP) to prioritize and project future workforce requirements and use the annual budget process/personnel budget requests to maintain the necessary staff to provide quality services. (Human Resources, Finance Department & Finance Committee)
- **Goal 3:** Provide customer service employee orientations and periodically train employees to provide quality service. (Human Resources in association with all Departments and Divisions)
- **Goal 4:** Utilize the reserve budget and capital improvement processes to maintain assets, plan for the unexpected, and modify as necessary/required. (Administration & Finance Committee)
- **Goal 5:** The City will provide sound employee safety and wellness policies and quality programs to help create the safest work environment possible and provide a path to the healthiest possible lifestyle. (Administration & Human Resources)

- **Goal 6:** The City will provide a focus on improving employee morale and promote a culture where employees are valued. (Administration & Human Resources)

Communications & Branding – Citizen Engagement Strategy

- **Goal 1:** Conduct a comprehensive community attitude survey to better understand how our customers utilize the various forms of communication and to re-survey as needed to stay in-tune. The end goal is to provide a public information outreach effort that informs the public of City operations, accomplishments, and policies, and allows for citizen input on matters of importance. (Administration & City Council)
- **Goal 2:** Utilize proper communication channels, adhering to all applicable laws, and focus on proactive communication for the efficient management of our City. (Administration, City Council & Department Heads)

PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

Of the priorities listed and discussed, Council listed them in what they each felt was the order of importance:

Councilman Lorenz: I think they are all equally important. I really think public safety is probably one of our biggest priorities right now. I think with the social justice movement in this country right now, as well as trying to keep our residents safe and healthy, that is probably the most important thing we can do. I will also always say customer service is important and should be handled consistently across the board. Health & wellness within Parks & Rec is very important, particularly when we are battling a virus. Economic Development and how we grow and go forward as a City - perhaps using our parks to try to generate revenue, for example. Those items, in that particular order, are all important.

I suggest that, as we dissect these further, it is appropriate for the three committees to take these up and dedicate a certain amount of time per month to move forward on them.

Councilman Bennehoof: I do not think we can do any of these things without proper financing. A funding model, diversity of funding, etc. needs to be the first priority. The entire time I have been on Council our funding model has been of concern and I think we need to address that first.

Councilman Counts: Everything that I heard tonight comes with a price tag. You want customer service, and you want a high-level customer service, it comes with a price tag. If you do not want to pay for adequate staffing, then customer service is going to suffer. That goes across the board with everything. You have to have adequate funding sources because no one source of funds is going to adequately do everything that we need to do. We have seen some short-term things, we have seen some long-term things, but we need consistent, adequate funding to provide the kind of quality community that I think our residents are asking for. Without that, the rest of the stuff fails.

The second thing I would mention is all of these tasks require a lot of Staff time. We have to prioritize for Staff because they cannot do all of this without knowing exactly what it is that we feel is important.

Councilwoman Riggins: I agree with what has already been said so far. What is in the back of my mind on all of this is when are we going to discuss going back to the ballot? It has been two years. We really needed the money two years ago and here we are two years further in [without any additional revenue sources]. I agree with Tom that we need to narrow it down, address going back to the residents, and craft something that will be able to pass to get that money coming in that we need. Even though there are a lot of great ideas here, without that money coming in, how would we be able to do it?

Councilwoman Karr: For me, public safety is always number one. Looking at all of the priorities, while all are very important, it always comes back to funding and how do we pay for it. As much as it pains me to say this, I think financing has to be our primary focus.

Councilman Swartwout: This was a tremendous list of objectives and priorities. I will finish where I started. Right now, I believe the City's priority has to be our short-term finances. If you look at some of the economic numbers that came out today, they are not encouraging for the short-term finances of the City. I think that has to be our number one priority. I agree with Tom as well. We do need to prioritize. We have to keep in mind that we have to prioritize our goals and the policy objectives we have as the City is undergoing a tremendous amount of flux as we are looking to perhaps reorganize, bring new people in, etc. We have to realize that a lot of Staff resources will be spent on bringing new people on board.

Beyond that, every member of Council had some tremendous things to say tonight and I think that the policies here articulate it, no matter how we prioritize them, and are all very worthy. It is good to see Council on board with many of these broad policy goals because I think as we work together, we can make these goals and objectives a reality.

Mayor Bertone: I agree with you all. Finance is number one for me; economic development is probably number two. Public safety is close behind. Many of these things are going to take a lot of time and resources to knock out and some of these elements are also going to be quick hits.

I will step back with Andy and we will re-prioritize this based on the feedback of the group. We will share that with you before the end of the week. Let's then move into the prioritization in a little more depth and get them into the various committees to start working on them.

Staff, thank you all for being here tonight. Please feel free to offer your comments to the group. You have invested a lot of time tonight listening in. What are your thoughts?

Ms. Sybert: All the priorities are good, but I agree that finances is the mesh over all of it. As Tom said, everything has a price tag. I like the idea of going out to the committees with certain aspects of each and coming back together so we can collaborate that way.

Mr. Scott: It seems you have all touched on points that Staff has had discussions about internally. I know Andy has been pretty involved with all of us in getting our opinions on what we needed. It is encouraging to hear the discussion you are having. We are looking forward to seeing what comes of this.

Mr. Moran: This list is a big help in letting Staff know what your priorities are and how we need to proceed. There are some opportunities going forward such as a development corridor, a lot of stuff downtown. The one project located where the carry out is at is exciting and I look forward to seeing that come together. Again, short-term financing is a concern.

Ms. Schellin: I do not have much to add other than to introduce myself to those of you that I have not yet met. Right now, I am the Development Department, so if you need anything, let me know. Thanks for the detailed list. It is exciting to be a part of this and see the direction things are going, the visionary plans.

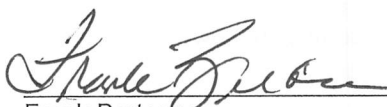
Mr. Bowers: I echo everybody else's statements. It is encouraging and refreshing to be involved in the communication of where things may head. We have different leadership in place now so while it is a time of change; it is also a time of excitement and opportunity as well. In talking with Andy, the word opportunity seems to come up a lot and it is the thing I think a lot of us look forward to. It is nice to hear that some of the same concerns we have are similar to the concerns you have.

Ms. Mitchell: Similar to what others have said before me, I believe that our biggest obstacle right now is funding/revenue and getting adequate Staff in place so that we can move forward with these goals as outlined. The notes provided are outstanding and very helpful. It is a time of change with many exciting possibilities ahead.

ADJOURNMENT

By unanimous consent of the members, the meeting was adjourned 9:01 p.m.

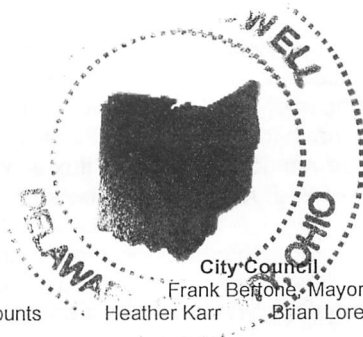
MINUTES APPROVED: August 18, 2020

 9/1/2020
Frank Bertone
Mayor

Date

 9/2/2020
Karen J. Mitchell
City Clerk

Date



Jon C. Bennehoof

Tom Counts

Heather Karr

Frank Bertone, Mayor

Brian Lorenz

Melissa Riggins

Daniel Swartwout