At 5:30 p.m., Mayor Condrey called the City Council meeting to order in Council Chambers, Lower Level of the City Building.

Mayor Condrey provided a brief history about the gavel.


Cynda Kash, 1325 First Avenue, spoke in favor of the Certified Local Government. She stated that she has spent more than 10 years in historic preservation and is a proponent of saving our historic buildings. This presents a good opportunity for growth and development in Middletown because property owners can apply for historic tax credits. She stated that 1/3 of landfills are filled with old buildings.

On behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 36, Detective Jason Wargo congratulated Mayor Condrey, Councilmember Nenni, and Councilmember Moon on their being elected to serve Middletown and congratulated soon to be Chief Dave Birk. He stated that the department was looking forward to working together with everyone.

Dora Bronston, 4817 Earl Avenue, spoke about Middletown being a Purple Heart City. Her husband, Lafayette Bronston is a decorated Marine and also a Purple Heart Recipient. She stated that Ohio is the 4th largest state populated by veterans and discussed the suicide statistics for veterans due to lack of help for their physical, mental and emotional needs. Veterans with traumatic brain injury are 60% more likely to develop dementia. Many veterans are homeless and do not qualify for financial and health benefits. Mrs. Bronston stated that these are public health issues and that she is seeking more support for veterans in our community. She stated that when she thinks of the color purple, she thinks of blue and red. Although you ran non-partisan, we are both democrats and republicans, blue and red and together, we make purple to complete our task. We are not fighting against one another, but fighting for one another. She is currently working to address the home health care needs of veterans. As she left the podium, she declared, "Semper Fi."

Acting City Manager Cohen thanked the City's first responders that worked tirelessly at the scene and expressed her appreciation for the help from surrounding communities at the former Middletown Paperboard facility that caught fire on New Year's Day. The large fire was reported at 6:40 a.m. on January 1. More than 100 firefighters at a time battled the blaze. Police arrested a man who was living in the building when a fire he started spread to his bedding. She stated that Vickers Demolition estimated the cost to assist firefighters with debris removal at $100,000, but Ms. Cohen added the City has not received the final bill. The demolition was necessary because the building was too unstable for firefighters to get inside to put the fire out. Early on, there were concerns that a search and rescue was necessary for human remains. Thankfully that turned out to be untrue and no one was injured or killed in the fire. This property was owned by B. P. Logan Corporation but has been abandoned for years. Due to unpaid taxes, the property was foreclosed on by the Butler County Treasurer during 2018-2019. The property was offered at Sheriff’s sale twice but no suitable buyers were found. The property was forfeited to the state of Ohio in December 2019. There is a grey area because the tax records have not been updated to show that the property was transferred to the state. There will be more discussion about who was the property owner at the time of the fire. The City will be working to get the final bills for this fire and seeking legal remedy to recover any and all of the costs incurred. She discussed applying for grant money to get the environmental remediation completed to clean up this site. She acknowledged that the site needs to be cleaned up but that it will likely be a long process.

Receive and File Board and Commission minutes:
- Board of Zoning Appeals- June 5, 2019
- Historic Commission- July 18, 2019
- Planning Commission- August 14 & September 11, 2019

Confirm the personnel appointments of:
- Adam Grindstaff to the position of Patrol Officer in the Department of Public Safety, Division of Police; and
- Erin Calto to the position of Police Records Clerk in the Department of Public Safety, Division of Police.

Confirm the exceptional appointments of:
- Andreas Eddy to the position of Process Control Supervisor in the Department of Public Works & Utilities, Division of Water Treatment; and
- Griffin Steffen to the position of Water Reclamation Operator in the Department of Public Works & Utilities, Division of Water Reclamation Facility.

Receive and file Oaths of Office for Councilmembers Talbott Moon and Monica Nenni and Mayor Nicole Condrey.
Receive and file a maintenance bond submitted by Sawyers Mill Project I, LLC guaranteeing public improvements constructed as part of Sawyers Mill Section 2 Subdivision.

Ms. Nenni moved to approve the issues and actions listed on the Consent Agenda. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condrey, Ms. Vitori.

Ms. Cohen called David Birk to the podium and welcomed him as the Chief of Police. She stated that he earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and urban affairs from Wright State University, graduated from the Criminal Justice Training Academy at Sinclair Community College and graduated with honors from the Southern Police Institute at the University of Louisville. He was hired as a Patrol Officer in 1997 and moved up the ranks as a Field Training Officer, Special Operations Detective, Sergeant, Lieutenant and most recently as Major and Deputy Chief. He has proven himself to be dedicated leader in the department and in the community. He has improved efficiency, implemented cost saving measures and applied for numerous grants to help the department. Ms. Cohen stated that she was positive that the Department was heading in the right direction under Chief Birk’s leadership. She welcomed his family to the podium for the Pinning Ceremony.

Chief Birk received a standing ovation from all of those in attendance at the meeting. He thanked Council for the opportunity and thanked his wife and family for their support. He thanked the former Chiefs in attendance for the opportunities that they provided to him throughout his career and expressed his appreciation to his staff for their hard work and dedication and their support for the numerous community events. He thanked everyone for coming out and showing their support for him and the department. He stated that the possibilities to shape the culture and the future of Middletown were wide open. Chief Birk quoted hockey coach Herb Brooks “Great moments are born from great opportunity” and that’s what we have here in Middletown.

Ms. Nenni congratulated Chief Birk and thanked the citizens who came forward to make comments.

Mr. Mulligan wished everyone a Happy New Year, welcomed the new Mayor and member of Council, and congratulated Chief Birk. He commented that there is a lot of work to do but that Middletown has an opportunity to grow as a city. He commended the great work of the City’s first responders and stated that the fire highlighted the need to address the abandoned commercial buildings in Middletown.

Ms. Vitori congratulated Chief Birk and thanked everyone for their comments. She welcomed the new Mayor and Councilmembers and remarked that at 45, she was the oldest person on City Council. She stated that she is looking forward to working with everyone. She agreed with Mr. Mulligan that the City needs to address the abandoned commercial buildings in Middletown.

Mr. Moon congratulated and welcomed Mayor Condrey, Councilmember Nenni and Chief Birk. He stated that with the outpouring of support demonstrated tonight that Chief Birk will be very successful. He discussed House Bill 252 that is exploring state funding for abandoned commercial buildings. He thanked the Middletown Division of Fire for their great work and dedication and expressed his appreciation to the surrounding communities that supplied a mutual aid response to the fire.

Ms. Condrey congratulated Chief Birk on his promotion and thanked Chief Lolli and the Fire Department for their hard work and dedication to the safety of the Middletown community. She thanked everyone for the warm welcome that she has received since becoming Mayor.

Ordinance No. 02019-102, an ordinance establishing a procedure for and authorizing amendments to contracts for grounds maintenance for 2020 was read for the second time.

Ms. Vitori moved to approve Ordinance No. 02019-102, an ordinance establishing a procedure for and authorizing amendments to contracts for grounds maintenance for 2020. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condrey, Ms. Nenni, Ms. Vitori.

Ordinance No. 02019-103, an ordinance denying a request to change the zoning classification for one parcel located at 1407 Winona Drive from R-3 (Medium Density Residential District) to B-2 (Community Business District) was read for the second time.

Mr. Moon commented that he wanted to hear from property owners, he hates to say no to a business development.
Ms. Vitori moved to approve Ordinance No. 02019-103, an ordinance denying a request to change the zoning classification for one parcel located at 1407 Winona Drive from R-3 (Medium Density Residential District) to B-2 (Community Business District). Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condrey, Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon.

Ordinance No. 02019-104, an ordinance amending various sections the Middletown Development Code of the Middletown Codified Ordinances was read for the second time.

Ms. Vitori moved to approve Ordinance No. 02019-104, an ordinance amending various sections the Middletown Development Code of the Middletown Codified Ordinances. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Condrey, Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan.

Ordinance No. 02020-01, an ordinance establishing a procedure for and authorizing the extension of a contract with T.R. Gear Landscaping, Inc. for gateway maintenance was read for the first time.

Ordinance No. 02020-02, an ordinance authorizing an agreement with V3 Companies to develop a Parks Master Plan was read for the first time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:05 p.m. Mr. Mulligan moved to adjourn to executive session under the authority of O.R.C. 121.22 (G) (1) To consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official. Mr. Moon seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condrey.

At 6:47 p.m. Mr. Moon moved to return to regular session. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condrey, Ms. Vitori.

Board & Commission Appointments

Ms. Vitori moved to approve the following Board and Commission appointments:
- Hamilton-Middletown Task Force – Nicole Condrey, Mayor; Joseph Mulligan, Vice-Mayor
- Airport Commission – Tal Moon
- Architectural Review Board- Monica Nenni
- Board of Health – Nicole Condrey
- Board of Library Trustees – Ami Vitori
- City Planning Commission – Joseph Mulligan (Alternate: Monica Nenni)
- Convention and Visitors Bureau – Ami Vitori
- Emergency Management Advisory Council – Nicole Condrey
- Keep Middletown Beautiful – Monica Nenni
- Master Plan Implementation Committee – Joseph Mulligan (Alternate: Ami Vitori)
- Middletown Cemetery Board – Nicole Condrey
- Middletown Moving Forward – Nicole Condrey, Tal Moon (Alternate: Joseph Mulligan)
- OKI Regional Council of Governments – Talbott Moon (Alternate: Joseph Mulligan)
- Park Board – Ami Vitori
- SELF Board – Monica Nenni
- Tax Incentive Review Committee – Nicole Condrey
- Warren County Municipal League Representative- Talbott Moon

Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condrey, Ms. Nenni, Ms. Vitori.

At 6:49 p.m., the meeting was declared adjourned until January 21, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Nicole Condrey, Mayor

Attest: [Signature]