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


Dr. Geri Lynn Maples, an Elizabeth Dole Foundation Fellow explained that when the City of Middletown becomes a Hidden Heroes City it will be the 161st city to join the movement in support of raising awareness and providing a voice for military and veteran caregivers across the state. I can’t tell you how much the passing of this resolution would mean to myself and my fellow caregivers. Although our stories are different many of our experiences and challenges are similar. Caregivers are spouses, parents, siblings and other loved ones who voluntarily provide around-the-clock care to America’s wounded warriors at home. The loved ones they care for may have physical injuries such as the loss of limbs or other physical injuries such as amputations or invisible wounds that cannot be seen. Some of these include post-traumatic stress disorder, or traumatic brain injury. Caregivers have a host of responsibilities that may include managing medication, assisting in wound care, dressing, bathing, coordinating medical appointments or providing physical and emotional support, monitoring environmental triggers, assisting with activities of daily living and so much more. In most cases military caregivers do this while assuming responsibilities around the household such as cooking, cleaning, child rearing, balancing a career, working towards educational goals and paying bills. Caregiving is a full-time job and I can tell you that it is mentally, physically and emotionally draining.

Dr. Maples provided a video that explained that the seeds of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation were planted in 2011 when Senator Bob Dole spent 11 months at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, recovering from surgery. His wife, Elizabeth Dole, met countless individuals caring for family members wounded in war and was deeply moved by their challenges. The Foundation commissioned the first-ever comprehensive, evidence based study to determine the scale of the military caregiving crisis. The study found that 5.5 million spouses, parents, family members and friends are caring for America’s wounded, ill or injured service members and veterans. Many of the caregivers begin in total isolation, without any support. Further research shows that a well-supported caregiver is the number one way to contribute to the health and recovery of a veteran. There are 150 Elizabeth Dole Foundation Caregiver Fellows representing all fifty states and Puerto Rico, and they storm Capitol Hill and tell their stories and are instrumental in getting legislation passed. The Hidden Heroes campaign was launched to raise awareness about the enormous contributions and challenges of these caregivers. The campaign seeks to educate and build awareness in local communities for caregivers. Countless caregivers have been empowered to be a voice for themselves. The Elizabeth Dole Foundation has put a face and a name to those who are caring for our wounded, ill and injured service members. The goal is to shine a bright light on our nation’s military caregivers by empowering and honoring them and providing them the resources they need and deserve. The Elizabeth Dole Foundation’s legacy will be a shift in culture in America where caregivers are empowered, appreciated and listened to.

Dr. Maples explained that her caregiving journey began 16 years ago when her husband Robert, an Ohio National Guard military police veteran, sustained injuries during service from exposure to multiple blasts during Operation Iraqi Freedom. His injuries include traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress disorder and other chronic pain, sleep apnea, hearing loss and other debilitating conditions. In 2007 and 2008, after he came close to losing his life, following losing the ability to swallow food and water, Robert was forced to leave his career behind. As Robert’s wife and caregiver, it is my responsibility to help him cope with the everlasting wounds of war and advocate for his care. Like many of my fellow caregivers I also had to ensure the security of our future financially, I sought higher education and that ten-year academic journey last resulted in my earning a doctorate in philosophy with a major and a PhD in educational studies. My academic journey allowed me to study the two signature wounds of war post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. This also allowed me the opportunity to understand my husband’s illnesses and injuries and to become a more effective caregiver to him. During my academic journey and beyond I work tirelessly to align resources for my fellow military caregivers and their families. I have helped others recognize that they too are caregivers. My dissertation titled “Surviving the Invisible Wounds of War as Told by the Unseen Hero” was an opportunity to connect military and civilian communities. His wife, Semm, Elizabeth Dole can be life changing. During Covid the community provided food to struggling military families impacted by the pandemic. A plan was developed to provide financial resources and employment opportunities. The needs of military caregivers can vary but with the support of the Foundation we can pinpoint these needs and find solutions to the challenges facing our Hidden Heroes. Our nations caregivers are serving our country with the same honor and duty as their loved ones demonstrated in volunteering to defend our freedom. It is time that our communities embrace them and provide the support and recognition that they deserve. On behalf of military veteran caregivers in Ohio and beyond, I hope that communities across this great state will consider passing a resolution to become a Hidden Heroes City.
Renewal & Expansion of the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA)
Ms. Cohen explained that 5 years after initial approval of the DORA, R.C. §4301.82(I)(1) requires the legislative authority for the City to review the operation of the area, and approve its continued operation or dissolve it.
- DORA was created in 2015 and has been amended twice
- Hours of operation are noon to midnight daily – 2018
- Boundary extended to the east along Central Avenue – 2019
- The City has been able to maintain public safety and sanitation within the DORA with limited problems
- The Economic Development Department proposed expanding the DORA to include New Ales Brewing on First Avenue
- The expansion is approximately 3 acres of land, bringing the DORA to a total of 103.84 acres
- Cities with a population between 35K and less than 50K can have up to 320 contiguous acres in a DORA
- Staff recommends the continued operation and boundary expansion of the DORA to support business, tourism and economic development in the City.
- The expansion includes the block bounded by Philadelphia Avenue, Garfield Street, First Avenue and Baltimore Street.

At 5:48 p.m. Ms. Condrey opened the public hearing and asked for those who wished to speak in favor of the renewal and expansion of the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA).

Steve Lewis, 4814 Wicklow Drive, Middletown spoke in favor of the renewal and expansion of the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area. He is a customer of New Ales Brewing and has been impressed with their business plan. Their sales are pretty incredible especially in the middle of a pandemic. They brew good beers and the owner is very conscientious and has been diligent with their safety during Covid, I think they improve that area.

Ms. Condrey asked for those who wished to speak in opposition to the renewal and expansion. Hearing none the public hearing was closed at 5:50 p.m.

Dr. Celeste Didlick-Davis, 505 Garfield Street, Middletown, stated “I am here on behalf of the NAACP. While I have been working with several members of the city government it is my desire and the desire of the organization to put on record our concerns about the photographs that were floating around on social media. The circle game has also been co-opted or subverted to represent some white supremacy. While the photographs have been removed and we do not want to infringe on anyone’s first or second amendment or any other amendment rights, we also have a concern of a police officer or any other duly authorized employee representing the City of Middletown and how that impacts community relations. So, we’d like to have the City do some additional investigation. I have been in touch with Susan Cohen and now we have a meeting scheduled but we want it to be on the record that these photographs have made several members of the community very uncomfortable and even looking at HR and personnel requirements and confidentiality. It has not yet been resolved completely because of course we have not heard anything from the officer. We’ve not heard anything from the Chief of Police including some of the events where we have seen law enforcement officers and other people being involved. Again, it is not about political affiliation it is about a perception that has been in existence in Middletown previous to Chief Birch’s administration but that we have to have more open conversations. We have to be more transparent and we really have to get to some better reconciliation about the opposing political points and help the community be more cohesive. So, the NAACP stands ready to work toward that goal but it takes participation of the entire city government especially the city leaders. So, we would like further investigation and we’d like some recent statistics over the last couple of months of the different kinds of traffic stops that people of color have been exposed too. Thank you for your time.”

Ms. Condrey asked Ms. Didlick-Davis when the date of all of this was because she wasn’t aware of it until now. Ms. Didlick-Davis responded, “The photos were sent to me last week but I’m not sure how long they were up. I have been in conversation or communication with Susan and the photos have been taken down. I will leave the photos for you and they are disturbing, but again, we’re not trying to impinge on anyone’s first amendment, second amendment rights but we also talk about as a duly authorized officer of the police department and representative of the City of Middletown it’s really not okay for there not to be a more public response about addressing that we are anti-supremacy, that we respect the rights of all people and that we are continuing to work. We can disagree but we still have to do it in a way that is transparent and authentic. So, they are here and maybe someone else can tell you when they appeared but I became aware of it last week.”

Ms. Condrey stated that that information was helpful and commented that this would be a very good topic for the Citizens Advisory Board to consider.

Ms. Cohen commented that the matter was brought to her attention on January 25, 2021, and that we’ve had an ongoing conversation since then.
Ms. Condrey commented that the Citizens Advisory Board is a great avenue for these kinds of discussions but it is not the be all and end all because it once meets every two months. In this case, the CAB meeting a few days before this issue came up, I would love to use the Citizens Advisory Board for people to come and talk and have those conversations however the regularity of that is not a great one. I think that we can definitely look into this and figure out what, honestly, I have no idea, we’re talking about right now, so I’d like to have some time to look into it.

Ms. Didilock-Davis commented, “As I say, I’m not expecting immediate action, I’m here to put it on the record, to request action. But in response to what you just said. I think that it is significant that while the Citizens Advisory Board is still being reorganized and there is still some stability that is necessary for that organization that it not be swept to that committee because it is bigger than the Citizens Advisory Committee. I want it to be on the record that that is not what we are asking for. Thank you for your time.”

Steve Lewis, 4614 Wicklow Drive, Middletown, shared his observations as a member of the Park Board and Tree Commission. I applaud the City for getting a little tighter with what is going on with the boards and commissions. I have personally been involved with the City since 1993, starting with Keep Middletown Beautiful. Since then, I have been part of the Park Board and the Tree Commission. We have never had anything but professionalism from our City Park Board liaison, they have been impeccable, they keep great notes. We try and stay on course with the direction. I have some concern about the direction. In the last couple of months, I have seen some things go on and I’m kind of scratching my head. The thing that stood out the most for me was that we had a ten-year member, the president of the Park Board, that was kind of abruptly told that he had run his term. I don’t know all of the specifics, but I just felt that the way Jason was asked and how it was presented was pretty pitiful. You got a guy here that was just a good taxpayer, that wants to be involved in his community. I’m sure it was up, but I hope that at some point we can review or look at how you’re asking members to leave or come on board. You are the ones recommending them to these boards so I would think that the liaison would be involved in that. I am concerned that the new person coming in has missed meetings. Something was brought up in last night’s meeting about the potential of having non-voting liaisons involved on the Park Board.

Ms. Condrey commented that Council has paid much closer attention to how we have structured our boards and commissions and make sure that they are doing the right things but I am not aware of how we communicate to our board and commission members. I know Mrs. Schenck is working on that but I see a great deal of improvement that we could make in that area. The policy is that if a new person applies to a board or commission and the person has already served two terms then the new applicant would be appointed to the board. I am happy to take on that role as Mayor, our current communication needs a lot of work. We will definitely work on our communication because we are very appreciative of every person that is volunteering on the City’s boards and commissions.

Mr. Lewis commented that he would send an email to the Park Board liaison and to Mr. Tadych with his observations and fine tuning this, we have things in the Charter but it is not making sense because it is not being utilized. If it is not being utilized then it is a waste of time in my book.

Dr. Dora Bronston, 4817 Earl Avenue, Middletown commented, “It’s great to see you Mayor and my colleagues and Ms. Susan and Mrs. Schenck, that I love very dearly. I’m here for two reasons tonight. Number one, I hadn’t planned but I would love to support the resolution presented by Dr. Geri Maples for the hidden heroes which you all know that I am one of those. I am still recovering, I’m still exhausted from that situation as a caregiver. It’s wonderful to hear that things are moving in that direction for veterans here in Middletown. I know that Lafayette would love it too. Thank you so much for that and I support Resolution No. R2021-04. On the second item that I am concerned about, I am in support of Dr. Didilock-Davis. I saw the disturbing captions of one of our police officers holding an AK rifle, I don’t even know the names of them. I saw the white supremacy symbol with the hand sign and if you haven’t seen them you will when she sends the pictures around. Very disturbing to me based on my background, I’m a Heinz 57 person, I have a mixed background. There is a lot going on in our nation. Our police officers and firemen know that I am very supportive of Chief VanArsdale when he was here and Chief Muterspaw and Chief Birk. As a Citizens Advisory Board member along with the Mayor those are things that we do discuss. That is not the only thing, the only way, the only path for this discussion to be held. Those are issues that we need to address right away because those things don’t exist here. I’ve not foreseen them, I’ve never seen them here. All of our confidential things that were taken care of behind the scenes and the things we took care of race issues or otherwise were taken care of. I have all of the respect of our officers because they swore an oath of their character and integrity and the trust of our community. Those kinds of pictures on Facebook or otherwise do not reflect what we want to see in our police officers. As a matter of fact it will go against what we trust and we will start to find distrust. We don’t want things to happen here in Middletown like other cities. We all know, we see it, I am here to share that concern. Those are the two things I came for number one was a great positive, you know,

Steve Lewis
hooray for the resolution and the other is to show my concern and make sure our police officers adhere to what we have taught them over the years. I would like to be part of the public hearing or whatever discussion if you all would allow me to be there. Right now, I am working in a capacity of the Secretary of the State of Ohio."

Ms. Condrey commented that the Police Chief takes issues like this very seriously and I am sure that he is looking into it. She asked Mr. Pelenick to forward the email chain and other information to Council so that they can better understand the issue and address it moving forward.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Ms. Nenni

Ms. Nenni thanked Dr. Maples for being here and for making her presentation. It was very moving and certainly tells the story of some unsung heroes. She thanked Dr. Didlick-Davis and Dr. Bronston for being here and talking to us about some really important things. Thank you for coming out and making us aware of those issues. She thanked Cty staff and City Manager Pelenick for their long hours of work and presentation for Council at the strategic planning session. Appreciate all of the hard work that went into that.

Mr. Moon

Mr. Moon said he will look forward to hearing more about the issues that Dr. Didlick-Davis and Dr. Bronston brought us this evening.

Mr. Mulligan

Mr. Mulligan thanked Dr. Maples for coming and commented that he is looking forward to supporting that resolution regarding the hidden heroes. As to Mr. Lewis’ comments regarding the boards and commissions, I had a couple of board members that were term out contact me after the start of the year and they were a little surprised that they were being asked to step down from their position. I apologized to them and I think that we as a council communicated inadequately to Mrs. Schenck and in turn to these people the concept of the two-term limit. This wasn’t properly communicated to these volunteers on the board. I assured them that in no way reflected our displeasure with the time and effort that they put into their service and obviously we wanted them to continue to participate whether it is as a volunteer or non-board member. Certainly, in the future when opportunities come up they can come back. I wanted to clarify that so I am happy that Steve Lewis came and expressed that so that I know as a Council we can do better in the future to communicate to our volunteers that do give a lot. I thank City staff for putting together a very robust agenda at our strategic planning session Friday and Saturday. We have some bold initiatives underway and I look forward to working with you all to make those a reality.

Ms. Condrey

Ms. Condrey commented that it was a very, very impressive strategic planning session last weekend from our Public Safety and Economic Development departments. Everything was really top-notch and people are doing really great things in the City building. There’s a lot of exciting things to come in Middletown. As a council member I’m excited, but as a citizen, I’m even more excited. I would like to take on the challenge of creating a smart excel spreadsheet that helps us better track our board members and when their terms are expiring because I am an engineer and I love that kind of stuff. I would be happy to get a list of all of those board members and when they started. Just one master list that we have because it is kind of all over the place on each of them and we’re having to work through each different board and commission. We need a bigger picture that would help us look at it all.

Mrs. Schenck explained that this year we had more interest in certain boards. In the past, it was not uncommon for people to serve their two terms and then stay on the board because no one else applied. Rather than have vacancies, people stayed on the boards and commissions longer. We had so many applications and some people that applied that did not get an appointment to any board because we received more applications than we had spots to fill. What people have come to know as the norm did not play out that way this time because we received a lot of applications.

Ms. Condrey suggested reaching out proactively to individuals that are going to term out and let them know that they may apply again, but if anyone else applies, the new applicant will get preference; that will better set their expectation.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

Lakeside Redirection Project

City Manager Pelenick welcomed Assistant Public Works Director Nakita Lancaster to the podium to present an update of the Lakeside Redirection Project. Ms. Lancaster explained that the Lakeside Redirection Project is part of Middletown’s Consent Decree. This is a large construction project with impacts to residents. It includes:

- 10 MGD Pump Station
- 2,100 LF Gravity Sewer
- 5,000 LF Force Main

Public outreach is part of the Consent Decree requirements and it is a good practice. The outreach approach includes door hangers, a webpage and regular social media updates.

City Manager Pelenick provided information about the City’s efforts to be proactive with regard to homelessness in our community. The City has received a lot of CARES Act money and there is a lot of concern about the economic impacts of the pandemic on our citizens. One of the things we have been cognizant to is the potential to deal with homelessness as a result. This
year we have tried to be quite proactive and as a result there are several items.

Ms. Cohen explained that in the spirit of being proactive and making sure that we have the ability to address concerns, those that have happened in the past and those that might happen in the future, this year in particular because the Shalom shelter is not in operation this winter. We tried to address two main concerns, the first is how do we address missing shelter beds with Shalom’s absence, and the second is there a more effective way to help deal with homelessness in the community. The first legislative item allows for the appropriation of some funds out of the CARES Act allocation to help address the issue and then the next piece of legislation will be to enter into a memorandum of understanding with a pilot program with One City for Recovery to put social workers on the frontline to address some of our homelessness concerns. I have been working extensively with the Butler County Homeless Coalition to try and look at some county and local resources to address the need for shelter beds. The homeless coalition is a group that brings together officials from Hamilton, Middletown and Butler County, including the non-profits and service providers in the area to try and effectively group services together when appropriate. Through the coalition we were able to work out a triage system to get people connected with the best resources available and try and give our first responders the ability to triage situations and get people from field to the most appropriate resources. Our first responders will be looking to see if people are veterans, if they are able to group shelter, are they appropriate for group shelter, are they families in need of private shelter or are they people unwilling to go to shelter. As we work through the triage continuum the idea is to use the least expensive or intrusive methods necessary to get them to the correct services. For our shelter beds we will be utilizing the expanded Hope House beds and we have the ability to utilize night shelter and warming locations at Serve City in Hamilton when necessary. When people are unable to shelter in groups there are limited options and availability for officers to provide short-term housing assistance at a Middletown hotel. This has limited availability but will provide an important piece of the puzzle when we encounter families and those who are unable to get out of group shelter and still have to get out of the elements. Those who are homeless and that are unwilling to shelter or unable to go to the shelter environment. This will be when we look to our transitional housing teams and those doing field outreach to provide services when possible. With the field outreach, is there more that we can do to help address the homelessness concerns? We are proposing a one-year pilot program with One City for Recovery. One City for Recovery has worked with our first responders on the quick response team to respond to overdose calls. They make sure that people who are willing and able can get the treatment resources they need. They have had incredible success. They are now using the Middletown model in national trainings on how to handle this type of issue. We are looking to use the same type of model to address our homelessness concerns. Chief Birk and I met with representatives from One City for Recovery about ramping up their services in Middletown. They would spend a designated amount of time addressing homelessness concerns. They proposed a memorandum of understanding that provides for some additional services of social workers in the field and working directly with our Community Oriented Policing unit. They will provide resources to get people into more permanent housing. They can use the One City for Recovery hotline and be connected with the resources that they need. The goal is to remove the systematic barriers and get people into more permanent housing. In the past the City has been dealing getting overnight shelter but we have not really been looking at what are some of the ways we could do to help people get into more permanent housing. Social workers explained that getting IDs for people can be difficult; it requires money and documentation. Maybe we could chip away at those kinds of barriers that will help people get along their way and get into a more stable environment. Learning about the specific challenges helps us determine how we can help fix them. We are hoping by using this system for a one-year pilot program it gives us enough time to get some data about how people ended up in Middletown, how they became homeless and how we can best help them moving forward. It will also provide some accountability that they will have to come back to the City and provide some metrics on what kinds of services that they provided over the year. With the data, the City will be able to evaluate what is working and not working and what needs to change. I think this is a great opportunity to really live out the idea of putting more social workers out in the field with police officers and trying to address issues in a different way. This would put us in the forefront of trying it out and see if it helps our citizens.

Ms. Condrey asked how they would interact with the Police Department. Chief Birk explained that they started out with the heroin response team (also known as the quick response team) and the fire department. Chief Birks meets with Victoria and Lindsey on Wednesdays and they go out and meet with the people who overdosed the week before. The social workers follow up with them to see if they want treatment and they help them find placement in rehab facilities. The program has been very successful. When it first started we had a very long list, now it’s much shorter and overdoses are decreasing. I think that this pilot program will be very successful because they are already networking with some of the individuals involved. Many homeless people are dealing with drug and alcohol addiction.

Ms. Condrey asked how the contract would be paid, one lump sum or a per visit. Ms. Cohen explained that it is proposed to be 4 quarterly payments. The contract provides access to the One City for Recovery hotline and their services, additional hours for social workers to be in Middletown, and resources to help social workers to help people get the identification and
documents they need to secure housing.

Ms. Condrey asked how the $50,000 would be accounted for. Ms. Cohen stated that the City will pay for each quarter in advance and One City for Recovery would be responsible for tracking it and making sure that it meets the terms of the proposal.

Ms. Nenni asked if One City for Recovery was providing these services to any other city. Ms. Cohen stated that this is a new idea.

Mr. Moon asked if homelessness was still impacting downtown businesses. Currently, there are only a few downtown businesses open due to the pandemic. The City still receives calls consistently about the homeless camps. Chief Birk reported that the number of homeless camps has increased throughout the City. With this pilot program the social workers would go with the community-oriented police unit and make contacts and relationships with these individuals and see if they need treatment for addiction or mental health issues. By creating relationships with these individuals, I really think that they can help find long term placement for them.

Ms. Nenni asked what the City’s approach to the homeless camps has been up until now. Chief Birk reported that up until now the police department has just broken up the camps and the people collect their belongings and go on their way. The department may also check and see if the individuals have any warrants. The homeless people just move on to another location. We need to think outside the box and try something new. Some people who are homeless want to be homeless, but we want to try and reach those people that need and want help.

Mr. Mulligan asked if this could be accomplished with the City’s community-oriented policing unit. Chief Birk stated that we have the officers but we don’t have the connections with the treatment facilities, hospitals and the Veterans Administration like the social workers do. They have contacts and connections all over the area. Mr. Mulligan asked if Hope House has those connections. Chief Birk reported that Hope House doesn’t take everybody. They won’t take individuals with warrants, issues with drug or alcohol addiction or mental health issues. He reported that 80% of the homeless population has alcohol or drug addiction issues or has mental health issues. The social workers have the connections to find placements for these people.

Mr. Mulligan discussed the comprehensive study that was done in 2019. That study indicated that there were only 16-17 homeless persons in Middletown per week. Chief Birk said that the number of homeless has risen. Middletown has a lot of services for these individuals. We are trying to think outside the box, we see the same homeless people over and over again. But if we can get one person the long-term treatment they need to put them on the path to success. Mr. Mulligan clarified that his next comment was not directed at Chief Birk, but how much more does the City of Middletown have to do? We have borne a very heavy burden when it comes to subsidizing affordable housing; eight times what HUD thinks a City of our size should be. It should be 2% of your housing stock. At one point in the recent past it was 16%; that includes the Section 8 vouchers, Butler Metropolitan Housing Authority units, Habitat for Humanity, etc. We are doing all that we can, more that we should be doing with regard to affordable housing. Now we want to build another infrastructure to potentially attract additional homeless persons to get out of that system. I don’t wish homelessness on anyone and I don’t want this to come across as cold-hearted but at some point, we have to look out for the greater good; the 48,000 people, many of whom are paying taxes, their property taxes, their water bills on time. They just want a clean, safe city, they don’t want to be magnet for poverty. That is what is so frustrating about this proposal, and then procedurally, you have been working on this for weeks and months and we get it the Friday before it’s to be passed as emergency legislation. I take exception to that. We have to vote up or down with maybe a couple of business days to review it and one day to ask questions. I can’t support this in its current form. I don’t know if I want to be involved with this group for a year. I would expect that we would have some tangible results in three or four months. I have some procedural concerns and concerns about the content of the legislation.

Chief Birk stated that the program is new and I don’t want to send these females out to homeless camps without an officer. An officer would go with them and our goal is to find them treatment for their addiction, job training and placement so that they are no longer homeless. We want to find the people that need this help. That will require going out into the field and making these relationships. We get calls about the homeless all of the time; camps here, camps there. We go there, we run them and we send them on their way. We have no place for them. This program would allow us to take it a step further. We have had really good success with the heroin response team and they have modeled it for other cities.

Mr. Mulligan stated that the City has financially supported the Hope House expansion that was to provide additional beds and deal with the issue of homelessness in the downtown corridor where we are trying to build businesses and educational opportunities. Now it’s like well that’s not enough, we have to do more. For 16 or 17 people we are spending a lot of resources attacking this, hitting the whack a mole.
Ms. Nenni asked what was the allocation of resources to engage these two ladies as it stands right now. Chief Birk stated that right now their services are paid through another company, they come in for a few hours, one day a week. With Covid we have been doing different things, trying to reduce direct contact with anyone. Things are opening up a little bit more now so they are becoming more active but right now their services are paid through a contract. We have had such success with them including an improved mindset of the officers. Now instead of putting people in jail, they can call one of the social workers and get a place for them and see if we can help them. They City reached out to the social workers and said what can we do with these homeless camps and these homeless individuals, coming downtown and into different areas. Instead of just breaking up the camps and sending them on their way, let’s try to find a long-term solution. We have to do something different than what we are doing.

Ms. Nenni and Ms. Condrey asked why this was brought forward as emergency legislation if they are not engaging people because of Covid right now. There are just so many questions.

Ms. Cohen stated that we can re-evaluate it, if you would like to consider it for a first reading this evening we can certainly do that. I think some of the concern was getting the resources out into the community now that it is supposed to be zero this weekend.

Ms. Condrey stated that Chief Birk reported that they are not engaging the homeless right now because of Covid, would that change if this was passed as an emergency.

Ms. Cohen stated that resources like funds for transportation to shelters would be available to be used this weekend.

Ms. Condrey asked if these issues could be separated. Mr. Palenick clarified that Resolution No. R2021-03 was the allocation of funds and Ordinance No. O2021-10 was the contract with One City for Recovery. Ms. Condrey suggested that Council talk about the allocation of funds and if that is something that Council feels comfortable moving forward with. Mr. Palenick asked Council to allocate the $5,000 and the $10,000 which are the more immediate things for transportation and/or short-term housing in a very cold environment and leave the $50,000 to be dealt with later along with the contract with One City for Recovery.

There was discussion about whether or not Council wanted to consider the allocation of the $5,000 and $10,000.

Mr. Moon asked about the short-term housing situations. Ms. Cohen clarified that when we are triaging the homeless people, they first determine if they are veterans and eligible for veteran services or if they are appropriate for group shelter environments. There are a certain percentage of people that are not appropriate for a group shelter. That could be families, kids and we are asking for $10,000 to allocate for short-term assistance to get people into short-term hotel stays here in Middletown. Mr. Moon asked if these funds would be paid out as needed. Mr. Palenick clarified that these are CARES Act funds that were set aside to deal with homelessness. This is not a contract. It is like a voucher to stay for so many nights. It is up to the Police Department to determine if and when they would be used, if the other options are not appropriate or available.

Ms. Condrey commented that she does share Mr. Mulligan’s concerns about becoming a magnet and is concerned about something that says free hotel rooms for the homeless. (I am obviously being extreme on that.) I recognize that these are CARES Act funds that are being proposed in this manner because Shalom is not open and there are fewer resources available for these people. I do feel like it would be appropriate to use that money for them. I also want to be very careful that we don’t make it a habit to do that because it will have that effect. As much as I want to help these people we have to be able to help ourselves first.

Ms. Vitori asked what the alternatives are. I think the triage approach is prudent. I think the transportation piece seems most effective since they can then use other resources. We are just connecting people. I agree with Ms. Condrey that the hotel piece could be misinterpreted across the community and within the homeless community but what are the alternatives if we do nothing? What happens to those people this weekend?

Chief Birk stated that if we come across the homeless and obviously and they don’t have any warrants or anything like that and we can’t find a place for them, they are on their own. In the past we haven’t used the hotel vouchers. We have called Serve City in Hamilton and taken a few people down there. They do bring them back the next day. The Gathering from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. has been great. They have been providing hot drinks and lunch which has been a great resource for the homeless. In the evenings is when we really struggle when we come across homeless people. In the past they would go to Shalom.

Mr. Palenick added that the sole reason this came about was due to the pandemic. There are a lot of people suffering economic hardship that we didn’t see before. Our concern was that it put other people into situations of homelessness particularly families or children. There has to
be something within that triage system that provides an opportunity to provide short-term shelter to someone that is not appropriate for group shelter. That is always up to the Police Department, they make that decision, there is no free ride here. That only happens when they have looked at every other alternative.

Mr. Moon stated that he has questions and concerns about the pilot program, the length of the contract and getting the information on a Friday afternoon for a Tuesday meeting. I am more comfortable with moving forward on the allocations of $5,000 and $10,000 than I am moving on the $50,000. Perhaps Council should have another conversation on the $50,000.

Ms. Cohen stated that Council can amend the resolution to make the appropriate changes.

Ms. Condrey applauded the idea of trying to do something to address the addiction problem that is creating a lot of the homelessness problem. It is something that our police department needs some help with. It is not their job to help people get off of drugs. I appreciate thinking outside the box and I would be interested in seeing a pilot program that was not a whole year. I can see the value in it and I realize that we need something long enough to measure it.

Ms. Cohen clarified that if they read the legislation tonight as a first reading they can make amendments before the second reading, or it bring it back as a new piece of legislation. She encouraged Council to send her the amendments that they would like to see.

Ms. Nenni suggested a 6-month pilot program, that would get us through the cold winter months and we can see what effect it has and go from there.

Mr. Moon asked to see how many calls for service there have been.

Ms. Condrey thanked everyone for the good conversations. This is an important topic that has woven itself into our community very deeply.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Approve the City Council Minutes of November 3, 2020.
- Confirm the reinstatement of Elaya Romine to the position of Dispatcher in the Department of Public Safety, Division of Police.
- Confirm the appointments of Devra Wells to the position of Zoning Administrator in the Planning Division; and Amber Martin to the position of Dispatcher in the Department of Public Safety, Division of Police.
- Confirm the promotional appointments of Todd Abell to the position of Equipment Operator in the Department of Public Works and Utilities, Division of Street Maintenance; and Christopher Klug to the position of Fire Lieutenant; and Todd Steinbrunner to the position of Fire Captain; and David Hoerst to the position of Deputy Chief in the Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire.
- Receive and file the board and commission minutes of:
  - Library Board - November 17, 2020
  - Board of Health – December 8, 2020
- Receive and file Oaths of Office for Alexis Manning, Connor Beel and Jennifer Stout.
- Receive and file final assessments for the 2020 Sidewalk, Curb, and Gutter Program.

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

**MOTION AGENDA**

To approve a contract with various vendors for nuisance abatement services of vacant/city-owned properties and private properties that have failed to abide by the City's codified ordinances within the City of Middletown.

- Possum Hollar Designs, LLC $53,395.63
- Results By Carroll LLC $67,601.88
- Cam's Lawn Care $67,886.83
- Julie's Lawncare $68,583.16

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

To authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract with Instiuniform Technologies to complete the rehabilitation of approximately 792 LF of the North Interceptor in an amount not-to-exceed $498,333.

Mr. Mulligan moved to authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract with Instiuniform Technologies.
Technologies to complete the rehabilitation of approximately 792 LF of the North Interceptor in an amount not-to-exceed $498,333. Ms. Condry seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condry, Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon.

Waive Charter

Mr. Mulligan moved to suspend the Charter provision that requires reading on two separate days and to declare Resolution No. R2021-01, Resolution No. R2021-02, Resolution No. R2021-03, 2021 Ordinance No. O2021-06 and Ordinance No. O2021-11 emergency measures to be read one time only. Mr. Moon seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Condry, Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan.

Resolution No. R2021-01

a resolution requesting the Auditor of Butler County to advance to the Treasurer of the City of Middletown, Ohio, taxes assessed and collected for and on behalf of the City of Middletown, Ohio and declaring an emergency was read.

Mr. Mulligan moved to approve Resolution No. R2021-01, a resolution requesting the Auditor of Butler County to advance to the Treasurer of the City of Middletown, Ohio, taxes assessed and collected for and on behalf of the City of Middletown, Ohio and declaring an emergency. Mr. Moon seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condry.

Res. No. R2021-02

2021 Urban Paving Program

Resolution No. R2021-02, a final resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter a contract with the State of Ohio, Department of Transportation for the 2021 Urban Paving Program to resurface Verity Parkway (S.R. 73) between Germantown Road and the northern corporation limit and declaring an emergency was read.

Mr. Mulligan moved to approve Resolution No. R2021-02, a final resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter a contract with the State of Ohio, Department of Transportation for the 2021 Urban Paving Program to resurface Verity Parkway (S.R. 73) between Germantown Road and the northern corporation limit and declaring an emergency. Ms. Nenni seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condry, Ms. Vitori.

Res. No. R2021-03

Amend Appropriations

Resolution No. R2021-03, a resolution to make adjustments to appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Middletown, Counties of Butler and Warren, State of Ohio, for the period ending December 31, 2021 and declaring an emergency was read. (Community Development Act 1974 Fund & General Fund)

Ms. Condry moved to amend Section 2 of Resolution No. R2021-03 from $65,000 allocated to $15,000 allocated. Ms. Nenni seconded.

Mr. Palenick explained that the City was waiting on funds from HUD for the small business grants. Ms. Condry asked him to let Council know when those funds were received. There was discussion about whether the City was confident that HUD would provide the promised funds. Ms. Cohen and Mr. Palenick are very confident that the funds would be received.

Mr. Mulligan asked why the small business grant funding from HUD and the CARES Act allocation for homelessness were brought forward in the same piece of legislation. Ms. Cohen explained that they were both appropriation amendments and emergency measures so it was done for ease of processing, the two items are not interrelated. Mr. Mulligan commented that it would be nice to separate them. It is hard to support the emergency hotel voucher component of this. It is just not a program, that I feel like, was fully vetted through Council. It kind of came out of nowhere and doesn’t really achieve the long term goals as a City that we are trying to work towards.

Ms. Condry commented that she understands where Mr. Mulligan is coming from. It would have been nice if we could have thought a little more in advance on that and not made that once an emergency. We have CARES Act funding and we are still in a pandemic and it is going to be very cold.

Ms. Cohen suggested that Council strike the original motion to amend Resolution R2021-03 and instead amend Resolution No. R2021-03 to only include Section 1 and to strike Section 2 and to create a separate resolution to consider Section 2.

Amend R2021-03

Mr. Mulligan moved to amend Resolution R2021-03 to only include Section 1 and strike Section 2. Ms. Condry seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condry, Ms. Nenni, Ms. Vitori.

Establish R2021-06

Ms. Condry moved to establish R2021-06, a resolution to amend the appropriations listed in Resolution No. R2021-03 to only include Section 2 and strike Section 1. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condry, Ms. Nenni, Ms. Vitori, Mr. Moon.

Mr. Mulligan moved to approve Resolution No. R2021-03, a resolution to make adjustments to appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Middletown, Counties of Butler and Warren, State of Ohio, for the period ending December 31, 2021 and declaring
| Res. No. R2021-06 Amend Appropriations | an emergency as amended. (Community Development Act 1974 Fund) Ms. Nenni seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Condrey, Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan. Resolution No. R2021-06, a resolution to make adjustments to appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Middletown, Counties of Butler and Warren, State of Ohio, for the period ending December 31, 2021 and declaring an emergency was read. (General Fund) Ms. Condrey expressed her concern that the emergency hotel stay funding would be available for use through the end of the year. Without an end date for use it may become like a magnet. Finance Director Burton explained that the appropriation would be for the year 2021 but that the contract with the local hotels to house homeless people for short-term stays at a contracted rate could be for a limited time, such as, during the cold winter weather months. Mr. Palenick explained that the contract is only for a specific rate per night, not a set amount of nights. The City would only be billed if the rooms were used. Ms. Condrey implored staff to only use these hotel rooms when individuals would be put in physical hardship conditions because of the temperature and weather outside. Mr. Moon concurred with the Mayor. Ms. Nenni urged staff to use this money conservatively and to use the vouchers conservatively and appropriately. Ms. Cohen explained that in the triage approach, the hotel vouchers would be a last resort when individuals were not appropriate for the other options and the environment is dangerous outside. Ms. Vitori suggested sending out a monthly report of the use of these funds so that Council can see how these funds are being utilized. Ms. Condrey moved to approve Resolution No. R2021-06, a resolution to make adjustments to appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Middletown, Counties of Butler and Warren, State of Ohio, for the period ending December 31, 2021 and declaring an emergency as amended. (General Fund) Mr. Moon seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Ms. Condrey. Nays: Mr. Mulligan. Waive Charter Ms. Condrey moved to waive the Charter provision that requires reading on two separate days and to declare Resolution No. R2021-06 an emergency measure to be read one time only. Mr. Moon seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condrey, Ms. Vitori. Amend O2021-10 Ms. Nenni moved to amend Ordinance No. O2021-10 from an emergency to a first reading. Mr. Moon seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Ms. Condrey. Nays: Mr. Mulligan. Ord. No. O2021-10 MOU OneCity for Recovery Ord. No. O2021-06Extend Contract for Grounds Maintenance Ordinance No. O2021-10, an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with OneCity for Recovery was read for the first time. Ordinance No. O2021-06, an ordinance establishing a procedure for and authorizing extension of contracts for grounds maintenance for 2021 and declaring an emergency was read. Mr. Mulligan moved to approve Ordinance No. O2021-06, an ordinance establishing a procedure for and authorizing extension of contracts for grounds maintenance for 2021 and declaring an emergency. Ms. Nenni seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condrey, Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon. Ord. No. O2021-11Contract with RINKA Towne Mall Galleria Ordinance No. O2021-11, an ordinance authorizing an amendment to a contract with RINKA for master planning services related to the Towne Mall Galleria Redevelopment Project and declaring an emergency was read. Mr. Mulligan moved to approve Ordinance No. O2021-11, an ordinance authorizing an amendment to a contract with RINKA for master planning services related to the Towne Mall Galleria Redevelopment Project and declaring an emergency. Mr. Moon seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Condrey, Ms. Vitori, Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan. Ord. No. O2021-07Zone Change 812 South Main Ordinance No. O2021-07, an ordinance changing the zoning classification for the parcel located at 812 South Main Street from R-4 (Attached Residential District) to R-3-HD (Medium Density Residential District – Historic District Overlay) was read for the second time. Mr. Mulligan moved to approve Ordinance No. O2021-07, an ordinance changing the zoning
Ord. No. 02021-08
Zone Change
500, 502 & 504
The Alameda

Ordinance No. 02021-08, an ordinance changing the zoning classification for the parcels located at 500, 502 & 504 The Alameda from R-3 (Medium Density Residential District) to R-3-HD (Medium Density Residential District – Historic District Overlay) was read for the second time.

Mr. Mulligan moved to approve Ordinance No. 02021-08, an ordinance changing the zoning classification for the parcels located at 500, 502 & 504 The Alameda from R-3 (Medium Density Residential District) to R-3-HD (Medium Density Residential District – Historic District Overlay). Ms. Condrey seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Nenni, Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condrey, Ms. Vitori.

Ord. No. 02021-09
Zone Change
Bexley and Ellen Dr.

Ordinance No. 02021-09, an ordinance changing the zoning classification for a parcel located at the intersection of Bexley Drive and Ellen Drive from B-1 (Neighborhood Business District) to R-3 (Medium Density Residential District) was read for the second time.

Mr. Mulligan moved to approve Ordinance No. 02021-09, an ordinance changing the zoning classification for a parcel located at the intersection of Bexley Drive and Ellen Drive from B-1 (Neighborhood Business District) to R-3 (Medium Density Residential District). Ms. Nenni seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. Moon, Mr. Mulligan, Ms. Condrey, Ms. Nenni, Ms. Vitori.

Ord. No. 02021-12
Extend Fire Uniform Contract with A.E. David

Ordinance No. 02021-12, an ordinance establishing a procedure for and authorizing an extension of the current contract with A.E. David Company for the purchase of fire uniforms was read for the first time.

Ord. No. 02021-13
SBED Grant Mz
Jades Soul Food, LLC

Ordinance No. 02021-13, an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement for a Small Business Economic Development Grant with Mz Jades Soul Food, LLC was read for the first time.

Ord. No. 02021-14
Renew and Expand D.O.R.A.

Ordinance No. 02021-14, an ordinance renewing the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area and authorizing an expansion of the boundary thereof was read for the first time.

Res. No. R2021-04
-Hidden Heroes City

Resolution No. R2021-04, a resolution in support of the City of Middletown, Ohio becoming a Hidden Heroes City in support of military and veteran caregivers was read for the first time.

Res. No. R2021-05
Amend Appropriations

Resolution No. R2021-05, a resolution to make adjustments to appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Middletown, Counties of Butler and Warren, State of Ohio, for the period ending December 31, 2021 was read for the first time. (Police Grant Fund)

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:20 p.m., the meeting was declared adjourned until February 16, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Attest: [Signature]

Nicole Condrey, Mayor