

CAUCUS MEETING MINUTES OF THE ELSMERE CITY COUNCIL

August 1, 2023

6:30 PM

LOCATION: Elsmere City Building.

CALL TO ORDER: Councilwoman Maria Vogt called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: The following members were present: Mayor Marty Lenhof, Councilwoman Maria Vogt, Councilwoman Gloria Grubbs, Councilman Malcolm Daniels, Councilwoman Serena Owen, Councilwoman Missy Tester, and Councilwoman Joanne Barnett Smith.

AUDIENCE REMARKS:

Councilwoman Renee Wilson, Erlanger City Council addressed the council to ask for support for the youth of this city. She came to ask the support for Destiny Owen who was unable to make it to the meeting. She stated that she hoped the council would see fit to raise awareness about student safety.

Mr. Larry Owen, who serves on the Kenton County Soil and Conservation Board. He came to address the council to also ask the council to support the initiative of Ms. Destiny Owen. He stated that she has been trying to raise awareness for over two years now and would love the support of the council. He stated that student safety week is in October.

Councilwoman Serena Owen stated that an email was sent to everyone from Ms. Destiny Owen, who is a senior at Lloyd High School. Councilwoman Owen read the email to the council.

Dear Mayor Lenhof and Elsmere City Council,

I am an Elsmere youth leader who helps and volunteers in our community and thank you for organizing the Student Government Day. I enjoyed participating and learning from you.

I helped with our Elsmere City Clean Up when we had them and I currently help with my annual Holiday outreach for students and families, a Free Formalwear Giveaway for High School and College students, helping during Vacation Bible School at my church in Elsmere, and with fresh free food and school supplies for students, people, and families in need in our school district and community. I like helping people and with students and our students Officer getting hit by vehicles going to and from school and with school shootings in our country, and bullying in our schools, I want to help support student and school safety.

I am following up on my 2021 request two years ago for your support of our students and school safety through a Student and School Safety proclamation or resolution in honor of the National and Kentucky Safe Schools week in October. This year it will be October 15-21, 2023.

I hope our city of Elsmere will care and say yes to support Student and School Safety. Please see the sample proclamation/resolution language in my email below.

Will you please help us and support Student and School Safety with a proclamation or resolution for this year and every year?

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Pilot Chicken Program Update – City Administrator Matt Dowling stated that per the ordinance that there would be a quarterly update at the Caucus Meeting. He stated that he had spoken to our code enforcement officer Chris Preston who stated that all five of our licensed owners were in compliance with the ordinance. He stated that one home had four roosters and a notice of violation had been sent and all had been removed. Matt also stated that there was one home that was not part of the pilot program that had chickens. A notice of violation had been sent to the property, but the chickens had not been removed yet.

Caucus Meeting Procedures – City Administrator Matt Dowling stated that the city had never had formal procedures for caucus meetings to his knowledge. He wanted to reach out to the council to see if they would like to formalize a procedure for caucus meetings. He stated that the staff could put together some options for the council to consider.

Councilwoman Grubbs stated that as long as the city has been doing caucus meetings, that the lead council person runs the meeting, and she is in charge of the agenda and if you would like to have something added you would

contact that person to have it placed on the agenda. She stated that she did not have an issue with it remaining that way.

Councilwoman Vogt stated the items should specifically pertain to Elsmere, even though we are working with other agencies, sometimes it gets away from items that are of concern for the residents of Elsmere.

Councilwoman Missy Tester stated that there should be a time limit set on how long residents can speak.

Councilwoman Grubbs stated that that had always been at the discretion of the lead council person or the mayor.

Mayor Lenhof stated that when the city first started the caucus meetings that there was not a city administrator and there were a lot of items put on the lead council and now that there is a city administrator he can help with the agenda.

Councilman Malcolm Daniels stated that the only thing he would like to say is that he would like when we do not have a caucus meeting such as July that we put audience comments on the council meeting agenda so that there isn't a gap in time where residents can come in and voice their opinions. Councilwoman Grubbs agreed with that suggestion. She asked if there needs to be a resolution to that effect. Attorney Greg Voss stated that the mayor as the presiding official would put together the agenda and he would be able to put that on the agenda. Mayor Lenhof stated that we could depending on the holiday we could make to where there is no caucus we could put audience comment on the council agenda.

Councilwoman Serena Owen stated that the voices of our residents are important. It's important that they know their voice is valued. She would like to ask the council and mayor since we are considering doing this for the months that we do not have caucus that we put public comment in each of our meetings you so that residents who cannot make it to one but can make it to the other still have the opportunity to know that their voice is valued. She is asking and hoping that we value our residents' voices enough to open the public comment section up in both meetings so that they have an opportunity to voice their concerns.

Councilwoman Vogt stated that the council is actually voting on city issues on the second Tuesday of the month. If the public comes in on the second Tuesday and brings up issues it might affect voting. Councilwoman Owen suggested discussing the items at the next month caucus. Mayor Lenhof stated the reason they opened public comment at caucus is that it gave council a week to review and then they can take care of the item at the next council meeting.

Councilwoman Grubbs stated that some people do not like to bring up items while they are on live television. They do not want to have their names and addresses listed on television or have their neighbors know that they complained. Councilwoman Owen stated that those who are camera shy we could tell them that they could discuss their issues at the caucus meeting and those who are not can address at the council meetings. Councilwoman Grubbs stated the city building is always open to those who wish to speak to the City Administrator or Mayor. Councilwoman Owen stated that by opening up the public comments to the council meetings it would give the residents ample opportunities to address the council. Mayor Lenhof stated he would take the request into consideration.

Council Travel & Training – City Administrator Matt Dowling stated that historically the city has not put a significant amount of funding into travel and training for council members. He stated that over the past year or so the city has seen an increased interest from the council in wanting to attend training courses and different kinds of events. He states that the city has a limited budget, they budgeted \$15,000.00 for travel and training. This is a significant increase over years past. This amount includes all the training for the City Clerk, the Treasurer, the City Administrator, the mayor and any other administrative staff. He stated that he would like to see if the council would like to set up some sort of policy for travel and training and what that would be like. Is it one KLC event per year. Councilwoman Barnett Smith stated that each member should go to at least one and bring information back. Councilwoman Grubbs stated that when she was on the school board, they would make it to where one year

two members could go to a conference and on the next year two more could go. Mayor Lenhof stated that since the council is only on a two-year term that it would not work. He stated that when he and the City Administrator sat down and talked about this you need to money in the budget and in the past year's council was not interested which is fine. He stated that the city needs some sort of direction. He stated that he and Matt discussed it and thought one KLC event per year. The only problem with that is those elected to council for the first time would probably go to the training at the beginning of the year but does that eliminate them from going to the convention later in the year.

Councilman Daniels stated maybe you can make it like a stipend and the person who goes would pay some as well. And they would fill out a form stating why they wish to attend and after the event they would report on it as well. Mayor Lenhof stated that the council should not have to put in any of their own funds.

Councilwoman Owen stated that she liked City Administrator Dowling's suggestion to give each member an amount. She appreciates the opportunity.

Personnel Policy Updates – City Administrator Dowling stated that the city needs to make some updates to the personnel policy that was adopted in 2020. He stated that the city needs to have an on-call policy for the public works department when they are called out. Matt will reach out to other cities to see what their policies are. The city also needs to update the Juneteenth holiday as a holiday afforded to staff.

Home Consortium – City Administrator Dowling stated this program is facilitated by City of Covington staff. It provides down payment assistance, closing costs, or attorney fees. Anything that goes into purchasing a home. This will help promote home ownership in the city.

ARPA Legislation – During the budgeting process the city identified the items that the City will spend the ARPA funds on. These items have already been budgeted, but the city needs to adopt legislation to expend the funds.

No Action Taken

Councilwoman Grubbs had no report.

Councilman Daniels had no report.

Councilwoman Barnett Smith had no report.

Councilwoman Vogt had nothing to report.

Councilwoman Tester had nothing to report.

Councilwoman Owen Good evening, All, A resident who lives on Kim Street off of Plateau Street across from the Mary E Smith Cemetery contacted me concerned about the unsafe nature of not having any streetlights on their street. Can someone from Public Works look into it and follow up with me so I can share our resolution plan with the resident? Thanks!

A resident/homeowner who lives on Garvey Avenue reached out to me concerned about pedestrians walking on and destroying her rock and flower garden in her front yard. She asked if she could have a fence put in, but our PDS Planning and Development Services Rep and our City Administrator Matt responded and shared that it was against the rules to have a fence in front yards in Elsmere. There are currently at least two houses in Garvey with fences in their front yard and I would like to know by what provision are those homeowners allowed to have a fence in their front yard and is there a possible solution to her concern? Thanks.

I attended our Kenton Co. Soil and Water Conservation District Board meeting in July and as a member of the Education Committee we celebrated and gave an award to our Lloyd HS Envirothon team who won a Regional and State Award! Congratulations and keep up the great work!

Thank you, Larry Owen and Councilwoman Renee Wilson, for following up with us today and sharing Destiny Owen's concern and advocacy for Student and School Safety.

To our Mayor Lenhof, Elsmere Admin and City Council, a youth leader in our community named Destiny Owen reached out to us and Erlanger's City Council following up on her request from 2021 asking our Mayor Lenhof and Council to support student safety with a Student Safety Resolution that she emailed to Mayor Lenhof, City Administrator Matt, and our Elsmere Council. Her August 1, 2023, email reads:

Dear Mayor Lenhof and Elsmere City Council,

I am an Elsmere youth leader who helps and volunteers in our community and thank you for organizing the Student Government Day. I enjoyed participating and learning from you.

I helped with our Elsmere City Clean Up when we had them and I currently help with my annual Holiday outreach for students and families, a Free Formalwear Giveaway for High School and College students, helping during Vacation Bible School at my church in Elsmere, and with fresh free food and school supplies for students, people, and families in need in our school district and community. I like helping people and with students and our Resource Officer getting hit by vehicles going to and from school and with school shootings in our country, and bullying in our schools, I want to help support student and school safety. I am following up on my 2021 request two years ago for your support of our students and school safety through a Student and School Safety proclamation or resolution in honor of the National and Kentucky Safe Schools week in October. This year it will be October 15-21, 2023.

I hope our city of Elsmere will care and say yes to support Student and School Safety. Please see the sample proclamation/resolution language in my email below.


Will you please help us and support Student and School Safety with a proclamation or resolution for this year and every year?

Thank you,
Destiny Owen

Can we please respond to our Elsmere Student leader's two-year-old request by adding it to our next meeting agenda and creating a Resolution or Proclamation supporting Student and School safety? She asked who would be responding to the student's request. City Administrator Dowling stated that he will respond to the email.

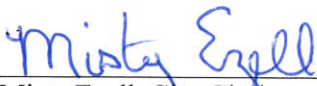
ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Vogt called for a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Tester made the motion and Councilwoman Barnett Smith seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.



Mayor Marty Lenhof

Attest:



Misty Ezell, City Clerk