



**NORTON CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE WORK SESSION  
MONDAY, APRIL 05, 2021**

The Committee Work Session convened on Monday, April 05, 2021 at 7:00 PM. The meeting was called to order by Dennis McGlone, President of Council, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silent reflection.

Roll Call:	Jack Gainer	Also Present:
	Dan Karant	Mayor Zita
	Paul Tousley	Robert Fowler
	Scott Pelot	Pam Keener
	Charlotte Whipkey	Kerry Macomber
	Joe Kernan	
	Dennis McGlone	

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC** – Pamela Hickson-Stevenson, Executive Director Akron Summit County Library District, 4475 Castlemaine Court, Akron OH. Ms. Hickson-Stevenson thanked Council for the opportunity to discuss the upcoming renewal levy and discussed the importance of the levy for the continued operations of the library. Ms. Hickson-Stevenson noted that the levy is 55% of their operating revenue and it would be disastrous without those funds. It comes to about \$4.51 a month for a \$100,000 home or about \$.15 per day and supplies many resources that most of us could not afford individually. A complete listing of speaking points is attached herewith. Mr. McGlone thanked Ms. Hickson-Stevenson for her presentation. Ms. Whipkey asked if this cost will be the same as what residents have been paying as the property values have been increased for some and Ms. Hickson-Stevenson explained the library will likely receive the same amount; however, due to the recent re-evaluation of property values, it is possible there may be an increase for some and without the detailed information cannot answer that question specifically.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Mr. McGlone called for a change in the Agenda to consider Item C – Summit County Library Levy first.

Summit County Library Levy - Mr. Kernan noted that the Library is a valuable resource and we have a branch in Norton. He said that as leaders of the community, Council has a responsibility to support and encourage residents to vote in favor of the levy. Mr. Kernan moved to add Res. No. 51-2021 to Council’s next agenda; seconded by Mr. McGlone.

Roll Call: Yes: Kernan, McGlone, Whipkey  
No: None

Motion passed unanimously.

Updated Codified Ordinances – Mr. Pelot explained this is an annual update of ordinances from 2020 and it ensures we do not have conflicting legislation from January 12, 2020 through December 14, 2020. Ms. Whipkey asked about the changes that were made in the legislation identified in Exhibit A and she believed those were State changes, not ours. Ms. Whipkey stated they are listed here, but she would like to have the language with it to see how it has changed. Mr. Karant noted that he had the same question but did not want to hold up this legislation as he didn't think we would have an issue with it, but he would also like to know the changes. Mr. McGlone requested that Ms. Macomber request that information. Mr. Pelot moved to add Ord. No. 49-2021 to Council's next agenda and waive readings contingent on that the information requested is provided; seconded by Mr. McGlone.

Roll Call: Yes: Pelot, McGlone, Whipkey  
No: None

Motion passed unanimously.

Agricultural District - Mr. Gainer explained this is a renewal application for an Agricultural District for Eric and Kristen Beddow, 3631 S Medina Line Road; Parcel No. 46-07452. A Public Hearing is scheduled for April 26, 2021. Mr. Kernan confirmed this is not the property where a new facility is being built and Mr. Gainer concurred stating this property is on Medina Line Road. Mr. Gainer moved to add Ord. No. 50-2021 to Council's next agenda for a first reading only; seconded by Mr. Pelot.

Roll Call: Yes: Gainer, Pelot, Karant  
No: None

Motion passed unanimously.

Time Extension for Cleveland-Massillon Road Assessment – Ms. Whipkey stated that Dr. Lehner is the owner of the former Meden property and was supposed to develop it as the Meden Place, but that has not taken place. He has since received his tax assessments that in 2018 Dr. Lehner agreed to pay for putting in water and sewer lines and also to pay for the engineering for \$75,000. He is now asking that the assessment be extended from 10 years to 20 - 30 years, which is what she believed the same as what residents pay. Ms. Whipkey stated she believed some have already paid their assessment and those amounts would have come off of Mr. Lehner's obligation. Ms. Whipkey stated she is not in favor of moving this forward because there are a lot of residents and businesses that have been assessed. This was by petition and in the past when residents have petitioned for improvements and upon hearing the price they would be assessed did not go forward as they couldn't afford it. Dr. Lehner was the petitioner but now he is saying he did not know he was responsible. Ms. Whipkey stated she does not buy that for one second as he signed the papers back in 2018 and requested a lot of documentation from the Administration. He is also talking about a TIF and she doesn't recall any TIF for this particular property although there was one for the Dollar General Store. Ms. Whipkey asked if we ever got our \$75,000 for the engineering that we paid out and pointed out that the City paid \$24,000 of that money from out of the rollback fund. Ms. Whipkey stated again she did not believe he did not know he was obligated; she believed he just didn't know the deal he had may fall through and he would ultimately be responsible for it. She cannot in any good conscience give or even back giving an extension of 10 or 20 years on this. Ms. Whipkey provided a listing of the legislation and dates associated with the discussions that date back over the past three years: 77-

2018 for the engineering; 136-2019 assessment discussions; and 70-2020 actually levying the assessments. She does not want to give him any extension because there have been no improvements. There are residents that will have to pay to tie-in to that sewer if their septic systems fail. Ms. Whipkey recognized that the COVID pandemic may have contributed somewhat to the circumstances as it has all of us, but none of the residents facing assessments got breaks on their taxes and their increased amounts would be comparable to them to the amount he has. Ms. Whipkey stated she may be agreeable to a one-year or two extension, but this 10 or 20 years...No. Mr. Gainer read the email that he sent to Council addressing his reasons for granting the 20-year assessment request. Mr. Gainer is not disputing that Dr. Lehner signed the petition for 100% of the cost, but he believes granting the extension will be good for Norton in the long run. He does believe he did not realize how much money he would be obligated to pay. He encouraged Council to consider amending the original agreement to reflect a 20-year assessment because he believes this will allow Dr. Lehner to continue looking for developers. We did extend the lines and fears we would end up owning the property. Mr. Lehner would get some of his money back over the years as people tied in and that could go on this obligation; he feels that asking him to pay \$48,000 plus a year with no development at the present time is too much to ask and understands how it is unsustainable at the present time. Mr. Kernan asked if the deal fell through because of COVID and Mr. Gainer responded no, he thought there was a problem with the funding. Mr. Kernan reminded Council it forgave fees for the games of chance businesses because of the restrictions during COVID although he realizes the scale is different. Mr. Gainer remarked that he is only asking for an extension not forgiveness; we will get all the money back. An extension is better than taking ownership of the property through foreclosure. Mr. Pelot remarked that Norton has worked hard to repair a poor reputation with builders and developers. Norton has made concessions for others and Council should consider at least a 15-year extension for Dr. Lehner. Mr. Pelot encouraged Administration to discuss options with Dr. Lehner to determine what would be plausible for both parties. Mr. Pelot noted Dr. Lehner should have had a contract with the developer to protect his interests and hold them responsible as well. If he gets a developer, we can have an agreement to pay it off early. Mr. Gainer stated he would prefer 20 and it would give the man an opportunity; as far as an agreement, he is no lawyer and that is for the Administration. Mr. Karant asked if this decision is time sensitive and Mr. Gainer indicated it is because he has already received his first bill and we need to decide to extend or not. Mr. Gainer stated Mr. Lehner contacted him as he is the Ward Councilman for that area and that he gathered all the paperwork from Kerry and looked at what he signed and didn't; there is no question he did sign for 100%, but he believes that Mr. Lehner doesn't remember signing it. Mr. Gainer stated that Mr. Meden handled it and he believed Mr. Lehner was working with other people and he used an electronic signature on it; he did not physically sign it. Mr. Gainer added that Mr. Lehner has been around for years and we should help him out. Mr. Tousley remarked he could see both sides of the argument. He remembered the forgiveness of the games of chance and that this was also done partly to correct an error in the way the fees were being collected by the City; it was the circumstances at the time and the City's error back then. Mr. Tousley remarked the City is at risk no matter when this development happens. The next developer could also fail and we are put back that much more and increases our risk. He agreed with a one-year extension, as previously suggested by Ms. Whipkey; ten years seems extreme. Mr. Pelot asked Ms. Keener if we have funds available to cover this and she will look into it. Mr. Fowler stated the City paid a portion out of Fund 126 and Fund 128 as we could not use Fund 127 money to extend sewer. He recognized that this is a Council decision but stated any show of good faith would help and they want the petitioner to succeed. Mr. Fowler stated he had been discussing with Justin and agreed with Mr. Gainer that

upon sale of property we get our money back. Mr. Kernan said if he sells the property, we will get our money back. He felt it was a matter of fairness as we helped other businesses particularly with COVID. If he loses it to foreclosure, we will still get our money back. Right now, it is only costing us time. Ms. Whipkey stated this started back in 2018 long before COVID and it stalled out, she believes, in 2019 as those engineering plans were to be done in seven months...again, before COVID. She reiterated that the paperwork clearly states that he is going to be held responsible should the development fail and other businesses have struggled due to COVID yet have not received this kind of leniency. We could have seen the same with the parkland we purchased. Ms. Whipkey stated she had a real bad feeling about someone that states they didn't know they had signed their life away and particularly being a doctor that most likely has financial advisors. A couple year extension, yes, but not ten years. Mr. Gainer stated he didn't think two years would help and moved the item to next week's agenda; seconded by Mr. Kernan. Mr. McGlone clarified this will be for discussion only.

Roll Call: Yes: Gainer, Kernan  
No: Whipkey

Motion passed: 2 - 1

**TOPICS FOR NEXT WORK SESSION – Monday, April 19, 2021**

A. Time Extension for Cleveland-Massillon Rd Assessment

**NEW BUSINESS**


Mr. Tousley asked about the status of Hametown Road and Mr. Fowler agreed to speak with him on the subject.

**ADJOURN**

There being no other business to come before the Committee Work Session, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

  
Dennis McGlone, President of Council

I, Kerry Macomber, Clerk of Council for the City of Norton, do hereby certify that the foregoing minutes were approved at a Regular Council Meeting held on April 12, 2021.

  
Kerry Macomber, Clerk of Council

**\*\*Note: these minutes are not verbatim\*\***  
Original signed and approved minutes are on file with Clerk of Council.

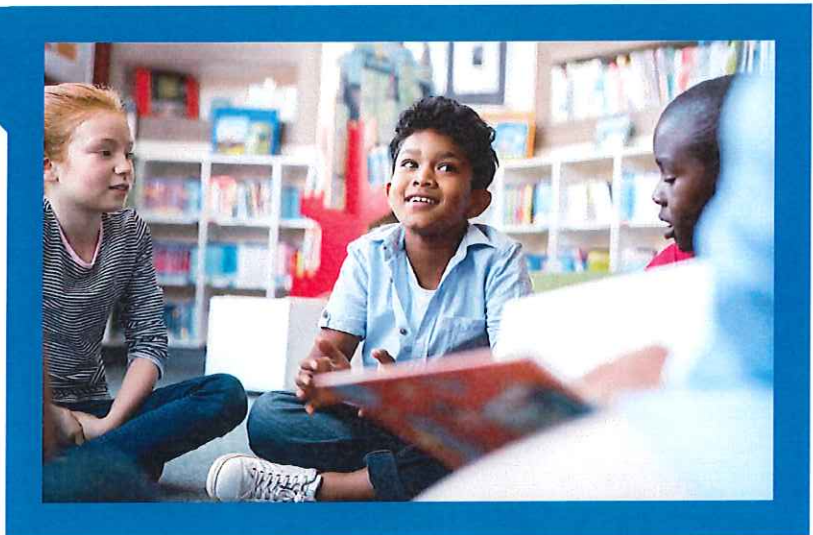


# Important Library Levy on the May 4 Ballot

As we continue to navigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and move through 2021, the dominant issue for our library system is the **1.9 mill renewal** levy on the May 4 primary election ballot.

**Fifty-five percent (55%)** of the Library's operating income is supported by our current levy. Without levy funds, the Library will be forced to reduce hours, staffing, collections and programming.

**ISSUE 10 is not a new tax.** The levy will cost the owner of a **\$100,000 home approximately \$4.21 per month.**



You can support your Library for less than 15 cents a day.

Our Library is a vital community asset to people of all ages.

- The Library provides millions of books and digital materials, like ebooks, audio, movies and research databases.
- Children, students, job seekers, and seniors rely on the Library's services.
- Your Library was recently recognized as a Star Library by Library Journal.

The Library has had the support of the community through a local property tax levy for over **35 years**. With the help of that local funding, we have been able to evolve and grow into a nationally recognized public library system. We are truly grateful for that support, and for the privilege to provide service to this community.

For more information:  
[SupportOurLibrary.com](http://SupportOurLibrary.com)

