



APPROVED

**CITY OF YPSILANTI
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
ONE SOUTH HURON STREET, YPSILANTI, MI 48197
Tuesday, August 16, 2016
7:00 A.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL –

Council Member Anne Brown	Present	Council Member Robb	Present
Council Member Nicole Brown	Present	Council Member Vogt	Present
Council Member Murdock	Present	Mayor Edmonds	Present
Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson	Absent		

III. INVOCATION -

Mayor Edmonds asked all to stand in a moment of silence

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE -

"I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

V. AGENDA APPROVAL –

Council Member Vogt moved, seconded by Council Member Nicole Brown

VI. INTRODUCTIONS -

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION -

Mayor Edmonds opens the floor for Audience Participation

1. Ann Hogarth- 909 Woods, thanked the Council for their service to Ypsilanti. She stated that as city council are chosen by their neighbors to represent their collective will, this sometimes may not align with what you want, but the citizens selected you to fulfill your duties even when it is unpopular. Today you have to ask the citizens whether or not they will vote for water street millage again. You knew the water street millage would be unpopular in which you voted to put it on the ballot in August when there is lower voter turn than in November. The city of Ypsilanti does not want to pay a new millage. If you decide to put the millage on the ballot again in November you will simply be conveying the message that what you think matters more than what your constituents think and it would be time to move on.

Peter Church- 1815 Whitmier Street

- Peter wanted to show the results of poll in his neighborhood that was done using Next Door. One of the two social media sites being used there. In his presentation Peter points out that map shown in green that are members of next door, 21 people and 168 households. When asked should the water street proposal be put on the November ballot 59% no and 49% yes. Peter says the language Council proposes is so restrictive that we are required to pay this millage even if we go bankrupt in the City. This means we can have no money and will still be paying. He wants Council to use another methodology that will avoid this. Peter points out 3 concerns that he has; average income is too low, crime is too high, and taxation is too high. He says looking at the police you can find that incidents per person .158% in Ypsilanti the reason we need so many police is because there are so many incidents. Something should be done to reduce the likely of incidents. He compares Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor saying taxation is 66% in Ypsilanti while in Ann Arbor it is 45% we need to get to 50 which we need for gentrification.

John Wise

- John says that he is in strong support for bringing the millage back, it seems like the only viable way to keep our city solvent. He says that it was defeated by a very narrow margin and we are all ready to provide our support to educate the citizens on the millage. Most people say let the people feel the cuts. Asking households with great specific what services will be cut.

Maryellen Hagenhower

- Maryellen is in support of putting the millage back on the ballot in November. She believes that most people did not know the ramifications of voting no. There was an extensive no campaign but there was no yes campaign. People just did not know what was at stake and most people should be given the ability to hear it.

Arialen Flair- 986 Maddison St

- Arialen says Council should not put Water Street millage back on ballot. The city government is supposed to run on a democracy and putting the millage back on the ballot would go against what the people want. You shouldn't send the millage back because it's going to be counterproductive to finding out how to handle things without it. You should not send the millage back because the 1st ward had a good reason to reject it. Ypsilanti already has some of the highest taxes in the state, and it is not okay to put more of a burden on the families who cannot afford this.

Steve Willcocks- 1728 Whitmier

- Steve says that this is the new millage vs the renewal. His understanding was it was just a communication issue with people not fully understanding the millage. Steve states that he's not sure how we can balance the budget without this millage. Though he isn't sure if November is the correct time to put this back on the ballot but it needs to be considered.

(could not hear name)- 831 Greenroad

2. A member of the audience said that they are participating in the yes campaign and firmly believes in the efforts that were put forth. They will support council if they put it back on the ballot if council will not put the effort behind it then there is no reason to put it back on the ballot. However, it will hurt more if it is put back on the ballot too soon and fail than if they took their time to figure out what efforts could be made now to solve this problem, then putting on the ballot out of fear of not solving the problem
3. Erin Pepsi- 1215 South Congress supported to putting it back on the ballot maybe not November. She believes that there has not been enough education around the topic. While there was a strong campaign for the no side there wasn't a counter argument to it for the yes side. She also states that a lot of people do not understand the difference between restricted and unrestricted money and how you can't pull money from different pools of money.
4. A member of the audience said that as many people have already stated the timing on the millage shouldn't be November, unless we have the research showing that it will work. The issue is people know the millage will affect their personal lives, the city council needs to be unified so people can see what it will mean if it works. The long term the city of Ypsilanti is not viable for the long term.

VIII. REMARKS BY THE MAYOR -

- Mayor Edmonds stated that she appreciated everyone who was able to come out today for the meeting. She had been listening very carefully to the people after the vote and received a lot of correspondence from both sides of the arguments stating many reasons.

IX. RESOLUTIONS/MOTIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Council Member Ann Brown Moved, seconded by Council Member Nicole Brown to reconsider the Water Street Ballot Proposal.

Mayor Edmonds began the discussion about the millage reconsideration by talking about the correspondence she received from several people. The people she spoke with urged the Council to reconsider and look at everything again and bring it back to the table. The Mayor says she talked to several people in willingness for the campaign and asked if people were willing to step up. TO her this was a cause for some consideration, it is important to consider this and the timing. The cuts are painful, every city government, can do something with more. There are so many conversations with the police which would have to be cut, planning and economic development staff will have a cut. After seeing the very low of the city working with minimum staff it is hard. There will be cuts that many people will see such as the pool, the senior center and the Parkridge center, which are all on the table. She then asks to hear from council.

Council Member Vogt said that his mail and contact have been running about 50/50 on this and he appreciates the comments from the citizens that have been had today. He says the reality is that both sides are the argument has validity. Looking at the prospect of the vote and there isn't enough evidence

to show it will change. Secondly, Vogt felt that they needed to pass an actual budget that will show what will be cut if the millage fails. There needs to be a black and white with the vote before people can wrap their heads around it and see the actual reality before they make assumptions that will lead them to vote. Vogt says that this was the ultimate failure on this, not passing the budget and laying out what the cuts would actually be. He doesn't think that they are quite ready yet to put the millage back on the ballot.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richards says that she's done a lot of thinking about this and she believes that one of the main issues that she's picked up on by talking to people is that somehow or another some people think the Water Street Debt will just disappear. She states that whether by the millage or something else we have to find a way to get the Water Street from around our neck. WE have to find some way to get this debt taken care of, a lot of the communication Mayor Pro-Tem Richards received has been that there are other ideas to get this taken care of. She wasn't to sit down with the people who voted no to find out ideas that they may have. She says that maybe November is too soon and if they vote on putting it on the ballot then they have till September to take it down. She really believes that everyone needs to sit down as a City and come to a decision on how we can handle this debt. As long as the debt is there we cannot move forward with many things we need to. The long term use of the rail track would be to bring in business and more money into the community, but the debt is holding us back from that and several other things.

Council Member Murdock says he has seen all the comments on Facebook and it generally comes down to the people who voted if it should be back on the ballot. He doesn't know anyone who said that it was a mistake that they voted no and wanted it back on the ballot. There wasn't enough effort put into making the ballot work is what Council Member Murdock believes. He states that even though they got 400 people to change their minds doesn't mean the millage is going to work in November. The people that didn't vote may end up voting no as well. What the council needs to do is make adjustments to the budget and we can look into the issues as it come up, which will be sooner than later. Murdock says that the project was ill-conceived in how it was paid for and we cannot let it bring the City down. He says that he is not in favor for a November vote for tactical reason but it is an important tissue and will come up in the near future for sure.

Council Member Vogt spoke again this time saying that he had two things to point out. HE said the first was regionalization which he supports, has been tried several times in which Ypsilanti have attempted to get involved with other organizations. He says that it failed because the other guys would not say yes for various reasons. Its always the problem with getting different organizations, municipalities, with different points of view, different tax structures and different populations to say yes. Because Ypsilanti is the one with the financial issues its harder to get the other guys to agree. He then says that the second issue he wanted to point had slipped his mind.

Council Member Ann Brown said she also heard from the citizens. They would turn their vote from a no to a yes, but it would not be in November. She says that a lot of the issues were caused by a lack of communication, due to a lack of educating the populace on the issue. Council Member Ann Brown said that the Council had not done its due diligence to get the information to the Citizens. Council needed to take the time to speak with the Citizens to get the information across to them. She felt there wasn't enough communication between council and the citizens and many people do not under how the budgets actually work. Council needs to start by educating the citizens and being more transparent with the budget. She is not in favor of the millage going on the ballet in November.

Council Member Nicole Brown stated that everyone said how she felt about the situation. She spoke to several of her constituents, but believes that November is too soon to consider it. More time and effort needs to be put into educating our constituents. Council Member Nicole Brown said that she thinks that the people who needed to understand the yes side did not attend the town hall meetings that were held. She felt that it is her personal responsibility would be to go out and educate her constituents in Ward 1

on how things will affect them. She says that the Council cannot vote yes to put it on the ballot in November.

Council Member Robb said that he had nothing to say or add to what was said.

On a roll call, the vote to call to question was as follows:

Council Member N. Brown	Yes	Council Member Robb	No
Council Member Murdock	No	Mayor Edmonds	Yes
Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson	Absent	Council Member Vogt	Yes
Council Member A. Brown	Yes		

VOTE:

YES: 4 NO: 2 (Robb, Murdock) ABSENT: 1 (Richardson) VOTE: Carried

On a roll call, the vote to reconsider the Water Street Millage for the November Ballot was as follows:

Council Member N. Brown	No	Council Member Robb	No
Council Member Murdock	No	Mayor Edmonds	No
Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson	Absent	Council Member Vogt	No
Council Member A. Brown	No		

VOTE:

YES: 0 NO: 6 (Edmonds, Vogt, A. Brown, N. brown, Robb, Murdock) ABSENT: 1
(Richardson) VOTE: Failed

X. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION -

1. Peter Church, 1815 Whitmier St., Peter questions if the council should be taking a roll on something rather listening to people. He says there is a leadership aspect to their job and it is difficult. There needs to be an open mind as there is no "no downside" solution even if the millage is past it has its own downside. They need to cover that and bring it to the floor more. Another point that needs to be made is that everyone believes they are doing they best and have gone as deep as they can go. One aspect, he believes is we spend 200,000 on recycling. There is a state program or grant for that. Church states that Ann Arbor received 80,000 for recycling with Ypsilanti received 0 simply because the City didn't apply for the grant. He states that we need to make sure are on top of such things.
2. Wyazniach stated she appreciates the Council's comments on reaching out to both sides to educate people further on the budget so that they understand what is going on. She feels that a financial expertise will be needed to help educate people on everything such as the budget. The other thing she says is that in terms of being able to do any of the interesting ideas, the staff does that. The City needs talented staff to do things, and budget cuts will be hard as staff members will be cut. Regional consolidation is something she would like to have a conversation about and have the City's friends to the west more deeply engaged in what their responsibility is about what happens to the City of Ypsilanti.
3. Alan Foyer thanked the council for not putting the millage on the ballot and looks forward to having further discussions about it.

XI. ADJOURNMENT –

Council Member Nicole Brown moved, seconded by Council Member Vogt to adjourn the meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:56 a.m.