CITY OF FAIRBORN
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
May 5, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
Fire Training Room

COUNCIL MEMBERS	Present	Absent
Dan Kirkpatrick, Mayor	☒	☐
Clint Allen, Councilman	☒	☐
Sylvia Chess, Councilwoman	☒	☐
Adam Fritzsche, Councilman	☒	☐
Rodney McCubbins, Councilman	☒	☐
Mary Reaster, Deputy Mayor	☒	☐
Tana Stanton, Councilwoman	☒	☐

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Adkins, Browning, Gebhart, McNamee, Schell, and Taylor.

UPDATE TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Emily Gay, Communications Manager, stated they just wanted to look back at what was discussed a couple of months ago about community engagement. The following ideas were discussed:

- Ask the Mayor Q&A – weekly posts on Mondays.
- This week with Council posts – weekly posts on Fridays
- The Agenda Ahead – weekly post on Fridays
- Coffee with Council – quarterly
- Mayor's Forums – 4th Monday of the month quarterly
- Council Conversations – June, July, August (2 mornings, 2 afternoons, 2 evenings)
- Town Halls – September and October
- Citizens' Academy – September and October

The only thing that was added to the calendar she distributed previously was a Lunch with Law Enforcement event on June 11, 2025, at the Senior Center. She did receive one message back from Tana Stanton that she would like some weekend events because it is a little bit more difficult throughout the week. Ms. Gay wanted to gage Council's interest on if they did do some things on the weekends what would they like to do and what weekends work best, Saturday or Sunday and time frames. She is looking for more ideas. Councilwoman Stanton stated she had sent an email to Ms. Gay of her availability. Ms. Gay said yes, and that Tana had suggested doing Coffee with Council on weekends.

Mayor Kirkpatrick stated this all had flexibility built into it. Ms. Gay stated she just developed the Council with flexibility but if they want to start this in June, they definitely want to at least get some things rolling so they can get it out on social media and she can talk to some local businesses that want to host and figure out the logistics.

Deputy Mayor Reaster asked if they could move the Council Conversation of June 20th to June 27th, so it is spread out a little bit. It doesn't necessarily have to be the 27th but sometime during that week.

Councilman Allen asked if Coffee with Council and Council Conversations one in the same. Ms. Gay responded, essentially, yes. Coffee is just in the morning and then the Council Conversations she saw as a different way to reach other businesses and maybe have lunch or breakfast and if they wanted to talk about something longer than a pop in and grab a coffee and leave. They could sit down and have a meal.

Deputy Mayor Reaster asked what the window of time they are anticipating these to take. Ms. Gay thinks Coffee with Council is maybe an hour. Short and sweet and maybe the Council Conversations are two hours or an hour and 30 minutes. It's super flexible. Ms. Gay discussed the different restaurants she envisioned these engagements taking place at.

Mike Gebhart, City Manager, stated the Mayor's Forums he would like to see them have topics for those since they will become quarterly. The town halls for this fall should be geared around the levy renewals for both the Police and Fire property tax. He had kicked around the idea of doing a review on Fridays of the upcoming Council agenda. His only problem with that was he wants to keep them short and to the point because people don't have 30 minutes to sit and listen to what is on Council's agenda. He figures they have a 5-minute blurb of here's what is on it. He is not sure they can do that. Then he thought they would take it down to one of the pieces of legislation on the agenda and then someone said, how do you pick what is topical? Someone else may not find it topical. He has not given up on that totally, but it must be tweaked a lot more, so they won't roll that out in phase one. These are flexible. If we find that stuff doesn't work, then they can drop it and figure something else out. The goal is to be as transparent as possible to get people interested in what is happening and that their opinion matters. He does not think this will be the final configuration. It will constantly be tweaked. Next year they won't have a Police and Fire property tax levy to renew so the Town Halls could turn into something different next year, or we don't have enough questions for the Mayor and the Ask the Mayor a Question segment needs tweaked. They are just trying to make information more accessible to people.

Mayor Kirkpatrick discussed the Ask the Mayor segment. Ms. Gay stated they could post a Q&A on the website where people could fill out a form and then they will have it by Friday at noon and then the Mayor comes in Friday afternoon or Monday morning to tape the segment. Mr. Gebhart explained it would be put on the social media platform, website, and you-tube. Mr. Gebhart stated it would not always have to be Mayor Kirkpatrick. They will not be answering all questions, as they will get inappropriate questions that is just the nature of the beast.

They discussed the "This Week with Council" idea which would include what Council had been up to the previous week, attending outings like the Lions dinner. Mr. Gebhart explained what Pete Williams does about where they Mayor of Riverside has been weekly. Such as I attended the MVRPC dinner with these Council members. He went to a ribbon cutting for such and such business. We had a City Council meeting and work session on Monday night. It just gives a wrap up of what Council members did for that previous week. It has worked well for him. Ms. Gay pulled it up on the computer and

showed the example of what it might say. Ms. Gay said even if Council just sent her a quick note and a photo that would work out great. Councilwoman Stanton stated if it is going to have Council meeting stuff it would be cool to do that when they do the proclamations. It would be a great way to spread that information.

Deputy Mayor Reaster stated talking about engagement ideas she has asked this before, but can they get with the Chamber and ask them to have a more current calendar of events. So, Council can plan to attend more events ahead of time. When and where are the Chamber Chats, when are the ribbon cuttings? She would like to know in advance so that she can arrange her calendar accordingly. Mayor Kirkpatrick stated it would be nice to have a community-wide calendar.

Mike Gebhart, City Manager, stated they are excited to bring the Citizens' Academy back. Pre-covid it was well attended. Then when Covid came they changed it to a podcast version, and it got a few views. Physically bringing it back and walking through the eight-session program will do wonders. If it is popular enough, they can bring it back in the spring. Mayor Kirkpatrick asked if they were limiting the enrollment? Ms. Gay stated they have it set for 20. Mayor Kirkpatrick asked if it was first come, first serve. Mr. Gebhart stated, pretty much. They will go through all of the departments beginning with Council, Administration and Legal. Public Works will get two sessions because they have to cover Water and Sewer, Streets, Garage, Building Inspection and Engineering. They were very successful in that, and other communities continue to be very successful, so it is time to roll that back out. Ms. Gay reviewed the layout of eight sessions. Mr. Gebhart stated they may travel out to the Water Reclamation Center when they do that. Terry Adkins, Public Works Director, stated in the past with Water and Sewer and both treatment plants they would do the Wastewater treatment plant tour. Councilman McCubbins stated the City having their own water is a big item making us a full-service City. It is important for people to see that. Mr. Adkins asked when it was done previously if they were given a tour of the garage. Councilwoman Stanton remembers them doing that. Mr. Adkins stated they could have a fire truck or an ambulance up on the rack and they could go to the garage if they wanted to. Mr. Gebhart stated he believes people stay more engaged when there are hands on activities. When he did Economic Development, they would get on the Senior Center bus and tour around the City. People stay more engaged whether it is what Fire and Police does or what Public Works does. When they can get out of a classroom setting and actually see it really helps explain things a lot more. He believes it builds leaders for the future. They will begin advertising for that shortly.

Mayor Kirkpatrick stated someone asked him about Channel 5, so he started watching it and has seen the Fourth of July parade many times. How do they change what is being viewed on Channel 5? Ms. Gay stated it is through a software called Playback 365 and Granicus was going to be the one to run it and put content on it. She would just have to send it to them. Well, they have not put any content on it. Mayor Kirkpatrick asked if there was a way to send this information to Channel 5. Ms. Gay stated yes, they can send power points and slides. She actually had a meeting set up with them last week, but they cancelled because the software wasn't working. She has a meeting rescheduled with them this Thursday to learn how to put stuff on the channel because at minimum the Council meetings and the Planning Board meetings must be on there because we have had a schedule for years. Mayor Kirkpatrick would like to see short segments about each department on Channel 5. They discussed the previous "Fairborn in Five" segments and bringing those back.

Mr. Gebhart asked for Council's comments about the engagement plan. Councilman Allen stated it is a great step in the right direction. He does appreciate Tana's statement about weekends and doing Council Conversations or Coffee talks on the weekends. He likes an hour, if it needs to go longer it could go longer on whatever Council member is there and just to add some structure to it they could independently sign up for a weekend day so that way they know it is predictable for them when they are going to do it. Ms. Gay stated someone mentioned a sign-up sheet, just saying who could come and what days are best. Mr. Gebhart stated he would like Council to do this in pairs. Mayor Kirkpatrick asked if there are any sunshine law issues with this. Mike McNamee, City Solicitor, stated not a one. Ms. Gay stated these need to be advertised because they want people to come. The goal is for the residents to show up. We want to talk to our residents, that is the whole point of us doing them at different times than a normal 4th Monday Citizen Forum. Mayor Kirkpatrick asked if someone shows up to video tape are they allowed to. Mr. McNamee stated absolutely. Councilman Allen stated a recap would be great. Councilwoman Stanton asked if it is not a public meeting can they ask them not to record. Mr. McNamee stated you can ask them not to record. Deputy Mayor Reaster asked if they could make the broad statement in any of the formats which is what she thinks Mr. McNamee was getting to, that they say we have someone here that would like to record this conversation is everyone comfortable with that so that everyone knows, whether it is a big format of the Mayor's forum or a small conversation. That way everyone is aware because some people don't realize they are being recorded.

Mike McNamee, City Solicitor, explained the law on recording conversations. Ohio is a one-person state. So, if he wants to have a meeting with Mayor Kirkpatrick and Deputy Mayor Reaster he can record without their consent, as long as he participates in the conversation. If you are not a participant you can't lay back and sandbag and do a recording, but as long as I am a participant I can record that meeting. Mayor Kirkpatrick stated that if someone is sitting in the back of the room recording can they tell them to stop. Mr. McNamee said absolutely, they must be a participant in the conversation. It is unlawful at that point.

Mayor Gebhart asked if there was any more discussion about the communication plan. If not, they will start sending it out. Deputy Mayor Reaster stated an email is best for her and if she could mail it in two month increments that would be great. It was suggested that Coffees with Council be at 10:00 a.m. so that people can get used to a fixed time.

Mike Gebhart continued with a discussion about the disconnection of the downtown wi-fi. He would like to be able to give two months' notice to everyone that it is going away. The City spends almost $35,000 a year on it. The statistics aren't great. We do have an opportunity to utilize that money for Placer AI, which would benefit economic development, engineering, Parks and Recreation and Communications. It would essentially take the place of what they spend with Alta fiber. He asked Emily to pull current statistics and again they would shoot out notices to all the businesses along Main Street and say we have made a final decision and come July 1, 2025, we will be removing that and moving on. Deputy Mayor Reaster asked if they could see who is using that. Is it mainly the businesses? Ms. Gay stated from January 1 of this year to yesterday there were 250,000 visits, but a visit could be driving through town and your phone pinging the wi-fi. She suspects some of these are people going to the library or sitting at Lefty's and

work. There are other opportunities for wi-fi. The library has wi-fi and Giovanni's and McDonald's have wi-fi.

Councilwoman Stanton stated the last time this was brought up she thinks everyone was fine with it, but they wanted to make sure the businesses downtown got the heads up. Again $35,000 is what benefits the greater number of folks. How is that money better spent? If we have only 3.5% of the people who are new to the system, is it really accomplishing what we want it to do? Ms. Gay stated of course they get hits for the Fourth of July, Bluegrass, and Hairborn. Councilman Allen stated so the initial thought was to provide wi-fi to people downtown. Mr. Gebhart stated the initial thought was that when people came down for any of our events they could log onto this, and it would be a perk. The thing that also bothered Mr. Gebhart was our partner was supposed to notify the City about any changes to the pricing structure well in advance and they never did. It went up $5,000 without any notice per the contract. He does not know of any other cities that provide the service anymore. It was great during Covid because before we deployed the hot spots for the kids working from home people could come downtown and work. They don't even have that now. Ms. Gay stated Kettering provides wi-fi at parks. Centerville does not but they looked into it and they did not think it was worth the cost. She emailed every municipality around here and those were the only two that responded. Cherise Schell stated she believed Matt Halpin checked with the businesses and she does not think people will be terribly upset. Mr. Gebhart stated it does not make economic sense for the City anymore. He stated he would keep Council up to speed on what is going on with it. He explained it is month to month now as they are outside the contract. As of right now it does not seem it is worth it.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Kirkpatrick stated there may be a crowd in attendance for the Council meeting. He asked that during Citizens Comments Council refrain from answering questions. Questions will be answered during Council comments. We are not going to get into a back and forth during Citizens Comments. Mr. McNamee embellished on that saying that the same should apply during Council Comments try to refrain from a back and forth. Mayor Kirkpatrick does a good job of managing the meeting. There will be a court reporter at the meeting tonight. It is just good practice, and you are not obligated to explain your vote.

Councilwoman Stanton asked if her questions needed to be asked publicly. He explained that many of her questions would be answered during the presentation. He stated if there are things that she wanted to know about and it did not come out during the presentation to please ask.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Fritzsche moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilman McCubbins seconded. Yeas, seven: Fritzsche, McCubbins, Allen, Chess, Reaster, Stanton, and Kirkpatrick. Nays, none. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

MAYOR

CLERK, CITY OF FAIRBORN