

BROOKVILLE CITY COUNCIL  
PUBLIC MEETING  
January 3, 2006

The Public Meeting of the Brookville City Council was called to order by Mayor Seagraves at 7:00 p.m. on January 3, 2006 in the City Council Chambers. The pledge of allegiance was recited. Members Duncan, Garber, Hanos, Reel, Sanders and Ullery; Assistant Manager Sewert, Law Director Stephan, Police Chief Preston and Director of Finance/Clerk Keaton were present. Manager Wright and Fire Chief Nickel were absent.

Mayor Seagraves announced the Public Meeting is being held to consider the retirement and rehiring of John R. Wright as City Manager for the City of Brookville.

Clerk Keaton announced the Public Meeting tonight is to consider the issue of John R. Wright being re-employed by the City of Brookville as City Manager effective February 1, 2006, upon his retirement as City Manager, effective January 31, 2006. Per Ohio Revised Code Section 145.381 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 145-1-79, public notice was provided in the November 23, 2005 edition of the Brookville Star that a public meeting would be held on January 3, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, which meets the requirements of providing notice at least 60 days before the re-employment is to begin. A public notice was also placed on the City of Brookville's website.

For those unfamiliar with the Public Employees Retirement System, or PERS, public employees who have worked the required number of years in government are eligible to retire and begin immediately receiving their pension. According to the rules and requirements of PERS, it is acceptable and very common for eligible public employees to retire and then be rehired by their same organization. In fact, this occurs regularly in various public-sector agencies, including the military, schools and others. It should be noted that our suburban neighbors routinely employ retirees, including five that have rehired their City Managers in the last year.

In addition to PERS, there is also a police and fire program called DROP, which stands for the Deferred Retirement Option Plan. Under this plan, a police officer or fire fighter that is eligible for retirement can continue to work and enter the DROP program for a period of three to eight years. The concept of both the PERS re-employment program and the DROP program is to retain qualified, well-trained professionals working for their current communities.

Mayor Seagraves commented from a financial and management position, there are several benefits for retaining City Manager Wright. First, we would retain - as with the DROP participants - an experienced, highly qualified, professional City Manager who is extremely knowledgeable about Brookville's issues and challenges during this critical period. Secondly, we would avoid the prolonged acclimation process that would accompany any new City Manager stepping into the position. Thirdly, there is no additional cost to the City to retain Mr. Wright as City Manager. We either pay him to serve as City Manager, or we pay another individual to do so. In fact, a very real possibility exists that a new City Manager could require a higher salary.

Council Member Ullery commented he has known Manager Wright for a number of years, and he has been a really good leader for the City of Brookville. Not only was he a leader, he was also a joiner. Anytime there was a problem out in the City, Manager Wright was familiar with all aspects of the problem. He always participates with the employees when there is a problem, or repairs need to be made. Council Member Ullery stated he felt Manager Wright's qualifications are second to none. Council Member Ullery commented, as Mayor Seagraves mentioned previously, there would be no additional expense to the City to retain John Wright as City Manager, and Manager Wright has expressed an interest in retaining the position of City Manager. Council Member Ullery stated he thought it will be very beneficial to the City to consider Manager Wright as our City Manager.

Council Member Garber indicated he has some comments, but we should allow the public to speak first.

2141

Dan Appenzeller, of 318 Maple Street, stated he has known Manager Wright for 30 years. Mr. Appenzeller commented that he concurs with Council Member Ullery that Manager Wright has done an absolutely wonderful job for the City of Brookville. Mr. Appenzeller commented that he does not agree with the way the system allows its people to retire and be rehired; he thinks it's a really, really wrong thing to do. Mr. Appenzeller commented he understands there can be some advantages to being able to retain people who have been doing the job, know the job, and can continue to do the job. Mr. Appenzeller commented what it also does, is it potentially has some very negative connotations for people who are aspiring to do their job and to grow into new positions. Mr. Appenzeller stated for Manager Wright to do this, is an absolute kick in the face to Assistant Manager Sewert. Mr. Appenzeller commented he believes, as far as he is concerned, Assistant Manager Sewert can do the job of being a City Manager. Mr. Appenzeller stated, if upon Manager Wright's retirement, Council would entertain the idea of having Assistant Manager Sewert be the candidate for City Manager. Mr. Appenzeller commented if Council allows this to happen, there is a very good possibility that we're going to lose Assistant Manager Sewert to some other entity. Mr. Appenzeller stated he thinks Assistant Manager Sewert has done a great job, and has been a real asset to this community.

Council Member Garber stated we all feel the same way. As a matter of fact, as a group and personally, we conferred with Assistant Manager Sewert. We wanted to make sure that he knows we really appreciate what he is doing and value him very highly. Council Member Garber commented we wanted to make sure that we would not lose Assistant Manager Sewert if we did this. Council Member Garber commented we were assured as a group, and he was personally assured by Jeff, that he was happy, and he will be interested in the Manager's job in the years to come; he is currently happy with the way things are right now. Council Member Garber stated there were other considerations that Council thought through and worked through. Council Member Garber commented he understands Mr. Appenzeller's point. Those were his concerns also; he does not want to lose Assistant Manager Sewert.

Mr. Appenzeller stated he was not aware that, that was fully considered.

Council Member Ullery stated he appreciates Mr. Appenzeller's comments and his support for Assistant Manager Sewert. Council had the same feelings for Assistant Manager Sewert. Council Member Ullery commented that Council is pleased to have Assistant Manager Sewert. Through this process, Assistant Manager Sewert has indicated to Council that this is probably the route to take at this point.

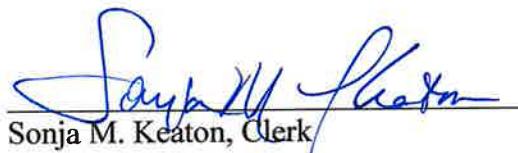
Council Member Hanos commented she wants to know about Mr. Appenzeller's comments on why he didn't think it was right the way the retirement is set up; she wants to know his feelings about that.

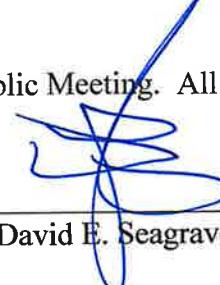
Mr. Appenzeller stated he knows it happens in school systems. He sleeps in Brookville, but he works in Preble County. He knows of three Administrative individuals in the Eaton School District, where they retired and were rehired, and he feels that is really wrong. Mr. Appenzeller commented it is done, because they say we need qualified people. How in the world do you ever become a qualified person, if you are not given the opportunity.

Council Member Duncan stated in reviewing the process, Council became aware that it is a detriment to the family, if you do not proceed with retirement, due to beneficiary issues. Council Member Duncan commented there is a substantial difference, if Manager Wright would pass away now, and he is eligible to retire and hasn't, his beneficiaries would receive considerably less life insurance, then if he had retired.

Mr. Appenzeller commented he understands that, but he gets frustrated that people who work in government positions, or in government P.E.R.S. positions, you people are on a different level, than us other folks.

Motion by Ullery, second by Duncan to close the Public Meeting. All yeas, motion carried.

  
Sonja M. Keaton, Clerk

  
David E. Seagraves, Mayor