

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
MARCH 9, 2020 AT 4:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CAUCUS ROOM**

Present: Chairperson Kathleen Kapusta
Councilperson Jim Trakas
Councilperson Chris Walchanowicz

Also Present: Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz (left at 5:06 p.m.)
Finance Director Vern Blaze
Recreation Director Tom Walchanowicz
Community Services Director Marilyn Senick
Community Services Office Coordinator Amber Veverka
Recreation Department Eric Sarley
Procurement Coordinator Dennis Zdolshek (left at 5:43 p.m.)
Clerk of Court Angie Zidanic (left at 4:50 p.m.)

Chairperson Kapusta called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Chairperson Kapusta said the first item as stated on the Agenda is the approval of the Minutes from the December 11, 2019 meeting. We have actually changed our formatting at the Council meetings; and we now approve those at the City Council meeting. So, these Minutes were actually approved at the most recent meeting in February.

So, we will go on to the second Agenda item which is the Drug Prevention Programming, and we have Angie Zidanic with us here today to give us an update.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said I just prepared a few brief bullet items to review. The first thing that I would like to talk about is the Drug Free Clubs of America. The high school is currently up to 200 in numbers, and just remember this is a voluntary program so the students sign up. This is not mandatory; and that means that over 61% of the students in the high school are members.

Councilperson Trakas said that's great.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said the program is going strong, and just to keep in mind that they are always looking for incentives; and anybody from the community can contribute to that. I put just a couple of ideas on what the most coveted items are. They like gift cards to restaurants like Chipotle or Chick Fil A, that kind of thing. Anybody in the community is able to donate if they want to support that program.

I did put Campus Life on the agenda.

Chairperson Kapusta said I just have one question. This was the second year?

Clerk of Court Zidanic said yes. This is the second year.

Chairperson Kapusta said thank you.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said the Campus Life Advisory team met in February just to discuss the activities and the goals. So, one of the new additions is that they have assigned a second staff person to Independence, and this has enabled them to increase the number of students that they serve and also to have more consistency and constant programming. I consider that to be a drug prevention initiative because I think the most important thing to students is to build relationships; and this organization does that very nicely. It is in fact one of their main goals. One of the ways that we are actually is we are trying to partner with the Community Services Center is through our senior citizen population. So, we brainstormed some ideas on how to get the students more involved with the seniors; and some of those included, there's a craft club that is taking place at the middle school. They are talking about having the kids make cards or some kind of craft to include for the Meals on Wheels delivery.

There are many more things that we discussed at that meeting as far as maybe bringing the senior citizens in. I think one of the girls will probably go and speak at a senior luncheon. They would also like to increase the number of adult volunteers, and that may be one way for our seniors to get involved in that program.

Councilperson Trakas asked weren't you talking about those types of things Mayor a couple of months ago, those types of opportunities for the kids and seniors?

Mayor Kurtz said there are a lot of opportunities, especially if you have the right facilities; but that's for another conversation. Absolutely, the concept that Angie has articulated is interaction, a multi-generational interaction as well as dealing with some of our challenges at the greatest age level. So, one of the roles a community could play to advance the socialization process beyond what the school formally does. I think everybody in this room, a good example was yesterday, what everybody did to make that event; and maybe I am going off the reservation, but that's what we do. That's what this team does because you allocate funds and the opportunity.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said this might be a good time to just skip around my memo a little bit because it kind of coincides with the 25 and Alive planning that we are doing. We are considering a re-brand for 25 and Alive; and it's just right now in its infancy stages. One of them could include a name change, which again it's just in its infancy and we are just talking about it; but traditionally 25 and Alive has been geared towards students, families. We have involved the whole community I think very nicely; but now is a time for us to kind of take a look at it and say how can we bring in the whole community to be participants and to be engaged in the organization. So, that is definitely on our agenda for planning in the upcoming year.

The last thing that I had to talk about was the McKeon Education Group. You can see from the memo that Alexa's current caseload is 45 students and families. That means that she had I believe 18 new referrals from this year and 27 continuing from last year. Alexa also continues

her work in our after school program. One of the things that we decided rather than having programming for the students; she consults with the staff which has been invaluable as far as bridging the gap between the schools and the after school program. We see the same type of students, and I think they are very, very happy with her work there.

Community Services Director Senick said I would like to make a comment just about Alexa. Today I had 2 incidents with young children that I talked to the parents because we are having issues with them in one of our programs; and both of them said they would probably consider using Alexa because they are having issues inside the home with the children. So, I suggested maybe we could help you there because it's been an ongoing issue. Even with something like that, it's a free service. I said you might want to consider it and both of them said they are going to think about it because the one especially said she could use the help.

Chairperson Kapusta said the advantage too is not only that it's available because the families could obviously go on their own and get it; but the collaborative nature of it. Yes, there has to be confidentiality between, but when the counselor can get input from the staff, from the school system and then coordinate all that, the outcome is going to be far more appropriate.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said absolutely.

One of the last things I wanted to discuss, it's not on the agenda; but we are going to be participating in an Indy Family First Night again that's taking place on March 19th. I brought some flyers for you. On this night after 5:00 p.m., the teachers and the coaches have agreed that there is no homework, no tests to study for, no sporting events; and it's going to give the community an opportunity to spend time together as a family. There are some incentives that were offered, discounts at local restaurants. I know the library has some programs that they are offering as well. It's just something that we are doing to help promote some family time.

Mayor Kurtz asked where?

Clerk of Court Zidanic said the restaurants that are participating.

Mayor Kurtz asked where are we going to do this?

Clerk of Court Zidanic said it's nowhere. It's just a hiatus from homework and tests and sporting practices where families used to be able to sit down to dinner every single night; and with everything going on, they don't have time to do that.

Mayor Kurtz said I thought you were going to do it here. What the heck?

Clerk of Court Zidanic said we could probably plan something.

Mayor Kurtz said after we get our new kitchen.

Community Services Director Senick said new kitchen, did you get that Vern?

Mayor Kurtz said he knows.

Clerk of Court Zidanic asked any questions?

Councilperson Trakas said Angie, in terms of the McKeon Education Group. We get an update pretty frequently from the Youth for Christ. We don't get an update from McKeon the same way. Is there a possibility that we might have that type of information so that on a more regular basis we might know what they are doing in the community, just a little bit like what Youth for Christ does. Obviously, we are impressed with the types of work they are doing, but obviously we hold one program to a standard; and I think it might make sense to have a similar standard in terms of reporting, what are they doing, and how are they doing it.

Clerk of Court Zidanic asked so how often do you get? Do you get those updates directly to, Council?

Councilperson Trakas said we have, yes.

Clerk of Court Zidanic asked how often do you get those?

Councilperson Trakas said I think like once a month or so.

Chairperson Kapusta said now maybe sometimes quarterly because we talked about it.

Councilperson Trakas said I read your report in the Mayor's newsletter, but I didn't know if there was more to it or not.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said sure, I will definitely do that.

Mayor Kurtz said we could definitely put something together. We can tell you what we are doing, how we are doing it, the collaboration; but we have to stop at that point because of the confidentiality. I can tell you, having sat in the meeting with Angie and the school; there is a tremendous amount of respect for Alexa. Sandy at the school, I am impressed with her willingness to take this to the next level; and so how we formalize that and how we integrate that into our services and how we need to grow our serviceability, it's exciting. There's going to have to be a few technical changes in order to facilitate that.

Chairperson Kapusta said we appropriate money for this on an annual basis. It might be a good idea when it comes up for legislation to have someone come in and address us. I would almost think it would be preferable the actual counselor come rather than the owner of the agency though. I think when we had the last presentation, the introductory one, that's kind of who did it; and I think that was appropriate, but now the hands-on person would help us to better understand.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said absolutely.

Mayor Kurtz said I know our team is very comfortable with her, and it's been articulated to me that the impact we are having on individuals, young people; so that is really the direction and trajectory we are heading in. It's exciting because of the people here and the team as well as the person on hand that's doing the work. So, we will get that report quarterly if it's okay.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said in this report we have kind of caseload, number of students and the types of issues. We agreed that we were going to keep it very general for confidentiality purposes; but if you can see the types of issues that she is dealing with. One of them is actually driving one of our choices in 25 and Alive for the upcoming school year. There's a movie called Angst which is a documentary designed to raise awareness around anxiety; and it's for ages 10 plus. It would be a community wide presentation. It would be several presentations. There would be one at the school, maybe one at the high school, one for parents; and we are still researching all of that. Again, her work has kind of uncovered that this is probably the number one issue with our students.

Mayor Kurtz said it's challenging; but we are blessed to be able to have someone, and don't minimize the people in this room because if we didn't have that collaborative communication. If they want to go and share with you maybe what each of them do; if they feel comfortable doing that, I think you would be enlightened a little bit as to the role that each of them play. I am amazed.

Chairperson Kapusta said I think we are very fortunate Mayor in this committee because the directors and their staff who come, come so well prepared with a very comprehensive, as a matter of fact, I think they do over work as far as preparing things for us so that we have a good understanding of what they are doing. That's helpful because then we can support them in issues, matters, legislation, funding and so forth. So, that's great.

Anybody have any more questions?

Mayor Kurtz said did you hear the last one, funding.

Councilperson Trakas said Vern just closed his ears.

Chairperson Kapusta asked did anybody have any questions?

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked with all the other stuff that they cover in McKeon, maybe we already have programs for it; but to enlighten kids on cyber bullying and the whole pedophile going through Instagram and stuff like that because I have been in talks with the middle school principal about videos that we can show the kids and stuff. I don't know if we could add that into there where you kind of put programs together where kids could come, and we could enlighten them on, hey this is what you have to look for when you are Instagram with your friends or TikTok videos and all that stuff?

Chairperson Kapusta said I think that would be great, and I think that between our Campus Life group and the McKeon group, they are trying more and more to coordinate things. Angie is a

great center point for that so that she could bring it back and forth. I would say anything that you have, this is just my opinion, it would be worth looking at and discussing with her.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said there's been some cyber bullying issues at school. I think if we could work with the principals. Not so much the primary school because those kids don't have phones yet, but when it gets to middle school, they are starting to see the issues there.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said one of the things that I know that the schools did several months ago is they brought in the Internet Crimes Against Children Unit; and they did a presentation. I attended the evening presentation, and it was a different person than I know of, but that was arranged by the schools. I will definitely let them know.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said because I shared a video with him that my wife and I sat down and watched with our daughter. When the kids see these videos at school and their parents aren't there, I don't think they really pay much attention; but when Mom and Dad are sitting right there, they are going to focus in on this video. So, if it's something where we can put a night once a month where; obviously we would have to watch what types of videos we would show the kids, but as long as the parents are there, they can sit in with them. The kids will kind of take it in a little bit more than just at school.

Chairperson Kapusta said I think absolutely because if the parent isn't there, they may be questioning some of the things that are being presented; and with them being there, they could reinforce with the child after. I think that's excellent.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said and you bring up a good point. One of the challenges that we face in 25 and Alive meetings all the time is parent engagement because there are plenty of times that we have offered these kinds of things, and the parents don't come. I had a meeting with Mrs. Saunders at St. Michael's today too, and we discussed the same thing. It's not only Independence, it's everywhere. Brecksville has a similar partnership. They held a very, very important suicide prevention meeting, and a handful of parents showed up. I think what we are willing to do, we are willing to bring all of those ideas to the community. If the parents can respond, that would be wonderful.

Mayor Kurtz said well you are going to have to have a dinner, and bring the parents to dinner.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said that's probably true, food.

Councilperson Trakas said so when we first started talking about this Mayor, we said this could be extrapolated out to the community; and there is a need in the community. So, be thinking about that as to how we are able to leverage this program or something that can marry those 2 together. Our children aren't the only people who are feeling these things.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said right, and you had also talked about parenting programs; and I want you to know that it was discussed at length at 25 and Alive meetings and with McKeon. What ended up happening was, we ended up kind of outlining a series that would happen for these meetings; but then because of things that the schools were planning, and that the principals were

doing inside their own schools for the parents, it got put on the back burner. So, because they felt that they were already addressing those issues with programs that they had. I want you to know that we did hear you, and we did have a lot of discussion about that.

Councilperson Trakas said keep it going.

Chairperson Kapusta asked any more questions of Angie or comments?

Thank you very much.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said oh you are welcome. Thank you guys very much for having me.

Chairperson Kapusta said we are going to move on then to the Community Services Department, and we have a couple of items on the Agenda. I will hand it over to you ladies.

Community Services Director Senick said I did talk to Vern, and right now I am in the draft for the capital; and some of the items were removed. I don't know Vern if you want to address that, where we are going with it because you and I had not had a chance to discuss this yet.

Finance Director Blaze said I need to talk to Council more tomorrow prior to a meeting because I inherited the Capital Plan that was approved in December; and for 2020 it showed almost \$18,000,000 of departmental capital and infrastructure projects being completed this year. After Maggie and I put all the numbers together that Council got this weekend, without borrowing additional money, we can only come up with about \$9,500,000 of that \$18,000,000; so call it half. We are going to ask the budget to be adopted tomorrow with that number and then sit down with Council as soon as Council wants after tomorrow's meeting. We are going to have to redo the Five Year Capital Plan going forward because I suspect that this bottom line of \$18,000,000 this year, \$25,000,000 in 2021, \$18,012,000 is more of a wish list than it can be realistically funded.

Mayor Kurtz said it's the dream.

Finance Director Blaze said that's great if the documents that dream Five-Year Capital Plans because when I look at it from a financial perspective; and Maggie and Finance updated it before I came with the P.O. lines so we knew how much of this money we already had tucked aside; but I think the next step is to now structure it so that we get to a number each year of how much money we are going to have available each year that we project of internally generated cash. Then Council and the Administration has to make a decision, are we going to stick with that capital number and infrastructure number for that year, or are we going to add to it by borrowing because right now we can't do \$18,000,000 of capital purchases and infrastructure projects.

So, I told Marilyn it's not up to Maggie and I to "x" and check out of this 2020 list on these twenty some pages, that's really a legislative body and an administrative decision. We just implement. So, what we are going to do then is again sit down with whoever wants to participate and say okay, here's the \$18,000,000 list for 2020, if you want to do \$18,000,000 give us the approval to start figuring out how we are going to go through the steps of borrowing another

\$9,000,000 this year. You want to do what we are going to be able to generate internally, then Council and Mayor whittle that \$18,000,000 down to \$9,500,000.

Chairperson Kapusta asked when this whittling was done, was it done with the Directors involvement or was that more a paper project that you and Maggie worked on?

Finance Director Blaze said this was done prior to me coming aboard.

Chairperson Kapusta said I understand, but the changing, the reduction Vern from the \$18,000,000 down to the \$9,500,000.

Finance Director Blaze said we haven't whittled yet, all we have said is hey of this \$18,000,000 that's on here; we are only going to generate about \$9,500,000. So, we haven't picked and chosen which projects are going and which are staying.

Chairperson Kapusta said so none of them had the Directors sitting here, if they were to look at their budgets, it was the same as they submitted earlier.

Finance Director Blaze said everybody is still sitting on the \$18,000,000, thinking hey we are going to be able to do everything in 2020 that we thought we were going to be able to.

Chairperson Kapusta said okay, I understand. So, would it be correct to think that perhaps the ideal way to do it is when is to first have the Directors have their input in it because as a Councilperson, I certainly wouldn't want to say well we have to cut this or cut that. I would rather have the Directors make their requests because if it was a wish list; and they tell us what their priorities are, and then we can work from there.

Finance Director Blaze said that's a fair process.

Several people began speaking at once.

Finance Director Blaze said we could get some input from Directors and the Mayor as to what the priorities are of that \$18,000,000. I would have hoped that the process would have already taken place to get to this point, but obviously it did, but it exceeded our ability.

Councilperson Trakas said so that impacts all the other years too.

Finance Director Blaze said oh for sure because if we can't come up with \$17,000,000 this year, unless income tax is going to go up by \$8,000,000 next year, I don't know how we are going to figure \$25,000,000.

Community Services Director Senick said it's like some of the money I had has been moved to Public Lands & Buildings because of the bus, quite a bit of money; but that's on hold right now in addition to the building to see what direction we are going to take over all of the complex. So, it's not that it's gone, it's just that we have to wait and see what's going to happen now.

Mayor Kurtz said we will scalpel that and bring it to Council, explain the logic as to how we reduced; and then you can add, subtract, make a priority, help us prioritize.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said Vern, a good part of that though is street repairs.

Finance Director Blaze said a lot of it is, and that will be, the departmental stuff that most of you are concerned with is only \$3,000,000 of the \$18,000,000. So, it will be easier, but that's if the Directors, Mayor and Council place the priority on the \$3,000,000 versus the \$15,000,000 remaining; and some of it is in progress so we can't stop the Lafayette job.

Mayor Kurtz asked how much of it has been encumbered though?

Finance Director Blaze said as of when this was written, about \$7,000,000 of the \$18,000,000; so we still needed another \$11,000,000 to come up.

Mayor Kurtz said \$11,000,000, but that doesn't include the \$8,000,000.

Finance Director Blaze said this was approved in December.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said you said it was already done before you started in November.

Finance Director Blaze said I started in mid-November, and it was on the agenda in December.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked was it John Veres who started it?

Mayor Kurtz said it was a process that we have always used.

Finance Director Blaze said I don't know how the previous Mayor.

Mayor Kurtz said it was a process that we always did.

Finance Director Blaze said we had an Interim Finance Director for most of the year, so it was probably a convoluted process last year that didn't get the proper attention and focus that it probably needed.

Mayor Kurtz said so really what we are saying is there is so much we need allocated to finish the projects, the committed projects that we have already started; then there's the departmental \$3,000,000 that we have to see how much of that we can sustain, hold on to without compromising our level of service. Then we will see, the accordion, like there's a \$350,000 modification tomorrow night with respect to Lafayette. These are things, working up our contingencies, so we will make sure we bring it to Council before we are compromised rather than waiting until after. We will ask permission instead of forgiveness. That is always the goal.

Chairperson Kapusta said thanks Vern.

Community Services Director Senick said thanks Vern, I appreciate it.

The other item on the Agenda that I wanted to address is new programming. We have talked about this numerous times. There are two issues, one we will talk about it when we talk about your Advisory Board too that you are suggesting that we have. We are looking for new programming, new events. We are meeting with my staff and Recreation staff to address those issues to try to find some exciting programs and also for all age groups. I know we had some suggestions from parents, and I don't know Mayor if you want to address that 2 to 6 year old population or have any comments on that.

Mayor Kurtz said no, keep going.

Community Services Director Senick said we had some parents who came forward who wanted programming for the age group 2 to 6 year old. They felt we fell short for that age group. Tom and I put together a little bit of a report for the Mayor showing what programs that we had in the previous years, what was successful, what people didn't sign up for. We have offered a lot of programs, sometimes these are younger families coming in asking for things; but one of the things I did was went to 4 major communities, talked to their Directors and found out how they fund some of these programs. One was by a levy. One was by income tax; so 1/8th of 1% of the income tax goes to the programming for the Recreation and Community Services Department. So, the bottom line is, these parents want more programming, and they approached with a letter to the Mayor; and the Mayor was so kind to bring us into it to make sure that we do something about it. We are moving forward with that. We did a survey that we are putting together that will go in the City newsletter as to what parents overall would like and actually going to include other age groups. So, that's where we basically stand right now to address those issues.

Mayor Kurtz said they are also helping us frame the survey too. We are asking them to give us information that we could add to the survey, and then they will help us pulse the survey results. It will make it more seamless when we create these programs. We showed them that we had some programs, we didn't have the participation. So, they were very understanding. I think it was an educational process where it helped them, and the result was it's helping us because that result will be the survey which they are helping us frame. It is resident driven. The goal is to then say okay, when we get the survey results, we will be able to handcraft and come up with a strategy that gets us much value added to that younger population, as well as it doesn't diminish our existing programming.

Community Services Director Senick said and just as an example, I had a program called Little Yogis. It was a yoga class for 2 to 6 year olds, and we sent out to the parents the 2 year olds, we had 45 parents' e-mails. So, we blasted an e-mail to everyone with this class for the children, and one person signed up.

Mayor Kurtz said so all the Administrators had a sit down and played yogi. I am just kidding.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked what does a program like that cost?

Community Services Director Senick said it was \$10 a week; and the issue, that is an issue in talking with the Directors from the other communities. I went to Strongsville, Westlake, Beachwood, Orange because they have a phenomenal program there. The bottom line is, every

one of them said they have been doing it for 20 years. It is hard to get the people. I only have 3 people sign up. I only have 5. So, not to make excuses, but how can we make it better; and I think once we get the survey, we will be able to do that.

Chairperson Kapusta said look at the size of your population base.

Community Services Director Senick said and then I went on population compared to 37,000, 12,000, 7,000; but I think we still went ahead with the Little Yogi program. It has 5 children in it, and we still did the program. That's okay, and they love it.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked how do you guys determine what you are charging for these programs?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said well basically we look at the overall cost, and we try (inaudible).

Community Services Director Senick said a lot of times we don't include the staffing in it; and if it's an outside contractor.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked why is pricing an issue? Is it kind of break even? Are they complaining that it costs too much?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said there were no issues with pricing. In fact, we did a survey for our basketball program, and I will pass it out. You will see there's no issue with pricing.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said for me with kids, and I pay for them to play here, I think it's ridiculously cheap for the facilities that our kids have to use; and you have families who live in other communities that are paying far more than what we pay for sub-par facilities. Maybe it's time we raise prices a little bit on that stuff because parents have to know that they are getting the best of the best here.

Councilperson Trakas said I guess I have the opposite approach. I look at that as an advantage to our community. So, it's like what are some of the amenities that we offer? We offer these programs. They are small programs. I went to Independence High School. I took a class with Mr. Scholl called American Utopias. There were 3 of us in the class. We went to Zoar Village; and whatever that thing cost, it wasn't the \$5.00 that I paid for the program. In 1981 that was a pretty good chunk of change from the Cleveland Press that I put together.

I guess my feeling is all these programs should be either underpriced or a great deal. The goal isn't really to make money. The goal is to have some type of fee so you don't take advantage of it. If it's free, then it's free; and we don't pay for it, it's the cavalier attitude. However, on something like this, you make it more than affordable for people because that's part of the Independence advantage. That's what you get for living here. Yeah you pay the lowest property taxes of any incorporated city, and you get amenities like this. So, it's just a personal opinion.

When Dottie first started these programs, we whacked down all the fees. She wanted to charge \$135 to be a Civic Center member, and we took it down to \$35. You are not going to make it up anyway. The cost of those buildings, you are never going to make it up through these types of things. So, don't try is I guess my opinion of it. It is just a philosophical thing, but I think the Mayor has a similar view on a lot of that. It's like it's an advantage to living here, and we love being able to tell them hey go to Seven Hills and it's this. You come to Independence, and it's this. I think that's why those programs have been like that over the years. I personally embrace that philosophy.

Councilperson Kapusta said and I kind of take the middle road. I think that we certainly want to offer things that are more affordable than many of the neighboring communities, and I think that's something we pride ourselves on the ability to do; but I also think to Chris's point that we do need to figure out if we look at our rates, make a comparison and make decisions about them because what we don't want to have happen is what did at one point in the past where we had to make or were considering a rather significant increase in some programming; and it was problematic for parents. So, I am more of the mind that I would like to see periodic, incremental things. Little incremental increases; I think one of the things that the Community Services Department is doing, and correct me if I'm wrong on this, but is when we have some of our trips; we are asking for a little nominal fee hoping that they don't cancel out, \$5, \$3, something like this because we are renting our buses now. Sometimes I think you even give some of that back. I don't know how you do that.

Community Services Director Senick said they get the \$5 back.

Chairperson Kapusta said that's what I thought.

Community Services Director Senick said I would have trips like start out with 40 people, and on the day of the trip 13 people were there.

Councilperson Kapusta said if it's something that's very inexpensive or no cost, people sometimes don't value it as much and understand that there was a cost expended for it. So, I think to have a cost is appropriate, and to incrementally look at where we stand. I agree with you with that, never looking to cover all of our costs but somewhere in between.

Community Services Director Senick said I reiterate if you are going on a trip like to the zoo that's free, we charge them \$5; they show up and get their \$5 back. It's just that the \$5 believe it or not, will make them show up.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said the cost of the bus rental is what you are telling me.

Councilperson Trakas said we eat every cost.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said as a business guy it's going to be rough.

Chairperson Kapusta said that's why I said, I am kind of in the middle there because I see that and where we need to make some adjustments.

Community Services Director Senick said you look at a bus that's costing me \$600 to rent, and if they didn't show up, then what.

Councilperson Trakas said it's not a business.

Mayor Kurtz said tonight's Mayor's Listening Night. I didn't know if people were showing up, but they are showing up so I have to leave. If I get done, then I will come back.

Chairperson Kapusta said thank you for your time Mayor.

Mayor Kurtz asked is there anything else you need me for with respect to anything on the agenda?

Chairperson Kapusta said you will see when we get through it where we go with it.

Mayor Kurtz said we have had some discussions internally, but if there's anything else.

The Mayor then left the meeting.

Chairperson Kapusta asked is there anything else on that grant application update?

Community Services Director Senick said Jim maybe you can give an update. Senator Dolan was there Sunday. I know there's a little bit of a delay, but maybe you want to talk about that.

Councilperson Trakas said so we did put in an application, and it comes through the State Capital Improvements Budget; and the State Capital Improvements Budget was supposed to be introduced around now. There was a deadline of the first week in January that legislators and the Governor asked. So, what this is, it's a place like Cleveland, it's like \$30,000,000, and northeast Ohio gets that. So, Cleveland gets maybe \$15,000,000. These are called community projects. So, these are non-state. What the Capital Improvements Budget is would be for prisons, for universities, for hospitals, things that the State manages. Then they have expanded it to include community pot monies. So, we put in a modest proposal for \$150,000; and so we put in for the Civic Center. The bill has not been introduced as yet. So, the legislature is on recess until two weeks from now. I am told that they will come back and start this up in April. They currently have some disagreements about funding formula for schools. Until that thing gets resolved, they are still messing with this. This could happen in October. It could happen in April.

I e-mailed your work product to the Governor's office and to the lady who is in charge of this area for the Governor. They have regional directors, and they appreciated that. Then obviously Senator Dolan; so Senator Dolan came to the Civic Center yesterday. He saw the condition. He was very happy, and he enjoyed being with our residents. He saw limited facilities that we had; and so as I am sitting there trying to talk about who we are, we have residents coming up and saying oh they drive me for prescriptions.

Several people began speaking at once.

Councilperson Trakas said he saw that. He was standing line for a while, and then we both realized we were in the wrong line for a hot dog.

He is the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and he is going to sponsor this bill. So, having him be a champion for us is important. We have other people who are asking as well, and it might be that. It might be less money. It might be nothing. So, once we see the bill introduced, I will keep you posted. Like I said, it might be some time in April.

The good news is, a very good friend of mine is the House Finance Chairman, Jamie Callender; my wife works for him. He is there temporarily. That's a nice opportunity for us as well, and I intend to discuss this with him as well. We will see where it goes.

Chairperson Kapusta said thank you. When you speak about driving for prescriptions and in relationship to Councilperson Walchanowicz's comments about the rates and all; I do have some material that I was going to share with you. I will send it over to your office as an e-mail with some of the transportation costs in an area village near us. It's a village that very much supports their residents with just amazing services; and you are going to be surprised when you see some of those costs for transportation. I will send that to you.

Anything else Marilyn? There was nothing else from Community Services.

Chairperson Kapusta said we will go on to the Recreation Department.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said Debi I appreciate you making copies of the ordinance; but unfortunately I don't know if we are going to end up changing this because when I talked with Greg O'Brien about this, he came up with rewording for our main sign up sheets. I will pass that out.

This is when people sign up for passes for the Civic Center this is the form that they use. The old form is on the left, and the new form is the one Greg O'Brien proposed. So, it does just specify here that there is a fine. It is considered theft of services; and so far we haven't had anybody question this. We haven't had any issues lately with anybody trying to do anything. So, whether it's related to this, I can't say. It seems like a simple solution, but at least we have some leverage now. It's here. They have to sign this when they get a new pass or renew their pass. I think this is a step in the right direction, and we didn't have to change the ordinance.

Chairperson Kapusta said if that helps to resolve some of the issues, that's what we were aiming for. So, that's just as well I would say. Maybe then if you could Tom keep us apprised of how this is going. That would be helpful to us. Does anybody have any questions on that?

Councilperson Trakas said I just have one quick question for you. So, do we read this to them? Or do they read it themselves? Are we taking the initiative to read it to them?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said no, we don't take the initiative; but we do put it in front of them and we say to read this and then fill it out and sign it. We don't just throw it on the counter.

We ask them to read it.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked the bottom signature, is that for a desk person to sign then after the resident signs?

Eric Sarley said this is in reference to the general labor, the text that's right below that; so, it kind of goes with our liability.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said so next desk employee signs one of these after it has been signed.

Eric Sarley said no.

Chairperson Kapusta said that might be a good idea.

Several people began speaking at once again.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said you know, I'm working the counter and someone comes in to buy a pass. Then after they are done, I ask okay did you read the highlighted area? They say yes. I sign it, I validate that they signed it.

Eric Sarley said supervising a lot and being around the desk. While there is no kind of indication for that on the actual membership form; that is kind of the informal thing that we have been doing. Somebody comes in, and usually it's initialed by the person at the front desk that has issued the membership to them. So, you are able to kind of trace that back.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked okay, do we stamp these?

Eric Sarley said not a date stamp. We would be able to see if they sign up for a membership in this system; you would be able to see. The date stamp would go through Sportsman when they would sign up.

Chairperson Kapusta said the computerized programming.

Eric Sarley said so it won't be the same day they would sign this, but it would be, say they sign up today; it would be March 9th. That would show up in the system.

Chairperson Kapusta asked would you believe, since it's your department, that it would be possible to do the signature validating by the staff person or would it be too cumbersome for you?

Councilperson Walchanowicz said it takes 10 seconds to sign your name.

Councilperson Trakas said then read it back, do you affirm.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said either they sign or we physically stamp the paper.

Chairperson Kapusta said I think that's a good point, I really do. It kind of adds a little bit more oomph to it too for lack of a better word, a little bit more reinforcement of the significance of it.

Community Services Office Coordinator Veverka said in addition to this in Sportsman, it does also put the operator's name so you would be able to look it up.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said we could trace it back.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I was just thinking if the person was buying the pass sees the staff member signing it.

Chairperson Kapusta said also this does not go to the resident.

Eric Sarley said no.

Chairperson Kapusta asked should it? I am just throwing it out there. I am not telling you how to run your area, but should it because now they are going to have this at home in front of them.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said the staff member, they fill it out, they sign it, the staff member signs it. We make a copy. We keep the main, and they get a photocopy.

Eric Sarley said there are a lot of forms you do like that. I wouldn't be in opposition.

Chairperson Kapusta said that's pretty significant there.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said this way they are walking out with this and a receipt, not just a receipt.

Chairperson Kapusta said if you feel it's doable by your department Tom, I think it's something worth considering. I don't want to give you more work.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said just one more block.

Chairperson Kapusta said I think that's a good way. It just kind of shows you how the process works because we had the issue. We looked at legislative ordinance changes, and then being able to resolve it with this. That's great. Hopefully we can resolve it.

Councilperson Trakas said Madam Chair, while we are talking about that, would you mind if I bring up a little new business along these lines. So, a couple of things; I have been intrigued by our conversations of this committee as it relates to safety. We have had some conversation as Council about making this building secure, City Hall. I think your building needs to be secure. You have more residents going there. It is a soft target. Though we found out unfortunately in Minnesota, a recreation center got shot up a few weeks back. Has there been discussion about cameras, security? If you are going to submit a capital, I would think this has to be pretty high priority for us. I was wondering what you thought about that.

Procurement Coordinator Zdolshek asked hey Jim can I address that? Right now we just started the GPD study, and security is one of the areas that they do focus on. They started the study this week. They are going to the Fire Department tomorrow; I don't know what other areas they are going to go to, but they are going to meet with every Director at their building to find out what their concerns are and what their needs are. GPD, when they look at a facility, their main goal when they start prioritizing things is safety and security. So, I think they will bring a lot of insight to into it; but they are going to talk to the Directors to find out what are their concerns. I know one of the first things Tom will mention, or Marilyn, will be the security issue.

Councilperson Trakas said the second question I have is I used to employ a fingerprint system, and I found it eliminated fraud. So, we had people who came into a testing center; and they said they were Jim Trakas, they put their thumbprint down and they were Jim Trakas. The next guy who came in and said he was Jim with a thumbprint was somebody else got referred to the Police. So, I am just curious if we, for security purposes, because these are supposed to be our residents; and I don't know if they are or not, but I hope they are. Would that be something that could help us from a security perspective that they could come in and out with a thumbprint. We know that they are our residents.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said one of the old gyms I worked out at, your pass had a barcode on it; and like we scan it at the front desk or put your code in. In order for the door to open to get into the gym, I had to swipe my card and then the door clicked and I could go in. Maybe there's a way to switch how we get in. Granted there are a lot of seniors that maybe not have passes and stuff; it would have to be something now where everybody has to have a pass to get into the building.

Chairperson Kapusta said which would be potentially available for our residents. Do you know the number of non-residents who access that building every single day, particularly the Community Services side. I'm sure some even on the Rec side as well. We have meetings, and then you will have the Cuyahoga County this meeting or that. That speaks again to the point why we are highlighting this. I agree 100% with what Jim had said; and I know that we have had these discussions before and I know that the group is going to look at it the whole City. When we initially began some of those discussions, they were talking about what was going to be done to City Hall, and I spoke up right then and there and said I don't dismiss that we need safety here; but I think that Community Services need it. The building is open from in the dark in the morning until in the dark at night; and some of those earliest and latest hours have our most limited number of staff and some of our part-time staff.

Councilperson Trakas said you have children, you have seniors. These are all vulnerable.

Chairperson Kapusta said 100%. So, although I would agree that it would be nice if we could have something to only open the door to those who should have access, I don't know how that would work. So, I think we need to look at other measures definitely.

Councilperson Trakas said so to that point, there's a way to do that because a resident is supposed to be with a person right if they are coming. If I am a community member, and I am sponsoring something, I am supposed to be there.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said on the Rec side of the building.

Community Services Director Senick said not on our side.

Chairperson Kapusta said the person in essence should be there, like if you are using it for a shower or a party or something, yes. You are there, but that person is not necessarily standing at the desk validating that all those people are their guests. They are in the room running the party, getting everything ready and so forth. I know Community Services has worked diligently to make sure that it is if a resident is renting those rooms that resident is there in person at that event because that was a big issue for a while. They struggled with it.

Councilperson Trakas said another way to do that Kathleen is to say that everybody has to have some form of picture ID; and they have to scan it. They may not be a resident, but we know who they are. So, knowing who is in the building I think is kind of the issue.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said they scan your driver's license now; that's how they do that.

Eric Sarley said as far as the Rec side goes, obviously anybody who is a member already has a photo ID that they would scan in. One piece of software that we do have at the Civic Center at the front desk is software called Safepoint. We usually use that for the non-resident guests who come in. It is a driver's license scan. So, basically you scan the driver's license, their name comes up. Originally I believe it was implemented, we had a concern about somebody who basically it was for criminal reasons; somebody in the building may have had some criminal record. They wanted to make sure whoever was coming into the building wasn't just a guest; we have no idea who they are, but I think it also works really well as far as the liability that we have that exact name and record of the people who are in the building.

Councilperson Trakas said and what time they were there. I think that's really critical.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked are we still only charging \$4 for a non-resident fee?

Councilperson Trakas said \$5.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said it was \$4 twenty-five years ago; it hasn't gone up much in twenty-five years.

Community Services Director Senick said lunch is still \$3. You know the issue with that is that even if the Rec Department, you don't walk through a turnstile; you could have 10 people walking in at the same time, 3 will go this way. I have delivery people coming in, and unless I have an entrance where it's going to be a single file; they come in and can't get past their until they swipe that license.

Councilperson Trakas said you may have that.

Community Services Director Senick said down the road. I'm just saying right now we can't.

Chairperson Kapusta said and you can't hold the person, when there is 2 at the desk, 1 is working with residents another one answering the phone. There is a line, and they are not going to see everybody who comes in.

Community Services Director Senick said the entire area we are talking about renovating and stuff; and it would have to be reconfigured.

Chairperson Kapusta said but I am interested Eric, this Safepoint software you speak of, is that on your side or does the Community Services' side have access to that also?

Eric Sarley said it's just on our side. I know we have had discussions in the past; it's just at our desk, but we don't have it at the Fieldhouse. Usually we have pickleball on Sundays, and I'm always there on Sundays; so there's a lot of guests who come in for pickleball. We have to scan all their ID's, and we get a little bit of resistance. A lot of people who go to the Fieldhouse during the week, they don't have to scan their ID's, but they have to scan their ID's to the Civic Center.

Councilperson Trakas said I would suggest that we take a strong look at that. I am not trying to create problems, but we should know who is in our buildings.

Community Services Director Senick said but you have an issue at the Fieldhouse with the after school program. There are the three rooms in there, and they can go in there.

Councilperson Trakas said absolutely.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said technically no one is allowed beyond that point before 5:00 p.m., right? Or before 6:00 p.m.?

Several people said 6:00 p.m.

Community Services Director Senick said they have tournaments and stuff going on prior to that with the basketball and stuff.

Several people began speaking at once again.

Community Services Director Senick said we don't have all three courts, so people use (inaudible).

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said there's 3 events throughout the year.

Chairperson Kapusta said I think the comments are very valid, very important; and hopefully, when the company comes through with Dennis, they are able to evaluate and get all that input from you. So, hopefully they could give us some suggestions and direction with your input as to how we can better deal with that because it is an extremely important issue.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said GPD, they are doing schools, gyms, they should have answers for all that stuff.

Councilperson Trakas said I think it's important. I go to military installations, and without a picture ID and without a purpose, without orders I can't get in. That's a military thing. However, these are our children. You have somebody on a background check there's software that can find stuff, this person may have a problem; we should know that the person is in the building. They should send you, I don't know if that software does it; it should be able to do that. I have had experiences where I have seen that. I know people are in the building that shouldn't be in the building; and those are the types of things that we need to protect our residents. It's not inexpensive to do those things, but boy I think we need to be talking about it.

Finance Director Blaze said I get what you are saying, but don't make it so onerous on the residents who use that facility every day to say that the person who is coming 6 or 7 days a week, you have to bring your license every time. You have to bring your pass every time. I feel like come on, you don't know me by now. A lot of times I go up there, I don't take a phone, I don't take a license, I don't take my ID. I punch my number in and I go.

Councilperson Trakas said but you punch your number in.

Finance Director Blaze said but I am hearing hey we are going to have to require the pass, we are going to have to require the license; and it seems like we are going to yesterday's technology where you go to thumbprint or something that's tomorrow's technology forcing people, especially the regulars, to bring something with them every time. I see dozens of people in the morning, they are regulars who just come to work out. They have their keys and that's it.

Chairperson Kapusta said but they put their numbers in. Is that what you are saying?

Finance Director Blaze said probably, I am assuming.

Chairperson Kapusta said that's still a way.

Councilperson Trakas said and that connects to you, and we know you are in the building. I think that would be totally appropriate.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said fortunately it's such a small town, all our employees know most of our residents who are coming in. The big thing we have issues is when we have basketball games on Saturday mornings in the Civic Center, we have people coming in from different cities and sometimes it's a big mass. The whole team from Brecksville is coming in with their parents.

I will say, my kids have been in the same league, and we travel to Brecksville, Broadview Heights and Seven Hills; and when we walk in all the other rec centers, we walk in as a parent watching the kids, nobody checks. We are not lacking in that regard, but like right now in a normal day our girls are on top of things and checking everybody in. Like Vern said, if you don't want to bring your ID, you can put your code in.

Councilperson Trakas said that's good.

Chairperson Kapusta said Prime Network membership, anything else Tom.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said I'm just trying to be a little pro-active on this because I know it's probably going to come up at some point because of this Prime Fitness membership. This kind of piggybacked off of the Silver Sneakers Program. Are you familiar?

Chairperson Kapusta said no, I'm not familiar.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said Eric is going to explain it more, but I want to bring this up and discuss this now because I think it will start affecting our numbers in our building possibly. Like right now, anybody who is on our health plan can join quite a number of other facilities. I am just going to bring up one. Terry Guinto's husband works over in Middleburg Heights, and he said wow, I can go to Middleburg Heights for free. I work out there, and I'm going to go to Middleburg Heights. Right now he comes for lunch, and he comes to our Civic Center. I am just using that as one example. It's a neat program, but I did talk to a couple of the other directors; I talked to Bob D'Amico over in Westlake, and they are on the program. He said they are strictly on it to generate revenue, and in our case we are not looking to generate revenue. We are more serving our residents. We really don't want non-residents in our building. Let me rephrase that. Not that we don't want non-residents, we want, the building was built for our residents, and their guests. So, if a non-resident wants to come in with one of our residents, that's fine.

I just wanted to bring this up that I don't think at this point, unless anybody tells me something different; I don't think joining this Prime Fitness membership will benefit the City of Independence as a whole.

Chairperson Kapusta said so you mean us becoming one of the names up on that board there.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said correct.

Eric Sarley said just to Cliff note quickly how it works. It is very similar to Silver Sneakers; it's actually the same company that runs it. Basically, if we as a rec center were to join on our side, we contact the company, they come out and get some information saying how many members we have, what is the price of a membership. Basically, if somebody has a Prime Fitness pass like anybody with our healthcare have access to this. We get the equivalent of whatever is the basic membership at that location for free. So, we would get their basic membership. When somebody with that Prime Fitness pass goes to the location, depending on the amount of times that they would go to that location per month; they would get a bill back say for \$3 per visit up to 7 visits or something like that.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said 10 visits. Westlake will get reimbursed \$3 per visit, up to 10 visits per month. So, they are making \$30 per month for someone who joins.

Chairperson Kapusta said when I said no about the Prime Network, I thought that you meant that we had it here. That's why I was asking.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said no we don't have it at our Civic Center, we do have it on our health plan.

Chairperson Kapusta said that I'm familiar with, the health plan. I thought you meant we will be getting it here.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said no, and I wouldn't recommend it at this point unless someone here tells me that we should look into it; but I feel we are going to get infiltrated with people who aren't residents of our City.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said there's a building across the street who has 1,800 people affected.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said exactly.

Councilperson Trakas asked what is our program here, I just went to it and forgot. So, what does it say about this program? That we were going to join it?

Chairperson Kapusta said we are in already. No, not the Civic Center.

Several people began speaking at once again.

Eric Sarley said that's how we kind of got familiar with it.

Councilperson Trakas asked other people would come here too right Tom?

Councilperson Walchanowicz said we don't want that.

Eric Sarley said it's something to be aware of.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said I'm just being proactive because I am surprised I wasn't asked by anyone yet about this. So, that's why I just wanted to put this on the table.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said it's like Mr. Guinto going to Middleburg. Their facility is a lot bigger than ours. Their workout area, the amount of machines and stuff they have is a whole lot more than ours. Sometimes there's a wait to work out upstairs, so we can't afford to have more people come in.

Chairperson Kapusta said okay. Anything else Tom?

Thank you very much.

Then we have the review/status of Civic Center projects and proposed ideas. Is that something you want to put on hold in lieu of everything.

Several people said yes.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked what was the amount that we had already allocated for the building? Do we know?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said for this year we had for the locker rooms a little over \$200,000; but again like Vern said, it was just on paper. It wasn't actually encumbered yet. That locker room upgrade was on the plan for 2020. I think the main thing is to wait for this GPD Group to come in and give their assessment and go from there.

Chairperson Kapusta said so we will put that item on hold in view of the GPD work and then the budget review that we are still trying to have taking place for the capital items.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said here's a copy of our survey that we had out for our basketball program. We used Survey Monkey, but we used the free version of Survey Monkey. We had over 60 children enrolled in our basketball program. So out of 64 participants, we got 10 responses back. So, this is basically our results and comments.

I know there is one person who wasn't happy, but there were some things that went with that which I could explain.

Chairperson Kapusta asked and when was this conducted please?

Eric Sarley said this was sent out I believe 2 days after the final season.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said which was the middle of February.

Councilperson Trakas said so you had a 16% rate of return on the survey which is good, usually it's about 2% or 3%. That's not bad at all. It sounds small, but it's really not. So, these are only residents?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said yes, these are only residents who were in our program.

Chairperson Kapusta said it says good registration process. That's very good.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said it's interesting to see how everybody likes text messages. Nobody wants phone calls, it's all text messages.

Chairperson Kapusta said probably because we don't want to weed out the robo calls from the regular ones, and we don't answer our phones anymore.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said there's some really nice comments.

Councilperson Trakas said nobody wants a phone call, that's funny. When it says teams seemed stacked, what do they mean by that?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said that's the one that was kind of the ringer in here that wasn't happy with a couple of things.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said so has that has been in the past years, particular coaches pick the best of all the girls and put them all on one team; and then it's just unfair competition for the other teams. In defense to Tommy and Dimitri, Dimitri does everything he possibly can to keep every team as even as possible.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said sometimes you get a thing like, you get a coach and you get an assistant coach that have 2 of the best players. Then you throw in a request to be on their team because of car pooling; so you have 3 good players on a team of 7 girls or boys. Right there you have almost half of your team of superstars; so that's what I think this person is referring to. It's hard for Dimitri to, sometimes it's not right.

Councilperson Trakas asked do you have like a random selection process?

Councilperson Walchanowicz said it's a draft.

Recreation Walchanowicz said like I said, except for in the case I just said a main coach and assistant coach; and if you get one person who needs to go with one of those 2, then you have 3 good players on a team of 7.

Eric Sarley said as far as the Cavs Youth Sports Organization question. We have gotten some feedback that people didn't receive their ticket for the season. So, we contacted our representative from the Cavs Youth Sports Organization, and they sent the tickets out shortly after the survey was sent out.

Chairperson Kapusta said it's nice to see outcomes of surveys.

Eric Sarley said that's right because sometimes you think they sent something out, and they didn't.

Councilperson Trakas asked what about scheduling? Were you able to take care of all of our needs?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said yes, we had good scheduling. I wish I could pull that schedule up here because I would like to show everybody the scheduling when we don't have an event over there how the place is a ghost town.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said prime example. I was there yesterday, everyone bellyaches that they can't get a weekend in there. I went in there at 3:00 p.m. Dennis was taking a nap I think. He wasn't. I had the whole Fieldhouse for my 9 year olds who were there. There was no one there.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said again, I welcome anyone to come into my office and pull up my computer; and I will go over it. Unfortunately, it's not everyone, it's a handful of people who are really having an issue. I don't know.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said people just don't understand that we have to generate money off of that facility. It's got to kind of take carte blanche over a free 2 hour practice.

Chairperson Kapusta said and what a great facility that is even for some of our organizations like the Kiwanis with pickleball; it afforded them that availability, and that's a great fundraiser for that organization which then they turn around and give it back to things we need in our community. So, it's reciprocal.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said then we just came off of another nice event from Saturday. I don't know if anyone was at the train show. The Mayor was at the train show, he seemed pretty impressed. There were a lot of residents who were there. First of all, it was a resident who ran the train show. There were a lot of residents who came in to just walk through it, and they brought their kids in. It was a really nice event.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said it was fun for the kids to see that kind of stuff.

Chairperson Kapusta said I see there's one comment that they wish the basketball program served prior to third grade. Is it because of our volume too?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said we are actually changing that this year. We have plans, we are going to go down to first and second graders.

Chairperson Kapusta said that's nice. That's great.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said we have a program too right now that's on Saturdays, and we have over 30 kids in there.

Councilperson Trakas asked what type of message are you showing them?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said we are just showing them the basics. It is all basics.

Eric Sarley said we have some smaller wheeled basketball nets in the Civic Center. They can be adjusted down.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said it's just unfortunate that when the kids are able to be on a team, and it's third grade; they are going against cities that have already been playing organized basketball for 2 years. Our girls are 2 years behind.

Chairperson Kapusta said well they would say our third graders are behind. It's just a different world.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I know. So, it's something that they need to address.

Chairperson Kapusta said that's good. It's great. Thanks for sharing this. Do we have any other questions for Tom or Eric about this survey? There were none.

It's helpful for us to have this. Thank you.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said good job Eric.

Chairperson Kapusta said the last item we have on the Agenda is review proposal to establish a citizens board to serve in an advisory capacity to Community Services and Recreation Department. It sounds like a great segway from having gotten some input information here from the Rec Department.

Councilperson Trakas said thank you and thanks for the opportunity to bring this to the committee. It's been an idea that I have had for a little while. We talked just very basically about it. So, for about 20 years Independence had a Recreation Board, and we abolished it. I don't know why. I wasn't around when they abolished it. So, we have enough programming and potential programming and the fees and the costs and stuff like that; but I thought it might make some sense to have a citizens sounding board on these types of issues so that as people approach you, you could have a formal organization who can vet this, do research for you, who has some ideas and come back and say hey these are some things we would like to see. The idea is to have users of the facilities come up with some of these ideas. So, one of the approaches is to have someone who is a student in our schools be on the commission. Now maybe we can't find somebody like that; but I guess the idea behind it is to try to increase the amount of the public who does have an appetite for these programs to help come up with suggestions for us. If there are programs that aren't working, they can come back to us and say hey we didn't have the participation we wanted.

So, I think it's another sounding board for our community to have people who are involved to help come up with some ideas. Sometimes the residents go to you guys directly, and if they get the wrong answer, then other people get calls; and it's a little bit of a process where you can have a citizens review committee. Many communities have them who can help with advice on these issues. It is a non-binding advisement. The idea is to just increase citizen involvement and to help you have more people who can listen to some of the ideas that you have and then maybe come up with some of their own. I know that a number of people in other communities have this.

Another idea behind this would be we have talked about having parks and other recreation facilities around town. So, how does that mesh with what we currently do? Do you need other parks and recreation facilities? This committee could help you come up with opinions as to the need as well and perhaps by ordinance. It would non-binding. It would be basically advisory in nature and just kind of help us for future planning and current planning. Exactly what you are talking about here, they would help you to come up with and make recommendations and be able to be a sounding board for input. I know that dozens of communities in this area; we have 60 communities in Cuyahoga County, a majority of our communities, over 45 of them have a Parks and Recreation type board. I haven't seen a Community Services board because we are a pretty unique community, and we offer a lot of those types of services.

Anyway, that's the concept behind it, and I thought it would be non-intrusive and beneficial.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked how many people do you want to sit on a board like this?

Chairperson Kapusta said you said 5.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked it's all volunteer correct?

Councilperson Trakas said all volunteer. If we wanted to compensate them we could.

Several people began speaking at once again.

Chairperson Kapusta said I can only speak to my experience which was that we did have a Senior Advisory Council Committee back in the early 2000's until probably about, I am not really sure, maybe about 2005 or 2006. It didn't go much longer than about those first 5 or so years; and I was really excited about it. I just started it when I was working in Community Services and handpicked seniors that I had come to know and the staff had come to know who were going to be very involved and would provide good input. So, these were people who we thought were ideal to be on it. They were not always people who agreed with what we were doing, some had brought different ideas. That was okay too; but they were there. They were visible.

Community Services Director Senick asked didn't the Mayor appoint some of them? Weren't there one or two who were appointed by the Mayor, and then you appointed the other ones I think.

Chairperson Kapusta said maybe, I don't remember; but my point was there were people who we knew would come and would want to be involved. I will tell you those meetings were very, very difficult meetings because if I did not bring a full agenda, no agenda came. I wouldn't want, I think this is an idea worth considering; I just wouldn't want it to be more work for the departments. I would want it to be a supplement to what they are doing. I would want it to be something that helps them, but not something that they have to create a whole agenda for. That's how it was, and I didn't want it to be that way. I didn't place it that way. I said come give, submit to me ideas of what we can put on the agenda; and month after month, nothing ever came.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said it fits perfect to that group of young adults who came in to the Mayor's office a few weeks back. They were very like interested in, and that was that whole 2 to 6 programming thing.

Councilperson Trakas said they can meet on an as-needed basis, and you don't have to meet on a monthly basis; but the point is, and I am really glad you said that because I had forgotten we had that committee, and now we know. It's got to be functioning. It's got to be a sounding board. It shouldn't be a pain in the neck. It isn't to make your life harder, it's to make it easier too, to present ideas and yay or nay or maybe or yes, to let you know what people are thinking about, to get people talking about our programs in the community.

One of the things that obviously we struggle with is participation. So some of our programs are highly successful and some aren't. The concept is to have people who could be advocates for our programs as well and to further inform people. We are going to be putting together an additional Communications person perhaps as early as tomorrow who can help get the message out. That's kind of the idea. We can certainly structure it on an as-needed basis, and we don't have to pay anybody to do this. It would just be volunteers. If it doesn't work.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said these parents are just looking for programs so they can involve their young children into things.

Councilperson Trakas asked do you think it would be a value to you?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said I think it's a great concept, a great idea. A couple of things, like going back to maybe Vern would remember this, back when they did do away with the Rec Board; if I am not mistaken they did away with the Rec Board to create the Community Services Committee. If I remember, Vern do you remember, were you on Council at the time?

Finance Director Blaze said it's been so long ago, I don't remember the details.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said I bet if I asked Ed, that's when the Rec Board kind of got abolished; and then they came up with the Community Services Committee.

Anyway, so the only thing that I would have to say is that I think the Mayor would say the same thing, if we get any citizens who come forward with issues or suggestions, like he did here, he called everybody into the office and said hey what's on your mind, what can we do to help them? We are moving forward on doing it.

The same thing with the Civic Center, my door is always open; and last Friday I had a fellow come into my office in the morning and gave me a whole, I have 5 suggestions and about 4 improvements. They were minor things. He saw a couple of things in the gym, minor things that Tech Service can fix. So, we have an open door policy that hey if you have any suggestions, ideas, come in and let us know, e-mail us, call us. A lot of things happen that way, but again if you want to be more formal on it; I am all for it. Whatever this group decides, I am on board; but I think that the one reason we don't have a formal citizens board because we are so open and small that we try to take any suggestions we can.

Community Services Director Senick said and I think my concern, I understand if it's something everybody would want; and again, we have an open door policy. We get a lot of suggestions, but maybe there's something out there that we are not getting or people aren't coming forward. I don't know if I would consider having them make recommendations for capital improvement, infrastructure investment, do you know what I am saying? I can see with programming and some of these other things; but cost wise because that would be a little difficult for somebody on the outside to come in and make some adjustments for that.

Councilperson Trakas said okay, that's fair. That's really our job in a sense.

Chairperson Kapusta said we talk about the fact that we are open for our residents, and they come and approach us. Do we have some venues out there, and I am just thinking of a few as we are talking through this; Mayor's Listening Night, special meetings when a group of families of 2 to 6 year olds got together, using our common boards through the public media that we have? If we packaged those and reminded people that they are here, and that we encourage them to use it for the purposes that Jim is stating in here, some of these very important purposes, do you think maybe that would be a route to try first and see if we get more momentum with that? If we don't maybe it's telling us that there aren't any un verbalized needs out there. The people feel that they are communicating well enough through these channels.

Community Services Director Senick asked what if you had something like a Community Services/Rec Department listening night. Do you know what I am saying? See how many people would come to that to address these issues. If that comes and there's a real interest.

Chairperson Kapusta said it can grow out of that.

Community Services Director Senick to see if there's a real interest, open it up to the residents and say we are going to have this and need your input. Hopefully we are going to do that with the survey because the survey is going to encompass all ages, and that may address some of it. I am open to trying anything to improve the department.

Councilperson Trakas said let's figure out some ideas about that.

Chairperson Kapusta said maybe we can keep this on the agenda for the next meeting to talk more about what avenues we could use, what approaches we could use, maybe it is a listening night; I don't know, maybe it's using what we have.

Community Services Director Senick said and the survey is going in this month's newsletter, right?

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said I think April's. I have to talk to Dar.

Chairperson Kapusta said so maybe at the May meeting, maybe we should hold the discussion until the May meeting. If you think it's going out in April, would you have some data do you think ready by the May meeting or not necessarily?

Eric Sarley said especially if we get the digital survey out.

Chairperson Kapusta said and we can just talk about what we have at that point. Would that be okay with you Councilperson Trakas?

Councilperson Trakas said fine by me.

Chairperson Kapusta said we will put it to the May meeting.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said so we will have a Community Services meeting in May?

Chairperson Kapusta said actually it will be in June. I am sorry.

Councilperson Trakas said that gives us some time.

Chairperson Kapusta said that would be good. Thank you for bringing that up though.

Are there any other matters to come before the committee this evening?

Councilperson Trakas said one other thing. So, obviously we had 3 cases of coronavirus in Cuyahoga County. Are there any protocols that we are doing any differently for large amounts of people who are coming together? Any public information that you are able to disseminate? Anything that we are doing to change our infection control standards?

Community Services Director Senick said I just got something from the County like a couple of pages what they are doing, which I understand tomorrow too at our staff meeting Chief Rega is going to address it with the staff probably what we should be doing in that sense. Dar has told him he has to be there to do that.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said at our custodial end we did up our wiping of door handles, panic bars on doors, our upstairs weight equipment. Linda did order extra supplies, and believe it or not, we are having some trouble.

Councilperson Trakas said and there are some cost hikes in there.

Recreation Director Walchanowicz said not that we are out, but we are trying to get more. I think this is just the tip of the iceberg; but we are trying to be proactive in that regard.

Councilperson Trakas asked what about from a transportation perspective? So, we are transporting residents here and there. We have buses. When the Spanish influenza came in 1918 it was because of the trains and taking troops all across the country for World War I, but this thing spread all over the world. I am just curious, do we do anything like that for the transportation, and should we?

Community Services Office Coordinator Veverka said for our chartered buses we obviously have no control what the driver does in terms of sanitation, but for our drivers they do keep a kit. We keep Lysol and antibacterial wipes; and they do wipe down the surfaces of the car when they transport and between transports, the door handles and all those things.

Councilperson Trakas said I would get that information out. I think people are starting to get a little concerned, and we are doing everything right. Thanks to you guys we are doing everything right. Just make sure people know we are doing everything right.

Community Services Office Coordinator Veverka said because we kind of had a larger event yesterday, also our staff was armed with the wipes; and actually in the putt-utt section, every time a kid used a club, they were wiping handles. The parents did notice, and they were very

appreciative that they were being diligent about everything the kids touched, and everything got wiped down between uses.

Chairperson Kapusta said might we suggest too that talk to our transportation providers, the bus providers and just ask them what they are doing so that we might know that. I would like to wager that they are doing something like that as well.

Councilperson Trakas said if we don't ask, they don't tell.

Chairperson Kapusta said and I think another issue that comes up to my mind is when we prepare our foods for our residents, we obviously do it in our excellent way in our own kitchens that have no dishwashers; and I will reinforce that is an issue. I know you struggle with that, and we have all these years. I don't know how many places that prepare food for the numbers of people that we do would have no dishwashers for all of our pots, our serving trays, our utensils. I know we throw away disposal things that we actually eat on, but I think that's an issue. It's legitimately an issue to be able to better sanitize those things.

Community Services Director Senick said and we do sanitize counters and everything. That's done every day.

Chairperson Kapusta said I don't question that you try to the best of your ability. We don't have what we need in there. I hope when the GPD Group comes through, I hope that it is a point that's brought up as they are looking at what's needed for our area. We know we want a whole renovation of the kitchen as we were discussing earlier; but that's a critical factor as far as I am concerned. You are always working on our temperatures in your refrigerators and freezer with the alarms that tell us if the refrigerators have gone off so that we will know. Those are things that are critical too, and we do that; but this is a very important; sanitation of the equipment.

Councilperson Trakas said it does highlight the issue that there are germs and infection control procedures; and we are doing it, and maybe the residents or the other guests aren't doing it. Maybe we need to be a little bit educating for them as well. I get it. I am appalled at the amount of people who don't wash their hands while they are using the latrine. That is one thing.

Community Services Director Senick said we just talked about that. It shocks me.

Chairperson Kapusta said and this maybe is going to sound, and you may not like it; I have been to some restrooms; you know how you see the ones that say all staff must wash their hands. I have been to some that say unwashed hands lead to e-coli and all that. People maybe they don't realize it. Common sense should tell you, but maybe we need more things like that. I have seen that in public facilities.

Moved by Trakas, seconded by Walchanowicz, to adjourn the Community Services Committee Meeting of March 9, 2020. Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.

There being no further business to discuss, the Community Services Committee Meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Debra J. Beal, Clerk of Council
Minutes Unapproved at Time of Release 12/13/19
