

Dennis Murray called the meeting to order at 5 p.m. after the **Invocation**, given by Jeff Smith, and the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

The clerk called **the roll** and the following Commissioners responded: Naomi Twine, Julie Farrar, Dennis Murray, Wesley Poole, Dick Brady and Jeff Smith.

Upon motion of Jeff Smith and second of Dick Brady, the commission voted to excuse Keith Grohe. The President declared the motion passed.

City staff present: Paul Ricci – Fire Chief, John Orzech - Police Chief, Aaron Klein - City Engineer, Don Rumbutis - IT, Don Icsman - Law Director, Hank Solowiej - Finance Director, Sally Poggiali – Senior Accountant/Auditor, Nicole Ard - City Manager and Kelly Kresser - Commission Clerk.

Upon motion of Julie Farrar and second of Wesley Poole, the commission voted to approve the minutes of the February 10 city commission meeting and suspend the oral reading. The President declared the motion passed.

Dennis Murray said good progress is being made on the **city/county water litigation**.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (*agenda items only*)

Mark Norman, 1016 Third Street, said it has been about three years since he attended a city commission meeting as he felt there was not much hope for change. The new commissioners present a great opportunity to move things forward. As you drive through this city, it tells you it is tired and depressed and is a city which does not have the money to maintain its infrastructure. The homes are older and people have left for other areas because it would be easier to build than to fix up older homes. The city has failed to connect to the future, the economy and the leadership, but now we do have people with experience, know-how and relationships to connect to the future and the citizens need to be supportive. We cannot build upon what we have now by taking away more and more services, we need to keep growing and the citizens need to give their support through the income necessary to do so. He is also skeptical as he was optimistic and perhaps a bit naive when he built his home and the quality of life is probably why many people do not or will not live here. There are more than eighteen dogs in his block and every time a bicycle, walker or car goes by, one dog starts barking, and then they all start barking and it is getting to the season where he will have to deal with them all summer long. People are beaten up on street corners or wake up to find someone in their room, and these are all things which affect our reputation and we do not have the income to address some of these quality of life issues. Mark Norman suggested coming up with a proposal to start moving this city forward and identify how much it will cost, who will lead the effort and who will be accountable for delivering the results. Quality of life issues should be addressed first including commercial trucks parking on residential streets, dogs, junk vehicles, trailers and vehicles on vacant properties. Mark Norman asked who to call for these types of things to begin attracting people back into the city. The city gives money to the Erie County Economic Development Corporation but the director (Peter Zaehring) lives in Akron and will not come to events here, but he should work here and attend events here. Mark Norman said Peter Zaehring says he works out of his home in Akron because he wants to connect us to people we need to be connected to, but he (Mark) does not buy this. An example from not so long ago is when Gary Packan was the Assistant City Manager here and was on fire. People could get emails from him at 2 a.m. or 4 a.m. about ideas and he would meet with people on Sunday if necessary. Sandusky needs someone like this with vision and ideas to move forward.

King Baer, 401 West Shoreline Drive, #351, said some of the commissioners already have graphs and have made a decision about what they are going to do and figures he will not make much headway, but is a retired firefighter and proud of this. He is very proud of the passion and knowledge of the young firefighters in Sandusky. King Baer said when he first joined the Fire Department, the equipment was not so hot and there were only two ambulances: one was an International and the back door would fly open as you drove down the road and they fought

this all of the time. This was not equipment the city should have and half of the department members were not Emergency Medical Technicians at the time. The firefighters met with the fire chief, the city commissioners and the city manager with a proposal to start charging minimum wage for ambulance calls to make repairs to equipment or to purchase equipment and vehicles. One thing stated at that time was if the money/fund ever got too large, the city would keep it and they (those on the fire department at that time) were told this would not be the case. They were told it would always be for the fire department's use and it is frustrating to see what is happening. King Baer said he worked for two years trying to get a new station built with former Chief Ken Gilliam and trying to find other ways of funding a new fire station. They traveled the city with stop watches trying to determine where the station should be built as seconds matter in the fire service. When responding to a baby with crib death, minutes count. When a fire fighter is stuck in a fire without other support, minutes are important. Cutting and taking away from training and equipment makes him wonder if the commissioner have been to the fire house and ridden in vehicles to see what they are really about. There is a lot of nice equipment now and things that do not change is what they are up against. There is a challenge in this profession and they are especially challenged when faced with the manpower situation and not calling people in. There are times when there are 13 on duty with minimum manning and all kinds of things happen at once. He recalled one night when the Sail-In was hit by electricity at the same time as a tornado came down Bogart Road and he had to open the door of the fire truck to let the water out as it was up to his waist. They could not call on Perkins, Margaretta or Huron and had to do it all on their own. King Baer said when he was on the department, he would be called a sissy for putting an air pack on his back and unfortunately, most of these guys have died from heart or lung disease. The physicals are being done away with and the first five years and the last five years of a fire fighter's career are when there are fatalities. This is a great town and he has served his whole life. Trust must be given first by working together and setting an example by the commissioners by riding in a snow plow or a fire truck. King Baer said he did this when he became a member of the school board by going into the classrooms and this is what a family is all about. He will not change what is already going to be done, but said to start planning tomorrow to find a way to get these fire fighters back. Police officers and fire fighters are special people and are like little boys who have never grown up. About two years before he retired as the fire inspector, King Baer asked about starting a Silent Alarm Parade to bring attention to Fire Prevention Week and to honor the names on the wall downtown and the politicians only attend when they are up for election. He asked the commissioners to attend these kind of things for those who serve them and to find a way to get them back. King Baer thanked the commissioners for serving and asked them to serve their employees by seeing them. In 1980, persons on the department were Emergency Medical Technicians and now they are Paramedics and the same call which used to last 30 minutes now lasts up to an hour.

Sharon Johnson, 1139 Fifth Street, asked if the commission will reconsider their contribution of \$30,000/year to the Erie County Economic Development Corporation. She was recently at an Erie County Commission meeting when ECEDC gave their report and there is no accountability showing they called on specific companies. One of the county commissioners has been asking for this list for about four years. Sharon Johnson said she attended a coffee meeting a few years ago and a businessman was pleading for the city to do something or he would pull out; it is bad when people have to come to these meetings to get action and ECEDC did not call on them or he would not have come. There needs to be accountability and a contract with ECEDC. Sharon Johnson said Dick Brady was on the commission when the contribution was increased from \$5,000 to \$30,000 and Erie County matched this. Now \$60,000 is provided and there is no accountability.

Tim Stookey, 1307 Fifth Street, said he has debt to pay and understands a little bit about what the city is going through but he knows how much debt he has. He keeps hearing people are going to be laid off and the city does not have any money, but asked how much debt the city has that keeps rolling over into new loans and asked why the city is not addressing this. Tim Stookey said a lot of people know his wife is a critical diabetic and when he uses 9-1-1, she has seconds. One of the fire fighters told him one time when he responded it was a good thing they were coming from Station #3 because if they had come from Station #1, he does not know what

would happen. Some calls require emergency, split second things to be done and he cannot give an IV and this is what saves his wife. Breathing, blood pressure, swallowing and talking cease and the commission is telling him they may not send someone to his house because they may not have enough manpower. Tim Stookey said he does not know what can be done with a taxpayer's lawsuit, but the day may come when it can be proven his wife died because fire fighters were not there. Everyone in this audience knows someone with health problems including strokes and these victims must be taken to the hospital soon to have a drug administered. The commissioners should look somewhere else to cut and to let Fifth Street go in order to have firemen available to come to his house. The speeders will not go so fast with all of the ruts in the roadway. This city is in bad trouble and is eighty percent rental and asked how many people live outside of the city and do not have to pay the tax. Citizens of Sandusky have to balance their budget and cannot get certain things done or purchase certain things and as a retired mail carrier, saw how a lot of people live. The city has lost many industrial businesses and needs to look somewhere else to cut besides the fire department.

Matt Morgan, 1003 West Osborne Street, said he wished he could offer a silver bullet for the problem, but can only offer a silver lining. He sees this is a problem we all face and is something that is frustrating and agonizing. There are cold facts and figures, public and private employees, young and old persons with something involved here. He would like to make it obvious we do not lose the fact everyone is here because we want to take care of it in our own way and with our own experiences. We are all headed toward the same destination and he would like to offer a reminder despite all of the differences, we are all in the room together to confront this. He may not have an impact on the budget or the effect, but a better understanding and the ability to come together to find solutions, even if only temporary. In the future, residents will continue to participate and fill this room to have an exchange of ideas.

Tim Schwanger, 362 Sheffield Way, asked if Item #3 is for parcels in Cold Creek Creek Crossing and to forgive \$1.7 million in assessments. Tim Schwanger asked what this means for the city's budget through 2017. This was supposed to be assessed to the property owners. This money could maintain two of the fire fighters and this is a project gone wild and he hopes this never happens again.

Sue Daugherty, 1016 Third Street, said not only is she a resident of Sandusky, she is a landlord. With the number of rental properties in Sandusky, this could be an opportunity and is willing to welcome an increase in the rental registration fee if it meant there would be a return on this risk. Sue Daugherty currently pays a \$30 rental registration fee each year for a property on Franklin Street and would be willing to pay \$100 or \$200 each year if the commission shows a plan as to what would happen one, two or three years down the road. She would see this as an investment and not an expense and to consider this as a possibility.

PRESENTATION

BreAnn Hohman, member of the Sandusky City Tree Commission, said the members felt it was important to present information about the state of trees in the city and is an issue people need to hear about. This is an eight member group made up of five city residents, the Foreman at the greenhouse and one member of the city commission who acts as the liaison. The Tree Commission is a citizen body which helps to study, plan and advise the commission regarding city-owned trees in the parks and boulevard areas. Sometimes trees are taken for granted but there are a lot of various benefits such as shade and aesthetics. There have been studies which have shown trees reduce driving speed and road rage which is interesting. Trees help build the character of the community and cut down on energy costs and shading can help to prolong street pavements and help to reduce storm water. There has been a fair amount of trimming in the past few years and several hundred trees have been removed. The removals have been stepped up because of the Emerald Ash Borer. There are several more standing that need to be removed, but plantings have not increased. We have lost approximately 2.5 trees for every one that has been planted. If this pattern continues, the character of some of the tree-lined streets will be lost. The good news is the City of Sandusky has received the Tree City USA Award for the past 23 years, but the urban forest needs to be replanted to maintain the

Growth Award and Sandusky has only received this six times in 23 years. There are lots of complaints about trees from residents and these are in the boulevard areas. Many of these complaints do not get addressed and in 2011 and 2012, there were more trees taken care of only because the winters were milder. When trees are being managed and properly taken care of, there are less limbs down during storm events and the city would not want to completely eliminate this service because of money as the problems will only get worse. There are many trees needing to be addressed but still on a waiting list. These are trees which keep rolling over on the list from year to year and 100 – 150 new ones are added each year. Many of them can be addressed by trimming, but there are many trees standing dead which adds to the blighted look of the city. There are trees in the 48th and 50th Street neighborhood which are aging and hollowing out in the center and before too long, these trees will start to become a problem as well. Without tree management, the city may be faced with eliminating all of the trees on one whole side of a street in one shot. Under current management, the city has one forester and a Greenhouse Manager, who is the only arborist in the city. Funding is through a horticultural budget which has been cut. Other funding comes from the green fund endowment, fundraisers, donations and grants. The city is stified in what grants they can obtain right now because they do not have a lot of information about the trees. There is a flux right now in how citizens help maintain these trees. Currently, citizens cannot address the tree unless it has been approved by the city which is not covered by ordinance. If something were to happen because of a tree falling, it would be the resident's problem to have the tree trimmed at this point. There are many wrong trees planted in the wrong places in the city and there are areas where sidewalks are heaving because of trees which were planted that are too large. There is crowding in the boulevard and issues with power lines. Some trees have been limbed out to the point where they are unsightly and this also increases the possibility of the trees falling. The Emerald Ash Borer took a big hit in the City of Sandusky and many of these trees have since died and there are several more in decline. BreAnn Hohman said it takes three crew members to do removals and trimmings but there are not enough employees to do this. Most of the tree management currently comes from a contract. There is not a master plan although one was drafted nine years ago but not actually adopted. At this time, the members find it difficult to deal with complaints or concerns and they do not know what the most appropriate action is. In the past few years, the loss of canopy has been three to one (3/1) and it was about two and one half to one (2½/1) about eight years ago. The goals for the Tree Commission are to start inventorying trees in Sandusky. There is a free software package called I-Tree which takes input of measurements and tree species. The members are hopeful to at the least get fifty percent (50%) done in 2014 and a grant was submitted to the Sandusky/Erie County Community Foundation to help complete this inventory. The members would like to investigate whether or not it is a good idea to restock the Pipe Street nursery, or go into contract growing to provide the needed and necessary trees. They will continue to investigate other grant opportunities but need good information and detail to put into the grants first. Some of the recommendations being discussed by the members of the Tree Commission are to:

- Reinststate zone trimming and/or removal which would require more staff or a contract
- Update regulations to expand the management of the urban forest by citizens
- Collaboration of the Tree Commission with the Planning Commission and the Engineering Department by prioritizing small projects that combine street improvement with "issue" tree areas and consider using green infrastructure to manage storm water

BreAnn Hohman said there are some dead trees in very high profile areas. The members love the community and want others to come into the community, but our character is enhanced by tree-lined streets.

Dennis Murray said he would like to see an ordinance which clarifies what homeowners are permitted to do as it seems backward to tell residents a tree is their responsibility if it falls down, but we do not provide an opportunity for this to be addressed proactively or for residents to be able to plant trees. An inventory should be done to provide people with ideas

and he welcomes this. BreAnn Hohman said some of the forms have been drafted, but the ordinance needs legal review before being adopted.

Jim Arthur, 1104 Erie Boulevard, and member of the Sandusky City Tree Commission, said **a tribute was recently provided to honor a long-serving member of the Commission, Ellen Amstutz, by planting a tree in Washington Park.** Ellen Amstutz was the driving force in establishing the Sandusky City Tree Commission, the city's code of ordinances for trees, and served as Chairperson of the Sandusky City Tree Commission for many years. She was instrumental in the city first earning its Tree City U.S.A. status. A plaque will be placed at the base of this tree honoring Ellen Amstutz.

PUBLIC HEARING

Dennis Murray opened a **Public Hearing regarding the 2014 Budget.**

Nicole Ard provided information outlining the budget proposal and activities which the departments and commissioners have been working on for the past few years. It is good to see so many people out and interested and hopefully this energy can move forward positively for Sandusky. The budget itself is more than the general fund, but this is the focus. The budget starts after being adopted in the spring and is a plan or outline of what is anticipated during the next year. City staff looks at performance measures by departments culminating in the summer with a message by the Finance Director and instructions for preparing detail sheets. Overall, the budget contains several different funds: water and sewer, general fund, recreation and some specialty funds such as the green fund. There are over 200 employees and Nicole Ard said she is going to focus on the general fund tonight. Nicole Ard read the vision and mission statements adopted by the city commission and noted there are several focus areas which are guiding principles to allocate limited resources regardless of the personnel involved. The commission may remember in the fall months, priorities were presented by the department heads for 2014. Several perspectives must be kept in mind and everyone has a different idea of what the city should be like and balance must be brought to these ideas. People want a walkable and livable community with a thriving downtown and new industry.

The projections for the 2014 General Fund balance, as provided by the Finance Director, are with revenues of approximately \$16.1 million; expenditures are estimated at approximately \$16.3 million, for an estimated ending fund balance of \$4 million. This is a process to find the best balance of resources for the services we talked about. Members of the Audit/Finance Committee made a recommendation for the most appropriate carryover fund balance of 25%. This has fluctuated over the years and what has been reported in Sandusky historically is maintaining the fund balance. Bond agencies recommend certain carryover levels and what they may be able to attribute to a lower fund balance for certain aspects of our community in terms of reliance on the tourism industry or reliance on a limited income tax. Decreasing the carryover will affect the city's bond rating and the level at which we borrow funds.

The service impacts for the Fire Department include timely responses; our ability to invest in infrastructure is limited in terms of what we can appropriate; safety impacts include the potential closure of Fire Station #7 and an increase in emergency medical service travel time by two to five minutes in this district; reduced emergency response capability in quality of life and community development and reduced recreational activities for persons in the community. In the Police Department, the Patrol and Reserve Officer programs will be affected including the positions of Court Officer and Evidence Officer; we will continue with our records management program and School Resource Officer position. Items not funded include a fingerprint machine (\$10,000) which would help meet state mandates and would generate income.

The Fire Department continues with land-based fire suppression, outreach programs such as the Explorer's program, the vacant and abandoned building program, emergency medical services, fire boat based suppression, water rescue activities, HAZ Mat and other specialty units in our region. Mid-year staff reductions have been proposed and based on calls for service maintained by the department, it is estimated between May – October, if the level of staffing

falls below 12 employees, this would facilitate the closure of Station #7. This would make the travel time two to five minutes, dependent upon the location. Nicole Ard noted the potential for reductions in staffing also affect other services. There will be less persons available for land and water based fire suppression and the specialty activities, as well as outreach from staff members. Nicole Ard provided a map showing the location of the fire stations.

The Administrative Services Department is similar to the Fire Department in their funding from the general fund, and a combination of water and sewer funds help to support these employees, but they will continue to provide services such as: general support and liaison to the Civil Service Commission, assist employees with FMLA and other federal laws, workers compensation, and providing a safety officer to help have a better work environment for the employees and reduce costs. There is a person helping with recruitment and benefits packages and the number of seasonal employees hired is quite an undertaking. There are two part-time IT employees, one of which is assigned to general government and the other to the Police Department. About one year ago, the full-time IT position was not filled as a cost saving measure. These two staff members are working on an Request for Proposals to help save money with our copier services and various other technology needs which affect all of our city government. There are training activities for safety and personnel laws to help keep abreast of current information.

The Engineering Department is partially funded by general fund monies and includes two engineers, one secretary and a field manager. This department also oversees Building Maintenance, Horticultural Services, Grounds and Facility Maintenance, Forestry and Oakland Cemetery. There are seasonal employees and the city tries to hire students in the summer through the TANF program and we rely on volunteers at the greenhouse and with the Tree Commission. Fleet maintenance is included and supports city equipment as well as the City of Huron and Margaretta Township. Street Maintenance has a limited crew and is funded with street funds. The Sandusky Transit System goes throughout Erie County and there has been some support from the general fund, contracts, the federal government and grants. Water and sewer activities are also funded through the Engineering Department and are self-funded. There are Planners who handle economic development activities and they are supported by general fund and community development or CDBG funds. There has been a suggestion to reduce the city's economic development consultancy funds as the city has private consultants such as the Erie County Economic Development Corporation. There is currently a Request for Proposals for these services and some of the services provided by the Assistant Planner to help plan for our future economic development.

The Recreation Division is made up of one employee and many seasonal employees and will continue with limited winter and summer recreation programs funded through the recreation fund and fees from the participants. Scholarships are also provided through the Sandusky/Erie County Community Foundation and CDBG monies for young persons who cannot afford to pay. The summer playground programs consist of arts and crafts and food programs for low income children. The city will continue to seek sponsors for different events and tournaments. The marina, golf course and boat ramp operations will continue and the city has a Request for Proposals out for operation of the boat ramp by an outside party. There was a private party interested in this and there may be interest from others. There is also a Request for Proposals out for Shoreline Park and the Sandusky Bay Pavilion to offset some of the costs for the recreation activities. There are a couple of things the city is looking at in order to provide continued service to neighborhoods by providing food at some of the summer program sites with non-profit organizations. The number of seasonal employees at playground sites will be reduced and some non-profits may provide programs at Schaeffer and Foxborough Parks. The food portion of these programs is funded through CDBG although the fire fighters had previously delivered the food; the police department may be able to provide assistance as time permits. The Beats by the Bay concerts have been discontinued due to lack of sponsorship. The Boo at the Bay Festival has also been discontinued.

There are several things identified by different departments about how staff provides services and how much they cost. There are areas where efficiency or effectiveness is provided and

some are because of mandates. Nicole Ard made a list of items identified and there are a number of positions she would like to fill, but given resource restrictions, cannot be filled at this time. Maintaining fire fighters and providing a stable source of funding is important. The need for an administrative assistant or a secretary has been noted for the offices of the City Manager, Police Department and Planning Department and currently, the Police Chief and Fire Chief share a secretary. Employees in the water and sewer divisions have done without to keep rates low and contain costs and be conscious of funding. An Assistant Police Chief position has been identified as well as a Human Resources Director and IT Director, seasonal or temporary Code Enforcement Officers, an Economic Development Specialist or Community Development Administrator, temporary contract Project Engineer and an Assistant Engineer. There has been discussion about how to attract Interns and someone recently noted use of the VISTA AmeriCorps Association for these types of positions.

Some of the activities the city can look at include how we do our banking, different technology activities, telephone system upgrade or replacement, virtual desktops, timekeeping system upgrade, email system upgrade and the addition of laptop computers. The city's telephone system vendor has told us we cannot continue to receive service because we are so far behind the curve with our existing equipment. The city can look at taking automatic payments or credit cards for water and sewer bills and other fees. Customer relationship management, a work order system, converting our paper records management system and upgrading our website to make sure it is compatible with mobile devices have all been identified as needs. The fire and police emergency vehicles have been deferred and a new replacement schedule needs to be adopted. The city sold some vehicles on www.GovDeals.com last year and made purchases from the Water Distribution Division, but we are still behind the curve with several pieces of heavy vehicles and equipment and the Fleet Maintenance staff is trying to get the most out of the vehicles which we have. A road survey should be completed and an updated listing of roads needing improvement should be prepared and this will help guide us toward the future and obtain state or federal funding sources to maintain our roads. Roadways eligible for state funding currently are being done (such as Columbus Avenue or Hayes Avenue), but not those in neighborhoods. The city has various parking lots in need of repair such as the Jackson Street parking lot, city hall, Lions Park and other areas that impact many. The city has lots of older playground equipment in parks and there are various ongoing redevelopment activities such as the former Wisteria Hill property on Campbell Street. Infrastructure improvements have been discussed for the Paper District Marina as well as some things that might help increase revenues at Mills Creek Golf Course. There is a small Human Resources staff and they would like to place an emphasis on health and wellness for a potential new health insurance carrier going into the next round of contract negotiations. Employee and succession training is also important.

There are several things to be accomplished in Community Development including an update of the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Code, the Water and Sewer Rate Study, more marketing for economic development, programs to help bring business and to retain business in the city and finding alternative sources of funding for economic development activities. There has been mention of transit funding and going beyond the Governor's fund. We will continue to look at 2014, 2015 and 2016 and determine priorities, commission focus areas and activities including the lease for the golf course, health insurance and some opportunities to work with non-profits, Erie County and the State of Ohio to work toward new funding to help provide services. Nicole Ard said potential revenue enhancement has been discussed for public safety through income or admissions tax and to identify these potential opportunities as the city cannot continue to operate as it is with our known revenues. Nicole Ard said these are just some things the staff has been looking at and appreciates the commission support and consideration about the state of the city.

Dennis Murray asked if there is any input from the public regarding the 2014 budget.

Tim Schwanger, 362 Sheffield Way, said carryover balances are way overrated and there was one point where the city had a 16% carryover and did not go into foreclosure; some of the \$4 million carryover should be spent. Tim Schwanger said there used to be a capital improvements

budget and asked if there still is one; Dennis Murray said there is and it is included. Hank Solowiej said projects included in 2014 are: Sandusky Cabinets, Warren Street revitalization, the Camp Street resurfacing, Perkins Avenue signalization project, water and street rehabilitation, Ferndale Drive, Curran Street, ODOT urban paving program, BIWW Chemical improvement project, Perkins Avenue waterline project and the Keller Building demolition project. A lot of the credit must be given to the City Engineer who prepares a spreadsheet of these ongoing projects. Sometimes it is tough to figure out what types of costs will be incurred and the one issue which we are attempting to solve is creating a vehicle replacement schedule and this something which requires prioritizing existing vehicles and identifying their replacement needs according to funding. Several police vehicles were replaced last year as there was funding, but there is not funding this year for them. The city needs motors, pickup trucks and more cruisers; we are behind the eight ball, but are trying to get a better capital plan in place. Tim Schwanger said there used to be a tar and chip program in Sandusky and the potholes have gotten bigger this year. It may be time to tar and chip which is half of the cost of milling and paving. Tim Schwanger asked where the \$20,000 will be cut from economic development. If Erie County does not think they are getting what they should be from ECEDC, the city is probably not getting what they should either and instead of taking \$27,000 from our own people, cut or scale this amount back.

Chris Sims, 912 Bardshar Road, said he lives on the west end of town and asked if there is a concrete number for the three or four fire fighters we may be losing. He asked what amount the city would need to raise in income tax to cover these persons so as to not lose their jobs and put this back on the voters. Dennis Murray said in terms of the math, one percent of income tax raises approximately \$6.7 million; one quarter of a percent increase would amount to \$1.5 million. Dennis Murray said the last two times this issue was placed on the ballot it was defeated two to one. Dick Brady said to be pointedly clear, absolutely everything is on the table: income tax increase, admissions tax increase, or continuing to find other ways of increasing revenue. Chris Sims asked if these increases, when presented in the past, were done in a way to address safety concerns and it is worth it for him personally to pay another one quarter percent in income tax and safety should not even be a consideration.

King Baer, 401 West Shoreline Drive #351, said he served on 26 levy committees and got to know people really well and this is a tremendous town and the commission must show a need and get trust in the need. He stated he firmly believes people will not go with an income tax but will support a safety tax isolated for police and fire. Figure out what is needed to bring these guys back and use this income for it. People need to understand how it affects everyone, not just those on the west end. The second best place is where the central fire station currently sits, but it was not a first choice. The city should look into getting together and paying the administrators of Cedar Point a visit. Their visitors have made them successful and they are making money although they already are doing a lot for the city by providing jobs to local persons. The city should make Cedar Point a part of this and take ownership and we will see them come up with a solution to help in what we are doing. We are all in this together and this is a tremendous town. King Baer said he has gone through three generations in this town and if the city shows a sincere need about public safety, they will support this. There are some great things going on here and he recalls walking down Columbus Avenue when there was nothing open and nothing to do and now you cannot get a parking space downtown. Success breeds success. There are a lot of things we can do in this town and it will become a destination. The Sandusky Main Street Association put together a video which would have made him want to come here. We may get a percentage of an income tax passed right now with some education.

Mark Norman, 1016 Third Street, said he is glad the commission has the guts to make this decision but in the long run, would like to know what it is going to take to move forward. The city should determine what it will take to move forward and let the citizens know.

Matt Morgan, 1003 West Osborne Street, said none of the commissioners are glad to cut positions and programs and this is a very difficult thing. These are tough decisions and hopefully will be temporary. He is happy we are looking two years out and being transparent with what is needed and letting everyone know what our problems are and how to address them. There is a

general distrust but a specific safety tax or the creation of a special zone for the downtown area would help take care of themselves to free up resources in other places. There are a lot of things to be put on the table and not to be scared to do this. We have problems that need to be fixed and we need to attach numbers to them and put budgetary figures with them. We need to be reasonable and educate each other and discover it together. Some people do not have access to desktops and laptops, but have smart phones which can access many things and information is everywhere. We can put information out there and do this together and can tackle the problems in our future and it will be a good time for all of us to come together.

Julie Farrar said there has been job loss for a very long time, long before she or any of the current commissioners sat here. We have to embrace things that are working but to move forward, we have staff needs. The city does not have economic development to help create jobs and many positions have had to be cut. Julie Farrar said she did not run for office to be part of a decline, she wanted to be part of something moving up and we have done nothing but battle budget cuts. Every time she mentions the word *increase* she is demonized, but she wants firemen and policemen to show up, she wants roads paved like every other citizen and would like trees to be taken care of, and we have lost investing in our community such as with an income tax increase. People have been shown the numbers and the cuts that have taken place and the community is receiving the knowledge. More of these meetings need to take place and we all need to have a plan to make this happen, move forward and grow. We have to, as a family and as a city, move forward with a revenue source because there is not going to be a golden goose. Cedar Point is our friend, but we need to ask them for support as well because they are using our services and they can put this onto their guests, in her opinion. Julie Farrar said she sees the community knows we need to get increases in some taxes to move forward and grow or we will just wither and die on a vine.

Wesley Poole said he recognizes the commissioners will vote on this budget not based upon dreams and things we would like to have. The manpower in the future for all departments can be funded through increased revenue and this is what it will take to sustain this. To increase revenue, we need a walkable, livable city which people want to move into and live in. There may be a short shot in the arm to raise taxes and make it safe to walk the street and offer the services we provide for people. Going forward, Wesley Poole said we should look at the 25% carryover because we need some immediate things done to invest in our city.

Mark Norman said the city has a lot of capital and there are some people he would not lend money to, but he believes in the city and believes it can get the support it needs because of this credibility.

Jeff Smith said he has noticed a lot of people in Sandusky are afraid of development and when this is mentioned they do not want to discuss it, but this is the only way to bring Sandusky back. We can raise income taxes even for just a short amount of time, but every time taxes are raised, we lose citizens. This is similar to a business; when they raise prices, they lose customers, then have to raise prices again because of lost business. As a community, we have to embrace economic development. Communities around us on the waterfront have embraced economic development and it has worked well. Sandusky has Cedar Point which brings millions of people into our city each year and we have to take advantage of them. You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make them drink and we have to take advantage of this.

Dick Brady said he had an opportunity to watch a reply of "Between the Lines" with two of our fire fighters who spoke very eloquently. Although he understands the commissions' position, he also understands the position of the fire fighters. He heard them say this is not their problem, it is the problem of the city commissioners and he (Dick) agrees with this. The commission needs to step up and solve this and those on the Fire Department are not expected to fix it. Dick Brady said you can only cut so far and he has had it with cuts and we do not need to reduce the number of employees further. Currently, we have 212 employees and a city cannot be sustained on less than this and the cutting has to stop and the revenue has to begin. A couple of weeks ago, the commission found \$65,000 from recycling and next week we have to

find another \$65,000 and so on. These have to be strung together to provide safety services; these are tough tasks and they are the commissions' tasks.

Naomi Twine said she is encouraged by the support displayed tonight. The budget has been difficult and the mood in this room is so depressed, but this is not the end, this is the beginning. We have people in this community who care about it and commissioners who are thinking ahead. We have to get through this short-term period, but great comments have been made and the commission wants to know what the people want them to do. She is hearing people need to share what they want, know how much it is going to cost, and how this will affect their quality of life. The commission is hearing and listening to make a short-term decision tonight, but this is not the end. Naomi Twine said she is very encouraged by the comments made tonight from people who have a passion for this city and she is here because she has a passion for her hometown and wants people to continue to challenge the commission to do things to make this city great.

Dennis Murray said he hopes tonight marks a bottoming out for Sandusky and to now begin the process of having a dialogue with the community through additional Town Hall meetings. We cannot continue to make cuts and this is just not an option. We need to do things to attract people to our community and he does not have all of the answers, but this is why we will continue to have dialogue and conversations. The outcome is not preordained and this would not be a democratic process if it were. Dennis Murray said he is very grateful for those who contacted him on both sides of this issue during the past couple of months and is grateful for those who showed up at the Town Hall meetings. Dennis Murray said Nicole Ard laid out a vision for the city which he agrees with and it is his hope to make Sandusky a walkable, livable city and this is how to repopulate our city. This is how we will drive up income taxes and property taxes and generate additional revenues. We will improve the quality of public debate. Dennis Murray said the way to grow this budget back and grow services is by attracting business here. We will roll out a program over the next couple of months and will talk about enhanced building enforcement and code enforcement and making Sandusky a place where people want to invest residential dollars. Dennis Murray said he wishes the commission did not have to do what it is about to do, but hopefully this will be a short-term effort. People have asked if the recent Town Hall meetings have been to get people behind supporting an income tax but the answer to this question is "no", he is asking the people in the community to tell the commissioners what they would like to do.

The President declared the 2014 Budget Public Hearing closed.

CURRENT BUSINESS

Upon motion of Jeff Smith and second of Julie Farrar, the commission voted to accept all communications. The President declared the motion passed.

ITEM #1 – Submitted by Paul E. Ricci, Fire Chief

AGREEMENT WITH FIRELANDS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER FOR RESTOCKING AMBULANCES WITH MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND PHARMACEUTICALS

PASSED AT FIRST READING 2.10.14

Budgetary Information: The purchase of supplies will not negatively impact the general fund. The funding for these supplies, not to exceed \$16,000, will be paid from funds generated from the ambulance transport fees in the Fire Department's EMS fund.

ORDINANCE NO. 14-012: It is requested an ordinance be passed **authorizing and directing the city manager to enter into an agreement with Firelands Regional Medical Center of Sandusky, Ohio, for restocking city ambulances with supplies and pharmaceuticals.**

Upon motion of Wesley Poole and second of Jeff Smith, the commission voted to approve this ordinance in accordance with Section 13 of the city charter. Roll call on the ordinance: Yeas: Naomi Twine, Julie Farrar, Dennis Murray, Wesley Poole, Dick Brady and Jeff Smith, 6. The President declared the ordinance passed.

ITEM #2**GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 2014**

ORDINANCE NO. 14-013: It is requested an ordinance be passed **making general appropriations for the fiscal year 2014**; and declaring that this ordinance shall take immediate effect in accordance with Section 14 of the city charter.

Upon motion of Dick Brady and second of Jeff Smith, the commission voted to approve this ordinance in accordance with Section 14 of the city charter.

Discussion: Wesley Poole said there are some things he is uncomfortable with in this legislation and asked what the process is going to be as we move forward and what happens if we can find things which perhaps are not covered. Dennis Murray said every commissioner at the table has the power to make a motion now or at a future date to have additional discussion and vet ideas. The budget is a fluid document and a general road map for the City Manager and staff, but this does not mean it is not susceptible to modification. Wesley Poole said he is not locked in on the 25% ratio number and does not think we have to stay here. Additionally, the budget needs to be passed and taken off of the table and we need to change our direction to discuss how bad things will be if we do certain things. He will vote to pass this and then work toward the future. Julie Farrar said her concern is there is a pending retirement in the Fire Department and some other issues and we should look at this and go over the numbers with Chief Ricci to see if there is some way to make these numbers work for us in short order and keep the three fire fighters. Dennis Murray said he makes a commitment to learning more about the proposal for cuts to occur through way of attrition as he understands there is a cost to laying someone off. It does appear there may be an opportunity at hand to make this transition a little more orderly and it still gets us to the same place. There was a very brief worksheet submitted over the weekend which needs some more work and he would like to see this happen.

Roll call on the motion: Yeas: Naomi Twine, Julie Farrar, Dennis Murray, Wesley Poole, Dick Brady and Jeff Smith, 6. Roll call on the ordinance: Yeas: Naomi Twine, Julie Farrar, Dennis Murray, Wesley Poole, Dick Brady and Jeff Smith, 6. The President declared the ordinance passed.

ITEM #3 - Submitted by Amanda Meyers, Paralegal**APPROVING AND ACCEPTING 51 PARCELS THROUGH THE LAND REUTILIZATION PROGRAM**

Budgetary Information: The cost of this acquisition will be approximately four thousand three dollar and fifty cents (\$4,003.50) which includes title exams, title fees, recording fees and transfer fees, of which the city will recoup upon sale. The taxing districts will not collect the \$268,774.37 owed in delinquent property taxes, nor the \$60,070.82 owed in penalties and interest, totaling \$1,460,761.30. The city will not collect the \$1,119,481.94 owed to the city for special assessments nor the \$10,434.60 owed to the city for weed cutting. However, upon sale, the city will be able to recoup some of the delinquent special assessments and will save \$10,434.60 a year or more in weed cutting. By returning this non-productive land to tax producing status, the taxing districts will begin collecting approximately \$28,075.94 yearly in real estate taxes in the short term, for which the tax base will build as it becomes fully developed in the long term. The city will begin collecting approximately \$146,753.65 in yearly special assessments that will continue on a gradual declining scale until 2028.

RESOLUTION NO. 008-14R: It is requested a resolution be passed **approving and accepting certain real property for acquisition into the land reutilization program**; and declaring that this resolution shall take immediate effect in accordance with Section 14 of the city charter.

Upon motion of Jeff Smith and second of Julie Farrar, the commission voted to approve this resolution in accordance with Section 14 of the city charter.

Discussion: Julie Farrar said there was a question about acquiring these properties and selling them would be one way to get our assessments back. Amanda Meyers said without looking too far into the future, the basic plan is to acquire the lots and upon their sale, the city will recoup the assessments. The taxing districts will not get all of their money back but they will win by future development of the property and the value will continue to go up. The new Chief

Planner has some ideas about marketing these properties. We may not get one hundred percent of what is owed back, but this is unknown; real estate is going up in price now, but it is hard to tell. Don Icsman said to analogize, if he were to purchase a new car and then were to lose his job, the bank will come and get the car. You do the best you can, but with other alternatives, you will get nothing. This is the best scenario going forward is to have collateral in our name and try to move forward. Wesley Poole asked Amanda Meyers to explain how this property will come to the city. Amanda Meyers said the Sheriff's office will start the process with the largest area of land (3 – 4 acres) to potentially develop condominiums and see how the public reacts. They will continue property by property but this could take a few years. Wesley Poole clarified the city is doing what is necessary to allow the Sheriff's sales and acquire the property for the city. Don Icsman complimented the Prosecutor's office for working with us as they are the only ones who can foreclose.

Roll call on the motion: Yeas: Naomi Twine, Julie Farrar, Dennis Murray, Wesley Poole, Dick Brady and Jeff Smith, 6. Roll call on the resolution: Yeas: Naomi Twine, Julie Farrar, Dennis Murray, Wesley Poole, Dick Brady and Jeff Smith, 6. The Vice President declared the resolution passed.

ITEM #4 - Submitted by Amanda Meyers, Paralegal

APPROVING PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENTS FOR 1620 SHERMAN STREET THROUGH THE LAND REUTILIZATION PROGRAM

Budgetary Information: The cost associated with these purchase agreements is the total amount of the title examination, survey and deed preparation. Any such costs shall be recouped by the city from the non-refundable earnest money deposits required to be paid by the purchasers upon sale. The purchasers shall pay the real estate transfer tax and recording fees upon purchase. By returning this non-productive land to tax producing status, the taxing districts will immediately begin collecting real property taxes and assessments once again.

ORDINANCE NO. 14-014: It is requested an ordinance be passed **declaring that certain real property owned by the city as part of the land reutilization program identified as Parcel #57-04368.000 located at 1620 Sherman Street, Sandusky, is no longer needed for any municipal purpose and authorizing the execution of purchase and sale agreements with respect to that real property;** and declaring that this ordinance shall take immediate effect in accordance with Section 14 of the city charter.

Upon motion of Julie Farrar and second of Jeff Smith, the commission voted to approve this ordinance in accordance with Section 14 of the city charter. Roll call on the motion: Yeas: Naomi Twine, Julie Farrar, Dennis Murray, Wesley Poole, Dick Brady and Jeff Smith, 6. Roll call on the ordinance: Yeas: Naomi Twine, Julie Farrar, Dennis Murray, Wesley Poole, Dick Brady and Jeff Smith, 6. The President declared the ordinance passed.

ITEM #5 - Submitted by Jane E. Cullen, P.E.

RESOLUTION OF NECESSITY FOR PERKINS AVENUE WATER LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Budgetary Information: The Engineer's estimate for the total project cost including engineering, inspection, advertising and miscellaneous expenses is \$283,417.09. The project costs will be paid with water funds.

PASSED FIRST READING: It is requested a resolution be passed **declaring the necessity for the city to proceed with the proposed Perkins Avenue water line replacement project; approving the specifications and Engineer's estimate of cost thereof;** and directing the city manager to advertise for and receive bids in relation thereto.

Upon motion of Jeff Smith and second of Julie Farrar, the commission voted to approve this resolution in accordance with Section 13 of the city charter.

Discussion: Dick Brady asked Aaron Klein to explain more about this project for the record and identify where the funding will come from. Aaron Klein said the project is for replacement of approximately 1,900' of six inch and eight inch waterlines on Perkins Avenue between 52nd Street and the bridge at Pipe Creek with a new eight inch waterline. The Ohio Department of Transportation is doing a project at this intersection and will be making improvements and

there have been significant problems with the water line at this location prior to this project. ODOT's project is scheduled to be completed in May, 2015 and we would like to complete this beforehand.

Roll call on the resolution: Yeas: Naomi Twine, Julie Farrar, Dennis Murray, Wesley Poole, Dick Brady and Jeff Smith, 6. The President declared the resolution passed.

ITEM #6 – Submitted by Kelly L. Kresser, CMC & Commission Clerk

A request has been received from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control requesting new D1 (Beer only for on premises consumption or in original sealed containers for carry out only until 1 a.m.), D2 (Wine and mixed beverages for on premises consumption or in original sealed containers for carryout only until 1 a.m.), D3 (Spirituous liquor for on premises consumption only until 1 a.m.), and D8 (Sale of tasting samples of beer, wine, and mixed beverages, but not spirituous liquor, at retail, for consumption on premises) liquor permits for **Huong Trinh Thi Bui dba Small City Taphouse, 202 Columbus Avenue, Sandusky. It is requested the commission clerk be authorized to notify the Ohio Division of Liquor Control the city has no objection to this request.**

Upon motion of Julie Farrar and second of Jeff Smith, the commission voted for the Commission Clerk to notify the Ohio Division of Liquor Control the city has no objection to this request.

Discussion: Wesley Poole asked about approving this with the known outstanding fire code issues identified by the Fire Department. Paul Ricci said a business owner would have to perform the necessary measures to bring this up to code initially. From what he understands, there will be a considerable amount of rehabilitation as approved by the Building Department and there are processes to upgrade the facility. Dennis Murray said he assumes they will be unable to get the necessary permits if these violations are not corrected. Julie Farrar said either way, even if they have a liquor license, they cannot sell one beer without a building permit and they will have to fix this.

The President declared the motion passed.

ITEM #7 – Submitted by Kelly L. Kresser, CMC & Commission Clerk

A request has been received from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control requesting a D5J (Spirituous liquor for on premises consumption only, beer, wine and mixed beverages for on premises, or off premises in original sealed containers, until 2:30 a.m. in a Community Entertainment District) liquor permit transfer for **Sandusky Bay Concepts LLC dba Volstead Bar, 316 East Water Street, Sandusky. It is requested the commission clerk be authorized to notify the Ohio Division of Liquor Control the city has no objection to this request.**

Upon motion of Julie Farrar and second of Wesley Poole, the commission voted for the Commission Clerk to notify the Ohio Division of Liquor Control the city has no objection to this request. The President declared the motion passed.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Upon motion of Dick Brady and second of Julie Farrar, the commission voted to accept the following donations for a new K-9 Officer: Phyllis Wassner - \$50, Daly's Pub - \$500, William and Ara Lou Waldock - \$1,000, Fischel Haas Kim Albrecht - \$200, McDonalds ESGS, Inc. - \$400, McDonalds - \$800, and Dan & Cindy Brake, \$25. The President declared the motion passed.

Nicole Ard congratulated Fire Marshal Rudy Ruiz who recently accepted a new position as Fire Chief and who will be retiring from the City of Sandusky.

Nicole Ard said she recently attended the "Little Free Library" reception hosted by the Sandusky Library, and likes the concept of placing these little libraries in city neighborhoods.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Upon motion of Dick Brady and second of Julie Farrar, the commission voted to hold an executive session regarding pending litigation. Roll call on the motion: Yeas: Naomi Twine, Julie Farrar, Dennis Murray, Wesley Poole, Dick Brady and Jeff Smith, 6. The President declared the motion passed.

Dennis Murray said he would like to appoint Carl McGookey as an Alternate Member of the Revolving Loan Fund Committee and asked the commission for their concurrence with this recommendation. Upon motion of Wesley Poole and second of Jeff Smith, the commission voted to authorize this appointment. The President declared this motion passed.

Dennis Murray said he would like to appoint Dennis Feltner and Mike Zuilhof to the Downtown Parking Committee and asked the commission for their support. Upon motion of Dick Brady and second of Jeff Smith, the commission voted to authorize this appointment. The President declared the motion passed.

Dennis Murray said he is appointing Naomi Twine to serve as his designee to be the chairperson for the Fire Chief Selection Board, according to the Charter. He stated he would like to appoint Chris Sims and former commissioners Dan Kaman and Dave Waddington to this Board. The fifth member is the chairperson of the Civil Service Commission, or her designee, and Dennis Murray said he has spoken with her about this. Upon motion of Naomi Twine and second of Dick Brady, the commission voted to appoint Chris Sims, Dan Kaman and Dave Waddington to the Fire Chief Selection Board. The President declared the motion passed.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

King Baer, 401 West Shoreline Drive #351, thanked Paul Ricci for serving as the Fire Chief and said he encouraged him to apply for this position as he demonstrates the qualities required. There are very qualified persons on the department who should be considered for this vacancy.

Sharon Johnson, 1139 Fifth Street, asked if money will be taken out of the general fund to balance the budget. Dennis Murray said if this question refers to the reserve funds, the amount is \$200,000. Sharon Johnson asked for a report about the Keller Building and Dennis Murray said if we had the answer right now we would provide it. King Baer said there are crews down there working on it.

Timothy Work, 517 42nd Street, said as a city we need to identify our assets and capitalize on them. There are a lot of rental properties and he would not mind considering increasing the rental license fees and to be more aggressive with our code enforcement. The Tree Commission is also very important and is an asset we need to maintain. We need to work together and find other sources of revenue so we do not have to continue to cut.

Tim Stookey, 1307 Fifth Street, said this was quite an interesting meeting and he commends the commissioners for trying to do something with our city. This is the first commission he has seen in a long time who are seriously interested in the citizens.

The President announced a recess of the regular session at 7:25 p.m. One executive session was held beginning at 7:30 p.m. The President announced adjournment at 8:20 p.m.

Kelly L. Kresser, CMC
Clerk of the City Commission

Dennis E. Murray, Jr.
President of the City Commission