

OWENSBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session

November 9, 2021 12:00 PM

Owensboro City Hall
101 E. 4th Street
Owensboro, Kentucky

1. CALL TO ORDER - Mayor Tom Watson

Present: Mayor Tom Watson, Commissioners Larry Maglinger, Mark Castlen, Bob Glenn and Jeff Sanford.

2. GOLF UPDATE – Charles Whelan, Golf Course Manager, gave an update on the history and activities at Ben Hawes and Hillcrest courses (presentation attached). Both courses saw an uptick in play during the pandemic. New revenue sources that were added over the past year include Finn Cycles and a SkyTrak Simulator. He covered the programming available at the courses and the impact to the community, including youth programs. Mayor Watson asked what would be required to lower the annual subsidy to the golf courses. Amanda Rogers, Parks Director, explained that they analyze competing courses (in a drivable area) and their fees each year to help set the rates. They are always looking at new revenue sources. City Manager Pagan added that various sports are subsidized throughout the City which lends to the opportunity for play to those that may not have otherwise had the chance.

3. POLICE OFFICER TRAINING – Sgt. Courtney Yerington, Owensboro Police Department, discussed the various training given to police officers (presentation attached). Sgt. Yerington covered the following training offered in three (3) phases: pre-academy, Basic Law Enforcement through the Dept. of Criminal Justice, and post-academy which includes specialized unit training (Emergency Response Team, Honor Guard, KYLEAP, Crisis Negotiation, Hazardous Devices, Drone, Accident Reconstruction, and K-9). Future training opportunities will include crowd control and tactical combat casualty care. Mayor Watson asked the start to finish cost for a new officer. Chief Ealum responded it varies, however, it is approximately \$108,000. City Manager Pagan added that about eleven (11) months of training is over \$100,000. There is a waiting list until March 2022 at the Academy, Chief Ealum will work to get new officers in earlier. Sgt. Yerington stated that Kentucky League of Cities brings in a Use of Force simulator each year for training purposes. Chief Ealum added that with the construction of the new OPD training classroom, he intends to purchase a simulator for the department to consistently train on it. Body cams, which will be given to all officers, are on order and expected to be delivered in a few months. City Manager Pagan said once the body cams have been received, the Commission will receive a demonstration at a future work session and will walk-through the policy and procedures. There was also discussion on the amount of storage required for the data and the task of responding to an open records request.

4. DOWNTOWN HOLIDAY EVENTS – Tim Ross, Public Events Director, briefed the Commission on the upcoming “12 Days of Christmas” that is planned to begin November 26 (presentation attached). Various activities are scheduled to take place downtown and can be found at www.owenbsoro.org/christmas. Some of the events include: Energy on Ice, Dancing Lights, a scavenger hunt, outside movies, Hot Chocolate Hop, etc. Mayor Watson asked about the cancellation of the Christmas parade. The events will be advertised via newspaper, radio and online.

5. DOWNTOWN ACCESSIBILITY – Tim Ross, Public Events Director, discussed options to allow for additional downtown parking (presentation attached). There are currently over fifty (50) on-street parking spaces along Second Street and Veterans Boulevard and over ninety (90) on-street spaces from Third Street to the river for handicap accessible parking. After studying other cities and their parking situation, Mr. Ross gave the following options to increase the accessibility: (1) offer a shuttle service from a remote location outside of downtown (not a popular option and underutilized in other cities), (2) designate additional parking handicap accessible spaces or (3) designate a drop-off/pick-up lane for major events. Commissioner Glenn asked if the second option could be accomplished but on a temporary basis during large events. Mr. Ross replied it could be done and open up spaces within the block closest to the river. Commissioner Castlen asked if the first floor of the parking garage could be used as accessible parking during large events. Mr. Ross said they would look at the ADA compliance with the parking area. Mayor Watson explained possibly the GRITS buses with the drop down ramps could be used and that shuttles would be helpful. The issue is not the number of accessible parking spaces, but rather the movement from the parking spaces to the actual event; i.e. mobility issue. Mr. Ross said he would look into it further.

Mayor Watson relayed that Francine with Friday After 5 has offered to either take over or participate in the coordination of the Christmas Parade (since the Christmas Parade Committee cancelled). Mr. Ross said the Parade Committee announced they were not hosting the parade due to a variety of reasons. A group has come forward and been in contact with the City about the possibility of hosting the parade this year. Mr. Ross has been working with the group and they will let us know if they are able to coordinate.

6. CITY PROJECT LIST – Project list attached. Mayor Watson announced on November 11, Veterans Day, there will be a gathering at the Gold Star Monument at 11:00am, to honor veterans.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned by motion of Mayor Watson with a second by Commissioner Sanford at 1:05 p.m.

Thomas H. Watson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Beth Davis, City Clerk