

Canal Winchester

*City Hall
Council Chambers
45 East Waterloo Street
Canal Winchester, OH 43110*



Meeting Minutes - FINAL

May 1, 2023

6:00 PM

Council Work Session

*Bob Clark - Chair
Laurie Amick
Jill Amos
Steve Buskirk
Chuck Milliken
Patrick Shea
Mike Walker*

- A. **Call To Order** *Milliken called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.*
- B. **Roll Call** *Present 6 – Amick, Amos, Buskirk, Milliken, Shea, Walker*

A motion was made by Shea, seconded by Buskirk to excuse Mr. Clark from the Work Session meeting. The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes 6 – Shea, Buskirk, Milliken, Walker, Amick, Amos

C. **Also In Attendance**

Mayor Ebert, Matt Peoples, Lucas Haire, Amanda Jackson, Bill Sims

D. **Request for Council Action**

RES-23-015

Council

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE COMPENSATION FOR THE OFFICE OF MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CANAL WINCHESTER FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2025

- Tabled

No discussion or vote occurred during this meeting.

RES-23-016

Council

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE COMPENSATION FOR THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CANAL WINCHESTER FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2025

- Tabled

A motion was made by Amick, seconded by Shea to untable RES-23-016. The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes 6 – Amick, Shea, Walker, Amos, Buskirk, Milliken

A motion was made by Shea, seconded by Amos to table RES-23-016. The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes 6 – Shea, Amos, Buskirk, Milliken, Walker, Amick

Discussion started at 57:15 on YouTube Channel

Amick – At the last meeting, I believe it was my peer, Mr. Buskirk, who suggested potentially making the health insurance for individual coverage only versus family coverage. As I thought about this over the last couple weeks, I also thought maybe it would be a potential consideration to reduce the travel allowance from \$6,000 to \$3,000. Mrs. Jackson, maybe you can help me. I have the family health insurance documented at \$26,000, but I don't know what the single is.

Jackson – Let me pull something up real fast.

Amick – So for my peers on council, I just thought that to keep this resolution moving, maybe we can discuss what changes my peers on council would like to potentially see in the salary, if any.

Walker – The PERS pickup is not there presently, correct?

Amos – That was something that I think we talked about adding in. We've been throwing lots of numbers around; each one of us has an idea of what we think the salary portion should be. We've talked about the different benefits. I think I would like to get an idea by starting from the top and working our way back.

What is the salary with benefits that everyone would kind of like to see for this position?

Shea – The challenge is that public sector benefits are very generous, and they are expensive. I think you just need to include that as part of the package and start with a take home number that you want to give somebody. I think it's surprising how much those benefit packages cost.

Amos – I don't think anybody is opposed to doing single coverage. We can figure the amount for the travel allowance and the PERS pickup. In total, how much does everybody feel this position should be paid with those benefits?

Walker – Is the coverage for a single individual \$4,000?

Jackson – No, it is roughly \$13,500 this year. It includes medical, dental, vision, and life insurance.

Amos – Could you remind me how much PERS pickup is?

Shea – 10%.

Jackson – %14 is being paid by the city regardless. 10% is the additional.

Amos – So, insurance is \$13,500; with PERS, you're looking at close to \$5,000–\$6,000. Just between those two, you are at \$20,000. You'd add the car allowance; we're at a total of \$26,000 in benefits until we decide to lower the car allowance. What is your total cost? Throw out a number.

Shea – Let's start with what we're spending now.

Amos – We're spending \$110,000 on the salary.

Shea – What is the mayor's total compensation package right now?

Amos – Is it more than that, mayor?

Ebert – If you don't know what you're saying, then don't say it. If you throw all kinds of messages out there to people, then it all gets around.

Amos – That's what's been floating around. \$110,000 for the base salary.

Jackson – That's not correct. \$100,842.27 is what was approved by the city council back in 2021 for 2022 and 2023, plus the travel allowance of \$500 per month. It would be \$106,842.27 total plus health benefits, including medical, dental, vision, and life insurance.

Amos – Are we paying for family or single coverage?

Jackson – Family.

Amos – How much is family?

Jackson – Approximately \$31,400. It includes all insurance, not just medical.

Amos – The city is currently paying for the insurance.

Jackson – Correct, just like they do for all of the other employees.

Shea – Does he have PERS pickup at that position now?

Jackson – No.

Amick – Is there a short-term or long-term disability included in that number?

Jackson – No.

Buskirk – Just to give a little bit of feedback on my perspective. I really struggle with making a change; I feel like if we're going to push to go towards a weak mayor, it's a charter change that needs to go before our constituents vote. I really struggle with reducing the salary and making it half of what it currently is. I feel like we're trying to make a change that should be going before our constituents to get their input. It's coming up in the near future, so Mrs. Jackson, you can correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't think we would go broke continuing to pay what we're currently paying for a mayor until such time. Is that correct?

Jackson – It will not cause us any financial hardship, no.

Amos – Mr. Buskirk, you're saying two years from now will be this evaluation. Is it fiscally responsible to have two top-heavy positions in a city of 9,000?

Buskirk – I think that's why we're here to vote on it. My point is that, in my opinion, our constituents, not this council, should make the change that we're trying to push for. We're pushing to make the salary change half of what it is, forcing the city into a weak mayor.

Amos – You're not forcing the city into a weak mayor position. Right now, our mayor can show up for one hour a week. The charter doesn't state the hours. The next person who walks through that door and gets elected could work two hours or 50 hours. We have no guarantee how much they're going to work.

Buskirk – I think the appearance makes it appear that we are going towards a weak mayor by making this decision.

Amos – I would argue that it's fiscally responsible for us not to have two top-heavy positions for 9,000 people.

Amick – One of the things that I've been thinking about in my head as I contemplate what an appropriate salary might be is that you're paying for the day-to-day operations and management of the city. When I think about the mayor and the way the charter is currently written, I am paying for a level of responsibility. This person is still the executive authority for the City of Canal Winchester. You're not paying them for a certain number of hours, to run the sweeper in here, or for specific tasks. You're paying that person for the responsibility of being the executive leader of the city. To me, that warrants a little higher salary.

Shea – Staff, have we determined the salary for the city administrator? I knew there was a range.

Jackson – No.

Shea – Off the top of my head, I think the range was \$125,000–\$160,000.

Jackson – I'll have to look.

Milliken – I'd just like to say that I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Buskirk. Mrs. Amos, technically, I don't disagree with what you're saying about being fiscally responsible. If that was our concern, I think the correct course of action would've been to not proceed with the city administrator position. We had that opportunity, but it passed. If you're asking me for my opinion on what number you're looking for, I think our current salary is my floor. What Mr. Buskirk just elaborated on is what I've been saying all along. It's just the appearance of bringing an administrator in and lowering the mayor's salary; I don't think it's the right way to do it.

Amos – It may not be, but the problem is that it was brought to us by the city. They asked us for a city administrator. We were considering the position because they needed it. It falls in line fiscally for us to be responsible and put things in line. We're not changing the charter at this point. We are fiscally responsible for making sure that if we're doing one thing, we're still maintaining the other. You have to look at how much money we're spending. We followed through with the city administrator position because the city needed it. I just think that having two top-heavy positions potentially worth \$250,000 plus for two positions in a city of 9,000 is just a lot. We're still going to have to backfill one position. I completely understand what everybody's saying, and I understand where you see it as a perception, but our task was to consider the city's request, which we did. Now our task is to make the right financial decision.

Buskirk – The other perception of that is that we have an income that we are charged to budget. I personally would rather see that go to the mayor's salary. The management of our infrastructure is going to be desperately needed with the growth that we have in our community, as opposed to saying, "Hey, let's throw more money into a park and build some ball diamonds," which I think is important as well. I think, being fiscally responsible, would you rather see it go to a salary or to some other things like that? I think that we all have eyes on us.

Amos – I'm a bad one to ask because I'll tell you that the park is equitable, and everybody has an opportunity for that. I see your side; I just still feel it's too much.

Amick – When our voters voted in 2010 for the charter, which included the potential of a city administrator at the time, there was nothing in the charter that said it was conditional upon the mayor's salary. To my knowledge, there's nothing in the charter that says that. Again, in 2010, the voters did say it was okay to have a city administrator at some point.

Amos – Our city charter never, at any point in time, discussed a salary at all.

Amick – That's my point.

Shea – Actually, it does. It very clearly states that the council will set the salaries of officials.

Milliken – *I think that’s why we’re here, right? This is the checks and balances on the system; you know, yes, the residents approved the city administrator position in the charter with no mention of salary. What we’re here to do is determine if we are to make salary considerations in determining whether we want the administrator or not. You’re not wrong, but I think we shouldn’t ignore the fact that that’s what we’re here to deliberate and what we think is best. It doesn’t mean any one person is empirically right or wrong, but that’s what we’re here to do. I, for one, have made my opinion pretty clear. I think Mr. Buskirk has made his opinion pretty clear.*

Amos – *A few weeks ago, when we talked about this, you know, Mr. Buskirk said \$60,000–\$70,000. Mr. Shea said \$80,000. I said \$50,000. It sounds like everyone has kind of done a 360, and we’re back to a full salary.*

Milliken – *We hadn’t approved the city administrator position yet. We were kind of spitballing there, in my opinion.*

Amos – *But why would we ever decrease the mayor’s salary if we didn’t approve the administrator?*

Milliken – *At that point in time, I think I had mentioned maybe joining them together in one piece of legislation. If we didn’t know what we were going to do, then yeah, I think that’s a healthy discussion to have. If we’re not going to have the administrator, what do we do with the mayor’s salary? If we are going to have the administrator, what do we do with the mayor’s salary? I think that was a healthy discussion. I’ll throw out a ballpark figure for that, but here we’ve already approved the administrator position, so that kind of sets me in stone as far as what to do with the mayor’s salary.*

Amick – *I think I’ve kept track of the math somewhat closely. We’re talking about a difference of somewhere between \$50,000 and \$55,000 a year. Would you all agree with that number? It would be effective in 2024, so for one year and 2025 until a charter commission is formed and a decision is made and voted upon. We’re talking about somewhere in the neighborhood of about a hundred and some thousand dollars over a two-year period. The timing for this, for me, has just been wonky. It’s been very difficult to figure out where we would be from year to year, but if we’re talking \$100,000 over the course of two years and we may or may not have a charter change in the future, I can live with that.*

Jackson – *If I may go back to Mr. Shea’s question about the range for the city administrator. At the end of 2022, when council approved the employee salary ranges, which included the city administrator, the city administrator’s minimum was \$100,464; this is approximately right where the mayor’s base salary is today. The maximum for the city administrator was \$146,500 and change.*

Amos – *At the end of the day, someone’s going to make a proposition, and we’re going to vote on it. We’ll vote how we feel. I still believe that where we’re at is just extremely high for a city our size, but at the end of the day, we’ll vote on whatever somebody puts forward, and we can disagree at that point. I think it’s irresponsible.*

Shea – *At this point in time, I’d like to move to table this resolution so we can bring it up at the next meeting because I don’t feel like we’re making progress.*

ORD-23-019
Construction Services

AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH ELITE EXCAVATING COMPANY OF OHIO, INC. FOR THE

CONSTRUCTION OF THE 2023 WATERLINE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT AND
DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

- Request to move to full Council

A motion was made by Shea, seconded by Buskirk to move ORD-23-019 to full Council. The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes 6 – Shea, Buskirk, Milliken, Walker, Amick, Amos

Discussion started at 1:20:23 on YouTube Channel

Sims – This ordinance would have council authorize the mayor to enter into a contract with Elite Excavating Company. This is for the 2023 Waterline Improvement Project. It's essentially four smaller projects lumped into one large project. It's primarily the replacement of the water main in the Dye Addition along Groveport Road from Washington to Gender Road. A short but very important piece along Gender Road from Walnut to the north Gender water tower, and then a connector piece from McGill Park to the east end of Columbus Street. We had three bids. There's a copy of the results in your packet. We had a lot of interest, but not quite as many bids. It's a pretty competitive market with other projects out there right now. A lot of folks are very busy bidding at this point, but the price came in line with our expectations. We think that we can move forward with an experienced contractor. We're also tracking along with our funding with the OEPA to get this project rolling by June 1st. I'm asking that it be moved to council for authorization.

Shea – Have you used Elite before?

Sims – We have not. They have not worked for the city previously. They do a fair amount of work in central Ohio. They're from the Mansfield area. They work quite a bit in Columbus and also in several surrounding communities. They appear to be very experienced, particularly in water and sewer line construction.

ORD-23-020

Public Service

AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN
AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE PROPERTY FOR USE AS RIGHT OF WAY, AND TO
DECLARE AN EMERGENCY

- Request to move to full Council

A motion was made by Shea, seconded by Amos to move ORD-23-020 to full Council. The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes 6 – Shea, Amos, Buskirk, Milliken, Walker, Amick

Discussion started at 1:23:26 on YouTube Channel

Peoples – This ordinance is for the acquisition of right-of-way down at the curve on East Columbus Street. It's part of the waterline that was just discussed. This would be the connection from Columbus Street; there's a dead-end line there now to McGill Park. It's a very odd piece of property. We don't know how, but the actual property line goes out into the roadway, so this needed to be kind of cleaned up anyway. Normally we would have gotten an easement through here, but we decided to go and work with the resident to dedicate that as right-of-way.

E. Old/New Business

OTH-22-021

Pedestrian Safety

Discussion started at 1:25:04 on YouTube Channel

Peoples – The three-way stop at Washington and Waterloo was put up a week ago, last Thursday. We do have some experience there now. We're continuing to monitor. It is getting better. It was something to get used to at the beginning, in the first 10 to 15 minutes of us putting it up. We had the sheriff's deputy there. They went after four people who went right through it. He gave them all warnings, but he was just trying

to get people's attention through there. It does seem to be working very efficiently. We do see a little bit of a backup in the evening at 5:00 p.m. on the eastbound side of West Waterloo Street coming towards Washington, but the Groveport backup has been diminished. We may tweak a few things, but we are pretty happy with the result.

Shea – I went through it with my daughter on her bike the other day, and we felt much safer crossing, so thank you.

Ebert – I was going to say something similar. I've seen kids crossing the street without thinking they're going to get run over.

Peoples – It's still something to get used to. We'll keep those orange warning signs up for probably 60 to 90 days. Does this address those pedestrian safety concerns? Can this be taken off the agenda?

Shea – Yes. At least in my opinion. I'm the one that kept this on there, so thank you for resolving it.

Milliken – I don't have a need for it to continue to be there. I think we all know there are still some issues out there, but nothing that's going to be solved right away.

Peoples – We're still monitoring Groveport Road and that crosswalk. We know we had an issue with that and want to see if there are any configurations we can make. It's not something that will be done this year. Pedestrian safety was also discussed around downtown. We're going to look at the Waterloo and High intersection next year. We're going to make it a little bit more direct for the crosswalks, as well as line them up a lot better with actual ramps rather than the whole depressed area towards the center.

OTH-22-022

Police Study

Discussion started at 1:29:33 on YouTube Channel

Fairfield County Chief Deputy Jared Collins – What can I do for you?

Amos – Reassure us. We had a police study done, and it explained a bunch of different things; none of it tied together. I think what we're looking for is reassurance. Do you feel we're in a good spot with the number of sheriffs that we have?

Chief Collins – The reality is that I looked at both of my shift briefings for the last 24 hours. I get two shift briefings a day from my division commanders and my sergeants that are out there working. Our total calls in the last 24 hours throughout Fairfield County and our contracted areas of Canal Winchester were 62 calls. That is with 10 deputies working per shift. Out of 62 calls, 20 reports were taken. This is throughout the entire Fairfield County area and the area covered in the City of Canal Winchester. We took three reports in Canal Winchester: a theft, an information report, and a crash in the last 24 hours. I can tell you that's par. It's normal. I can also promise you that when I see the need for more cops up here, I'll come to you and ask for more cops. Once again, I'm going to caution against having too many officers assigned to an area without enough work to do. They become pests. They become problematic. I know I have told you all before that you live in a very safe and wholesome community. You really do. We've seen no spikes from the Gender Road area. It's pretty much a constant, but we are constantly looking for those types of things. You may have outliers. You may have situations where you see in the crime stats that a certain thing is going to pick up. When we see that, we're all over it. Our detective bureau looks at those things on a daily basis, not monthly or weekly. If the reality is not there, then it's not there. So far, anything that we've seen

a jump or spike in, we've analyzed and put resources on it.

Amos – One of my main concerns is training. I know it takes a year to a year and a half to get somebody trained. Is that still the case? Are you still seeing this high level of training?

Chief Collins – You're always going to have that. You're always going to have five to six months in the academy. You're always going to have 16 to 18 weeks of field training.

Amos – At one point in time, we were struggling to get people into that training. Is that getting better?

Chief Collins – Industry-wide, yes. I think we're in better shape than most. We had the foresight to hire corrections officers at 18 years old. When Sheriff Lape came in, one of the first decisions that we made right off the bat was to hire corrections at 18. We're grabbing these kids right out of these high school law enforcement programs, and it's paid huge dividends. We're two years in the future on that, and we're starting to see these kids wanting to go to the academy. We have all of these young corrections officers who are now using the county's tuition reimbursement program to go through the police academy. I believe we've got a crop that's just getting ready to graduate from Eastland's Academy. We have four or five corrections officers in that class. I'm not going to tell you that all five are going to pass. I would be really glad to have three out of five, to tell you the truth, but we also have several law enforcement candidates in the process right now. Without going into our recruiting spiel, the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office is a really attractive option for kids that want the full picture. If they want money, they're going to go to the suburbs or they're going to go to the city, but if they want true opportunity in the job to be able to do really anything across the spectrum, ours is the place to come. A lot of kids recognize that. In today's day and age, where these kids are veering away from money and more towards the life experience thing, I think we're getting just really quality candidates right now. I really do. I'm very happy with how we're recruiting and how we're bringing kids in.

Amick – I want to reiterate a previous conversation that you and I had: thank you for keeping our city safe. Thank you to Sergeant Walker as well. Please thank your deputies too. You shared with me in our phone conversation your metrics. Can you share those with the rest of the council, please?

Chief Collins – Right. The biggest thing that I look at are these daily reports. I'm seeing the statistics and the hard numbers daily. I'm seeing them twice a day. It's everything down to the list of calls for service per area, reports taken, and a description of every report taken. I mean, that's my front-line way of looking at things. As far as a monthly look, I'm looking at individual deputy performance and statistics. I'm a firm believer that when you look at these types of numbers on a daily basis, a shift, or even a location, they just don't have the same importance that the individual deputy statistics have. You have sergeants like Kelly who is really attentive to that. I mean, nobody gets a free ride with her. When you expand it out, you look at the performance per station. I will tell you that the station up here is the highest-performing station we have. It is 100% attributed to her. She gets it. She gets the mission. She gets the push, and she manages her people very well. As I'm looking at this to expand out the individual deputy performance and the individual location performance, I use it as a comparison. The best we can do is make a comparison. I compare Lincoln Station. I compare Violet Township station. I compare our canal station. I look at everything from dispatch calls to self-initiated activity to the degree and severity of crimes. I'm not going to go into a lot of detail on the other areas because it's just not necessarily fair, but I can tell you point blank that if it wasn't for Walmart, our people up here would do very little as far as dispatched and response calls. Again, Sergeant Walker has insisted that our people be proactive up here, and I think they

need to be. They need to be in the subdivisions. They need to be patrolling neighborhoods. They need to work on quality of life issues because, at the sheriff's office, that's what we're all about. As long as I have deputies responding to calls up here and handling those quality of life issues, I think we've got the right formula. I really do. When I tell you that the deputies up here have a fraction of the dispatch calls that the other two areas of the county have, I think that's huge. Again, it does give them more time for quality of life issues. You also have the wonderful thing that the deputies in the south don't have, which is almost zero drive time up here. When it may take you 25 minutes to get across your district to the next call, that's not it up here. Response times up here are next to nothing. I promise you that when I get to the point that I feel we need additional staff up here, I'm going to ask for it. The sheriff's office looks upon the city as a partner, and we have for 20 years. I just want you to know that anything that you want to see from your sheriff's office, you need to let us know, and we'll make it happen.

Amick – Thank you.

Shea – Thanks Chief.

Amick – I'd like to recommend something similar to what we did with pedestrian safety that we remove from the old business, OTH-22-022.

Milliken – We can do that.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Discussion started at 1:40:58 on YouTube Channel

Amos – Can we talk about the park, Mr. Peoples?

Peoples – Sure.

Amos – I know several of us got an email from a couple residents about the large number of cars there after hours. One night, there were over 20 cars at 10:30 p.m. in the park. As the parent said, nothing good goes down in a park at night. Is there potential to get gates or something across there to keep people out at night? I know we leave the lights on.

Peoples – We do not have anything planned for that. We had major problems with that at Hanner's Park. People get locked in, and the gate isn't getting closed. We don't have anyone after hours on any schedule other than overtime, so there are a lot of issues that go along with it. I think we'll work with the sheriff's department. I know they do make patrols out there.

Amick – Mr. Brown from the IT Department stated in his report that security cameras are being installed at both McGill Park and Guiler Park. It did not have a date. Do you have a rough idea when those will be completed?

Peoples – I don't. We're working on them now. I know they've ordered the cameras. The cameras are going to be on McGill House at this point. There are some areas where we found evidence of people loitering. There is minor damage, but nothing that would make us file a report or anything. We've got cameras on the house and then out into the parking lot, so we'll be able to capture some things. Within the next month, hopefully, those will be up and running.

Amos – Sergeant Walker, if you can just make sure that it is part of their nightly routine that would be lovely. I just want to make sure that we’re not partying in a park.

Amick – Mrs. Jackson, will you be sending an email about the Kris Sims dinner coming up on May 17th?

Jackson – Yes. You will get a notification about it. I think that we will probably be discussing that tomorrow at our weekly staff meeting.

Shea – You don’t have to answer it right now, but if you could look it up and just shoot me an email, how much did we give Destination last year?

Jackson – In bed tax money?

Shea – Yes.

Jackson – I can have an answer for you during my report at the council meeting.

F. Adjournment @ 7:11 p.m.

*A motion was made by Amos, seconded by Shea to adjourn. The motion carried with the following vote:
Yes 6 – Amos, Shea, Walker, Amick, Buskirk, Milliken*