

**City of Taylor Mill
PUBLIC HEARING MEETING
Wednesday, September 7, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME:

The Public Hearing was called to order at 6:05 p.m. In attendance were Mayor Daniel L. Bell, Commissioner Caroline Braden, Commissioner Mark Kreimborg, Commissioner Rose Merritt, Commissioner Dan Murray, City Administrative Officer Brian Haney, and City Attorney Jack Gatlin.

CAO Brian Haney stated the purpose of the Public Hearing is to receive input from residents regarding the firehouse. CAO Brian Haney reviewed the firehouse structure condition and provided four (4) options on how to address the firehouse. The options are: 1) Try to repair the existing structure; 2) Look at possibly building a second firehouse back onto the backside of the bays and tear down the front; 3) Build a new firehouse on the lot the city purchased back in 2010. The bays would be repurposed for the Public Works Department, and 4) Do nothing. CAO Haney stated that should the city want to do something then the Commission would decide what it wants to do and how much it wants to spend.

Commissioner Kreimborg provided the fifth option as being to dissolve the Taylor Mill Fire Department and contract out to another agency for the fire and EMS services.

CAO Haney invited the residents to address the commission.

Mr. Stu Bowns of 5400 Shadow Hill Court addressed the Commission. Mr. Bowns stated that in looking at the budget there is no increased revenue coming in and with expenses rising he is of the opinion that the City does not have the revenue for a new firehouse. Mr. Bowns is concerned with the increased firefighter expenses and the cost of overtime. He questions how the streets will be fixed if the city continues to spend it on other things such as the firehouse. Mr. Bowns stated that the designs and costs provided don't make sense and are inconsistent. Mr. Bowns stated that we should look to consolidation or look to spend with what our needs are because we don't have money to spend within the budget. Mr. Bowns said that if the city looks to Option 4, then it needs to consolidate.

Mr. Rich Meyer of 724 Vincent Drive addressed the Commission. Mr. Meyer stated that since 1990 the Commission has taken the stance to be in debt free and that is why a city municipal building was never built. Mr. Meyer stated that the Commission needs to step back and start from scratch. Mr. Meyer is supportive of the fifth option to contract out the services of the fire department.

Mr. Ed Kuehne of 5303 Old Taylor Mill Road addressed the Commission. Mr. Kuehne stated that the City wasted \$53,000 on engineering plans. He inquired as to why the report did not mention the problem of mold and asbestos. Mr. Kuehne supports spending a maximum of \$1.5 million to rebuild what is already there.

Mr. Mike Blackburn of 707 Forest Lane addressed the Commission. Mr. Blackburn shared photos of his grandfather who served as the Director of Forest Hill Fire Department and the Ladies Auxillary. Mr. Blackburn stated that the proposed plans are not feasible for the budget. Mr. Blackburn stated that he wishes the Fire Department could be given everything they need, but the Public Works Department needs a maintenance building more than the firehouse. He questioned why the City did not purchase the former St. Elizabeth Physicians property or the former Jehovah Witness Church and add on garage bays. Mr. Blackburn stated that the City should spend \$2 million that would serve all three departments. The Fire Department could be housed in the corner of a Public Works building. And a canopy could be built for the Police Department to park their cruisers.

Mr. Tom Koehler of 664 Manor Drive addressed the Commission. Mr. Koehler stated that the estimates are outlandish. Mr. Koehler suggested that the current exercise room be converted into the new locker room and the current locker room be converted into something else. Mr. Koehler stated that he finds it embarrassing that the City allowed this building to get in the condition that it is in and that something needs to be done. However, it needs to be done within a reasonable budget. Mr. Koehler agrees that the plans and costs don't make sense. He stated that the City could repair the existing facility and that it has to be done within the budget that this city can afford. There is no need for a fourth bay because we don't need a ladder fire truck and we don't need 10 bunks. The design needs to be reasonable and according to what the city can afford.

Mr. Ed Frondorf of 3308 McCowan Drive addressed the Commission. Mr. Frondorf wondered what the plan was to replace the "rainy day" fund. Mr. Frondorf stated that contracting out might be the better option due to the fire department staffing and equipment concerns. Mr. Frondorf stated the City of Taylor Mill is not a bigger city. Mr. Frondorf agreed that something needed to be done. However, he looks at the expense of 2 School Resource Officers, the cost of road repairs and wonders how the city can afford this. Mapleridge needs repairs and so do many other streets. Mr. Frondorf finds it irresponsible on the part of the Commission to have wasted funding on the designs.

Mr. Steven Smiley of 803 Rockdale Court addressed the Commission. Mr. Smiley asked that the Commission listen to what the firefighters recommend because they are the ones who sleep and live there 24/7 and are tasked with providing services. Mr. Smiley provided the commission with social media examples of cities that neglected to take care of the needs of the firefighters and his concern that going with Option 4 would open the city to potential lawsuits. Mr. Smiley asked that the commission keep firefighters' safety in mind.

Mr. Fred Wolnitzek of 718 Carol Drive addressed the Commission. Mr. Wolnitzek stated that he wants the city to keep the fire department and that he is opposed to contracting it out. He stated that he doesn't think the city needs to build a new firehouse, but should renovate the current one.

Mr. Charles Riley an employee of the Taylor Mill Fire Department addressed the Commission. Mr. Riley requested that the commission takes into consideration that the firefighters live there. Mr. Riley stated that the firefighters use the same washing machine to wash the fire equipment that holds carcinogens and their personal clothing. He further the HVAC drops water onto their heads as they try to sleep. Mr. Riley stated that he loves working for Taylor Mill and that he asks the Commission to take into consideration that they live there, their families visit, and so does the public.

Mr. Jeff Lawson of 5482 Taylor Mill Road addressed the Commission. Mr. Lawson questioned why taxpayers are providing a vehicle and paying gas for the fire chief who lives in Ohio.

Mr. David Volz of 784 Crocus Lane addressed the Commission. Mr. Volz asked what the purpose of having a city without having a fire department or a police department. Mr. Volz stated he has lived in Taylor Mill since 1999 and that he is wanting to purchase a home here in Taylor Mill, but that he does not want to reside in a city that does not have a fire department. Mr. Volz stated he does not want to have to depend on Independence or Covington for services.

Mr. Kuehne expressed his opinion that he would like for the Caucus Meeting to be in the evening instead of at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Blackburn stated that Toyota offers grants if the city would allow Toyota to advertise on the building.

ADJOURNMENT:

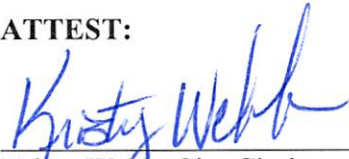
There being no further comments, the Public Hearing concluded at 6:44 p.m.

APPROVED:



Daniel L. Bell, Mayor

ATTEST:



Kristy Webb, City Clerk
Date: 09/14/2022