

**XENIA CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 9, 2021**

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**SPECIAL MEETING**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** President Wesley Smith called the Special Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
- 2. ROLL CALL:** Councilman Thomas Scrivens, Councilman Will Urschel, Mayor Sarah Mays, and President Wesley Smith were present. Vice President Levi Dean, Councilwoman Rebekah Dean (arrived at 5:49 p.m.), and Councilman Cody Brannum were absent.
- 3. WORK SESSION:**

**Demand on Information Technology Services:** City Manager Brent Merriman said it is the Appointed Officials' responsibility to periodically evaluate services to ensure they are provided in the most cost effective and efficient manner as possible. He said Information Technology falls under the Finance Director's purview but was essential to all organization-wide operations. They have had good conversations recently regarding the service demand and have arrived at some thoughts on adjustments that need to be made. He then turned the presentation over to Finance Director Ryan Duke. Mr. Duke said service demand has increased across many City departments, but he believed the Information Technology Department's service demand has increased more than any other City department. In 2013, a comprehensive study of the IT Department was conducted, and in 2014, some recommendations were made to City Council—and approved—with regard to adding one staff member and rearranging the department's structure. That was the last time there was a significant change from a staffing standpoint. As he and IT Director Keith Pagett make the presentation, a lot of the comparisons will be made based on the changes accomplished in 2014. A presentation was provided as follows:

Core Systems and Services Supported:

- Provisioning, maintenance, and support of user devices such as personal computers (PCs), copiers, printers, tablets, and cellular devices
- Programming and support of facility access controllers and infrastructure (security systems), which includes an entirely new building (City Administration Building [CAB]) completed in 2016
- Setup and management of City camera video surveillance systems (all throughout the City including City parks, inside and outside of City buildings, etc.); the cameras are used for security as well as assistance in providing efficient customer service
- Design and Maintain City Network Infrastructure including fiber, wireless devices, cabling, switches, servers, etc.

Mr. Pagett said in 2014, there were only three data centers (any location that has a rack and/or servers for network access). Currently, there are five data centers and four additional network cabinets or other devices for a total of nine, which helps to spread out the backup and disaster recovery infrastructure as well as access to those locations for quicker data connectivity. Mr. Duke said IT staff had done a terrific job enhancing their ability to back up information at multiple sites, but with that comes a lot more maintenance, monitoring, and the potential for additional issues, which obviously adds to their responsibilities. He then continued with the presentation.

Core Systems and Services Supported (continued):

- Support for external internet customers including the YMCA, Adult Recreation and Services Center, RITA, and Strong Tower Radio, which also includes billing them for those services
- Data storage and backup recovery systems (as noted above, enhancements have been made and additional data centers have been added with shared servers, shared drives, and individual drives for various Departments all over the City)

Mr. Pagett said in 2014, they would have had about two (2) terabytes (TB)<sup>1</sup> of data storage throughout the City, and now they have about 15 TBs spread out at various locations. Mr. Duke continued with the presentation.

Core Systems and Services Supported (continued):

- Management of the City's phone voice over internet protocol (VOIP) system<sup>2</sup>—instead of plugging phones into the wall and using an analog line via a third party provider, there are a whole host issues that now need to be resolved by IT on a regular basis with regard to the VOIP phone system, phone trees, network/technical issues, etc.
- Network Security systems including firewalls, antivirus systems, and cyber attack mitigation software and monitoring

Mr. Duke asked Mr. Pagett to address firewalls, antivirus systems, and cyber attacks. Mr. Pagett said there are many layers of protection, with the first being the firewall where the internet comes in and where things are blocked. They also use antivirus systems for cyber attack mitigation, and he described multiple ways the antivirus systems detects cyber attacks. Mr. Duke said cyber attack mitigation results in a whole other level of work to deal with prompts that are received, and they have to immediately respond to every single one. Further, cyber attacks increase every single day.

- Setup and maintenance of virtual server environments
- Hosting of third party programs, such as Courtview and SSI finance suite software
- Maintenance of DNS (Domain Name System) records for all City IP addresses/domains
- User Access maintenance including active directory for every user account (virtually every City employee/determine what each user can and cannot do) and virtual private network accounts and security, which requires regular work as City employees come and go
- Support for digital meetings and remote work capabilities, which increased dramatically over the last year and a half as they had to host Zoom meetings, employees working from home, due to the pandemic. However, digital meetings and allowing employees some flexibility with their work schedules seem to be here to stay. Even though they are not actually supporting the apps for Zoom, Go to Meeting, etc., they need to ensure they work on the employees' computers, during meetings, in conference rooms, etc., which occasionally requires some troubleshooting.

Assigned Projects and Tasks:

There are currently 85 recurring task groups; examples are as follows:

- Set weekly door schedules for security access for all City buildings, keeping in mind some are 24/7/365 operations and some are not, there are sometimes evening meetings, etc.
- Information Technology Chargebacks—any expenditure related to IT runs through the IT fund, and those expenditures are then allocated back to the appropriate department. All those expenses and chargebacks must also be budgeted for various departments.

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<sup>1</sup> One (1) Terabyte (TB) = 1,000,000,000,000 Bytes or 1,024 Gigabytes (GB)  
One (1) GB = 1,024 Megabytes (MB); One (1) MB = 1,024 Kilobytes

<sup>2</sup> Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP): A technology that allows voice calls using a broadband Internet connection instead of an analog phone line.

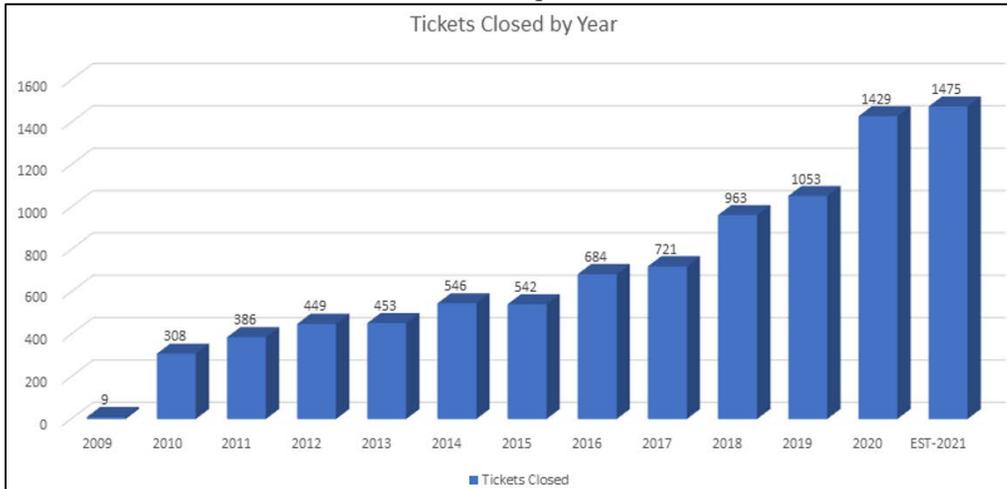
- Responding to potential cyber security threats—as noted above, IT must respond to cyber attacks and threats on a regular basis (something on a server, an email, etc.)
- Test backup environments

There are currently 101 projects in the queue; examples are as follows:

- Update Active Directory and reorganize group structures
- Facilitate fiber connection to Ford Road WWTP and Police Training Facility
- Add additional cooling to the Public Service Center data center
- Implement two-factor authentication

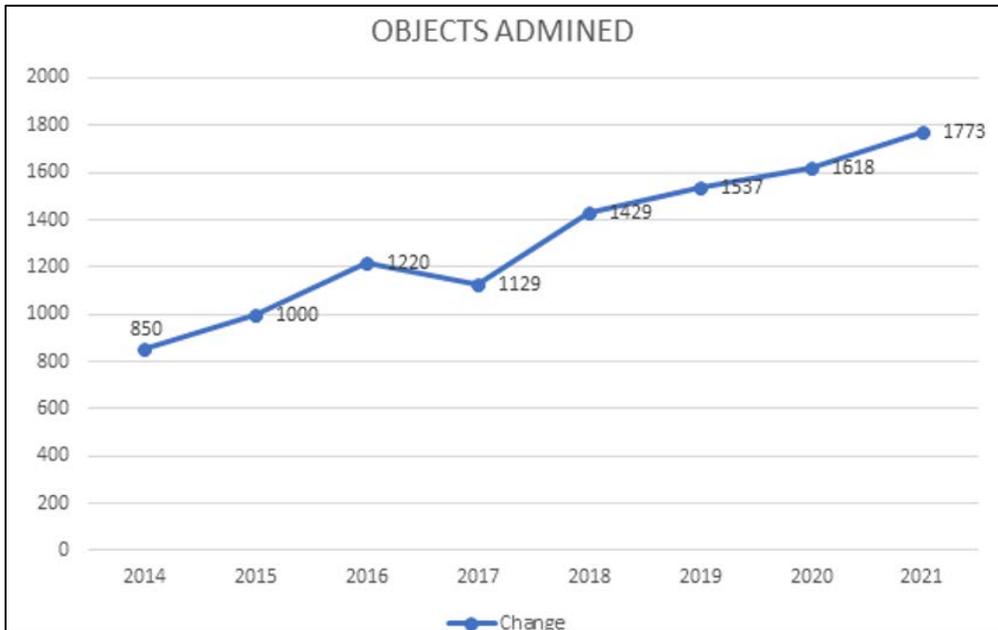
Increases in Requests for Service:

- There has been a 170% increase in service requests since 2014



Supported City Devices:

- There has been a 109% increase in the equipment (anything using an IP address) supported since 2014



Email Management (does **not** include emails that are immediately rejected by the SPAM filter):

A total of 1,698,487 emails have been managed so far this year 1,245,288 emails were allowed into the City network

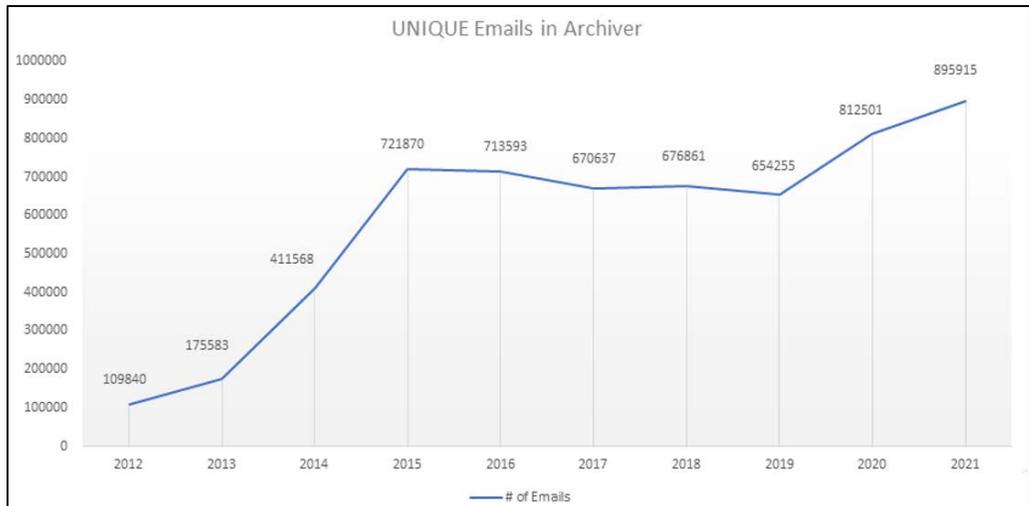


SPAM FILTER	YEARLY	MONTHLY	DAILY
SPAM	232,450	19,371	637
RBL-BLOCKED	206,419	17,202	566
HELO	9,599	800	26
INVALID REC	3,985	332	11
VIRUS	746	62	2

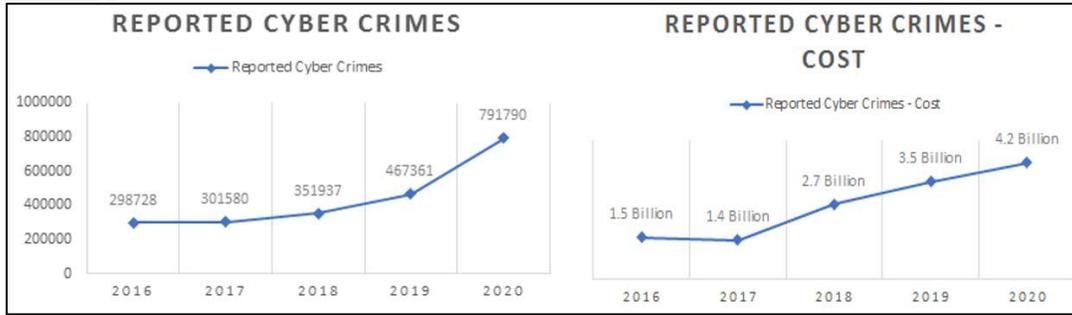
**SPAM:** Unwanted junk mail.  
**RBL-BLOCKED:** Registered blacklisted email addresses are automatically blocked  
**HELO:** Servers are reaching out to see if an email server is real  
**INVALID REC(IEVER):** For former employees, misspelled names in email addresses, etc.  
**VIRUS:** Virus in the email message that is caught by the SPAM filter.

Mr. Duke said some emails that contain viruses are not caught by the SPAM filter, and they are getting delivered to inboxes, which is why IT has had to do employee training so they are prepared to identify and report those issues. He noted sometimes email servers get hacked, and it looks like emails are coming from valid email addresses, such as another municipality, but they are not.

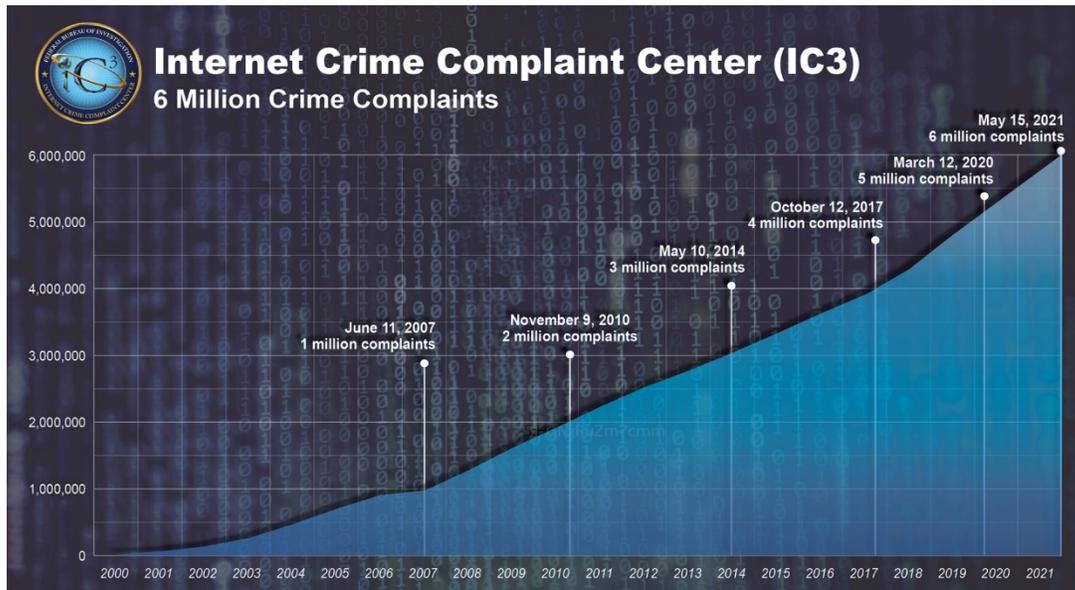
- There has been a 117% increase in email traffic since 2014:



Cyber Security:



Mr. Duke said it was very likely that the true cyber crime numbers are much greater than what the FBI has reported above because companies do not want to necessarily report that they have been hacked. Mr. Pagett said ransomware attacks are on the rise, and for a business with a similar amount of employees as the City of Xenia, the costs could reach \$2.5 million or more. Mr. Duke said per the table below, the next million internet crime complaints will most likely be reached in less than a year.



Current Staffing:

- IT Manager
- IT Technician
- Systems Administrator
- Network Administrator

Mr. Duke said he was requesting the addition of a *Management Analyst* in 2022 to relieve the IT Director from doing the more routine administrative tasks. The IT Department has an extreme amount of work on their plates, and the addition of this position will help keep their heads above water. He would rather the IT Director focus on more technical tasks—which are his strengths—instead of administrative tasks—which was not the best use of his time. He realized this would not fix all the problems, and at some point, they may need to look more broadly at the structure of the IT Department. He and Mr. Merriman have had many discussions about IT services across the

City, including public safety components (Dispatch Center and the Communications Technical Director position, which ultimately report to the City Manager). They were not ready to bring forward any recommendations to Council at this time, and he was not seeking Council endorsement for the additional Management Analyst position this evening. However, he feels very strongly that the position was needed, and it has been included in the 2022 budget, which would be presented to Council for their consideration before the end of the year.

(Councilwoman Dean arrived.)

Mr. Merriman said Mr. Duke and Mr. Pagett have demonstrated the increase in demand for IT services, noting they have continued to employ technology to make staff more efficient, to avoid adding additional personnel in other areas, etc. He said while Citywide services and service delivery has continued to expand as the community continues to grow, the number of City staff members has remained almost the same for the last ten years. He supported Mr. Duke's recommendation and concurred that the addition of a Management Analyst would not fix all the functional problems. At a later date, they will take a step back and look at IT services more globally with regard to the public safety information technology system (LEADS, 9-1-1, etc.) and the support provided by the Communications Technical Director. He noted the Communications Technical Director position was in part funded by the City of Fairborn and the City of Beavercreek, which adds an entirely different dimension to the conversation.

President Smith asked Mr. Duke how soon he wanted to fill the Management Analyst position. Mr. Duke said if the position was approved, they would look to fill it in the first quarter of 2022 (the sooner the better).

**4. ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Councilman Scrivens, seconded by Mayor Mays, to adjourn the Special Meeting at 5:57 p.m. to prepare for the Regular Meeting immediately following. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, Urschel, Mays, Smith

Abstain: R. Dean

Nays: None motion carried.

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## REGULAR MEETING 6:00 P.M.

Charlie Huff provided the Invocation before the Call to Order.

**A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Will Urschel.

**B. CALL TO ORDER:** President Smith called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

**C. ROLL CALL:** Councilman Thomas Scrivens, Councilwoman Rebekah Dean, Councilman Will Urschel, Mayor Sarah Mays, and President Wesley Smith were present. Vice President Levi Dean and Councilman Cody Brannum were absent. President Smith said Councilman Brannum contacted him last week about his absence today due to family business.

Motion by President Smith, seconded by Mayor Mays, to excuse Councilman Brannum from the meeting. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, R. Dean, Urschel, Mays, Smith  
Nays: None motion carried.

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion by Mayor Mays, seconded by Councilman Scrivens, to approve the October 28, 2021, minutes of the Regular Meeting as written. President Smith entertained comments or questions. None were presented. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, R. Dean, Urschel, Mays, Smith  
Nays: None motion carried.

**E. SPECIAL PRESENTATION(S):** None.

**F. AUDIENCE COMMENTS:** President Smith explained the procedures for Audience Comments and invited those who wished to speak to come forward. No one came forward to speak.

**G. OLD BUSINESS:**

1. President Smith presented **RESOLUTION 2021-SS AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF THE FEDERAL VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT (VOCA) GRANT AND THE STATE VICTIMS' ASSISTANCE ACT (SVAA) GRANT FOR 2022**, introduced by Councilman Scrivens on 10/28/2021, and it was read for a second time.

Motion by Councilman Scrivens, seconded by Mayor Mays, to pass Resolution 2021-SS as presented. President Smith entertained comments or questions. None were presented. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, R. Dean, Urschel, Mays, Smith  
Nays: None motion carried.

**H. PUBLIC HEARING(S):** None.

**I. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Introduction of Resolution 2021-TT Adopting Policy EBM-3.07, Titled "Court Leave," and Repealing and Replacing Policy EBM-3.19, Titled "Military Leave," of the City of Xenia Employees' Benefits Manual.** City Manager Brent Merriman said this resolution makes amendments to the Employees' Benefits Manual, as authorized by Section 260.01(a) of the City's Administration Code. The first amendment was the adoption of Policy EBM-3.07, titled "Court Leave" to address employees being called for jury duty or being subpoenaed to testify in cases related to their employment and establishes eligibility for compensation, proper notification, and what constitutes a violation of the Policy. The Administrative Steering Committee reviewed this Policy and recommends the adoption of Policy EBM-3.07, Court Leave. The second amendment to the Employees' Benefits Manual would repeal the existing Policy EBM-3.19, titled "Military Leave," and replace it by adopting a new Policy EBM-3.19. This Policy, originally approved by Xenia City Council on October 27, 2001, established eligibility, proper notification, compensation and continuation of benefits, reemployment following leave, and violations. The new Policy EBM-3.19 was written to comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights

Act (“USERRA”) and Ohio Revised Code Section 5923.05. The Administrative Steering Committee also reviewed this Policy and recommends repealing and replacing Policy EBM-3.19, Military Leave.

President Smith entertained questions or comments. Hearing none, he entertained introduction of Resolution 2021-TT as presented.

Mayor Mays presented RESOLUTION 2021-TT ADOPTING POLICY EBM-3.07, TITLED “COURT LEAVE,” AND REPEALING AND REPLACING POLICY EBM-3.19, TITLED “MILITARY LEAVE,” OF THE CITY OF XENIA EMPLOYEES’ BENEFITS MANUAL, and it was read for the first time.

**2. Introduction of Resolution 2021-UU Awarding the Contract for the Xenia 2022-2024 Biosolids Hauling, Disposal, and Application Services to Hines Farming, LLC.** Mr. Merriman said biosolids are processed at the Ford Road Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Biosolids Processing Facility on a daily basis and consist of the end-product of the City’s wastewater treatment process. Biosolids are made up of concentrated organic material with excellent nutrient value, which are extremely beneficial as soil conditioners and fertilizers for local farmers. Because the City of Xenia was not in the farming business, the distribution and application of this material was contracted out to certified haulers and distributors. The contractor was responsible for the final disposal and land application pursuant to the strict rules and regulations of the Ohio EPA. On Tuesday, October 26, 2021, proposals were received from three (3) qualified contractors for a three (3) year agreement with the City of Xenia for biosolids handling. The unit price proposals were based upon an assumption of 4,000 wet tons annually. Hines Farming, LLC, presented the lowest and best bid at \$15.85 per wet ton with no increase over the three-year contract. Hines Farming, LLC, has been the City’s contractor for Biosolids Handling for the past six (6) years and has performed exceptionally well. City staff was also pleased that the proposed new unit prices included no escalators over the term of the agreement.

President Smith noted he was pleased that the contractor was located in nearby Jamestown. He then entertained comments or questions. Hearing none, he entertained introduction of Resolution 2021-UU as presented.

Councilman Scrivens presented RESOLUTION 2021-UU AWARDING THE CONTRACT FOR THE XENIA 2022-2024 BIOSOLIDS HAULING, DISPOSAL, AND APPLICATION SERVICES TO HINES FARMING, LLC, and it was read for the first time.

**3. Administrative Motion Approving the Schedule of Bills in the amount of \$502,505.61.** Mr. Duke respectfully requested the payment of bills in the amount of \$502,505.61. He noted the vast majority of the bills was related to Dispatch Center improvements, which are paid from the 250 Fund (revenue comes from fees imposed by the State of Ohio on communication devices). Other taxpayer dollars are used to fund the project, but the State-imposed fee revenue was set aside to be used for this purpose.

President Smith entertained questions or comments.

Councilman Scrivens asked how often City staff reevaluated contracts with various vendors. Mr. Duke said that really depends upon the type of agreement, service, or goods being purchased. Many service contracts have different terms, but they are typically for three- to five-year terms.

Motion by Councilwoman Dean, seconded by Councilman Urschel, to approve the schedule of bills in the amount of \$502,505.61. Brief discussion followed. President Smith asked if City has used the same vendor for indigent burials for a while. Mr. Merriman said yes. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: L. Dean, Scrivens, R. Dean, Urschel, Mays, Smith  
Nays: None                      motion carried.

## **J. APPOINTED OFFICIALS REPORTS**

President Smith asked Ms. Fisher for her comments. Ms. Fisher said the first Legislative Review and Government Affairs Committee meeting would be held on Tuesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 4 p.m. She hopes to have the materials to the Committee members late next week. President Smith noted the Council also meets that evening at 6 p.m.

President Smith asked Mr. Duke for his comments. Mr. Duke did not have anything further to share. President Smith thanked him for his presentation on Information Technology service needs during the Special Meeting.

President Smith asked Mr. Merriman for his comments. Mr. Merriman reminded everyone that City offices would be closed on Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, in observance of Veterans Day. He reported that Leaf Collection began on Monday, noting the schedule was posted on the City's website and social media sites. Staff continues to monitor legislative actions at the State level that may impact them locally, and there are quite a few items either currently being introduced or enacted including a new law on fireworks. Further, legislation was introduced for statewide mandates for implementation of Next Generation 911 systems, which was extremely consequential legislation because the funding that would accompany that mandate was far insufficient based on the anticipated cost for implementation. Finally, they are nearing completion of the report materials related to the redevelopment of Xenia Towne Square, and he expects the information by the end of November. Several Council Standing Committee meetings may be necessary in December to begin reviewing those materials, including the Public Service & Utilities, Property Management, and Finance & Budget Committees, to look at different components. A full report would be given to Planning and Zoning Commission at their January 2022 meeting, eventually moving on to City Council. He recognized Mayor Mays and Councilwoman Dean for participating in the Steering Committee process.

Councilman Urschel said when indigent burials are included in the Schedule of Bills, he asked if that was just the cost of the actual cremation and not the actual burial. Assistant City Manager Jared Holloway said that was correct. There would eventually be costs for the headstone. He noted the State of Ohio has reimbursed the City for several indigent burials, which usually takes about six months to receive and was based on available funding. Councilman Urschel assumed that when a burial was planned, local pastors would be invited to participate again. Mr. Holloway and Mr. Merriman said yes. Mr. Merriman said an interment would likely be scheduled this spring. Councilman Urschel said he was certain he and local pastors want to be involved.

President Smith said he noticed Public Service crews out yesterday doing leaf collection, which was a big job. He appreciated the work they do every year to provide the leaf collection program.

## **K. REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

**1. Property Management Committee:** Councilman Scrivens said the Committee, which includes Councilman Urschel and Vice President Dean, met on November 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss the transfer of the Carnegie Library from Greene County. The Committee members were very excited about the proposed project at the site, which would be shared very soon.

**2. Planning and Zoning Commission:** President Smith said in Councilman Brannum's absence, he reported that the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting was canceled.

**3. Board for Recreation, Arts, and Cultural Activities:** President Smith said BRACA just met yesterday evening. Councilman Urschel was also in attendance. They had a lot of discussion on The Christmas Station event to be held on Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, from 5-9 p.m. They will welcome Santa Claus at Xenia Station, there will be carriage rides from Xenia Station to see the lights at Shawnee Park, activities include Elf on the Shelf and window decorating and gingerbread house contests, dressed up characters for photo opportunities, etc. He thanked the downtown business community for their support of this Christmas community event. He announced a vacancy on BRACA and invited anyone interested to contact City Clerk Michelle Johnson. He said the next "big event" for BRACA would be the Easter Egg Hunt on the Saturday before Easter.

## **L. COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Councilwoman Dean thanked the Xenia Police Division for allowing her to ride along with them last Tuesday evening. It was a great experience and very eye opening. She encouraged her fellow Councilmembers to take advantage of that opportunity if they have not done so yet.

Councilman Scrivens thanked the citizens of Xenia for all they did to make Halloween so great for Xenia's children. He thanked Mr. Jerry Ferrell who attended the last Council meeting and distributed calendars honoring the 13 soldiers who were recently lost in Afghanistan as well as the Purple Heart parking sign. He said many veterans have sustained injuries and deserve a place to park. He thanked Police Chief Randy Person for his endeavor and dedication to provide the lights at Shawnee Park, which was an amenity for the entire City of Xenia. He attended the Greene County Career Center's grand opening last week, and the facility was one of the nicest amenities in Xenia. For those who do not wish to pursue an academic career, he said there are a myriad of activities and skills that they could learn at the Career Center, including culinary arts to plumbing. The Collier Chapel was recently rededicated, which is located on the campus of the former Ohio Veterans Children's Home (OVCH) and the Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Home (OSSO). The chapel was packed, and a number of local, County, and State elected officials were present. He encouraged those who haven't been there to take the time to visit it. He said with Daylight Savings Time, it was now dark in the mornings, and he asked drivers to be aware of children waiting at bus stops or walking to school. He thanked all Veterans regardless of where and how long they served. He was looking forward to The Christmas Station event on Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Finally, he congratulated all who were recently reelected or elected to City Council and the Xenia Community Schools Board of Education.

Councilman Urschel commended the Association of Ex-Pupils and Athletes in Action on the amazing work they completed on the Collier Chapel. He noted OVCH was shut down in 1995, and the property—that included 49 buildings—just sat there and began to deteriorate. In 1998, Dayton Christian Schools purchased the land and started to rehabilitate many of the buildings. The chapel,

the graveyard, and the museum all stayed with the Association of Ex-Pupils. The chapel was built in the 1870s and was very dilapidated. Some of the ex-pupils got together with State lawmakers and found the dollars through multiple means and spent over \$1 million on the renovation. It was absolutely one of the gems of the City of Xenia. He also encouraged those who haven't seen it to take the time to stop by the museum and see the chapel. Many of the ex-pupils who spoke at the rededication said the chapel was the center of their lives and kept them going during that time. He has been attending the Xenia Township Trustees meetings this year and noted the Trustees continue to be very sensitive about annexations. He asked Mr. Merriman and staff to continue to coordinate and communicate with them on annexation issues. He has also been attending Xenia Community Schools (XCS) Board of Education meetings, and the number one topic for the last eight meetings has been bullying. Parents have expressed a lot of concern and having a place for families to be safe is everyone's top priority. The School Administrator asked if the City would like to participate in future efforts to address bullying, and as a City Council representative, he said they would. Mr. Merriman said he appreciated Councilman Urschel bringing up this subject, noting he intended to mention it this evening and was remiss in doing so. He received a request from XCS to consider adding a School Resource Officer (SRO) for Warner Junior High. He noted Council has previously discussed this issue and expressed support. Although all the details have not been worked out, the final budget for 2022 would include that position.

President Smith asked Mayor Mays to give her report because he knew she needed to leave the meeting due to another commitment. Mayor Mays said on Friday, there would be a Veterans Day service at the Adult Recreation and Services Center, and tickets are still available for the 5 p.m. dinner event. She said this year's free Community Thanksgiving Day Dinner would be held at the Schindler Banquet Center at the Athletes in Action campus from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. There would be a sit down dinner this year along with delivery to shut-ins. President Smith thanked her for her report and dismissed her from the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Councilman Urschel said during the latest election campaigning and discussion with those appearing on the ballot, the subject of homelessness in the City came up often, which got the attention of a Dayton Daily News Staff Writer London Bishop, who did a great job on the following article, which he read into the record:

*XENIA — Every Saturday morning, Mike Hunter cleans up trash on the same bike path where he saved a person's life. On Saturday mornings and Wednesday nights, he and 17 other homeless or formerly homeless individuals go out and clean up trash, cut back trees, lay mulch and generally maintain the look of Xenia's downtown. Hunter, who has been homeless and just recently obtained housing, carries Narcan with him, and said he has saved eight people from overdoses. "He didn't even thank me or nothing," Hunter said of saving the man on the bridge. "Killed his buzz, I guess." Hunter and his colleagues work through a privately funded program put on by Bridges of Hope, a Xenia shelter that serves homeless single adults. Workers are paid \$10 an hour at the end of each work day<sup>3</sup>, in a way that organizers say gives them dignity and purpose in addition to putting money back in their pockets. Since the project started in May, workers have picked up more than 1,000 bags of trash. "It's teaching men and women responsibilities you need to have a job," said Will Urschel, a city council member and president of Bridges of Hope's board of directors. "They get paid every day, but if they don't work the hours, they don't get paid. It's teaching good basic work skills."*

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<sup>3</sup> Privately funded; not funded by the City of Xenia.

*Through the work program, five people now have full-time jobs and full-time residences. One of those people is Jeff Langan. Langan became homeless two days after Christmas in 2020, and now works at the Greene County Fairgrounds doing general maintenance. "If it wasn't for Bridges of Hope and TCN (The Caring Network) helping me, it was getting cold in January, I'd probably have been dead," he said. Bridges of Hope currently houses 35 adults each night, but closes during the day. Bridges of Hope houses individuals from Xenia, Fairborn and Beavercreek, but all adults served by Bridges of Hope must have proof of Greene County residency.*

*Bridges has plans in place to be open as a full-day programming shelter in 2022, both to give people a place to go during the day and to address some of the root causes of homelessness. Those root causes can be as varied as the individuals experiencing it, said shelter director Jill Conkel. "People think it's 'they don't have a job or because of drug addiction.' For a third of our population, it's health issues," she said. "You want to really know somebody's story? Ask them about their childhood. It's horrific what some of these people have gone through, but they didn't have the support or counseling to work through it."*

*The City of Xenia has started its own initiative to address homelessness from a law enforcement perspective. "The issue has become a significant concern for residents, and by extension the council," said City Manager Brent Merriman. "There's no easy way to deal with it. What this initiative is attempting to do is providing assistance and accountability at the same time." Titled the HeadsUp program, the effort has dedicated two police officers to go out in the mornings and identify individuals that are living on the street, offer them help, and direct them toward available resources. Through their efforts, the city has identified that there are roughly 10 to 12 people living on the street who refuse to seek help. "The perception of the scale is really off," Merriman said.*

*Sgt. Jeff Osburn of the Xenia Police is one of those officers interacting directly with the homeless. "Ninety percent of the ones we're dealing with now are those that don't want to take the next step," Osburn said. "We don't just want to lock them up. We can't force them. We can't harass them. But if they are committing a public ill, we can hold them accountable."*

*Though some individuals refuse to seek help, there are others who are actively giving back to the community, and Xenia is already starting to see a return on investment, Merriman said. "Some homeless folks are taking value away, but these guys and gals are taking pride in doing a service in the community that others wouldn't," he added. That pride is felt by individuals like Hunter as they go about taking care of the city of Xenia. "We're people just like everybody else, we're just going through a hard time," Hunter said. "Sure you have people who abuse the system. But we do a hell of a good job."*

Councilman Urschel said comments have been made that the City of Xenia should not be funding anything for Bridges of Hope, and Bridges should be seeking public grants, which has occurred. He shared another news article titled, "Bridges of Hope among five programs across Ohio receiving a workforce development grant from the Association of Ohio Commodores Foundation Fund," noting Bridges was granted \$10,000 to support its day hub computer lab. He said former Ohio first lady, Hope Taft, a member of the Commodores, nominated Bridges for the grant. Veterans Day is Thursday, and he can recall being in uniform in the late 1970s and being mocked and having things thrown at him. Veterans Days in the past were sometimes not happy times. Thank goodness that culture has changed, and veterans are treated differently today. He encouraged everyone to take some time and thank a veteran for what he or she has done for this country. He was certain they would greatly appreciate it. He suggested maybe even picking up the tab for a veteran's breakfast or lunch. Finally, he defined the word "slander," which was the action or crime of making a false spoken statement that is damaging to a person's reputation. Synonyms

are “character assassination,” “smear campaigning,” “denigration,” “slurring,” “insulting,” and “mudslinging.” Another word is “libel.” Libel and slander are both defamatory statements. He defined the word “libel,” which was a defamatory statement that was written. He said there was a lot of libel and slander going on—not by the candidates—during the campaigning for the last election for Xenia School Board and City Council. Community members were slandering and libeling those on the ballot. In both circumstances, some community members—who call themselves leaders of this community—were leading the community in much of the libel and slander. As he listened to the parents at numerous School Board meetings, much of the bullying that was taking place was occurring in cyberspace. Two parents talked about their children who committed suicide over things that posted about them on social media. He said children may be talking about other children because their parents are talking about other adults—the leaders of the community. Children are not oblivious to what was going on, and when adults decide to destroy someone’s character, he asked why they are shocked when children do the same thing. He has looked at social media platforms for surrounding municipalities, and he was shocked to see slander and libel that goes on in the Xenia forums. He said it needed to end, and it needed to start with every individual. If they know the people doing it, they need to hold them accountable. It was not acceptable behavior, and it was shameful.

President Smith reminded everyone that the next Council meeting would be held on Tuesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, due to the City’s observance of Thanksgiving on their regular meeting date. He wished everyone a “Happy Veterans Day,” and noted the reason they get to serve as Council members was thanks to our veterans. He thanked everyone who exercised their right to vote on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and for making Xenia a community of choice and the City of Hospitality.

**M. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

**N. WORK SESSION:** None.

**O. ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Councilwoman Dean, seconded by Councilman Scrivens, to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 6:52 p.m. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Scrivens, R. Dean, Urschel, Smith

Nays: None                      motion carried.

Michelle D. Johnson  
City Clerk

Wesley Smith  
President, Xenia City Council