

**WARREN CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 5, 2021 – 6:00 PM**

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Cashman presided over the April 5, 2021, special meeting of Warren City Council in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Cashman announced that Council met in executive session immediately prior to this meeting for discussions regarding the Police Memorandum of Understanding and legal matters.

ROLL CALL

Members present and responding to roll call were: Mayor Maurice Cashman, Gregory Fraser, Paul Giannini (via Zoom), Philip Gilbert, Douglas Hearn, John Wortman (via phone), and Christian Zavinski. Members of City Staff present were Nancy Freenock, City Manager; Michael Holtz, DPW Director; Teena Leary, Assistant City Clerk; and Joseph Sproveri, Chief of Police.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mayor Cashman welcomed all visitors. Present were:

- Kim Exley: Observing
- Jared Villella: Summer Park Program
- Kellie Blasco: Summer Park Program
- Michael Suppa: Summer Park Program
- Jasmine Lydic: Summer Park Program
- Jennifer Reynolds: Summer Park Program
- Christyn Allen: Erie News Now reporter
- Brian Hagberg: Your Daily Local
- Josh Cotton: Times Observer Reporter
- Attended via the Zoom internet meeting platform:
 - Jenn Scalise
 - Alec Conarro
 - Reyd Martin
 - Nicole Peterson

SUMMER PARK PROGRAM

Mr. Hearn noted his disappointment in learning that the Administrative staff had determined that the Summer Playground Program would not be held due to concerns regarding the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. Mr. Hearn stated his belief that children should have an opportunity to participate in organized outdoor summer activities at the City's playgrounds. Mr. Hearn stated that he believes it is necessary to learn to move forward during the pandemic.

Mr. Wortman stated that he supported Mr. Hearn's comments and further stated that he believes today's youth should have the same opportunities as in years past. He suggested that the time to plan regarding the Program would have been during development of the 2021 budget.

Mr. Fraser stated that Mr. Hearn explained the value of a Summer Playground Program well; however, he cautioned Council against micromanaging matters which are under the purview of the City Manager and administrative staff.

Mr. Zavinski stated that he believes that people (parents) should have the freedom to choose whether their children will participate in a Summer Playground Program. He indicated that, at this point in the pandemic, individuals should be aware of how to act and protect themselves in regard to COVID-19.

Mayor Cashman expressed his concerns regarding new variants of the virus which are more contagious and are causing more severe illness than seen in hospital admissions over the past several months. He stated that he believes the offering of a Summer Playground Program would send the wrong message to the community and children regarding efforts to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Mrs. Freenock agreed that a decision regarding program operations would typically be made during budget discussions; however, at the time that the budget was being developed, it was impossible to project what the status of the pandemic would be. She further stated that while schools and sports programs have adapted to operations during the pandemic, those programs are predominantly operated by professional personnel.

Visitors Kellie Blasco, Jennifer Reynolds, Jared Villella, and Michael Suppa (Chairman of the City Parks and Recreation Commission) each addressed Council and stated their support for a Summer Playground Program in 2021.

Mr. Hearn made the motion for the City of Warren to offer a Summer Parks Program while following CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and Department of Health regulations (concerning COVID-19). The motion was seconded by Mr. Wortman and carried with four votes in the affirmative and three nay votes cast by Mr. Fraser, Mr. Giannini, and Mayor Cashman.

Mrs. Freenock indicated that City Staff will work to develop protocols which may include limiting registration to City residents only, providing a "supply box" for each registered child, limiting daily participation to the playground where the child is registered, separating participants into groups which will remain together for the duration of the program with a supervisor(s) being assigned to the group, and staggering group lunchtimes. The City Solicitor is reviewing a COVID waiver which would be signed by the parent/guardian of each Playground Program participant. Sanitation protocols will be developed.

The playgrounds to be included in the Program for 2021 will be Lacy, Beaty, and DeFrees. A summer program will not be operated at Crescent Park as the adjacent area will be under construction.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE, LODGE NO. 83

Mrs. Freenock noted that the City negotiated with the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge No. 83, regarding the three-year contract period commencing January 1, 2021. The City's Bargaining Committee consisted of Mayor Cashman, Councilman Wortman, and Mrs. Freenock.

Upon motion by Mr. Wortman and second by Mr. Fraser, Council members voted unanimously to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge No. 83 for the three-year period commencing on January 1, 2021.

2021 C.A.R. POOL OPENING

Mr. Gilbert made the motion to open the C.A.R. Pool for the 2021 season while following CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and Department of Health guidelines. The motion was seconded by Mr. Zavinski. Following discussion, the motion carried with four votes in the affirmative and three nay votes cast by Mr. Fraser, Mr. Giannini, and Mayor Cashman.

Mrs. Freenock noted that current COVID-19 guidelines require that there be limitations as to the number of people in the pool at any given time and the distance that must remain between patrons who do not reside in the same household; she suggested that admittance to the pool be limited to City of Warren residents.

Mr. Holtz cautioned that the amount budgeted for pool operations is based upon projected attendance which, due to COVID-19 restrictions, will be considerably reduced. Therefore, the revenues projected during development of the 2021 budget are likely not to be realized and the pool will operate at a greater deficit than in most years.

Mayor Cashman and Mr. Fraser stated their concerns regarding the pool being operated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Wortman and Mr. Zavinski stated their view that the City needs to establish adaptive measures to operate the pool in a safe and responsible manner for the 2021 season.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, Mayor Cashman declared the meeting adjourned.