

**Committee Members:**

- Grant Russel, at-large– Committee Chair
- Bud Haas, Ward 1
- Joshua Palmer, Ward 7

**Guests:**

Denise Grant, The Courier

**Meeting Start Time:** 6:27 p.m.

**Meeting End Time:** 7:28 p.m.

## Agenda:

### Call to Order

### Roll Call

### New Items

#### 1. COVID-19 and related issues for City Council meetings

- Councilman Russel provided the following introduction as to how this committee came to form, discussions he has had with all Council members, points that the committee should consider and potential recommendations the committee may make.
  - Asked by Law Director Rasmussen & Council President Harrington to discuss this issue with all Council, determine if there was a consensus and if there was not, to call for an ad hoc committee to address the issue.
  - The initial results of those discussions:
    - 5 in favor of requiring masks
    - 1 in favor of recommending masks
    - 3 in favor of taking no action
    - 1 in favor of requiring masks if the majority of council also favored the requiring of masks (i.e. no opinion)
  - Subsequent to the calling of the ad hoc committee:
    - 7 in favor of requiring masks
    - 3 in favor of taking no action
  - Councilmen Hass & Palmer were the first who asked to be on the ad hoc committee. They represent different viewpoints on the question.
    - Councilman Russel favored taking no action.
  - Council sets its own rules with the majority of Council – six Councilmembers – needed to change our rules. For that reason, Councilman Russel believes it is appropriate to address this issue via Council rules and an ad hoc committee.
  - This committee will make a recommendation to Council which will then vote on its recommendation. Councilman Russel suggests this committee has three possible recommendation:
    - Make NO recommendation
    - Make a single recommendation concerning the wearing of masks

- Make multiple recommendations concerning the wearing of masks giving the full council the opportunity to select one that they favor.
  - Councilman Russel suggest that there are three distinct audiences that should be considered as the committee considers its recommendation:
    - Council members
      - Rules cannot be established that prevent a Councilmember from attending a meeting and representing their constituents.
      - Council rules do include a manner to discipline Councilmembers. See Section I General Provisions – Chapter F Disciplinary Action of Council’s Rules of Procedure.
    - Those of who attend Council meetings at the request of Council including the Mayor, Law Director, Auditor, Service Director, Safety Director, etc. See Section II Council Meetings E – Attendance
    - The General Public
      - Council must provide a manner for people to address their government. Even if a citizen is not physical present in Council Chambers, they have a manner to view (watching on television or streaming on the City’s website) and address (written communications) City Council.
      - Council Rules currently establish requirements for attendance upon the general public. See Section II Council Meetings – Chapter I Public Communications of Council’s Rules of Procedure.
      - The President of Council can, and has, had members of the public removed from meetings
- Councilman Palmer stated his support for taking no action. He favors giving people a choice. He did not appreciate the manner in which a face-mask policy was being dictated to Council.
- Councilman Haas favors the requiring of masks because:
  - Citizens look up to Council and trust Council to make good decisions
  - Council members should set an example by wearing masks
  - Out of respect for the Mayor who has asked that Council and those who attend Council meetings wear masks
- Councilman Russel said that although he favors the ‘do nothing option’, he nonetheless wears a mask at Council meetings for the very reasons Councilman Haas expressed.
- Councilman Haas offered three options for consideration:
  - Do not require the wearing of mask
  - Requiring everyone to wear masks
  - Requiring only Council to wear mask
- Councilman Russel noted that other Councilmembers raised concerns about their personal health if meetings became too crowded and attendees were not wearing masks. They did not think it proper to have to choose between their personal health and fulfilling the duties for which they were elected. Councilman Russel said of the three audiences that the committee is considering, only a Council members attendance was mandatory – to fulfill

- their elected responsibility – while attendance by the public and those requested to attend was voluntary.
- Councilman Russel offered a possible policy whereby masks are optional for Council members but mandatory for others. Councilmen Haas & Palmer both disagreed with this idea saying it should be all or nothing, but do not single out council for special treatment. Councilman Russel agreed with their thinking.
  - Councilman Russel likened the restrictions on the number of people able to attend a meeting by the Health Department akin to maximum occupancy limits established by the Fire Marshall; both are done to protect public health of those in attendance.
    - The committee suggested that the maximum occupancy of the room be determined and that for each Council meeting, the number of members of the General Public who could attend a meeting be limited to the new Maximum Occupancy less number of Councilmembers in attendance less the number of people requested to attend the meeting by Council and that this number be made available to the general public and also enforced.
  - Much discussion about whether Council should require or recommend the wearing of masks. The committee felt that both options should be presented to Council.
  - Much discussion about the most practical manner to provide a recommendation to Council. A recommendation requires two affirmative votes in order to be a recommendation of the committee.
  - Motion by Councilman Russel / seconded by Councilman Palmer, to recommend that Council choose between one of two paragraphs to be added as a third paragraph to Section II Council Meetings – Chapter E Attendance of Council’s Rules of Procedure (emphasis added for clarity):
    1. In the event of a public health emergency declared by either the State or County Health Department, all who attend at a Findlay City Council meeting or committee meeting are **requested** to adhere to all guidelines prescribed by the State or County Health Departments.
      - This option is favored by Councilmen Palmer and Russel.
    2. In the event of a public health emergency declared by either the State or County Health Department, all who attend at a Findlay City Council meeting or committee meeting are **required** to adhere to all guidelines prescribed by the State or County Health Departments.
      - This option is favored by Councilmen Haas and Russel.

Motion passes 3-0

**Adjournment**

*Grant C. Russel*

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Grant Russel - Ad Hoc Committee Chair

COMMITTEE REPORT

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FINDLAY, OHIO

An AD HOC COMMITTEE met on July 16, 2020 to discuss COVI-19 and related issues for City Council meeting.

We recommend: that Council choose between one of two paragraphs to be added to the end of Section 11 E - Attendance:

In the event of a public health emergency declared by either the State or County Health Departments, all who attend a Findlay City Council meeting or committee meeting are required requested to adhere to all guidelines prescribed by the state or county

Aye  Nay Grant Russel MOTION LEGISLATION: \_\_\_\_\_ Health Departments  
Grant Russel, Chair

Aye  Nay Bud Haas DATE: July 16, 2020  
Bud Haas

Aye  Nay Josh Palmer SECONDA COMMITTEE: AD HOC • Requested Option favored by Palmer & Russel  
Josh Palmer

• Required Option favored by HAAS & Russel