



Special Meeting of Norwood City Council Council Chambers August 31, 2011

A) CALL TO ORDER

The Council for the City of Norwood met in special session on the above date with Ms. Jane Grote presiding. The meeting opened with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Grote announced that Ms. Brown was not available, so Mrs. Laake will fill in for her as clerk pro-tem.

B) PRAYER

C) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

D) ROLL CALL

On roll call, Mr. Moore, Mr. Thornbury, Mrs. Laake, and Mr. Gabbard were present. Mr. Mumper, Mr. Sanker, and Mr. Schneider were absent.

E) APPROVAL OF THE HEATH COMMISSIONER SALARY

Ms. Grote announced that the 1st matter of the special meeting is to consider the starting salary for the Health Commissioner. She noted that members of the Board of Health were present for questions. Mr. Moore commented that one Councilperson felt it was important to hire a Health Commissioner that could live in Norwood. He said that we approved the last Commissioner who lived outside of Norwood. He asked the Board of Health if they can tell us how this has worked out with a commissioner not being a resident. Ms. Grote stated that we're considering the salary, but can discuss both issues, the other issue being that of residency. Kathy Hammond from the Board of Health answered that with Ms. Bauer it worked out perfectly. The Mayor could get a hold of her 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. She has received calls at 3:00 AM and on weekends and it has never been an issue. We do not perceive that it will be an issue with Mr. King. The drive takes him about 45 minutes. Mr. Moore asked why no one was found who lives near or in Norwood. Ms. Hammond answered that they had gotten applications from as far as Columbus. Some may know the fiscal issues of Norwood. Mr. King had researched Norwood. He knew what was going on in Norwood when he applied. No one in Norwood applied, and Mr. King was the most qualified person. They felt he could do a good job and be a good fit. Mr. Moore inquired if there was a motion on the floor. Ms. Grote stated that no motion was on the floor and that the issue right now being discussed is the salary. Mr. Moore stated that he has concern about spending any more money than what we already have allocated to fund what we have to. He wants to know what the Board of Health has to say about that. Ms. Hammond answered that the salary is not at the top or the bottom of the scale. They talked to Mr. Stith and he made suggestions. Mr. Stith suggested a starting salary they should consider and a starting date for Mr. King. Mr. Stith had sent over a spreadsheet and said that it would work as long as the start date was September 11 or later, but the board said September 12. Mr. Stith said that he felt if we offered that amount and Mr. King accepted the Health Department would be OK and there would be money left over and that's why we went with that figure. Mr. Thornbury asked how the offered salary compares with the current Commissioner's pay. Ms. Hammond answered that it is below that. Mr. Thornbury asked how it compares to what the current Commissioner started at. Miss Hammond answered that it is also less than what Ms. Bauer made to start with. It is about \$4,100.00 less than what Ms. Bauer is currently paid, and it is less than what she was offered in the beginning. Mr. Gabbard asked why the board didn't offer to start at the low end of the range because of the economic situation here. Ms. Hammond answered that the board felt that since Mr. King has a Masters of Public Health and is a registered Sanitarian and with his experience it was a good starting salary. The board did not want Mr. King to turn down the offer because of the salary. There are people that Mr. King would be supervising who make more money than he will. Mr.

Thornbury asked if the board could address the competitiveness of the position in this region. He asked if the board members are all aware of what other similar positions pay. Miss Hammond answered that we are not close to what Hamilton County pays. Mr. Thornbury asked how the pay compares with other cities in the area. Ms. Hammond answered that they did that study when they hired Ms. Bauer. She thinks it is below what other communities pay. Some have part-time people and Mr. King will be full-time. Mr. Moore said from all that he has seen, Mr. King is qualified and it would be a great position for him. He understands the desire to pay someone what you think they would bring in. He noted that the Safety-Service Director has people who work for him that make more money than him. He noted though that there is no overtime in Public Works so work goes undone, the Norwood Fire Department and Police Department have pulled administrative positions on to the line to save money so inspectors and detectives are not getting work done to cover the basics. That is how we're getting through this year. Mr. Moore asked how this is different for the Health Commissioner that this is what we need versus the other sacrifices people are making. Ms. Hammond answered that they came in with a lower number than Ms. Bauer's current salary and thought that that was a plus because we were saving \$4,100.00. Her salary was already allocated. Also the department is bringing in some money with birth and death certificate requests. Gary Arthur, the president pro-tem of the Board of Health, stepped forward to speak. He introduced himself and then said that when the board began to look for a replacement for Ms. Bauer, we found that there was a reluctance to come to Norwood for the position of Health Department Director because of circumstances we are in. They felt the salary range we offered was comparable to what Mr. King was asking for when he came in. It is on the lower end of the scale. It is an attraction to bring in a qualified person. We used those criteria to decide what we wanted to do. Mr. Arthur noted that Mr. King is qualified for the job, he is willing to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, he is willing to do whatever he has to do for the job and he has a positive attitude. He did his research before he came and told us why he would be fit for the job. The range and the salary, the board felt was comparable. Mr. Thornbury asked if Mr. Arthur could speak on cost saving measures the Health Department has done in the last twelve months. Mr. Arthur said he would be at a loss to give the statistics on that. Ms. Bauer has done a lot of grant research to fund some positions. The department took a big hit on their budget. Mrs. Laake asked if it was correct that Mr. King had already given his resignation to his other job. Mr. Arthur answered yes. There were no more questions. Ms. Grote stated that the Law Department indicated that an ordinance was not necessary. This action requires simply the making of a motion. Also it requires that only a majority of Council be present. She noted then the first matter is the approval of the Health Commissioner's salary. Ms. Grote asked if there was a motion. On a motion by Mr. Thornbury, seconded by Mr. Gabbard, it was moved that Council approved the salary as requested by the Board of Health for the new Health Commissioner. Mr. Gabbard asked the Mayor for his thoughts. The Mayor wanted to thank the members and president of the board for being there. He requested a special meeting, as the health board said they missed the boat and should have been here last time. In the meantime there has been a lot of discussion. It was prolonged and got worse. So he asked for a meeting so that Council members could be here and the Board of Health could be here and we could come to a conclusion. Mayor Williams said that he feels that he is not a Health Commission expert and he knows nothing about the Health Department. He is simply there when they need him. He attends a few meetings and did attend the last one. When he heard that they had checked on the finances he had concerns about what the issues were. He thinks there was a breakdown in communication and the rumor mill caused issues. For the sake of honesty, he told Mr. Arthur that they needed to do something. He did not want to see old issues resurface. These are legitimate concerns discussed around this issue. He had a discussion with Mr. Stith on it and he said he had a bit of a problem with the starting salary, but just a bit and it had been discussed. They started Mr. King below what Ms. Bauer started at. It was noted he will work for less than some who will work for him. When you look at this, if the person doesn't perform it will be a big issue. Mr. Gabbard said that the starting salary is a concern. Under normal circumstances, if they have no experience you start them out at the lower range. He does understand the issue. His concern to the Board of Health is that we have a projected \$1.7 million shortfall next year. Mr. Arthur mentioned a hit on their budget and there will be at another one next year. Mr. Gabbard hopes that Mr. King has been informed that it might come to drastic circumstances next

year or the year after, as come December 31st the financial woes won't stop. Mr. Gabbard does like Mr. King's experience and we will need that, as this position requires a lot of experience to work with the EPA. Mr. Gabbard will vote for it to get it moving. He appreciates that they started Mr. King out lower than the current salary, but because of our circumstances and what we need; the board can't just pick someone off the street. Mr. Gabbard would encourage the board to inform Mr. King of our financial situation when he starts, as it will be difficult with budgetary concerns. Having a Health Department makes us unique, and he noted the board does a great job with that. Mrs. Laake stated that back in the spring she proposed a 5% pay cut for everyone. While she would have liked to come in at a lower rate, she wasn't aware of the updated 2009 ordinance and she thought that \$58,000.00 was going to be less than starting salary. She can say from experience that Norwood is one of the lowest paying full-time Health Commissioner positions around that are comparable. She has personal knowledge from when she was health commissioner and was offered another job at a higher starting salary. Most other departments start at a higher salary, but Mrs. Laake acknowledges that this is not really an argument because of our situation. Mrs. Laake said she will vote yes, but wishes the process had been different. She stated that we have all learned from it. Mrs. Laake said that she talked with Mr. Stith today and he said the numbers he provided to the Board of Health were ok assuming that Ms. Bauer had not worked past the end of July. The money will be close. Mrs. Laake said she is willing to do this because they, as the Board of Health, have made a commitment to Mr. King and he has given his resignation. She's not sure of ramifications if we do not hire him. She will vote yes on this. Mr. Moore asked if the Mayor had a comment. The Mayor stated that one comment he heard was that we should look for someone less qualified. If we take the position to hire unqualified people to save money, we should close the doors. If we start hiring unqualified people we're not doing the citizens or the businesses of Norwood any service. Ms. Grote reminded everyone that the motion on the floor is to approve the starting salary of the Health Commissioner as requested by the Board of Health. On the motion to approve the starting salary of the Health Commissioner as requested by the Board of Health, the motion passed with Mr. Thornbury, Mrs. Laake, and Mr. Gabbard voting "Yes" on the motion and Mr. Moore voting "No".

F) WAIVER OF RESIDENCY FOR HEALTH COMMISSIONER

On a motion by Mr. Moore, seconded by Mr. Thornbury, it was moved to waive the residency requirement for Mr. King. All members present voted, "Yes."

G) EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS

On a motion by Mr. Thornbury, seconded by Mr. Moore, it was moved to excuse Mr. Mumper, Mr. Sanker, and Mr. Schneider. All members present voted, "Yes."

H) ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Thornbury, seconded by Mr. Moore, it was moved to adjourn. All members present voted, "Yes."

*Casey Brown **

**Casey Brown
Clerk of Council**

*Jane M. Grote **

**Jane M. Grote
President of Council**

*** Original copy was approved by council and signed by Ms. Brown and Ms. Grote during the regular Council Meeting held on October 11, 2011 and can be viewed at the Clerk of Council Office, 4645 Montgomery Rd, Room 205, Norwood, OH 45212**