



**MINUTES OF LEGISLATIVE AND ORDINANCE COMMITTEE**

59 COURT STREET  
ROOM 201  
JANUARY 17, 2024 AT 5:00 PM

RECEIVED

JAN 31 2024

WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Onyski at 5:00 PM.

Councilor Onyski called the roll. The following Committee members were in attendance: Chair, Councilor Bill Onyski and Councilor Michael Burns. Councilor Ralph Figy was not in attendance. Also in attendance was Director of Veteran Services Julie Barnes, Assistant City Solicitor Shanna Reid and Scribe of the Legislative and Ordinance Committee Karisa Zerbato.

Councilor Onyski opened the meeting for public participation. There was no one present to speak.

Upon motion of Councilor Burns, it was  
VOTED: that the minutes of December 19, 2023, be approved. The motion was seconded by Councilor Onyski. Approved by Roll Call 2-0.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Bill Onyski	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes

Upon motion of Councilor Burns, it was  
VOTED: TO APPROVE a Resolution to allow the Mayor to enter into an Intermunicipal Agreement with the Town of Montgomery to provide veteran services to the Town of Montgomery. The motion was seconded by Councilor Onyski. Approved by Roll Call 2-0.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Bill Onyski	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes

Prior to the vote, Julie Barnes stated an agreement was signed to enter into an Intermunicipal Agreement with the Town of Montgomery to provide veteran services to Westfield veterans as well as Montgomery veterans. She stated the Town of Montgomery doesn't have an office, full time staff or equipment needed to input Chapter 115 Benefits. She further stated in the past the city has entered into Intermunicipal Agreements with other towns including Chester and Russell. She added that she isn't sure why these dissolved as currently Chester is districted with Northampton and Russell is districted with Agawam. Mrs. Barnes stated she has been assisting Mindy the Veteran's Service Officer in Montgomery however Mindy works limited hours. Mrs. Barnes stated the Town of Montgomery will be paying the city a percentage and the agreement will be updated every year. Michael Morrissey, Chair of the Montgomery Selectboard stated they intend to keep Mindy as the first point of contact for veterans in Montgomery. Mr. Morrissey stated that Julie has been helping Mindy with the different processes.

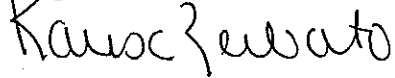
Mrs. Barnes stated Mindy is available to go to residents homes in Montgomery if needed for paperwork and deliver the paperwork to Westfield. Councilor Onyski asked about reimbursements. Mrs. Barnes stated the entire Chapter 115 payout is submitted to the state every month and the claims are approved and every quarter the city is reimbursed 75% for the prior year's quarter. She stated that in January the city will be reimbursed for October, November and December of 2022 as they are a full year behind. Mrs. Barnes stated the accounting for Montgomery is separate from Westfield. She stated she currently works with Montgomery's Treasurer for their payments. Shanna Reid stated the mayor can't sign the agreement until City Council gives approval. An attachment can be made to the agreement in regards to the amount changing yearly. Councilor Burns asked how many veterans she is working with. Mrs. Barnes stated currently she is working with Mindy with one veteran. Mrs. Barnes stated she is going to work on getting a newsletter out to veterans in Montgomery. Councilor Onyski asked what the reimbursement is for. Mrs. Barnes stated the majority of the time it is for medical reimbursement for low-income veterans (unemployed or underemployed). The benefits are paid monthly. Mrs. Barnes stated she can help people apply for VA benefits and homebound care if needed. She helps people with social security, pension, SSI and MassHealth insurance. She also stated she helps spouses when a veteran passes away. Councilor Onyski and Councilor Burns expressed their appreciation to Mrs. Barnes for her work.

At 5:14 PM and upon motion of Councilor Burns, it was VOTED TO ADJOURN. The motion was seconded by Councilor Onyski. Approved by Roll Call 2-0.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Bill Onyski .	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes

Respectively submitted,



Karisa Zerbato, Scribe