

MINUTES
CITY & SAFETY SERVICES COMMITTEE
JANUARY 27, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Sarah Grace, Chair
Chris Fahl, Vice-Chair
Beth Clodfelter, Member

Administrators and/o
Other Elected Officials: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Close-Circuit Sewer Television Camera
 - Grace – this equipment would be used to inspect and evaluate the City’s aging sewer lines – the funds for this purchase are already appropriated, however, since the cost is \$90,000 it must receive City Council approval for expenditure – this camera system can extend long distance on wheels that will allow it to navigate through different size sewer lines – current equipment can only be used for smaller lines – in past the City has rented CCTV for larger projects at a high cost with several days lag time, causing significant delays for repair – this equipment will be used on a regular basis, if not every day, at least 3 days a week – it will be used for proactive inspections
 - Risner – asked if this system can map the sewer lines
 - Grace – it is a GPS system
 - Fahl – that is huge for our unmapped area

ITEMS NEEDED ON THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. CCTV Camera

MINUTES
JANUARY 27, 2020
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
7:00 P.M.

Council Members in Attendance: Beth Clodfelter
Sam Crowl
Chris Fahl
Sarah Grace
Peter Kotses
Jeff Risner
Arian Smedley

Administrators and/or
Other Elected Officials: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht

Item Discussed:

- Southeast Ohio History Center
-President – Executive Director Tom O’Grady, has submitted a request that City Council send a letter of support for their capital campaign to the State of Ohio for \$600,000 for roof repairs and to restore the building’s masonry

- Baileys Trail System
-President – information was received today that ORCA has approved the hiring of an Executive Director
-Mayor – Rural Action is in receipt of an ARC grant that will cover the salary for the first year of this full-time position – the Director will act as a steward for moving the project forward by seeking funding, promoting the trail, of which 14 miles has been completed, and to institute programming – tonight he is requesting that Council amend Ordinance 110-19 as follows: Any Member may withdraw from ORCA upon ninety (90) days’ written notice to each of the other Members. ~~Withdrawal will be final after the ninetieth (90th) day, EXCEPT THAT all obligations, financial or otherwise, to ORCA assumed by the Member prior to submitting the notice of intent to withdraw shall continue until the end of ORCA’s then current Fiscal Year.~~

-Grace – believes it is important for the City to be able to opt-out because it is not typical for us to enter into a 20-year agreement to financially support a project outside the City limits – there are some concerns with our long-term financial revenues – it was important to her at the time of adoption of the Ordinance that the City not be the only entity on the hook for the bond – to date, no one else has signed on – the City is still waiting for the County to make a commitment, and she is unsure about the City making changes at this time – a request for State

funding has been made and, if approved, could change the financial needs of the project, so she just doesn't understand why it is so important for the City to change its terms when other parts of the deal are still in flux – if the City's share is contingent upon the County, then the County needs to make a decision

-Fahl – agrees with Grace – Council adopted the Ordinance based on certain criteria to protect the City in case the Baileys should fail – the County appears to have taken a step back, a time out before moving into the final steps

-Risner – he recalls the County asking the City to move forward with approval because our legislative process is lengthy as opposed to the County's one meeting and done – the City has done that and weeks later the Commissioners have still done nothing – he would like to see some earnest intent from the County that it supports this financial commitment to the Baileys – it doesn't seem that is too much to ask

-Mayor – the Port Authority has indicated that a bond cannot be issued until this 90-day withdrawal clause is removed

-Risner – again, sees no enthusiasm from the County

-Mayor – noted that the amount of \$3.6 million is being requested for Baileys from the capital budget – if approved, those funds would not be available for some time – meanwhile funding is needed – if we're successful in getting even \$1 million some adjustments can be made to the City's commitment

-Seth Brown, Quantified Ventures, Washington, D.C. – the Mayor's request to remove the withdrawal language is only to send a signal of the City's continued 20-year commitment to the project, and to reduce the fear of a lending agency – it does not change the City's financial obligation

-Smedley – questioned why he doesn't view this as a fundamental change – she is hearing from her colleagues that it is because what was agreed to before allowed the City the opportunity to opt-out – the Mayor's request tonight removes that opportunity

-Fahl – what the Council is comfortable with is being able to opt-out in order to protect the City's budget – when our partners are backing away, the City should not be stepping up

-Smedley – there's a lot to love about this project, but it's the long-term commitment that makes Council nervous

-Grace – it was her understanding when City Council approved this agreement last December that having this 90-day opt-out clause protected the City in case of unforeseen financial hardship

-Brown – the intent was to have a long-term annual commitment so that money could be borrowed upfront to fund the construction along with a set aside for operation and maintenance, knowing that the money would be coming in while the trail was able to become self-sufficient – if that money is not guaranteed and the City is not going to be there for the long-haul, it would be too risky for the borrowing agency

-President – without a binding contractual commitment for at least the term of the bonds, the Port Authority will not consider bonding

-Crowl – there was skepticism last year about this – City Council needed that escape clause – questioned why no one at that time voiced that no bond counsel would ever offer a bond with these kinds of terms

-Fahl – the key is that City Council funds physical projects, not management and administration of which this project comprises a high number value – she questions the City funding for anything other than the building of the trail

-Grace – not being an expert in bond procurement, she asked in earlier meetings who would be on the hook financially for the bonds – she felt comfortable adding that the bonding for this project would need separate approval by City Council, as well as the City having the ability to leave upon 90-days' notice – those who were involved in the planning and organization of this, who assured Council the City would have the option to leave after the notice and financial commitment through the current fiscal year, should have known very well that no one would be issuing bonds, and here we are – this should have been made clear long ago

-Fahl – asked about the status of the Mayor's request to amend

-President – there doesn't appear to be a consensus of Council to move forward with consideration of the amendment

- Climate Emergency

-Fahl – would like consideration of a resolution to begin a process addressing climate emergency

-Crowl – noted that on February 11th at 7:00 p.m., Ohio University is hosting a challenging dialogue series – Lisa Friedman, a New York Times reporter, will be talking about how climate change is covered

-Clodfelter – this is a very well timed resolution given that Wednesday, April 22, is the 50th anniversary of Earth Day

-Smedley – questioned the proposed 2030 benchmarks in terms of carbon emissions and whether that timeline is feasible

- Stormwater Service Charges
 - Grace – Administration requests increasing the stormwater fee by \$1.00 per month – currently the fee is \$2.00 per month for residential users and \$4.00 per month for commercial/industrial users – the requested monthly increase is \$1.00 for residential (\$3.00) and \$2.00 for commercial/industrial (\$6.00) – this rate has not changed in 10 years – expressed concern that multiple fee increases have either just recently been implemented, water and sewer, plus this one for stormwater, and another likely to come for garbage and all are reflected on just one bill – she would prefer a more coordinated plan that could be presented at one time – while the increases are all for good cause, residents are feeling nickel and dimed
 - Risner – asked about the justification for the stormwater increase
 - Crowl – administration would like to staff a new position, Environmental Coordinator – in the past, the City has paid the Athens Soil and Water Conservation District (ASWCD) to administer the City’s MS4 regulations/permits – due to a recent retirement in the ASWCD, the administration would like to bring these responsibilities in-house – part of the stormwater increase being proposed is to cover this added position – it would be paid .8 out of the Sewer-Storm Sewer Fund, a .1 from the Sewer Fund and .1 from the Water Fund – this would be a non-union position, non-supervisory, middle of the pay grades – primary role of the position will be to administer the MS4 program, specifically permitting stormwater pollution prevention, back up the lab technicians, monitoring fats, greases, and industrial pre-treatment in sewage treatment, assisting the Wastewater Assistant Manager with bio-solids management (sludge), and other environmental education efforts
 - President – understands that the ASWCD contract runs through May
 - Grace – asked what the City pays for the ASWCD contract
 - Mayor -- \$40,000 annually – the additional duties, beyond the MS4 regulations, performed by this employee will be important to the City – this increase will improve and enhance our stormwater system – the current revenue from this fee brings in approximately \$138,000 annually
 - Grace – the added rate change will bring in an additional \$69,000 annually
 - Fahl – would like part of this fee increase to go toward more green infrastructure
 - Auditor – City will need a job description before moving forward with the position – justification of the percentage splits paid from each fund will need further clarification

ITEMS NEEDED ON THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Climate Emergency

MINUTES
FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
JANUARY 27, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Sam Crowl, Chair
Jeff Risner, Vice-Chair
Peter Kotses, Member
Arian Smedley, Member

Administrators and/or
Other Elected Officials: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- CMI Software Upgrade
 - Crowl – this software is used for taxation, payroll, accounts payable and is utilized by the Auditor’s Office, Utilities Billing, and Human Resources – this system includes backup data – this will be a capital expenditure estimated at \$175,000 – the server resides in the Auditor’s Office
 - Auditor – the City has been with CMI since 1985 – the software system has not been upgraded since 2005 – accounts payable (\$60,000); payroll (\$51,000); tax authority (\$61,000) – estimate includes a new server which hasn’t been replaced for 8 years – does not have enough memory – would like to separate the server from the software to get it in place sooner – Auditor would like to transfer the money for the server from her supply line to capital improvements line (should be less than \$10,000) – the software installation can be implemented in April, starting with the Finance (payroll) and then moving on to tax – would like all to be in place by year-end
 - Kotses – asked if there is currently generator backup for the server
 - Auditor – there is not – explained that there is a virtual City server that has ample space to house this information and back it up, however, the State Auditor’s Office has very specific backup requirements – currently the Auditor’s server has two backups, one being a tape backup stored in City Hall and the other in the Cloud through CMI – the tape backup in an off-site location is preferable
 - Grace – asked if this software will include an electronic interface that would allow residents to access information and/or pay bills, of course, without providing access to confidential information

-Auditor – she will check on the availability of accessing such information
-Grace – before making a large software purchase that will hopefully serve the City for several years, it would be nice to be able to incorporate some of these features
-Auditor – added, very few software applications include an interfacing tax component

- Staffing (amend 0-08-20)
 - Crowl – amend to add other position title changes (no change in pay grades), and remove the position of pool manager

- Fire Department Contract
 - Crowl – a tentative agreement has been reached – highlights are as follows:
 - Contract term is 3 years.
 - Pay raises of 2% first year, 2.25% second year, 2.5% third year (the average increase in southeastern Ohio for Fire according to SERB is 2.37%).
 - Modification of the pay tables to decrease the step increase from Step 4 to Step 5, and tie the lieutenant increases to the firefighter increases (as opposed to being larger).
 - Healthcare adds “alternative plan” option for AFD members to “opt-in” to the HDHP-HSA program. This should yield some long-term savings.
 - Some work rule improvements on sick leave (doctor’s note after three days).
 - Allow for “structured interviews” for part of the lieutenant promotion process, rather than a straight written test. This should lead to more well-rounded officers.
 - Changes in the fair-share provisions to come into compliance.
 - Some other work-rule modifications in various areas.

The Union membership rejected the first tentative agreement, mainly over some changes the City wanted with command pay. We returned to the table and retracted most of those changes, but gave less pay increase in return, and the contract was ratified the second time.

-Mayor – this contract was completely negotiated in-house

ITEMS NEEDED ON THE NEXT CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Server
2. Staffing (amend)
3. Fire Contract

MINUTES
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
JANUARY 27, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Peter Kotses, Chair
Sam Crowl, Vice-Chair
Beth Clodfelter, Member

Administrators and/or
Other Elected Officials: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Events (street closures)
 - Kotses – four street closures are being requested at this time: International Street Fair, Saturday, April 4, closing East Union Street between Court and University Terrace, and College Street between Union and Washington, from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; The Plains Lions Club Cruise-Ins, closing Court Street between Washington and State, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the following Fridays, May 29, July 31, and September 11; Brew Week, Saturday, July 11, closing State Street between Court and Congress, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday, July 18, closing Court Street between Washington and Carpenter and a portion of State Street between Congress and College, from 6:00 a.m. to midnight; and Bounty on the Bricks, Saturday, August 1, closing Court Street between Union and Washington, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
 - Risner – asked if the City has a deadline for event organizers to schedule 2020 street closures
 - Kotses – there is no deadline this year, but one will most likely be a part of the guidelines next year
- ODOT LPA Project
 - Kotses – this is a resurfacing project on US 33 and us 50 within the corporate boundary – scheduled for June, 2020 – 100% of project cost will be paid by ODOT

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Event Street Closures
2. ODOT LPA Project