

MINUTES

CITY & SAFETY SERVICES COMMITTEE

APRIL 25, 2022

Members in Attendance:

Micah McCarey, Chair
Sarah Grace, Member
Sam Crowl, Member
Alan Swank, Member

Administrators and
Other Elected Officials:

President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Service-Safety Director Stone
Auditor Hecht

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- City/County Sewer Expansion, Project #317

-S-S Director – this project is related to Project #330 which will be discussed at an upcoming meeting – both are large improvements to the City’s sewer collection system – will be borrowing through an OEPA regionalization loan – 40 years at zero percent interest – these improvements will be needed for the City’s system, even without the County expansion – this project will allow sewage to come across from the southwest portion of the City at the intersection of North Blackburn and Stagecoach Roads, across The Ridges, Tier 2 land, through the back of the Summit at Coates Run Apartment Complex, down to Dairy Lane and onto Richland Avenue, as well as coming in from Elliottsville Road along Dairy Lane by upsizing the existing sewer line that serves the Dairy Barn and 317 Board – along with this Dairy Lane portion will be funds to build a water line on Dairy Lane – LeAx has continued to service the area since it was annexed, but the City cannot provide adequate fire protection – will also make pedestrian improvements to the 317 Board

-Grace – asked about pedestrian access improvements at the bridge

-S-S Director – this is primarily a utilities project with minor pedestrian improvements – there will be no changes to either of the two bridges on Dairy Lane

-McCarey – asked about the difference between construction and construction engineering

-S-S Director – the City handles the construction engineering (design changes) on small projects, but for larger projects the City typically hires a firm to monitor and handle design changes due to unanticipated problems, i.e. weak soils

-S-S Director – the other part of this project referenced earlier (Project #330), is an upgrade to the lift station at Richland Avenue and St. Rt. 682, the force main underneath the river to the trunk line, and also upgrades to the lift station St. Rt. 56, bringing sewage into the City across the river and down to the trunk line by Peden Stadium, via the force main

- Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Remote Site Telemetry Improvements, Project #339
 - McCarey – this project will separate communications from the Water Treatment Plant (WTP), and improve the remote site system
 - S-S Director – explained that these remote sites are booster and lift stations, water towers, in-ground reservoirs and various pressure release valves, about 45 sites around the City – these are controlled by radios – this is a 1990 system that has been upgraded over the last several years – have a bid with approximately \$530,000 already appropriated – will also need to appropriate funds in the amount of (\$235,000) to allow the award of the two alternatives, which will allow completion of telemetry improvements to all sites, and provide funds for construction engineering – the base bid includes telemetry upgrades at the WWTP and the following lift stations: Depot, McBee, Oakmont, Columbus Road 1 and 2, 50 East and West, SR 56, UE 1 and 2, Blackburn, Blackburn Tank (repeater site), UE Tank (repeater site), and Roosevelt Tower (repeater site) – Bid Alternative 1 includes the following lift stations: A-Frame, Dentist's Office, Shafer Street – Bid Alternative 2 includes the following lift stations: Motel 8, Old Coach, and Turnkey

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Project #317
2. Project #339

MINUTES: APRIL 25, 2022

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Members in Attendance:

Sam Crowl, Chair
Jeff Risner, Member
Solveig Spjeldnes, Member
Ben Ziff, Member

Administrators and/or
Other Elected Officials:

President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Service-Safety Director Stone
Auditor Hecht

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Fine and Fee Justice, Municipal Court (resolution of support)
 - Crowl – Judge Grace and Mayor Patterson recently attended a conference, Cities & Counties for Fine and Fee Justice, and the Judge would like to share an interesting proposal for social and economic equality as it relates to Court fines and fees – Judge Grace would like City Council to support this program through a resolution – understands there is a partial grant that is available for the study, and that five cities will be selected across the United States to participate
 - Judge Grace – explained that this program is a coalition of local governments working to ensure that fees do not place a disproportionate burden on low income residents – believes this meshes well with our City’s ideals – the City has an opportunity to apply to be one of the five cities from around the nation to join a progressive group looking for ways to make court systems more equitable for all people coming through the system – it gives the City the opportunity to be a leader, and then be a model for other communities to enact change of this nature – will connect us with resources, i.e. a grant option ranging from \$25,000- \$75,000 that is available to the cohort for this year – would like to investigate ways to reduce court costs, not fines or penalties – administrative costs are set as a flat fee on every case, regardless of type, severity, background, or financial situation – the idea of the cohort is to look at this as something that may have a disproportionate or unequal impact for the people coming before the court system, and to investigate ways to make it more equitable – Chief Justice O’Connor will write a letter of support to join the cohort, and having support from City Council would be a nice addition to the application process – understands the City is not in a situation at this time to take on all of the costs of the court, and he is not planning to ask for that, but there are a lot of things the City can do for the people most heavily impacted – regardless of the cohort, some changes have already begun, but being a part of the cohort gives the City the chance to be tied in with other people of like minds, and to be a leader addressing this issue and, again, setting a model for other communities – he encouraged Council Members to support a resolution
 - Mayor – noted that the initial charter cohort was 10 cities and is now down to five – at the conference he asked the likelihood of a city our size being selected to participate in the cohort – was told that all applications are weighed equally

and was strongly encouraged to apply – if selected, the City would go through a year-long process, bringing in non-profits and other legal services to take that deep dive into the inequities of the current fee structure – he, too, is in favor of City Council putting forward a resolution

-Judge Grace – believes community engagement through a Resolution of Support to reduce inequities is an important piece to the application

-Crowl – asked if the Court finalizes and submits the application

-Judge Grace – yes, the process has started and the final application is due May 22nd

-Risner – asked about support from Athens County Commissioners and the Athens County Sheriff's Office

-Judge Grace – he plans to approach them after this meeting since the City has the funding authority and obligations – understands the importance of including the broader community, others that may be impacted

-Spjeldnes – criminal justice reentry barriers are a concern – she supports this

-Swank – asked for an example of local inequities in the judicial process

-Judge Grace – it is common to have supervision fees when placed on probation (\$360.00) for a year – he has routinely seen people doing well in the program, but who struggle with the finances, thus delaying resolution of their case and undermining their sense of accomplishment in the program – he has already made this change – for each month there is successful participation in the program he provides a \$30 credit toward the supervision fee – supervision fees collected over the past five years are less than \$5000 per year

-McCarey – enthusiastic about this work – asked about ways to support this proposal regardless of whether the City is granted the opportunity to be part of the cohort

-Judge Grace – he has already begun making changes – is not waiting to be accepted into the cohort – the reason to make the change is to ease the impact on those coming through the court system – the court has a lot of latitude already in making these kinds of changes – he would like the community to engage in this process and share these goals

-McCarey – questioned whether the resolution will specifically speak to this opportunity, or more broadly to our interest in pursuing these interests as a community

-Crowl – believes the resolution will specifically be in support of the application

-Auditor – can appreciate the ideals of this proposal, but as Auditor she is concerned about losing court costs which is the main source of revenue for Municipal Court – the Court's budget is over \$1 million, and the City already subsidizes the Court by approximately \$400,000 annually – Court costs last year were approximately \$460,000 – other fines and fees bring in about \$200,000 – while she supports the concept, she is uncomfortable moving forward with a resolution if the City cannot follow through and be willing to give up a half million dollars a year in our General Fund to support the Court – the General Fund subsidy to Municipal Court increases every year – there have been many

conversations over the years about how much of the General Fund can be used to subsidize the Court – financially, City Council needs to be ready to back this up, and it's a lot of money, \$460,000 in court costs the City would be losing by supporting this program

-Judge Grace – it is not the Court's immediate plan to remove court costs, which would be the extreme, most progressive version of this proposal, and he is not proposing that – he understands the City is not in a situation to absorb all of that cost – he is looking at ways to minimize the impact, not to completely change the structure

-Auditor – without additional financial support, City Council will need to make other adjustments in the Court budget to account for this loss

-Crowl – financials are an important part of the process

-Spjeldnes – believes there are some smart ways of dealing with this that could conceivably reduce costs, rather than adding to them

-President – sees general support for submitting the application and supporting the Judge's program interests, understanding there are already a number of ways to advance more equitable situations – City Council needs to be cognizant of the Auditor's concerns with further discussion and caution about the financial implications of removing court costs

-Swank – in 2015 the Court's total revenue was \$957,000 and in 2019 it was reduced to \$737,000, four straight years there was a significant decline in revenue, a total reduction of 24% -- that is a lot of money – agrees with Auditor Hecht, why support a resolution if the City can't follow through – asked the Judge the reason for this decline in revenue

-Judge – this revenue decline began in roughly 2012 with a policy change by the Ohio State Patrol in reducing traffic citations – reiterated, this program is to make costs more equitable and to protect those coming through the court system that are being impacted, not because of punishment, but because of imposing these blanket costs – that is what he is trying to address

-Swank – asked about a similar reduction in traffic citations issued by APD and the Sheriff's Office

-Judge – APD doesn't typically issue a lot of citations

-Mayor – clarified that there was no similar OSP paradigm shift with the APD

-Ziff – understands the Court is not a business – would like to see the loss of court costs subsidized in other ways

-Auditor – this would be a large subsidy for the City – while revenue has decreased, expenses have not

-Grace – requested additional financial detail, a further breakdown of the Municipal Court's budget

-Auditor – will provide more detailed revenue and expenses

- Retroactive Pay for Chief Deputy Clerk

-Crowl – Judge is requesting retroactive pay after a new pay grade was established

-Judge Grace – order to increase the pay was issued in January, 2022 with the desire to reclassify the position which took about three months – he hopes the employee will not lose the increase pay during that time period – the retroactive pay would be \$247.26

- 2022 Staffing (amend)

- Crowl – (see attached) requested changes for the Auditor's Office – a change is also requested to increase the pay rate for the Pool Manager's position from \$16.00 - \$20.00

- Risner – clarified that this will be a reduction of one staff member in the Auditor's Office

- Auditor – that is correct, the position being eliminated has been vacant and unfunded for some time

- S-S Director – have a highly qualified candidate for the seasonal position of Pool Manager – with the pool opening soon he asked that the legislation be approved quickly, or that the requested increase in the pay be made retroactive to the pool manager's date of hire

- Grace – asked if this position is eligible for overtime

- S-S Director – this position is not typically paid overtime, but it is permitted

- Swank – asked if the person being considered has experience with mechanicals

- S-S Director – not as much as this particular pool has, but support is available from City's maintenance and water staff

- Armory Rehabilitation, Project #313

- Crowl – Administration is seeking an appropriation of \$165,000 for final design, and to expend up to \$274,000 in order to capture the overall expense authorization, to date

- S-S Director – in looking back at costs associated with Project #313, \$109,000 has already been committed, but the total expenditure will also need to include the recent appropriation by City Council of an additional \$500,000 of ARPA funds, or \$774,000 – City will commit about \$1 million toward this \$3.5 million project

- Appropriations

- (\$200,000.00) to General Fund, Auditor, to cover income tax refunds

- Spjeldnes – asked if this will be the final amount needed for appropriation

- Auditor – no way to predict – 2021 refund costs are much higher than she ever would have anticipated – her office is reaching out to other municipalities on their refund status from their work from home – her staff is also tracking regular refunds vs work from home refunds

- Swank – asked if she could provide a ballpark figure to date for the total number, not amount, of refunds processed thus far, and the percentage of those that are from Ohio University

- Auditor – can provide those figures

- Swank – tomorrow City Council is meeting with Ohio University executives and believes that would be a good topic of conversation
- Auditor – she will follow up with him tomorrow

- (\$7,000.00) to General Fund, Lands & Buildings, for tool replacement from a theft – this amount is payment from the City's insurance

- (\$40.00) to DRD Fund, to cover County Auditor fees

- (APR) miscellaneous
 - Crowl – includes pump repairs, maintenance of the gym and exercise studio floors, and lifeguard precertification
 - S-S Director -- \$8000, T.C. 300, Recreation 270, for maintenance, and \$2500 for lifeguard precertification; gym and fitness studio floors (\$8500) Community Center, 271, T.C. 300
 - Spjeldnes – has received some concern that the high gloss finish on the gym floor is not the best for pickleball players – asked about a matte finish
 - S-S Director – is not familiar with a matte finish that would protect at the same level as that of a high gloss finish, for other sports being played in that facility – he will check into that
 - Swank – glare from floor is a concern for pickleball players, however, the new lighting may make a difference – prior to finishing suggested painting lines for all sports being played on the floor instead of taping, that can ruin the finish – understands there be additional cost
 - S-S Director – another benefit of sheen on the floor, high gloss finish is its durability vs a matte finish that may be more permeable and more difficult to clean
 - Mayor – LED lighting will be a great improvement – will review best practices on the finish

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Resolution of Support
2. Retroactive Pay
3. Staffing
4. Pay Increase
5. Armory
6. Appropriations

MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

APRIL 25, 2022

Members in Attendance: Jeff Risner, Chair
Sarah Grace, Member
Alan Swank, Member
Ben Ziff, Member

Administrators and/or

Other Elected Officials: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Service-Safety Director Stone
Auditor Hecht

- University Estates Bikepath Spur, Project #348 (repair)
 - Risner – this project will repair the slip on the bikeway spur between Armitage Road and University Estates Boulevard – there is a need not only to repair the bikepath, but to stabilize the slope
 - S-S Director – this slope has been disturbed previously, not only to build the water line but for underground electric as well – this disturbed ground, coupled with the fact that there are underground drainage issues and groundwater, has caused a fairly significant slip to move and to continue to move, common in southeastern Ohio – need to build a retaining wall to arrest movement and protect the spur and waterline – this will guarantee that it will not continue to move – need to authorize to accept bids and enter into contract(s) for construction and construction engineering, appropriate \$550,000 for the retaining wall and an additional \$100,000 for some improvements to the upper and lower sections of the path to arrest movement
 - Risner – if the slope continues to move it could damage both the water and electric lines
 - Swank – asked if the project could be separated, by relocating the spur (less than 100 yards), and then repairing the slope where the water line is located
 - Mayor – regardless, the slope needs to be shored up for the critical infrastructure – an alternative for the spur will not solve the problem of the moving slope – the City has experienced a lot of issues and spent a lot of money with slippage of water lines along University Estates Boulevard due to the soils in this development
 - Spjeldnes – agrees that relocating the spur may be a good option
 - S-S Director – an alternate path would cross private property – reiterated the retaining wall will still need to be constructed to protect the water line

- Adhoc Committee on Pedestrian Accessibility
 - Dianne Bouvier, Chair -- presented the members and the First Quarter Focus of the 1st Quarter Progress Report (see attached)
 - Stephanie Hunter, Unofficial Contributor – defined “How do we define pedestrian? And What is pedestrian infrastructure?”
 - Solveig Spjeldnes, City Council Member – spoke to the Vision and Mission Statements and Goals of the Ad Hoc Committee
 - Rob Delach, Community Member – provided Sidewalk Baseline Information and Current Situation – working with Member Neil Ryan, Ohio University Student on GIS Data
 - Bouvier – concluded with Next Steps Timeline
 - Swank – asked what impediments have been identified, and whether cost is one of them
 - Bouvier – cost is definitely an impediment – looking at many options
 - Swank – is aware of another community where sidewalk repair is a shared expense of the City and the property owner, and has showed definite improvement in their sidewalk structure
 - Bouvier – need to make sidewalks a priority and receive the benefits they provide
 - Mayor – in many areas of the City there are challenges with topography
 - Spjeldnes – there has been a lot of effort over the years to improve our sidewalks, and this is an opportunity to build on that – exploring all workable solutions and possibilities for cost of improvements – would appreciate feedback from the Council
 - President – appreciates the background and detailed information the Committee has provided in such a short time, and looks forward to the next progress report on August 8th

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Project #348