

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING (HYBRID)
MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2020 – 7:30 P.M.
MAYOR WILLIAM G. KOONS PRESIDING VIA ZOOM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Berger (Zoom), Canton (Zoom), Carroll, Galicki, Nairn, Porter

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Fiscal Officer Romanowski (Zoom), Fiscal Auditor Lechman (Zoom), Police Chief Rizzo (Zoom), Solicitor Matheney

VISITORS: Kelly Kimball, Jim’s Iphone, Greg Heilman

The Mayor called the hybrid Regular Council meeting conducted with some members attending in person and the Mayor and some via the teleconference service Zoom to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said, and the Fiscal Officer read the roll. Regarding the minutes of the October 12, 2020 Council meeting, Canton stated he had a correction to the second full paragraph on page 11. He wanted it added to the end of the paragraph that ‘Canton stated he and Berger did not take any offense to Nairn’s comment.’ Carroll made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2020 Council meeting as amended, seconded by Nairn. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

MAYOR’S REPORT: The Mayor addressed recent activities that he did not feel reflected well on the Village, Council, or citizens. He wanted to be included in the next HR Committee meeting to discuss seeking the assistance of an HR professional to facilitate Council working better together.

The Mayor advised he wanted to split the strategic plan into stormwater, land usage, and future vision for the Village. He asked for recommendations from Council for the strategic plans to determine whether they could be done in-house or by an outside contractor.

Regarding the discussion of Village processes at the previous Council meeting, there was a question of checking references of potential employees. He advised that normally, three references are provided on the applications. When he would call those references, he would ask for other references so that there would be six or more references total. With a recent hire, he was able to talk to seven different people who could discuss the potential employee.

Using Indeed.com, the Village received 252 applications and the Fiscal Officer narrowed it to 17. This number was cut to two people to interview, and one did not show. He stated that the Village should not rely on Indeed.com but word of mouth and going to colleagues to see what they are doing to find good candidates.

The Mayor addressed the Finance Committee regarding pay situations he wanted to look at and asked to be invited to the next meeting.

Regarding the Cares Act funding, the Mayor stated that there was \$70,000 unaccounted for, and Chagrin Falls Schools approached the Village with a request for \$20,000 for plexiglass for the classrooms. He asked Council to consider this as well as doing something for small businesses.

The Mayor stated that a couple of weeks ago, a citizen put on a movie at the South Russell Village Park pavilion on a Saturday night. There were over 100 people who attended. He acknowledged how someone could provide a nice experience inexpensively.

Saturday, October 24, was the Art Craft Show. The Mayor stated that it appeared to be the same format as the Farmer's Market, and that some of the vendors were the same as well.

At the November 9th Council meeting, the Fire Marshal would be presenting a proposal for a smoke detector program and other ideas he would like Council to consider. He would also address review of the fire code.

The Mayor stated that there was a Zoom Park meeting that went well.

Two more trees had been purchased; one for Sally Butz-Voss and one for former Mayor Harvey.

The Mayor reported that the County stepped up to help residents with storm related sewage problems. The issues have resulted in costly repairs for some residents. On October 15th, there was a Zoom Stormwater meeting where residents could discuss their issues.

The Mayor attended the Alderwood Homeowners Association (HOA) meeting and reported that water problems with Country Estates continue. The Village will have to notify some residents of Country Estates to make changes to their properties to mitigate the water issues.

A swale located between the Woods of Wembley neighborhood and Sheerbrook Dr. has disappeared due to construction and erosion. The two neighborhoods are working to resolve the issue and the Village has given them help, but it is a civil matter. The Village staked out the source of the problem and is trying to deal with the Woods of Wembley to get the swale reconfigured.

The Mayor met with residents of Paw Paw Lake and will meet with them again on Wednesday, October 28th. He reported that the community hired a contractor to fix their road, which will be 16 feet across. They requested the Village consider snow plowing it, and the Mayor said he would get back to them on Wednesday but did not see that becoming a reality.

Shredding Day will be November 7, 2020. Shredding Day for 2021 will be October 18th.

Regarding sign regulations, the Mayor advised that it is an issue Council needs to address.

The planning meeting for the Manor Brook HOA construction was held on Friday, October 23rd. Two meetings will be held in November for representatives of Manor Brook to explain the process of the project in 2021.

Carroll offered that the Mayor could utilize the Urban Planning Department at Cleveland State University (CSU) as a resource with the strategic plan.

Regarding the Cares Act funds, Carroll asked if any of the other area Villages were providing money to the schools. The Mayor did not know and stated that he caught them by surprise when he offered that they could make a request to the Village. Carroll thought that it was a good idea, along with the suggestion for small businesses, but advised the Village was getting tight on time. For planning

purposes, it would be difficult. The Village would need to have an application process in place if it were to consider offering funds to small businesses and the schools. Additionally, these would require approval by the Solicitor before the Village could move forward. Given the tight timeline, this might be difficult. The Mayor agreed that November 20th would come quickly.

FISCAL OFFICER'S REPORT: The Fiscal Officer advised she had been busy preparing for the Cares Act funding. This included preparing legislation currently before Council.

Regarding Income Tax, the Village is about \$305,000 from where it was estimated for the year. In the last two months of the previous year, \$278,000 was collected. She advised that the Village is close to where it should be providing the last two months come in where they should. CCA has reconciled through August, which could mean additional payments to the Village.

Porter asked if the Road Program bill had been paid, and the Fiscal Officer stated no. She anticipated asking for approval by Council at the next meeting. She explained that the Village will pay the gross, and then will get the funds back, which would amount to \$750,000. The reimbursement from Kensington Circle was close to \$100,000 and Daisy Lane was about \$128,000. Carroll added that the Village would be outlaying \$755,000 total, but with the reimbursements, the net outlay is about \$620,000. Porter thought this sounded high. Carroll and the Fiscal Officer explained that there were also engineering costs included, which is a percentage of the Road Program.

FISCAL AUDITOR: The Fiscal Auditor distributed his report for the month ending September 30, 2020. The total of all funds at the end of September was \$3.68 million. The fund balances on the Fiscal Auditor's report matched the independently determined fund balances of the Fiscal Officer to the penny. The interest rate had not changed since the previous month. The Fiscal Auditor noted that the Village ended the month \$26,000 less than when it started, which was not unusual for the time of year. Year to date, the Village is still \$641,00 higher than the start. Notable revenues included the \$25,462 COVID grant and the homestead rollback payment. In combining this payment with Real Estate Taxes, the Village exceeded the budget amount by 102%. He added that the Village is doing well for revenue for the year. There were no big expenditures to note in September, but he suspected there would be some coming before the end of the year.

Carroll made a motion to accept the Fiscal Auditor's report since it matched the Fiscal Officer's report to the penny, seconded by Porter. Roll call, ayes, all. Motion carried.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Carroll stated that the Finance Committee minutes were distributed to Council. Documentation relating to the Cares Act funds were also distributed to Council for consideration. The proposed expenditures had been reviewed by the Solicitor. The Solicitor added that as long as the memoranda of necessity had been signed, she had no problem with them. Carroll indicated to the Mayor that his signature was required. Carroll identified the proposed expenditures as follows: installing a pocket door between the administrative office and the copy room in Village Hall; installing touchless fixtures in bathrooms and kitchens on the Village campus; purchasing tablets for elected officials; replacing the ventilation system and exhaust fans in the Police Department; replacing carpet in public areas of Village Hall and the Police Department with hard surface flooring; purchasing a Fit Test machine for the purposes of testing N95 masks, air purifying respirators, and self-contained breathing apparatus by the Chagrin Falls Fire Department; and replacing the Service Department Ford Expedition with a Ford F350 Super Cab with a box for a total of \$109,202. The Fiscal Officer

explained that with the Cares Act funds, it would be possible to replace the carpet in the public areas of Village Hall and the Police Department. A quote was also obtained to include the private offices, but they would not be covered by the Cares Act funds. The cost to do these offices would be \$6,600, which would come out of Village funds. There was money budgeted to cover this if Council decided to do this. Carroll stated his recommendation would be to do everything to be consistent. The remaining funds could be used for salary and benefits. He acknowledged the Mayor's suggestion but thought this would require more information and would be difficult with the timeline. The Fiscal Officer reiterated that whatever is not encumbered by November 15th must be returned.

Carroll suggested moving the Finance Committee meeting from November 3 to November 4 at 8:00 a.m. in Village Hall because of election day, and suggested the Mayor attend and present the committee with information he wanted the committee to consider. It would be necessary to be ready to move at the November 9th Council meeting. The proposals would need to be submitted to the Solicitor before this.

Nairn asked about touchless flushing with the toilets, and the Fiscal Officer explained that all the toilets on the Village campus were not commercial toilets and thus could not be fitted with the touchless feature. To replace the toilets would be costly.

Porter asked about the entry for eight computers for officials and the Street Commissioner and asked who the officials were. The Fiscal Officer explained the computers would be for Mayor and Council. They would be used in conjunction with the teleconferencing equipment to be installed in Village Hall for remote meetings. They would alleviate technology issues with the personal computers used by members of Council. She and the Police Chief have computers and one would be obtained for the Street Commissioner. Porter acknowledged the computers would be returned by Council members on completion of their terms in office. The Fiscal Officer advised that if Council members exclusively used the device for Village business, it would also contain all the public records information. Carroll added that there would be good tracking of the devices and thought it would be beneficial in providing flexibility with video conferencing.

Nairn asked if the Village planned to give any money to the hospital, and Carroll stated not that he was aware.

The Mayor asked how much money would be left if all the expenditures were to be approved, and the Fiscal Officer stated around \$52,178. The Mayor verified this would have to be returned, and Carroll explained this would only be if the Village did not encumber it. However, it could be encumbered for salaries. He attended a training session where it was suggested the funds be encumbered no matter what. The Fiscal Officer stated that all the funds could be encumbered for salaries for Police only. She added that the budget for Police is well over \$220,000 per year. The funds could be encumbered for this, but it would have to be done through special legislation. Then, the Police could be paid from this fund, and the funds appropriated for Police could be reappropriated to use as the Village chose. It was recommended that the remaining funds be encumbered for salaries. Porter agreed this was a good idea.

The Mayor said he would send a simple spreadsheet with everything the school wanted for \$20,000. He asked if there was any interest by Council in giving money to the school and said it could be discussed at the next Council meeting. He added that the idea of giving money to the hospital had

been discussed. Carroll asked the Mayor to forward the information and questioned what Chagrin Falls Village or any of the other communities like Bentleyville, Moreland Hills, and Hunting Valley were doing regarding providing funds to the schools.

Carroll addressed the repair of a brick apron to a driveway on Sheerbrook Dr. relating to the Road Program. The estimate was \$1,500 to repair the apron. Given the information provided by the Engineer about the difficulty of the transition and the way the roadwork was done, it was recommended the Village split the cost of repairing the apron. Carroll was uncertain as to the proper way to pay the homeowner. The Fiscal Officer stated that for transparency, the Village should write the resident a check directly. Because this had not been done before, the Fiscal Officer wanted to be certain Council agreed. Porter asked if the contractor caused the issue. Carroll explained the details of what led to the issue, and Porter clarified that it was a matter of the contractor doing the job per the specs, and the results were not what they should have been. As a result, the Village should make it right. Carroll concurred. Carroll also explained that there was another unresolved driveway apron issue still under consideration.

Carroll thought that writing a check to the resident with the brick apron made the most sense. Porter made a motion that the Mayor and Fiscal Officer be permitted to cut a check to the homeowner with the brick driveway in the amount of \$750 representing half the amount spent by the homeowner to correct a problem arising from the Road Program, not the fault of the contractor, seconded by Carroll. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

The Mayor referenced the Finance Committee minutes where it was stated that many of the residents were unhappy with the way their driveway aprons turned out. He asked if the Village had addresses for these residents. Carroll said he was in receipt of several emails, including from Mr. Flaiz. Carroll observed two of the three aprons as well as the roadside grindings of which a resident complained. Porter, Carroll, and Nairn had received emails, and Carroll advised he would forward them to the Mayor. The Mayor stated he received complaints about grindings and one about a scratch on a mailbox. He stated that the Street Commissioner had not been copied on the emails and asked they forward the emails to him. Carroll stated the matter was discussed at the Street Committee meeting with the Street Commissioner. The Mayor stated when he spoke to the Street Commissioner that morning, the Street Commissioner was surprised there was a problem with aprons. Carroll reiterated that it had been discussed with the Street Commissioner. Carroll added that he forwarded a complaint he received to the Street Commissioner about the reclamite sealer which was still leaching an oily substance on the road and the residents were not happy about it. This, too, had been discussed at the Street Committee meeting with the Street Commissioner and the Engineer. Carroll stated it would be discussed at the Street Committee meeting on October 30th.

SOLICITOR: The Solicitor stated she had nothing to report.

STREET COMMITTEE: Porter stated the Street Committee will be meeting on Friday, October 30th at 7:00 a.m. in the Street Commissioner's Office. Discussions will include the driveway aprons and overall performance of the 2020 Road Program contractor.

Porter advised that the Chagrin Falls Schools wanted to purchase salt from the Village in 2020 – 2021, and per the Street Commissioner's recommendation, the committee was in favor of this. Porter made a motion that the Mayor, Fiscal Officer, and Street Commissioner be authorized to enter into an

agreement with the Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools for the purpose of purchasing salt for the winter of 2020-2021, seconded by Carroll. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Porter spoke with Jim Flaiz about his driveway apron, and he was not pleased with what was done. He had one estimate for \$3,200 to tear out what was done and have it redone by a contractor. Porter verified this estimate was forwarded to the Street Committee, and they will consider it at the October 30th meeting. Flaiz was unhappy and felt it was the fault of the contractor rather than the other driveway apron situation Council just addressed. Porter advised the Engineer and Flaiz would be invited to participate in the meeting to resolve the issue.

BUILDING COMMITTEE: Canton stated the Building Committee will meet Thursday, November 5, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. Canton was informed that all tests and background checks had been completed with excellent results. He welcomed Ruth Griswold as part of the South Russell family and said her first day on the job would be November 2nd.

SAFETY COMMITTEE: Canton stated the Safety Committee would be meeting November 5, 2020 at 7:00 a.m.

HR COMMITTEE: Porter stated the HR Committee would be meeting Friday, October 30th at 8:00 a.m. in Village Hall to discuss HR issues which would include the grievance reporting process for the Village and items identified in the last Council meeting. The first issue pertained to how a grievant might pursue a grievance if a supervisory person in their direct chain of command were the alleged harasser. The current system does not take this into account.

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE: Nairn stated that the 22 trees were purchased and planted on the inside wall of the Cemetery and looked wonderful. She offered kudos to the Street Commissioner and staff, and thanked Mayor and Council for allowing the much-needed sound barrier.

Nairn reported that there were components on backorder for the LED lights purchased with the Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) grant funds for the salt dome and shed. The lights had been shipped and should arrive soon which would complete the project.

Nairn stated the Properties Committee would be meeting Wednesday, October 28th at 10:00 a.m. in Village Hall for purposes of establishing an inventory system for Village property/equipment in the various departments of the Village.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE: Galicki stated there was nothing to report.

The Mayor addressed the United States Geological Survey agreement for 2021, and Carroll asked if it was the same amount the Village paid last year. Porter stated it was close and possibly several hundred dollars more. The Fiscal Officer stated that \$8,500 had been budgeted. The Village paid \$8,200 the previous year. Carroll said that keeping the contract had been a matter of discussion in past years but given the Lantern and water issues at Gurney School, he supported continuing the program for at least one more year to ascertain continued good water levels. Porter agreed, but found it disturbing that South Russell was alone in Geauga County to monitor water levels. Galicki advised this was a decision by former County Commissioner, Mr. Claypool, which Porter stated he recalled. Galicki made a motion that the Village enter into an agreement with the United States Department of

the Interior Geological Survey (USGS) to continue a program of ground water level monitoring within South Russell Village, seconded by Nairn. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

PARK COMMITTEE: Nairn advised that the Mayor conducted a Zoom meeting on Tuesday, October 13th at 7:00 p.m. with nine attendees to discuss various aspects of the South Russell Village Park. Nairn learned a variety of things, to include that the Village has a number of residents who are experts in birds. The possibility of the Village hosting some bird walk and talks was discussed. The Bobolinks were also discussed as well as the necessity to being cognizant of the mowing practices. Nairn stated that the bluebird boxes needed to be monitored, installed in pairs, facing southeast, and should be 500 feet apart. The bat houses should be placed near the new wetlands area. Regarding the current condition of the park, meeting participants discussed that it is overloaded with invasive plant species and the idea of conducting a controlled burn was discussed as a beneficial solution. The controlled burn would require time and a great deal of planning. Other methods of addressing the invasive plants were addressed as well. Nairn noted that one participant in the meeting expressed concern over inadequate insect life, which serves as an indicator of the health of the park.

The Mayor stated that before the Village considered a controlled burn, it would observe what was done in Frohring Meadows. It would not take place until 2022. The Mayor liked the idea of introducing more activities like the bird walks into the park and noted that areas used for former Girl Scout projects would have to be watched and maintained.

ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:

Carroll provided the third reading of an ordinance creating a petty cash fund for the Building Department. Carroll made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2020-50**

Porter provided a second reading of an ordinance amending Appendix D – Job Descriptions of the Village’s Employee Handbook adding the job description of the Building Inspector and to reflect that such position will be part-time.

Porter provided a second reading of an ordinance amending ordinances 2015-41, 2016-33, 2017-08, 2018-07, 2018-44, and 2020-07, 2020-41 by amending pay ranges for South Russell Village employees due to adding a part-time Building Inspector pay range.

Carroll introduced a resolution of acceptance approving Cares Act expenditures and declaring an emergency. Carroll made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Carroll made a motion to adopt, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **RES 2020-51**

Carroll made a motion to do the remaining offices in solid surface with Village funds for the amount not to exceed \$6,700, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Porter made a motion to renew the healthcare coverage for Village employees per the proposal made by the Fiscal Officer, seconded by Carroll. Porter stated that the Village was looking at a 4.5% increase in the healthcare premium costs, which was significantly below the average increases for other entities, which were 12% to 19%. This was partly because the Village was grandfathered into the plan from a time before Obamacare. The Village was fortunate to have small increases over the

last 10 years or so when Council predicted 15% to 20% increases in health care. This had not been realized in part because the Village administration had the wisdom to enter the pool of insurance. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Regarding the Village policy of paying \$100 to employees who get a physical in a calendar year, Porter recommended continuing this practice. Porter made a motion that the Village continue its payment to employees of \$100 each should they get a physical accomplished in the calendar year of 2021, seconded by Carroll. Galicki asked how many employees took advantage of this the previous year. The Fiscal Officer stated it was eight or nine the previous year and she currently was aware of two and expected more to follow.

The Mayor asked if this motion must be done yearly, and the Fiscal Officer explained that initially it was done yearly, but if Council desired, it could be made permanent. Porter suggested doing it by the year. If it were placed in the Employee Handbook, it would have to be amended by ordinance. 25 years from now \$100 may not have the same significance. Galicki and Nairn agreed with Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

BILLS LIST: Carroll made a motion to ratify the bills list of 11/15/2020 in the amount of \$123,518.82, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

NEW/OTHER: Carroll, Galicki, Nairn, Berger, Canton had no new business.


At 8:34 p.m., Porter made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing employee compensation and imminent or pending litigation, seconded by Carroll. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Council reconvened at 9:47 p.m.

Porter made a motion to give all full-time and part-time employees a 3% raise for 2021, seconded by Carroll. Roll call – ayes; Carroll, Galicki, Nairn, and Porter. Nays; Berger and Canton. Motion carried.

Porter made a motion to increase the Administrative Assistant to the Fiscal Officer’s hourly wage \$2.00 per hour seconded by Nairn. Roll call – ayes; Carroll, Nairn, and Porter. Nays; Berger and Canton. Galicki abstained. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: Being that there was no further business before Council, Porter made a motion to adjourn at 9:40 p.m., seconded by Carroll. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.



William G. Koons, Mayor



Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki