

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2021 – 6:30 P.M.
MAYOR WILLIAM G. KOONS PRESIDING**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Berger, Canton, Carroll, Galicki, Nairn

MEMBERS ABSENT: Porter

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Police Chief Rizzo

The Mayor called the long-range planning meeting to order.

Canton spoke to the Chief and reported that there were no major projects coming around the corner. However, there is the continuation of purchasing hybrid vehicles for the Police Department. Galicki asked about the plan over the next five years in terms of the phased replacement program. The Chief advised that generally one car per year is replaced. In 2018, it was necessary to purchase two cars due to the catastrophic failure of an engine in one of the cars. Two new cruisers were purchased in 2018 as a result. He explained that this would mean that the replacement of these two vehicles would come up at the same time which presented some issues with high mileage if replacement of one were extended an extra year. After discussion with the Safety Committee, two vehicles may be requested in 2022 to replace the two 2018 vehicles. Galicki asked if this would be reflected in the Chief's budget, and he explained that this would be discussed in the Budget Session. It was not in the original plan because the hope was to spread out the vehicle replacements, but the mileage became an issue. Carroll asked if the replacement were done by time or mileage and the Chief indicated miles. He explained that this equates to a four-to-five-year cycle. He further explained that one of the two vehicles would be used to replace the 2014 Village vehicle. The 2014 vehicle and the 2018 in poorer shape would be traded in. Carroll and the Chief discussed the pattern of use of the vehicles. Carroll explored the option of replacing the vehicles by time instead of mileage, and the Chief explained that with the current process it ends up being equal. Nairn asked about the savings with the hybrid vehicles. The Chief stated that there is a significant savings in both maintenance and fuel.

Canton addressed the purchase of the license plate recognition (LPR) cameras. The Chief explained that there is a \$2,500 per camera per year cost, which would be a \$20,000 recurring cost. The installation fee is \$300 per camera. Carroll verified there would be eight cameras. The Chief explained that there would be one at each entrance to the Village and one at the intersection.

Canton addressed the continuing education for the police officers and asked how often they went to a shooting range. The Chief stated that they have range four times per year. The minimum qualification is at least once per year.

The hiring of police officers was discussed.

The Chief addressed the purchase of body cameras as a budgeted item for next year. He is attempting to obtain a grant but has allocated \$20,000 for four body cameras in the event he does not receive one. Nairn asked if the body cameras are required, and the Chief felt they will be soon. Most municipalities west have them, but there is only one other agency in Geauga County that has them. Carroll indicated that the cameras are best practice. The Chief explained that with the system the department currently utilizes, every interaction the officers have is audio recorded by the cameras in the cruisers. It has been helpful, and he felt body cameras would be as well. The Chief would like to have one camera per officer, and if he gets the grant, this will be possible. If not, four cameras will allow them to put them in the cruisers and they will have to be shared.

Berger explained he would be using the list that the Mayor sent to Council. He wanted to clarify that one of the items, Anglers Drive, was not a Building Department issue but rather a Street Department issue. Carroll agreed and added that in looking at the Mayor's list, he noted that some of it was just annual punch list items rather than long-range planning or strategic planning.

Berger said the Building Department has a proposed contract for the new software from City Force and said that there is no cost for the change in software. Because there was money in the budget, however, they purchased a new computer for the Building Department and invested in upgrading the Wi-Fi system to accommodate the cloud-based software. The computer and Wi-Fi are up and running and the City Force software will not be installed until the first quarter of 2022. Berger added that there is the opportunity to add the Fire Inspector's inspections to the City Force software. This would be a one-time fee of \$800. Nairn felt this would be well worth the cost. Berger anticipated there would be training, upgrading, transferring of files from old software to new, but it would not be a tremendous cost. Where there will be cost is in time diverted for the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector to get the software running, to be trained, and to get someone else trained as well. He asked if money should be included in the budget for extra hours to train someone, whether it is the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector or the Fiscal Officer's Administrative Assistant or someone else? The Mayor said yes. Berger suspected the amount would be in the \$8,000 to \$10,000 range for time dedicated to do the training to do the upgrade.

Berger addressed the updating of the Zoning Code, which would be a major project requiring resources from the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector and the Building Inspector, the Solicitor, etc. There was a conversation with the Solicitor at the Finance Committee meeting where she discussed how the Village could reduce its Solicitor fees. Options included limiting the Solicitor meeting attendance to one instead of both monthly Council meetings. Another options would be to potentially moved her up to the top of the agenda and then allow her to leave after her presentation to Council. She also discussed a fixed fee schedule and billing a fixed amount every month for a certain number of hours. Berger explained that if the Solicitor is needed to review the Zoning Code, Council will have to expect that there is a cost associated with it. He did not know what this would be.

Berger explained that he and the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector have been investigating changing from letter size file cabinets to

legal size lateral files because the files do not fit in the cabinets. It is a \$1,200 cost. Carroll asked if there were a budget for this, and Berger said no. Carroll felt this would be easy to add.

Carroll addressed back-up in the Building Department and acknowledged that a flowchart handbook was being developed which should be part of the strategic long-range plan to determine how it will be implemented. Berger added that the funding for it should be included. Berger suggested calling it a process plan.

Regarding Finance, the committee examined the revenue stream and stated that they did not see a significant change in the revenue stream over the next five years. It should be consistent. Carroll indicated that the Finance Committee discussed bringing in Bond Counsel to do a presentation to provide information to Council for future considerations. Questions would be developed ahead of time to provide to the Bond Counsel to keep the one hour meeting clear and concise.

Carroll also addressed reserve funds in terms of long-range strategic planning, specifically to identify any reserve funds that Council should consider setting up for budgetary purposes. From a Budget Commission standpoint, reserve funds are favorably viewed because they indicate the Village is putting money aside for very specific projects to be completed within a specified time period.

Regarding the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, Carroll thought these should be discussed either at the Budget Work session or another planning meeting.

Carroll distributed the master equipment list for master expenditures. This reflected the total year estimated expenditures and capital items. For 2022, the Village is looking at an estimated \$242,000 in capital expenditures. The report reflects all the departments, and Carroll indicated the biggest one is the replacement of the International dump truck. Carroll thought this had been purchased, and the Mayor indicated it had been. Carroll said the Street Commissioner included it for 2022 when it was purchased in 2021. Carroll suggested that for the budget session, Council should continue a five-year forecast where every budget session Council would adjust it accordingly. He would keep this on the strategic plan.

For the capital budget, the Finance Committee recommended coming up with a timeline as to when items would be replaced. With regard to the Street Department, it was originally discussed that the Village would not keep the big International dump trucks for more than 20 years. The Village has had trucks longer than this. Carroll adjusted the Street Department proposal. One truck was purchased in 2021 and the next will be in 2026. The truck to be replaced will be 25 years old, which is old, but they were trying to get five years in between replacements. In 2035, the last truck to be replaced will only be 17 years old.

The additional item that was adjusted in the Street Department was the 2015 Case loader. The Street Commissioner wanted to replace it at 15 years, and Carroll suggested 12 years because it is a \$90,000 purchase and there would be \$250,000 in capital items purchased in 2030. The committee tried to separate the big capital hits where it makes sense so the Village will not be slammed in any single year. This will be discussed further in the budget session.

Lastly, Carroll advised that at the joint HR/Finance Committee meeting the tiered salary system was discussed, which he distributed to Council. He indicated it was a first-cut draft, but from a long-range strategic standpoint, it is necessary to implement a more consistent system of salary payments and raises across all departments. The Police Department has a consistent system, and Carroll wanted to see something like it incorporated as a model moving forward.

Regarding Street Department, Carroll advised that there would be a five-year plan for proposed paving. Carroll also wanted to see a reserve fund created for stormwater mitigation and added that the Village has the 2021 Updated Stormwater Study that contains projects. He wanted to see reserve funds set up for those projects with an amount to be determined. The Road Levy from four years ago brings in about \$225,000 every year. The purpose of these funds was to allow the Village to spend approximately \$225,000 on stormwater mitigation. After collecting this levy for five years, the Village is at about \$1.2 million. In the next few years, if the Village addresses the suggestions in the stormwater report, then the Village could look at how much it could increase the Road Program. Normally the Village spends \$350,000 on the Road Program but is in a position to increase this.

Carroll stated that the Village needs to identify whether it wants to start setting up a reserve fund for Bell Road East and determine how this project will look with regard to widening it. He added that this discussion needs to begin sooner rather than later. Berger asked about the project cost for Bell Rd. East. Carroll said it was estimated between \$800,000 to \$1 million, but from a historical standpoint, the Village has been able to offset the costs with grant funds. Berger suggested starting a reserve fund for the project even if it did not fund it in its entirety. Carroll agreed.

Carroll added factoring in the use of Reclamite in the long-range plan.

Carroll advised that a comprehensive ditching program was discussed by the Street Committee, and it is working through how this would look. They are considering whether it would make sense to do ditching on a street that it will be paving. The Engineer suggested ditching the road the year before actually paving it.

Nairn noted that the long-range plan identified a schedule of road paving through 2026 and asked if this was based on information provided by the Engineer. Carroll indicated it was determined through discussions with the Engineer and the Street Commissioner. He added that in 2022, the committee would propose doing Garden Park Dr., Ridgecrest Dr., Louise Dr., and Woodside Dr. Woodside would be taken off the 2023 list. They were trying to group streets together that made sense. Carroll realized that circumstances could change with PCI ratings but having the information available for the community is beneficial. Galicki asked if Washington Street would be done next year, and Carroll advised this was a road the Village was just going to do. The Mayor explained how he came up with his list of roads to pave. The two lists were similar. Nairn noted that the cost figures seemed very low. The Mayor explained that these were the numbers the Village had now.

Regarding HR Committee, Nairn advised that Carroll touched on the tiered salary structure, which is a work in progress. She described it as extremely involved and detailed. Nairn relayed that she was concerned about a comment made by the Fiscal Officer regarding the proposed building in of

a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), longevity raises, etc. which would create quadruple the work for her. Looking five years ahead, Nairn was concerned about the workload on the Fiscal Officer, and thought Council needed to consider the amount of work expected of her. Although she has an assistant, Nairn could hear the Fiscal Officer's frustration with how much extra work the committee was making for her with the tiered salary system they were developing. Nairn acknowledged her frustration but stressed the need for structure for how the employees receive their raises. The Mayor advised that he also spoke to the Fiscal Officer and saw that she was very frustrated. Carroll said that part of the frustration had to do with hours and the possibility of having someone who was full-time that could be split between the Building Department and the Fiscal Office. Carroll did not perceive that the Fiscal Officer was told no that it would never happen. More hours for her assistant were discussed, as well as the committee's concern about whether that would make her full-time or part-time. They discussed that with added hours it would not be considered full-time with a benefit impact. This was just more discussion. To be clear, the goal of the tiered salary system the committee is developing is not to add more work. Berger put the proposal together, and Carroll applied it across all the employees to see the financial impact. The goal would be to not create more work than there must be.

Nairn explained that at the end of the meeting, the Fiscal Officer seemed overwhelmed. The Mayor and Berger suggested discussing it further with HR. Canton asked if the committee had looked at what structure other municipalities used. Carroll and Berger said yes that they had looked at Chardon, Russell, and Bainbridge. Berger said that what the committee is developing is nothing that these communities are not doing. Carroll stated that almost all had a tiered system. The goal of the committee was to get away from a buckshot/arbitrary way of doing raises and bonuses. Carroll stressed that it was necessary to have a good process to do it consistently because otherwise, animosity is created.

Nairn raised the issue of cross-training and stressed that she wanted to see it implemented and did not want to see the can kicked down the road further. It had been discussed for years. She heard concern coming from the Building Department and it bothered her that the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector was worried about taking time off because if the Building Inspector were not there, the only coverage would be by the Mayor. She did not want to see the problems of a few years ago in this department. Furthermore, it was unfair to the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector if she should want to take vacation. She should not worry about taking time off because there is no one who had even been trained in the basics. Nairn reiterated that cross training was very important not only for the Building Department but throughout the Village.

Canton asked about the status of the evaluations, and Nairn clarified that he was asking about job performance. Canton said yes, and Nairn stated that by the end of the year, every Department Head is supposed to do evaluations on their employees. Last year, there was difficulty because it was a new concept. Nairn would provide a reminder to the Department Heads at the next Council meeting to submit evaluations by the end of the year.

The position of part-time Zoning Inspector was addressed by Nairn. She said a Zoning Inspector was really needed and she wanted to start setting up interviews. Nairn asked the Mayor if he had a candidate, and the Mayor explained that this person would be interest. Berger asked if the job had

been posted, and the Mayor replied that he guessed. Nairn thought it had been taken down, and the Mayor agreed. Galicki explained that it had been posted and there were a number of applicants who went through the interview process. When this process began, the job posting was removed. He suggested posting it again so that the individual to whom the Mayor referred could provide an application as well as other potential applicants. Berger said it should be posted Monday. The Mayor stated that it was already on Indeed.com. Galicki suggested it may have stale information and should be updated.

Galicki referred to the Mayor's list and noted that as Berger said, most were tactical actions that could be taken care of by committee action. However, there were a couple of issues that were strategic in nature. The Mayor has appointed a very diverse population on the Parks Committee. The most recent appointment is a strict conservationist. One issue on which the committee does not have consensus is the way forward for the park. In other words, there are members of the committee who feel the park should be developed more for human use, and there are members who believe the Village is interfering with nature by mowing the grass. The Village does not do enough to encourage animals, insects, birds, etc. This is the split in the committee. There was consensus that the park needs a strategic plan going forward. As he understood, there are agencies that will assist municipalities in developing a park use/land management plan. Galicki asked a committee member to investigate this to see if there is cost associated with this or whether there are organizations that will do it gratis hand in hand with municipalities. He believed that the committee agreed that instead of the 'thought of the hour' or 'project of the hour' that there ought to be a plan that determines how the Village intends to use the park and what the long-range plan is for the development of the park. This might include increasing the size of the parking lot, putting in bocce courts, bowling alley, or more nature preserves, etc. They want a long-range plan as to how the park is to be parceled out in the future. There are committee members who believe that restrooms should be installed instead of the porta potties, but do not want to see a Taj Mahal. A restroom was suggested with running water and modern amenities, which would be an added expense. Nairn stated it would be \$25,000 per year to have this. Galicki explained it would be necessary to sink a well and winterizing would have to be done. Connecting to the sewer system would also be an added expense. \$50,000 had been discussed as funds to be set aside for this, but it would be more like \$100,000 or more with these upgrades. In terms of designating reserve funds, a good target would be the funds collected for park improvements, i.e. a park restroom. During the next year, Galicki suggested the development of a design of the restroom that would minimize expense and provide better service than an outhouse.

Regarding the master plan in terms of plaques, benches, and trees in the park, Galicki stated that he is trying to obtain the master plan of the park when it was commissioned to determine the intended number of benches, locations of the benches, etc. He added that there may have been discussion of brick paths. A suggestion was made that instead of brass plaques and pictures/memorials, that the Village institute a program of memorial bricks that can be placed in the park. Nairn clarified that this would be a paver path. Carroll explained that many communities have such memorial pathways. Carroll suggested that residents could be offered three options: a paver, bench, or tree. The pavers would only cost \$30 to \$40, and the Village could charge \$100. The money could go into a maintenance fund for the playground. He was not looking to make money and it could be cost neutral. However, if there were an opportunity to supplement something for the park, there might be an option. Berger argued that committee

members might say there is too much brick in the park. Galicki agreed and added that whether it is picnic benches, park benches, etc. there is a diverse population among the members of the Park Committee. There would probably never be unity, but if there could be a majority or compromise that suits both parties, that would be the best approach.

Canton added that there are also constituents who live across the street who made it known a few years ago that they did not want the park to become too active. Berger clarified that they did not want it overbuilt. Galicki said this is a universal concern for the people on the committee with a jumble of projects and memorials. Nairn added that there had been discussion of keeping the Bell Rd. side of the park passive and putting the active side on the Washington St. side. Galicki recalled that there had been a proposal to put in a soccer field that would be funded by a private citizen. Council was on board with it until discovering the individual was a fraud, and then it fell through. Galicki felt that to avoid the arbitrary nature of designating park projects there was strong support for a strategic plan for what Council wants the park to look like. While gathering funds for the projects like the restrooms, consideration should also be given to placement and design. Carroll concurred that a strategic plan would be helpful.

Berger said he was in favor of the pavers and thought it was a great way to fund raise, but there are people in the community who would not want the hardscape. Galicki agreed but explained that the compromise would be that the Village would not be putting up brass plaques on sticks and having park benches populating the rural area of the park. Canton thought that the initial discussion concerning paths was that there would be a crushed stone path from the parking lot to the playground and a path from the playground to the pavilion. Galicki added that there is a brick path already from the parking lot to the pavilion. Berger offered that this could be replaced with the pavers.

Galicki asked about the expansion of the parking lot in the park. He knew it had been discussed but suggested if there was a desire to go forward, funds should be put aside in 2022 and estimates obtained. Expanding the parking lot might have an impact on where the restrooms would be placed. Carroll added that this would go back to the use and land management plan.

Galicki added that 2022 had been designated to start the burn of the park. It would be divided into four sectors and once a year the selected area would be burned in order to manage the invasive species.

Regarding Public Utilities Committee, Nairn wondered why the Geauga County Department of Water Resources dye test was on the Mayor's list because she thought this had been completed. The Mayor said it had been done last year. Nairn noted it was the first item on the Mayor's Public Utilities list.

As far as long-range planning for Public Utilities, Nairn's priority is to make sure the Village's wells are kept clean, safe, and operating. It was her impression that the Village was moving away from using the services of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) because of expense, but she thought it was good that the Village wells were being monitored by a reliable entity. She verified this with the Mayor, and the Mayor said he would keep USGS forever. Nairn concurred.

Nairn stated that the Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) agreement on sustainability will be on the agenda for the next Public Utilities Committee meeting. The committee is looking long-range for sustainability and flipping the Village into sustainable energy sources down the road.

Carroll referred to the Mayor's list and addressed the use of ARPA funds. There had been a proposal to study the 21 lakes in the Village. Carroll advised that there is a local pond maintenance company which could do assessments for \$500 to \$600. Even if it were \$1,000, the Village has 21 lakes and settling ponds according to the Mayor, and Carroll thought this should be something that is done sooner rather than later because it could play into stormwater management. Having a contractor conduct this study from a stormwater mitigation standpoint would be beneficial. Carroll wanted Council to consider investigating this. Berger asked if the 21 lakes are public or private. The Mayor replied that they are private. Carroll explained that some play into stormwater. Nairn added that some are recreational, and Berger reiterated that they are privately owned and asked how they play into stormwater. Carroll explained that the Engineer must weigh in on it and there had already been discussion of funding work on a private pond. The Mayor offered that the Village could say it would give the various neighborhoods \$1,000 to have studies done on their ponds. Carroll added that some of them have a positive stormwater impact, and some do not. For example, there might be a settling pond that has filled in and is part of a stormwater pathway, like Sugar Bush which was identified in 2015. Council would be looking at this from a stormwater mitigation standpoint.

ADJOURNMENT: Being that there was no further business before Council, Nairn made a motion to adjourn at 7:37 p.m., seconded by Canton. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.



William G. Koons, Mayor



Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki