

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 25, 2022 – 8:00 A.M. VILLAGE HALL
MAYOR WILLIAM G. KOONS PRESIDING**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bell, Berger, Canton, Cavanagh, Galicki, Porter

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Fiscal Officer Romanowski and Solicitor Matheney

VISITOR: Brian Doering, ^{MAPLE LEAF}CVT; Dr. Scott Allen

The Mayor called the Special Council meeting to order at 8:16 a.m. and the Fiscal Officer read the roll.

PARK COMMITTEE: Canton recommended that he, Chief Rizzo, the Mayor, and Street Commissioner Alder meet to discuss pavilion rental with respect to police coverage and report to Council at the August 8th Council meeting.

ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:

Galicki provided a third reading of an ordinance advancing funds from the Income Tax Fund to the Manor Brook Fund of \$160,000 and declaring an emergency. Galicki made a motion to adopt, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, Cavanagh, Galicki, Porter, and Bell. Berger and Canton abstained. Motion carried. **ORD 2022-61**

Canton provided a third reading of an ordinance approving the Service Agreement with Inspection Solutions, LLC for the professional building inspection services, authorizing the Mayor to execute the Service Agreement on behalf of the Village of South Russell, and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, Berger, Canton, Cavanagh, Porter, Bell. Nay- Galicki. Motion carried. **ORD 2022-62**

Porter provided a second reading of an ordinance establishing a Capital Projects Fund to be known as “Chillicothe Road Culverts” and declaring an emergency. Porter made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2022-63**

Porter provided a second reading of an ordinance approving the grant agreement between the Ohio Public Works Commission and the Village of South Russell for the Chillicothe Rd. Culvert Replacement Project, authorizing the Mayor to execute the grant agreement and declaring an emergency. Porter made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to adopt, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2022-64**

Galicki provided a second reading of an ordinance establishing a special fund to be known as One Ohio and declaring an emergency. Galicki made a motion to waive readings, seconded Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Galicki made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2022-65**

VISITOR: The Mayor introduced Scott Allen, management professor at John Carroll University. Allen offered to provide two hours of his time. The goal was not to create a Strategic Plan but rather to refresh or learn about what a strategic plan is and how it works. The Mayor asked the Department Heads to work with committee members in August to come up with two to three SMART goals for

Council to consider. In September, Council will reconvene with the Department Heads to start looking at the whole Strategic Planning process. He asked Council to introduce themselves to Allen and to provide their experience with goals and strategic planning.

Cavanagh stated she was in the 1999 Strategic Planning meeting, which was an all-day session and seemed to be eternal to her. She was on Council at the time. Cavanagh hoped that Allen could streamline this and asked that he make it as simple as possible.

Galicki explained that he was a former career Naval Officer. Before returning to civilian life and working in industry, he spent the last four years of his naval service on the faculty of the Naval War College in Newport, RI, where he taught Strategic Planning.

Porter said he was a former Naval Officer, and he had been on Council for 16 years. In reading the previous Council strategic planning sessions, he was surprised by how many of the objectives were achieved. It occurred to him that strategic planning was a good way to look and plan ahead.

The Mayor stated he did 39 years as a public school teacher/administrator and had a lot of time to do strategic planning and SMART goals, but identified with Cavanagh's sentiments. He reviewed the past strategic planning sessions to see what was done and saw 57 different items that some people thought could get done. That was not going to happen. He was looking forward to the process.

Canton stated he is a retired classroom teacher. While with Berkshire Local Schools, he took part in the strategic plan, and they carried it out quite well.

Berger explained he had been in business for 40 years and had done strategic planning on different levels. He is a consultant to businesses and has been an adjunct at Lakeland Community College and Lake Erie College teaching business management for the past 20 years.

Bell stated that he had been in public relations and marketing for about 24 years. He had done strategic planning with non-profits primarily on the corporate side.

The Fiscal Officer advised she had been the Fiscal Officer of the Village for 15 years. She was looking forward to the strategic plan to help prepare a five-year budget for the Village.

The Solicitor introduced herself.

Allen advised that he has taught at John Carroll College of Business since 2006. His area of specialty is leadership and leadership development. He thanked Council for their service.

Allen asked Mayor to complete the following sentence: At the end of this hour, it has been successful if...

The Mayor responded if people in this room have a better understanding of strategic planning and SMART goals and they have a way forward to know where they are going next. Hopefully, this will prepare them to develop goals with the departments. He hoped that everyone realized that the goals will be meshed into a plan identifying where the Village is going and is something fairly simple. His fear in asking for two to three goals from each department with seven departments is that he does not want 21 goals. He thought they should be looking at five to six goals. A year from now, they should be able to develop an excellent strategic plan.

Allen summarized the Mayor's thoughts in saying that it would be about how they get their heads together on moving forward with the process and determining whether there is a shared

understanding of the objectives and goals. The Mayor thought this was accurate and that everyone had the same idea of what they were going to do for the Village. Allen indicated that on the Mayor's agenda, he shared possible topics for goals and asked if the Mayor wanted to talk through those, or determine whether they aligned on priorities. The Mayor explained that this was just a list of ideas to get people's minds going, like improving the Zoning Code. He thought that after an hour, Allen would be filling Council's heads with how they were going about this.

Allen asked each member of Council what the **best practices** would be when it comes to developing a strategic plan.

- Cavanagh - Very brief meetings at the committee level where issues are solved or enable the committee to go forward with the process. For example, she and Canton with the Parks Committee spent a ridiculous amount of time on how the Village addresses residents who call wanting to buy a tree. They are still working on it, and it has become unwieldy. She asked how to trim this. The wheels go so slowly in the sludge. Cavanagh asked Canton if he agreed, and he said he did. Allen rephrased this in terms of best practices strategic planning to be a focused on streamlining and cutting through the minutia. Cavanagh agreed.
- Galicki – The Village's fundamental issue in strategic planning was identifying the desired end state and backward planning from there. Strategic planning is not just about identifying topics for projects, but also includes the ends, the ways, the means, and the risks in how to achieve the goal. In his opinion, this is the flesh and meat of strategic planning. It is not simply identifying a dollar amount to spend on streets. Often, strategic plans will concentrate on mission statement or desired projects, but there is no meat behind it.
- Canton - The plans should have realistic goals. The purpose is not to develop a document and then place it on a shelf somewhere.
- The Mayor - Vision of what you think life will be like in the Village and what qualities of life there will be for the residents, which should be the top. The vision is how you are going to get there, spell it out, and work your way down to the nitty gritty. Most organizations get stuck at the nitty gritty and never get out of it. You have to keep going through the vision.
- Porter - In 2027, what will the Village look like and what does Council want it to look like? He wanted Bell Rd. east paved and stormwater addressed. A goal for stormwater would be that no house or resident suffers flooding in their basements because of stormwater. In 2027, stormwater would no longer become an on-going chronic issue like it has been the last ten years.
- Bell - What Council believes the residents want the Village to be in five years and building that roadmap. However, it is important to realize that members of Council are only one election day away from not being in office. Future members of Council should be able to easily pick up the document and keep moving with it.
- Berger - Referred to the Village's mission statement from the website and noted that it says a lot of nice things, but does not tell anything. Regarding best practices, if there is no clear vision of the top, the rest is worthless. He thought they should develop a better definition of what the mission is. What is it that Council does? They serve the people. How? He suggested diving from this point.
- Canton - To promote business in the Village a bit more. He and his wife visit and support the small businesses and ask the businesses how they are doing, how Council is doing, and what the Village can do to make their business better. He thought this would be a good goal.

- The Mayor - Suggested involving the stakeholders, the residents and the employees. Allen clarified the Mayor was referring to the business owners and residents. The Mayor agreed. The Mayor added that there are many organizations that can help that have the expertise, like Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Geauga Soil and Water, or the Geauga County that has created the Erosion Special Improvement District (ESID). The Mayor thought they should not be reinventing the wheel because there are people out there who can supply roadmaps to tell where the Village could go.
- Bell – Being an Elected official and not a full-time employee, one of his concerns was that any strategic planning will be too ‘top down.’ He would want more feedback from the employees who work every day. Council agreed that employees are considered stakeholders.
- Canton – Liked the idea of using interview questions to include how Council is doing, what are the strengths of Council and weaknesses, how could Council do a better job? Also, the Village has Gurney Elementary School and he hoped that the Village continued to work closely and maybe even more with Chagrin Falls Schools.

Allen summarized Council’s input: Best practices would be brief meetings at the committee level, streamlining things, trying to get through the minutia, and how to accomplish this; the whole thing needs to be manageable; it is not going to be 56 things; it will be certain things that Council can ensure are manageable that can be accomplished; desired end state, backward planning from there and the ends, the ways, the means, and the risks; realistic goals that are needed to live and what will life be like in the Village in 2027; what Council wants the Village to look like; some specific examples; flooding is no longer an issue and has been fixed; the stakeholders are at the center of some of the work, but residents are also at the center; the stakeholders are involved in the process, but ultimately Council is here to serve the residents; is Council keeping them central in its thinking; someone can pick up the document and it is not a challenging thing that no one can understand; Council will promote business and promote the stakeholders; and Council should seek out the help of others and utilize their expertise. Allen would add a question about how the Village’s systems would change to ensure that the plan lives? It should become part of the weekly and monthly conversations, goals, and objectives.

Allen asked what Council would want to **avoid at all costs?**

- Porter - Inaction.
- Cavanagh - Concurred and added that they wanted to move a lot faster.
- Berger - Creation of bureaucracy.
- The Mayor - Cynicism.
- Canton - Egos.
- Berger - Fiefdoms.
- The Mayor - Stagnation.

From previous discussions with the Mayor, **Allen concluded there was a necessity to have a five-year plan for budgeting.** He asked whether Council was focusing some of its efforts on five years or breaking it down into more manageable shorter durations so there is clarity on priorities. The Mayor thought short durations were necessary. Although there had been a lot of work already done, he thought once they had gone through the process, the five-year plans may change.

- Cavanagh – Unhappy employees. When employees are happy, they will in turn treat the residents the best way they can. If they are not happy, or have an issue that goes unresolved, this will translate to the public. **Allen rephrased this to ask if others have some sense of ownership in this or is it just something from on high.** Cavanagh agreed and said if the employees do not feel a part of it, they will be looking elsewhere.
- Berger - Complacency by Council that things are good enough because they are never good enough.
- The Mayor - Wanting more and more and more. He thought the residents liked what Council is doing now.
- Berger – What is the definition of essential services? How can they be done better and/or what needs to be added? Porter offered that essential services would include Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and roads. Berger added that stormwater has been on the radar for many years, and is this an essential service? How long has it been unaddressed until recently? 20 years ago, it may not have been considered essential. Cavanagh suggested referring to the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), which specifies roads and cemeteries, and the Village is way beyond that. **Allen offered that the question is how Council is defining essential services for the purpose of developing the strategic plan.**

The Mayor asked if a better restroom at the park is essential? No, but it could be the quality of life. Cavanagh addressed the park in relation to the plan and said the Mayor and committees have worked hard on it and have gone above and beyond. Galicki offered that if you wanted to talk about park and essential services, it might be beneficial to use phraseology like, ‘providing recreation opportunities for the resident,’ but you would not draw it down to ‘providing a restroom.’ This would be in the tactical weeds, where Council would want the more strategic look which is at a higher altitude in defining essential services. **Allen offered that it would be a discussion around essential services versus quality of life and how would Council define it. Having clarity on this would help inform the path forward.**

Allen asked what else Council would want to **avoid**?

- Cavanagh - Angry residents coming to meetings and Council being unprepared. Berger asked if this was avoidable? To an extent, this is feedback and can be helpful.
- Canton - Council should learn from the individual life experiences of the residents.

Allen summarized Council’s input on what to avoid: Inaction; slow movement; cynicism; complacency; bureaucracy; fiefdoms; egos; angry residents in so far as Council not having its act together in providing the basics; breaking the law; and thinking Council has all the answers and question who can educate Council.

Allen asked what Council would ask if they were in Allen’s place?

- Bell - Introspection to consider weaknesses and what role each member plays in the organization. How can this be improved? How does this relate to everyone else and how can it be built upon.
- Cavanagh - What problems would Council identify currently? **Allen observed this would be doing a traditional SWOT analysis so that there is shared sense of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.**
- Canton - What had Council accomplished to make it a better Village?

- The Mayor - Find somebody who could look at the Village and predict what is coming at it. He cited COVID and the resulting CARES Act money. He added that the Village was rushing into the Erosion Special Improvement District (ESID), and questioned why the Village did not know it was out there and why did the Village not see it coming its way? This was an example of something the Village could have done but did not know about it.
- Canton - Regionalism would be expanding in the future but said it has to make sense for South Russell.
- Berger - How to make better use of the talented employees that you have in the Village? How does Council listen to them as to what they need to accomplish what Council wants to accomplish? Cavanagh thought this was something Council already did, and Berger added it is done selectively. Allen asked if the employee's feedback is solicited now? Berger said there are committee meetings, but Council has not been consistent in direction.
- Porter - Maintain focus on certain things that can be done. Stormwater was not identified in the 1999 strategic planning session. The park leash law was the biggest issue in 2012 after personnel. Porter observed that things can become important over time that were not previously, such as stormwater. Council must maintain focus on big projects over a five-year period. The Village is doing stormwater projects now that may succeed but may not be adequate in 10 years.
- Cavanagh - It is episodic, and you deal with those issues as they come at you.
- Galicki - It is necessary to have certain issues which are considered essential areas. Stormwater had been topic of discussion even 30 to 40 years ago and it is necessary to keep focus on such issues instead of replacing them with things like whether the Village should have a circus.
- Porter - Stormwater management should be an essential service as a Village wide problem.
- Mayor – Village passed a levy in 2017 to take on five of the biggest roads, and some of the money was taken from the roads for stormwater.
- Cavanagh - Why have the Council members chosen to serve?
- Bell - What is the roll of the Elected Officials as they interact with the departments and full-time employees?

Allen discussed education and organizations like Ohio Acts, which is dedicated to helping the State of Ohio become a tech hub. There is also Gov Tech. Is the Village on the cutting edge of what is coming when it comes to the shifts like digitization, globalization, and regionalism? A few different types of education may be necessary, so Council is prepared to do its best work to serve the community.

- Berger - What has changed? What is motivating Council members to be here to discuss a strategic plan? What are those issues? The tech interface is a great line. Relating to this, Berger discussed the new software that is being instituted at the Building Department which will allow residents and contractors to interface with the technology. This is a dramatic change from how the Building Department formerly interacted with residents.

Technology advancements and the resulting expectations were discussed.

- Bell - How does Council fulfill such expectations?
- Mayor - Feared a groundswell from the community about stormwater. He referred to residents who questioned the clearing of trees for the two stormwater projects. He also relayed a meeting with a man who had 20 questions about the Flock Cameras. If an average citizen had questions

about the cameras, was the Village doing the right thing? Things were ok presently, but without a strategic plan of some vision, things could easily go off and lose track.

- Cavanagh - The minutes are online and accessible, but no one reads them. She gets questions from Paw Paw Lake residents about the red barn and tree clearing. How do you handfeed the residents the minutes and make them palatable and not something that seems weighty to mull through? This is essential.
- Mayor – Many residents of Lake Louise believe the Village did a crappy job paving their roads because they do not know that the job is not complete.

Allen summarized these thoughts with the question, how do you ensure you have an educated constituency? He indicated it was an issue with the system that was in place which was yielding large factions of people who are unaware. What needs to be altered to minimize that gap? Addressing it would involve conducting experiments to see if people are more educated or aware of what Council is doing.

- Galicki - The average citizens have more opportunities today to be informed should they choose to be informed, whether it is minutes posted online, live streamed meetings, Zoom meetings during the pandemic, etc. The technology is there to provide access greater than ever before. There is an element of citizens who are engaged and want to know what is going on in Village government. There is an element that are satisfied as long as their streets are plowed in the winter. In discussing moving that public engagement and local government needle, Council may never do that, and it may not be its charter. The charter may be to ensure that Council is providing the residents opportunities to access.

Allen suggested framing the objective as providing more opportunities for people to engage, which is a little different than increasing actual engagement.

- Porter - When people are interested in a topic, they become informed.
- Berger – Was it a push or pull system with how the resident obtains information? The newsletter is a push, but is quarterly, should it be monthly? Should it be a weekly eblast? Many people no longer read email and only read texts.
- Bell - More opportunities should be provided. With repetition like more frequent newsletters, people will know Council is working for them and remember where to find the information. But who will do it with a limited staff? Berger asked if it is an essential service, and if it is, they must find the money in the budget to do it.

Allen provided the following summary to the meeting: There were three things discussed; what are best practices, what should be avoided, and what would Council members be asking of the group given their expertise in doing this work themselves? One, the expertise exists with Council. These are all adaptive challenges. The bridge is being built while walking over it, and Council must identify the experiments it will run to see if the needle can be moved. Clarity around the key questions is a big piece of the work. The great leaders have the best questions. What are the core questions, like how is essential service defined? This has important ramifications. What does Council need to learn? What do the residents think right now? He would argue this could be a goal for the coming year. Every strategic plan does not have to start with mission, vision, and values. The question of how to prioritize some of the work will be interesting. If it is five to six things per year and 30 things over five years, in what order will they be done?

Allen noted that he did not hear the phrase, ‘wouldn’t it be incredible if.’ The conversation went to essential items. He asked Council to consider what would excite them? This is a key question. Allen thought Council came up with wonderful ideas of what needs to be avoided and the SWOT analysis is also very important. He also addressed the question of how Council would put a system in place that acknowledges that Council is part-time, yet they are ploughing through the objectives and accomplishing really cool things. This is another key question. Allen would provide his notes and reviewing them would be an exercise in identifying the key questions that need to be answered. This discussion requires space to occur because it is in those conversations that some of this will be clarified and exciting things might emerge.

Allen asked each Council member to provide one sentence of something that needs to be underscored based on what was heard today.

- Cavanagh - If the Village finally got the bike path that had been discussed since 1992 and a way to get across Chillicothe Rd.
- Galicki - It was the question of what Council wants the Village to be and what are those essential services provided to the community. There may be things residents feel are essential that are not being provided. Who do we want to be as a Village and organization?

Allen asked how the different stakeholders would answer this question and how do they define essential services? As a bike path?

- Porter – Wants a concrete definition of essential services, and specifically what they are.
- Mayor - Learned that Council is loaded with talent and can get a lot done as long as they figure out where they are going and what they want to do.
- Canton - Believes that the Village should continue to improve the great services it offers the community.
- Berger – His mantra is, ‘what am I doing to serve the Village today?’
- Bell - Identify who we are as a Village, who we want to be, celebrate that, and distinguish ourselves from the surrounding communities. He tires of hearing and reading South Russell referred to as Chagrin Falls.
- Fiscal Officer – Referred to what Berger and Bell said about including the employees as stakeholders and using their talents, abilities, and visions to best serve the Village moving forward since the employees are here every day and for the long term.
- Solicitor - Thought it was all good and agreed with every one of the sentences.

Allen thanked Council again for their service. He would forward notes and was excited to see what comes of this.

ADJOURNMENT: Being that there was no further business before Council, at 9:35 a.m. Cavanagh made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Porter. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**



William G. Koons, Mayor



Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki

South Russell Village

Strategic Planning Discussion

7.25.22

Sometimes great leaders have the answers; sometimes, they have the right questions.

- How are we defining “essential services” in 2023?
 - What contextual shifts have occurred in recent years?
 - How have resident expectations shifted?
 - How have Village employee expectations shifted?
- Which stakeholders need to be involved in this process?
- What education (as individuals and as a group) will help us plan?
- What initiatives would stimulate the community and us? Are some of our goals exciting and differentiating us?
- What is our desired end state? What are the ends, the ways, the means, and the risks?
- Who are we as a community and whom do we want to be? What differentiates South Russell?
- Which stakeholders (e.g., residents, business owners, employees) do we need to engage?
- What expertise can we tap?
- How do we better educate our constituents?
- How do we ensure that this is a living document, not a “binder on the shelf?”
- How do we put a system in place that acknowledges our part-time role while also ensuring goal achievement?
- What have we accomplished in recent years? What should we be proud of?

Best Practices

- Residents are the heart of the work
- The employees are engaged and active in the process
- Clarity around mission/vision
 - What are specific examples of what life will look like in 2027?
- A straightforward document that is not cumbersome to review and understand.
- Manageable goals and realistic timeline
- Clarity about our motivations for service and our role as elected officials

We Should Avoid...

- Inaction, slow movement, complacency
- Thinking we have all the answers
- Egos and Fiefdoms
- Bureaucracy