

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2022 – 5:30 P.M.
MAYOR WILLIAM G. KOONS PRESIDING

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

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Fiscal Officer Romanowski, Police Chief Rizzo, Street Commissioner Alder

The Mayor called the meeting to order. The Fiscal Officer read the roll. The Mayor reviewed the initial Strategic Planning meeting conducted in July by Dr. Scott Allen. The Mayor asked if the Village needed to hire a strategic planner and said that if it is kept in-house, some objectivity would be lost. On the other hand, it is mid-September and he had barely received SMART goals from everybody, Budget meetings are coming, and there were some things to consider. Bell said from his experience, to stay focused he would recommend hiring someone. Porter asked the Mayor how much this would cost, and the Mayor speculated that perhaps someone from Cleveland State would do it for free for the Village, but he thought it would be \$5,000 - \$10,000. The Mayor indicated that Porter and Berger had connections with strategic planners, and added that the Fiscal Officer was currently attending a program with Cleveland State. The Fiscal Officer stated she reached out to Cleveland State, and they did not have anyone at this time. Canton thought doing a strategic plan was a good idea and helpful from his experience. Cavanagh thought most residents were happy and that there was only a small percentage of unhappy residents. She questioned whether a strategic plan was necessary. She added that objectivity was good and said Berger has been bringing people back to ground zero. Canton has spoken to 15-25 residents and said they are happy with the direction of the Village. Galicki said there is a lot of value in strategic planning and suspected that it would begin with looking at the year ahead and then transition to a five-year view. Residents may be happy, but he thought Village leadership should have a goal as to what direction they want to go and what major projects they want to tackle instead of using the dartboard approach. He supported having an outside source lead the process. Porter thought it was worthwhile to have an outside mediator lead the discussion. The Mayor suggested he and Berger speak to a highly regarded man from Cleveland State to determine cost. He would want to hire someone by the second meeting of January 2023. First, he wanted to develop goals and then run them past the employees. Porter said if the individual's name is Ben Baran, he is an instructor in the Cleveland State Business School, has a Human Resources (HR) specialty, teaches strategic planning, and is a U.S. Navy reservist. The Mayor said he had spoken to him in June.

The Mayor reviewed the goals provided by the committees. Galicki asked for clarification as to whether Council was discussing goals for a preliminary one-year plan or a five-year plan. The Mayor said he had no idea and just wanted to get something down on paper. Berger thought the focus was a one-year plan and added that each department needed to define essential services in terms of laying out goals to meet these essential services.

The Mayor said his first Building Committee goal was that the Building Department services to include pavilion rentals, will be handled online. By January 1st, everything can be done through the computer. He expressed disappointment in the software company for putting off the implementation of the new system. Berger indicated that this should have been a strategic planning goal for 2022. The new strategic goal should involve how the new software would be utilized. If it is a matter of delay in

implementation, a more realistic date should be identified and then go from there in terms of a strategic plan of making it useful to the community. Porter offered that when the system is ready to take online pavilion reservations, the public can be notified through eblast and the newsletter. The Fiscal Officer clarified that the issue was implementing the software and the credit card capability, making the goal to have the system operating by the end of next year. Specific discussion ensued, and Berger advised that from a strategic planning point, it was too detailed and should be handled on a committee level. Council's perspective should be from the 30,000-foot level. An example of such a goal would be that the system would be online and ready to go January 1, 2024. Reasonableness of the goal is up to the committee. Bell was skeptical of the software company getting it done and was reluctant to attach a timeline to the goal.

The next goal provided by the Mayor was that when there are items needing involvement of the Architectural Review Board (ARB), Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), or the Planning Commission (PC), each board will hold scheduled monthly meetings with all board positions filled by members or alternates. The Fiscal Officer thought this was already in place. The Mayor said that ARB and BZA are fine. PC meets and then does not meet. Sometimes there are people there and sometimes there are not. He thought the Village needed to up its game and provide better service. Discussion of the sign at the Red Barn started in February and it was still going on. There are \$3,800 in legal fees for this since February. Delays or not getting things done is not good service to the residents and not a good use of taxpayer money. The Mayor thought the Village could do better. Bell asked if there were instances this year where there was potential business to be discussed and delayed because they were not available, and the Mayor said yes. He added that the Solicitor had Zoning Code changes ready for over a year.

Regarding goals for Finance, Galicki defined the essential services as exhibiting fiscal responsibility, transparency, and ethical behavior in Village financial dealings, and to act in accordance with applicable guidelines of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and State and County financial directives. Although the committee would still need to discuss the goals, Galicki suggested one Finance Committee goal might be to develop a five-year fiscal plan for the conduct of the Village. Berger said he did not disagree with a five-year plan but stated it was reliant on every department to create a plan. Galicki clarified that there are some knowns, but there will be unknowns, and that it might be better characterized as a five-year framework. Berger concurred.

Cavanagh addressed the HR goals, which would be updating of the Employee Handbook and job descriptions by engaging HR professionals. Additionally, a salary tier will be established with data provided by the HR professionals. Berger added that there would be an automatic review period for salary structure with the help of an outside consultant to ensure the Village continues to be competitive in the job place and fiscally responsible. The same would apply for review of the Employee Handbook. He added that the Employee Handbook could be made to be a live document and available on the website for employees.

Canton said that the Properties Committee goals were to work collaboratively with the Service Department to enhance the maintenance and beauty of all properties owned by the Village and continue to work and communicate with the Parks Committee to ensure a delicate balance between human usage and nature at the Bell Rd. and East Washington St. park. Canton stressed that this would not be micromanagement, but just increasing meetings and a presence. Porter asked the Street Commissioner about his attendance at the Properties or Parks Committee meetings and emphasized the importance of doing so.

Cavanagh said the booklets and important history items from the 75th Village Anniversary in 1998 were given back to her and she had them at home. She acknowledged that they are Village property but expressed concern about storage on the Village campus. The Fiscal Officer advised that there could be room in Village Hall. She added that the Mayor had asked her about the stained-glass window that used to be in Village Hall. Pertinent information was located in researching the matter and provided to Cavanagh. In 2005, there were plans to build a cabinet in Village Hall in which to put the historical items including the windows, but it was never done. Porter asked where this was, and Cavanagh said they do not know. The Fiscal Officer advised that in conjunction with discussion of building the cabinet, the minutes documented who took the window home that night. It was commented that it was a former Council member. The Mayor said he sent a text and email to the person and had not gotten a response. The Fiscal Officer agreed that the documents to which Cavanagh referred should be held by the Village. Cavanagh added that some materials would be presented at the Fall Festival. Porter suggested Cavanagh speak to Ted Kruse for historical information about the Village, and Cavanagh said he was great but did not grow up in the Village. Galicki asked about the historical information compiled by the former Street Commissioner, and Cavanagh said she had not heard from him.

From a bigger picture standpoint with the strategic plan, Berger suggested the Properties Committee consider what the future Village campus might look like. Would it be a goal of the Properties Committee to acquire additional property? If the salt dome will be moved, should the committee consider where this will be so that it would not interfere with other anticipated changes? Canton stated that the Street Commissioner has made it clear he needs more storage room. The Fire Inspector has said that the current storage is not ideal. Someday, the Village will build a new facility, and it will cost more 15 years down the road rather than 5 years. He proposed the construction of a new combined Village Hall, Police, and Service Department building. Cavanagh referenced the Bainbridge complex. Berger suggested the creation of a strategic plan for the footprint of the Village Campus and what it will look like next year and in five years. Berger thought there would be professionals who could provide insight into this.

Regarding Public Utilities Committee, Porter said that the five-year Village projects will control stormwater resulting from 100-year storms without detrimental impact to the residents from flooding. A lot had been done, but evaluation of how well the projects mitigate stormwater would be necessary, to include the eventual replacement and upsizing of the culverts on Chillicothe Rd. The second goal is to reduce the amount of electricity and gas used by the Village facilities. The committee proposed using solar panels on some of the buildings like the Service Department and Police buildings. The cost, payback, replacement costs, maintenance, etc. must be explored. Money could be saved with the electricity needed to run lights, computers, and the police cars. The committee also discussed drilling a gas well dedicated to the Village to offset the heating costs. Porter said this would have to be carefully done because of area wells. Alternative energy utilized by Kenston Schools was discussed, and the Mayor said he asked the former Superintendent to provide numbers for their solar and wind turbines. Porter suggested that at some point the committee will ask the Street Commissioner to investigate the potential of putting up solar panels to the point of getting quotes. This will give the committee the basis to go forward with both the energy reduction and costs to install the equipment. Location and requirements of a Village gas well were discussed.

Regarding Safety Committee, Galicki stated that the committee defined its essential services as providing a safe community for all South Russell Village citizens in which to live and work, and that the police force remains a professional, community-oriented organization. Two subgoals are that the

Village will recognize the safety forces with yearly participation in the Honor our First Responders Program and the committee will be evaluating the Flock Camera program to determine continuation of the program in the coming year. The committee is considering adding three more Flock cameras this fiscal year. Berger asked how many hybrid vehicles the department currently has, and the Chief said they have two and two on the way. The department has been happy with them. Currently, with fuel costs, the department will have made its money back on the original purchases within 13 months. The Chief discussed the anticipated delivery date of the cars. Considering the Public Utilities discussion of reducing the Village's carbon footprint, Berger asked if an EV Police vehicle exists. The Chief said the all-electric Chevy Blazer would be available in 2024 and discussed its attributes. Berger suggested that with the proposed solar panels, a charging station could be created to charge the cars. The Chief added that the Flock cameras were installed with and powered by solar panels.

Bell stated that the Streets Committee identified the rebuilding and/or relocating of the salt dome as a 2023 goal. The second goal would be the repaving of Bell Rd. east in 2024. Porter offered that a third goal would be for every road in the Village to be rated on the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) scale at 75 or better.

The Fiscal Officer addressed the previous strategic planning discussion about getting information out to the residents. The Administrative Assistant has been updating the Facebook page and at the Fall Festival, a table will be set up with volunteers to alert and sign-up residents for the eblast. Bell suggested that for a fee, the Village could utilize the Facebook boost option to increase visibility of its posts.

The Mayor summarized that he would call the company for the Building Department software. He and Berger would meet with Ben Baran about strategic planning. Regarding the stained-glass window, the Mayor also said he would call Patty Mills.

ADJOURNMENT: Being that there was no further business before Council, Cavanagh made a motion to adjourn at 6:40 p.m., seconded by Bell. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**



William G. Koons, Mayor



Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki