

Finance Committee Meeting
Tuesday, December 15, 2020 8:00 a.m. via Zoom

Members Present: Chairman Mike Carroll, Chris Berger, Mayor, and Fiscal Officer Romanowski

Visitors – Greg Heilman

Carroll called the meeting to order. The Fiscal Officer addressed the first agenda item, 2020 Annual Appropriations amendments and transfers. She explained that there will be some 2020 appropriation amendments at the next Council Meeting. One pertains to CARES Act funds which need to be included in the budget so that they can ultimately be designated for Safety salaries. It is necessary to amend the budget in order to spend all the funding the Village received. There will also be legislation for previously approved housekeeping transfers.

Regarding the Permissive Tax with the 2020 Road Program, the FO reported that Village would normally get the Permissive Tax from the county prior to the project being completed, but a mistake was made by County Engineer's office. The Fiscal Officer had been in touch with County Auditor and County Engineer. A correction plan was put in place and it will go before the County Commissioners for approval. If approved, the Village should have the money by end of this week. Once the funds are received, the Fiscal Officer would be able to write a check for Specialized Construction which would include the Village's share and the Permissive Tax; the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) would be paid directly to the contractor. At the Council meeting, a motion should be passed authorizing the Fiscal Officer to pay the contractor for the 2020 Road Program. The County Engineer's office said they would be willing to talk to the contractor if there were a problem with getting the money into the Village's account prior to cutting the check. The Fiscal Officer offered that if the money were not in the bank on time, she could pay the amount less the Permissive Tax and then ultimately write a second check once that money was received.

Fiscal Officer said she reviewed the budget and it appeared there would be nothing other than the CARES Act expenses that required amending. She spoke to Ruth Griswold in the Building Department and verified that there were no big construction deposits to return prior to yearend.

Carroll addressed the 2021 Annual Appropriations. The FO distributed the most current budget to the committee. She advised that she did not receive further information about a number of items discussed at the budget work session. Specifically, she received no further information on the water study for the whole Village. She included the culvert in the State Highway fund for under Chillicothe Road relative to the State's plan to pave the road in 2021. The Engineer was supposed to have been negotiating with the State to pay for this, but she had not heard any further information. A several of years ago, the culvert was estimated to be \$111,000, due to costs increasing over time, she estimated \$120,000 as a placeholder. She clarified that this was for only one, and that she did not know if two were needed or if the State would be picking up

this expense. Carroll told the Fiscal Officer to keep the entry as it is and said he would ask Porter to follow up with the Engineer before Monday's meeting. Carroll added that regarding a loader for the Street Department, he and Porter did not support this purchase for 2021. Instead, they were considering a new plow truck. The committee wanted to set up the capital replacement schedule in the Street Department to space out large expenditures. He would circle back and speak to Councilman Porter about the capital expenditure items before the next Council meeting.

Carroll advised that he was still waiting to hear from the Engineer about the stormwater study that the Village would need to include in the budget. He felt the majority of Council supported updating this information and stressed the importance of addressing problems holistically. The Fiscal Officer spoke to the Engineer who was attempting to get this information from CT Consultants.

The Fiscal Officer explained that with the budget the last few years, the Village projects deficits and ends up in the black but that is because there are large projects that have been being carried over from year to year. This year, the Village thought it would have completed the Lake Louise Bridge project and would be further along on the Manor Brook project. The 2021 proposed budget shows a deficit of \$808,000, and this is without having to re-budget for Lake Louise and Manor Brook. First it would be necessary to certify the year end balances, and then the Village would have to re-budget the projects in 2021. It appears they have run into some problems with Lake Louise with a gas line issue. The Village is nearing the end of the grant cycle for the use of the money, and the Engineer is attempting to get an extension. FO stated the Engineer should report on this at the Council meeting.

Carroll asked if the Village was in line with the budget for the Manor Brook project, and the Mayor said he saw no problems and the Village was about to go out for bids.

Carroll addressed whether the traffic light should be considered for 2021. The Fiscal Officer stated she included the traffic light in the budget under Special Equipment. If the Village were to get the grant, it would be a 50/50 grant. Carroll clarified that it would cover half of the estimated cost of \$294,000. FO stated the Engineer felt the chances of getting the grant were good. Carroll thought it would make sense to do the project while the street was getting done. The Fiscal Officer added that the current light has cost the Village a lot of money due to failures and repairs.

Berger addressed replacement of the loader in the Street Department and argued that it should be replaced because it was not equipped to do the job. Carroll reiterated the committee's commitment to develop a capital expenditure schedule. He did not support purchasing a snowplow truck and a loader in the same year. Berger stated that it was the purpose of Council to give the employees what they needed to do their jobs. He said the money is there and thought it should be done. The Fiscal Officer advised that in the budget, she had neither a plow truck nor

a loader. Carroll advised he would speak to Porter who would make the recommendation. The Mayor asked what the recommendation would be, the snowplow or the loader. Carroll stated the committee was leaning towards the snowplow. The Fiscal Officer asked for costs for the items, and Berger stated it would be \$146,000 for the snowplow and a net of \$85,000 for the loader.

The Mayor addressed doing two culverts, one 30" from the east side of Chillicothe to Manor Brook and one from Village Hall under Chillicothe Rd. to Chagrin Lakes. Carroll thought the discussion had involved doing both culverts. The Fiscal Officer explained that the Engineer did not want to do one of the culverts until after Manor Brook was complete. However, the Village found out that the State would be repaving Chillicothe Road, and the Engineer now wanted both culverts done. The Fiscal Officer did not have the numbers to put costs in for both culverts. The Mayor said he would contact the Engineer. The Mayor stated that the Village would have two culverts and one traffic light amounting to half a million dollars on Chillicothe Rd.

The Fiscal Officer stated that updating the Zoning Code had been discussed, but no further cost information was provided to her for the budget. FO offered to call the Solicitor to obtain this information, but Berger stated that the Building Committee would address it. The Mayor stated that Chagrin Falls paid \$100,000 to update their Zoning Code. The Mayor stated that the Solicitor said that much of the work should be done internally to minimize expense with the Solicitor. He suggested addressing it in 2022.

Carroll addressed salaries. The Mayor recommended a \$1,000 bonus for Jeff Pausch and thought the HR Committee would recommend it at the Council meeting. Berger stated that the money is there, and it is not an issue if HR recommends the changes. Carroll reminded Berger that he said that the money is there now, but it is necessary to forecast out and consider the long term. To Berger's point at a recent Finance meeting, Council needs to be cognizant and not arbitrary in its handling of employee pay. Berger suggested that HR put a schedule together to address pay issues, but he did not perceive it as a money issue, but a procedural issue. Carroll agreed it should be considered strategically. The Mayor said he created a schedule for the Street Commissioner and Lt. Pocek for three years but felt something was needed for all Village employees.

The Fiscal Officer advised that HR had been putting together job description and salary range for a Laborer/Mechanic at the last HR meeting she attended to address this issue. However, she missed the last HR meeting and did not know the status of this. Carroll stressed the importance of creating a consistent process.

The Fiscal Officer addressed a \$15,000 proposal by the Mayor to build a restroom at the Park. Berger asked if this was initiated by the Park Committee, and the Mayor stated no, that it was his idea although the committee had discussed it. Berger asked if the Park Committee was making this proposal. The Mayor stated "no" because of time. The Mayor said a restroom would cost

\$50,000 and that his purpose was to begin budgeting out. Carroll thought this should be something the Park Committee brings to Council and then funding options explored.

The Mayor addressed Tim Alder's raise. He created a three-year plan for Street Commissioner. Berger stated that this should be a proposal by HR Committee to be discussed by Council.

The Mayor stated that the Road Program would stay at \$350,000, and Carroll agreed.

The Mayor stated he had five things to discuss with the Engineer: Lake Louise Bridge, the Culverts, Stormwater Study, and Manor Brook. The Mayor stated that the Stormwater should be no more than \$10,000. The Mayor questioned the budget for the Solicitor and asked if \$120,000 was going to be enough. Carroll hoped it would. The Fiscal Officer said that \$100,000 was budgeted and that \$105,000 was paid in 2020. For 2019, 2018, 2017, and 2016, the Village paid \$124,000, \$49,000, \$39,000, and \$45,000, respectively. The Fiscal Officer explained that the Solicitor helps with the grants, but those charges are included in the appropriate special grant funds. Carroll addressed how the Solicitor is used. The Fiscal Officer explained that the Village was charged almost \$10,000 for COVID-19/Cares Act matters, which could not be paid with Cares Act funds. Paw Paw Lake charges totaled \$6,000. Berger questioned budgeting \$120,000 for a part time Solicitor. He believed a full-time Solicitor could be employed for \$120,000. Carroll said it was something for the Village to consider in the future. The Mayor stated that the Thrasher Dinsmore contract goes through 2021 so that this would be the time to consider options. The Mayor suggested looking at procedures to reduce costs.

The Mayor addressed the website. The Fiscal Officer obtained two estimates which were between \$8,000 and \$9,000. She added that there is another program with the county for website services in which the Village could participate. This program is supposed to be less expensive. She would continue to explore the website options in January and February.

The Mayor stated that a graduate student from Cleveland State may be able to do the Strategic Plan for free.

The FO will include the budget worksheets in the Council Packets with the explanations she gave to the committee. Additionally, she would prepare the necessary legislation. She said the budget needed to be adopted at the 12/21/20 as it needs to be filed with the County by the deadline.

Carroll concluded the meeting at 8:52 a.m.



Michael Carroll, Chairman

Prepared by Leslie Galicki