

Finance Committee
September 25, 2019 – 9:00 a.m. at Village Hall

Present: Nairn, Porter, Romanowski

Regarding contract renewal, the committee discussed the value the Village Solicitor, Thrasher, Dinsmore, and Dolan, provided in services to the Village. Porter stated that the rate of \$225 was good and felt the Village would not save any money by going out for a Request for Proposals for a Solicitor. Nairn clarified with Porter that the Village had done some price shopping for a Solicitor in the past, and Porter acknowledged there had been but not as extensively as the Village had with the Engineering contract. The Fiscal Officer acknowledged that it was good to have the stability of maintaining the same Solicitor during the upheaval in other Village departments. Nairn added that the transition from Solicitor Ondrey to Solicitor Matheney was seamless.

In order to control legal charges, Porter suggested not calling the Solicitor on every issue. Nairn stated that she and Porter advised Council to do independent research before contacting the Solicitor. The Fiscal Officer stated that she had to contact the Solicitor more often due to the Village's involvement with a variety of grants. Porter and Nairn agreed such contact was appropriate. The Fiscal Officer stated that the Solicitor's bills had gone up but were justified because of the amount of legal issues happening in the Village. Porter stated it was very reasonable. The Fiscal Officer asked if the Committee would make a recommendation relative to the Solicitor's contract at the next meeting and go through three readings. This was adequate time before the expiration of the contract. Porter added that the Village was charged a few hundred dollars an hour by Dennis Coyne, the Prosecutor, which was consistent in what the Village paid for legal issues.

The Fiscal Officer provided the committee with information from USI, the current PEP (Public Entities) insurance. They provided free property evaluations for the Village, and all the buildings were done, to include the exterior of the rental house. Porter asked what they came up with for the rental house, and the Fiscal Officer said the report indicated \$229,900. She clarified that it was an insurable value. The Fiscal Officer also provided a comparative analysis of what value the Village had placed on the buildings and what they determined. She noted that the Village had severely undervalued the police building because the equipment was not accounted for.

Nairn asked Porter what his opinion was on the rental house. Porter said it was bringing in net \$5,000 per year. It had been rented for 15 years and money had been put into the property. He questioned whether it was worth \$5,000 a year for the Village to continue to rent it, and he did not think so. There had been previous discussion of selling the property because it represented 2/3 of a Road Program. He stated that if the Village chose to bulldoze the house and keep the property, he was also good with that. Nairn stated she had always been a land person. Porter added that he did not want to get rid of the Crappe Property. He stated that the Village could make money on the rental house by selling it and could get more than the Village paid for it. Nairn asked when the Village purchased the property, and Porter thought it was possibly in 2002

or 2003 as part of a larger purchase of the land where the cemetery currently is located. Nairn and Porter discussed the merit of keeping the land, and the Fiscal Officer added that the Village would not have to pay taxes on it. Porter added that the grass would need to be maintained, but he saw value in keeping the land or selling it. The Fiscal Officer advised that although the Village made \$5,000, the liability was much more because of the potential for costly repairs. Although the Mayor stated the property brought in \$50,000, it cost the Village over \$50,000 in renovations in 2014. Porter said the Mayor was addressing rent paid in the past five years with rent of \$1,200 per month. He saw the value in keeping the property or selling it. Porter advised that the Village did not need the money. He again proposed renting the property, but then stated if the Village did not want to rent it, the house should be razed. Nairn agreed with keeping the land.

The Fiscal Officer said the committee did not need to deal with the insurance until February 2020. She added that the company added the Terrorism Endorsement and the Active Assailant coverage. There was a \$1,000 Safety Grant. She would speak to the Interim Street Commissioner to see if there was anything, he would want for Service Department staff. The Fiscal Officer advised that the insurance personnel raised her awareness to things the Village did not have on its schedule. She would have to work with the Police Chief and Street Department on this list, which included fences, flagpoles, hydrants, gates, retaining walls, free standing traffic signs, pools, playground equipment, none of which were listed.

Nairn asked if traffic lights were the responsibility of Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), or if streetlights were the responsibility of the individual Homeowners Associations (HOA). The Fiscal Officer advised that the traffic lights were the Village's responsibility. Nairn pointed out that her neighborhood had lighting, which was maintained by the HOA, not the Village. Porter added the need to include the pavilion to the schedule. Nairn added that with the new Veterans Memorial, the five flagpoles would need to be included. The Fiscal Officer requested that the committee think of other things that may have been omitted. Porter suggested inclusion of the Tornado Siren, and the Fiscal Officer mentioned the new antenna. She felt the list the insurance company provided was helpful. She added that the company provides cyber insurance, which is \$250,000 of coverage. Additionally, they have online training for the police, and other resource and reference material they provide to the Village. The Fiscal Officer said the Village has saved a lot with the company and has gotten a lot as well.

The Fiscal Officer explained that in the past, 16 hours per week were budgeted for her Administrative Assistant, but it was left to her discretion to add or subtract hours as needed. Earlier in the year, the Mayor told the Fiscal Officer that Council had discussed allowing her to schedule more hours for the Administrative Assistant. The Fiscal Officer had the Administrative Assistant working three days a week until she went on medical leave. She returned from medical leave early, but the Fiscal Officer did not have her work extra because of her recovery. The Fiscal Officer stated that she was at the point of needing to get things done, but that she looked at the budget and saw that it would be really tight unless the budget was amended. She indicated that there were minutes from the Boards that had not been done by the former Building Department Secretary and she did not want to overwhelm the New Building Department Secretary while she was learning the department. The Administrative Assistant offered to help get these done. Nairn agreed that the Village would not want to lose the new Building

Department Secretary. The Fiscal Officer said she was enthusiastic and had good suggestions. She was somewhat concerned that the Building Department Secretary might really want full-time work. The Fiscal Officer said she wanted to help her get caught up. Porter said there was another candidate for the Building Department Secretary who could also do the job. Regarding increasing the hours of the Administrative Assistant, Porter stated he thought it was a fine idea. He asked how many hours a week she was currently working. The Fiscal Officer stated that when Mayor Brett was with the Village, 16 hours had been budgeted, but if it was a busy year and the Fiscal Officer needed more, she could go to Council. Now, there were issues with specific hours assigned to the Building Department. Nairn advised no one would question that the Fiscal Officer was padding the request. The Fiscal Officer said that she managed the hours, and with her former Assistant, when she did not perceive a need, she asked the Assistant to rotate to other departments so that her time was filled. The Fiscal Officer said she needed to catch up and was at a point where she could not get to where she felt she could improve her own system. The Fiscal Officer asked for three days a week, and if more time was needed it could be up to her discretion. Porter suggested increasing the time to 24 hours, and the Fiscal Officer agreed but said that she did not want it set in stone. She proposed amending the budget, and then she would manage the hours. Nairn said it needed to coincide and have the flexibility that went along with the workload. Porter stated Council could authorize the Administrative Assistant to work up to 24 hours per week, and he was fine with that if she did not go over 30 hours a week because of benefits. The Fiscal Officer advised that the Employee Handbook was changed to 40 hours. The Fiscal Officer said she could not imagine going over this at least on a regular basis but knew that if the Administrative Assistant was there three days, her time would be filled. Porter stated at the next Council meeting, the committee could recommend to Council that the Administrative Assistant's hours be increased from 16 to 24 per week, and that the Fiscal Officer as her supervisor, would monitor the hours and ensure that there was adequate work being done for this period of time. If there was a need to cut it back, she could do so. The hours would be increased from 16 to no more than 24 hours. Porter said that if it went over 30 hours, it got dicey. Nairn asked if increasing to 24 hours would rectify the problem, and the Fiscal Officer said it would help. Nairn added that she would like to see the Fiscal Officer caught up. Fiscal Officer indicated that several years ago, she was able to get caught up after having a full-time help for two years. It was at this point that she had said it was time the Administrative Assistant rotate through the departments because she could not justify having her there with 40 hours. The Administrative Assistant did not want to do this and left employment. The Fiscal Officer said she would appreciate the request to increase the Administrative Assistant's hours to Council.

The Fiscal Officer advised that she did not have the Budget Worksheets ready yet but would get it done. The Budget Work Session would be on October 7th. She reminded Porter, who is on the Property Committee, that next year was the last year of the approximately \$15,000 Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) grant and asked if the committee had a project idea. Porter was confident the committee could come up with something. The Fiscal Officer said there was discussion about roofing the building, but she did not know the price. During the Department Head meeting, the Mayor discussed generators and problems neighboring communities were having with them. The Police Chief tested the Police Department generator and noted there was an issue. Porter advised that there was a service agreement with Shepp Electric. The Fiscal Officer surmised with everything going on with the Building Department, no one had called to have the generator checked.

Nairn also addressed the wind and bird issue in the Street Department as a possible project idea. Porter and the Fiscal Officer recalled there was work that had been done with the roof to mitigate these problems.

The Fiscal Officer addressed the Building Department budget and explained that this would be dependent on Council's decision to keep it open or transfer it to the county. Council had agreed to decide by the end of October and questioned how the budget could be addressed. Porter said he did not know whether there would be a Building Official, but there would be a part-time Zoning Inspector, and a Building Department Secretary. He said Council could leave it open and keep its certification and then bring in a Building Official later. Porter explained that it would not be the \$189,000 budgeted last year because the Building Inspector was being paid \$77,000 and with benefits was earning around \$100,000. Porter suspected the Building Department expenses would go down \$100,000 or more and added that the Village was not offering benefits to the Building Department Secretary. Nairn asked how this would be handled in the Budget Work Session. The Fiscal Officer said it would be discussed and from there, she would get numbers.

The Fiscal Officer said a large Road Program was anticipated, but this would also be discussed at the Budget Work session. Porter said he was in favor of a double Road Program.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30.


Cindy Nairn, Chair of Finance Committee

Prepared by: Leslie Galicki