

**Joint Finance and Human Resource Committee Meeting  
September 3, 2021 8:00 a.m.**

**Members Present:** Chairman Nairn, Chairman Berger (8:10 a.m.), Carroll, Porter,  
Fiscal Officer Romanowski, Chief Rizzo

Nairn called the meeting to order and requested it be recorded. The Fiscal Officer read the roll. Berger was absent.

Nairn addressed the part-time Zoning Inspector position which had been discussed for many months. Two qualified candidates were interviewed, but the situation had not been rectified. She advised that there are zoning issues which need to be addressed by the Village. Nairn also expressed concerns that the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector was being paid to do zoning, but is unable to get to it. Nairn referenced a comment by the Mayor that he did not want to hire anyone in that capacity until next April, and she asked if the committee recalled why this was the case. Porter did not know. Carroll stated that the Village has zoning issues, and if the Building Department is that busy and the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector is there by herself, he did not understand why the Village had not hired a Zoning Inspector. He provided examples of zoning issues in the Village and was unclear as to who was enforcing zoning in the Village. Carroll was aware that the Building Inspector did not want to do zoning but was addressing some of it. However, if he is not paid to do zoning as part of his contract, it should not be expected of him. This begged the question as to why a Zoning Inspector had not been hired and when it would occur.

Porter relayed that at the Safety Committee meeting, the Chief updated the committee about a pair of zoning violations involving a collection of Volkswagens. The matter had been referred to court and this was the first such case in a long time, which indicated progress. He added that he did not understand the Mayor's rationale in waiting to hire a Zoning Inspector. There were two qualified candidates for the Building Inspector position, and they could easily do zoning. The committee could recommend to the Mayor that one or the other be hired as a part-time Zoning Inspector, but it is the Mayor's appointment. Council does not have the power to force the Mayor to do that. Carroll questioned this. The Mayor has authority for certain appointments and if this is one that is not legislated at the State level, it is something Council could do. Porter recalled that the Village's ordinance provides that the Mayor appoints the Zoning Inspector subject to Council confirmation or rejection. Carroll advised that Council could change the ordinance, and Porter agreed. His view was that the position had been open for quite some time and while he was glad some of the zoning issues were being handled, there were still matters that should be enforced. If the Mayor were going to drag his feet on appointing a position that had been open for quite some time, it is Council's responsibility to take the necessary action to fill the position. He did not understand the logic in delaying until April. He understood that in the winter there may not be much going on with tall grass and weeds, but there are other issues like the vehicle violations. Furthermore, Carroll pointed out that the Village is paying a premium rate to the Building Inspector to do zoning. It is irresponsible for the Mayor or the Village not to have a Zoning Inspector. If the Mayor cannot move off top-dead-center, then Council should

encourage him to do so or take action which would allow Council to fill that position. The Village has a bad track record of kicking the can down the road and this is another example of Council not taking appropriate action to fill an open position. If there is no substantive reason not to fill it, it should be filled.

Porter indicated that the record should reflect that Berger joined the meeting at 8:10 a.m. Porter explained that the Mayor's rationale was that over the winter, there was not a lot of work for a Zoning Inspector. However, Porter did not see any reason not to hire one now. The ordinance could be modified to make the Mayor's appointment a Council appointment and it would require three readings, the drafting of legislation, and then the first reading at the September 13<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Carroll pointed out that it could be done by emergency. Carroll's point was that Council needed to move on filling the Zoning Inspector position. There had been loose zoning in the Village for a couple of years because of the lack of a formal Zoning Inspector. Porter added that the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector was the part-time assistant Zoning Inspector. In winter, she was not as busy and might have time for zoning even though there is not as much demand for zoning. Porter thought there should be a Zoning Inspector out and about in the Village to look for problems and to respond to them. The Chair of HR could touch base with the Solicitor to have the legislation drafted to change the ordinance for consideration at the next Council meeting.

As Chair of the Building Committee, Berger advised that the committee had met, and this topic was discussed. He thought the Mayor was concerned about the expense of having a part-time Zoning Inspector over the winter and wanted to ease into the process. If the position were filled from March through October, it would allow the Village to assess the workload. Berger explained that when the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector was hired, it was thought that she would have time to get out of the office and address zoning issues. She has not had this time. Nairn asked if the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector were not being paid to do zoning. Berger indicated that as the Assistant Zoning Inspector, she does the administrative portion of the zoning work. Carroll indicated that it was his understanding that the administrative work was what constituted the Assistant Zoning Inspector aspect of her job, not going out and doing the zoning. Berger explained that the Building Department will be transitioning to new software which would make it even less likely that the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector would have time to do zoning. Berger stated he was in favor of hiring a part-time Zoning Inspector being hired immediately.

Carroll clarified that he understood the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector was busy and he had no expectation that she would be doing zoning. He added that she is doing an outstanding job. Carroll reiterated that the Village needed to hire a part-time Zoning Inspector and that Council is getting nowhere in doing so because of the Mayor. Porter directed Nairn to get ahold of the Solicitor to draft legislation to change the ordinance to make the part-time Zoning Inspector position a Council appointment. Berger questioned why legislation was necessary. Porter explained that the position is appointed by the Mayor and it might be necessary to change it to a Council appointment. Then Council would

interview candidates and appoint someone, taking the power away from the Mayor. The Fiscal Officer explained that in the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), there are certain positions that must be appointed by the Mayor, but she did not believe this was one of them. Carroll further explained that the reason for this possible action was because the Mayor did not want to hire anyone until April. Berger said he thought if Council made a recommendation to begin the hiring process, the Mayor would have no problem with it. Carroll pointed out that the committee made a recommendation to hire a part-time Building Inspector, and the Mayor did not appoint. Berger said it was a different position. Based on the conversation in the Building Committee meeting, there was strong support for a part-time Zoning Inspector. Berger said he was speaking for the Mayor and as the Chair of the Building Committee, he had no problem with it. He encouraged the committee to take action and would tell the Mayor that the Finance and Building committees wanted him to appoint a part-time Zoning Inspector at the September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, given Council had sufficient notice to consider the appointment. The Fiscal Officer verified that the interview process would be observed, and the Berger agreed. He would contact the Mayor to get the process started so that the job could be posted and interviews conducted. Nairn questioned how it all could be accomplished by the September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, and Berger said that at the least, he could provide Council with the action that had been taken. Porter added that Berger should let the Mayor know that legislation is being considered to make the position a Council appointed position rather than a mayoral appointment.

Nairn reiterated the need to have a Zoning Inspector year-round because the Village had issues that were more than seasonal. Nairn asked Berger if there was discussion at the Building Committee meeting of a potential candidate from Russell. Berger thought this was one of the candidates that had been recommended to the Mayor.

The tiered salary schedule was discussed. The three elements that were identified regarding modification of the salary structure were a service bonus based on years of service for full-time employees, 1% performance increase based on the evaluation, and cost of living adjustment (COLA). Carroll provided a presentation of how these three elements would affect the pay of current Village employees into the future. For each employee for 2021, the average would be a 2.5% increase with this system. Berger clarified that the COLA was the variable that Council must approve every year. Regarding the impact of this system, Carroll explained that the percentage increase would be different for every employee. If it were a flat rate for performance and longevity, it would be the same for each person based on the criteria. Carroll addressed the timing of the raises and suggested with new hires, the raise should not occur until after the probationary period. Berger suggested utilizing the anniversary date to institute raises instead of a January 1<sup>st</sup> date, which would preclude a situation where someone was hired in November and then received a raise in January. Porter asked if the COLA would be effective January 1<sup>st</sup>. Carroll clarified that in terms of Berger's proposal, this would not be received until the anniversary date. From a management and fiscal standpoint, this system involves a lot of tracking. Functionally, the January date works better. From his experience in the public sector, raises occur January 1<sup>st</sup>, service/longevity bonuses are received on the anniversary date. Most public sector entities do it this way, and Carroll explained the different ways the municipalities

apply such payments. Porter agreed that the COLA should be applied at the beginning of the year and the service bonus received relative to the anniversary date.

Carroll explained that if this system were instituted in 2021, the cost to the Village would be \$4,800 for service bonus and \$14,000 for percentage increase. The cost for the first year would be about \$18,000. COLA was not included. Carroll asked how the committee would suggest implementing the system and suggested making it effective January 1, 2022. Carroll added that he struggled with the 1% tied to the evaluation because the tendency is that everyone would receive a good evaluation. Nairn asked if the Department Head is doing a great job if everyone under him/her is getting a fabulous evaluation. Carroll cautioned that Council should understand the consequences down the road of the system and consider whether it is sustainable. It would be unfair to the employees to implement a system and then change it a couple of years later. Carroll liked the tiered system and the service bonus for time in grade. He saw the service bonus as reflecting a commitment to the job, which should be recognized. Carroll explained that the Village needed to get away from arbitrary raises. Nairn concurred. She said she was struggling with the yearly Department Head evaluations. Berger suggested that in the private sector evaluations are sometimes done with a point system which relates to a percentage of a maximum raise. Carroll explained how this system could be an issue in the public sector, and Berger stated that this was his reason for favoring a pass/fail model. He added that the Village did not have Department Heads who were trained in doing evaluations with quantifiable goals. This would be the next step and would likely take three to five years. Carroll questioned the raises based on evaluations, and Porter stated that the evaluations are documentation that may become important down the road. Traditionally, it had not been done in the Village and had only recently started.

Carroll indicated that based on the discussion, he would create a model to reflect flat rate options versus percentage increases and provide it to the committees. Berger noted the financial difference between the two and asked if the person making the lower salary would be adequately rewarded or would it be a slap in the face for the person making the higher salary. Carroll supported a percentage and explained the percentage increments as they relate to longevity. Porter suggested doing a reverse percentage whereby the employee would receive less of a percentage as their pay and time increased. The committee discussed the incentive that would be provided to employees to stay with the Village based on the flat rate or percentage increase models.

Berger asked if the 2.5% reflected by the model put the Village in the ballpark, and added that with COLA for 2021, the inflation rate was running in the 6-7% range. Raises could be 8-9%, which would be a significant financial hit to the Village. The Fiscal Officer indicated that most of the recent annual raises were 2-2.5%. Carroll suggested looking at other measures of COLA to determine if the numbers indicated in the model were in the ballpark. He considered that the 2-3% range was adequate.

Nairn addressed the mechanic position. The committee had requested data of the amount of mechanic work being done seasonally. Carroll explained that the Street Commissioner documented mechanical work done daily through July. Carroll called into question the data collection, indicating that for March 12<sup>th</sup>, 8 hours of mechanical work was documented, but the

employee only worked for 4 hours that day. Carroll indicated that often in the private sector, a mechanic will charge for time on a job by a schedule. For this analysis, he preferred to have a good estimate. Ultimately, Carroll calculated the time spent on mechanical work for March to be 38% of the employee's time. In April, May, June, and July it was 42%, 27%, 10%, and 22% respectively. He did not have data for August. The total average from March until the end of July was about 27-28% of the employee's time. Carroll explained that the mechanical work varied with the season and it ebbed and flowed. Carroll asked what the value was for the employee to be spending 27% doing mechanical work. Would it be cheaper to contract it out or keep it in house? He thought keeping it in house would be cheaper, but then there are tools, equipment, and supplies that must be included.

Berger suggested that the annualized percentage would be higher than 27%. It would be closer to 35%. Carroll indicated that more information was needed to include data from the remainder of the year as well as information about work completed. Berger asked what the difference was between the mechanic's rate and the regular Service Department rate. The Fiscal Officer stated there is a range. The employee in question is currently at \$29.65 and the other two are at \$26.75 and \$23.18. Nairn stated that for Bedford Heights, an Auto Mechanic Grade 1 had a pay range of \$27.22 to \$32.26 and required certifications. Nairn said this was close to what the Village had looked at with Russell and Gates Mills. Porter thought this sounded low. The committee examined the current rates of pay of the Service Department employees and noted that the employee in question was already at a high rate of pay. Carroll asked if the employee were the only one who was doing mechanical work, or were the others as well. Will these employees seek raises based on the raise given to one employee doing mechanical work? Porter said it boiled down to how mechanical work was defined. The committee discussed the different types of mechanical work listed on the spreadsheet by the Street Commissioner. Carroll explained that he considered mechanical work to involve engines, brakes, etc. and things that were mechanical and not routine work like washing a mower deck and changing lawn mower blades.

Berger questioned that if the pay of the employee were bumped up \$6.00 per hour which would translate to an increase of \$12,000 per year, would this be more cost effective than sending the work out? Carroll reiterated that there were some things that were being measured and quantified that did not qualify as mechanical work like checking and filling all fluids. All four Service Department employees can do this. Carroll asked about the basic job description for the Service Department employees and explained that the committee should be looking at work that was above and beyond the basic. Porter agreed. Berger stated that there are things that should not be listed on the spreadsheet, so instead of 27.5% now the committee is down to 24%. Carroll noted that Berger mentioned a \$6.00 per hour raise, which he did not find appropriate because the individual was already the highest paid employee in the Service Department. Although the committee was trying to justify the position, it needed to be realistic with what the other employees were doing when they may be doing similar work. Would this mean all employees would be worth an additional \$6.00 per hour?

Porter advised that more data was required that would be more tailored to actual mechanical work like that done at a car dealership. The current information appeared to reflect anything

involving vehicles. Porter also wanted to know what mechanical work was done for the rest of the year. Carroll specified that the mechanical work documented should not be work the other employees can do.

Carroll added that the individual should definitively have certifications, especially if he is working on brakes on police cars.

Regarding staffing and hours, the Fiscal Officer stated that at the last HR meeting, she mentioned the possibility of having her Administrative Assistant assist in the Building Department as well as the Administrative Department. Aside from this, she needed more hours for the Administrative Assistant. There had been many more meetings and there was not enough time to get the work done. Carroll noted that cross training had been discussed. The Fiscal Officer said she presented the idea of possibly hiring the Administrative Assistant full-time. She had been with the Village for three years and it is known that she is dependable, reliable, does the work, and personality wise, everyone gets along. The Fiscal Officer spoke to the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector who feels pressure not having back-up. She would like to have cross-training. If Council would consider bringing on the Administrative Assistant full-time, there would be flexibility to help out in the Building Department, especially with the new software. It would enable the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector to take time off as needed by allowing someone to be at the counter who had a little knowledge of the process. The Fiscal Officer explained that aside from this suggestion, she needed more hours for the Administrative Assistant.

Porter said that making the Administrative Assistant full-time was a major step. Porter asked if four more hours a week would help, and the Fiscal Officer said that from the present to the end of the year, maybe not. She could use another day because the department is behind. Berger indicated that 30 hours was full-time, and the Fiscal Officer explained that 40 hours is full-time. Porter said there was something about 30 hours, and the Fiscal Officer said that this was changed to 40. Berger said that anything over 29 hours per week was full-time. Carroll thought that this was over a period of time. Porter agreed that this was the problem with the handbook, and the Fiscal Officer again explained that the handbook was changed to 40 hours. Porter suggested going up to 28 or 30 hours per week but was not ready to go to full-time. Carroll liked the idea of cross-training and assisting in the Building Department and having a full-timer who floated for consistency in the departments. If the work could justify it, he supported the Fiscal Officer's proposal of having someone who could cover when the Fiscal Officer or Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector were off. Porter indicated that 16 hours per week was a major increase. The Fiscal Officer explained that this would be for both departments. Porter said he was fine with 28 or 30 hours, and Nairn added she was fine with 30 because the Fiscal Officer is behind. Berger asked for what period of time, and the Fiscal Officer stated forever. She further explained that she has 456 hours of flex time and five weeks' vacation which she would probably lose at the end of the year.

Porter asked if the Finance Committee would be fine with 30 hours, and Berger asked if it would be 30 hours forever. Carroll was fine with 30 but thought full-time should be considered as long

as there was cross-training with the Building Department. The Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector is doing a great job and it would be good for her to have this flexibility. Currently if she needed time off, there was no one to cover. Porter stated that the Mayor needed to weigh in on the matter. This could be addressed at the September 13<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

Berger explained that with the new software, it would be possible to fill out the applications online. Eventually, it should be possible to pay for the permits online. There would then be a lot less foot traffic.

Porter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 a.m., seconded Carroll. Voice vote, ayes, all. Motion carried.

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Cindy Nairn, Chairwoman HR

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Chris Berger, Chairman Finance

Prepared by Leslie Galicki