

Human Resource Committee Meeting
Friday, August 13, 2021 – 8:00 a.m. @ Village Hall

Present: Chair Nairn, Member Porter, Fiscal Officer (FO) Romanowski, Mayor Koons

Nairn called the recorded meeting to order and read the roll.

Nairn first addressed the part-time Building Inspector position. Interviews had been conducted starting in the Spring. There were two qualified candidates. Nino Monaco was particularly qualified. The other candidate, Howard Sonenstein, had required qualifications but not electrical. Nairn noted that the Mayor expressed concerns about Monaco. Nairn stated that the Mayor sent her a note indicating he wanted a Zoning Inspector hired in 2022 for four hours a week to handle property complaints. Nairn asked for the committee to explain why the Village had been advertising for a Building Inspector if it was not hiring one in any capacity. The Mayor stated he did not know. He did not want to interview for the position and was happy with Dave Hocevar as was the Building Committee. Nairn advised that as a courtesy to Monaco, he should be thanked by the Village for coming back for the second interview. Nairn asked the Fiscal Officer if this had been done for both candidates after the first round of interviews. The Fiscal Officer stated no since she did not know what direction the committee would be taking. The Mayor said he calls the candidates. The Fiscal Officer stated that normally she sends letters when instructed. Nairn suggested the Mayor reach out to both candidates if in fact the Village would not be going this direction, but she wanted an explanation for them.

Nairn reviewed the part-time Building Inspector job description and said there were a lot of aspects of it that Hocevar and the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector do daily. She assumed the Zoning Inspector would be ensuring that commercial and residential properties were compliant. The Mayor said it did not make sense for the Village to pay \$75 per hour to look at someone's grass or a car that had been sitting in a driveway. The Mayor described various zoning violation examples in the Village and stated that they were petty little things not worth spending \$75 per hour. Someone could be hired for \$25-\$35 per hour. Nairn said that the Village had tried in the past without any luck. The Mayor said that on the Plain City website, the Zoning Inspector looked like a high school girl, no offense. If the person was breathing, he/she could be a Zoning Inspector.

The Fiscal Officer stated that part of the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector job position was Assistant Zoning Inspector. At some point, there needed to be some cross training. There were times when both she and the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector needed more help and other times where the workload decreased somewhat. She proposed bringing her Administrative Assistant on full-time for three days at Village Hall and two days at the Building Department. It would allow for cross-training and would allow the Building Department Administrative Assistant time to go out to do the zoning work. She acknowledged that her Administrative Assistant knows how to do the minutes and is dependable. It would mean full-time benefits, but it would be someone who had been with the Village three years, and everyone gets along. The Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector knows what she is doing and knows zoning. It would also allow for coverage for the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector when she goes on vacation.

Nairn stated that this would save on having to advertise in the paper and interviewing candidates. She added that there was a need. Nairn had received emails from disgruntled residents about properties. She understood Hocevar did not want to have to deal with the follow-up involved with these issues. Nairn stressed that there were problems and the Village needed someone to address them for the sake of keeping the community beautiful.

Porter stated that regarding the Building Inspector, the Village did not have the long-term situation in the Building Department that it formerly did when Hocevar was the Building Commissioner and Laura Heilman was the secretary who became the Building Inspector. Hocevar, through his company, provides service to at least five municipalities. As such, he is not in a position where he can devote most of his time conducting South Russell Village business on a part-time basis. He recognized that the situation was favorable now, and hated to upset the apple cart, but questioned what would happen in five to ten years. The current Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector did not have certifications nor the inclination to obtain them. Porter questioned if Hocevar decided to close shop and move to Florida, what would happen then. Previous attempts by the Village to locate a Building Inspector did not produce any qualified candidates. This time, Porter stated that Monaco was wildly qualified. The other candidate was also qualified but did not have the electrical certification. He was concerned that the long-term situation would turn into an immediate need and recognized that finding a Building Inspector with all the certifications was rare. This was why the committee conducted the interviews of the candidates. However, it was the Mayor's appointment, and if the Mayor failed to appoint anyone to fill the position, then that was the end of it. Given that it appeared the Village would not proceed with hiring, the candidates should be notified by the Mayor in writing to thank them for their time and explain that the Village would be going in a different direction.

Regarding zoning, Porter recalled that the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector was part-time zoning and was being paid in part for this job. If she ceased to be the Assistant Zoning Inspector, the Village must refuse this pay. Nairn asked if she had ever done it. The Mayor stated no. Nairn remembered that in the hiring process, this portion of the job description was added. The Fiscal Officer clarified that it is Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector. Porter recalled that the hours for the position were increased, and the Fiscal Officer noted the pay was also increased to do zoning. Porter suggested exploring Monaco or Sonenstein as the part-time Zoning Inspector. This might be a way to have a bench in the Building Department. He asked if the Building Department Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector were being paid in part to be a Zoning Inspector and her other duties preclude that, and someone else were to be hired, would she continue to be paid for the zoning work. Porter suggested that she could keep her pay and continue as the Assistant to the actual Zoning Inspector.

The Fiscal Officer questioned whether the Village would want to consider contracting with Monaco on a per inspection basis to provide the bench where someone was working with Hocevar to learn about the Village. Porter thought either candidate would be ideal for this and would provide coverage for times when Hocevar was unavailable. The Fiscal Officer thought it was important to plan for the future. Nairn concurred and referred to the five-year plan. She added that the Mayor indicated that Hocevar and the Administrative Assistant/Board

Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector were uncomfortable with the HR Committee discussing putting someone else in place in the Building Department. Realistically, neither one of them would be in place in this department forever; both are retirees. She did not want the Village to have to go through what it did two years ago with the Building Department being on and off. It was tedious and cantankerous. She felt the Village would be hard pressed to have another Hocevar with his depth and knowledge of the Village. Both the Mayor and Porter said he was an expert. The Fiscal Officer pointed out the importance of training and transferring this knowledge to the next person to take the position. Hocevar retired in 2014 and at some point, would retire permanently, and then someone would be brought having no knowledge of the Village. There could be an overlap where this knowledge could be conveyed.

Nairn asked the Mayor if he was suggesting that Hocevar would feel threatened or resentful because of this, and the Mayor stated that anyone would when the Village was interviewing for his job. Nairn asked the Mayor how eager he was to put either of the candidates in place, and the Mayor said there were better people than those two to be the part-time Zoning Inspector. Nairn asked where. The Mayor said he would get the guy from Russell Township who was a retired Building Inspector. Nairn asked if he interviewed in the past, and the Mayor said no because he worked part-time for Streetsboro, but the Mayor had spoken to him. The Mayor explained that this was such a serious issue in the State that the mayors had all gotten together to go to Columbus to say that something needed to be done. There was no plan to become a Building Inspector. To get someone full-time would cost the Village \$120,000 and he did not think the Village needed someone full-time because there was not enough work. The Mayor added that if a Zoning Inspector were to be hired, he would specify that this person worked Saturday mornings so as not to disrupt the office. Things were going well with Hocevar and the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector. The Mayor added that when the Fire Prevention Officer was there Friday mornings, there was a different atmosphere. The Mayor proposed that the Fiscal Officer's Administrative Assistant become the part-time Zoning Inspector. He thought about having one of the Service Department employees do it if one of them wanted more hours. Porter advised that they are full-time, and this would be overtime.

Nairn summarized that perhaps hiring from within might be the way to accomplish it for now. She felt that the committee should not be discussing a five-year plan for the Building Department because they would get disgruntled about it. She asked how the committee could get them to see that this was for the best interest of everyone, and they should not feel threatened. She thought that they would not like it if someone from the outside were brought in to work a few hours a week. The Mayor stated he did not know about this. He suggested pulling the advertising for the Building Official position and added that Hocevar was being asked about it recently at a Building Official's golf outing. On the other hand, the Mayor had been asking Hocevar about his contract because his contract was up. The Fiscal Officer stated that Hocevar's contract was now ongoing, and Porter agreed. The Mayor said he wanted Hocevar to provide a year's notice for when he was leaving and he said no. It was the first thing on the Building Committee's agenda for the August 12th meeting and Berger did not address it. Perhaps he had already spoken to Hocevar. The Mayor thought that Hocevar and the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector were in agreement that each would stay as long as the other. That was what they say.

The Fiscal Officer advised that she has had conversations with the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector who was concerned about cross training. There was a lot of pressure in wondering who would cover the office if she wanted to take time off. Additionally, she would be getting new software at the beginning of the year, and it would be good to have another person learn it and cross train. She said the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector was on board with cross training. Porter offered that if the Fiscal Officer's Administrative Assistant became the Zoning Inspector she might as well be made full-time. The Fiscal Officer stated that if her Administrative Assistant were made full-time, it would give the Village flexibility to address administrative projects. She reiterated that her Administrative Assistant is dependable and personality-wise, everyone gets along. She emphasized that from an emergency standpoint, it was necessary for employees to have knowledge of other positions to enable the Village to function if someone were not there – currently the Village does not have this. Porter suggested that if something were to happen to the Fiscal Officer, theoretically, her Administrative Assistant could come in and at least fill in for a while and over time become the Fiscal Officer. The Fiscal Officer offered that she was not at that point because the Administrative Assistant only works 24 hours, which is not much time. She would like for the Administrative Assistant to be backup for the payroll and start learning some of the financial duties, but she is limited to the 24 hours per week. If she were full-time, the Fiscal Officer could teach her more as could the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector. The Fiscal Officer recalled the time when she was hospitalized and the previous Mayor called her at the hospital to find out how long she would be out of the office because there was no backup. The Fiscal Officer emphasized this was the reason having back-up was important. Porter indicated that this would mean an increase in pay, a change in the job description, and an amendment to the ordinance and budget. Porter suggested that hiring a part-time Zoning Inspector would be less costly. He was not opposed to making the Fiscal Officer's Administrative Assistant full-time because she was an excellent employee. Nairn concurred, and said she is focused, gets the job done, and learns quickly.

The Mayor advised he would not want to bring in a Zoning Inspector until April and the individual would work for 30 weeks of the year. He did not think there was that much work. He proposed \$25 per hour, for four hours a week on Saturdays for 30 weeks which would be \$3,000. Porter reviewed the issue of hiring a part-time Zoning Inspector as well as a succession plan for the Building Department and said that the problem was there was no process for this. He was stunned that with the most recent effort to hire a part-time Building Inspector, the committee had two qualified candidates. Porter was concerned that if a vacancy were to occur, the Village would be scrambling to fill the Building Inspector position in a hurry and may not be able to find someone suitable. The Mayor stated that Mayfield just hired a new Building Official and they had to reach down to some place in Medina. The Mayor suggested that they could find a Building Official who was working someplace for \$68,000 and see if that person would want to be a Zoning Inspector on Saturdays for four hours. It would be a good way to see. Porter offered that the Village already had two candidates who could easily do that. The Fiscal Officer added that Monaco asked if the Village would consider having one person be both Building and Zoning Inspector because he did zoning as well. Porter recommended hiring Monaco as the Zoning Inspector, which would be the better deal financially for the Village. Porter added that there still was the issue of the bench.

Nairn observed that the Mayor was not enthralled with either of the candidates, and the Mayor stated no and said he thought the Village could find someone better especially if the Village decided to hire a four-hour a week Zoning Inspector in April. He thought they could find someone better than either one of the candidates. The best he got from seven mayors was that Monaco would be adequate for the Village. Porter said that during the second interview, he found Monaco's explanation satisfactory. Nain concurred and added that there was more to the Pepper Pike story than what they heard. The Fiscal Officer asked if he could be hired temporarily as a test, adding that the Village had a six-month probationary period. Nairn asked the Mayor his opinion of hiring on a temporary basis. The Mayor asked if it would be for part-time Zoning Inspector, and said the Village could get someone better. Porter stated that the qualifications for Zoning Inspector were that the candidate must be breathing and over the age of 18.

The Mayor suggested Executive Session when Nairn proposed to discuss personality issues, and the Mayor added that the Building Committee had little knowledge of the issue. Porter made a motion at 8:40 a.m. to go into Executive Session for the purposes of potentially hiring a new employee part-time and full-time, seconded by Nairn. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

The committee exited Executive Session at 8:50 a.m.

Nairn addressed over-time and comp time. The Fiscal Officer provided the committee with pages 10 and 11 from the employee handbook. She explained that per the employee handbook, the Village does overtime based on hours worked in a day, not a week. The Federal Law requires that overtime must be paid after 40 hours in a week. With the Service Department and snow plowing, overtime in the Village is based on hours in a day. Recently, the Service Department requested going to four 10-hour shifts in order to have Fridays off. It was presented to the Streets Committee, and it did not seem that the committee was interested. Since that time, there were two weeks where they worked the four 10-hour shifts and took the Fridays off. She wanted the committee to be aware that it is costing the Village overtime. The employees worked their 40 hours and took Friday off, which meant no coverage in the Village these days. Additionally, the employees all received an extra half day to take off another time because for the 8 total hours they worked by doing the 10-hour shifts (extra 2 hours per day), they got a day and a half off. It also put some of the employees over the 80 hours that they were allowed to have in their comp bank. They could have chosen to be paid for it, but they wanted it as comp time. The Fiscal Officer asked the committee if this would continue and be the permanent schedule and if so, would the committee want to address how overtime / comp time is calculated. Nairn said she was not in favor of giving anyone extra money right now. She did not think having the Service Department unmanned was a good idea either. Porter advised that the Street Committee had not considered the matter and recalled it coming up a while ago. It was not viewed favorably. The Fiscal Officer explained the Federal Law pertaining to overtime being based on a 40-hour week and said the Village's policy was rare. Because they stayed two hours extra per day, it must be computed at time and a half. It is each employee's decision to take it as comp time or to be paid overtime for it. Porter noted what would need to be changed in the policy to align it with the Federal policy. The Fiscal Officer explained the rationale behind the Village's policy relative to snow plowing. Porter suggested that the Street Committee should consider this.

The Mayor stated that the arrangement was sold to him with the explanation that the Village had 24 culverts to do on Bel Meadow and it would work better if they could work four 10-hour shifts that week to get the culverts done before paving started and they did it. He said he was told there would be no additional cost, but now he was hearing that they each received four additional hours off. The Fiscal Officer could understand the need if the road program were about to start and they needed to get it done by a specific close deadline, but it had not. They still worked 40 hours but did it over four days, resulting in no coverage for the Street Department on Friday and they got an extra half day off. The Mayor said that this was not right and they should not have an extra four hours. He told the Fiscal Officer to take it back. She explained that she could not because this was the policy, Porter concurred. It was the Mayor's understanding that there would be no additional compensation. The Mayor stated that they owe the Village four hours. Porter and the Fiscal Officer stated no, they are entitled to an additional four hours. The Mayor reiterated that each of the employees owes the Village four hours. Porter said that this may be so morally, but not per the employee handbook. The Fiscal Officer added that this was per week, and they had done it twice. The Mayor stated it was not right. The Fiscal Officer wanted to bring it to the committee's attention in the event it chose to amend the handbook or change the practice, etc.

The Mayor stated it may have been an honest mistake by the Street Commissioner. The Fiscal Officer pointed out that he banked the hours on the employees' timesheet tracking. The Mayor said he was referring to the extra four hours, and the Fiscal Officer explained that the Street Commissioner banked these hours. She checked and said that had he not, she would have explained it to him that the 10-hour days was costing the Village more, however, he banked them as the extra hours. Nairn verified they knew what they were doing. The Mayor said he did not know that they knew what they were doing. The Fiscal Officer reiterated that the Street Commissioner knew because it was reflected on both the timesheet and the spreadsheet that reflected the additional time. He entered that they received the comp time. Nairn asked if this was something they wanted to do more often, and the Fiscal Officer explained that the Street Commissioner asked the committee if they could go to four 10-hour days. Porter said this would give the employees a three-day weekend every week.

The Mayor reiterated that he was told that it would not cost one penny more.

The committee discussed a date for the next joint HR/Finance Committee meeting.

The Mayor discussed the possibility of allowing the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector to bank comp time instead of leaving early on Fridays to compensate for board meetings. The Fiscal Officer said this was the way the position was set up. The Mayor thought that needed to be changed. The Mayor explained that the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector should be able to take the hours spent in board meetings and apply them to the following week, for example, so that she could stay longer to do what she needed to instead of having to take that time on Fridays. The Mayor asked if all employees can bank comp time, and the Fiscal Officer explained yes, up to 80 hours. Department Heads are hour for hour and employees are time and a half. The Fiscal Officer

reminded the Mayor that Council amended the handbook just for the Building Department position so that she would not fall into the hours per day but hours per week with Friday being the day to adjust for the 40 hours. The Mayor asked if she could slide the hours to the next week. Porter said not now unless the handbook were changed. The Mayor stated that if everyone else can slide their comp time to the next week or day, she should have the same privilege. Porter explained that the job is different from the Street Department and Police. The Fiscal Officer added that this was the reason for there being the hour per day at the end of the day where the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector could leave early or do the zoning work. Porter agreed and explained that it was because she would be doing evening meetings. The Mayor indicated that the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector did not know about this discussion, or that he brought it up. He felt it would give her flexibility that other employees have. Nairn said that her job is not congruent with the Street or Police Department. Porter said the handbook was written specifically to the position because of the possibility with the meetings racking up overtime. Nairn clarified that the Mayor had not spoken to the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector, and the Mayor said no. He would talk to her and tell her what he came up with. Nairn asked why the Mayor would bring it up to her at all. The Mayor said it is the way to treat somebody decently. The Fiscal Officer said that from the conversations she had had with the Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk/Assistant Zoning Inspector, she likes leaving early on Fridays.

Regarding the no smoking ordinance, Nairn had reviewed a variety of legislation from other communities pertaining to the topic. Nairn said that it currently was not an issue, but she felt strongly about it in the interest of saving the Village some legal costs. She distributed copies of the previous Village legislation from 1993 and the version produced by the Solicitor. Nairn wanted to be sure e-cigarettes and chewing tobacco were included. She asked the committee to review it. The Fiscal Officer had been unaware of the old legislation. Porter advised that it applied to smoking inside buildings and Village vehicles. The new one applies to all Village properties. Porter noted that it was much broader than the earlier versions and added that it would be a misdemeanor offense resulting in a ticket. The Mayor asked if this were a solution to a problem the Village did not have. Nairn thought it was good to have an updated policy. The Committee agreed that it should be on the agenda for the next Council meeting. The committee discussed the potential need to include illegal substances in the ordinance. The Mayor noted that occasionally a visitor would be smoking on the Village campus or park pavilion.

The Mayor sent an email to the committee regarding employee benefits and what they would like to see changed. The Mayor said he would like to have a survey and then sit down with the employees.

The committee discussed the Street Department issue further.

Porter made a motion to adjourn at 9:24 a.m., seconded by Nairn. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Cindy Nairn, Chairman of HR Committee