

**Finance Committee Meeting**  
**Monday, March 11, 2024, 9:00 a.m.**

**Members Present:** Chairman Berger, Council Member Galicki, Fiscal Officer Romanowski

Discussion was held regarding the cost for the Village using Paychex payroll services and whether that was a good use of money for the Village. Fiscal Officer explained that previously the Village used ADP Payroll Services and the costs were close to \$10,000 per year. The cost for Paychex is still significantly below that and they provide great service to the Village. There are aspects of the Village's payroll that are more complex, and the Fiscal Officer is able to input information and review that everything is properly applied before the payroll is processed. Paychex processes payroll and prepares and files the associated taxes as well as preparing and mailing W-2s. Additionally, they have online resources available to the Village such as handbooks, sample policies, training and templates. Fiscal Officer said she believes the costs are well worth the services and resources the Village receives.

Regarding Star Ohio, Berger noted that the Village has accumulated \$30,000 in interest within the past year and a half. The interest rate is 4.18%, and he had seen higher rates. The Fiscal Officer advised that she had been in contact with Meeder Investments about a meeting with the Treasury Investment Board (TIB). Berger wondered if Meeder is being competitive. The Fiscal Officer clarified that the 30-day yield for STAR Ohio was 5.49%. She would work on arranging a TIB meeting with Meeder.

The Fiscal Officer said that work with Automatic Data Processing (ADP) with the county is progressing. They are in the process of getting the emails set up and have all the equipment. The next step is to set up a date to do the changeover. ADP staff came out to the Village to establish what it would cost to have one modem. Right now, the Service Building and Village Hall would have two separate modems and ADP would prefer one. This was not part of the original quote. Berger asked if the Village had paid the county yet, and the Fiscal Officer said not until after installation.

Regarding the Village Agreements List that was shared with Council, the only upcoming agreement is the Farmers' Market, which is pending updated insurance and a diagram of the market setup. It should be on the next meeting agenda.

According to the Fiscal Officer, the Mayor requested that Ann Dunning be put on the March 11<sup>th</sup> Council meeting agenda relative to creating drawings for the proposed park restroom. She was uncertain whether there was an agreement involved or if the purpose was to identify a price to have this done. Galicki asked how much money was in the budget for this, and the Fiscal Officer explained that although there was money in the budget for the restroom, there was not specifically for architectural drawings. Berger responded that it was incumbent on the Park Committee to provide a budgetary number to Council. He did not think a specific breakout of the various costs was necessary and just wanted a total dollar amount for the package. Galicki asked for clarification about Ann Dunning, and the Fiscal Officer said she is an architect who was a former resident who served on the Architectural Review Board (ARB) for many years. Galicki clarified that these architectural services were for the restroom the Village would build as

opposed to the prefab drop-in model. Berger added that it would be necessary for the plans for the restroom to be reviewed by the ARB. One member of the ARB had said he would do the drawings free of charge, but this would be a conflict. So, another architect was found, but he did not know the fees that would be charged. It is necessary to have drawings in order to get approval to do the project. The Fiscal Officer thought that the drawings would be for a restroom that would have running water and sewer. Galicki was aware that there had been discussions about the project being cheaper if it were done in-house. He hoped that the Village would first obtain architectural, material, and construction costs because they may find that the total was a wash with the prefab model. He was concerned that Council would opt to go with Ann Dunning's plans without realizing how much the rest of the project would cost. Berger advised he had requested the all-in budget number for the project but had not seen it yet. Galicki did not want to provide checks to people to later find out that it would be so much more expensive. Berger would discuss this with Councilwoman Cavanagh since she is the chair of the Parks Committee. The Fiscal Officer understood that drawings were necessary to go out to bid, but hoped Dunning would not be too expensive and would provide adequate information for Council to know whether it wanted to go out to bid or not. Berger reiterated this was up to the Parks Committee to at least put a rough number on paper comparing the costs of the prefab project and the in-house project.

The Fiscal Officer advised that the paperwork had been submitted to the county to make the corner lot tax exempt and she is working with them to make sure the application is correct before they submit it to the State. Berger said that after this is done, the Village needs to decide whether to consolidate the lots. Fiscal Officer discussed estimated costs for consolidation with the Solicitor and was told it would be simple and not too expensive. It would include a surveyor and the Planning Commission. Since the Village campus is made up of multiple lots, there was discussion on whether it made sense to consolidate all of the lots at the same time. Consolidating would make sense from a finance and ease of administration perspective, but it was felt that it should be directed to the Properties Committee to come up with a 5, 10, or 20-year plan about what makes sense as it is seen today. Looking forward, would it make more sense to have individual parcels or one large piece of property?

The Fiscal Officer asked Berger about a Whitetail Homeowners Association (HOA) study he sent to Council. Berger explained that he shared it as an example of what can be done to look at the useful life of capital and equipment for planning purposes. Galicki thought it was a great study and noted it could be beneficial for the Village to look strategically in determining priorities with its needs and to help with the budgeting process. The Fiscal Officer saw the benefit of doing a study in terms of creating a five-year budget and saw merit in creating a long-term master plan for the Village. Berger thought this would be a discussion for the Properties Committee, but the Finance Committee could ask the Engineer what CT Consultants would charge for a reserve study and then decide when Council would want to do it. The Fiscal Officer advised that having this type of information would have been helpful in projecting the need to replace the salt dome. She said that Russell Township had a study done, and she would reach out to them for information.

There was discussion about the grant writer and whether a revised agreement had been submitted. It has not. The Village would need \$350,000 in grants to justify the expense of having a grant writer. Berger said no one has responded to his request for a list of potential / upcoming projects. If this could be done with the salt dome, that would make sense. There is a firm that has come up with a proposal, and they are looking for grant money. If the salt dome is not part of the project list, then what else does the Village need to do? The Fiscal Officer reiterated that it is better to have the list of projects and then find a grant that fits the project rather than finding a grant and then putting together a project to fit the grant. Berger added that he did not see the benefit in having the writer sit at a computer for five hours per week to see what he could find, or to give him a list of 50 potential projects that would have to be sorted to determine if any were worthwhile. Berger did not think this was the way to go. Galicki added that when the subject of a grant writer came up, it was perceived that the grant writer would be looking for money for which the Village could apply, but during the presentation by the grant writer, the grant writer indicated he would require direction. Berger did not want the grant writer to be the forward thinker of what the Village would be doing. Therefore, it is incumbent on the committees to identify projects that are of value to the Village. The Fiscal Officer referenced the recent proposed grant for a solar project, and asked if this was really a project the Village wanted. Berger thought it was worth the effort, but said it was a one-off deal and would not propose the Village do business this way on a regular basis. The Fiscal Officer explained that if there were a list of projects, then the Village would be ready for when a grant opportunity is available, rather than trying to put something together just to get grant money. Berger said that he challenged the Wisers about how the payback of the projects they proposed did not make sense for the Village. He told them that the only way the Village would do a project with them is if they found a grant, and then they came up with a potential grant. Berger concluded that he would ask again for a list of projects. Until this was provided, he did not know why the Village would go forward with a grant writer. The Fiscal Officer raised the possibility of identifying a grant writer who could explore grant opportunities as needed by the Village. She added this had been a function of the Engineer and CT Consultants in the past as well as CRWP. The Fiscal Officer clarified that the services are available, but the Village is not charged if they are not used.

Regarding other Village projects aside from the salt dome, Berger noted that Manor Brook II is in the mind of some people. He hoped that the Village had learned from the first project to do better with number crunching. There is also Fox Run and other stormwater projects. However, he would like to see how effective the first projects are before going further. The Fiscal Officer advised that grant money is not really free money, there are usually strings attached. The Village could have done Manor Brook in a different way for less money, but the Village took grant money and as a result, it raised the costs to do the project to the specifications of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant requirements. In considering grant money for Manor Brook II, what are the requirements, and would there be a better, less expensive way to do the project that would accomplish the goal? The Central Retention Basin was done with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money, so there were no restrictions. With the park, the Village agreed to an easement, so the Village is very restricted in what it can do on the park land. Berger said that unfortunately, through changes in elected officials, the Village does not retain

the soft knowledge to fully understand these ramifications. Council needs to do a better job of understanding restrictions when considering grant funding.

Berger adjourned the meeting at 9:54 a.m.