

**Finance Committee Minutes**  
**Friday, April 18, 2025, 9:00 a.m.**

**Present:** Chairman Canton, Council Member Porter, Fiscal Officer Romanowski, Mayor Koons

Canton called the meeting to order. The FO reported that the budget worksheets went out to the committees and DH on April 17<sup>th</sup>, and she requested them back by the end of May. The Tax Budget must be adopted by July 10<sup>th</sup>, so the goal would be to get it done by June. At this time of the year, it is just the big ticket items that are concern. Once the Village knows what the salt structure will be, then they can get the rest of this year planned. The FO hoped this would be in the next couple of weeks, so then she could work on the 2026 Tax Budget. Porter asked if the FO had gotten any further information about the salt structure from the Engineer, and the FO said she had not. He asked that she convey to Council that they should discuss the Road Program at the April 14<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Porter said Council discussed paving Countryside Drive.

FO informed the committee that according to an Ohio Municipal League (OML) notice, there was a budget bill which took the County Prosecutor off the County Budget Commission and replaced the position with the County Administrator. She had not spoken to Prosecutor Flaiz about it yet. She thought the matter was pending.

Regarding the new finance software she discussed at the Council meeting on April 14<sup>th</sup>, she met with the Mayor, Chief, and Street Commissioner and everyone is on board that the UAN software is the way to go. The Solicitor is reviewing the agreement, and the FO hopes to have it on the agenda for the next Council meeting. This will allow the Village to get on the wait list for setup and training with UAN. Porter asked about implementation, and the FO said she thought it could be done by the end of the year but there were still discussions she needed to have with UAN personnel. The FO added that she will have support for her current software until the end of next year. Porter did not see any downside with going with UAN, and the FO explained that the only downside is having to set up the line items. However, she noted that ultimately in getting it set up correctly, the state report will simply be a press of a button. There are 2,100 entities who use UAN to include many of the surrounding communities.

Regarding the \$15,000 Verdantas trail study, the Mayor stated that the Village paid \$12,000 for the Master Plan for the Park, and he picked the number \$15,000 out of the sky. It looks like Verdantas just picked the number up and said that is what they will charge for a Master Plan for the trails. He thought this amount would be cheap, but it bothered him.

Canton asked about the monthly income tax received by the Village. The FO explained that because it is income tax collection time, CCA usually estimates what is given to the Village for March and April. In May or June, they will make an adjustment for what was actually collected. The FO further advised she had sent the committee OML information regarding replacement levies and renewal levies and explained the differences.

The Mayor reviewed the previous request by State Representative Demetriou and Congressman Joyce for funding the needs of the Village and the response that no money is coming. He also verified that he had completed public records training for the next few years.

The Mayor provided Ike Tripp with Meeder Investment updates from the last couple of years to try to entice him to be on the Treasury Investment Board (TIB). At the last Council meeting, the Solicitor was asking if Tripp had a degree in Finance. The Mayor did not know, but Tripp told the Mayor privately that he has handled \$4 - \$25 million and knows what he is doing money wise. He discussed Tripp's qualifications further with the Solicitor and said he would follow up to see if Tripp was still interested after reviewing the information. The Mayor said Tripp ran a business for 30 years and Porter added that he also served many years on Planning Commission.

The Mayor wanted to take a look at the idea of getting a grant writer. There are three grants the Village was told it should have applied for to include a grant for the cemeteries, a grant for sidewalks, and a Chagrin River Watershed Partners grant. He thought Steve Balaban would be a good idea. He would try to get more specifics about what Balaban would do. He did not think the Village had the manpower expertise. The FO reminded the committee that Balaban wanted a retainer, and asked whether he would do it a la carte. The Mayor thought he would, especially if given three projects to research.

The FO asked the Mayor about the NOACA meeting regarding the \$800,000. He said the meeting occurred yesterday at 3:30 p.m. and there were five NOACA members, Rich Washington, and himself. The Mayor told the group that he received a two-page letter dated March 9, 2023, stating that the Village received \$1 million to pave the road and \$800,000 for trails, but he had received nothing since. The Mayor wanted details like the deadline to spend the money and how big the trails had to be and what materials they were to be made of. He told the group what the Village wanted to do. The impression he had was that somebody dropped the ball and should have been in touch with the Village. Basically, they pawned it to ODOT and said the Village needs to get on ODOT's list and have this number to get the process started. This is what they threw at the Village for the repaving in 2025, saying that the Village was not on ODOT's list and had been put off a year. The impression he was left with was that there was no issue of time, but they could not give him the standards for the trail. The Mayor explained to them that he would not want to put a 10-foot path in somebody's front yard and asked if a five-foot stone path could be done. NOACA said they would look into it. He had not spoken to Rich Washington since the meeting but thought if the Village wanted to do something from Chillicothe Rd. to Sunridge, it would be Kensington Green's property and one property at Sun Ridge. The Village probably could put a 10-foot path there and would pay for it, and it won't bother anyone. Porter suggested putting it in the right-of-way and the Mayor said that perhaps this is the time to enclose the huge ditch for the path. That gets people from Bellwood, Bel Meadow, and Sun Ridge safely onto the path. Lake Louise and beyond would not work because the hill is too much. The NOACA group saw the value in the connectors like from Gurney to the park playground. He did not think they were disagreeable with putting five feet of crushed stone.

Regarding the injured Service Department employee, the Mayor said initially, he did not care what the individual does working on the weekend. However, the Mayor found that the employee cannot do that. He will meet with the employee to tell him he cannot be driving the Amish anymore. Porter said that the scenario presented by the State Auditor involved a union worker who was precluded by the union contract and provisions in the employee handbook from working while on sick leave. Porter asked how this compared to the Village's handbook, and the FO said the handbook does not address that. However, the Solicitor spoke to the HR attorney at her firm who said it was fraud and not permitted. Porter said that the case referenced by the state does not lead to that conclusion for the Village. His thought is that if someone is out on sick time, they are sick and can't work. He did not think it was fraud because the employee informed the Village what he is doing. Canton wondered how this would apply to someone on sick time conducting online business. Porter said there was no question, the employee should not drive the Amish while he is on sick time with the Village. The Mayor said this is what he planned to tell the employee. Porter explained that his point was that the State Auditor's case does not pertain to the Village employee's situation. Canton wanted it made clear to the employee that this was per the advice of the Solicitor and HR attorney.

The FO requested to be notified when meetings occur that pertain to grants the Village has received, like the NOACA meeting. Many times, the fiscal officers are the last to know what is going on in the grant world because no one keeps them in the loop. The state is starting to require a board be set up when grants are applied for so that there is a committee which must include the fiscal officer. The Fiscal Officer does the budgeting, and every grant has different specifications. The Mayor offered that the NOACA members wanted to see the Village's grant application to see how it got the \$800,000, and the Mayor said there was no application. He only received a letter stating the Village would be getting \$1.1 million for Bell Road and \$800,000 for trails. He thought maybe it was the Village's turn or somebody on the NOACA committee said oh, let's give this to Bill. The FO added that she, too, was told there was no application. Porter asked if the Village had gotten the money, and the FO explained it was a reimbursement grant. The committee agreed that communication had not been great and there were a lot of details missing.

Canton adjourned the meeting at 9:38 p.m.