

**THE FINANCE Committee held a meeting on Monday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 beginning at 6:25 P.M**

**Committee Members Present:**

Finance: Chair Tollett, Schneider, Cerra, Siwierka  
CD: Chair Callahan, Mitchell, Schneider, Oswald  
Utilities: Chair Mitchell, Oswald, Stewart, Armstrong  
Excused Absence: Davis and Lipian

**Administration and Department Heads Present:** Mayor Brubaker, Law Dir Deery, Safety Service Dir Pyanowski, Finance Dir Pileski, Asst Finance Dir Farrell, Engineer McKillips, Public Works Supt Conner, CD Manager Almobayyed, CD Dir Scott, Asst Dir Calvert, HR Dir Yousefi, Fire Chief Pronesti, Building Official Farkas

**1. The matter of delinquent utility accts to be certified to the Lorain County Auditor.**

Referred By: Public Works Supt Conner  
Public Works Dir Conner said these delinquent accounts were approved by the resolution board last Friday. The total amount of these accounts is \$23,343.66. Most of the accounts on this list are multiple units and they cannot be shut off.

Mrs. Siwierka asked about the old Knights Inn at 523 Griswold and she asked what 511 Fuller is?

Dir Conner said it's RJ Gordon and they are funded thru Federal Funds and she said that she has been trying to get ahold of the manager with no luck. This account has been delinquent before.

**Motion made by Mr. Schneider and second by Mr. Cerra authorizing a resolution for 'said' charges to be certified as liens to the Lorain County Auditor's Office.**

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**2. The matter of finding city property no longer suitable for use and to be disposed of.**

Referred By: Fire Chief Pronesti  
Chief Pronesti said he needs to get rid of old fitness equipment and cannot be used and cannot even get parts and not worth trying to sell and just need to throw away.

**Motion made by Mr. Cerra and second by Mr. Schneider authorizing the SSD to declare 'said' equipment unfit and to dispose of by the best means.**

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**3. The matter of the creation of a new position, titled City Planner.**

Referred By: Mayor Brubaker  
Chair Tollett said that the City is coming up on changes to the Zoning Codes and additional potential new business and this could be a great addition to the City. Mayor Brubaker said as they have gone over the comprehensive land use and now we're getting deep into the zoning aspect of that phase.

We are getting overwhelmed with zoning requests information particularly in the mall area. There are a lot of buildings and land. We are not in a position to do some of the things that need to be done. As talented as our CD Department, Building Dept and Economic Dev is, we're missing the piece on the Planning side to help to determine as a part of the comprehensive land use. What is in the best interest of the City as we move forward.

After speaking with his team and HR, what is it that the City needs to move forward, and, City Planner/Zoning Administrator came up. The objective is to bring someone, not someone that we currently have in house. They would go out to search for this candidate. Building Official Farkas is spending a lot of his time with the housing and commercial developments. If we can take that off his plate, it will benefit the Building Department and we would not have to hire another residential inspector. Mr. Farkas is capable to do that, if needed. He asked Dir Calvert to add to his comments.

Dir Calvert said they have looked into what were the skill gaps and what were the task gaps that we have inhouse to deliver a good experience for those going through the PC and Zoning process. It was recognized that there is a need for someone to be the main contact for all zoning requests, particularly for commercial and to be engaged from beginning to end. Once they saw that is where the need was, they did research. Many communities have a combined PC and Economic Development Dir. They spoke to Shannon Fergus who is a certified planner with Burgess and Niple and she oversees multiple planners in her role. That helped us to get an idea of what level of planner this would be, what the tasks would be and how we needed to create a job description that would be attractive in the market. They spoke to the chief planner of Sandusky as well as looking at the American Planning Associations example job description and similar jobs in communities of similar size. They also did a wage study and looked at skill sets to make sure that we were in the ballpark for the salary range for the skills that we are asking for. This position was created at a C-51 wage scale that is \$66,000 to \$93,000. They expect that this candidate would have 3 to 5 years of working experience with educational background and planning certification.

This person will have the responsibility of zoning and doing all the commercial zoning and frontline zoning requests. One thing is that we divide opportunities to participate in community plans where we can get money into the community. As we're trying to get grants into the City that require someone who is knowledgeable with planning and can be consistent with that.

Planning Commission and Board of Zoning is going to be the bulk of their role, they are hoping to bring extra capacity to get involved in neighborhood and community plans that will open the door for more funding.

Mayor Brubaker said the concerns from the Finance Dir's Office in regards to future dollars and that is fully understood and his administration is cognitive of that. But keeping in mind that the Planner's job and the Mayor's job is to help bring and develop business that will potentially be a great investment to the city.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if this position will be exempt, but covered by civil service? Dir Calvert said that is correct, this position will be exempt from overtime.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if the salary level will be based on whether this candidate has a bachelor's degree or master's degree or certified planning credentials? She had hired a planner last year when she worked for the city of Avon Lake and they went through the American Planning Association.

Dir Calvert said that salary range will be based on education, experience and any additional certifications to make that market competitive.

Mrs. Siwierka said she feels that 5 years is the level of experience that is needed. We do have several different silos of the process of planning commission and board of zoning and other boards that have to go through for variances. She thinks we need to refine this just a little bit to find a candidate that has those skill sets.

Mr. Oswald thinks this is an investment for the City. Who will this person answer to and how does that group work so that everyone works together?

Dir Calvert said the position will be housed in the Community Development Department and that is because that is standard practice for planning departments. It will allow to have synergy with the plans that are underway that CD is working on. However, this is obviously a very multi-disciplinary topic. This touches more departments, has more complexity than any others. They anticipate the office being on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor across from the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor conferencing room where they will be accessible to the public and have meeting space and space to review jobs and to be able to interact with Building Dept., Engineering, Economic Dev., Fire Marshall, everyone as needed. Applications received through the Planning Commission process will be routed to this individual. This individual will be housed in the Community Development Department and will report to Dir Scott.

Mr. Schneider thanked Dir Calvert and his feeling on the salary offering is that we may be closer to the mid to higher end than the low and he asked Mrs. Siwierka if she found that to be true with her recent experience? She agreed.

*Chair Tollett read the committee report and asked for a motion:*

**Motion made by Mr. Cerra and second by Mr. Schneider authorizing an ordinance to authorize the creation of the 'said' position.**

**MOTION CARRIES                      COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

#### **4. The matter of re-appropriating Issue 6 Capital Funds.**

Referred By: Mayor Brubaker

Mayor Brubaker said they appropriated \$180,000 during the budget process for replacement of windows on the rear side of City Hall, they have received the reimbursement from NOPEC for the \$180,624. He is now asking to take that reimbursement and put it into Issue 6 Capital.

\$50,000 would go towards the Fire Department for new equipment that they need for the new ladder truck when it comes in and the balance of that will go back into Issue 6 Capital Outlay for additional maintenance work at City Hall.

*Chair Tollett read the committee report and asked for a motion:*

**Motion made by Mrs. Siwierka and second by Mr. Cerra authorizing an ordinance to re-appropriate the 'said' funds.**

*Dir Pileski said he has appropriation changes that these changes can be incorporated into and are included on the exhibit for this evening's appropriation changes.*

*Therefore, a committee report was not needed for this matter.*

## **5. The matter of a contract for the Lowell Street Sanitary Sewer Extension Improvement Project.**

Referred By: Engineer Schneider *[Passed by Utilities on 7/10/2024]*

Engineer McKillips said they would like to go out for bid for the Lowell Street Sanitary Sewer Extension Improvement project. This will extend the sewers on Lowell Street from Schilling Drive, which is a paper street, between Kokosing Construction and the GM Plant, to Church of the Open Door.

They will install a gravity sewer to accommodate the flows in that area.

There are areas over there that have expressed interest in development and the church is also expanding and looking to off their current system which is a package plant, they treat their own sewage before they discharge it. The intent is, once it's complete and they figure out all the costs, they would go back to establish fees, connections fee for those who would connect to it. And for other residents to tie into it in the future and the city would recoup our costs.

The estimate cost for this is 1.7 million, to be paid out of the sewer fund.

They will look at getting a capital recover fee structure approved thru Council for residents and any commercial buildings connect to that in the future.

Chair Tollett asked if that will be assessed to the Church of the Open Door?

Engineer McKillips said they will be paying the capital recover fee for their portion.

Mr. Schneider asked if those properties from Murray Ridge to Open Door are in the Township or the City and would the residents would be able to tie into this?

Engineer McKillips said it's both. Currently residents who are in the City would be able to tie into it.

That is part of Elyria Township and there is a JED Agreement for various areas which would require no contest for annexation to come into the City.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if this will help the Black & Decker building?

Engineer McKillips said they are stopping just shy of Rt 113, not crossing Rt 113 at this point in time.

Mayor Brubaker said he met with them when this project started and they were looking at an eight-inch line. They did talk about Black & Decker and 140 acres of land that is currently farmland and could be potentially be developed. If we were able to put in an eight-inch line and put in a 24, that would allow for that expansion as well as potentially going to the road. There is also land for sale north of Rt 113 which is in the township and they are trying to set us up for additional or potential development.

Mr. Oswald asked if this will extend to the new residential Yost Development?

Engineer McKillips said the Yost Development is already tied into a sanitary sewer that goes to the lift station behind West Ridge Green. This project will give gravity sewer up to Church of the Open Door and will be beneficial to future development in that area.

**Motion made by Mr. Schneider second by Mr. Cerra to authorize an ordinance to authorize the Mayor to advertise for bids and enter into a contract for the said project. Emergency clause requested.**

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**6. The matter of levying the final assessment for the 2023 Sidewalk Program.**

Referred By: Engineer Schneider *[Passed by Utilities on 7/10/2024]*

Engineer McKillips said last year they had a few residents that participated in the Sidewalk Program to have their sidewalk replaced or part of their sidewalk replaced. They ended up with 6 residents and one of those is paid in full. So, there are 5 that are being assessed and one resident is paid in full. The list of the 5 residents were distributed. The list will be submitted to the Lorain County Auditor. The total amount for those 5 properties is \$15,548. They will not add any additional administrative fees to these charges.

Dir Deery said this is to be passed as an emergency.

Mr. Schneider asked if this is an owner-occupied program and is there a way the list can show the address?

Engineer McKillips said this is for owner occupied only and she will make sure to add the addresses to the lists.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if the county adds fees, she thinks it's 4 percent?

Dir Pyanowski said the county does charge a 4 percent collection fee.

**Motion made by Mr. Cerra and second by Mr. Schneider to authorize a resolution for final assessments for the 'said' program to be certified to the County Auditor.**

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**7. The matter of additional easements to existing easements for the Windward Sewer and Gulf Road Pump Station Project.**

Referred By: Engineer Schneider *[Passed by Utilities on 7/10/2024]*

Engineer McKillips said there is a siphon that crosses from the pump station and across Abbe Road thru the ravine and over to Gulf Road to the WWPCP and they are looking to eliminating it.

Part of the project involves construction of a new pump station located off of Gulf Rd. There are two properties that will be affected and easements are already there which go thru those properties, but they need to get a little bit more to be able to finish off the area that is necessary for the new pump station and sewer. The two properties are on Gulf Road. As part of the design, the City needs to get 2 easements from 2 property owners that abut the current easement.

One of the easements will cost the City \$775 and the other easement will cost \$2,200. These amounts have been presented to the property owners and one property owner accepted and the other property owner has not accepted and is more hesitant due to other issues with trees. They are asking for Council's approval to accept these two new easements with assistance of the Law Director.

**Motion made by Mrs. Siwierka second by Mr. Cerra to authorize an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into the 'said' easement agreements. Emergency clause requested.**

**MOTION CARRIES**

**COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**8. The matter of Amendments to the 2024 Permanent Appropriations.**

Referred By: Finance Directors Pileski and Farrell *[Standing Referral]*

Dir Pileski said in addition for the one that was already discussed earlier for the 2016 ½ percent income tax fund they have another fund which involves the opioid settlement fund. Subsequent to the permanent appropriation being passed, Council passed an ordinance authorizing opioid monies to be split; 1/3<sup>rd</sup> muni court, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> police, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> fire. They are moving the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the amount that was originally appropriated in muni court, moving \$66,706 to police, opioid settlement fund and moving \$66,685 to fire, in operating and maintenance. This settlement money will be coming in for 17 or 18 years and we are now in our 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The amount will change yearly.

**Motion made by Mr. Cerra and second by Mr. Schneider authorizing an ordinance for the approval of the 'said' amendments to the 2024 permanent appropriations.**

**MOTION CARRIES**

**COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

Chair Tollett asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion made by Mr. Schneider and second by Mrs. Siwierka to adjourn this evening's Finance Committee Meeting at 7:10 P.M.**

**MOTION CARRIES**

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Colleen Rosado, Secretary/Administrative Assistant