

**The FINANCE COMMITTEE held a Meeting on  
MONDAY, APRIL 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2022 beginning at 7:30 P.M.**

**FINANCE PRESENT:** Chair Stewart, Tollett, Cerra, Davis, Schneider

**CD PRESENT:** Chair Callahan, Mitchell, Lipian, Oswald, Schneider

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Law Dir Deery, Safety Service Dir Brubaker, Mayor Whitfield, Finance Dir Pileski, Asst Finance Dir Farrell, Asst Dir Calvert, Engineer McKillips, Police Chief Pelko, Building Official Farkas, CD Dir Scott, Parks Dir Reardon  
Council members Simmons and Corbin

**1. Approval of the Finance Meeting Minutes ~ March 14<sup>th</sup> and March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

**Mr. Cerra moved, second by Mr. Schneider to approve the 'said' meeting minutes.**

**2. The matter of inactive/delinquent EPU Accounts to be certified to Lorain County Auditor's Office. (*Standing Referral*)**

Referred By: Public Works Supervisor Conner

Dir Brubaker said this is standard procedure and the list will be sent to the county.

**Mr. Schneider moved and Mr. Cerra seconded to recommend a resolution to declare 'said' property unfit and no longer needed.**

**MOTION MADE**

**COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**3. The matter of permit fee increases and addendum to the Elyria Codified Ordinances, Section 109.13 (*Building Department Fees*)**

Referred By: Building Official Farkas

Mayor Whitfield said when he first heard about these proposed fee increases, he was nervous because one of the commitments we made early on was that we need to improve our services. That includes things that they've been working on, digitizing so customers can submit their plans and permit requests. Chief Building Official Farkas is very competent and skilled and very technical and what he is hoping this department can become customer friendly. He's hoping for an increase in service along with these fee increases.

Building Official Farkas said the reason for this change is due to the recent change in our permit applications and upgrades. He noticed many of the fees were status quo. He's been in the department for 20+ years and he recognizes that some fees have not changed for a long time. There has not been a fee change within the last 7 years and some fees have been 14 years a few in 22 years. He went thru the entire fee schedule and did research for comparisons of adjoining communities; Amherst, Lorain, North Ridgeville, Vermilion and targeted on new home fees. Elyria currently has numerous new subdivision in process and proposed. That creates a need for additional personnel. His hopes are that one day Council might approve that.

Mr. Farkas went over our current fees for new homes and what he proposed. Our fee is a flat rate of \$650, in Amherst it's \$888, Lorain fees vary from \$1,866 to \$2,666, N. Ridgeville is \$2,300 and Vermilion is \$2,262. Official Farkas is proposing a fee of \$2,000. A list of these fees is attached to these meeting minutes.

Mr. Farkas added the services that comes with these fee; the State Board Building Standards requires that the City has certified personnel (a residential building official) in order to do Plan Reviews. We have 3; himself and two others.

The time to do these plan reviews is very extensive and we've been very busy with many new homes. When his residential building officials are doing those plan reviews, that means he is without an inspector in the field.

Mr. Farkas went on to discuss other fees and his proposed new fees and that list is attached and also available upon request.

Chair Stewart asked if the majority of requests are available on line or both where some customers come into the department in person? And he asked what's easier?

Mr. Farkas said they are in a transition phase. Covid exposed the need for digital electronic submittal. We are accepting electronic plan reviews and initiating the e-permits where people can go on-line. Some are more comfortable submitting on paper and some are comfortable submitting electronically. There are working thru some complications with the electronic submittal and they are working on those. They are accepting those to expedite plan reviews.

Mayor Whitfield said during the pandemic the building dept was doing virtual inspections. The department is ready. They're trying to find the right technological tool that can be used and the right software.

Asst Dir Calvert said they've done research. Some communities do all things digitally and have an integrated system. We wanted to build our system out with New World and make sure everything links together with New World. So, they're building it out 'in-house' with our IT Dept. And they are working those kinks out internally before they put that electronic system out there. They've made the first big hurdle with the e-permitting process and a lot was learned. They will maintain both options for people but the expectation is that the e-permitting system will grow we can take what's been learned from that process and move forward with other parts.

Mr. Tollett said he would absolutely support the changes to the Building Dept. fees. \_\_

Mr. Oswald supports this proposed fee increase. The issue he has with the actual inspections in the home are that an actual person/inspector is actually needed, to be physically there to see the job in person and so the homeowner or contractor can talk face to face and ask questions. He suggested that the re-inspection fees should be increased because each time an inspector goes back it takes him out of the field. The other thing is that inspectors can let someone know if they forgot something or did something incorrectly and it's the worker's back-up to tell him what he missed. That what the fee is paying for.

Mr. Oswald asked when this would get implemented so builders know when they're going to have to start charging more for their homes?

Mr. Farkas said they actually do 'Face-time' inspections, instead of using photos. When they use Face-time it's live so they can ask the person on the other end to move up and down and left and right, zoom in and zoom out. It's basically the Building Official's call in regards to what it is.

Mayor Whitfield said these rates will allow to build capacity within the department because part of the rush is people have a lot on their plate and to go from one to another. The other piece he wanted to speak to is the quality of Mr. Farkas's work. So, if his word is behind something. If there is someone who goes by the book, it's Mr. Farkas. So, if he approves something, you can trust in that work whether it's virtual or in person.

Mr. Farkas thanked the Mayor and said he really appreciates that. Being a Building Official, Zoning Administrator and other multiple hats they wear isn't easy. There are always multiple challenges. He's always been one to look up what the code says and if you tell the truth you don't have to have a good memory.

Mrs. Davis asked when these new costs will roll out?

Mr. Farkas said that would depend on council.

Law Dir Deery asked Mr. Farkas how long it would take internally for the department to update New World to implement these new fees?

Mr. Farkas said it would be a matter of changing and altering the applications.

Chair Stewart asked there is an additional cost when a re-inspection is needed?

Mr. Farkas now the current re-inspection fee is \$40. We have found that is being abused in lieu of knowing the work themselves to know what has to be ready for the inspection, they would rather give the department the \$40 and let our inspector tell the contractor what's wrong. They get 2 free inspections and after that they pay that re-inspection fee. By them using our staff, it creates a delay.

Mr. Tollett asked if he were to propose this for a June 1<sup>st</sup> start for new applications, would that work?

Mr. Farkas said he would need time to adjust everything and notify their contractors. Also, the website would need to be revised.

Director Brubaker said he suggested to the Mayor that when we raise these to put a specific date so the contractors and customers can have a heads-up. He suggested a date of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Law Dir Deery said if this passes this evening it would go to Full Council on April 18<sup>th</sup> and if it passes at full council, the legislation would specify the effective date of the fee increases, which could be July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 if that is what the committee chooses.

**Mr. Schneider moved and Mrs. Davis seconded to recommend an ordinance authorizing the 'said' fee increases for the Building Dept. effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.  
MOTION MADE COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

#### **4. The matter of applying for and accepting, if offered, a Grant through AARP and to use the funds to purchase Park Benches at South, West and Pocket Parks.**

Referred By: Parks Director Reardon

Director Reardon said the department has already applied for this grant due to the time line. It's for the trails at South and West and the new Pocket Park. Shannon from McCauley was helping in finding this grant. There is no match from the City. We will be notified in mid-May and will purchase the benches in June and will be placed in the locations.

Mayor Whitfield said this AARP is the retirement group.

Dir Reardon said there were guidelines they had to follow for this grant and to show that this would be a benefit to community members that may be a part of AARP.

Mrs. Mitchell asked how many benches will be installed at West Park?

Dir Reardon said it will be 6 benches at South, 6 at West and 3 at Pocket Park. The Pocket Park is at 1504 West Ave., and is in development and in partnership with Leaders Of Today. If we don't get the grant we will still get the benches. The total amount of the grant will be \$10,363.00.

Mrs. Mitchell asked about the plaques to be placed on benches.

Dir Reardon said those could be put on after they get the benches. They didn't make the plaques a part of the grant request because they didn't know what they would say.

**Mr. Cerra moved and Mrs. Davis seconded to recommend an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to submit application for 'said' grant.  
MOTION MADE COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

#### **5. The matter of applying for a grant through The Office of Criminal Justice Services for an ARPA Law Enforcement Violence Reduction & Staffing Grant.**

Referred By: Police Captain Pelko

Chief Pelko said this grant was announced just last week. It's for Law Enforcement Agencies to reduce violence and staffing. It was based on issues of violence and staffing issues due to the pandemic.

There is \$175,000 appropriated for this grant. It's not a matching grant, the City won't have to pay anything toward this. The length of the grant will be for 12 months or 24 months of funding.

Mr. Cerra asked what the funds will be used for?

Chief Pelko said they're exploring the options. It may pay some retention fees and bonus fees. There's a shot spotter which is a gun detection device which they're looking at implementing. It would be a computer system which tell where gunshots are coming from.

**Mr. Cerra moved and Mr. Schneider seconded to recommend an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to submit application for 'said' grant.**

**MOTION MADE COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**6. The matter of entering into a professional service agreement with AECOM for Wet Weather Program - Amendment #9.** *(This matter will also go to Utilities Committee on 4/13/22).* Referred By: Engineer McKillips

Engineer McKillips said this is an annual thing they've been doing since 2014. AECOM Services is the consulting engineer that's been working with the City on the Wet Weather Program. They have partnered with the City as we've been moving forward with negotiations with the US EPA and DOJ and Ohio EPA. Hopefully we'll be coming to a close with that later this year. We're moving forward with the Wet Weather Program, which includes the big sewer project which will continue the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the year on Poplar Street and East Bridge St. It includes other projects at the WWPC Plant and other projects throughout the City.

AECOM is essentially an extension of the City's Engineering Department.

This request is for Amendment #9 and the monies have been appropriated in the budget through Waste Water Miscellaneous Fund.

Mr. Cerra asked when the sewer project on Poplar will start and how long will it take?

Engineer McKillips said they will go out for bid in May/June. Depending on the availability of materials, they will start the construction as soon as possible after that.

The project will actually start at East Bridge Street because of the Cleveland St. project.

Mr. Oswald asked if this company oversees projects or do they do part of the designing?

Engineer McKillips said it's a combination. They are program managers. They have done design on projects and are currently doing the design of the Ease Side Relief Sewer, phase 1D and 2north which will be bidding out this year. The department has utilized other consultants for other phases; AECOM for Plant Design and will utilize other consultants for other designs. AECOM has the hydraulic sewer model and they can be used for those projects. They are looking into doing the sewer project on Windward and AECOM will utilize the hydraulic model, which has all the data, the flows and the technical numbers to do the design on that siphon.

Mr. Cerra asked if the one project is starting at East Bridge, what time frame does that put Poplar Street in?

Engineer McKillips said they definitely have to have th contractor start on East Bridge because of the work that will be done on Cleveland Street. If the contractor has two crews, they could have the 2<sup>nd</sup> crew work on Poplar. Though the equipment that they need for the big sewer, which goes 30 feet deep, may not be available, because both may need to be used. The cost to move that piece of equipment is expensive. Thinking the work on Poplar, in front of St. Jude's will be next summer, hoping while the schools are on summer break.

**Mr. Cerra moved and Mr. Tollett seconded to recommend an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into 'said' agreement.**

**MOTION MADE COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**7. The matter of advertising for bids and enter into a contract for the 2022 Street Sweeping Program.** *(This matter will also go to Utilities Committee on 4/13/22).*

Referred By: Engineer McKillips

Engineer McKillips said this is the annual program for the street sweeping. Cost is split between Waste Water and Storm Water. They've allocated \$200,000 for this in the permanent appropriations. Due to the increase in fuel cost, they will only do one round this year and will make the second round as an alternate. They usually start this program in June/July.

**Mrs. Davis moved and Mr. Cerra seconded to recommend an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into 'said' existing contract.**

**MOTION MADE**

**COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**8. The matter of amending ordinance 2021-192 to change the account where the funds are to be appropriated from.**

Referred By: Safety Service Director Brubaker

Director Brubaker said he and Finance Dir Farrell noticed they accidentally allocated the funds towards the Building Dept., Professional Services and it should've come out of Issue Six Economic Development Dept. All they are asking is to switch the accounts of where the contract is paid out of and the funds are there to pay that. The amount is \$100,000.

Dir Pileski said the monies were appropriated all along in the 2016 .50% Income Tax Fund, the ordinance just had the wrong fund, so that part of the ordinance needs to be corrected.

**Mr. Cerra moved and Mr. Schneider seconded to recommend an ordinance to amend the 'said' ordinance.**

**MOTION MADE**

**COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**9. The matter of maturing bond anticipation notes for 3 items; Chestnut Commons Connector Road, Fire Truck and Garbage Truck.**

Referred By: Finance Directors Pileski and Farrell

Finance Dir Pileski said these are 3 maturing notes. The intention is, the \$5.2 million in the Chestnut Commons will be a roll over in its entirety. The road is completed but there's been no development so there are no TIFs. So these notes will be replaced with a long-term bond, and will roll it again for another year.

The Fire Truck note is maturing at \$550,000 and he's planning on paying down \$110,000 out of the 2016 .50% Income Tax Fund and rolling \$440,000. He's hoping to have that note completely paid off when this round of Issue 6 money matures.

The garbage truck note matures at \$350,000 and he will roll the entire amount and try to pay down on some of that next year.

Th maturing notes are bearing an interest rate of three quarter of one percent and the new notes will be somewhere around two percent. The short term market is going up.

**Mr. Cerra moved and Mrs. Davis seconded to recommend an ordinance providing for the issuance and sale of notes in anticipation of the issuance of bonds for Chestnut Commons Road, Pumper Fire Truck and Sanitation Truck.**

**MOTION MADE**

**COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**10. The matter of Amendments to the 2022 Permanent Appropriations.**

*[Standing Referral]*

Referred By: Finance Directors Pileski and Farrell

Finance Dir Farrell said there are two this evening; 1.) Legal Research Dept. Operating & Maintenance Account ~ increasing it from \$0 to \$19,500 for a Muni Court Special Revenue Fund, which wasn't included in the initial budget. 2.) Street Construction maintenance & repair Department ~ increasing from \$323,628 to \$423,628 (an increase of \$100,000). This is for gas and fuel for the Street Dept. In 2021 they spent \$42,000 and this year they are already at \$36,000.

**Mr. Schneider moved and Mrs. Davis seconded to recommend an ordinance authorizing the appropriations changes to Ordinance No. 2022-45.**

**MOTION MADE**

**COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**Mr. Tollett moved, second by Mr. Schneider to move to go into Executive Session to discuss a bargaining agreement, with a potential for action.**

**Roll Call Vote was taken.**

**All Ayes**

**Executive Session began at 7:13 P.M.**

**Mr. Cerra moved, second by Mr. Tollett to come out of Executive Session.**

**Roll Call Vote was taken.**

**All Ayes**

**Executive Session ended at 7:22 P.M.**

**11. The matter of the Police Dispatcher's Contract** *[Standing Referral]*

Referred By: Director Brubaker

**Mr. Cerra moved and Mr. Schneider seconded to recommend an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into 'said' contract.**

**MOTION MADE**

**COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**Mr. Cerra moved and second by Mr. Tollett to adjourn this evening's Finance Committee Meeting at 7:28 P.M.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Respectfully submitted by,*

*Colleen Rosado,  
Council Clerk Secretary/Administrative Assistant*

*CMR/*