

**THE FINANCE Committee held a meeting on Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024 beginning at 6:35 P.M**

**Committee Members Present:**

CD: Chair Callahan, Mitchell, Schneider, Oswald  
Finance: Chair Tollett, Davis, Schneider, Siwierka, Cerra  
Others: Armstrong  
Not in attendance: Lipian, Stewart

**Administration and Department Heads Present:** Mayor Brubaker, Safety Service Dir Pyanowski, Finance Dir Pileski, Asst Finance Dir Farrell, Law Dir Deery, Dir Calvert, Public Works Supt Conner, Community Development Dir Scott, Engineer Schneider, HR Dir Yousefi, Parks Dir Reardon, WWPC Supt Stewart, Fire Chief Pronesti and Police Chief Pelko

**1. Approval of the Finance Meeting Minutes from February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**

Motion made by Mrs. Siwierka, second by Mr. Schneider to approve these minutes.

**MOTION CARRIES**

**2. The matter of delinquent Public Utility accounts to be certified to The Lorain County Auditor's Office.**

*[Standing Referral]*

Referred By: Public Works Supervisor Conner

Supt Conner said this list was approved by the EPU Resolution Board on March 8<sup>th</sup>. She said there's been an update, that rec'd a payment this afternoon from High Point in the Park and they paid \$22,370.40. So that brought the delinquent amount on this list to around \$10,000.

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

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**3. The matter of the purchase of a new pumper truck for the Elyria Fire Department.**

Referred By: Fire Chief Pronesti *(this was passed by Utilities Committee on 3/6/24)*

Fire Chief Pronesti said that the amount of time it takes to build and get delivery of a fire apparatus could take up to 3 years. One of the things they've run into is trying to time the age of where the current pumpers have worn out and the time to receive a new one that's been ordered. He had a meeting with the Finance Director. To refresh everyone, the City has in service three pumpers every day. One at Cedar, one at 57 & Bell and one on N Abbe. The pumper at N Abbe is a 2021, Cedar St pumper is a 2021. The pumper at 57 & Bell is a 2016 which has given them problems and the engine has been replaced. The goal is to replace that 2016 pumper. They do have reserve status where they keep two older pumpers in reserve, currently, they are a 2009 and a 2014, they are fully equipped, but they are not staffed.

The goal would be to get the 2016 into reserve with the 2014 and sell the 2009. That would give them a good fleet. They are still up against the problem of high mileage which creates the maintenance issues. He would like to try to get a new one ordered as soon as possible. The cost is skyrocketing; pumpers that were bought in 2021 were around \$600,000 and 3 years later, the cost is now 1 million dollars. The cost will only continue to go higher. The build time will not change. They are built from scratch. The 2014 and 2016 were leased because they needed them right away and couldn't wait to have them built to their specs.

Chief Pronesti said we keep that 2016 in service because it's in better shape than the 2014. The reason we would try to sell the 2009 because there are standards that after 15 years, the National Fire Protection Agency Standard says it should go into reserve for 5 years. In three years, that 2009 will be close to the 20-year point. He keeps track of the amount of money that put into each apparatus and that 2016 far out seeds all the other apparatus as far as what we put into it.

Chair Tollett said because this arrive in '27 or '28, how will the finances work on this?

Dir Pileski said it will take 3 & half years and we have to enter into a contract in order to place the order. Therefore, we have to encumber the total amount of the truck which is \$950,000. He has included that in with the changes to the permanent appropriations. It will be from the general fund. Next item on this agenda is to apply for a grant to help pay for the truck. If we don't get that, in 3 years we have the option to issue short term debt or long-term debt to pay for the long-term debt over 10 years, which will depend on what our cash flow situation will be at that time. It will show up as an encumbrance in the general fund for the next three. It will be an open purchase order which is a commitment to pay from the general fund. So, it will affect the budget this year, next year and the year after that, ('24, '25, '26), until the time we pay it.

Mr. Stewart asked for Chief Pronesti to give the committee a run-down of all the Fire Departments equipment.

Chief explained how the 2014 and 2016 were not built to our city's specs, the engines are smaller and the overall wear and tear weren't designed for a city like ours. He gave an example, cities that run fire-based EMS where they run ambulances so they go through ambulances on a regular basis, but in our City, we provide a valuable service with our paramedic engine company. The downside is, we do put mileage on our trucks since we don't have ambulance service. When we have them built to our specs for what we need they last longer. The lead time to have this pumper truck built is somewhere around three years from the order date to when it's delivered.

**Motion made by Mr. Cerra and second by Mr. Schneider to authorize the Mayor to enter into an agreement for the purchase of Pumper Truck for the Fire Department and emergency clause applies.**

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

*(this matter was also passed by Utilities Committee on March 6<sup>th</sup>)*

**4. The matter of applying for and accepting a grant from the ‘Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program’. If awarded, the grant would be for the new Pumper Truck.**

Referred By: Asst Dir Strohsack

Chief Pronesti said they worked with a grant writer to use the FEMA grant to purchase this pumper. We did not receive the other two grants we applied for, one was for a rescue truck and one was for an ambulance. When we apply it was with the hope of a new fire station where this pumper could go into service at. But, FEMA grants are slow getting back. The match for the grant for a city our size is 10 percent. The pumper runs about \$980,000 so we would have to have a 10 percent match on that. Emergency clause is requested on this.

Dir Pileski asked if we are awarded that grant, would it come in right away or when the truck is completed?

Chief said FEMA would let us know that we have received the grant, then it would be up to us are we going to utilize that grant for this or purchase another pumper? But, the money would probably come first, he hopes.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if we have a better chance since we didn’t get the last two?

Chief said, probably not, because what FEMA looks for is a city that is in dire financial straits or smaller departments where they don’t have the rolling stock like we have. But, it’s worth for us to go for it, but, our chance might be around 30 percent.

**Motion made by Mr. Cerra and second by Mrs. Davis to authorize the Mayor to apply for and accept if offered, the ‘said’ grant. Emergency clause.**

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**5. The matter of an agreement with Sixmo, Inc. for primary plans exam services and an agreement with Jeffery Grusenmeyer & Assoc. for back-up plans exam services.**

Referred By: Asst Dir Calvert

Dir Calvert said this is commercial plans exam services so every commercial project that comes into the Building Dept has to be reviewed by and outside plans examiner. They did an RFP process and selected Sixmo and Jeffrey Grusenmeyer for back-up. We used these same services for 2023. Request emergency clause.

**Motion made by Mr. Schneider and second by Mr. Cerra to authorize an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into ‘said’ agreements. Emergency.**

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**6. The matter of creating a new position called Equipment Control Electrician Leadman as part of the AFSCME bargaining unit.**

Referred By: HR Dir Yousefi

HR Dir Yousefi said they are looking to add this position to the Wastewater Pollution Control Plant.

There are four electricians there now and they want to create this new position for a promotional opportunity. They looked at rates and how much it will pay, which will be \$1000 increase. Management employees are not electricians. So, they need to have an electrician to project manage current projects and be advisors to management. They will be responsible for the Scada System and Factory Talk Systems. These projects are mandated by the Ohio EPA of the Federal EPA.

Mr. Oswald asked if someone will be hired within?

Dir Yousefi said it will be a promotional opportunity for an internal position.

Mrs. Siwierka asked what's the reason behind making this a union job, why is it not a managerial job? And Is this replacing the Electrical Tech position?

Dir Yousefi said they will still have to act as an electrician on a regular basis.

Currently there are 4 electricians at the Plant and one will be promoted to be the leadman, and the other 3 will continue as electricians.

The leadman position will be a tested position.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if the same situation applies at the Water pumping plant?

WWPC Supt Stewart said no, it does not, the Water Pumping Plant only has one Equipment Control Electrician.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if they will need more than one?

Supt Stewart said the Water Pumping Plant is in a little different situation with expansion projects currently going on throughout the City and beginning now and they are coming to fruition so there are multiple consultants and engineers emailing and calling to set these projects up so there needs to be someone who understands the integration and systems. That person needs not only to know the systems, but what has to be ordered for the projects. If a wrong part (controller or vfd) is ordered and installed and not caught and now we're on the hook for that, and it could be \$20,000 or \$30,000 and it can't be returned. The electrician can recommend to the contractor and to the consultant, exactly what we have so they have our best interest in line.

The Water Pumping Plant has an outside contractor that does their Scada System.

They have looked at outsourcing it at the WWPC Plant and the pricing of other systems were an upward of \$250,000. Another issue would be integrating with the system and to keep it as safe as possible. Some outside sources ran into issues with IT because they wanted to be able to VPN or remotely access our systems and we're against that. We would rather have someone on our staff to come in or use our VPN to look at it, which is beneficial for it.

Joe Stubner and Alex Webber are the ECE (Equipment Control Electricians). And there are two Electrician Specialist and one they're filling within a week and the other one is Dustin Wise who started a year or two ago.

Either Joe Stubner or Alex Webber will move up to that leadman position.

Chair Tollett said they're starting with 4 and finishing with 4 and the total expense is roughly \$1,000 per year.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if this was at the request of the union or the administration? Supt. Stewart said he requested this and then the administration and HR listened and referred this request this evening.

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

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**7. The matter of reimbursing Chapter 165 employees for the cost of their Commercial Driver's License (CDL).**

Referred By: Asst Dir Strohsack

Dir Pyanowski said this is something that used to be done on a regular basis and that ordinance was revoked and they just want to bring back this one small piece, to reimburse Ch 165 employees for their annual registration for their CDL, which amounts to about \$11 per person per year. It's a small thing, but it does matter to those folks. We can call on these folks to do snow plowing and other tasks that require a CDL. There is some benefit to the City as well. It will amount to about \$500 per year.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if job descriptions will change to include this benefit?

Dir Deery said as the legislation is proposed, no one will be forced to get a CDL. The language will state that effective January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, employees of Ch 165 who have a CDL and are required to maintain such a license shall be entitled to reimbursement of the cost of renewal. It does not have to be part of their job description or job requirement. Right now, there are about 10 employees this would affect and it would be for all CDL levels.

**Motion made by Mr. Siwierka and second by Mr. Cerra to authorize an ordinance authorizing the reimbursement of the cost of CDL charges for certain employees.**

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**8. The matter of adding a Public Works Supervisor position to the Parks and Recreation Department.**

Referred By: Safety Svc Dir Pyanowski

Dir Pyanowski said they want to do some restructuring. Cemetery Dept falls under Parks & Rec but often times they operate separately. There has been a Cemetery Supervisor position that has been filled off and on. They would like to create a Public Works Supervisor Position. There is a large number of parks and lands we maintain including the cemetery. This position would have oversight over both to help with maintenance and management of the personnel assigned to those jobs.

Instead of filling the Cemetery Supervisor position, we would use this position which would allow to use that time in Parks & Rec, maybe use them as 60% P&R and 40% Cemetery, which would be a better use of the time.

Chair Tollett asked who this employee would report to?

Dir Pyanowski said they would report to Parks Dir. The job description includes all of those things; supervision of personnel, oversight of properties and assets of the city as well as some budget input. They did consider public works supervisor or public works coordinator and decided on the supervisor position.

Mrs. Davis asked if this position will be filled house?

Dir Pyanowski said they have some ideas of who will bid on it that is already an employee. They will go thru the process of identifying the best candidate.

**Motion made by Mr. Schneider and second by Mrs. Davis to authorize an ordinance authorizing the addition of 'said' position to the Parks & Rec Dept.  
MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

### **9. The matter of a pay increase for Elyria Police Dispatchers.**

Referred By: Mayor Brubaker

Chair Tollett said they all received info regarding the massive pay differential happening and why this is so critically needed.

Mayor Brubaker said they have been sharing info regarding our dispatcher's pay. A quick summary, Elyria dispatchers are at the bottom of the scale in about 20 jurisdictions for pay, hourly rate wise, they top out at \$22.14 per hour.

They would like to increase the pay based on submitted documentation effective at the first pay after approved. The dollar amounts for 2024 budget shows \$121,735.

There will not be retro pay. It will take effect after the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of this year. Currently 911 lateral transfers are being accepted and they are starting between \$28 and \$31 per hour. The top step for our dispatchers will be \$27.10, next step \$26.36, next step \$25.35 for the remainder of this year and there would be an increase in 2025. They provider an excellent service and this will get them to where they should be and there are currently only 12 dispatchers and they are all full time. They will finalize an MOU with the union. They agreed to extend the contract from June 30, 2025 to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025 which will put all of the contracts at the end of the calendar year, which helps with the budgeting process and future negotiations. He feels this is a fair MOU for them. We did the same thing with the EPA and the FOB in December and because they are a part of our Police Dept. and the infrastructure for first responders. He's received support from several members of the police department.

Chair Tollett agrees with the Mayor and said these positions are important and getting more so, by the day as our City continues to grow.

Mrs. Siwierka completely agrees with this request.

Chief Pelko said he concurs with everything that was said. It's been a struggle to maintain 12 dispatchers. They are true professionals and have come a long way since he's been Chief. This will help the City keep the dispatchers we have from going to other cities.

**Motion made by Mrs. Siwierka and second by Mr. Cerra to authorize an ordinance authorizing the 'said' pay increase. Emergency clause  
MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**10. The matter of the 2024 Permanent Appropriations. (Budget)**

Referred By: Finance Directors Pileski and Farrell

Finance Dir Pileski said he passed out a summary of changes that were made of appropriations that were presented at the last meeting.

CHANGES TO PROPOSED PERMANENT APPROPRIATION SINCE 2/26/2024 FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

FUND	DEPARTMENT	MAJOR ACCOUNT	CHANGE
General	Fire	Salary & Wages	+ \$223,150
		Benefits & Pension	+ 20,000
		Capital Outlay	+ 950,000
	Police	Benefits & Pension	+ 5,000
	Parks & Rec	Operating & Maintenance	+ 51,850
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	Misc. General Govt	Operation & Maintenance	+ 400,000
			+ \$1,650,000
American Rescue Plan Act	Fire	Salary & Wages	- \$ 223,150
		Benefits & Pension	- 20,000
		Benefits & Pension	- 5,000
	Parks & Rec	Operating & Maintenance	- 51,850
	TOTAL ARPA FUND	Home Beautification	Operating & Maintenance
			00
2016 .50% Income Tax	Streets/Paving	Capital Outlay	+ \$ 300,000
	Capital Needs	Capital Outlay	+ 350,000
	Economic Development	Operation & Maintenance	+ 50,000
TOTAL .50% INCOME TAX			+ 700,000

Dir Pileski said in order to put money into the home beautification program and ARPA act fund. He had to move some appropriations out of ARPA and put back into the General Fund to make room for the \$300,000 that was requested for that program. Dir Pileski went over the changes above. The \$950,000 in Capital under the EFD is for the new pumper truck that was discussed. That will be an open PO until it's paid for. Next is adding \$400,000 to misc. general government operation and maintenance for Life Care subsidy.

The 2016 ½ percent income tax fund; he will add \$300,000 to Capital for residential street paving project, so that brings the total for this resurfacing program to \$2 million for 2024. And he added \$350,000 to Capital needs, Capital Outlay account for the City Hall parking lot. The final change is in the 2016 ½ percent income tax fund, Economic Dev Dept, which was a PO from 2021 under essential services which was closed and is now coming forward to be paid so he has to add \$50,000 back into that fund.

So, these are the changes since the last meeting.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if the P&R Supervisor position which was just discussed, included in these budget numbers?

Dir Pileski said yes.

Mrs. Siwierka asked what that old PO from 2021 was for?

Dir Pileski said it was for a façade grant program through the EEDC that was in downtown and the City owes the business owner his reimbursement, which was inadvertently closed.

**Motion made by Mr. Cerra and second by Mrs. Davis to authorize an ordinance authorizing the 'said' permanent appropriations for the 2024 annual budget.**

**MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN**

**11. The matter of Amendments to the 2024 Temporary Appropriations.**

*[Standing Referral]*

Referred By: Finance Directors Pileski and Farrell

Dir Pileski said there are none.

They will close out the temporary and the temporary will become part of the permanent.

Mayor Brubaker announced that through Congressman Latta and Senator Sherrod Brown we have received 2.8 million dollars in earmarks. 1.2 million dollars is for work at the East Broad Street Bridge, just past Pais Auto and Murphy Brothers. There was also 1 million dollars for some infrastructure needs for sewer projects at Dewhurst which will allow us to get in under Rt 57 and tap in over to that new development area so more development can be done in the future. The number was 15 earmarks that Congressman Latta and Senator Brown got for our area and 2 of the 15 were for the City of Elyria.

Chair Tollett said that this is very good news for those two projects.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if the East Broad bridge repair help the hospital erosion project?

Engineer Schneider said no.

*Chair Tollett asked for a motion to adjourn this evening's meeting.*

**Motion made by Mrs. Davis and second by Mr. Cerra to adjourn this evening's Finance Committee Meeting at 7:25 P.M.**

**MOTION CARRIES**

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Colleen Rosado, Secretary/Administrative Assistant