

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL/RAVENNA TOWNSHIP  
MEETING  
January 21, 2020**

The Special Joint Meeting of Ravenna City Council and the Ravenna Township Trustees was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by City Council President Andrew Kluge. The Council Clerk read the call to the meeting, noting the purpose of the meeting was to approve the cemetery budget for 2020 and appoint two city representatives to the Cemetery Board.

Upon roll call, those **present were: Council members:** Amy Michael, Paul Moskun, Tim Calfee, Robert Kairis, Christina West and Matt Harper. **Present for Ravenna Township Trustees:** Vincent Coia and Henry Gibson. Also present was Mark Gabriel, Cemetery Superintendent.

The budget was previously distributed to those present.

Mr. Gabriel said that not much has changed in the budget year to year. It has all remained pretty close to the same. The only thing starting to change is that they have been spending down the surplus the past several years. They've been funding the equipment out of the surplus. The surplus is starting to go away. This year they are not putting the \$20,000.00 in from the surplus to the equipment fund because the used excavator was sold and they got \$16,500.00 for it. If they put \$20,000.00 a year into equipment fund, they should be good to 2040; with selling things and interest, etc. Otherwise, the regular budget the City and Township have given about 2% change since 1997. They are going to have to look at that. The Board will take a look at it this year and try to figure out where they are with it. They are pretty much bare bones this year but he thinks they will be alright. Last year nine trees came down. One already came down this year. This is pretty much as it has been for the last several years.

Mr. Gabriel went on to say that Ray Harner who owns the property next door to the cemetery has donated about \$1.6 million worth of dirt and equipment use. They were running scrapers and dump trucks almost every day all summer. They brought tons and tons of dirt. They brought the back end of the cemetery up 27 feet. They are putting a pond in for them. The EPA is requiring retention so they are going to put a couple of extra feet on top of that retention and put in a regular pond. That is in the back towards the railroad track, past the new sections being put in now. That will meet the EPA regulations for the runoff and then they'll have a pond back there as well. They should finish up this year.

Mr. Gibson noted they'd also be remiss if they didn't talk about the chapel. It has been neglected and they are going to have to collectively come up with a solution to fix that up.

Mr. Gabriel said that's about the only thing left on his list when he joined the board in 1996. That is the one thing that is left from that time that hasn't been accomplished. It's a big expense. There are some people who talked to them about possibly doing some things. Hopefully this year, it will shake out and they can get moving on that.

Mr. Calfee asked about the \$20,000.00 for tree work proposed for this year.

Mr. Gabriel responded that's not just tree work. It includes improvement of sites. They are putting fence back up in the back, maybe surveying, etc. They have not planted trees in years. Part of the money Mr. Shafer donated is going to be used to plant trees; \$20,000.00 of that money is going to plant them. They've lost so very many trees out there. They were all planted about the same, in late 1800s or early 1900s and their life cycles are just gone. Then when the plans are drawn up for the new section in the back, they are going to have to do some planting back there also. The other thing, they had to close the bridge over the bridge pond on the front last year. Mr. Finney wasn't fond of it and thought they should block it off. They allotted \$20,000.00 from Mr. Shafer's money to do that because it's a big part of that area of the cemetery. That's where they give speeches during the Memorial Day parade, etc. He will be speaking with Mr. Finney later this week to see where they are with it.

Mr. Gibson asked if Mr. Gabriel could touch on what they are doing with the money that was bequeathed to them by Mr. Shafer.

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Mr. Gabriel said the board hired two landscape architects. The first one is drawing up the tree planting plans. The family wanted them to hire a specific person out of Columbus to come up with new plans for the area in the back. They wanted it to be similar to the one in the front. They were really pushing that a lot of the money be used for that. The board hired Mr. Kentner, contracts have been signed and he has started drawing up the plans.

Ms. Michael asked if they lost an employee or if they are down one. She sees the medical coverage went from \$78,000.00 in 2017 and in 2018, it was \$66,000.00. Now they are looking at \$94,000.00. It was high, went down and now it is even much higher.

Mr. Gabriel said one employee turned 65 so he went on Medicare. They are now just carrying his secondary. They've been playing around for years; going partially self-funded. This year they went a little higher on that and dropped about \$7,000.00 off of it. If everyone stays relatively good this year, they might be able to save quite a bit more that way. They've had pretty good renewal numbers. They have been working on health insurance. This year the employees are contributing more toward the self-insured part of it. They are looking at some other changes this coming year.

Mr. Calfee asked if the changes in the healthcare represents another employee or if there are the same number of employees and it's gone up \$9,000.00 just this year.

Mr. Gabriel said that it has just basically gone up. Those are just increases in healthcare. They are actually on a grandmothers plan, which has kept the increases very, very low compared to others, percentage-wise. By keeping that plan, it has saved them quite a bit. The problem is, the insurer, said they basically went over the cliff on risk because of all the issues they have health wise. They are hanging out on a branch and ready to go over. They can't go any higher. That's another reason they didn't jump as much as other places did because they are tapped out by the State level.

Mr. Gibson said they are working with Mr. Gabriel to try to get in line with what the township and city do as far as employee contribution. That's a goal. They are going to be sharing that with the staff. They will need to contribute this next cycle.

Mr. Calfee asked if there is a possibility to get into a larger pool to get their costs down.

Mr. Gabriel said they looked at that. It doesn't make sense. There are three employees with two family plans and secondary on one who is on Medicare. When he took over as superintendent in 2003, they were at \$67,000.00 for healthcare with less people and worse coverage. They didn't meet that number again until 2018. This total covers eight people.

Mr. Calfee noted the proposed budget for salaries is \$230,000.00. He's curious if that represents more employees or a wage increase, etc., since 2018. That's over a 10% increase in the two years.

Mr. Gabriel said they increased it 2% this year. It's hard to explain. They have to cover themselves for overtime on Saturdays for Saturday funerals. Some years they haven't used it and hardly had any Saturdays. This past year they got blitzed with Saturday funerals. It's a flow through because there is more income coming in but he thinks last January there were four Saturday funerals just in January.

Mr. Calfee asked if that \$80,000.00 increase is a set aside for overtime and the 2% increase are no additional employees.

Mr. Gabriel responded there are no additional employees.

Mr. Gibson said that would be the exception for seasonal employees.

Mr. Gabriel said last year they brought one person three days a week. The year before they didn't have that so that could have a little to do with it. They have four less employees than there were in 1996. There was a guy working a couple of days a week trimming bushes and he left. They left that position open for a couple of years. They are trying to take care of 69 acres and they really need him. This person was a tremendous help last year. They are starting to get caught up. They still have some caved in graves in odd places, etc.

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Mr. Cecora said that 2% averages out about \$50.00 a week. That's the overtime average.

Mr. Gabriel said this past couple of years they haven't really used much overtime, except when before Memorial Day. The last few years they haven't had the overtime due to weather, for the leaf pickup.

Mr. Calfee said that Mr. Gabriel said the carryover balance is dwindling and they would be spending less of the excess income. What is the carryover balance?

Mr. Gabriel responded that right now, this year, it's \$70,000.00. That's basically the balance other than the equipment fund. They have taken all of the equipment fund out of the surplus over the past six years. That equipment fund is at \$104,000.00. There was a time when they gave money back to the City and Township. The surplus, at one point was up to a \$250,000.00 at one point. The other thing they use part of the surplus for was to build a building out there.

Mr. Kairis noted there are no funds to fix the chapel.

Mr. Gabriel said it would be a fundraising effort. They are easily talking \$250,000.00. That's not even doing the windows.

Ms. Michael asked if Mr. Gabriel has noticed an increase on the indigent burials.

Mr. Gabriel responded in the negative. They've always had quite a few.

Mayor Seman said Mr. Gabriel had previously talked about trading land with the City and asked if it is still active.

Mr. Gabriel responded in the affirmative. He further explained that in the back of the cemetery where the golf course used to be, Potter's field is on the south end of the cemetery. The fence juts back over a couple of times. He had an idea to trade land with the City to give the City land in the back. There's around 128 feet of frontage the cemetery has along the trail. They have nothing. The trail abuts the cemetery property. They had to give the City an easement to put the bridge across down by the trail. It seems to make more sense for the cemetery have the land next to it and then give everything in the back to the City. They talked about it many years. He would like to move forward with it because the cemetery has a road down one side of it. The could put a couple of temporary roads in and maybe get three new sections. He doesn't want to do anything to hamper the Parks Department and their plans. They'd actually all have to sit down to see what would work best for the Parks Department.

A motion was made by Ms. Michael, seconded by Mr. Moskun to accept the 2020 budget as written.  
**Vote: All Ayes.**

A motion was made by Ms. Michael, seconded by Ms. West to appoint Matt Harper to the cemetery board. **Vote: Ayes: Michael, West, Calfee, Coia, Gibson, Moskun, Kairis. Abstain: Harper.**

A motion was made by Mr. Kairis to reappoint Mr. Moskun to the Cemetery Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. Michael **Vote: Ayes: Kairis, Michael, Harper, Calfee, West, Coia, Gibson. Abstain: Moskun.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:42 P.M..

**ATTEST:**

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Clerk of Council

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Joseph Bica, President of Council