



**RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
May 24, 2021, at 7:00pm**

The public meeting was held via Zoom and live streamed via YouTube. A video recording of the meeting can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuXu4frBtJA&t=3042s>

The Committee of the Whole Meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Council President, Andrew Kluge.

Council present via Zoom: Council President Andrew Kluge, Amy Michaels, Rob Kairis, Paul Moskun, Cheryl Wood, Tim Calfee, Christina West, and Matt Harper.

Also attending the meeting via Zoom: Mayor Seman; Police Chief, Jeff Wallis; Acting Fire Chief, Mark Chapple; Finance Director, Brian Huff; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Service Director, Kay Dubinsky and Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor

The first item on the agenda was to approve the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes from April 19, 2021.

- Motion to approve the April 19, 2021, Committee of the Whole minutes by Ms. Michael, 2nd by Mr. Kairis- **All Ayes**

The second item was an ordinance to authorize the creation of 3 part-time police dispatch positions.

Ms. Michael stated that Chief Wallis sent everyone an email as a follow-up from the committee meeting and stated that it is not an option at this point to create a full-time position and one part-time position, adding that the item is only to create 3 part-time positions.

Mr. Kairis stated a concern with the feasibility and cost of the positions, but Ms. Michael stated that the positions would alleviate the overtime costs that are currently being incurred.

Mr. Huff stated that the part-time positions are meant to fill the vacant spots that occur due to vacations or sick time, which are currently being filled with overtime, adding that the cost will be cheaper than paying overtime.

Ms. West stated that she spent time doing a ride-along and in the dispatch center and found that some dispatchers are currently scheduled for 12 hour shifts to ensure coverage.

Mr. Kairis stated to clarify that there are no open positions and that the part-time positions would be brand new budgetary lines, adding that he would like to know more details and how many hours are currently overtime hours.

Ms. Wood stated that she wished to see a comparison of part-time positions, and a full-time and a part-time position.

Chief Wallis clarified to Council that the part-time positions are to alleviate the overtime that is spent and will only be paid when they work. He stated that the position must be covered if someone takes vacation or sick time, adding that he anticipates a retirement in the future. He said that he is not asking for a lot of extra money, just to take some of the money that would be used for general overtime which would cover the costs of the part-time positions.

In response to Mr. Kairis' statement wanting to keep the payroll positions stable, Ms. Michael stated that there will always be fluctuating needs when it comes to safety forces which will shift the needs of the positions. She asked Mr. Huff for an overtime amount to share with Council.

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Mr. Moskun agreed that the part-time positions are needed and stated that down the line they may possibly be able to replace full-time positions who will retire.

Mayor Seman reminded Council that many people were not able to use vacation time last year and he has signed a lot of slips approving vacation carryover.

Ms. Wood emphasized the importance of retaining enough dispatchers for adequate coverage.

Mr. Harper stated that he would like to know how many hours of overtime have been accrued to determine the appropriate number of part-time dispatchers to hire.

Mr. Huff stated that if a full-time dispatcher were hired it would cost approximately \$80,000 including benefits, but that the part-time positions would be a savings to the City with the only extra cost being the cost of training.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The third item was an ordinance to authorize the creation of a full-time Fire Marshal position.

Ms. Michael stated that there has been a job description created by Ms. Richkowski and Acting Chief Chapple, adding that it is a union position, so the exact salary is unknown.

Acting Chief Chapple stated that there is a position available that ultimately needs to be addressed. He stated that with the number of businesses compared to the amount of fire inspections that have been done, the numbers fall short averaging 30 per year. A rough estimate of the salary cost would be between \$90,000 and \$120,000. Acting Chief Chapple stated that it is something that the Finance Department needs to figure out if it can be a sustainable position. He addressed that the fire fighters used to be able to do the inspections but stated that calls have gone from approximately 1,900 per year to 2,900 per year, adding that they have been done with the same amount of full-time fire fighters the last 25 years.

Mr. Huff concurred that the cost of the position would be approximately \$109,000 to \$121,000.

He said that the funds are available to keep the position, but Council will have to weigh that against any other possible positions that they may have coming up.

Ms. Michael clarified that the 3 part-time dispatcher positions will be considered a wash since they will be replacing over-time costs.

Mr. Kairis expressed his concern regarding any other possible positions that might come up and stated that there is a limited amount of funds available.

Mr. Huff stated that it is a constant that departments have requests for new positions or funding.

Mr. Kluge stated that more information and clarity regarding the item will be looked at with the Mayor and the administration.

Mayor Seman stated that that the two positions up for discussion that evening were life-saving jobs.

Acting Chief Chapple stated that the main concern is position sustainability in regards to funding.

Mr. Kluge asked Council if they would like to move the item forward to the next meeting.

Mr. Kairis stated that he would like to see the numbers so that he has the full picture and acknowledged that Council and the administration has been financially conservative for as long as he has been on Council.

Ms. Wood concurred with Mr. Kairis that Council needs to look at the feasibility of the numbers, adding that she understands the need for the positions.

Acting Chief Chapple asked if the funds are available and the sustainability is there, would Council support the creation of the Fire Marshal position.

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Council members stated their support of the position but emphasized the importance of ensuring its sustainability.

Mr. Calfee had questions regarding the Fire Marshal job description and who does those jobs currently, adding the question of if there are smaller steps that can be done to meet the needs of the position rather than establish a full-time position.

Acting Chief Chapple stated that there are fire fighters who are inspectors that are doing those jobs, and everyone oversees their own record keeping. He stated that it is a small amount of time compared to the main job of fire, EMS and preventive maintenance of the vehicles.

There was no further comment.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The fourth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract for 2021 pavement striping.

Mr. Harper stated that it is the City's annual pavement marking and striping program for crosswalks and new lines on newly paved roads.

Mr. Finney stated that they received two returned bids and he is waiting on a consulting question to be answered from the law director.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The fifth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to apply for an AMATS grant for S. Prospect St.

Mr. Harper stated that the item is to resurface South Prospect St. from Main St. to the city line. 80% of the project cost will be paid by AMATS, and the City's share will be 20% at approximately \$55,000.

Mr. Finney stated that the project did not score high enough, so he will modify the application and apply for another round of funding in the fall.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The sixth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to apply for an AMATS grant for N. Chestnut St.

Mr. Harper stated that the resurfacing will be for North Chestnut from Main St. to Route 14. Funding for the project will be for 2024.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The seventh item was an ordinance authorizing the vacation of Edgewood Ave. between Maple and Linden St.

Mr. Harper stated that vacations occasionally come up and the administration sees no problem with going through with the request to vacate the parcels.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The eighth item was an ordinance authorizing repairs to the EQ basin.

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Mr. Moskun stated that there was damage to the EQ basin due to a storm that came through. A company will be taking care of the repairs. So far \$22,700 has been received from the insurance company for repairs. The approximate cost of the project is \$41,000, and the remaining amount will then be submitted to the insurance company for reimbursement.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The ninth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a 4th agreement for natural gas aggregation.

Ms. Dubinsky stated that the price requested is \$2.99 per mcf and the current rate is \$2.97 per mcf. She stated that the item is a fourth amendment agreement that the City will enter into which will be for two years.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The tenth item was an ordinance to authorizing modifications to the Community Reinvestment Area map.

Mr. Finney stated that two options were presented at the last meeting. One option was for the proposed business behind the Immaculate Conception Church which he stated is moving forward and added that he just signed a re-plat that day. The other option that he presented was to blanket the city in a CRA and later in the summer potentially rewrite the ordinance to explain the advantages to the residents and businesses. He stated that the CRA for the entire city was moved forward at the last meeting.

Mr. Kairis asked if there was some state legislation that might influence the CRA, and Ms. Wood stated that there are some HP bills that might change the priority of the CRA to make it more advantageous.

Mr. Finney explained that the ordinance is just to change the map and then it will go to the state for approval. Once the state approves and excepts it, then it will become the new CRA area.

The eleventh item was a discussion of an engagement letter for economic development matters from Roetzel Law.

Ms. Wood stated that Dennis West is the Economic Development Director and will remain so. He has been out of the office recovering and the City wishes him well. The item is for consulting on an as needed basis and would be used if an economic development circumstance came through and the City would need to move forward swiftly. She stated that Jason Dodson of Roetzel Law Firm is willing to do that. The cost for the service is usually \$350 per hour, but he is willing to charge \$195 per hour to the City only on an as needed basis and only until Dennis comes back. Ms. Wood stated that it was to help ensure things keep moving forward.

Mr. Kluge asked the Mayor and administration if the service would be used if Council approved it and Mayor Seman stated that it would be highly unlikely. Mayor Seman stated that the City has other people that they work with to help them with economic development, such as Northeast Ohio Development (NEO) and Brad Ehrhart from the Portage Development Board.

Mr. Kairis stated that he was not sure there was a logistical needed for the service and was not inclined to move forward with the service at that time.

The Mayor stated that Mr. West has been working everyday in response to the statement that he was taken ill.

Mr. Moskun stated that the service is a good idea until Mr. West is completely recovered.

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Mr. Calfee inquired into who would be making the calls for the service.

Mayor Seman stated that it would be a consultation with Mr. West, adding that Mr. West does not see the need for the service.

Ms. West was not in favor of the service.

Mr. Kairis stated that if Mr. West is not in favor of the service, then he is not in favor of the service. He stated that it should work with him, not in opposition of him.

Mr. Harper stated that he was mixed on the item, especially if Mr. West is working, adding that he was not in favor of paying two different people to do the same job.

Ms. Michael stated that her only intention towards the item was to help and in no way replace Mr. West. She explained that it was to help take any additional pressure off administration as Mr. West recovers.

Mayor Seman stated that he called Mr. West at the request of Ms. Wood to get his opinion on the matter.

Ms. Wood explained that the service was in no way meant to replace Mr. West, but only to help him as he recovers.

Mr. Kluge stated that he appreciated the discussion that evening, and Mayor Seman stated that his door is always open, and he is available to Council.

There being no further business before Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Council President