

MINUTES OF UTILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

February 11, 2019

The February 11, 2019 Utilities Committee meeting was called to order by Paul Moskun at 5:30 P.M. Present were: Matt Harper, Rob Kairis, Bruce Ribelin, Scott Rainone, Andrew Kluge, Amy Michael and Joe Bica. Also attending the meeting were Mayor Frank Seman; Service Director, Kay Dubinsky; Finance Director, Kim Cecora; City Engineer, Bob Finney; City Police Chief Jeff Wallis; Bill Steiner, Director of the Portage County Solid Waste District and Larry Silenius of 123 North Walnut Street, Ravenna, OH.

Mr. Moskun said the first item on the agenda is a presentation about the Solid Waste Plan update.

Mr. Steiner explained that it's time for the Solid Waste Plan Update ratification. The plan is the projection of how they are going to run the district over the next 20 years. It's difficult because right now month to month it changes. The plan is pretty much the same document in place right now which was written by the EPA. They are trying to get out from underneath the EPA written plan. They revised some tables and charts, built in some flexibility for the district. They own a transfer station; do they want to keep it; not run it; use it in the event something catastrophic happens? There is a rail spur right next to their facility if they had to bring everything to that facility to help out the county, that would do it. They are putting the rules back in. Basically, every year they discovers somebody new hauling trash from this county and not claiming generation fees. They have an environmental compliance officer whose job is to investigate that. The last time the plan was updated, it was very contentious but are now making great headway with what they are doing as far as modernizing the fleet. Most of the citizens are appreciative of the two cart; putting everything in the cart. Some things that will be coming out is contamination. They will be addressing that shortly. The EPA told him that if they get 75% of the population to ratify it as a plan, they will recommend to the new director to sign. That process will be over August 19. They have a May 23rd deadline to get this to the EPA if they have the votes necessary for ratification.

Mayor Seman asked who votes for the 75% ratification.

Mr. Steiner said that the entities such as Ravenna City Council would vote for the City of Ravenna. The population is just over 160,000 residents so the Ravenna City population would account for that 160,000, which is roughly around 11-12,000. They have to get 75% of that 160,000. It can be any combination of cities, villages or townships.

Mr. Ribelin asked the price of the contract for this year.

Mr. Steiner said they are looking at a 25¢ per month increase. For the communities having pickup bi-weekly, that is probably the most cost effective way to go. They are paying, right now, to have the recycling processed. That's not something they anticipated.

Mr. Ribelin asked what is going to be excluded in the recycling because of the market demands, etc.

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Mr. Steiner said that is still a moving target but they have a contract with the processor, Lease Management. They would prefer glass be taken out. They've met several times and for him to do that is going to require him to go through the entire county and sign addendums to every contract. Glass is something that has been recycled since day one. You cannot get residents to just stop it that quickly. What they have opted to do is continue to accept glass. That will be factored in because it is a negative value. It costs \$22.00 a ton to have it processed. Last year it was around \$38,000.00. It's a small fraction of the fee. The big things they will target will be plastic bags. Those wrap around the equipment. They have to shut down every eight hours to cut the bags off the equipment. The non-recyclable items such as yard waste, trash, etc. They are going to get really aggressive and tag them. They are now tagging them and not picking them up. They may put an enforcement component in it; just a letter explaining that it effects everyone's price. It's the stuff like the garden hoses, etc. Those are the things they are trying to target. They figure they could do that through good, hard aggressive education and awareness campaign. They have a lot of recycling of paper plates where there might be a little mustard on it. That's been contaminated. Those are the kinds of things they are going to target this year. Ideally, their contract says they are allowed to have 20% contamination and that's the non-recycled items. They would like them to get down to 15%. They've done some analysis. They are close. For the communities that have drop off facilities, they may opt to separate them out from the curbside. Curbside they are right at 15% but he would like to get it done as close to 10% as possible. Some communities assess a penalty of \$30.00 if the cart has more than 50% contamination in it. Cleveland will fine people but it turns into an accounting nightmare. They just want to do it for education.

There being no further questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the ratification of the updated plan would be referred to the Committee of the Whole for further action.

Mr. Moskun noted the next item on the agenda is a request to forgive uncollectible debt in the Water Billing Department. Some of the bills go back as far as 2004. Some of it is 15 years old. Some of it is as trivial as 1 cent. The largest amount is \$1,046.00. That is city owned property that used to be Smith & Cowan. You can't really charge that to themselves. A lot of the properties have been demolished over the years. Some of them are vacant lots and some just were rebuilt. A lot of the money was lost through bankruptcy. Some of it unable to be collected upon because if a landlord sold the property and in the process, sometimes, the Water Billing Department was not contacted. They don't bill anything under \$25.00. Mr. Moskun said that this is the first time a list like this has ever been compiled.

Mr. Bica asked if these have been placed on the tax duplicate for collection.

Mayor Seman said that a lot of the homes have been sold. The present owner is not the person who owes the money.

Ms. Dubinsky said that in looking at the list, she can see that a number of the people are deceased.

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Ms. Michael asked why they weren't assessed on the taxes.

Ms. Dubinsky said that there is nothing prior to 1997 because that's when the system was computerized.

Mr. Bica asked how that shows up on the city's books

Mr. Cecora said that it shows up just as an outstanding debt. This is monies owed on paper. The city does not record revenue until it is realized. In other words, they are never going to record any revenue before it's paid. There is really nothing to write off. It's whether they are going to pursue it or not pursue it. The answer is, while it's not in any revenue cycle or stream, it's in a subsidiary saying this is the amount of billing that went out that was never paid. It's the same thing with income tax liability.

Mr. Bica asked the total amount.

Mr. Moskun responded the total is \$22,914.36.

Mr. Bica asked what is the most recent.

Ms. Dubinsky said 2017 is the most recent. That is an account for \$237.75.

Mr. Cecora said the bulk of it is between the years 2000 and 2012. None of them are over \$1,600.00 per year. After 2012, it's under \$1,000.00 a year.

Ms. Dubinsky said she asked Mr. Reynolds how frequently this has been done in the past who told her that he was not aware that it's ever been done.

Mr. Harper asked if they ever considered using an outside debt collection service.

Mr. Cecora responded not typically for that because of those going directly to assessments; at least in the recent history. Unlike taxes, they can put it on the duplicate. Often times the property switches hands. They've had to write off a few of them previously. This isn't like income taxes being assessed.

Mr. Bica asked if the customer name is the customer who owns the property now or the person who owes the money to the city.

Ms. Dubinsky noted that she looked at the list and there are some people on it who have passed away.

Mr. Bica said there are people on the list who are alive and breathing. There are companies here that are doing well.

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Mr. Ribelin said it might be easier to understand if they get an explanation from Mr. Reynolds.

Ms. Michael said that she knows they are all small amounts but it really seems like a lot of money.

After a great deal of discussion, it was decided by those present the issue would move to the Committee of the Whole for further explanation and discussion.

Mr. Moskun said the next item on the agenda is a request for the Hazen Avenue Waterline Project.

Mr. Finney said this is the Ohio Public Works Commission Project. This is to authorize the mayor to advertise for bids. They cannot award the contract until the State gives the go ahead which will be the beginning of July but they can have all the documents ready, contractor scheduled to begin, etc.

There being no further questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the issue would be forwarded to Committee of the Whole for further action.

Mr. Moskun said the next item is the QCI contract.

Mr. Finney said is an annual contract. It locks the City into a contract with QCI whether they are used or not. He is currently using QCI to monitor the fiber optic project and will most likely use them when Dominion comes into town to tear up Ward III. There is a revenue component to the projects; the roadway work permit. They utilize QCI to monitor construction with a small markup to cover the Engineering department time on top of what QCI gets paid. The rate for 2019 is \$56.75 per hour. They've been doing this contract for many years. Unfortunately, the rate was raised a little bit. All this does is authorize the mayor to enter into the contract.

There being no further questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the issue would be forwarded to Committee of the Whole for further action.

Mr. Finney said he would like to add the advertising of a Stormwater project. The funds will come from the storm fund. A couple sections of storm pipe will be replaced. One section on Perry between Rosedale and Woodland along the south side. There are three pipes going into a 12" pipe. The 12" is not adequate. They are going to up size that to a 24" pipe. There is another section on Stevens Street, probably mid-block that they are going to relay the pipe, put it in as deep as possible and hopefully it will drain. He is assuming at one time there were ditches along Stevens that got filled in too shallow so that will be replaced. There is an option ditch at Havre's Woods, near the road, which Parks & Rec. have asked to fill in so that it's not a maintenance or mowing issue. The estimated cost is \$74,778.00. No appropriation is needed because it was budgeted in the storm project for the year. They will need authorization to advertise for bids.

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There being no further questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the issue would be forwarded to Committee of the Whole for further action.

There being no further items to be discussed, the meeting adjourned at 5:55 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Paul Moskun, Chairman
Utilities Committee