

VILLAGE OF MOUNT STERLING, OHIO
FINANCE WORK SESSION JANUARY 22, 2020

The meeting was called to order by David Timmons at 3:35 pm

Attendees of the meeting were:

Mayor- Marci Darlington
Pres. Pro Temp- Becky Martin
Council Member Jay Pettey
Council Member- Craig Hix
Council Member- Andy Drake
Council Member- David Timmons
Fiscal Officer- Courtney Bricker

Courtney began meeting by providing an update to the AEP project that would be constructed at Mason Park. Courtney advised that Josh Pedaline from AEP would like to hold a meeting with council along with other AEP representatives to discuss the development/plan of the project. Members agree to hold an open meeting on Feb. 12, 2020 at 3:30 pm, Courtney would provide confirmation once date has been confirmed with AEP.

Courtney then advised that since the medical insurance provider has changed for 2020 that invoices have not been received and payment is now set up quarterly. Courtney recommended that she wanted to obtain an invoice as some employees have HAS account now. She needs to determine the cost to ensure the deduction is for 26 pay periods. Courtney spoke to effected employees and it was agreed to draft 20% instead of 10% out of next pay check. Members approved.

Members then received committees for 2020 and set recurring meetings for the year. Parks and Rec. mtg to be held on the first Wednesday of each month at 4:00pm, finance (tentatively) on the second Wednesday of each month at 3:00pm, block watch to be held on the last Wednesday of each month at 4:00pm, street committee to be held on the first Wednesday of each month at 9:00 am, water/ waste water to be determined, and records retention every six months- mid June to be held.

Courtney then provided the estimated local government funds, tax rates, and estimated revenues from Madison County Auditors office for 2020. She advised that there will be legislation that will be presented during next council meeting allowing council to approve. David asked how much would the Village receive in gas tax, Courtney advised that it is estimated and forecasted that an additional \$5000 would be received each year. Legislation was agreed to be passed as an emergency.

Courtney provided to members a copy of the current contract and new Rumpke contract for renewal of the large container pick up. Courtney did advise there is an increase in service prices and to review the pick up locations. She stated that contract is set to renew every two years and that if there are any changes and questions to express before contract is set to be approved. The Village does provide pick up at squad and fire buildings. Andy asked if there was an option for a recycling program. It was discussed that at one time there was bulk recycling offered but had to be removed due to continuous abuse of not collecting only recyclables.

This would have cost Village more to have services. It was suggested that residents can call Rumpke to have service added. An audience member asked if there was a scheduled time on pick up of the large containers, Courtney replied that no it is not listed.

Courtney presented to members that she had met with the Auditor and that there needed to be legislation approved for a transfer of \$200,000 & \$68,000 from the general fund to the water and street funds. This was already approved as a budget change (per ordinance 2019-24) but needed to be allowed as a transfer into the respected accounts. Courtney asked if members wanted to approve as an emergency? All agreed but will make a disclaimer to audience on why this will be passed as an emergency. Courtney advised that she has created a draft and has sent to Andy for review.

As a result of the Auditor's meeting and the completion of the audits it was approved that some fund accounts and line items that are not being used and have a \$0.00 allocation can be removed from the UAN system. Courtney showed examples of the line items and wanted to now have those removed for a more accurate display of the report. Members agreed and a draft of the legislation had been sent to Andy for review.

The Committee then discussed the job description that was created by Andy for the Village Solicitor vacancy. Andy advised that he created a description that would fit the need of the Village and allow the Village to pay for only what was needed for a cheaper salary. The committee agreed that the job description was confirmed for finalization and that the salary would not be disclosed until interviews/resumes are accepted. The salary would be determined dependent on the Solicitor's expertise if they are part of a firm then the Village would benefit and have access to more with specialized people. Courtney voiced that she has already received three interested people. Committee agreed to post job opening on website on Jan. 23, 2020 and end on Feb. 5, 2020.

Courtney presented a five-year forecast of the general fund. During her discussion with the Auditor it was recommended that the hiring of a Village Administrator was not financially feasible given that the cost of Village Administrator shows a decrease in the budget each year. It was voiced that the Village needed to decrease expenditures. Andy motioned to extend the meeting until 5:00pm, David seconded all in favor. Courtney explained the restrictions on being placed under fiscal emergency and that decisions of hiring had to be accepted and recommended by the Auditor's and then presented to the Commission Committee for final approval. Becky expressed that she was not understanding why the Village was allowed to hire Village Administrators prior and now it can not be done. Courtney explained that when those Administrators were hired, they were required to spend half of their time at the sewer plant allowing most of their salary to be spent from the sewer fund. Courtney then expressed that this was discussed in prior meetings and the importance of expending out of different funds. This allowed the general fund to not expend their entire salary. She added that now that Madison County has taken over operations the new Administrators time spent will not be much at all at the plants but in the office. This causes a much larger expense from the general fund which is monitored by the Commission Committee. Courtney then presented a solution that allowed the general fund balance to increase instead of decreasing. Courtney advised that the new potential Administrator is not in need of medical insurance, she showed that would a \$20,000 + savings over the next five-years. She also added that in their contract it should state that medical insurance would never be offered by the Village to employee during their tenure of employment. Courtney also suggested that there may be little work in/at the water and sewer plants (ex: meters, contractors, leaks, backups etc.) that possibly taking a small percentage of their salary from the water/sewer funds could help in reducing expense to general fund.

Once figures were calculated fund balance total did show decrease. Committee agree to have Courtney make recommendation as suggested to the Auditors for approval.

Discussion of the renewal of sheriff's contract was held. David expressed that he believes the Village is paying too much for the services. Jay voiced that he would like to hear why? David advised that being involved with the block watch program that deputies do not attend them and they are not responding to calls that are reported. Craig stated that according to the sheriff's report on incidents that those were incidents were reported within the Village. He questioned the number of traffic accidents that had occurred. It was confirmed that some responses involving EMS/Fire require a sheriff. Becky shared a proposal of a sheriff's contract that was presented to Pleasant Township in 2011 that was later denied and questioned in terms why is the Village paying for all services within the township. The 2011 proposal outlined different services and cost then what has been presented for 2020. Becky voiced that during the cuts on the employees and expenditures due to the fiscal emergency the contract was never reviewed for a decrease and this large contract was always met with payment. She also reminded members of the meeting that was held with Sheriff Swaney that there were responsibilities that she did not agree with that were not being performed. Members agreed that they too did not like that ordinances were not being enforced and the fact that it was recommended that a person needed to be hired to enforce parking violations. Members also expressed that the rules of council state a report is to be given during each meeting and also a deputy must attend certain committee meetings, this has not been a continuous practice by the department. Becky also voiced that if there is a call in another district then they can be removed from the Village to respond. Becky voiced that she was not comfortable with renewing contract but to stop services or cut back on protection and cost. Andy voices that he would like to pay for the service if services were being performed. Becky said she has spoken to several residents and they expressed that the cost is too much. Andy agreed that the level of service has decreased over the years and that there is a lack of presence of deputies. David voiced that he would support the contract knowing the services were met and guaranteed. Jay expressed that he was hopeful but was not sure how the services could be monitored ensuring they were met. Andy suggested that removing cost for services if they are not performed in accordance to the contract. Members then asked the audience to voice their concerns and or issues. An audience attendee voiced that if there are tickets that are issues the Village would receive a portion of the cost. Also, that their services should be monitored and tracked on what they are performing. She also advised that with her involvement on committees a deputy is never available and does not attend ex: nuisance and abatement. Craig added that most of the crime is performed at night and that could be an option that coverage is only needed during that time. Becky also mentioned that office space in town hall is restricted, why does the village not have access to those rooms?

Marci advised that she met with Sheriff Swaney and that she wanted to report back to members some of his points and clarifications to the contract. Sheriff Swaney was asked to calculate a total cost of an employee for a year and it was determined that it is \$78,000 including benefits but excluding vehicle expense and equipment. Sheriff Swaney proceeded to explain the requirements of calls and services provided. He stated that two deputies may have to respond on certain calls, special events are attended at no additional charge, if an arrest is issued the person is transported to Mechanicsburg and no patrol is able to be conducted. He also mentioned that most crimes happen at night were as the public may not notice. Sheriff Swaney stated that if the on-duty deputy is sick or on vacation then their shift is replaced at no charge. He agreed to negotiate office space and to assist at bus stops. Andy motioned to extend the meeting ten minutes to 5:15pm which was seconded by David all in favor for extension. Becky expressed that the rebuttal to Sheriff Swaney's responses that the Village could hire services for special events, and mentioned that without contract the

deputies are still required to respond to calls. She also suggested that patrolling could happen during evening hrs. Andy added that this arrangement would be the agreement that was offered in 2011 for 11 hours daily.

The audience members were then asked of their concerns. A resident voiced that the contract was too expensive and wanted to make the sheriff's department accountable for their services. She suggested that contract not be renewed and doing so the Council would see immediate changes to improve services. Another audience participant asked if members have advised Sheriff Swaney of the issues that the community is experiencing and see if they could be corrected.

Marci ended by asking members if they would like to hold a town hall meeting to allow residents to voice and express their concerns to Sheriff Swaney before making a decision. All members were in agreement and Marci will determine meeting.

Meeting adjourned by David Timmons at 5:16 pm

Respectfully submitted:


Courtney Bricker, Fiscal Officer/Clerk of Council


Marci Darlington, Mayor