

**VILLAGE OF CUYAHOGA HEIGHTS
COUNCIL WORKSHOP
MINUTES
6:00 PM
JANUARY 27, 2016**

ROLL CALL: BIRO, BLOAM, DUSZYNSKI, HARRIS, HENLEY, SCHOEFFLER

Assistant to the Clerk, Ms. Meriwether was also in attendance.

The Mayor asked to go into Executive Session for Economic Development, as well as contractual.

Ms. Duszynski made the motion, seconded by Mr. Bloam. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried. Ms. Meriwether was asked to stay in Executive Session.

MAYORS REPORT / CLERKS REPORT:

Prior to the Meeting, the Clerk passed out his document for the 5 Year Forecast. The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions concerning the report. Ms. Biro stated that there is a lot of information contained in the report, and was wondering if they could ask the Clerk any questions in the future concerning his report. The Mayor said absolutely.

The Mayor stated that the things the Clerk has put forward today in his report, are things you will see within the next month in the yearly budget for 2016. The job of putting this document together is very difficult, but Mr. Unger and Ms. Meriwether did a great job.

Ms. Biro asked why we increased the Senior budget from \$4,000.00 a year to \$5,000.00 a year. Ms. Henley said that she requested it to be increased, and the Mayor said to make it \$10,000.00 if you want. Ms. Biro asked Ms. Henley why she requested a \$1,000.00 increase. Ms. Henley said the Seniors are very cautious in their spending, and they use the complete \$4,000.00 and more than that, so they asked to increase it this year. Ms. Henley told them she would ask the Mayor. The Mayor stated he is 1000% behind the \$1,000.00 increase for the Seniors. Ms. Biro asked the Mayor, what are we going to do for the rest of the residents? The Mayor said we will bump them up equally. Ms. Biro stated that based on the number of residents, whether it is youth non-senior or senior, they should all be bumped up equally. The Mayor is in total agreement, and anything we do per capita we will make the adjustment. No resident will be left behind.

Clerk Unger said that as you look over the 5 Year Plan document, which are Estimates for the next 5 years, it will be very similar to the Budget that will be presented to Council for 2016.

Ms. Biro asked if the Mayor had any plans to expand the concession stand at Bacci Park this year. The Mayor stated that we are hoping with the redevelopment of our ballfields to be open for all the activities that will be held at the park. Ms. Biro said that she goes there for lunch in the summer, and it is a great lunch, with very comfortable seating. She would like to see it promoted more to the local businesses.

Mr. Schoeffler asked about the Capital Outlay portion of the 5 Year Report supplied by Mr. Sciano and Department Heads. The Mayor said that there are many projects that we should have done years ago, but stretched them out to for years without doing them. Setting those projects behind, costing more dollars in the future. For example, we should replace our garbage truck every 10 years, but now we have gone 12 years. They are maintained, but eventually they will need to be replaced. These are costs we keep putting off. Eventually we will have to do them. Another example is our Police cars, they need to be replaced on a rotation basis that is supplied by the Police Chief. No car that is replaced has less than 90-100 thousand miles.

Ms. Duszynski stated in regards to the letter the Mayor put in the Handbook from 2014, it showed that the Mayor did alert Council to this problem, and the issue of declining revenue to fix the larger problems, but now it is show time, we must get a tax increase on the ballot as soon as possible.

Mr. Bloam asked the Mayor what a professional firm would charge to do some projects for the businesses in our community to explain the need for an increase. Mayor Bacci said he will get Council prices. He also said we can also use Silverload to do some of the work. Once we explain the situation to the businesses, the Mayor believes that they will be as understanding as the residents.

We need to put a document together showing that we have been fiscally responsible, and that we have been good custodians of the Village coffers, and ultimately, these are things that need to be done to take care of the town that we love. The Mayor would like to see legislation passed at the February Council Meeting, and the Marketing go forward to the businesses and residents all the way up unto Election Day.

Ms. Duszynski asked a question regarding the document they received showing where our money goes. The Mayor said that we need to explain to the businesses where their employee's tax money goes, and let them know that we are not squandering it.

Ms. Biro wanted to let Council know that when she gave the information about a professional marketing firm to the Mayor, it was at a seminar that she attended, there is no connection to myself and the marketing company. What she took away from the seminar was that they gave an example of what they do in marketing in the Columbus area. At first the residents were against a tax increase for a shopping plaza in the area, but after this firm did their marketing program, the residents passed the increase in taxes for the project. Summit County has also used them. The trend now is to take 5-10 thousand dollars and go to a marketing firm that markets municipalities, and helps put a package together in order to get the tax passed. We are not Mayor Louis Bacci, who was able to get a tax passed just by asking. Today we need to market the proposal to let the businesses and employees know what you are going to do with the money. We don't want anyone to think we are using the money to give everyone raises. We need to let them know that we are going to use the extra revenue to benefit everyone and move forward with projects that have been put off for many years.

Ms. Henley stated that it might be easier this time, because everyone is in agreement that this is what we have to do. No one on Council is against it. The Mayor stated that it is very clear that our businesses absolutely respect what you and I have done for this community. People drive around our town, and they are very impressed that this is an inner ring suburb. We border communities that are in dire straits, and we are holding our own. So, know that the businesses recognize that, and they are extremely pleased with what we are doing with our community. Business owners love what we have done to the Village, and they tell the Mayor that all the time.

Ms. Harris wanted to know if everyone on Council is for the tax increase, because she is for it, and she would like to know if everyone on Council supports this so we are on the same page. There was some discussion that if you vote to put this on the ballot, then you should stand behind the decision. Mr. Schoeffler mentioned that many local communities are at 2 ½% or more in Cuyahoga County. There was a discussion on what other communities have done in the past concerning tax increases. Ms. Biro stated that everyone needs to know that we need the increase for infrastructure projects and debt management. Mayor Bacci said that he does not believe the businesses will have any concern when they see the money going right back into Village projects, and not into buying things we don't need.

The Mayor said the landscaping of this town, the streets, the plowing, the Service Department, the Village Hall, the Police, the Dispatch, and Fire Department, are absolutely second to none. When our businesses or residents need us, we are there, and the people know we care about them.

WHEREFORE, there being no further business before this Council, Ms. Henley seconded by Ms. Biro that the Work Session be adjourned. All voting aye, none opposed; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.