

**VILLAGE OF CUYAHOGA HEIGHTS  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
6:00 PM  
JANUARY 22, 2014**

**ROLL CALL: BIRO, BLOAM, CONTIPELLI, DUSZYNSKI, HARRIS, HENLEY**

Mr. Contipelli made the motion to excuse Clerk Unger from the meeting due to illness. No objections.

**ISSUE 1: MILL CREAK WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP – MR. CONTIPELLI**

**COMMENTS:**

Mr. Contipelli gave Council an update on the meeting he attended with 10 other agencies and towns, and we are hoping to sign up another four to five towns. The first priority is to put a watershed action plan in motion. It is a plan to show how flooding, storm water, erosion, and recreation control will be done in the watershed similar to the Westcreek Watershed. Once it is accepted by the Federal government, we will open ourselves to millions of dollars in Federal grants. The expert working with us feels that this can be done in the next six months, and then we can start to apply for grants.

After some discussion, it was decided that he will let Council know once the watershed plan is in place and accepted, so we can look at projects we want to put in place. His hope is that once in place it will open the door to grants involving erosion in our Village. The Mayor also stated that many of the issues facing our Village are way out of our league as far as costs, and this consortium is a good idea to maybe get financial help from the government to resolve these issues. We are well positioned for these types of grants.

Mr. Contipelli also wanted everyone to know that the Ohio Municipal League is having a conference, and if anyone would like to go, please let him know.

**ISSUE 2: HOME LOAN GRANT PROGRAM**

**COMMENTS:**

The Mayor stated that Mr. Casini just gave him a list of three things that he would like to add for grant reimbursement relating to sewer work, and he will get Council a copy to decide if Council wants to add it to the existing legislation. Ms. Henley asked if we added it, could it be made retroactive. The Mayor stated that he does not see a problem with that.

Mr. Contipelli asked Council to look at it, and if it is something they want to move forward with, he will ask Mr. Greenberg to draw up the legislation. We will be making the housing grant legislation retroactive to January 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **ISSUE 3: CLERK REPORT**

#### **COMMENTS:**

The Mayor went over a quick overview of the current audit of our financial records by the State Auditors. He told Council that he talked to the Auditors before they left, and everything that was needed or provided to them was done on a timely basis, and from what they tell him, the current audit has worked real well, they are done with their in house work, they are going to do some sampling back at the office, and we can expect a management letter sometime in February.

A quick overview of the finances before moving into 2014. In 2013, the General Fund was at approximately 2.7 million dollars. The budget for the General Fund was 9.7 million, and actual expenditures were approximately 10 million. A couple items that we did not budget for were 200 thousand for the purchase of the Kennedy House, the Fire Department exceeded their overtime budget by roughly 70 thousand dollars, and there was an issue with the pension contribution in the Fire Department that turned into a 111 thousand dollar difference.

The Gallo Company closing put a dent in our revenue during 2013, but they are currently looking for a company to enter into a long term lease for the building. Silverlode and I are looking for anyone that might be interested in that building. We had some interest from the County, but they were going to use it for storage, and we need to put workers in there, not product storage. We will see monies coming in from the Fighfighters Credit Union building for 2014. The building will not be a branch; it will be an administrative building. So we expect the General Fund to stay around the same for 2014.

### **ISSUE REPORT: MAYORS REPORT**

#### **COMMENTS:**

## **2014 COMMITTEES**

The Mayor passed out a list of Committee members for 2014, and asked Council if there were any questions or concerns. Mr. Contipelli wanted it noted that there will be an Economic Development Committee meeting the first Tuesday of the month at 5:00 pm. Ms. Duszynski also stated that the Finance Committee will meet the first Tuesday of every month at 6.00 pm.

The Mayor stated that he added two new committees for 2014 that relates to our senior citizens and young people. In a conversation with Ms. Henley and Mr. Contipelli, Mr. Contipelli had an interest in working with the young people and the school, and the school being a hot spot in our district, it is a great idea to get the information first hand in order to let our people know that they are being responsible to the community and to our children. Also to get the information to our residents on what is going on as far as plays, ballgames, and events happening at the school.

Lois had an interest in being the liaison to the senior citizens. The charge he wants to give Lois is what are their needs from our Service Department, County programs, or State programs and how do we direct them or guide them to a program that will fill their needs.

## **SPORTS COMMISSIONER**

The Mayor stated that he is going to again appoint Mr. Joe Vitanza as Sports Commissioner for 2014. He has done a great job, and has shown an interest to do it again this year.

## **STATE OF THE VILLAGE**

Look for it sometime in March. After we do the budget for 2014, we can articulate to the residents and local businesses what we have going on in our community. Hopefully I can limit it to a little smaller than a text book this year.

## **BUDGETS**

We will have the budget to the Finance Committee for their first meeting on February 4th. We are going to try and get it to the Finance members the week before the meeting and then walk through it on the first meeting. After going through it with the Finance Committee, we will get it to the rest of Council for review. The Mayor and Finance Department will be in attendance at the Finance Committee meeting.

## **CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS**

All negotiations with the departments are going well. The Mayor met with the Firemen last Friday and moved forward with some things and held his ground as far as opening up the contract or massaging the contract as it relates to management rights. The proposal is on the table that the Policemen have agreed too, which is 3%, 2%, 1% for the next three years.

The Mayor stated that he has thrown out to all employees that in 2014, and 2014 only, a memorandum of understanding for the three bargaining units and the non bargaining unit, that if you retire this year, you will see an increase in your sick time payout. What it equates to in dollars and cents, is if you have the maximum payout, you will double that payout. A maximum payout is somewhere around \$18,000.00, so it would turn into \$36,000.00. Ms. Henley feels this is a nice thing you are doing because there are some employees that are ready to retire, and it is something that might help the Firemen that are laid off. The Mayor stated that that is the spirit of it, without opening a can of worms with buyouts. We ran our course with buyouts, and had a group of guys leave with a lot of money from the buyouts. Mr. Contipelli wanted to be sure that this is a onetime deal for 2014 only, the Mayor stated yes only for 2014.

The Mayor stated that he felt the original offer of 2%, 2%, 2% for three years with no increase in medical was an incredible offer, and human nature what it is, they wanted more. The Mayor told them no, if you want to open negotiations, we will start from square one. Everyone was very friendly throughout the process, and the process is moving smoothly. He has advised the non bargaining people that anything positive that happens to the bargaining unit, the non Bargaining unit will see it in a retro check.

Any other changes for anyone the Mayor will put in the budget, and I will put in notes so that the Finance Committee sees it, and the rest of the Council sees what they are. There are a number of things the Mayor wants to make adjustments too as it relates to pays and stipends that are outside the bargaining unit members, so you will see all that in your budget packet.

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

Mr. Bloam is going to Chair this Committee with Mr. Contipelli and Ms. Harris. The Mayor is going to have a list of things for them to look at, for instance an air raid siren for the south end of the Village, and a host of other things for them to look at, and they can sift through them and see what needs to be done. After the budget is done, we need to encumber \$100,000.00 for a squad in 2015. Ms. Biro mentioned a leasing program for 4-5 years to finance the purchase of the squad, and feels this is something we should look at. There was a discussion of some of the other projects that will be coming up in 2014.

## TREE SERVICE

We received a couple of quotes for tree services, and those will be before the Finance Committee. Scotty is going to recommend Stan's Tree Service, who we currently use. They are a little higher than the lowest bid, but he has a good working relationship with them, they come out right away and provide a courteous and immediate response to our needs.

## PEST CONTROL

The Mayor had a couple of quotes as it relates to bed bugs, one from Brian Feuerstein a former resident, and one from Vince Manacco who we currently use for pest control. Mr. Manacco's numbers are a little bit better than Mr. Feuerstein, and Mr. Manacco broke it down to where we have the municipal buildings monitored for bed bugs, and also a price if we have an outbreak in our residential area. Last year we spent approximately 12-13 thousand dollars to Mr. Manacco on

an as needed basis. The Mayor is going to recommend that we go back to a contractual agreement. Mr. Contipelli asked if the yearly contract would also involve a yearly spraying of all the homes. The Mayor replied yes, everything they did before and more.

## CONCESSION STAND

The Mayor is looking to get some seniors and young people to work there. The stand will be open every day, not just for baseball games. The idea is to give our residents and business folks a place to go and eat lunch, and enjoy the park. This gives our seniors a way to make some extra money, and our young folk a way to get community service hours. This is not for the Village to make money, this is to give our residents an opportunity to work and donate time. If Council has any ideas, please let him know. The Mayor asked Ms. Duszynski, Harris, and Henley to form a committee to help man the concession stand and come up with ideas to run it.

## SINKHOLE AT KLIMA GROVE

The Mayor stated that according to our records, there is nothing under the area of the sinkhole which is somewhere between third base and the pitcher's mound on the baseball field. This time it is pretty deep but not as big. So the Mayor asked Mr. Contipelli if a large pipe not directly underneath cause a sinkhole. He replied that it could, but there could also be other reasons pertinent to the area surrounding the ball field. The Mayor said it is appearing in the same spot over and over. The Mayor would like Public Works to look at this problem, and the rest of Klima Grove that needs to be addressed.

## LANDFILLS

The Mayor stated that last year he asked Council to put a moratorium on landfills because the Thompson Group was ending their litigation with the Sewer District. The moratorium isn't specific to the Thompson landfill, but the Mayor stated that they were the only active landfill. They ended between the Bacci and Contipelli Administrations, and there were no specifics as to how they were supposed to close to safeguard the Village. So we will make some proposals to Council on how it will relate to all landfills in the Village. We want to make sure that you have to have a purpose to fill your property not just that you want to fill it. It must be filled and ready to market. There was a question from Mr. Contipelli that as he understood it, home rule superseded state rule on how landfills are regulated. Mr. Greenberg explained that we will work to try to regulate what we can regulate without going against State or Federal regulations. He will send a report to Council.

## WILLOW HOUSE

As you saw in the Mayor's email, Mr. Gibbons has completed his findings concerning the question posed by Ms. Henley. Mr. Greenberg stated that there are no legal restrictions to prohibit the demolition of the Willow House. We looked at the Title Report from 2013, the Deed from 1944 from the Chopeks, and email from the Historical Society. We researched all the legislation and minutes back to 1944, in which we paid \$15,000.00 for the property with no restrictions. We have found no documents that put any restrictions on the property, or the demolition of the Willow House. After some discussion, the bottom line is that this property was

never donated as most residents were led to believe over the years, but sold to the Village in 1944 for \$15,000.00. We were able to find the old documentation from 1944 using the new service for our record storage that Council bought last year. It took Trevor 10 minutes to retrieve the old legislation pertaining to the sale of the property. The Mayor feels that we have enough research and documentation to put the questions concerning this property to rest.

## VILLAGE EVENTS

The Mayor will get Council a calendar of all the events and doings for the Village during 2014. There was a discussion about events and getting people involved in the community. Council will get a calendar of all major events in the Village.

## DEPARTMENT EXAMINATIONS

By law we have to give a test for Police, Fire, and Dispatch every two years. In June Council will see a testing procedure for all three departments. We will not be hiring a Fireman; it is a formality that we go through every two years.

## BUILDING DEPARTMENT

It has become very complex, and touched on it in caucus. We need to educate our residents and businesses. Ms. Henley asked if the Building Commissioner can come into someone's backyard to check on violations. The Mayor stated that yes he can.

We are at a point where Mr. Casini's contract and how he operates within that contract is not sufficient or efficient to the Village. In his contract, he is to be here Tuesday for half a day and Thursday for half a day. We need to come up with a strategy as a group to make our Building Department full time in the future. Our residents and businesses deserve it.

If anyone has any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us and we will get you the information you request in a timely fashion.

WHEREFORE, there being no further business before this Council, Mr. Bloam seconded by Ms. Duszynski that the Work Session be adjourned. All voting aye, none opposed; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.