
MUNICIPALITY OF CARLISLE COUNCIL – WORK SESSION MINUTES

JULY 21, 2020

CARLISLE COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CARLISLE, OHIO

Mayor Randy Winkler called the Carlisle, Ohio Municipal Council Work Session of Tuesday, July 14, 2020 to order at 7:07 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Carlisle Town Hall building, 760 Central Avenue, Carlisle, Ohio with the following members in attendance:

Council Attendees:

Mr. Tim Humphries
Mrs. Debbie Kemper
Mrs. Kim Bilbrey
Mr. William Bicknell
Mr. Randal Jewett
Mr. Chris Stivers
Mayor Randy Winkler

Staff members present: Village Manager Julie Duffy, Finance Director Ryan Rushing, Police Chief Will Rogers

Discussion Items:

Fire District

Mr. Bicknell address the group stating that it is his believe that he believes that, due to the continued growth of the Village, the Carlisle Fire Department will sooner or later require more than just volunteers to serve the community. He indicated that he has been in communication with both JEMS Chief Andy Riddiough and Franklin Township Trustee Brian Morris regarding the idea of forming a Fire/EMS District to serve both Carlisle and Franklin Township. Mr. Bicknell stated that both he and Mr. Morris serve on the JEMS Board for their respective entities and that JEMS doing very well financially. Mr. Bicknell indicated that Chief Riddiough is proposing a combined Fire/EMS district because most of the EMS activity happens on this side of the Township and that he believes having a combined district would offer better overall service. Mr. Bicknell stated that he knew that any proposed action would take time to review and implement which is why he wanted to begin discussion with Council at this time. Mrs. Duffy informed Council that she found two previous studies that were conducted on the topic of a proposed Fire/EMS District involving the communities of Carlisle, Franklin Township and City of Franklin. Mrs. Duffy distributed a copy of the 1999 and 2014 study to each member of Council for review. Mr. Bicknell stated that he wanted Council to begin looking at options and see what next steps should be taken. Mr. Humphries commented that he wanted the net to be wider and look at all options for fire service to our community that would also include the City of Franklin and not just Franklin Township. Mr. Bicknell stated that he has wondered if our residents would unsupportive of using Carlisle tax dollars to pay another entity to provide this service and that he believes that the City of Franklin is not interested in combining services with Carlisle and Franklin Township. Mr. Humphries commented that the City of Franklin pays a lot for their fire service and that we may never be able to afford our own fulltime department. He also stated that he would like to see an actual area district with all three entities. Mr. Bicknell commented that the bigger the service area, then the likelihood that the cost would also increase. Mr. Humphries indicated that he believed that the City of Franklin already had the operational infrastructure to absorb the area of Carlisle and this option should be looked into as well. Mrs. Kemper asked out many existing fire stations were in Franklin Township. Mr. Bicknell responded that the Township has one fire department with two separate stations. Mrs. Kemper suggested that we start with just the Township since there are probably already volunteers working with both departments and that we share service areas. Mayor Winkler stated that the existing Carlisle fire levy generates about \$150,000 in annual revenue but believed that the Township levy only

generates between \$50,000 - \$75,000. He had concerns that both entities bring to the table different existing tax revenue. Mrs. Kemper stated that she thought the City of Franklin had wanted to offer their services to the Village. Mayor Winkler indicated that there has been previous discussion about this, and he recalled the initial figure being close to \$500,000. Mr. Humphries stated he was a member of Council during that time and that he recalls discussion of such services being stalled as some council members at the time were concerned if the City of Franklin would provide the same level of non-Fire service such as parades. Mayor Winkler indicated that another option discussed at that time was joining with the then newly formed Miami Valley Fire District. Mayor Winkler indicated that the cost to operate this district is substantially more than what we currently pay – perhaps 10x more – but that the increase in cost pays for a high level of skill and training. Mrs. Kemper noted that she's noticed that they have a new fire facility on Wood Road that appears to be empty most of the time. Mr. Stivers asked how the Village currently pays another entity if they provide fire service on a Carlisle property through mutual aid. Mr. Rushing stated that we have a mutual aid agreement between the area entities that specifically prohibits charging for this service. Mr. Humphries indicated that this was one reason why the City of Franklin was upset with the Village many years ago as they felt that our community was abusing the mutual aid agreement. He indicated that the City perceived that we relied too much on using their services during a time that Carlisle was having difficulty having enough volunteers to get an engine on the scene and that they temporarily modified their call for response to our community in AMARS system at that time. Mr. Stivers questioned if the Township and Village departments merge if it would still be all volunteers and how that would make it any better – especially for reliable daytime help. Mr. Bicknell stated that a combined district would be a ballot issue for the citizens to decide the amount of funding we would have. Mr. Stivers asked if the ballot issue would be voted on by both Carlisle and Township citizens. Mr. Rushing explained the creation of a combined district would be through establishment of a Special District which is viewed as a legal entity in Ohio for a single purpose. He indicated that a school system is another example of a Special District whereas local governments are considered as a General Purpose District. Mr. Rushing indicated that such District would create its own taxing district and would have its own board. He stated that the majority of calls for service in a combined district is for EMS service and that JEMS receives approximately \$350,000 to \$400,000 each year for EMS billings plus an additional \$900,000 in base property tax and \$150,000 in rollbacks. This would make the annual JEMS revenue budget around \$1,500,000 as compared to our \$150,000 Carlisle Fire annual revenue for 2 mills. Mr. Rushing indicated that the desired standard of service, that is, the amount of time it takes to get personnel from the station to the location – would determine the amount of coverage that would be required. Mr. Bicknell said that he wants to start the process for looking at a combined Carlisle/Township District and that many grants are only available to entities that offer both Fire and EMS services. Mrs. Duffy suggested that the process to begin formal discussion would require one of the 3 entities (JEMS, Township, and Carlisle) to write a letter to the other two entities asking them to enter into such discussion. Each governmental body would then decide if they would like to participate. With regards to using tax payers dollars to pay another entity for services, Mrs. Duffy reminded Council that we currently do that with several Village services including maintenance of our sewer lift stations and building inspections. Mayor Winkler discussed that our existing residential TIF districts may make it difficult for us to generate more property tax revenue for fire/EMS services. Mr. Rushing explained to Council the history of the Carlisle TIF districts and that our areas of residential growth and more expensive homes are within these districts. Mr. Rushing also stated that the TIF districts are scheduled to remain in place until 2035. Mr. Jewett stated that he doesn't think it makes sense for Carlisle to have its own Fire/EMS service. He also stated that he would like to see the City of Franklin come to the table for discussion as well. Mr. Bicknell indicated that JEMS would not be interested in merging with the City of Franklin. Mayor Winkler asked Mrs. Duffy to provide Council with the number and type of calls for service of our Fire Department. Mr. Bicknell indicated that he would speak with

the JEMS Board about formally beginning the process asking the Township and the Village to look at a combined district.

New Resident Letter

Mrs. Duffy handed out a copy of proposed language of a welcome letter to new residents that had been drafted by Mrs. Bilbrey. Mrs. Duffy apologized to the group and stated that she had not yet had a moment to take the information and put it into a flyer format and would do so by the next Council meeting.

Concert in the Park

Mrs. Bilbrey stated that it appears that things may be going a bit backward at the moment regarding State restrictions and that, although she had hoped to begin having concerts at Roscoe Roof this summer, she believes it is best to hold off until next year. She indicated that this would give everyone more time to get things in order as well as book the musical groups. Mrs. Bilbrey stated that Council would revisit this topic in the fall or winter. Discussion was made about looking into options to either purchase or rent a stage for the bands that could be used at the park. Mrs. Duffy indicated that staff would look into options and provide a report to the group.

Zoning Administrator Position

Mr. Stivers informed the group that he had a conversation with Mr. Rushing regarding the financial feasibility to add a new fulltime position that could perform the duties of Zoning Administration and Economic Development. Mr. Bicknell indicated that he thought that zoning duties would be quite feasible but wasn't sure if economic development duties would be a natural fit for this position. Mr. Rushing indicated that larger communities – typically with populations exceeding 10,000 – have a position of Community Development Director and that the positions of Zoning Administration, Economic Development, Planning, and Code Enforcement are under this umbrella. He stated that smaller communities have combined positions and that Zoning Administration and Economic Development could go together but that Code Enforcement is typically kept separate. General discussion was had regarding the history of the Zoning positions in the Village and how the duties of the former Zoning Administrator, Greg Wallace, was separated after his retirement due to budgetary concerns. Mr. Rushing reminded the group that the most common area of public lawsuits is surrounding Zoning as you are telling people what they can and cannot do with their properties so it is a position of importance and requires expertise. Mr. Bicknell asked what would be the process to add this position. Mr. Rushing explained that the position would need to be added to the pay ordinance and would require additional budgetary appropriations. Given the fact that we are entering into the time when the 2021 budget is prepared, general discussion was made regarding waiting until then to add this position and that Town Hall offices would also need to be look at to determine where this employee would be physically placed. Mayor Winkler asked Mrs. Duffy if she believed that this position should be added as she is currently serves as both Zoning Administrator and Floodplain Manager. Mrs. Duffy indicated that she enjoys many aspects of the position but believes it is in the best interest of the public to have someone give their full attention to this important position rather than have it as an add-on role. Although Council could add this position to the pay ordinance and current budget at any time, she recommended that we wait until the 2021 budget discussion to allow Council and Staff to understand the current financial impact of COVID and make sure that we can sustain an additional position.

Role of Council

Council agreed to hold off discussion of this topic due to the lateness of the evening and have a work session after the July 28th Council meeting.

Other Discussion

Mr. Rushing reminded the group that there was a vacancy on the Council Finance Committee due to Mr. McIntosh's resignation and asked for them to decide on a possible replacement by the next meeting ahead of the 2021 budget discussion.

Adjournment:

With no further business, Council adjourned the meeting by voice vote with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Date: 7-28-20
Randy Winkles
Mayor

Attest: Julie Dally
Village Manager