
CITY OF CARLISLE COUNCIL – WORK SESSION MINUTES
Tuesday, September 12, 2023
CARLISLE COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CARLISLE, OHIO

Mayor Winkler called the Carlisle, Ohio City Council Work Session of Tuesday, September 12, 2023, to order at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at the Carlisle City Hall building, 760 Central Avenue, Carlisle, Ohio with the following members in attendance:

Council Attendees:

Mr. Tim Humphries
Mrs. Debbie Kemper
Mr. Michael Kilpatrick
Mr. William Bicknell

Mr. William Bicknell
Mr. Chris Stivers
Mr. Randy Winkler, Mayor

Staff members present: City Manager Chris Lohr

Discussion Items:

Council iPads

1. Council members were presented with new iPads to use in place of -ring binders containing documents for each meeting. This way they will be able to view the Council packet on their devices. As a group they went through a few basics to get started.

2024 Budget Process

1. Mr. Lohr asked was there anything in particular Council saw in the past that they want to see again, or anything in previous years they didn't see but would like to in the future.
 - a. Mr. Humphries said he wants to see specifics on trash and sewer. We charge \$70.50 for sewer, tote and trash. What is the cost of our agreements with Franklin and Germantown for the sewer and the contract with Rumpke? He'd like to know the price point differences and where that \$70.50 goes. He's interested in that line item so that when we say we need to raise it .50 cents, we can answer why we are raising it. Mr. Lohr thinks it might be helpful to provide a pie-chart of the revenue and where it comes from for the Refuge Fund and another pie-chart on everything going out. Mr. Humphries would like to see it broken down by house count which is 2,450 households x \$70.50, within reason. Mr. Kilpatrick said he's just wanting to understand the money, the profit margin if any, or whether it runs as a "just-in-time". He believes it's always prudent to keep a little cushion. Mr. Humphries stated it's easy for someone to do the math and say you're making a million dollars a year off us in water. He said, no we're not, we're covering our costs plus 10% because a broken water line costs money as and future maintenance costs money.
 - b. Mr. Kilpatrick said something that would be helpful is to get a roll-out plan from the different departments for the next couple of years so when they come saying we need to buy this next year, we would know their typical needs, which makes it a lot easier to approve and say that totally makes sense. Mr. Lohr sees a need for a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan, but to get to that point before we need to approve a budget for this year is probably unrealistic. However, he is getting from Department heads what their needs are for the coming year. Then his plan for next year is to get a full 3-year or 5-year Capital Improvement Plan allowing us to project into the future when we will replace vehicles, etc. Mr. Bicknell said we've had that to an extent as we've been on a Structured Capital Plan for some time now such as we typically replace police cruisers when the warranty runs out. The only thing that's different are like fire engines that we have for so long and mowers etc. that we're able to extend the life of with maintenance. Mayor Winkler stated Mr. Casson set up a roll-out plan when he arrived. Mr. Kilpatrick said if that's so, he's never seen it. Mr. Humphries said while he knows very little about it, what he does know is when people realized Dan Casson was our Public Works Supervisor, there were people waiting online for an hour for our .gov posts. We saw a significantly higher price of 20-30% more than what they were getting out of items because these things were in such pristine condition. His first thought is if it's so great, then why are we letting them go. If it's been pressure washed and regular oil changes and it's like new, no matter if it's a lawn mower, dump truck or a vehicle, then why are we letting them go at a certain time.

- c. He's heard there's an algorithm and you need to let them go at a certain time. He agrees with a roll-out plan but ours was so tight that our stuff was leaving looking like new. Dan is now gone but we'd like to continue that same quality of maintenance and preventive care, and he hopes Dan's methods rubbed off. Mrs. Kemper said that's what you want to do with your equipment so that when the time comes to sell it you can make some extra money. Mr. Kilpatrick agreed there is definitely a sweet spot for selling but are you putting more money into it in maintenance every year than you could by rolling out a new one. We also know a vehicle loses 50% of its value driving it off the lot. Mr. Bicknell said the perfect algorithm is the people we hire to do that job will tell us when it's the right time to let go of something because they know it and we don't. Up until this point we've never gone wrong getting the most out of it that we can, and when we purchase a new one having that fund go directly into the purchase of a new one. Mr. Humphries said it's not diversified from what we've done in the past so we don't know if we're doing it right or wrong other than we are getting something.

Mr. Bicknell stated the longer you have one the less you'll get. An example was JEMS just auctioned off on .gov deals the 5th apparatus that we didn't don't use anymore. It was well over 10 years old with over 100K miles and it finished at \$41,000. It's unheard of for vehicles that old with that many miles to go for that much. We didn't have to get rid of it. It was paid for but we weren't using it. Mr. Humphries said as things continue, what's the value of having a truck for another year because then we have an opportunity to learn whether it's right, wrong or indifferent to keep it another year. Mr. Kilpatrick said the purpose of asking this wasn't to question how staff is dealing with things because again, we trust them, but he also says our plan called for a fire truck and back truck within the same year. He would rather have staggered those at least a year apart to make our budgets look a little better. But he also knows Dan had held off on doing more insulated storage. He wants to make sure they have what they need in that respect. We can never have too much insulated storage in his opinion so if we could provide them with another building, he knows the costs have dropped significantly as he's been looking at them himself and blown away by how cheap storage is again. He's not questioning anything but hoping we think through all the scenarios that we can.

Traffic Signal – Central Ave/Union Road

1. Mr. Lohr has spoken with all or most of Council regarding the possibility of having a traffic signal in front of the new JEMS station. There's definitely a lot of interest in doing that. He spoke with staff here and they agree it would be really great to have it there. He's had some email conversations with Shelby Ingle, the Engineer. For us to be able to install that it's in the \$250-300,000 range. The number Shelby had thrown out was like \$500,000 initially so that was a very conservative number. Timeframe wise, ideally we could get it done in six months before the station is opened but she cautioned him that ordering the poles can be the significant delay. She advised him to expect 6 to 12 months from design to construction. She said in a perfect world, we could get it designed in 60-75 days, get it bid out in another month and a half, then once the contract is awarded we could have it ordered and could possibly get it constructed before JEMS opens. Mr. Bicknell asked if we're talking a wood pole, fiberglass or aluminum. Mr. Lohr said it depends. She had said about \$250K if we are just doing poles with tension wire. If we do a mast-arm type pole it would run more in the \$300K range, which compared to the initial \$500K discussion sounds great.
2. Mr. Kilpatrick asked if we were to do grants for this, would we have to wait until the grant money arrived because grant money is not retroactive. Mr. Lohr agreed. Mr. Stivers' only concern is if we rush to put this in and spend \$300,000 to get the best could something then change with the JEMS design or say traffic flow dictate we need a turn lane to get onto Union, then we may have to redo the whole thing. Mr. Lohr stated that would obviously be a big problem. Mr. Bicknell added as far as talking to the architects and Megan Construction, having the driveway coming out onto Route 123 was what was suggested and preferred. We're not putting an entrance or exit on Business Parkway, so where you see the trucks coming in and out right now is where the driveway will be. He doesn't see that changing other than maybe adding a light onto what we already have there, though we may have to take the standard red/yellow/green light down and put up a light that blinks. Mr. Lohr stated that during the design phase, that's something he can address with Ms. Ingle that we want to make sure this is going to work for us in the future. From his experience working with Shelby and her having been here 25 years or more, she's got a very long-range outlook. He saw that when they discussed the Dollar store. She knew exactly what needed to happen with sidewalks and a dedicated right-of-way. She

had it all planned in her head. He will make sure she takes that into account. The other thing that he will say is that intersection even without the Fire Station minimally warranted a traffic light. Mr. Stivers said absolutely and there's times it literally takes 5 minutes to turn left.

3. Mr. Bicknell believes we have most of the funding for this already? Mayor Winkler had told Mr. Lohr he received a phone call from Neil Tunison, Warren County's Engineer. We do have the County Vehicle Tax so every time someone renews their car's license, \$5.00 goes into the County Vehicle Tax fund, and we've got over \$200,000 in that fund that can be used for that red light. Mrs. Kemper remembered they approved that plan 3-4 years ago. Mr. Lohr said he does not have a complete plan as to how we're going to pay for this yet, but he does know this year we did use County Vehicle Tax funds as part of our annual paving program, so we have to take into account we're going to need money next year to contribute to our annual paving program, but he does think it's reasonable to get this funding together. We may not even need the funding until the 2024 budget. He knows we will need Engineering Funds very soon, but maybe we'll be able to budget for it next year. Mr. Kilpatrick agreed we need a light somewhere because he's actually timed it. Mr. Lohr will get a more firm number on what the engineering costs will be so he can begin getting funding lined up and get Shelby rolling on the design. Once he understands the timeline better, he can determine if we need to do a supplemental this year or if it could be put in next year's budget.
4. Mr. Stivers asked how much control we have as to frequency of when the light changes. Mr. Lohr believes we would have complete control. He's guessing there may be some standard ODOT on timing based on it being a State Route. Mr. Humphries said Wagner & Smith is who does their stuff. Because one of his passions is the timing at crosswalks he's make comments to them before that the next time they come out for a scheduled maintenance to add 2 more seconds for instance so it's easier to walk across Route 123 because of its width. He said that's all done in a box. Mr. Lohr will ask Shelby for more details on that.

Legislation

1. Mr. Lohr asked if there were any questions regarding legislation on the agenda for tonight. It includes:
 - a. Disposal of a 2012 Service Department truck ready to be replaced in our cycle, and we've already purchased the replacement.
 - b. An ordinance amending the City credit card policy that was discussed at last month's Work Session for Department heads to have their own credit card rather than coming to borrow one from the Finance Director when they need to make a purchase. This gives us a little more flexibility but at the same time there is a quarterly reporting standard where the City Manager designates a Credit Card Compliance Officer and we will bring Council a quarterly report. It will be a list of the credit cards we have and a report on any of the rewards we've earned so still provides that oversight.
 - c. A Solid Waste Plan for Warren County. Susan Mason is coming to speak about that.
2. Another Then-and-Now Certificate that we just missed issuing a Purchase Order on. He knows that topic was discussed at the last meeting. It should have had a PO issued in June but it was just something he and Charlotte overlooked. Moving forward with having the staff needed and everyone getting settled in, he thinks it will be much easier to get things like this taken care of in a timely manner. Mayor Winkler stated, to be quite honest, he's surprised there wasn't more overlooked than just this one item. He stated they have done an excellent job in keeping up with everything. Mr. Lohr stated if there is a bright side to it, this particular invoice doesn't have to be as an emergency; it can be done as a single reading. Then, as he understands it, we can pay it and have up to 30 days after that to get the Then-and-Now Certificate approved so that gives us 30 days for it to go into effect. Mr. Kilpatrick asked when we pay things like this invoice do we send a check or do a wire transfer. Mr. Lohr stated we issue a check. He hasn't worked with Barrett in a while but often they will come to pick up their check.

3. Mr. Bicknell asked if there were any questions on the Second Reading for the Personnel Manual revisions. He feels in general questions need to be asked by the Second Reading so that when we have the Third Reading we can go on to a vote. Mr. Kilpatrick asked if this was changing job titles. Mr. Lohr stated no, we had already done that. Following are the items on the legislation tonight:
 - a. Revised references from Village Manager to City Manager.
 - b. We will now allow credit for previous government service when it comes to Vacation Accrual. For example, Chief Rogers came in at two weeks of Vacation because he didn't get any service credit for his career and this will change that.
 - c. It clarifies who approves and denies Leave Requests. Previously, it had it all gone through the City Manager. He is very comfortable with having Department heads sign off on Leave Requests as they have more involvement in the day-to-day of their department than he and he thinks it's more important they're involved. Mr. Bicknell asked prior to this, was it written the City Manager approved all Leave Requests? Mr. Lohr stated yes, for certain types of leave. He doesn't know if that procedure was followed because he doesn't know how it was done previously but he's updating the language for how he thinks it should work.
 - d. He revised to clarify how Sick Leave may be used.
 - e. He changed the Military Leave language he believes may have been a couple of decades-old as it did not reflect current requirements if somebody gets deployed. Right now, the language that he has will reflect State and Federal law and he has Alex Ewing's firm reviewing it to see if any other specifics need to be added. Otherwise, we'll just leave it the way it is so we know we are meeting State and Federal law. Mr. Kilpatrick stated he's good with all of those changes. He said anything that allows us to make sure that we are competitive for keeping good team members is super important. The Mayor stated retaining good employees is as important as retaining forces.

We previously discussed modifying the OPERS contributions and also the spousal carve out where we're requiring our employee's spouses to take other insurance if they have it available. He is still compiling information and crunching numbers on those and hopes to bring that back to Council in the near future but did not have it quite ready for this evening.

4. Mr. Kilpatrick asked about Section 1.1.2 Absence From Work. It basically sounds like when someone's calling off you want at least 30 minutes notice. Mr. Lohr said yes. He then asked if there was some sort of scheduling app that the teams use. Mr. Lohr replied no. Mr. Kilpatrick said he's not saying we need to but his business uses it and the nice thing is he's no longer getting texts at 3:00 a.m. when someone is up sick; he can see it when he gets up. Mr. Lohr said we don't have anything like that available now but he would love for us to get to the point where we could do timesheets and leave requests electronically because it's much more efficient. Mr. Bicknell asked if we have actual time clocks here. Mr. Lohr stated he doesn't know. He would think the only places they might be used are in the Service or Police Departments. Mr. Bicknell asked how they sign in/out now and Mr. Lohr replied they don't. Most of our employees are on a set schedule and at least for salaried people there's no signing in/out. Mrs. Kemper added they never did any clocking in at the County. Mayor Winkler said when he was working, they didn't have anything; they just knew they had to be there. Mr. Bicknell said he was just curious because like if someone leaves early and you forget to write it down, or someone works over and you forgot to write it down, it works both ways. Mr. Kilpatrick sent the app he was referring to Mr. Lohr. He's not saying we need to use it and doesn't know if it's even compliant with what they would need, but the nice thing is they can clock in right on their phone and if you wanted you can set it to turn on with GPS so they have to be at the site to log in. Mr. Bicknell is moving his firm to log in by thumbprint. Mayor Winkler asked if we have any issues with the system we're currently using, and Mr. Lohr replied not that he's aware. Mr. Bicknell asked is it the honor system? Mrs. Kemper said yes. Mr. Lohr has not been involved to see how Service or the Police Departments are handling that, but he is signing off on time sheets he gets from Department heads but that's pretty much all he's seen so far. Mayor Winkler said he is certain the Department Heads screen their people.

Mrs. Kemper wanted to thank Mr. Lohr for sending the weekly updates because she feels it keeps her in the loop and that they know what's going on and what's been accomplished so that if anyone asks about a certain position or something going on that Council knows about it because they've received these weekly updates.

City Manager Goal Setting

1. Mr. Lohr wanted to touch on the Goal Setting Session this Saturday from 9:00 to 12:00. He is planning to spend time this week finalizing a list of To-Do items he's seen that need to be taken care of like finishing updating the Personnel Manual for himself and for any of the Departments. He will then prioritize those as a starting point, then he knows Council will have a list and then we can all come together.
2. Mr. Bicknell stated the main goal he wants from this session is for Mr. Lohr to tell him what he needs from him to be successful in his position. He wants to leave knowing what it is he needs from him, and he doesn't want him to hold back either. Mr. Kilpatrick added the Council probably has some grandiose ideas and Mr. Lohr may need to say I don't have the bandwidth for this right now, so then his thought is how do we get you the bandwidth you need. Like perhaps do we bring somebody in to make this happen. We may not be able to build the Taj mahal right now, but 2-3 years from now, he wants to know what it is he needs to do his job and how we can make that happen. That's what they are on Council for. On the one hand it's to spend money, but then to also make sure we're not spending too much money. But if we have a vision and we're headed for it, we need to support it with the budget. Mayor Winkler shared that a guy told him the other day he views money as manure; if you pile it up, it stinks but if you spread it around, it does a lot of good.
3. Mr. Bicknell asked how many open positions we still have. Mr. Lohr said the Community Development Director, Assistant for the City Manager/Clerk of Council, and a Police Officer. From what he understands in the past there has been a 5th full-time Service Worker. Right now, we have 3 full-time Service Workers, an Assistant Director and 1 part-time Service Worker. He's okay keeping that level right now. Mr. Kilpatrick said the Clerk of Council had been posted for quite a while. Mr. Lohr replied yes, and he's received a handful of applicants but has not decided how to move forward on that just yet. Mr. Kilpatrick said for the Police Officer, he assumes that's incredibly challenging right now. Mr. Lohr stated it has not been encouraging.
4. Mr. Humphries stated that across the river they're doing open enrollment where if you're working some place, he will take you as a lateral transfer, so when you've got your next door neighbor offering just short of double the pay and making it easy then that's our hurdle, but we do offer something different. Mr. Bicknell said in the last 18 months he's aware they had an across the board increase. Mr. Kilpatrick said they are also our mutual aid. Mr. Humphries added but it's also vice versa with us providing a lot of mutual aid. Mr. Kilpatrick asked with us being down one Officer, are we just doing less staffing or more overtime? Mr. Lohr believes it's a combination of both. The Chief is looking at the possibility of scheduling adjustments. He's tossing around the idea of 12-hour shifts rather than the 10 hours we are on right now, but nothing definite yet but hopefully if we can get this filled, this ceases to be an issue after that. Mr. Humphries has spent time talking to Germantown's Police Chief and staff about the number of Reserve Officers they have. In Waynesville they have 1 full-time Officer and a mass amount of part-time and Reserve officers. He asked what it about Carlisle is that we've not been conducive to any form of Reserve Officers. He knows there's some but the only time he sees 3 of them is National Night Out so he doesn't know where they are the other 363 days. Mr. Kilpatrick said it depends upon your definition and a Reserve Officer is being used. He thinks Eaton is set up similarly. They have 1 or 2 full-time Officers but also have Reserves and they actually do shifts. Here in Carlisle his understanding is Reserves only help with special events like parades and National Night Out. Mr. Humphries said he has directly dealt with Reserve Officers in Carlisle that had 8-hour shifts as we have had that before. Mayor Winkler stated he thinks they're only required to do so many times to keep their service. Mr. Humphries said it depends on where they're at in life and if they're just trying to keep their revolver and the minimum criteria to keep certification, or if they're wanting to give back to the community that raised them or if they're just in between jobs. He said we've had people turned down but for other reasons. Mr. Bicknell stated he's not opposed to Reserves maybe short-term in getting us to a solution until we can get whole. Mr. Humphries stated it's part of Germantown and Waynesville's daily operation and it's who they are and what they do. Mr. Kilpatrick asked how many people live in Germantown. Mayor Winkler looked it up online and the population in 2021 was 5,791 so very close to our size. Their Police Department is double ours, but the taxes are more because it's Montgomery County.

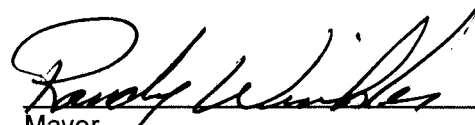
Adjournment:

With no further business, Council adjourned the meeting by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Date: 9/26/23

Attest: 
Clerk of Council


Mayor