



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting
Friday, March 21, 2025 at 8:30 AM
Council Chambers
4230 Lake Avenue

Minutes

Opening of Committee Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting of the Ashtabula City Council Finance and Personnel Committee was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by Committee Chair Kym Foglio.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair: Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Vice Chair: Ward 5 Councilor Jane Haines, Member: President John Roskovics

Absent: none

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper, Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin, Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg

Visitors: Water Pollution Control Superintendent Mark Verzella, Ashtabula Fire Department Chief Shawn Gruber

Sunshine Law Certification

A quorum was established as defined by the Ashtabula City Council Rules of Order. The meeting met the requirements of the Ohio Sunshine Laws Open Meetings Act.

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors

Special Guest Presentation

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin provided the report. The target revenue through February was 16.67%. At the end of February, the General Fund revenue was at 15.74%. This is due to the City not receiving its property tax from the county yet. City Manager James Timonere asked Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin to file an advance through the Ashtabula County Treasurer's Office; however, she missed the deadline and the request was denied. As a result, money had to be borrowed from the Star Ohio investment account. The Police Levy revenue was higher than projected, which is normal. Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin stated that looking at the overall revenues through February, there are some funds that are higher than projected and some funds that are lower than projected. Overall, the revenues are at the 16% target.

Council President John Roskovics asked if the county indicated when the property taxes would be disbursed. Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin stated possibly by the end of March, but it could be mid-April before the City receives the funds.

The target expenditure through February was also 16.67%. General Fund expenditures through

February were 20.36%. The expenditures include internal transfers that were made, which is why the percentage is higher than projected. Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin stated the only fund she is concerned about is the Sanitation fund, but she met with Public Works Superintendent John Melnik and they are managing it. City Manager James Timonere stated the first trash bill of the year is due at the end of March, so revenues will begin to pick up.

Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin discussed the City investment report. City Manager James Timonere stated that minus the fees paid to invest initially, the City has seen a decent return on its investment. In June 2024, the City's investment account with Star Ohio totaled approximately \$10.9 million. In July 2024, it was up to \$11 million after earning interest. The City took \$10 million from Star Ohio to invest with Meeter. The remaining balance in the Star Ohio account continued to accrue interest. In August 2024, the Star Ohio balance was \$3,047,806.92. In February 2025, the Star Ohio balance was \$2,118,010 after the \$1 million withdrawal to cover expenses until property taxes are received from the county. When the City receives its property taxes from the county, \$1 million will go back into the Star Ohio account plus interest. City Manager James Timonere stated that Star Ohio does not charge a fee to withdraw money.

Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin provided an update on the delinquent income tax accounts sent to the Attorney General's Office in 2023 for collection. More than \$1 million needed to be collected. As of February 28, 2025, \$734,992.70 had been collected. There are still 791 delinquent accounts for a balance of \$703,980.62 to be collected.

Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin stated she reached out to Ashtabula Municipal Court Administrator Tonja Amato regarding several charges on the court's credit card that Committee Chair Kym Foglio questioned. Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin stated the charges were for a Recovery Court party and paid out of the Recovery Court Fund. She suggested adding language to the purchasing card policy to clarify specifically what the credit card can be used for.

Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin asked for clarification regarding the Clerk of Council's use of comp time when she works late to attend council meetings. Council President John Roskovics stated that council asked that comp time be used within the same pay period it is earned. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper stated that comp time does not necessarily have to be used within the same pay period. She stated she would review the Clerk's contract as well as the City's comp time policy and provide clarification.

Financial Reports

City Manager's Report

City Manager James Timonere provided the report. The civil service entrance exams will be held March 23. Not enough people signed up to take the police test to fill all the positions that are available. The City Manager, police chief and Solicitor's Office are working on more defined language to allow lateral transfers to bring their vacation time with them from their previous department.

Council President John Roskovics suggested hiring someone to handle human resources for the City now that the assistant finance director is retiring. Currently, the assistant finance director manages human resources responsibilities. City Manager James Timonere stated he had discussed the matter with Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin. The City had a human resources/payroll administrator position previously held by the current assistant finance director. The position was never replaced, and the responsibilities of that role were combined with the assistant finance director position. City Manager James Timonere stated there is a way to separate those positions and he and his staff are working with Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin to modify that job description,

determine a salary range and whether the position will be full-time or part-time.

The MARCS (Multi-Agency Radio Communication System) radio system will need to undergo an authentication process by June 30 at a cost of approximately \$22,000. Some radios may need to be replaced due to their age.

The part-time seasonal positions for the parks have been posted. The parks staff are requesting additional equipment for the upcoming season, including a zero-turn lawn mower and a tractor-type lawn mower. City Manager James Timonere met with the YMCA regarding the lifeguard contract for this year. Their hourly rate has increased by \$3 per hour. They are also requesting funds to assist with placing buoys in the lake. City Manager James Timonere also stated they are discussing extending the hours lifeguards would be on duty by one hour. This would provide lifeguards from noon to 6 p.m. rather than noon to 5 p.m.

The sewer jet for the Wastewater Treatment Plant will need to be replaced soon. Water Pollution Control Superintendent Mark Verzella has been working on obtaining prices and financing options to present to Council to see if the purchase is feasible. The current sewer jet is 21 years old and will cost approximately \$500,000 to replace.

City Manager James Timonere stated he is also working on pricing vehicles as the City will need to purchase several new vehicles this year.

New Business

Council President John Roskovics stated he read an article in the newspaper on House Bill 154 which would change CRA agreements and is concerned about it. In the past five years, the City has seen upwards of \$5 million in new residential construction. Council President John Roskovics stated he does not believe changing the CRA policy is something that should be dictated by the state. He proposes that City Council should send a resolution opposing the bill.

Old Business

Next Meeting

April 18, 2025

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m. by Committee Chair Kym Foglio.