



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting
Friday, October 15, 2021 at 8:30 AM
Council Chambers
4717 Main Avenue

Minutes

Opening of Committee Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting of the Ashtabula City Council Finance & Personnel Committee was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Committee Chair/Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio.

Roll Call

Members Present: Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 5 Councilor Jane Haines, President John Roskovics **Absent:** **Officers Present:** City Manager Jim Timonere, City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper **Officers Absent:** Clerk of Council Stacy Senskey **Staff Present:** Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon

Sunshine Law Certification

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors

Finance Director's Report

September Month End Reports

Finance Director Welch reported there is nothing uncommon with the September financial reports. She hopes to present the 2022 budget soon since all the departments turned in their budgets in a timely manner. The goal is to hold a public hearing for the budget in December. City Manager Timonere compares the net revenues and expenses for the year to determine if the City's spending is on track. The Recovery Act funds were planned to stretch through the next four years, but since the City's portion was reduced, he expects the funds to last two years. Finance Director Welch added they don't want to spend the Recovery Act funds frivolously because revenue never changes, and expenses always go up.

The reason some funds, such as the Self-Insurance Fund and State Highway Fund, Law Library, are "in the red" is because expenses are encumbered for the whole year, and will always show a deficit until the revenue catches up. By the end of the year, it will no longer be a negative number.

Income tax receivables have increased due to the extra efforts of a new staff member. She has done a remarkable job collecting past-due income tax. City Manager Timonere continues to track unemployment figures. As of October 2nd, 351 people are on continued unemployment claims in Ashtabula County. It is still a concern because of the numerous help-wanted signs around the City. There are plenty of jobs available.

City Manager's Report

Positions within the City have been filled fairly easily. Only six or eight people participated in the fire entrance exam. They all passed, but it is preferable to have more applicants. Throughout the City, other skilled positions are open and a few applications have been received. Those applications received haven't met the qualifications required for the positions. Employees hired at the Waste Water Treatment Plant were given one year to receive licensure.

City Manager Timonere sees a potential dilemma in providing continuity of services to the public in the event of large absenteeism due to flu or covid.

Paving question from Committee

Finance Director Welch explained the City has collected \$850,930 from the paving levy net revenue this year. The figure is comprised of the 2nd half collection of the previous year. The Permanent Improvement (PI) Fund has been used for paving in the past, but the levy was requested in order to use the PI fund for other needed expenses, such as large equipment needed for different departments. City Manager Timonere has been able to extend grant money because of the paving levy, reducing the City's expenses. Finance Director Welch added there will be a carry-over of \$446,685 in the Paving Levy for next year. Paving the southern portion of Lake Avenue won't begin until 2023 or 2024 because City Manager Timonere intends to apply for grant funding for the project. The grant application is due at the beginning of the year. The paving thus far has been on the smaller, less-traveled streets and may not have been seen by a majority of City residents. The biggest paving expenses will be on the main corridors, but once paved, more residents will be able to appreciate how their paving levy dollars were spent. Not a lot of paving was done in the years before City Manager Timonere, so the City has a surplus of roads to repair and repave. He also does his best to seek grant funding to extend the funds. Typically, he will wait to receive grant funds in order to spend half of what it would cost the City without the grant. Aqua agreed to pave one lane of West Avenue. Koski is also their contractor, so the project should be successful.

Unfinished Business

Internal written policy for issuing credits or refunds, including setting a limit of years.

Finance Director Welch is working with City Solicitor Cooper to develop an internal policy on how far back to go for issuing credits and refunds. The past Finance Director did not go back more than two years but the procedure did not have a written policy. An ordinance will be created once the policy has been determined.

New Business

An ordinance template authorizing the Finance Director to write off uncollectible charges when properties are transferred.

Finance Director Welch is working with City Solicitor Cooper to prepare the ordinance.

An ordinance template authorizing the Finance Director the ability to return uncollectible write-off checks.

Finance Director Welch is working with City Solicitor Cooper to prepare the ordinance. The Finance Department has returned check item outstanding since 2015. The State Auditor says it needs to be written off and an ordinance would be required.

Resolution templates authorizing the transfer of unclaimed monies from their respective funds to the Unclaimed Money Agency Fund to be held for a period of five years or until claimed and authorizing the transfer of unclaimed monies held in the Unclaimed Money Agency Fund for a period of five or more years per Ohio Revised Code 9.39.

Finance Director Welch is working with City Solicitor Cooper to prepare these resolutions. Examples of unclaimed funds include bonds, credits on sewer accounts, uncashed payable checks, uncashed income tax refunds, among other things.

Next Meeting

November 19, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m. by Committee Chair Foglio.

Submitted by: Clerk of Council, Stacy H. Senskey
