

MINUTES
APRIL 26, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
7:00 P.M.

Council Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Beth Clodfelter
Sam Crowl
Chris Fahl
Peter Kotses
Sarah Grace
Jeff Risner
Arian Smedley

Administrators and/or

Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht

Items Discussed:

- Substitute House Bill 157
 - President – the Ohio Municipal League would like municipalities to consider, and both Auditor Hecht and Tax Administrator Timberman recommend, moving forward with a Resolution opposing Substitute HB 157 – this is currently in the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee to repeal Section 29 of HB 197 – the significance for the City is that Section 29, currently in effect, allows employer withholding and liability for the employee to be taxable for the city where the principal place of work is located – this has been an extremely useful tool during the COVID-19 pandemic for employees working from remote locations – the amendment proposed in Substitute HB 157 will repeal that language
 - Auditor – the majority of City employees do not live within the corporate limits, but because they work in the City they pay income taxes to the City – this proposed amendment will be retroactive to January 2020, adding the financial burden of taxpayers receiving refunds for taxes they have already taken as a credit against their resident tax liability – it will be complicated and very difficult to track these withholdings for other taxing entities – this holds true for small businesses as well – this amendment poses a real hardship if passed as proposed
 - Fahl – this appears to be another issue of Home Rule – if this change becomes permanent it would decimate our income tax revenue, which is the majority of the City’s funding – this could be catastrophic

-Smedley – asked how much the City stands to lose if this were approved
-Auditor – it would be at least a couple hundred thousand dollars
-President – added that Ohio University, our largest employer, has had many employees working remotely over the past year – as Fahl pointed out, our income tax provides most of the City’s revenue – close to 80% of our general revenue fund is from income tax, and 80% of that funding pays employee salaries and benefits – would be very consequential

-Mayor – noted that the Ohio Mayor’s Alliance is also concerned and will be speaking with legislators about the true impact of Substitute HB 157 – cities like Dayton and Cincinnati (border cities) have many employees traveling into Ohio across state lines and stand to lose significant revenue with this amendment

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Sub. HB 157

MINUTES: APRIL 26, 2021
FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Sam Crowl, Chair
Jeff Risner, Vice-Chair
Arian Smedley, Member
Ben Ziff

Administrators and/or

Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht
Human Resources Director Lucas

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Vacant Positions
 - Crowl – the vacant positions include a Code Inspector (to replace a retired employee); two Custodians (external hires); EPW Project Assistant (to replace a departing employee); a Maintenance Technician in the Street Department (an external hire); and begin the process of hiring a Water Treatment Plant Manager
 - Smedley – wished to verify that these are all existing positions and have determined to be essential
 - Crowl – that is correct
 - Mayor – these are critical positions – his Administration has been extremely frugal in filling vacant positions, as a cost saving measure under COVID-19 – clarified that each of these positions is funded in the 2021 budget
- Staffing
 - Crowl – need to amend Ordinance 141-20 to change the account lines for the Environmental Coordinator to paid 25% from the Water Plant Fund; 25% from the Sewer Plant Fund; and 50% from the Storm Sewer Plant Fund
- Appropriations/Transfers
 - Crowl – the following are needed:
 - appropriate \$11,000 to the Athens Enhancement Fund; (\$1,000) for micro-grants, \$250 each for neighborhood projects; and (\$10,000) for Art Outside the Box program;
 - appropriate \$29,191.96 to the CARES Act Fund in order to transfer that remaining balance to the General Fund for public safety payroll;
 - appropriate \$289,000 for transfer to the Sewer Debt Fund to cover debt payments through year-end;
 - appropriate \$35,000 to the Storm Water Fund for payroll associated with the position of Environmental Coordinator; and

appropriate \$4,000 to the Storm Water Fund to continue the Athens Soil and Water Conservation District's public education and outreach that is required for the City's MS4 permit.

-Clodfelter – asked about the balance in the CARES Act funding

-Auditor – the amount being transferred (\$29,191.96) is the remaining balance from a 2020 grant, and is being moved to the General Fund for public safety payroll, closing out that CARES Act Fund

-Mayor – recognized Council Member Fahl's work on the Micro-Grant guidelines

- County Sewer Line Extension (loan payment)

-Crowl – the Auditor has reported that the County has provided partial payment for sewer line extension tap fees – the City has a low interest loan that can now be paid off – tap fee payments will continue to come to the City from this City/County project

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Staffing Amend
2. Appropriations/Transfers

MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

APRIL 26, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Beth Clodfelter, Chair
Sam Crowl, Vice-Chair
Ben Ziff, Member

Administrators and/or

Other Elected Officials via Videoconference: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

- Transportation Improvement District (TID)
-Clodfelter – EPW would like approval to submit an application for this grant – the maximum grant award is \$250,000 – grant monies received would be used to offset the cost of the Stimson Improvements Project – application deadline is May 31st – will need Suspension of the Rules at second reading
- Small Cities Program Funds
-Clodfelter – again, EPW is requesting Council approval to submit an application – grant ideas are being reviewed – in the past the City has received Small Cities funding for Stimson (\$2,126,815) and West Union (\$1,976,393)
- Ohio Public Works Commission (Issue Funds)
-Clodfelter – this application will allow the City to participate in the State Capital Improvement and/or Local Transportation Improvement Programs – the maximum funding is \$400,000, and this grant is highly competitive – the City did not receive funding last year, but would like to apply again, strengthening the application for improvements on the West Side

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. TID Grant
2. OPWC Grant
3. Small Cities Grant

MINUTES
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
APRIL 26, 2021
7:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance via Videoconference: Chris Fahl, Chair
Jeff Risner, Vice-Chair
Sarah Grace, Member
Arian Smedley, Member

Administrators and/or Other Elected Officials
via Videoconference: President Knisely
Mayor Patterson
Auditor Hecht

Items Discussed:

- Title 49 (use of public rights of way)
 - Fahl – a request has been received from Ohio University to install a campus shuttle stop at 9 Factory Street for a transit stop – the application for use of the public right of way has been approved by the appropriate City departments
 - Clodfelter – asked whether this will be used by Athens Public Transit
 - Fahl – it will be used to support the Campus Area Transit Systems (CATS)

ITEMS NEEDED ON AN UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

1. Title 49