

**Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Minutes of the Finance and Appropriations Committee Meeting**

February 4, 2019

Members: Tim Gorbach, Chair
Jerry James
Mary Ellen Pyke

Mr. Gorbach called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. All members were present.

Legislation Discussed

Temp. Ord. B-2

Temp. Ord. B-3

Temp. Ord. B-6

Discussion:

Temp. Ord. B-2

An ordinance authorizing the Mayor, as Director of Public Safety, to enter into a contract or contracts, according to law, for the demolition and replacement of Fire Station 3, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Tony Demasi, Engineer, stated that Temporary Ordinance B-2 discusses the replacement of Fire Station 3 located on Portage Trail. The existing fire station was built in 1958. Based on a report that GBC conducted a few years ago, the building is outdated and inefficient. The cost relative to improve the building exceeded the threshold generally accepted to maintain existing buildings. Plans were by MS Consultants & Architectural hired out of Youngstown, and bids were opened on January 10th. Seven bids were received, and the lowest, best contractor would be Lakeland Construction Group out of Painesville. Mr. Gorbach stated that there was a piece of legislation that went along with this where Cuyahoga Falls schools were entering an agreement with the schools regarding a land swap. Mr. Demasi stated the land swap is complete. The agreement was signed between the two parties, the financial part was taken care of, and the properties have been transferred.

Fire Chief Fred Jackson stated that the current Station 3 was built in the 1950's, with approximately 5,000 square feet of dorm-style living quarters. The walls and floors are starting to shift around and the heating system is not working. The new building will have all the current requirements. Construction of this project should be about 12 to 14 months. They hope to begin building in mid-April of this year and to open in late spring or early summer 2020. In conjunction with this project, there will be improvements to the baseball field behind the station that is managed by Parks and Recreation. The staff that currently works at Station 3 will move to Station 1, so that will become a double company station every day for the next 12 to 14 months. That district will be slightly modified based on how quickly to provide service. Mr. James stated that he is very happy to see this coming to fruition. He is extremely impressed with Chief Jackson and the Fire Department and safety forces in general.

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Mrs. Pyke asked where they will keep the equipment when they move everything down to Station 1. Chief Jackson stated that their current plan is going to bring that second fire engine there. Mrs. Pyke asked if the new station will line up with the light there. Chief Jackson stated that it is going to be almost identical to what it is now, so it will line up with the light. The school maintains their driveway as part of the land swap. That light control will remain as designed at that point. The driveway out of the station west will be immediately west of the intersection just like it is now. The building will set a little bit deeper north. Mrs. Pyke stated that, in the legislation, there is no mention of funding, and asked if there a reason they chose not to put anything in this piece of legislation as far as expenditure. Mr. Bryan Hoffman stated that in Temporary Ordinance B-23, under Section 2 on Lines 22 and 23, it reads, "The Director of Finance is hereby authorized and directed to make payment from same from the Capital Projects Fund line on Capital Outlay." The total estimated cost on the budget sheet was \$4 million for this project. On the budget information line item, they had this budgeted in the Five-Year Capital Plan for two years, \$3.5 million in 2019 and \$500,000 budgeted in 2020. Mr. Miller asked if there was going to be a cleaner in this facility for the turnout gear. Chief Jackson stated that there would be a modern extractor system.

Mr. James moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-2 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Pyke. Motion passed (3-0).

Temp. Ord. B-3

An ordinance approving a petition for special assessments for special energy improvement projects and a plan for public improvements; approving the necessity of acquiring, constructing, and improving certain public improvements in the City in cooperation with the Akron-Summit County Energy Special Improvement District; determining to proceed with such project; and determining to levy special assessments in connection with such project, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Russell Balthis, Law Director, stated that he would like to just start a brief overview and then Mr. Chris Burnham, President of the Development Finance Authority out of Summit County, and Ms. Janet Ciotola, Assistant Law Director, will be available for any questions. This ordinance authorizes special assessments for energy and efficiency improvement projects in the city for commercial customers. This legislation is allowing Cuyahoga Falls to become a part of that district is to that our commercial customers or commercial entities would be eligible for these projects. The way it works is if a company wants to do an improvement for energy efficiency what they can do is participate in the program. It gives them an additional financing options where it can be paid for a voluntary special assessment on their property taxes over time. In order for this district to be expanded, there has to be a project to make it happen to start it. The specific project that you may have read about is a pump station that the County of Summit has where they're doing LED lighting improvement. By the County cooperating with Cuyahoga Falls by doing this project, it gets this program open to more commercial customers within the City.

Mr. Burnham, President of Development Finance Authority of Summit County, stated that they are a port authority legally constituted. Under the Revised Code, a port authority can finance just

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about anything as long as they can call it a port authority facility and we can identify some source of revenue that they obtain as security that will repay our bond holders. He passed out some general literature that contains a list of projects that they have done over the course of the last 18 or 19 years. They have not yet to be able to do anything in Cuyahoga Falls and would like the opportunity to do that. They have a bond rating of A minus. They can finance things in their bond funded up to about six or seven million dollars. There are private institutions that will buy those bonds. They have been expanding this throughout the county and would like to have Cuyahoga Falls in by the end of the year. Mr. Gorbach stated that he is excited about this. Mr. Burnham has been involved in the kind of Summit County Port Authority, his name has come up many times in all of the wonderful projects he has been involved in and help facilitate throughout the county. Certainly, with Mr. Burnham at the helm, he has no doubt that he will be looking for some projects to bring into our city.

Mrs. Pyke moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-3 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. James. Motion passed (3-0).

Temp. Ord. B-6

An ordinance authorizing the director of public service to enter into a contract or contracts, without competitive bidding, with Kinstle Sterling/Western Star Truck Center for the purchase of a tandem axle dump truck for use in the Street Department, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Charles Novak, Street Commissioner, stated that they had a snow truck that got stuck on the railroad tracks and was hit by a train. He was able to find a corporate demo truck that is very similar to the truck that was lost. It is for sale for \$217,000. What they tried to work out is for the Street Department not to purchase a couple of capital items that were approved in the 2019 budget to offset the cost. Mr. Gorbach asked if they were going to not purchase stake body for \$66,000 and the tractor motor for \$77,000. Mr. Novak stated that was correct. He is asking Council to increase appropriations in the Capital by an additional \$75,000 so they could make this purchase. Mr. Gorbach asked if the \$217,000 includes fitting this vehicle with new front blades. Mr. Novak stated that this truck does not include a front plow. They were able to salvage the front plow from the one that was hit.

Mr. James moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-6 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Pyke. Motion passed (3-0).

Mr. Bryan Hoffman introduced Mr. Matt Skitski as the new Tax Administrator. He also introduced Mr. Brian Thunberg, with RITA. Mr. Thunberg stated that he works in the Members Service of the Regional Income Tax Agency. RITA now processes money for the City of Cuyahoga Falls. The first deposit was last Friday. In that timeframe, they collected just a little over \$500,000 for the City of Cuyahoga Falls and the City will be receiving another distribution. Currently, all residents have online access. As of today, they have had over 650 individuals file with RITA. They also had 650 businesses file with RITA and 670 estimates filed with RITA. A little later this month, RITA is going to be using federal tax information that is received from the

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IRS. They will be scrubbing that data against their data, so we're going to be identify taxpayers that have a delinquency and be able to send out corresponding letters asking them to file that return. Their job is to increase collection and make sure everyone is paying their fair share of taxes whether it's a business or individual. RITA will be setting up billing statements for the amount due and yearly estimate. They can set up online, Come up to City Hall and pay it, or go to the RITA office. On March 5, 2019 and March 23, 2019, RITA is going to be holding a residential taxpayer assistance day where RITA will have agents and auditors come down to Cuyahoga Falls, and residents can come in and file their taxes for free. That is going to be located at the Quirk Cultural Center, 201 Grant Avenue. They have also extend their hours as far as walk-ins. Starting March 9th through April 5th, RITA will be open either Saturday, from 9 to 12, and then Monday through Thursday from eight to six p.m. we will extend those hours from during the week of April.

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.