

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

December 3, 2018

Members: Tim Gorbach, Chair
Jerry James
Mary Ellen Pyke

Mr. Gorbach called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All members were present.

Legislation Discussed

Temp. Ord. A-112

Temp. Ord. A-97

Discussion:

Temp. Ord. A-112

An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a grant agreement with the Summit County Land Reutilization Corporation and to appropriate and authorize the payment of the grant funds, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Sara Leedham, Deputy Director of Development, stated that this building is at 2225 State Road, also known as the DOES Building. It has been vacant for quite some time. It's approximately 53,000 square feet of available space; however, it does need a little TLC to make it into usable space. The Development Department, working with Summit County Land Bank, applied for a grant of \$50,000 towards the price of acquisition. The City will match that \$50,000 of CDBG that will be the financial objective of job creation. The property will be converted to an assisted living care facility and it will be redeveloped by Summit Health Network LLC. The building was originally listed at \$1.4 million. It was subsequently reassessed and dropped to \$1.2 million. According to the latest figure, it would be sold for \$800,000 with \$10,000 of it coming from a Land Bank grant and from CDBG money.

Mr. Gorbach stated that a \$50,000 investment from the City is a nominal amount to kick start and get this turned into something usable.

Mr. Brillhart asked approximately when they will start this project and how many people will be employed. Ms. Leedham stated that it is at the primary stages. The developer is doing his due diligence to see if the numbers work. She believes estimates are that it would be about 40 people, but, again, it would depend on how they refigure the space and how many beds they can make available. They will know that when they come back with plans and finalize and before the CDBG grant is finalized.

Mr., James moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-112 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Pyke. Motion passed (3-0).

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Temp. Ord. A-97

An ordinance establishing annual appropriations of money for the current expenses, capital expenditures and other expenses of the City of Cuyahoga Falls for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2019, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Gorbach stated that this ordinance was held for them to get through the budget hearing to review Exhibits A and B.

Mr. Bryan Hoffman, Finance Director, stated that Exhibit A and B are included in the budget book on page 47 through 54. Both of those exhibits will be attached with the budget as they are presented. Exhibit A would be the total appropriations into various funds and departments there as listed. On the backside of page 48, on page 2 of Exhibit A, is total transfers from the General Fund to other funds as listed. Starting on page 49, Exhibit B is the total in budgetary appropriation categories list for every fund. Mr. Gorbach asked if there were any changes to Exhibits A and B for Ordinance A-97. Mr. Hoffman stated that there were none that he knows of at this point.

Mrs. Pyke thanked Mr. Hoffman for the format that he gave her for the Income Tax Department. She also added that, last week, Ms. Kline gave her budget, and, as far as the budgets went, the knowledge that Ms. Kline has had for the length of time that she's been in that office is phenomenal what she demonstrated for her knowledge giving that presentation. She had a very beautiful budget, and she will be supporting the Deputy Park Superintendent.

Mrs. Pyke stated that she is struggling with what Ms. Crawford-Smith and with NECCO and with all of these duties and assignments what she was doing to the department had been done before. Mr. Gorbach stated that he is not struggling with it. The total expenditure in this budget is \$183,178,428. NECCO is .0091 of the total expenditures at \$339,584. NECCO is handling all the postage, at \$24,000, for all the departments to more align with what they're doing. That's seven percent. The Riverfront District, \$59,000, was brought over to NECCO. There is \$10,000 for a website if needed. Twenty-seven percent of that \$339,584 was for those duties. Part of what NECCO is doing is getting into the neighborhoods. In addition, they're coordinating for the downtown events. It's a neutral-cost department, so he does not see how Council cannot support this. Again, the communication NECCO is doing is just a part of what this department was established for. Akron has their own communications department. The Mayor of Hudson wants to create a committee with a population of 25,000. Green has a communications department with a 25,000 population. Cuyahoga Falls is the second largest city in Summit County. It is five years past the previous administration. This Administration didn't just take over yesterday. It is moving forward in a lot of directions.

Mr. Iona stated that, as a citizen, he cannot understand what's being done differently that they need a \$300,000 budget. A lot of this information that he sees comes out in the Falls News. This is about common-sense spending, and \$300,000 is still a lot of money to him. He is not convinced that the City needs this department.

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Mr. Colavecchio stated that, a couple Saturdays ago, there were close to 3,000 people downtown on Front Street. That didn't happen before this Administration came into place. Front Street was a shambles; now, there is something to come to. Reading a blurb in the Falls New Press is not going to draw that kind of crowd. There's an excitement in town. Things are in an upswing. Front Street was a joke, and now people are flocking downtown. Since Mayor Walters and his Administration has taken over, the City has millions more in its pot than before, and it has paid down \$10 million of debt. Mr. Gorbach stated that the City debt from 2013 to the end of 2018 went down \$9.35 million. The cash balance of unencumbered balance for all funds, from 12/31/13 to 12/31/17, went up \$4.1 million. When adding those two numbers together, it is a net positive impact of \$13,461,273. It was this Administration that made the move to open Front Street, but they couldn't have done it without the rest of Council. This Council and the prior Council should be proud, as well, and is part of everything the City has done in the past five years.

Mr. Nate Lever, Ward 5, addressed Council about his concerns about the cost and duties with the NECCO Department.

Mr. Tom Sullivan, 447 Tallmadge Road addressed Council about his positive experience being a Neighborhood Ambassador, which is part of the NECCO Department.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that that social media is free, but someone has to write it and distribute it, and that's where she doesn't think there is a redundancy. NECCO is communication, it's the neighbors, it's the FYI, For Your Information, it's the newsletters that tells all the city services, like Senior Watch and Envelope of Life. It's very important to people in her neighborhood to know when their leaves are picked up. It is neighborhood meetings to get people to come together, the Downtown Festivals and the Art Walk, just many things that, going back to community focus, is what is important and makes the City a better place.

Ms. Jackie Burton, 2220 High Street, Apartment 811, addressed Council to stated that she is not on social media and appreciates reading the paper to get information. She stated that attending Council meetings is a great place to get information, with different opinions and communication and the professionalism. It was really a nice atmosphere.

Mrs. Pyke moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-97 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. James. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.