

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

October 5, 2020

Members: Tim Gorbach, Chair
Susan Spinner
Jeff Iula

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

The minutes of the September 21, 2020 Finance Committee meeting were approved as written.

Legislation Discussed

Temp. Res. A-61

Temp. Ord. A-62

Temp. Ord. A-63

Discussion:

Temp. Res. A-61

A resolution accepting the amounts and rates of taxation as certified by the Summit County Budget Commission, authorizing the necessary tax levies, certifying such authorization to the County Fiscal Officer, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Bryan Hoffman, Finance Director, presented Temporary Resolution A-61 to Council. The City, in accordance with the provisions of law, has previously filed Alternative Tax Budget Information with the Summit County Fiscal Officer for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2021. On September 3, 2020, the Budget Commission of Summit County certified its action thereon to the City, together with an estimate by the County Fiscal Officer of the rate of each tax necessary to be levied by the City and what part thereof is without and what part thereof is within the Charter tax limitation.

Mr. Gorbach asked if Exhibit A referred to on Line 27 was sent. Mr. Hoffman stated that there is not an Exhibit A for this one. Mr. Gorbach asked if this refers to the information in Section 2. Mr. Hoffman stated that is correct. Mr. Gorbach stated that they will amend Temporary Resolution A-61, Line 27 by putting a period after “certification” and strike the remaining words.

Ms. Ciotola stated that Section 1 should read that the amounts and rates of taxation as determined by the Budget Commission and its certification are hereby accepted. Mr. Gorbach stated that they will remove the words “attached hereto as Exhibit A,” and leave the words “are hereby accepted.”

Mr. Iula moved to bring out Temp. Res. A-61 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Spinner. Motion passed (3-0).

Temp. Ord. A-62

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An ordinance authorizing the Parks and Recreation Board to enter into a contract or contracts, without competitive bidding, with J&J Amusements, Inc. for new pitching machines for Downview Sports Center, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Sara Kline, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, presented Temporary Ordinance A-62 to Council. The pitching machines at Downview Sports Center are at the end of their useful life and need replacement. J&J Amusements, Inc. provided and installed the original pitching machines, operating system, and any upgrade. J&J Amusements, Inc. is the only vendor that can provide and install compatible pitching machines for use with the current operating system at Downview Sports Center.

Mr. Gorbach asked how many machines were being replaced. Ms. Kline stated there are eight. Mr. Gorbach stated that this was on the budget sheet. He asked when they hope to have them, and will they install them now or wait until spring. Ms. Kline stated that it depends on when they come in. They will order them after Council approval and Board of Control approval. They will get them installed as soon as possible weather permitting.

Mrs. Spinner gave kudos for maintaining the machines and making them last that long. Mr. Iula asked how much the City makes on those machines during the year. Ms. Kline stated that she did not have the exact number in front of her. She believes they generate several thousand dollars a year. She will get that information to Council. They are extremely popular. This year, they have seen more use than other years, because it is something that people have been able to do.

Mr. Gorbach asked if there has been any thought given to repurposing them with the school or any park leagues. Ms. Kline stated that they do not have any other place within the city that has this kind of equipment to repurpose. They always talk to companies to see if they'll take something as a trade-in to offset any cost, and they will certainly be talking with this company to see if there is any value to them as a trade-in, because other cities have older machines and they might use them as replacement parts. Mr. Gorbach asked if any of the schools have the facilities or could make something like that work. Ms. Kline stated that the schools utilize the batting cages at Downview.

Dr. Todd Nichols, Superintendent, Cuyahoga Falls City Schools, asked Ms. Kline to call the Athletic Director, Mr. Kenny Johnson. They have a couple of batting cages, but do not have pitching machines. He does not know if they can use them. They may have the opportunity to use them for softball and baseball. Ms. Kline stated that she will mention it at meeting she has with Mr. Johnson on Wednesday.

Ms. Kline stated that on Saturday, October 24, from 1 to 4, the Parks and Recreation Department and Mayor Walters are hosting a drive-through treasure hunt, which is basically a drive through trick-or-treat. People will be asked to stay in their cars. This will be held at 10 locations, all Parks and Recreation facilities. At each location, there is going to be candy handed out and characters

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dressed up. Other City departments have joined forces with them, and each location is going to feature some special appearances from other departments and their equipment, the Police, Fire and Sanitation departments. They will be located at Downview, Waterworks, City Hall, the Natatorium, Babb Run, Oak Park, Lions Park, Keiser Park, Quirk and Ross Park. More information can be found on the Facebook page.

Mrs. Spinner moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-62 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Iula. Motion passed (3-0).

Temp. Ord. A-63

An ordinance authorizing the Director of Finance to enter into a contract or contracts, without competitive bidding, with Wichert Insurance Services, Inc. for the professional services necessary to manage the City's risk management and insurance program and for the purchase of public entity insurance coverages, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Bryan Hoffman, Finance Director, presented Temporary Ordinance A-63 to Council. The Director of Finance will be authorized to enter into a contract or contracts, without competitive bidding, with Wichert Insurance Services, Inc., on the basis of its proposal dated September 25, 2020, for the professional services necessary to manage the City's risk management and insurance program, including purchase of comprehensive public entity insurance coverages, for a period of one year. The Director of Finance will be authorized and directed to make payment for same from funds properly appropriated to the various departments of the City for these purposes, according to an apportionment of costs as between the departments.

Mr. Hoffman stated that this ordinance that would authorize the City to purchase insurance the end of this year through 2021. The insurance that they are purchasing is no different than they have in the past. They are using Wichert Insurance again. The City has used them for well over 31 years. They are in the city. Regarding the competitive clause in the ordinance, Wichert Insurance does competitively bid their insurance through their process. They have a good handle on the marketplace. They represent most cities in the region, and they understand public entities, and municipalities in general. They do get service, as well, from Wichert in managing lawsuits. The Law Department does an excellent job, and Wichert Insurance does follow those closely with the Law Department. When lawsuits are brought against the City, Wichert Insurance is consulted most times.

Mr. Gorbach stated that he is glad that Mr. Hoffman brought this up for the new Council members tonight. The City does have a synergistic relationship with Wichert Insurance and the Law Department.

Ms. Janet Ciotola, Law Director, stated that the Law Department does consult with Wichert Insurance when receiving claims for pre-litigation or when a claim or a lawsuit is filed. She consults with them about costs on potential liability, and they give exceptionally good advice.

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Sometimes, legal issues go away because of Wichert's wealth of knowledge and being in the business for a great number of years. If she has questions regarding insurance and contracts that she does not quite understand, she consults with them and they walk her through it. They do an exceptional job, and their customer service is top notch.

Mr. Iula moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-63 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Spinner. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.