

Brookville City Council
Work Session
June 22, 2021

The Work Session of the Brookville City Council was called to order by Mayor Letner at 7:45 p.m. on June 21, 2021. The meeting was held in the City Council Chambers and virtually using the Cisco Webex application. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Members Crane, Fowler, Schreier, Swabb, Wilder and Zimmerlin; Manager Keaton, Finance Director Brandt, Law Director Stephan, Clerk Duncan, Fire Chief Fletcher and Police Chief Jerome were present.

Roll Call by Clerk Duncan.

Motion by Zimmerlin, second by Fowler to approve the Agenda as presented. All yeas, motion carried.

Manager Keaton advised Council has a number of papers in front of them. The first is basically a condensed version of the Revenue Insufficiency Presentation that was presented on January 12th of this year. Council also has a copy of the Moody's Credit Opinion issued in March of 2020. Manager Keaton advised there is also a spreadsheet that contains proposed budget cuts that she put together over the last month, a copy of our current employee count by department and a copy of an income tax report that we received from City of Vandalia through May of 2021. The report provides the breakdown of our year-to-date income tax receipts for May of 2020, 2019 and 2018. It provides a breakdown between the net profits and the individual withholding. Manager Keaton advised there were some surprising things on that report which she will bring up later.

Manager Keaton provided some options to increase our revenue stream and an updated memorandum on the American Rescue Plan Act. Manager Keaton stated she hoped to have good news until she got emails this afternoon and found the State is taking away some of the money that we were projected to get. The last projection she saw was \$1.151 million and now it is down to \$615,000.

Manager Keaton reported first thing tomorrow morning, AARP will be sending a letter to our State Representatives, State Senators and the Governor's Office. Manager Keaton advised Council can stop in and sign if they would like to attach their names or she can sign it from the City Manager and City Council. Manager Keaton stated she would like to get the letters out quickly as they will probably vote on it this week.

Manager Keaton presented the 2021 Revenue Insufficiencies Report.

Member Schreier stated we really do not know if the net profit is going to stay consistent with other years or drop down closer to what the monthly is for 2020. It is a variable.

Manager Keaton replied last year there must have been a big tax loss for businesses in 2019 because in 2020 they would have been paying their 2019 business net profits. We do not know if they had a bigger loss here and maybe some of the businesses had bigger gains last year and you did not have any losses to offset. Manager Keaton stated she would not know unless we actually pull every return and look at it, which she can do by meeting with the City of Vandalia Income Tax Department.

Member Fowler stated we are putting in the sidewalk at Golden Gate which we had matching funds for. Going forward, we should consider foregoing non-essential improvements to the City. It's going to be a hard pill to swallow when people can say you spent \$30,000 to put a sidewalk but we are not going to clear the roads or salt or possibly let an employee go?

Manager Keaton replied those are the types of questions we will get from the public because they don't understand how our funds work. It is very complex. The CDBG sidewalk project at the park is coming out of the Capital Improvement Fund, which is where all our grant funds come out of. The public needs to understand that if we are not going to plow their streets, it is because it strictly comes out of the Street Fund. The Service Department payroll and benefits come out of several Funds. It does not come out of the Capital Fund. That is the hard part to get across to people.

Finance Director Brandt stated we cannot spend Capital funds to pay people.

Manager Keaton advised there are restrictions on what we use Capital Improvement Funds and Fire Capital Improvement Funds for. It has to be \$5,000 dollars or greater and it cannot be for ongoing maintenance or salaries.

Manager Keaton advised all of our CDBG projects have been driven by making the City handicap accessible. We put in the ADA ramps to help those with disabilities. For many years we were contacted by people that live near Flanders, Edgebrook and the Arlington Road area as they had no way to get from their house to the park in a wheelchair. This was the last piece of the puzzle so that they have the ability to go in our parks.

Manager Keaton stated right now she is not applying for any CDBG grants because most require matching funds.

Member Zimmerlin asked if we have any projections on what we are going to be sitting financially by the end of the year?

Manager Keaton stated she thinks if we can get past June/July we can get a better picture of where we are. Last year, the income tax deadline was extended to July.

Discussion followed regarding the complicated process on how to project the revenue calculation and revenue loss calculation.

Manager Keaton presented proposed budget cuts with the first being cutting snow removal from neighborhoods and only removing salt from collector roads. Manager Keaton discussed the yearly expenditures on salt & calcium chloride from 2018 through 2021 year-to-date. Manager Keaton also discussed eliminating overtime for snow removal and proposed only plowing and salting during normal working hours.

Member Zimmerlin inquired what kind of impact would these cuts be from a public safety perspective?

Police Chief Jerome stated he does not think it would have a big impact on them because most accidents occur on the main roads. If Council passes a snow ordinance that would also help by getting cars off the streets.

Fire Chief Fletcher stated Brookville roads are cleared quickly compared to many other communities. The Fire Department travels outside of the city limits, so they have invested in four-wheel drive vehicles and have taken care of themselves in regard to understanding not every road will be cleared.

Police Chief Jerome stated the impact might be more school cancellations and delays.

Member Schreier asked what normal working hours are for the service department?

Manager Keaton replied our Service Department hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Mayor Letner advised we could set up fire routes with our main arteries going into our subdivisions. We would have to consider whether we want to salt these roads or just complete two passes with the plow.

Discussion continued regarding cutting the overtime and amount of salt used, which would save the City roughly \$25,000 per year, dependent upon the weather.

Manager Keaton advised we could also increase the fees for our limb chipping service or eliminate it altogether. Manager Keaton reported we received \$1,402 in limb chipping fees in 2020.

Manager Keaton stated we could also eliminate leaf pick-up.

Discussion followed regarding whether to charge for leaf pick-up, the cost savings and the risk to our storm sewers if the service was eliminated. The consensus was to not cut this service.

Manager Keaton reported we could also cut back on mowing in our parks and city owned properties. Manager Keaton reminded everyone that Golden Gate Park is our greatest asset.

Discussion followed regarding upkeep of the parks and what the cost savings would be to cut back on mowing. The consensus was the savings would be minimal.

Manager Keaton proposed closing down the playgrounds, tennis & basketball courts if we cannot purchase replacement parts. Manager Keaton also proposed eliminating fertilizing and spraying for weeds in our parks.

Discussion followed with the consensus being the savings would be minimal for these cuts.

Manager Keaton proposed eliminating pavement repairs and crack sealing.

Manager Keaton reported we could delay the repaving of East Westbrook Road. The \$69,000 Permissive Tax funds that we applied for can be used next year.

The consensus is to delay the East Westbrook Road re-paving.

Manager Keaton advised Park Board approved an increase in park shelter rentals that begins with January 1, 2022 rentals.

Manager Keaton reported the outdoor restrooms at Golden Gate Park could be shut down from January to March.

Member Fowler stated this cost savings is very minimal. If we shut down the restrooms people will find another place to go.

Manager Keaton reported approximately how much would be saved in wages and benefits by laying off a full-time Service Department employee. The City is a reimbursing employer, so we pay 50% of the filer's wage, up to \$672 with three dependents. There are several Service Department employees who are eligible to retire but they or their spouse are not old enough for Medicare.

Manager Keaton reported the salary and benefits that the full-time Deputy Clerk who recently retired received and proposed hiring a part-time Deputy Clerk.

Manager Keaton proposed eliminating parades, walks, runs and the Community Picnic coverage, stating it will eliminate O/T in the Police Department, plus pension and Medicare.

Discussion followed on charging for parades and how much a parade costs in overtime wages.

Member Zimmerlin stated if it is between cutting personnel versus cutting a parade, this is an easy choice. Cutting parades and other non-essential events will be noticeable in the community.

Finance Director Brandt commented there is also Service Department overtime involved in parades.

Discussion followed. The consensus is to set a level of public safety personnel needed to hold a parade or event and bill organizations accordingly for city services beginning January 1, 2022.

Manager Keaton proposed increasing the stormwater rates to alleviate some of the payroll and benefit burden on the Street M & R Fund.

Discussion followed. The consensus is to double the current stormwater rate.

Manager Keaton proposed throttling down the water flow if a water main break occurs during non-

working hours, which would eliminate Service Department overtime. Mayor Letner explained how the water would be throttled back.

Fire Chief Fletcher stated this concerns him because throttling back the water could create a potential water pressure issue in the event of a fire. Fire Chief Fletcher commented the Service Department personnel are not under a bargaining unit agreement and the City could flex their hours to avoid paying overtime to make essential repairs.

Discussion followed with Mayor Letner assuring that the stretch of road that would be throttled back would be minuscule, and the water can be throttled back up if needed.

Member Zimmerlin inquired whether salary for water main break repairs would be compensated out of the Water Fund?

Manager Keaton explained that the Service Department salaries are funded by percentages out of the Street, Park, Water, Sewer, Stormwater and Refuse Funds. Manager Keaton advised increasing the stormwater charges would release some of that burden from the Street Fund.

Member Zimmerlin suggested a small increase in the water rates to help decrease the burden on the Street Fund.

Member Schreier commented Council discussed slowing moving the rates up in the past in anticipation of a rate increase from the City of Dayton. Increasing the rates slowly would make it not such a big hit at one time to our residents.

Manager Keaton replied she will work on that Ordinance.

Manager Keaton advised we could save on electric costs by changing the City Office hours to 4 10-hour days versus 5 8-hour days to save on electricity.

Member Schreier inquired if salary and benefits would be impacted.

Manager Keaton replied not at this time, but some entities cut back the hours during the recession, which is something we could look at.

Manager Keaton advised we could implement hard EMS billing, versus our current soft billing. Manager Keaton stated she is waiting on the increase in revenue estimate from EMS Billing Company.

Member Zimmerlin commented residents already pay for the service in taxes, so billing is like a double hit. We do receive an insurance payment in many cases. Member Zimmerlin asked if there is any way we could do an intermediary, maybe billing only if there is a number of service calls to the same address?

Mayor Letner stated there are a number of addresses we are repeatedly called to for lift assists. We do not bill for these types of calls unless we transport them to the hospital. Mayor Letner stated he has spoken with Fire Chief Fletcher regarding the many lift assist calls we respond to at Brookhaven, where they should have the equipment to lift patients.

Member Zimmerlin commented he does not know of any municipalities who do hard billing.

Manager Keaton replied Englewood switched to hard billing several years ago.

Manager Keaton advised we could eliminate trash pick-up in Golden Gate Park on the weekends during the summer months. That could create trash overflowing during busy weekends unless additional containers are purchased.

Mayor Letner commented this goes back to raising park shelter rental rates.

Member Zimmerlin stated he would be curious to hear how much revenue Englewood generates from hard billing and what kind of administrative burden it places on staff. Member Zimmerlin stated he would also like to know what the feedback is from residents.

Manager Keaton stated Perry Township is putting a 2.5 mill levy for fire capital equipment this November. If the levy passes, we can look at adjusting how much currently gets receipted in from our fire levies into the Fire Capital Improvement and make an adjustment to have more of it receipted into the General Fund. Manager Keaton advised she will be speaking to Clay Township because in both Clay and Perry Townships' fire contract, we put additional wording stating they have to pay us an incremental amount over the three-year period. But if they put levies on and the levies pass that goes away. Both townships know that they have to do something, or they are going to have this large lump sum of money to pay us in the contract out of their General Fund.

Manager Keaton asked if there are any other thoughts?

Member Fowler stated Council should put another levy on the ballot.

Discussion followed regarding different types of levies.

The consensus was to place a 3.85 mill street levy on the November ballot and pair it with some of the budget cuts discussed tonight.

Council recommended eliminating overtime by flexing hours for the Street Department and plowing only the fire routes and main thoroughfares. Council also recommended passing an ordinance prohibiting parking on the streets during a snow event.

The consensus of Council was to increase fees for limb chipping.

Discussion followed regarding cutting back on mowing city-owned properties. The consensus was the parks must be mowed on a regular basis. The other rights-of-way could be mowed less often, however, it does not require overtime, so it only saves on the wear and tear on equipment.

The consensus of Council is to eliminate crack sealing as the cracks are either too wide or there is so much crack seal it becomes a hazard for motorcycles.

Discussion followed regarding personnel. The consensus is to not lay-off any employees at this time and to hire a part-time Deputy Clerk for the front office.

Council discussed increasing the water rates. The consensus is to increase the water rates on an annual basis so that if Dayton increases our rate by three percent or more, it will be less of a hit at once to residents.

City Manager Keaton advised she will get more information from the City of Englewood regarding EMS hard billing.

Discussion followed regarding throttling back the water during a water main break until normal working hours to eliminate overtime in the Service Department. Mayor Letner pointed out this could undermine our streets and cause more damage than we save in overtime.

Fire Chief Fletcher commented on hard billing for EMS services, stating employing a collection agency to collect unpaid invoices could likely offset the increase in revenue.

Manager Keaton advised the City of Englewood sends their unpaid bills to the Attorney General's Office, who attempts to collect the funds.

Council also discussed multiple rides to the same address for lift assists and whether to bill if a removal is not made.

Member Zimmerlin commented he would hate for someone to not call for EMS services because they are afraid of receiving a bill.

Fire Chief Fletcher stated that is a legitimate concern they hear from residents.

Member Zimmerlin stated he does not see hard billing as an option.

Council directed Manager Keaton to prepare the legislation to move forward with the street levy and the legislation to prevent parking on streets during snow events.

Member Zimmerlin commented while many residents blame the fire station, it is the loss of employers that has caused our budget issues.

Manager Keaton agreed and reminded Council that the City needs to diversify our revenue stream.

Member Zimmerlin commented there is a lot of misinformation on social media.

Member Fowler stated he would like to get the support of Brookville Schools for the proposed levy.

Motion by Fowler, second by Zimmerlin to adjourn. All yeas, motion carried.



Kimberly Duncan, Clerk



Charles Letner, Mayor