

**MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

6:30 p.m.

December 21, 2010

Pursuant to Codified Ordinance Section 111.01 (17) and ORC Section 121.22, notice of the following meeting was given on December 17, 2010:

Council Members Present: Ranally, Harrold, Manning, Carr, Fiala , Black, Woodin

Others Present: Mayor Anderson, Law Director Wiles, Service Director Tomaselli, City Engineer Sayles, Fire Chief Zwega, Police Chief Straube, Chief Zoning and Building Inspector Smith, Parks and Recreation Director Katz, Finance Director Rogowski; Fiscal Task Force Members – Wade Mitchell, Larry Gradwell, Gregg Patt and Jim Ralston; Lake County Gazette Reporter McMahan, News Herald Reporter Shofar, Clerk Radebaugh

BUSINESS

FISCAL REVIEW TASK FORCE REPORT – ADMINISTRATION’S RECOMMENDATIONS

Mayor Anderson presented Administration’s recommendations regarding spending reductions and revenue enhancement recommendations outlined in the 2010 Fiscal Review Task Force Report:

1. Eliminate Health Care Benefits for City Council

Mayor Anderson explained that the charter is very clear regarding compensation for Council members which includes the health benefits. Compensation has to be set thirty days prior to the filing deadline for the next two years and shall not be changed during any part of that term. He explained that Council cannot take any legislative action to eliminate benefits for next year. Any change would have to take place in 2012.

Council President Ranally commented that in further discussions with the Mayor, Law Director Wiles and Finance Director Rogowski, they addressed the position of Prosecutor becoming a part time position which would also eliminate the health benefits.

Gregg Patt, Task Force member, suggested that the city could make it an option for a part time employee to be able to buy into the health care plan at the city’s group rate. Mr. Rogowski said that generally the Health Insurance Companies require limitations on how much an individual can pay towards health insurance. He will look into this to see what modifications would be needed to the contract. Mr. Ranally questioned how this option would affect the city’s rates.

Council President Ranally and the majority of Council agreed with the recommendation to eliminate health care benefits for City Council. Councilman Harrold commented that he, along with some of the other councilmen, are taking steps to be taken off of the city’s health insurance as soon as possible.

2. Offer City Employees Incentives to Opt Out of City Health Care

Mayor Anderson said that opting out of health care would result in short term savings, but could have a negative effect on future rates by removing healthy people from the group plan. This suggestion will be sent to the city’s Employee Health Care Committee and the health care advisor for further study.

3. Create a Central Purchasing Function

Mayor Anderson advised that the city will begin a trial program in 2011 using current staff.

4. Examine Contracting Out Landscaping Services

Mayor Anderson said that contracting out landscaping services in the short term would result in an increase in expenses. We are currently using union labor and contracts prohibit laying off employees if the city contracts services out. This can be evaluated as attrition takes place.

5. Control Employee Overtime Costs by Adjusting Work Schedules**6. Consolidate Service and Recreation Department Labor Pools**

Over the past couple of years, reorganizing the structure of the Service Department and Parks Department has resulted in the elimination of five supervisory positions which will save the city \$350,000 next year. Service personnel and Parks personnel are being pooled for snow plowing season and will be working three shifts. During the summer there will be a seven day work week which will result in a \$25,000 savings in overtime.

7. Eliminate the Police Department Fourth Platoon

Mayor Anderson commented that the Fourth Platoon has been an extremely valuable asset for the city. One officer will be retiring next year with the possibility of a second officer retiring. The Fourth Platoon will be eliminated for 2011. This will save the city between \$125,000 and \$250,000 next year.

8. Evaluate Administrative Staffing Levels

Two full time positions will be eliminated and replaced by part time personnel early in 2011. This will result in a savings of \$100,000.

9. Extend Vehicle Life**10. Conduct a Comprehensive Review of City Fleet**

Mayor Anderson said that most of the vehicles are used for ten years with some being used 15 or 20 years. Front line police cruisers were replaced every three years, but that has been extended to four years. This will continue to be evaluated.

11. Reduce City Expenditures for Health Care Insurance

Mayor Anderson said that through negotiations this year, the city was able to increase deductibles, co-pays and out-of-pocket levels. This will save \$400,000 this year.

12. Investigate Joining in the County 911 Emergency Call Service

The Task Force Report states that justification for keeping dispatch services was based, in part, on the need for the dispatcher to also take the role of jailer, but the justification no longer exists. Mayor Anderson said that the need still does exist. Often the dispatchers are the only ones in the building. You cannot have a jail operation with no one else in the building. Joining the county was discussed in 1993 and at that time the city chose to keep our own dispatch. Some of the issues, such as jail security and records management, still exist. Mayor Anderson said this issue will be seriously investigated the first part of next year. As a second option, he has contacted the Mayor of Eastlake regarding the City of

Willoughby performing dispatch operations for the City of Eastlake. Eastlake would pay us for dispatching services. We already have some compatibility being on the same 911 system and having some of the same records system.

Contract Out Services

This is a long term suggestion. Current labor contracts prohibit us from contracting out services.

13. Examine Eliminating the City Building Department

Mayor Anderson said that cities are not required to provide this function under the law. He said that the Building Department provides great value to the city in terms of the customer's standpoint. Usually cities that are in financial distress eliminate their Building Department and/or Recreation Department. Mayor Anderson said we are not in financial distress and he does not recommend eliminating the Building Department. One full time inspector will be retiring the first quarter of next year and will not be replaced. This will be a savings of \$83,000 in salary and benefits.

The total savings for all recommendations is \$1,058,000. An additional savings possible in the near future is \$250,000.

REVENUE INCREASES

Increase Efforts to Collect Unpaid Taxes

Mayor Anderson explained that the Regional Income Tax Agency recently conducted a program that included subpoenas for delinquent and non-filing taxpayers which resulted in the collection of \$47,000.

Open Additional City Properties to Gas Well Leases

Mayor Anderson said that city properties will be looked at, but pointed out that most city property is adjacent to residential areas. The city will also examine the airport property.

Non-emergency medical transportation.

The city does not provide non-emergency transportation.

4. Assess fees to residents for trash collection

5. Reduce Residence City Income Tax Credit

6. Examine Recreation Department Fees

7. Replace tax levies

8. Raise City Income Tax

Mayor Anderson said it is his recommendation that no increases in taxes or fees be considered at this time until all possible cost saving options have been fully explored or adopted. He explained that all recommendations were based on current revenue projections. If there is a reduction in State-shared income or if the economy in general results in significant decreases in revenue, further discussion would be necessary

regarding further reductions and/or possible increases in revenue or reduction in services.

Council President Ranally commended the Mayor and Administration for being proactive in not filling positions, in evaluating positions and for their negotiating with the bargaining units which resulted in a sizeable savings to the city. Mr. Ranally and other council members commended the Task Force members on their dedication, commitment and the time spent on the Task Force.

Mr. Gradwell commented that in reading the Mayor's report and listening to his comments and comments from the council, he feels things are moving along very well. If in the future any revenue increases are needed, he feels the city has a strong case to go to the electorate with.

Mr. Mitchell commented that the task force members had unfettered access to any and all information, no one was held back from talking to them and everyone was straightforward and upfront with the members. On behalf of the members of the task force, Mr. Mitchell thanked the administration and council for the opportunity to serve and for looking at the task force's recommendations.

The Committee of Full Council meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Date approved _____

Jerome P. Ranally, Chairman

Clerk of Council