

City of Gahanna

*200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230*



Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 13, 2012

7:00 PM

Council Committee Rooms

Committee of the Whole

*Stephen A. Renner, Chair
Beryl D. Anderson
Karen J. Angelou
Ryan P. Jolley
Brian D. Larick
David L. Samuel
Brandon Wright*

Members Absent: Stephen Renner

Members Present: Brandon Wright, Beryl D. Anderson, Karen J. Angelou, Ryan P. Jolley, Brian D. Larick and David L. Samuel

Additional Attendees:

Gen. Jim Williams, Brian Hoyt, Dottie Franey, Mike Andrako, Karl Wetherholt, Tony Collins, Chief Murphy, Lt. Jeff Spence, Shane Ewald, Anthony Jones, Jennifer Teal, Mayor Stinchcomb, Brandi Braun, Tom Kneeland, Isobel Sherwood, press.

PENDING LEGISLATION

ORD-0024-2012

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION - Early Retirement Incentive

Larick called the meeting for Monday, February 13, 2012, to order; said we will start with ORD-0024-2012 which is the supplemental appropriation for an early retirement incentive.

Teal said we discussed this at the last committee meeting; the sum of \$20,000 was in the ordinance; we knew the final estimate would be different; OPERS has provided the correct version which is \$16,000; we would be striking the old amount and inserting the new. Larick said is the \$16,000 the final amount. Teal said yes.

Recommendation: 2nd Reading, Amend by Substitution, Consent Agenda.

Recommended for Substitution and Adoption

ISSUES - From Director of Human Resources:

Reclassification of Unclassified Position, Supp. App. & Transfer of Funds

Larick said next is the reclassification of a position.

Braun said Wadley is ill; we sent out a report with 2 personnel requests that would require 4 pieces of legislation; what questions and discussion issues do you have. Angelou said I feel, because we have not done any capital improvement discussion yet, this should be done after that is completed; I will not support this; the first person seen here is at the front desk; she was very professional and sent people to the right place; think that position has worked out well but I see no reason to add to numerous supplemental appropriations; I am not comfortable supporting this at this time and would request it go on regular agenda.

Samuel asked is there an increased demand on the positions upstairs.

Braun said in 2008 the position of administrative assistant was vacated; I was moved up and my previous duties were taken on by 2 part-time aides; since 2009 we have had high turnover as these people look for full time jobs; one of these administrative people has taken on a great number of the duties that the executive assistant used to do; when the second person left, we felt it was time we could re-evaluate these positions and the reclassification could be done.

Samuel said how many departments would they cover.

Braun said the administrative assistant is not just for the Mayor but also the Assistant City Administrator, the PIO (Public Information Manager), and the Emergency Management Director; this person provides support and back up for a variety of positions; it will be the person on the front line for anyone coming into the Mayor's office.

Anderson said could any of this be folded into the front desk position.

Braun said the front desk person does take the initial request if someone wants the Mayor's office; but if they want the Mayor, they need to go upstairs to the Mayor's office; the front desk is currently providing back up to the Mayor's office and to Court; we are providing cross training for use when we have sickness or vacation.

Anderson said so we have plans for these to rely on each other.

Braun said this person is the front line for the Mayor. Anderson said when you prioritize these, the major concern should be the Mayor's office, but the front reception position is going to 2 part time people; could you do the same in the Mayor's office. Braun said the Administrative Assistant in the Mayor's office does much more than just answer phones; they are expected to take complaints and discuss issues with residents on top of doing complex administrative duties.

Samuel said is there more information on this in the data collected in the 2005 salary study.

Braun said that study looked at every position; we filled out questionnaires regarding duties; the consultant reviewed similar sized cities and made recommendations based on that; they created my new position and the PIO; they also recommended a purchasing agent, an executive assistant and a receptionist.

Angelou said was this revised in 2008.

Braun said in 2008 they did not look at every position; they did a smaller group of jobs; in 2011 it was not done as we were in flux; we are now able to give raises; with review in 2012 we believe it is the best direction to go. Angelou said we are deciding on a lot of things in 2011; capital improvements are not done. Jolley said I agree with Angelou that we need to take a look at of it is we need to do it now because of duties and not having the necessary bodies to get the work done.

Braun said we have needed to do this for years; I have advocated for it for years; when we had someone leave it gives us a wider gap in coverage; so as always, we evaluated the responsibilities and, given the small amount of money needed for the appropriation, we felt it was a good time to bring it forward. Jolley said and your evaluations point to full time instead of 2 part time people; is the front desk reception less demanding; is that why 2 part time people will still be better there. Braun said yes.

Larick said do you have an outline that defines the specific responsibilities for this role. Braun said I apologize; the job description should have gone out with the report; it is the gateway to the Mayor's office and will also draft correspondence, prepare certificates of recognition, do research for projects. Larick said will it coordinate events and meetings. Braun said yes; they will schedule all the people they support and help with special events.

Mayor said I would add that people usually coming into the building are asking to be directed; when they call the Mayor's office, they are upset; they need a high level of public service; they need to know they are not dealing with a receptionist; this person does contracts, checks, legal documents; there is a high level of confidentiality required. Wright said in visioning this, I looked at other Mayoral offices and they all seemed to have administrative assistants handling those issues; the issue is we have to take care of business; people coming in do not want to talk to a receptionist at the front desk; this is important for the image of the Office of Mayor; this is how it would be done for a bank president or even with non profits that function well; it is a good idea to get people into the right place to get the job done; is there a cost savings to this.

Braun said no it requires a supplemental of \$12,130.00.

Anderson said but you are using the front desk as a back up; if there is a high level of responsibility needed, what is the vision for the front desk; not just administrative work. Braun said the front desk is part time; they will only back up answering the phones; if we have a full administrative assistant, the Mayor and I would handle any complex issues that come up for back up; we do not intend to back up the entire position with the front desk.

Angelou asked in other communities with a Mayor, do they have an Administrative Assistant. Braun said it is not uncommon to have an administrative assistant to the chief of the staff. Angelou said could you get us some comparative information; Wadley may have it; and also the cost used for it if any cost analysis was done. Braun said there is an analysis in Wadley's report.

Anderson said I would like to see this information from other cities with our size and budget; do they have administrative or executive assistants to their Mayors. Braun said there are only a few cities like ours in central Ohio. Anderson said this should not be limited to central Ohio. Angelou said it is important to compare apples to apples.

Wright said this is a lot of reports we just ordered from these people; we should do our own looking up information; we just added considerably to Braun's work load; we could go to other cities' web sites to ask for duties in their Office of Mayor; we shouldn't have the Mayor's office do our reports.

Angelou said I did that; I looked at various cities for raises and health care information; I called 5 cities around central Ohio; I would rather not take Braun's time, but they need to give us the information; it is Braun's job to see the office is functioning properly so Council can take action. Braun said we haven't been looking at the entire country, and we only have 2 cities like us in the area, Bexley and Hilliard.

Anderson said my request is broader than that.

Wright said I feel it is wasting time and resources.

Larick said if the information is available, or if we find it ourselves, we should share among ourselves.

Jolley said it is clear the comparisons are never going to be ideal; if we put the community with their number of staff and salaries and do an analysis on a spreadsheet, we still have to look at each piece of work to make sure it is taken into account. Larick said we need to be careful in discussion to look at how to build the desk out front and upstairs; the administrative assistant is a separate discussion; find it hard to believe that any organization at the top level would not have a front line person with reasonable knowledge and skills to support it; pretty much unheard of whether you are a corporation, non profit or public municipality; at the end of the day when you read this, we are not changing head count; we are changing roles at a net cost of \$13,000 at most. Angelou said the position at the front desk is not a level 33. Braun said it was a 24 or 28. Angelou said if the front desk is level 28 to going to 33 changes job responsibilities; can't do a level 28 with 2 part-time people.

Samuel said if we could get the job descriptions emailed to us that will help. Braun said we will include the things the Mayor identified like conference scheduling, timely responses, technical skills, knowledge of legal forms; a really good administrative assistant knows the habits of the Mayor and is able to perform tasks reliably.

Angelou said I would like final vote to go to regular agenda.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, back to Committee of the Whole.

Supp. App. - Mayor's Office Part Time

Braun said the next supplemental appropriation in the Mayor's office is for a part-time position; in our analysis we did take a complete look at the Mayor's office; the PIO position has been an overwhelming success; we have one person doing a number of strategic duties; we would like to bring on an intern to perform duties like press releases and blogs; the PIO can then work full time to oversee and focus on strategic development of the Gahanna Brand. Angelou said can you provide an example of that. Hoyt said we are in a competitive environment; we have major economic issues; we need a game plan for top level hand-to-hand branding and messaging. Larick said what is the break out of time; hands-on and conceptual time for the PIO today. Hoyt said 10% strategy and 90% hands-on tactics.

Wright said do you want a grad student. Braun said we would like a college or grad

student in journalism or marketing; someone who could hit the ground running and be a true asset to the group.

Larick said in similar communities, what is the budget and head count for this. Braun said it is difficult to say how we compare; some communities have just one part time person and then you have Hilliard with a full staff; we would be competitive with a staff of 2; many other communities outsource major functions; we don't have any contractors. Jolley said I am a huge proponent of the PIO; the office here has been a big success; I worked in public relations and we are hands down saving money by doing this in house rather than with a contractor; the one question I have is have we attempted to fill this position with an unpaid intern. Braun said when we checked other communities, all had paid positions; we did not find anyone using volunteers. Jolley said not necessarily volunteers but people looking for course credit at a school like Capital or OSU.

Hoyt said I have done research and worked as a Public Relations (PR) intern; we billed for hours worked; maybe never got paid for them but we still billed them; in central Ohio there is a group pool and it is a hot bed of high paid PR people; qualified unpaid personnel are not really out there; what you need is accountability; need someone looking for work part time to help with the accountability. Samuel asked is there a PIO Association. Hoyt said there are 2 central Ohio public information networks.

Samuel said so this is how we start looking; let's poll these organizations for details and find someone that has some experience. Hoyt said I go back to Larick's point; the apples to apples comparison is a challenge; we go from communities with a part time person to a place like Dublin with a 1.3 million budget; we are basing this on what are the needs of Gahanna. Samuel said some PIOs also do the marketing out of their office. Hoyt said a good example of that is Upper Arlington; they have a PIO exclusively for their fire department. Anderson said we do need to identify what we do here; it is also nice to know what is being done in central Ohio; but we also need to look at best practices out of Ccve and not pay at a high rate; we should be thinking out of the box; there are mentoring programs through AARP; seniors there may be out of work not by choice and be willing to do this job; they would get experience to use for a permanent job opening; need to find people that are hungry for work and would do this just for the experience; I have a law degree, but chose to get up at 3 A.M. to work at a TV station just to be employed in journalism; we need to not just look at central Ohio, but in looking outside the box find the best practices in other parts of the country; I will continue to advocate for that; we are not just competing locally but in a global market; need to look beyond central Ohio.

Larick said how far are you in this process. Braun said we have a job description; structure would be a student semester by semester; about 15 to 20 hours a week; role would be on the front line.

Samuel said I have another question; will this help other departments and take some of the burden off Parks and Recreation. Hoyt said my department already does that.

Angelou said the money paid this person is based hourly; what would that be. Braun said \$8 to \$12 an hour depending on their qualifications.

Larick said my first job in 1990 paid \$8.00 an hour. Angelou said sounds like you were lucky to have that.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, back to Committee of the Whole.

ISSUES - From City Attorney:

Personal Services Contract - Tom Weber

Ewald said last year we did not go forward with the contract for coverage at Planning Commission meetings; I took 2 months to review processes; would like for you to consider appointing Tom Weber for Planning Commission to provide legal advice and do administrative work; it is a misnomer that the City Attorney does all the City's legal

work; I am really more of a legal director; I can't think of a better person with more experience to do this for us.

Recommendation: 1st Reading, no need to come back; 2nd Reading, Consent Agenda; Emergency Language.

Meeting Adjourned.

Della Brandenberger, Reporting