



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Public Service & Safety

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Jamie Leeseberg, Chair
Brian Larick, Karen J. Angelou

Kim Banning, CMC, Clerk of Council

Monday, February 22, 2016

Council Committee Rooms

Immediately Following Finance Committee

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Leeseberg called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

Additional Attendees: Dottie Franey, Matt Holdren, Kim Banning, Press, Residents, Chief Dennis Murphy, Joann Bury, Mayor Tom Kneeland, Anthony Jones, Niel Jurist, Diana Redman, Rob Priestas, Shane Ewald, Brian Metzbower, Michael Schnetzer, Stephen Renner, Nancy McGregor.

Present 3 - Jamie Leeseberg, Karen J. Angelou, and Brian D. Larick

ITEM FROM THE CITY ENGINEER

1. 2016 CCTV & Sanitary Sewer Cleaning Project - Award Contract

[ORD-0024-2016](#) 2016 CCTV Award Contract

Priestas said request to award contract for 2016 CCTV; opened bids and recieved a total of 5; lowest response is RedZone Robotics; checked their bid for completeness and quality; requesting we enter into contract; funds were encumbered in 2016 appropriations; Leeseberg asked if they have done work in the area; Renner said yes, Franklin County; Priestas said they have had positive feedback; Renner said they are without a doubt above anyone else; love their robots; they go and are automatic; McGregor asked if that was for a specific area; Priestas said it is College Park and Heritage Park subdivision.

RECOMMENDATION: Consent Agenda.

ITEMS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE

1. Utility Online Bill Pay - Office Payments

[ORD-0025-2016](#) Official Payments Online Bill Pay

Franey said it is a desire to offer online bill pay; in 2013 we pulled together a Committee to evaluate online bill pay and vendors; at that time we chose Official Payments; put legislation through and a contract was signed; for reasons we were unable to implement that contract; we picked the project up in late 2015; Official Payments was the leader again; we are bringing forward another agreement; has a term of 5 years with a one year auto-renewal after that; there are no implementation fees; either party can exit the agreement at any time; \$4.75 fee to anyone using it; also wanting to implement e-bill with Official Payments; City will pay \$1,000+ per year for them to store the payments all year; if people sign up we will stop sending them a hard copy; will cost us .16-1/2 cents for the e-bill; will save us about 34 cents per bill; will be cost-neutral; will also be offering interactive voice response so someone can call in and pay by card over the phone; will carry a transaction fee that the user will pay; it is the \$4.75+\$1.50 for the interactive voice; offering all these options; with red flag requirements and with PCI compliance; this is useful for us to get all of the information on file with Official Payments; we will no longer take credit card payments over the phone; added information into the report; we are a part of a group and the results are in the report; 36 separate communities responded and of that 27 communities offered online bill pay and 18 of them passed the fee onto the customer; 12 of them use Official Payments; asked what type of fees they were charging; it varied; one jurisdiction charged \$6 flat fee; we feel we are in the ballpark; tonight we are asking for an Ordinance to rescind or repeal the previous legislation to allow us to enter into agreement; Angelou asked if the cost has gone up since the last time; Franey said it has but it does not mean people would not have been paying that fee; the user pays the credit card fee and it could have gone up anyway; Schnetzer said to get the vendor set up they need information; asked if the vendor is getting a resident's social security number (SSN); Franey said for e-bill their billing statement would be hosted by Official Payments; they have all the security for anything they would house; for someone signing up; they would give an email and account number; typical to any online payments; Franey said we do not take social security numbers; may have verified the last four digits to deal with the account holder; Schnetzer asked if that would be shared with the vendor; Franey said the City would not but the user may in setting up things on their end; Angelou asked on the e-bill; would the City news still be attached; Franey confirmed it will still be there; Angelou asked if they will attempt to sell this and if they will do the marketing; Franey said we will be broadcasting it in the updates; Holdren said they have templates we need to push the efforts; they want it to be City-lead; Metzbower asked if there would be efforts to incentivize; Franey said we have potential to save; would encourage

that; just being offered as a convenience at this point; Larick said the \$4.75 is in what circumstance; Franey said it is per transaction; Larick asked if that was paying by card and by phone; Franey said phone is \$6.25 and card is \$4.75; Larick asked what they would pay if they came in today; Franey said it would be the \$4.75; we will have a terminal in the office; if someone comes to the counter with the new system they will likely need help; Larick asked if we can put off work and manual labor we would want to do that; does not want to charge someone for using the phone which is hands off versus not charging someone who will come into the building; Franey said with the phone the user is paying for the service; Larick said two scenarios - can pay via phone or come into the building and take away from staff to pay less; Franey said we did not choose the fees; this is what they charge if they use the service; Larick would not want to de-incentivise someone for picking up the phone; Leeseberg said his is paid through the bank, asked if there was a change to that; Franey said there would not be a change to that at all; Angelou confirmed people can still write a check and bring it in for no charge; this is just an opportunity; asked if someone chose to come and pay the e-bill at City hall; Franey said would not have to pay via Official Payments; McGregor asked if someone can pay now with a card or by the phone; Franey said they can do that and not be charged currently; McGregor said we do not do monthly billing but we can pay monthly; Franey confirmed; we are also researching how we can set up ACH payments so someone can pull \$100 out of their bank each month and then get the balance every quarter; researching that right now; will want all of those answers when we put together the quarterly update; we hope to be able to explain that; Metzbower asked what happens to the email addresses; asked if it was public record; Franey said that would be through Official Payments and that would not be shared at all; Metzbower asked if we would get those email addresses; Holdren said we would not; that is part of the compliance; Renner asked if we are just trying to provide other services or are we looking to push one service over to another; Franey said just offering more services and trying to get credit card numbers and that information out of our billing office; not pushing a service over to another; we do not want the credit card numbers in our office; we want someone else handling the secure information; Renner said it depends on what the relationship the City has with the bank; they can set up a kiosk so someone can swipe it and then the payment is received through US Bank; then there would not be any credit card fees; asked if they have looked at absorbing the fees; Franey said we absorb the fees now; Bury said it varies; may be roughly around \$4K a month; would have to double check; said we use Huntington for our merchant services; said we will no longer be swiping the card so the fees related will go away; Larick asked about the cost comparison; Franey said Huntington cannot do the online; they do not offer that like Official Payments do; we have researched

that with them; Bury said they were starting a platform but we cannot utilize those services; Angelou asked about other communities using Official Payments; Franey said they were all good; Leeseberg asked if this contract was previously signed and if there were issues getting out of it; Franey said it was and there were no issues.

RECOMMENDATION: Consent Agenda.

2. DISCUSSION ITEM: Water/Sanitary/Sewer Costs

Franey said in 2016 the water and sanitary sewer costs increased by 7.23%; thought it would be good in the report to spell out what Gahanna does compared to the City of Columbus; wanted to pass some information out and give Council an opportunity to ask questions and become more comfortable with our rates (see attached Supporting Document - 2/22/2016); said most people are familiar with our situation; Gahanna is a master meter City; which means Columbus provides us water; the meters are beyond our boundaries; once passed through master meter then Columbus is no longer involved with that water; 152 miles of water lines; we have over 10,000 water meters that we maintain; Gahanna sends sewage outside of our City to Columbus for them to process; Gahanna is responsible for maintaining the collection system within the City of Gahanna; we also manage about 10,000 customer accounts; we have one utility foreman, 7 equipment operators and 3 billing specialists that maintain all of that; want to pass around a document; if you look at it you see the blue line; that line represents the City of Columbus charges to the City of Gahanna since 2008; in orange is the amount that Gahanna is charging our customers each year since 2008; the City of Columbus, when you average their increases you can see a 4.06% increase each year; in 2009 Gahanna lowered the rates; we found ourselves in a situation where we had carryover; we had too much money; needed to buy down some rates; we did that in 2010 and also in 2011; paid close attention to the carryover; then had to begin raising our rates again; we were getting too low; comparing 2008 with the 2016 rate and average it and compound; we raised our rates on average 2.25% each year; in 2008 you see 42% box; the space between is the money we use to maintain everything in the City of Gahanna; in 2016, only \$5.02 per thousand gallons stays here in Gahanna; just wanted to give an update where we are; rates may go up next year; the next thing is the chart at the bottom; we looked at an average residential bill; average is 13 thousand gallons; then went out and looked at many other communities and looked at how much it would cost for 13 thousand gallons in another community; where Columbus maintained the water distribution system, the average is \$195.01; those six communities are listed in the report; also looked a 11 communities and averaged 13 thousand gallons and the average was \$202.89; moral of the story is that our price is competitive; even with the communities where

Columbus is maintaining the distribution system; might go up next year; still keeps us competitive; talking about Columbus maintaining, from what we gather, Columbus does not maintain their sanitary lines; Columbus' contract gives the communities a certain number of breaks; Whitehall is permitted 17 breaks in a year; any further after that the community pays for that; if the community has overages for 3 consecutive years the community has to replace the line; Larick said it is clear we have a fair structure in comparison to our neighbors; thanked Franey for the information; Angelou asked if we can see the number of feet of the water line and those demographics; Franey said that information is in the report; McGregor asked how much is Columbus in comparison; Franey said \$154.22 is for Columbus; if you live within the City of Columbus; you are charged for outgoing water of what comes in; Schnetzer asked if there was a list of other cities set up like Gahanna; those that are master-meter; Franey said yes; Schnetzer asked about the fee for Columbus and if there was a differentiator; Franey said that is what all master meter communities are charged; Metzbower asked how this was obtained; Franey said Columbus puts out a chart; they put it in cubic feet so there is a conversion; with other communities you have to go online and look at their rates; after we put together what we thought we contacted the communities to ensure that is what they would be charging; Larick said there is a lot of contributors; if you use dramatically less there will be less in the comparative; Leeseberg said meter inspections vary from community to community; Angelou asked what it meant to be a master meter community; Franey said we get water in bulk through those meters; if we were not a master meter community we would be an extension of Columbus; we would not know how they are getting the water to our customers; they would then build our customers; Larick asked if she can do a comparative for water, sewer, trash for comparative communities to include Columbus; Franey said we can do a comparison for those that charge for their refuse; certainly the resident is paying for it through taxes; we can call any that are charging and note which ones are not; Schnetzer said that is an individual agreement; our rate may be different than other communities; Leeseberg said monthly charge is due to can size; can look at changing that; Metzbower said there is a big difference in bulk trash.

[2016-0064](#)

Supporting Document - 2/22/2016

ADJOURNMENT

8:27 p.m.

Kayla Holbrook, Reporting

