



# City of Gahanna

## Meeting Minutes

### Finance Committee

200 South Hamilton Road  
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

*Jamie Leeseberg, Chair*  
*Brian Metzbower, President*  
*Stephen A. Renner, Vice President*  
*Karen J. Angelou*  
*Brian D. Larick*  
*Nancy R. McGregor*  
*Michael Schnetzer*

*April Beggerow, CMC, Clerk of Council*

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Monday, August 26, 2019

Council Committee Room

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#### **\*Immediately Following Committee of the Whole**

#### **A. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Leeseberg called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:36p.m.

#### **B. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

[2019-0087](#)

Sidewalk Program Discussion

Mr. Leeseberg asked about a follow up to a proposed sidewalk program discussed last month.

Mr. Crawford said that the CNA sheets have been formulated with what would look like a direct copy of the Westerville program which is a 5 year program with the city covering everything. It can be tailored as necessary to be a 5 year or 10 year program or coincide with the street program. Council can decide how they would want it to look.

Mr. Larick asked what the city was looking at as far as the assessment process.

Mr. Crawford explained the Westerville program has the city divided up in 5 districts. They go out to each zone for the year, mark the necessary areas for removal and remove and replace street trees as needed. They have gotten away from the assessment program which has become cumbersome.

Mr. Larick asked how the city sees managing this.

Mr. Crawford said we have multiple ways of addressing. One is as part of the street program, or an option to split up into quadrants and that additional staffing would be needed to have it completed.

Mr. Schnetzer said that the first conversations back in July were just initial discussions and that all Council is looking for is some sort of instruction on how it would be administered and then Council would draft some form of legislation to tie it together. He said his opinion of where we were at was looking for the administration to come forward with an opinion and then it could be openly debated.

Mayor Kneeland said that the only problem with tying it to the street program would be that you would be missing the worst sidewalk infrastructure by doing it that way. But there needs to be more feet on the street to make anything happen.

Mr. Schnetzer replied that what he's hearing is more of a preference for the zone type of program.

Mr. Moorehead said that the worst sidewalks are going to be spread throughout the city. The city of Powell had a zone approach which he thought would fit well, but also a city-wide assessment of any gap larger than 2 inches which can be viewed as a public safety issue. It required someone to walk the sidewalks in the City.

Mr. Crawford said he felt the zone approach was the easiest cleanest option.

Mr. Metzbower said he was a fan of the sunset provision that would put together a plan for like 5 years. Then in 5 years Council can revisit to see what worked and what didn't.

Mrs. McGregor said that she turned in a sidewalk on Hamilton road that wouldn't have shown up on the Street program that was caused by street trees. They corrected it and took down the trees but she was happy they replaced the trees with a different variety. She asked we set aside a certain set of money but it may not have been enough and what would happen if there wasn't enough.

Mr. Schnetzer said that his understanding of the Westerville program is that they go out, grade and then come up with an estimate that is appropriated the following year. If we were to follow that program, we would grade in 2020 and appropriate in 2021 to do the work.

Mayor Kneeland said that any money placed this year was just seed money.

Mr. Crawford said that he averaged Westerville's program over 5 years for the fully funded program and rounded up to \$600,000 to get this program off the ground.

Mrs. McGregor asked if the homeowners would be paying back anything that wasn't ADA or street tree related.

Mr. Crawford replied that the city would cover everything.

Mr. Leeseberg said that the administration's proposal would be for the city to pay for all sidewalk repair no matter what the cause was.

Mayor Kneeland replied that we originally talked about some reimbursement by homeowners but because of the management of it...

Mr. Schnetzer said so hypothetical, if a homeowner goes and puts rock salt out on the sidewalk the city gets to pick that up.

Mr. Leeseberg said that what the original plan proposed was Westerville's original plan which was through some money in and assess the homeowners and they pay it back over a couple years as a revolving loan. When that money comes back in, you use it to prepare the next section. In the current Capital Needs Assessment as I see it, there is just seed money and we pay for everything, there is no reimbursement.

Mrs. McGregor said that it seems to me, if it's not ADA or street tree related, they're responsible for it and they should be paying us back whether it's over three years or five years, or whatever we decide it should be a payback.

Mr. Leeseberg replied that it would just be an assessment on the property taxes like they do on sewer lines or water lines, things like that, you do it all the time. And the property taxes are paid over a period of time.

Mr. Metzbower asked what the citizen's recourse if they don't agree with the assessment.

Mr. Moorehead replied that part of the inspection process would involve going to each residence, log the problem on the property, photograph it, note the address and file it, size of repair and reason and then meet with the resident that had the disagreement, find property pins in case of

boundary disputes. Lots of administrative work and sometimes there would be an agree to disagree.

Mr. Metzbower asked if there was a commission.

Mr. Moorehead replied that it was city staff and the Council was the body to approve the assessment.

Mr. Ewald said BZA, administrative order.

Mr. Larick said he was just trying to understand, the \$100,000 level. Is that just based on they're now at a \$100,000 a year assessment level? Regardless of whether they charge them or not. Is it the sidewalks are not at \$100,000? Between charging and not charging, if we don't have a program to recoup the cost, it costs roughly \$100,000. But if we do recoup the cost, its \$100,000 less. In my head what I'm hearing is, I'm just not making the numbers work.

Mr. Crawford replied, that basically, from what I've found 1/6th of the program has been homeowner responsibility, the rest has been theirs.

Mr. Larick said got it, so there may be a half million dollars of sidewalks, but the majority of it has been defined as a tree or whatever.

Mrs. Angelou asked if TIF money could be used.

Mrs. Bury said that it would be considered as infrastructure so as long as it was servicing the TIF area it could be.

Mr. Larick asked if it would make sense to do an assessment of condition cycle. In that give an understanding of cause to understand what the situation is.

Mr. Crawford said it would be great, that we were trying to put something together with the least amount of people in the office.

Mr. Larick said that there is a significant amount that will probably reduce dramatically but until we know, we don't know. But it would seem to make sense to use 2020 as an assessment be it by quadrant or whole city, whatever makes sense. That gives us a picture of severity and volume and gives us an understanding on how to approach.

Mr. Leeseberg asked if we have an idea what streets we want to work on next year.

Mr. Crawford replied yes.

Mr. Leeseberg said that why don't we start with assessing those sidewalks for those roads, find some, so we can get some new sidewalks next year because if we don't assess until next year, we're looking at not doing repairs until 2021 and at that point we've already got a contract and pouring contract. So we already know the top 10 offenders, get some criteria together whatever it is, but we just put some sidewalks in with street.

Mr. Larick said now you're just rolling it into the street program?

Mr. Leeseberg said while we're out there, we replace waterlines, sewer, sanitary sewer, as we need it, we tear it all out and replace it.

Mayor Kneeland said just next year though.

Mr. Schnetzer thanked Mr. Crawford and said he appreciated that he examined this as much as he had. He said he does want to recognize that additional staffing may need added and he's on board with adding as needed.

Mr. Crawford said they need to finish their street ratings to get the list together and work out the quantities which would be late this year so he wasn't sure about having an accurate CNA sheet for 2020.

Mr. Leeseberg said he was willing to throw out a budget number \$100,000- \$200,000 worth of additional sidewalks for next year. That's the easy way to do it as far as a CNA sheet.

Mr. Crawford said we will also need staff to support this. We're already stretched to the max and understaffed how it currently is. We're looking to doubling the street program for 2020 as well, potentially a curb program, and maybe a reduced or a fraction sidewalk program. A full time person for sidewalk could be used for sidewalk and many other things. Of course we'll need staff members for a doubled street program as well as a curb program, we just can't handle those things with our current staff or come anywhere close to handling it.

Mr. Larick asked if it is the opinion of council that this is primarily a city funded program.

Mr. Schnetzer said that he understands that it takes a lot of effort to chase \$100,000 a year but he agrees that some sort of sample population is what is needed. If it's \$100,000 great, but if it's more like

\$300,000 then we should look at some sort of assessment.

Mr. Leeseberg said that in a 9-10 year time frame the program was 1.4 million dollars in the hole, the program was. For the City of Westerville to get paid back, at one point they were 1.4 million dollars in the hole and then it finally worked its way down to nothing.

Mr. Metzbower asked if it was worth going after the worst offenders first.

Mr. Crawford replied that one of the thoughts they had was putting money forward to have an actual assessment next year. Hiring a company to do a pretty blanket assessment of entire city or maybe a portion of the city and put pen to paper, this is what we expect.

Mr. Larrick said doesn't it make sense to assess where we are and (inaudible).

Mr. Schnetzer asked what the reasonable next step is.

Mr. Crawford replied that it would be to assess the situation next year through a contractor to see what the program is going to look like. If we can get a sample of a few different areas then we can come back and say this is how it should look. So get the assessments and then the following year we can decide how we want it to look.

Mr. Larick said you're not proposing to take a quarter of the city and assess it, you're looking at a random selection within the city. If you do a random selection, that's not how we would contract to fix. So if the expectation is we would do a city wide assessment and do the worst or if the expectation would be to do a quadrant, that's how we would assess. Because that's literally what the program would look like.

Mayor Kneeland said what if we take this back, come back with more of a clear path where it's going to go because there has to be some evaluation take place.

Plan is to bring back in a month.

#### [2019-0094](#)

Capital Needs Assessment 2020 to 2024

Mr. Leeseberg said that this was added as a request for a discussion amongst ourselves but the idea was for Council to give the administration ideas what we would love to see in the budget.

Mr. Schnetzer said his concern is that we will have these strategic items down the road that we are not well prepared for. I see a laundry list of

deferred capital and there is plenty of room to make up for underfunding and in some cases no funding in recent years past, what makes sense is to expedite some of that deferred capital, things like Creekside drainage, or doubling the streets program. All of that stuff seems logical to me, what I'd also advocate would be to refresh Go Forward Gahanna in 2020 and appropriating some money so in Jan-Feb-Mar that can occur that's where the strategic planning for SW floodplain park can begin to take hold. Go forward was supposed to be refreshed after 5 years and it's been 6.

Mr. Leeseberg said what he would love to see is parks back up to 2018 level, PD back to 2017-2018 level and increase in street program.

Mrs. Angelou said she's thinking of the core things, safety, roads, infrastructure and quality of life.

Mr. Larick said that as we look at the 2020 budget its doing the things needed to help catch us up. Reassessing the go forward program, updating it to current. We can appropriate supplemental in 2020.

Mrs. McGregor asked about funding the SOM and how much that was.

Mrs. Bury said departments are currently working on that and then Finance will add in the salaries. Directors will have their details in by September 9th. So there is no report now but it is being worked on.

Council discussed the Big Walnut trail and told Mr. Barr that they still desired Parks & Recreation to keep working on that project.