

COVINGTON VILLAGE COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

October 23, 2023

Mayor Ed McCord called the special meeting to order at 6:00PM. The following roll call was taken for council:

Council Members Present:

- Jesse Reynolds
- Amy Welborn
- Julie Blumenstock
- Dawn Duff
- Keith Warner
- Derrick Canan

Non-member Staff participating:

- Rhonda Gill - Fiscal Officer
- Kyle Hinkelman - Village Administrator
- Tim Cline – Police Sergeant
- Ben Denson – Public Works Director
- Ray Kimmel – Water Supervisor
- Greg Van De Grift – Wastewater Supervisor

Visitors – Public Comment

None

Discussion Items

Mr. Hinkelman stated this is the second year for the Budget Work Session and expressed his hope that this meeting will allow a clearer understanding of each department's needs. He continued that each department head is present to explain items they completed in 2023; goals and objectives for 2024, and a list of each department's wants and needs.

He also noted that no formal decisions are made at this meeting as the final budget will be adopted on December 4, 2023. Mr. Hinkelman spoke generally about the budget, noting that the proposed budget reflects a 2% salary increase for all employees. He discussed which salaries are funded in each fund, general fund priorities, and anticipated capital expenditures.

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Sgt. Tim Cline discussed the Police Budget including the impact of the personnel changes including three retirements in the department. He noted that additional expenditures would be necessary to outfit new officers, purchase service weapons, and get them the necessary training. He noted additional training requirements from the State of Ohio and the lack of local training opportunities.

Sgt. Cline noted that the department would like to purchase a drone in 2024 at a cost of \$6,000, with additional training costs. This would allow the department to utilize the equipment for many purposes, including helping serve the needs of the other departments in the Village.

In discussing the police staffing levels, he noted that he still believes the Village needs to get to seven (7) officers, as previously discussed, but understands the 2024 budget will not reflect that happening with the salary adjustments made in 2023.

Mayor McCord commented that it was a compliment to the past and present Council for the SRO program since 2015. As a past school administrator, it is important to have a good relationship between school personnel, parents, and kids. It is great to see how the school and council support the program.

Ben Denson, Public Works Supervisor, reported on all of the work completed by the Street and Parks crews over the last year. Mr. Hinkelman noted where the salaries of employees will fall in 2024 to try and help manage the limited revenue into the Street fund. He also noted that the largest expenditure in 2024 would be the engineering costs associated with the future US36 project.

Mr. Denson reported the street department is looking to purchase a new truck bed in 2024 that would be utilized for snow removal and salting as well as other purposes.

Mayor McCord commended Mr. Denson and all the street crew for beautifying Community Park. He noted that he has heard a lot of great comments about how nice the park looks. Mayor McCord suggested that in 2024 or 2025 the Village replace the steps down to the ballfields and provide additional signage to show the location of the AED units.

Mr. Hinkelman stated the Village had applied for grants to replace the steps and signage in Community Park through two grant agencies in the amount of \$45,000, but they did not receive any funding in 2023. He noted they would continue to apply for grants in 2024 to try and get funding for that project.

Ray Kimmel, Water Supervisor, reported on the work completed in the water department including the large water towers being painted and fire hydrants were flushed (except for the one at Pearl and St. Rt. 41) for 2023.

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Mr. Kimmel discussed the wells in the Village and Mr. Hinkelman noted Mr. Kimmel has worked hard with the EPA to keep wells open, as it is unknown where the Village will be able to locate new wells in the future. Mr. Kimmel noted additional work completed in and around Schoolhouse Park to correct old issues, and noted how the Village is now able to isolate the small water tower from the large water tower, which wasn't possible before this year.

Mr. Kimmel discussed goals for 2024 which include additional maintenance to two wells that will need to be rehabilitated. Mr. Hinkelman noted the estimate for the work is \$105,000 to complete. Mr. Kimmel explained that the two wells need to be brought up to safety standards by installing turn off valves and being cleaned and painted. He also noted the desire for a bushhog at a cost of \$11,179. Mr. Kimmel also requested consideration of an additional pay increase to keep the department competitive with the surrounding communities and the replacement of Mr. Boehringer, who retired earlier in the year, in the utilities department.

Mr. Hinkelman added the Village will be replacing meters, with the focus on the commercial meters initially. These meters are more expensive and will be placed with the largest users first.

Greg Van De Grift, Wastewater Supervisor, discussed the completed projects for 2023 and the needs for 2024. He noted that the majority of the costs cannot be estimated yet, as the new plant will likely require some adjustments once it is running and costs are more standard. He noted that two capital items for consideration would be a vac truck, so the Village could do their own services, and a trailer equipped for all departments to take out on repairs.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any questions from the public, from the Council, or from the Staff pertaining to the budget and there were none. He noted that he would take all of the comments and suggestions and incorporate them into the 2024 Budget for consideration in December. He requested that if anyone have any additional items for consideration that they send him it via email and he will see what can be done.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Warner, seconded by Mr. Canan. The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 PM.

Fiscal Officer

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Edward J. McLeod", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor

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