

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
of November 15, 2021

In Attendance: **Vermilion City Council:** *Steve Herron, President of Council; Monica Stark, Council at Large; Frank Loucka, Ward Two; Steve Holovacs, Ward Three; Barb Brady, Ward Four; Brian Holmes, Ward Five. Absent: Emily Skahen, Ward One*

Administration: *Jim Forthofer, Mayor; Susan Anderson, Law Director; Tony Valerius, Service Director*

Call to Order: Barb Brady, Chairwoman, RESOLVED THAT this Finance Committee comprised of the committee of the whole does now come to order.

TOPIC ONE: Review of Ordinance 2021-70 (Icebreaking Contract)

T. Valerius said the city received bids and they received one bid from South Shore Dredge & Dock. Due to the configuration of the rebuilt pier on the east side of the river, he had to increase his price by \$5,000 to adequately clean ice out of that area. The reconfigured east side pier is smooth up to the end and it jets out 10' and loops around, and the 10' is a perfect area for ice to jam up against and start backing up, so he has reconfigured his barge to hold two excavators, so he can effectively clean out this area while the other excavator is pushing it down towards the river. B. Brady asked if the \$5,000 is an upfront cost. T. Valerius said yes it is part of the mobilization, but he did bump up his hourly rate as well by \$100.00.

F. Loucka said there is no option as it has to be done, but this is another example of the Corp of Engineers maybe not totally understanding what happens on the Vermilion River, but he is the only game in town, and he has 20 years' experience on when to break the ice and how to handle it on the river.

B. Brady asked if South Shore is the one who decides when he needs to break. T. Valerius said yes. F. Loucka said he is the expert. B. Brady said if it is not his decision, then the city gets charged more if the city tells him not to break and he comes. Mayor Forthofer said it is his decision unless it is the city's decision. T. Valerius said there have been times he has called him in because he knew what was happening on Riverside at 11:00 p.m., so he has come in and done it, and there have been times when he went out there on his own. It is based on the weather and there may be 4" of ice on the river and he is out there, but he is looking to see if freezing temperatures are expected.

B. Brady said the \$5 million Marcy Kaptur is giving the city is something they need to be careful about on how it is used. Mayor Forthofer said he is going to a meeting on Wednesday with the Army Corp of Engineers regarding the west pier.

F. Loucka said historically the river has never been dredged south from the bridge until the last 10 years, and when they dredged up by the last marina by the Olympic Club and the Riverview Marina it made a huge difference in potential flooding on

the river because you had much more potential flow, so now the river has been dredged up to the bridge and they would hope that in working with Marcy Kaptur and the Army Corp that they would extend the benefit of dredging up to the Olympic Club because you have more potential flow volume to minimize flooding.

B. Brady asked the Mayor if he will make the ice flow a top priority when he attends this meeting. Mayor Forthofer said the meeting is to focus on the west pier.

Pat Stein of 5718 Huron Street asked what the length of the icebreaking contract was. She recalled it was a very short period of time. T. Valerius said it runs from January 1, 2022 – February 28, 2022. Pat Stein thought this was a short period of time because the spring ice has been bad the last couple years. T. Valerius said last year the big break was February 23 or 24. F. Loucka said there is an option to where the contract can be extended. He will still be available on request after February 28. Mayor Forthofer said two years ago there was no ice whatsoever, so they can't have a long contract on the hopes that it is going to be icy all the time and then waste that money. P. Stein asked how much is the extension? T. Valerius assumed he would do it hourly, but he does not know because since he has been Service Director they have never had to go beyond February 28.

TOPIC TWO: City's Insurance Coverage

S. Herron said the only reason he wanted this on the agenda was to give the administration the opportunity to respond to Mr. Pearl's comments. He said Mr. Pearl had been with the city for a long time and he felt he had an opportunity and deserved the right to come in. He said he certainly doesn't believe in sandbagging anybody, so he wanted Amy Hendricks or anyone else in the administration to have the opportunity to respond. He said Ms. Hendricks is not present but she sent council a couple of written statements with some information.

B. Brady said the finance director's explanation gave her a better understanding of what 'Agent of Record' meant. S. Herron agreed. S. Holovacs said the last contract they did a one-year term, so maybe they can do this again so they can get back into what is going on and look at more of their local businesses getting involved. B. Brady asked if he meant for the city to start earlier. S. Holovacs said yes to get people involved quicker. S. Herron said it seemed to be in the industry that when you enter into an agreement that a couple of years is really necessary to provide good coverage, but he does not know if this is true or not. He said he agrees with Steve Holovacs. He recalls they always received information to advise council what was up. B. Brady said J. Pearl always came in and addressed council. S. Herron agreed and said they just want fairness.

Mayor Forthofer said previously they always had multi-year contracts and this one probably should have been written as a multi-year contract and it wasn't.

Jerry Pearl of 6860 Cliffside said he has been a 38-year resident and has owned a building at 5237 Liberty Avenue. He asked about the procedure and how everything was done. To him to get the bid specs on October 25, and an hour later to get an 'Agent of Record' telling him he cannot go to the market – he only wanted two

markets. They had the same problem in Elyria when they wrote the Community College, so all the agents got together and talked to the people at the administration and each agent quoted three companies and if there was a conflict they worked it out. So, each agent had an opportunity to go to their company. The reason you go to their company is they believe that company is going to give them a better premium. Premiums are based on volume with companies, so if you have a big volume with a company and they have made money off that, they are going to give you a better premium of credits on the proposal that you're submitting. He understands the logic, but he sent his letter back in September and in September he would have had enough time to do everything, and he would have only requested the two companies. He wouldn't have requested 15 or 20. He said procedurally he thinks it was a "snooker" and feels badly because he is a low vehicle, and he doesn't kick dogs or beat up kids. He is a nice guy, and they have a business in town. He has four children that went to Vermilion High School – three homecoming queens. He wanted to voice his concern. He said they might have a lot of agents that want to quote it, but he hopes when the city comes to him and says, "Will you sponsor a basketball team, well you know what I really don't know that we want to do that. When you get the need for some help in the parks – I don't know if we really want to do that. He said keep this in mind, so you may want a nickel, but you may have lost more than that.

B. Brady said Mr. Pearl's suggestion about each agency that wants to quote – this sounds like a reasonable thing to do.

Susan Anderson said in terms of the 'Agent of Record' this is not something the city controls. This is insurance regulations, and the city has a current contract with Fitzgibbons Arnold, and you do have a renewal coming in at the end of the year, so she thinks the concern was that the city needed to start gathering numbers to know what they were looking at for the renewal. She didn't believe there was any intent to foreclose anyone else, but in terms of getting those numbers the city had to sign the 'Agent of Record' so that the numbers could be gathered. J. Pearl said the 'Agent of Record' negates the other agent from having an opportunity to go to that market, so if all you have is 10 markets that do municipalities and he writes an 'Agent of Record' for each one, who else will quote. He suggested that whatever 'Agent of Record' letters that went out, they want to see each one of those quotes and he wants to make sure the city gets the benefit of having the most competitive price they can get instead of just blocking the market, and this is what they did with the college. If he had two companies he got those two, somebody else had the other two companies, then it worked out perfect, so this is another alternative in making multi-year. If it is that big of an investment, then why not put it out annually – why do you put the icebreaker out annually? S. Anderson said in her experience these kind of contracts of brokers are usually multi-year because it does take some learning curve to get into knowing the employee benefit packages and the terms and conditions. It is common for there to be a multi-year contract, but you certainly can do it every year, but it is a difficult thing because insurance companies are not going to give you hard numbers on renewals until very close to the end because they want to see your claims experience. J. Pearl said, "Do not mix up hospitalization with P&C – there is a difference between the two of them. Property and Casualty deals with buildings and fire departments, not how many sick people

they have in their payroll. B. Brady said she thought they were pretty well set for this year, so they should agree to look at it...

Mayor Forthofer responded by saying the suggestion that the Administration snookered is absolutely ridiculous. We don't snooker anyone, and we brought an even and fair bidding, and the veiled threat if we don't pick your company, then somehow you won't play ball with the rest of the city is really unbecoming. We try and bid for the best thing for the residents of Vermilion. Sometimes they are local people, sometimes they are not. That's true in every contract they bid, but they bid evenly and equally, and we don't snooker anyone! J. Pearl said, "When I sent you a letter the day they had a council meeting and the same day at 1:00 p.m. I get a copy of the 'Agent of Record', this smells to me and he doesn't care how he puts it. B. Brady said this year they are pretty well set. She asked when the contract expires. G. Fisher said December 31 and she would need to have legislation prepared for the December 6 council meeting. B. Brady asked next year in September they need the administration to bring a procedure so they can buffer this a little bit. She asked Gwen if she could remind the administration. G. Fisher said she would put it in her tickler file. She asked Council if they wanted the ordinance to be written for one year or for multi-year. B. Brady said she feels that Arnold made a mistake by not making it a multi-year. S. Herron said they can look at this next September by making it a multi-year contract, which might give the company that has it now a benefit because they will be involved at looking at all kinds of stuff. He said they can even start looking at it in August. He asked if they want to be in a position to look at this yearly or with multi-year contracts that gives the benefit of a company being able better to service the city. He suggested the clerk draw up the legislation as a single year.

Drew Werley of 5016 Timberview said when Jerry Pearl said this whole insurance thing smells, well it smelled 11 months ago when this came up the last time. He is not saying you guys are dragging your feet, but magically the packets didn't get sent out to everybody, and he knows somebody wasn't here that normally would handle that – there is some worker that said he was going to and then didn't hand out the packets and allegedly they were all scanned and emailed, but nobody got that email. He thinks there were three or four of the council members that said, "Hey, I will vote if I have to, but I really don't want to". I wish they would have made a motion to push it off so they could read that stuff. A couple of you guys voted no on that to support somebody local. Mr. Pearl has been handling our insurance for a long time and is a good guy. This is type of business that is heavily regulated by the state and federal government and to see it being handcuffed by local government is a little ridiculous. I will try and keep my language nice – I like the word snookered, but it does seem like bullshit when he comes out. S. Herron said they do not tolerate it. D. Werley said that is fine, but he doesn't tolerate shit like this because this is wrong. S. Herron said he thinks he is done for the night. B. Brady said, "Let's stop. I think we are done. D. Werley said what they did was completely wrong, and they should change how they are going to do it for the future. He noted that Brian said last time that they need to take a look at this earlier and they should do that, but the way they did this snooker – he will use this word because what he would say is much worst. It smells, it's bad and it is just bad news. B. Brady said they will pull this up in August and they will come back then.

TOPIC THREE: Review of Ordinance 2021-71 (Full-Time Salary of Bill DiFucci, Building Official)

S. Herron thought the question was moot – is that correct? Mayor Forthofer recommended to have this legislation taken off the agenda. B. Brady asked him if they could let the audience know why. Mayor Forthofer said this morning he received a letter of resignation from Mr. DiFucci, so the review of his salary is irrelevant.

TOPIC FOUR: Administration Competitive Compensation Adjustments

Mayor Forthofer said they have another run at something that they tried a couple months ago. There are several factors that are confronting the city right now putting them in a bad disadvantage situation. Over the past several years and years of financial problems in the city they have not kept up with salaries for certain key positions. This has left them behind and this is definitely an employee's job market. The point is, that if they lose people from the City of Vermilion they are going to have a very difficult time replacing them at the current salary levels that we have. The intent of what he sent around by email earlier today and what he passed out now is to bring up to comparable standards of the salaries in the City of Vermilion to make us competitive with surrounding like communities, so that we may both retain the employees that we have and be able to replace them without having to come back to council to change the pay structure if they need to hire someone else. He said before council is a chart that addresses both the building department, the utilities department, and the finance department. It shows what the salaries have been and what the competitive salaries are in the neighboring communities, and what they recommend the salaries should be adjusted to in order to be comparable with those other salaries. What it amounts to is that in the building and utilities department to be comparable with other building and utilities departments it is essentially a \$2.50 an hour raise and in the finance department, again to be competitive with like communities it is about a \$5.00 an hour raise. The net over the period of a year is a roughly \$56,000 and he would recommend that council prepare an ordinance to this effect and ask council for their approval. At this point, if council has questions and if he can answer them in the absence of the finance director, he will do his best.

S. Herron said he is 100% correct and he said this before that the City of Vermilion is in the same position as any other hiring agency. It has to make decisions based on the market – the value of these jobs. They have an obligation to try to keep these salaries competitive and this is not the same way they look at things as they did several years ago. It is just different. This being said, he thought it would be best brought up to the next council and the reason for this is because a couple years ago they did this. The next council came in and votes changed, and it was kind of erased, so he thinks it is a permanent issue and it is very important and agrees with the administration, but he is just one vote, but frankly he feels this should not be done during this council.

S. Holovacs agreed with this as he is gone in a month and Frank and Emily will be gone, but one thing he would like to see because he used to handle contracts for Consumers, Grafton, and Hull – it's a total compensation package. What the total cost is that you're comparing. You just can't compare wages – what is the vacation, what is the hospitalization cost per person, do all the other communities have longevity. When you put this together, what is the cost per employee. If you're \$4.00 or \$5.00 low after being competitive, then he thinks we are low, but if you have a higher hospitalization and more vacation weeks, that's a benefit and this is how you would handle a contract. A lot of times it didn't go low in the wages, but it went into other benefits, so he thinks in the future they need to look at the whole compensation package – not just the hourly rate because this is also costs the city money in the long run.

M. Stark said she was very pleased that the administration brought this back to council. She knows they brought this forward to council a few months back and they had asked the administration to revise it a little bit. She was feeling bad that it hadn't been brought back to them because she agrees they need to pay the employees what they are worth because they want to keep their employees. If everybody agrees that they want to push this until the next council that is fine, but if they want to do it now, then that is fine too. She definitely thinks this needs to move forward whether it is now or at the beginning of the year, but she is 100% behind bringing their employees to where they need to be.

B. Brady said she is a little confused – they have the me-too agreement and if they had the me-too agreement she would think that was controlling their salaries. She could not agree with the fact that they do large increases and the me-too. She thought they need to pick. Either they include these people under the union agreement and the me-too contract, or they give them raises based on some other thing. She doesn't see taking this chart and giving people a raise and on top of the raise a raise that the 860 initiated. Doing both does not make sense to her. She asked the Mayor how many applications he got for Anne Maiden's job. Mayor Forthofer said five he believes. B. Brady said there are five people that think they are paying enough. Mayor Forthofer said they are interviewing five, but they have not gotten to the salary discussion yet.

Mayor Forthofer said for instance as Mayor they hired him for all four years and to do things to make the city move forward – not three or three and three quarters – he would imagine likewise the council is being asked to make decisions for all two of their years. He understands S. Herron's suggestion to put it off until another council, but he thinks this is a decision that this council should make, and then if the next council wants to make another decision, then they can. However, this is an issue that has come up before and there are other salaries that are addressed and enacted without regard for what the next council might do, so he is suggesting they vote on this one.

S. Herron said he thinks this is a little bit different from some of those comparisons because this is kind of an approach that involves several of their city employees and it is more of a philosophical viewpoint from a council persons vote in that they have a lot of people they need to keep competitive. They were not having this discussion

a year ago because the economic environment wasn't the way it was a year ago, so he totally respects and agrees with the administration's decision. He said they had a situation where four or five raises were given and all it did was create a big problem at City Hall because those benefits went away, and it had to do with the new council. He feels that it is in the best interest of the city to wait seven weeks, but he certainly respects what his fellow council members say as this is just his opinion.

Mayor Forthofer said there was a chart put forth in front of council for building and utilities, and he also passed out a separate sheet for the Administrative Assistant in the Police Department (Chrystal Deverick) and she has fallen behind badly too, so he asked if this could be addressed this year. S. Holovacs said if you push one you push them all.

B. Brady said another thing she has a hard time with is longevity. If you have a good employee then what you want to do is keep them. She said they have a problem with the chart because they limit how far it goes, so they have employees here that have only been with us two or three years and they are pushing their hourly rate to where people in other cities have been there 20 years, so this does not make sense to her. You need to be able to know that as you move year to year you're going to make more and more, so you look forward to waging increases, and they are taking this away. Mayor Forthofer said it is the individuals' salaries that fall below market, so it really doesn't matter what longevity is – if they are going to hire someone for one of their departments, then they can't talk about longevity because they don't have any. B. Brady said she is saying that if somebody is making \$25.00 an hour and they know that this is as much they can make other than their 2% a year – they're not going to look? She said she will look a lot quicker in that situation if she knows that next year she will make \$25.50, and they will move forward. To her this is squashes and the longevity they have. She said she is coming from the private sector and totally admits that, and the private sector does not function like this. They give raises according to how well people work. She said this is also civil service and they are dividing people up that were making the same amount of money and now they're deciding that one group should make a lot more than the other group – she did not think this is how civil service worked.

Mayor Forthofer said he spent 35 years in private and some time in public too and it is different. For instance, if you look at the job classifications in different communities they are different then they are here for another classification. This is just a function. There are certain jobs that carry with it more risks and responsibility for possible litigation if they are not right and they are paid more than ones that don't. They are just different jobs, just like in the private sector a certain machinist is paid more than another machinist. B. Brady said they were hired in that way. These people were hired in at the same rate and now you're choosing to split them. S. Herron said they are in different classifications, and they are in a totally different market. He cannot stress this enough. This is different and six months ago people were going to Cedar Point for a ton of money, but bottom line is, that it is just a different situation. He thinks the administration is filling its obligation to keep the salaries competitive. He thinks they have a disagreement on timing.

F. Loucka agreed with S. Holovacs that they need to look at the total compensation package. S. Holovacs said it is a lot of money – if you have a \$20,000 a year hospitalization compared to a \$15,000 it is \$5,000 extra and the city was really high up to \$32,000 at one time and they brought it down. They saved thousands of dollars, but they're still one of the best hospitalization programs. Does every community have longevity – he doesn't know. Does every community have up to five weeks where some of the older members have eight weeks' vacation? This is a heck of a benefit. A lot of the residents in this town do not realize that some of the older members in the community have up to eight weeks' vacation, so let's be honest about it – put the package together and if they are low in dollars, then give them a raise, but if the total package is too high then you're giving them a benefit on the other end or look at changing that benefit and giving them more money. It works both ways when you negotiate.

Susan Anderson added that she represents a lot of different public entities and other municipalities, school boards, and they're all struggling to have enough staff right now because the market is what it is. When you're looking at comparables, you are right that you have to look at the total package, but if the concern is recruitment and retention, those employees in her experience are looking at base wages – they're looking at what their hourly rate is compared to what the hourly rate is of the folks that are at a different city. By and large, insurance packages in municipalities are all very generous. There may be a change or maybe a difference in employee contribution from 10% a month to 12% or 15%, but all municipal insurance packages are pretty generous compared to the private sector, so she thinks if the concern is recruitment and retention, those employees in her experience are looking at their hourly wages and you can tell them that yes, but you're getting this other benefit, but if they're looking at the fact that they believe they can go to another place and make \$2.00 more an hour, this is going to be persuasive to them in her experience. B. Brady said then the other benefits are not as worthwhile for them. Susan Anderson said they are worthwhile – don't get her wrong, but most cities do have longevity for instance and that can vary from either a percentage of base wages or a stipend amount, so there can be variation in this, but the package across cities are all very similar, and it all evens out, and if that is the case, then employees are looking at – what is my hourly rate that I'm getting in my paycheck every two weeks or whatever the payroll is.

B. Brady asked if everybody was okay with asking the administration to come up with a total package. S. Herron thought it was a very fair thing for them to ask. B. Brady asked if there was any objection to doing this.

Chrystal Deverick, Administrative Assistant to the Police Chief said she has the same benefit package as Gwen – why is hers okay? S. Holovacs said because she works for council. C. Deverick said this is the second time this year it has been brought up. B. Brady said they are not saying their benefit package is wrong or bad. C. Deverick said she just doesn't understand how they can treat one employee better than the rest of them that are here. She thought this was extremely unfair and borderline ignorant to be honest.

Mr. DiCarlo of 320 Elberta Road said he is a new resident here and grew up in Lorain County and said it is good to be back home as he was gone 30 some odd years – 28 in the Navy and worked for the Army for five years after that teaching frequency jamming and all source intelligence, which is a flawed aspect because it is trying to tell you what tomorrow is just by the (inaudible) you have today. He thought perhaps some of the public employees seem to forget that it is a privilege to serve the public, and when they make demands perhaps they should consider that they are actually servicing the public instead of serving them.

Teresa Mosley, 1154 State Street said she was hired in 2008 as an Accounts Payable Finance Clerk and is still here, but she wanted to say that this gap has been created because nobody understands me-too isn't exactly me-too. Someone comes in with the union job in the 860, they get a step increase every six months for 3 ½ years. If an administrative employee comes in, if they're lucky they have a 90 day and a 180 day increase in pay. She did not get either one. She got one amount that she was hired at and after that all she received was whatever was negotiated in January. If nothing was negotiated, she received nothing. She said, you brought up longevity – her longevity was frozen at nothing. She was the only city employee that was frozen at nothing, and she is still here. She did vacate her full-time position and went to part-time with the city for six months in 2015 because at the time part of the finance department was outsourced. The payroll department was outsourced. Due to core research, this outsourcing was not able to give them a file to update their general ledger. This had to be done manually by her. A 45-page report into a spreadsheet that she could import. Eight hours for a bi-weekly pay, several more for anything more. She asked the finance director to go to council for a pay increase. She asked for a dime an hour and was refused. This is her experience and they do not get the same increases the 860 gets – plain and simple, and it starts at the hiring process. At 3 ½ years they're at the top of their scale and they have only had increases that they have negotiated, and even those in one year she thinks it was 2009, the union did not take their raise, but she didn't know the circumstances. B. Brady asked if she uses the step chart because this is the impression that they do. T. Mosley said in the real world they probably should, but the problem is the administrative employees stop at Step 3. The union goes to Step 8. B. Brady said this is part of her argument is that if you expand it, then you give people something to look forward to or to expect going forward. T. Mosley said they are stuck – it is not being expanded or dealt with and tonight they are hearing for the most part that they aren't willing to deal with it – let's let the next council deal with it. She said she supports each and every one of her co-workers. They work very hard – they really do, and they care about what they do, and they care about where they live. B. Brady said they are glad to have her. T. Mosley asked council to try to make this fair for everyone. S. Holovacs said he has known Teresa for a long time and is sorry to hear about this – one thing he would like to see is that when they hire someone here is your start in pay – in six months or whatever but spell it out in an ordinance so it doesn't change when the next finance director comes in and forgets about it. Take care of them from the beginning and going up. He doesn't know which way this is going to go – are you going follow the unions or are you going to be on your own because he can't say they should get both of them, but from start to the finish just like the 860 you should have something in writing that shows any new employee what you're getting and the job description of what they do, and it

should all be written out. Half of the people do not know what their job description is because he has heard this for quite a few years. He again said he was sorry this happened to her. T. Mosley said the job description evolves particularly with the pandemic. She is dealing with a lot more electronically than she ever has to and the paper to the imaging takes twice her time.

Mayor Forthofer said the idea of having a total compensation package – which he can say right now they are not going to come in that far from what other communities have – will delay this and they are probably going to have to hire a consultant because none of them have the time to take that deep dive into all of these different communities and all their analysis. They don't have time, so they are going to need to hire somebody to do the analysis and they know they are pretty comparable, and they will land right back to where they are now. No other compensation package is going to close this kind of gap. They are delaying the inevitable and in the meantime people continue to be underpaid and in the meantime people might leave, and what is going to happen is that somebody is going to come back and say, "I'll work for you, but he will have to come to council and say this person is going to need a raise. Why are we going to wait and do it then – why don't we do it now and remain competitive. They are just delaying the inevitable. B. Brady said he is asking for a 30% increase in some places. Mayor Forthofer said yes, it has been a long time since they haven't done anything. B. Brady said you have three-year employees that are hired in at a certain rate and now you want to give them a 30% increase in three years. If it was somebody that was here for.... Mayor Forthofer said he would rather complain about whatever the percentage increase is – he doesn't complain about why this wasn't done earlier.

B. Brady asked council what they wanted to do because she cannot make a decision. S. Herron said he is not dragging their feet, but he is looking at it from a realistic perspective because he saw a very difficult situation go down several years ago when a decision was made, and it was pulled right out – this is not what he wants to have happen. He tried to make the point that he agrees with the administration – this has to happen because they have good people that haven't been discussed before, so he is certainly willing to go out on a limb and stand up for his fellow government workers. He is employed by the state government so it is what it is, but he also knows reality and he know the last thing he wants to do is make a yes vote and then in January or February something happens – it happened before and he thought it was terrible situation and it was very difficult to deal with, so if they think he is trying to kick it down the can he is not. He is basing it on history being up here and going through the discussion before. Frankly, the question is – does a member of council feel that they need to support the administration in its endeavor to keep these wages competitive or do they not. Certainly, if the answer is no, then it is no, and he understands.

M. Stark MOVED, F. Loucka seconded to have legislation prepared for the raises as presented for the building, utilities, and finance clerks and for Chrystal Deverick, Administrative Assistant in the Police Department. Discussion: M. Stark said the ordinances have to go through three readings, so they have time to discuss it.

Bridget Triana said she has been working for the city since 2011 – she started as a dispatcher which was part-time. She had a full-time job dispatching in Erie County. The job was very stressful, and her husband is a fireman, so the schedules were not there as they could not both be gone on the holidays. The job opportunity opened in the building department full-time, and she took it, and she was grateful for it. She went to the building department in 2013 or 2014 and ever since then she has been so grateful from having people’s lives in her hands on the phone to dealing people’s dream houses – it was so night and day and she could breathe, so she is very grateful for the job that she has and is grateful for being close to home, and grateful for being able to be a mother, and being able to be in the community. She is all for fairness across the board. In taking the civil service test they all had to have the same credentials and they all had the same job titles. There is no doubt they need a pay raise. The economy is just booming, and she has new houses coming in every day. There is just a lot, and no one knows no one’s job unless you’re in their feet. Everyone needs a raise – there’s no doubt about it. Grocery shopping with four kids is just not feasible to feed four kids on the rate that they have. Gas Prices – She doesn’t know why it is so expensive in Vermilion compared to other communities, but that is a whole different ballgame. Everyone deserves a raise – Chrystal should not be with them – she should be on her own and she deserves a raise as well. If council wants to wait for them tonight and wait for the next, she wants everyone to hear it, so they have time to think. Again, they all deserve it, but they all deserve to be fair. They came in with the same application and they took the same civil service test. She said she might be a different ordinance – they are an ordinance, and they have the same job description even though she is building department. She just thinks they need to be fair regardless and this is all she is asking for – and a raise.

Greg Drew of 4670 Frederick Drive said he is soon to be the council elect. As a public employee for the past 25 years, he understands a lot of what the mayor has proposed, and he thinks it is very important that they take care of their employees. When they have happy employees, they have happy residents. This wage increase doesn’t seem to be that significant and council asked the mayor how many job applications he got for an open position, but you may have to fill more than what is open now if you don’t take care of your staff. He fully supports the mayor’s proposal to increase the wages and if council is not willing to do that tonight, then he will tell the residents and the employees that in January he will support this.

Melanie Wood of 1085 Vermilion Road said she works in the building department and just wanted to remind council that with Bill DiFucci leaving there is a big vacancy in their department and Anne Maiden is leaving at the end of the year also. The clerks will be the ones who are feeling the extra weight that is going to be upon them as people are learning the jobs. Just remember as you’re discussing pushing it back, they have more workload that is coming on them now.

Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS (Loucka, Holmes, Stark, Herron); 2 NAYS (Brady, Holovacs).
MOTION CARRIED.

After no further discussion came before the committee, B. Brady adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: December 13, 2021 – 6:00 p.m. @ Vermilion Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio (Immediately following the Public Hearing and Special City Council Meeting)

Transcribed by Gwen Fisher Certified Municipal Clerk