

**Village of Mariemont  
Committee of the Whole Meeting  
February 6, 2023**

Vice-Mayor Randy York called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Present were Mr. Bartlett, Ms. Geldbaugh, Dr. Lewis and Mrs. Rankin. Mrs. Brownknight arrived at 5:40 p.m. Also in attendance were Fiscal Officer Richard Ford, Police Chief Rick Hines, Service Superintendent John Scherpenberg, Tax Administrator Chuck Barlow and Senior Administrative Assistant Joannee Van Pelt.

Vice-Mayor York said at the last Council meeting the Finance Committee submitted a report relative to pay increases for Full-time, Part-time and appointed officials. Questions were raised regarding the process and rationale. The report was tabled for further discussion by the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Bartlett said in 2017 Chief Hines used benchmarking to gather data that was helpful to make the case and pass the Safety Services Levy. The Finance Committee applied the same benchmarking in 2020 for the Police Department and in 2021 all other departments were added and have continued the process. We collect data from neighboring communities of similar size. The goal is to stay competitive yet remain in the middle of the salary benchmarking which becomes the basis for the recommendations. He distributed handouts of the benchmarking data.

Fiscal Officer Ford went over the recommendations for each job role. The recommendation was most employees would receive a 3% increase, with some getting 2% or no increase. Those roles that were deemed to be below the average were given a larger increase to bring them closer to average. They did remove the Building Official and the Tennis Pro as both those positions are roles covered by a contract.

Fiscal Officer Ford reiterated that the increases with benefits will total approximately \$100,000-\$120,000. Council needs to look at how it will be funded. His recommendation would be to refer the matter to a sub-committee or the Committee of the Whole for further discussion on how increases will be funded over the coming years. In the General Fund the revenue brought in minus the expenses and encumbrances left the Village with a \$40,000 surplus. There are other sources of revenue opportunities we are trying to generate that could be coming in down the road. Using this methodology, the Village is trying to stay competitive. His personal opinion is Council should approve these increases, and take care of our employees, knowing that Council will be looking at funding plans in the future.

Mayor Brown suggested a Committee of the Whole meeting to talk about the options going forward. Mr. Bartlett said we need to do a better job figuring out what is the forecast and fine tune it to gather more detail. A clearer base line is needed to understand where we are. Council agreed to a Committee of the Whole meeting for March 2023. Dr. Lewis said given the gap that this represents, though she does not want to decrease raises, does anyone feel the increases should be backed down a little bit. The gap makes her nervous without a plan to fill it. Mr. Bartlett said last year Council gave 3% increase and still ended with a surplus of \$40,000 in the General Fund. Fiscal Officer Ford said revenues will also go up. The question is will revenue outpace expenses or vice-versa. He estimates that the investment in Star Ohio will generate \$80,000.

Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to untable the Finance report from January 23, 2023. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Ms. Geldbaugh to amend the report to remove the two contracted positions (Building Official and Tennis Pro) and to amend the Assistant Fire Chief to the current rate (\$75,000). On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Ms. Geldbaugh to accept the amended report. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

The necessary legislation will be presented at the next Council meeting for the first reading.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

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William A. Brown, Mayor

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Richard D. Ford, Fiscal Officer