

**Village of Mariemont
Council Meeting
November 27, 2023**

Mayor Bill Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Mr. Ayer, Mr. Bartlett, Mrs. Brownknight, Dr. Lewis, Mrs. Rankin, and Mr. York.

Minutes:

Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. York, to accept the Council Meeting minutes from November 13, 2023, and Committee of the Whole November 6, 2023, as written. On roll call; five ayes, no nays. (Mrs. Brownknight abstained).

Communications:

* From Building Official Holloway: October 2023 Monthly Report

Permission to Address Council:

Motion to Pay the Bills:

Mr. York moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to pay the bills. On roll call: six ayes, no nays.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer to accept the recommendation of the Rules & Law Committee which met on June 26, 2023, in Council Chambers. Present at the meeting were Rules and Law Committee members Susan Brownknight, Kelly Rankin, and Marcy Lewis. Also in attendance were Mayor Bill Brown and Building Administrator Rod Holloway. The Committee discussed the next steps in regulating sandwich signs in the Village. Rod presented a map with tentatively approved locations for permitted sandwich signs and permit fees.

Proposed fees for a sandwich sign permit are: \$250/year

Proposed max number of sandwich sign permits issued annually: 6

Proposed locations of sandwich signs were tentatively approved by the committee. However, the committee asked Rod to seek feedback regarding the locations from impacted property owners. The feedback is as follows:

- 1) Sign locations W1, W5 and W6 will NOT be permitted by impacted property owners.
- 2) However, M1 and M2 have been added.

Maps are attached.

The Committee approved the Village's Building Administrator to work with counsel to draft an ordinance for Council approval regulating sandwich signs. Attached is the legislation.

The Committee also discussed regulating geothermal installation in the Village. The Committee recommends we ensure any regulation is aligned with State of Ohio guidance. The Committee recommends that the Village only permit closed loop systems as open loop systems require access to public waterways and become much more complex to manage and regulate. Moreover, it is unclear whether any resident would have access to an appropriate water source, regardless of regulation. The Committee also discussed where drilling was allowed in

a yard. The Committee recommended only rear yards to be acceptable for drill location and drilling needed to be at a minimum, 3 feet away from a property line. Variances can be issued. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Mr. York moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to accept the recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee which met several times this year to develop a five-year capital forecast for the Village. This was one of the four elements in the Ohio Plan proposal. Those participating in this process included Finance Sub-Committee Members Rob Bartlett, Kelly Rankin and Randy York, Mayor Brown, Part-Time Village Administrator Chuck Barlow, Superintendent John Scherpenberg, Chief of Police Rick Hines and Village Engineer Chris Ertel. The team focused on the following areas: Streets, Parking Lots, Storm Water Pipes, Police Department Equipment, Fire Department Equipment, Public Spaces, Public Buildings and Service Department Equipment. Each area was assessed for items that needed significant repairs or replacement, or new items that were needed. Those items were then prioritized by year. The team then mapped that spending into the appropriate capital fund. The capital funds that were included were: Permanent Improvement Fund All, Permanent Improvement Fund Limited, the two Street Funds, and the new Dogwood Park Fund. The team also included in each fund the current cash balance, the projected revenue each fund would receive each year, and the projected ending balance for each year to ensure we were always maintaining the appropriate level of cash in each fund. After several iterations, attached is the most recent version of the projected capital spending, revenue and cash balance for each of the capital funds. Also attached is a forecast created by former Fiscal Officer, Richard Ford, of the incremental property tax income that the Village will receive as the properties located within the CRA come off of their tax abatement. The good news is for now it appears we have sufficient revenue to cover our capital needs over the next five years. To be clear, there are some projects which rely on grants or donations to be completed. If that is not available, then the committee is recommending we not proceed with those projects. There are also some projects that do not yet have an estimated cost, but we felt it was important to put a placeholder in the forecast for now. These will need to be developed and refined as we get closer to the proposed timing for those projects. It is hoped this forecast will facilitate the capital budget setting process each year including the Permanent Improvement Funds Meeting that is scheduled for December 18, 2023. The goal is to continue to update this list of assets and projects on an annual basis. Chris Ertel is exploring to see if we can use the GIS system to track all of this information versus keeping it in a spreadsheet.

Discussion ensued remarking that much work was done to prepare this report. It should be remembered that these are projections and they will be re-evaluated by future Council. It serves as a start to a proactive approach. How the data was assigned and prioritized was discussed. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to accept the recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee which met on Thursday August 31, 2023, at 4:00 pm to discuss the four different elements of the Ohio Plan proposal. Present at the meeting were Finance Committee Chair, Rob Bartlett, Finance Committee Members Kelly Rankin and Randy York. Also, present were Mayor Brown, Part-Time Administrator Chuck Barlow, Superintendent John Scherpenberg and Village Engineer Chris Ertel. One of the four elements of the Ohio Plan proposal was working on the right long term organization structure for the Village. From previous salary benchmarking work done by the Finance Committee, attached is a document which shows how our Village Office compares versus other similar sized communities. We also reached out to the Center for the Local Government, who shared that of the 21 communities that are members, only 4 (including Mariemont) do not have a full-time Village Administrator. After some discussion, the Finance Sub-Committee agreed that the long-term goal should be for us to have a full-time Village Administrator, a full-time Fiscal Officer (when Mrs. Van Pelt retires), a full-time Tax Administrator and a full-time Staff Assistant. However, no timeline has been set for reaching this end date.

Mayor Brown said future Council members cannot be bound by this. They will want to do their own evaluations.

Dr. Lewis added that the right long-term organizational structure is a subjective interpretation as there is no objective one correct structure. She has expressed previously that she is not totally comfortable that it is Council's rule to make those determinations. She has had conversations with other professionals, whom she trusts, who do not feel a Village Administrator is a necessary goal.

Mr. Bartlett said Council in the Mariemont Code Book is responsible for the Village funds. The Village funds are linked to the organizational structure, such as creating the Part-Time Administrator role which affects the budget.

Solicitor McTigue asked what happens with this report going forward. Mr. Bartlett said when Mrs. Van Pelt decides she is ready to retire, the Committee recommends consolidating her role and the part-time role of the Fiscal Officer into one role, which would result in a savings for the Village. Solicitor McTigue cautioned the discussion. It does not legally bind the Village to do anything. Mr. Bartlett said surrounding municipalities have this structure. The Village is not unique when it comes to running a municipality. Mr. Ayer said while it may not be legally binding, it does reflect research that was done by the committee by evaluating what other communities are doing and evaluating best practices. It is a viewpoint that should be strongly looked at in the future. On roll call; five ayes, one nay (Dr. Lewis dissenting).

Miscellaneous:

- Leaf Season will end the week of December 18, 2023
- The Council Meeting in December will be held Monday December 18, 2023, immediately following the Permanent Improvement meeting at 5:30. However, the Council meeting will start no later than 6:30 p.m.
- Village Offices will be Closed Monday December 25, 2023, in Observation of Christmas.
- Village Offices will be Closed Monday January 1, 2024, in Observation of New Year's Day.

Resolutions:

- "To Confirm the Appointment of Kelly I. Rankin as Village Fiscal Officer; and To Establish Pay Rate" had a third reading. Dr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to adopt the Resolution. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Resolution No. R-60-23 was adopted.
- "To Reappoint Louise Schomburg as a Member of the Parks Advisory Board for the Calendar Years of 2024 and 2025" had a second reading.
- "To Appoint Alicia Stock as a Member of the Pool Commission for the Calendar Years 2024 and 2025" had a second reading.
- "To Appoint Dave Middleton as a Non-Voting Member of the Tree Advisory Board for the Calendar Years 2024 and 2025" had a first reading.
- "To Appoint Larry Gray as a voting Member of the Tree Advisory Board for the Calendar Year 2024" had a first reading.
- "To Appoint Steve Pipkin as a Non-Voting Member of the Tree Advisory Board for Calendar Year 2024" had a first reading.
- "To Reappoint Marianne Prue as a Non-Voting Member of the Tree Advisory Board for the Calendar Year 2024" had a first reading.

- “To Enter into Contract with H. Hafner & Sons, Inc. for Brush, Gravel, Dirt Construction Fill and Leaf Dumping in Consideration for Money and the Right to Farm Part of the South 80 Acres” had a second reading. Mr. York said he is comfortable with this agreement as long as the Village has a legal “out” to the agreement.
- “Resolution Authorizing Mayor to Execute Contract with Choice One engineering to Design the Mariemont Connector Between Pocahontas Avenue and Miami Road; and To Declare Emergency” had a first reading. Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to suspend the rules to allow for the second and third readings. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. The Resolution had a second and third reading. Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. York to adopt the Resolution. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. York to invoke the emergency clause. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Resolution No. R-61-3 was adopted.

Ordinances:

- “To Amend Sections 151.125 and 151.127 Relating to Signage”
- “To Amend Section 151.087 Permitted Obstructions in Required Yards and Add New Section 151.XXX”

Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to table the Ordinances pending discussion for including additional language.

Task List:

Mr. Bartlett asked for an update on the job descriptions/measurables for the Part-Time Administrator and Fiscal Officer positions. Mayor Brown said they are underway and they will have something pulled together before the end of the year. Mr. Bartlett said if incremental dollars are being spent on the Part-Time Administrator role, we should give the Mr. Barlow a lot of meat as to what he will be working on so he can accomplish more.

Mr. Bartlett asked for an update on the IT support and the website. Mr. Barlow said they have had four meetings with potential IT support vendors. The website will take time to migrate. He is hoping to have it in place by mid-January.

Mr. Barlow said the wooden poles are down. There is still an issue with the wires.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

William A. Brown, Mayor

Kelly I. Rankin, Interim Fiscal Officer