Village of Mariemont
Committee of the Whole Meeting
October 27, 2024

Vice-Mayor Brownknight called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Present were Mr. Ayer, Mr. Bartlett, Mrs. Brownknight, Mr. Van Stone and Mr. York. Mayor Brown was also in attendance as well as Fiscal Officer, Kelly Rankin. Dr. Lewis arrived at 5:10 p.m.

The first agenda discussion item was the long-term Village revenue overview. Members of Council were provided reading materials prior to the meeting for their review. The discussion revolved around what to do and what not to do to ensure long term sustainability for the Village in terms of revenue. This meeting was fact gathering and not a meeting for debate.

Fiscal Officer Rankin explained that the handouts outlined all the funds and where the source of revenue comes from. The fund names and expenditures are self-explanatory. She does not see any red flags or trends for the immediate future. We did have large payments for improvements to the pool and tennis courts, but those were largely funded by donations. The top sources of revenue for the Village include property tax, municipal income tax, local taxes, safety services levy funds and permanent improvement/general fund levy revenues. She does not have concerns about those sources of income going forward. She noted that there is still discussion to increase the employer portion of funding to the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund. The proposed increase is from the current 19% to 24% over the next five years. She continues to work with Council to spend and appropriate funds within the Village's budget.

Work is currently being prepared on the five-year budget forecast. Engineer Ertel encouraged Council to spend more on the Village street paving program. The grants have become highly competitive. The average street is repaved every 18 years, Ideally, they should be repaved every 12-15 years. The State of Ohio repaves Wooster Pike every 20 years.

Tax Administrator Barlow answered questions pertaining to the information he disseminated prior to the meeting. He estimates the income tax revenue this year to be 2.9 million dollars. This will be the first-year net profit extensions are due November 15th.

Discussions/concerns centered around:

* Raising the tax rate, lowering the tax credit
*Various empty store fronts in the Village Square and Old Town Center
*Certain abatements will be coming off which should add revenue to the Village. Fiscal Officer Rankin will reach out to Hamilton County regarding what the valuation will be for the Village.
* Cost of replacing equipment and cars has increased over the last years. Safety Services needs the equipment, but it then leaves very little for other needs in the Village.
*If the State proposed property tax change happens, it will create chaos for every municipality, insomuch relief would have to be given
*It was recommended Council fund more money towards our sewer system which is 100 years old. Engineer Ertel will put together a storm sewer recommendation list.
*The effective rate of our current levies

Next steps for an upcoming Committee of the Whole Meeting include:

*Abatements
*General Fund Growths/Trends Relative to Inflation, Revenue and Expenses
*Safety Services - Proposed Ohio Police and Fire Pension Employer Contribution Impact
*Storm Sewer Assessment
*Levies in General
*How Does the Village Compare to Surrounding Municipalities. Dr. Lewis said she prepared a report when working with Envision, that details some of that information. She will send a copy to Mrs. Brownknight.

The second agenda item was the Capital Improvement Prioritization. Council and Department Heads ranked what they believed are the top Capital Improvements needs in the Village. Mr. Bartlett tallied them and distributed to Council prior to the meeting. This is not to decide which projects get funded. There will be less money carried over to 2026 because of the additional projects Council approved in 2025.

Discussion/Concerns centered around:

*Developing a Strategy for Ranking Projects – such as what projects would help reduce liability for the Village and how to protect existing property from future damage, projects that have been started and projects that realistically could be completed in 2026. The priorities between Council and the Department Heads were pretty much in sync.

*Damage to the Family Statuary which has seen an acceleration of damage. Mr. Biff Black, Mariemont Preservation Foundation, said the cover for the Family Statuary was part of the Village's Centennial Project. It is difficult to find grants that the Village qualifies for. There is $480,000 available for the project and feels it could be completed for that amount. Costs are not going down. They had a Giving Tuesday where MPF matched funds that were given. Additionally, the Emery Foundation donated $500,000 and asked when the project is going to be built.

*Should Council submit a second ranking prioritization list? If someone wants to change their vote, resubmit it to Mr. Bartlett by next Monday and he will create a new spreadsheet. Any updated prioritization will be distributed before the next Council meeting with updated dollar amounts. The Permanent Improvement meeting will be held at 5:45 p.m. on Monday November 24, 2025.

*Buy used equipment/vehicles instead of new equipment/vehicles. Chief Hines said a used vehicle ($35,000) would be a consideration for the Assistant Fire Chief's car, but a used car is not an option for the police fleet. The request for a new vehicle would be a police force rated pick-up truck. The cost would be the same. The truck would be used for picking up/dropping off cones for block parties, road closures etc. The vehicle would also be used as a road patrol vehicle. Other municipalities are utilizing trucks in their fleet. The Service Department truck now is estimated to cost $90,000.

*Look into Hamilton County Waste Innovation Reduction Grant that could assist with the shed behind the Municipal Building. The project would assist Sustainable Mariemont. It was estimated it would cost $25,000 and a $15,000 grant would make the project doable. It would become a recycling center.

*Projects that have funding associated with grants include Dogwood Park Parking Lot and the Mariemont Connector (which Council has already agreed to do).

*Council agreed to remove park benches from the list and the swing arm equipment for the Service Department.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

William A. Brown, Mayor

Kelly I. Rankin, Fiscal Officer