

**Village of Mariemont
Regular Council Meeting
February 8, 2021**

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Present was Mr. Bartlett. Virtually present due to the COVID-19 pandemic were Mrs. Graves, Dr. Lewis, Mrs. Rankin, Ms. Palazzolo, Mr. Stelzer, Fiscal Officer Borgerding, Building Administrator Keyes, Engineer Ertel, Police Chief Hines, Superintendent Scherpenberg and Solicitor McTigue.

Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to accept the minutes for the Council meeting January 25, 2021. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Communications:

*From Police Chief Hines: January 2021 Monthly report/2020 Annual Report. Chief reminded residents to not leave the keys in a vehicle, do not leave valuables in the car and be sure to lock your vehicle.

Mr. Stelzer asked that fiscal analysis be included in the department's monthly report including income received, spending to date and status of being on budget to date.

*From Assistant Fiscal Officer Wendler: January 2021 Monthly Report.

*From Fiscal Officer Borgerding: Annual Fiscal Officer's Report for Years Ending December 31, 2020 and 2019. Mr. Stelzer asked for some analysis about observed trends behind the numbers such as areas where there is more/less spending. Fiscal Officer Borgerding said he will work with Assistant Fiscal Officer Wendler to provide more prospective.

Permission To Address Council:

Ms. Susan Brabenec Page, 6636 Elm Street, was given permission to address Council (via Zoom). She voiced concerns that the public notices for the residents are not really telling the public what is going to be talked about in order to be effective. When the notice is not effective it jeopardizes the legitimacy of the meetings and decisions that are made. The Finance Committee notice that references "Organizational Structure" does not explain to the public that changes were to be discussed regarding the Administrator, Fiscal Officer and big changes to the Building Department. This is information that the public should have. Her understanding is that parallel research is to be done in the next 60-90 days. Her request for public interest is to supply the data along with the findings that helped support the recommendations.

Mayor Brown said the Committee reports do have detailed explanation, but he agrees that we have to do a better job in announcing what the agenda for a committee meeting will discuss.

Motion To Pay Bills:

Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to pay the bills as approved by the Mayor, Fiscal Officer and Chairman of the Finance Committee. Mr. Stelzer asked what the PNC credit card charges comprised of. Chief Hines said most of that is for the Christmas Program which was 100% funded by donations. The PNC card was also used to make purchases for K-9 Dasty. Mr. Stelzer asked for future bill lists to have it summarized. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Committee Reports:

Ms. Palazzolo moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee which met on Friday, January 29, 2021 at 4:15 pm via Zoom to discuss the Village's Garbage Sticker program. Present at the meeting were Finance Committee Chair Rob Bartlett, Finance Committee Members Joe Stelzer and Kelly Rankin, Mayor Bill Brown, Chief Rick Hines and Superintendent John Scherpenberg. Currently, the Village requires that all waste that is collected by Rumpke have a sticker on it. However, the size of the waste bin has now increased by 42% (from 45 gallons to 65 gallons), which will likely lead to a reduction in sticker income for the Village. We are already losing money overall on waste and recycling (see attached table). Furthermore, there have been several complaints from residents about the sticker system. The Finance Committee is recommending eliminating the garbage sticker program and offset that with an increase in the waste and recycling fee that is collected via Greater Cincinnati Water Works monthly billing. Now that the Rumpke contract has been renegotiated and, with the waste being taken to the curb, we have reduced the cost as low as it can go, we are also recommending charging enough such that the income generated roughly covers the cost of the new Rumpke contract (the new Rumpke contract is for \$286,425 versus \$319,566 in 2020). Currently, we charge via GCWW \$8.33/month for houses and \$5.83/month for apartments. We are proposing to increase that to \$19.00/month for houses and \$14.26/month for apartments. Again, this increase offsets the loss of the sticker income plus a nominal monthly increase to get the Village to roughly breakeven. If council agrees with this recommendation, an ordinance will need to be drawn up and voted on. The Finance Committee is recommending we discontinue the garbage sticker program effective May 1, 2021. If council agrees to draw up the necessary legislation, then we would

recommend we begin to communicate to residents that we will be voting on this over the next 3 council meetings and that the garbage sticker elimination would commence May 1, 2021, so residents can plan their garbage sticker purchases appropriately. We should also notify Kroger, MariElders and Ace Hardware, so they don't over-order stickers from us. Mayor Brown has already notified the Village Office that we are considering this, so we don't order more stickers. If a resident or one of the organizations that are selling the stickers ends up with surplus stickers after May 1, 2021, we believe it would be appropriate for the Village to buy the stickers back. The communication that goes out to residents about this change will need to include how the sticker buy back will work as well. If council agrees with these recommendations, the next step will be for the Village Solicitor to draw up the necessary ordinance for a first reading at the next council meeting, and to begin communicating this potential change to residents and to those who sell the stickers. The final reading would then be at the second council meeting in March, and there would be more than 30 days until it would go into effect.

Exhibit A:

Year	Annual Waste Fees Collected	Stickers Fees Collected	Rumpke Costs	Sticker Costs	Shortfall	Adjusted
2015	\$96,189	\$105,177	(\$264,763)	(\$1,668)	(\$65,065)	
2016	\$95,971	\$94,744	(\$264,763)	(\$1,668)	(\$75,716)	
2017	\$97,449	\$94,524	(\$291,496)	(\$1,668)	(\$101,191)	
2018	\$99,194	\$90,579	(\$302,670)	(\$1,668)	(\$114,565)	
2019	\$130,179	\$107,397	(\$283,325)	(\$1,668)	(\$47,417)	(\$72,056)
2020	\$37,614	\$90,342	(\$344,205)	(\$1,668)	(\$217,917)	(\$193,278)

2019 Rumpke costs of \$24,639 were missing in November 2019. This was paid in January 2020.

So, 2019 shortfall was really (\$72,056) and 2020 shortfall was really (\$193,278)

2020 is when we started billing via GCWW in September, so only 4 months of annual waste fee income that year.

2021 new contract with Rumpke is \$286,425 with a 3% increase in 2022.

Mayor Brown said as we go forward, he will be announcing and setting up communication with all the residents so they can plan accordingly. We will arrange to buy back any outstanding stickers. We will get a quick overview in the March Town Crier. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Mrs. Graves to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee which met on Friday, January 15, 2021 at 2:00 pm via video to discuss the annual salary increases for Mariemont employees. Present at the meeting were Finance Committee Chair Rob Bartlett, Finance Committee Members Kelly Rankin and Joe Stelzer, Mayor Bill Brown, Joanee Van Pelt, Allison Uhrig, Tim Feichtner, Deanna Darrah, Eli Wendler and John Scherpenberg. The Finance Committee reviewed two salary ordinances: the ordinance related to all grades of recreation employees, and the ordinance for all full-time and part-time employees. Ohio increased the minimum wage from \$8.70/hour to \$8.80/hour in 2021. Working with Jordan Schad, the Pool Manager, the Finance Committee is proposing to increase all of the wages for all recreation employees by \$0.10/hour, putting the lowest wage at \$8.80/hour to comply with Ohio law, and maintaining the same hourly wage differential between swim pool roles and between years of service as the previous ordinance. We are recommending a 1% increase for the Tennis Pro. For full-time and part-time employees, the Finance Committee is recommending an increase of 2% for most roles. Last year, the inflation index for Social Security was 1.6% and we gave a 2% salary increase. This year, the Social Security inflation increase was 1.3%, and the increase in the Ohio minimum wage was 1.2%. We also benchmarked current salaries with similar sized communities. Attachment A contains benchmarking data for roles in the Police and Fire Departments. Attachment B contains benchmarking data for all of our other roles. Attachment C summarizes the proposed increases for each role. Based on the benchmarking data, the Finance Committee is recommending a slightly larger pay increase for the roles of Lieutenant, Sergeant, Firefighter/EMT and Firefighter/Paramedic. These increases are in order for these roles to stay competitive with the pay in other similar size municipalities. To help pay for the extra increase for the Firefighter/Paramedics, Chief Hines and Assistant Fire Chief Feichtner are recommending to not give an increase for the Assistant Fire Chief role. Based on the benchmarking, we are also recommending creating a new pay grade within the Maintenance Department of Laborer Mechanic for one of our Maintenance Department employees. Also based on the benchmarking data, the Finance Committee is recommending we freeze the highest pay for the Tax Administrator role and the Administrative Assistant role. For both roles, our top salary is significantly higher than the other communities. For the Tax Administrator role, we are recommending to freeze the top salary until it becomes roughly equal to the salary for the Amberley Village Tax Administrator. For the Administrative Assistant role, we are recommending to freeze the pay this year and any future increases should be at a lower rate until the pay becomes roughly equal to the mid-point between the average Fiscal Officer pay and the average Administrative Assistant pay. For appointed roles, we are recommending a 2% increase in the hourly pay for the Village Engineer and the IT Administrator, and no change in the annual salary of any of the appointed roles. All

of these pay changes will go into effect in the second pay period in April, 2021. (Attachments included at conclusion of minutes). On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Ms. Palazzolo moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee which met on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 3:30 pm via Zoom to discuss the Village's organization structure. Present at the meeting were Finance Committee Chair Rob Bartlett, Finance Committee Members Joe Stelzer and Kelly Rankin, Mayor Bill Brown, council member Marcy Lewis, Fiscal Officer Tony Borgerding and Assistant Fire Chief Tim Feichtner.

As part of the 2020 salary benchmarking, for the first time we collected data from five neighboring communities (Terrace Park, Fairfax, Newtown, Columbia Township and Amberley Village) on the other village employee roles besides just police and fire. The attached table 1 summarizes the data collected. Key observations from an organizational structure standpoint are as follows:

1. Mariemont is the only municipality without a full-time Fiscal Officer.
2. Mariemont and Newtown are the only communities without at least a part time Village Administrator.
3. Mariemont and Amberley Village are the only communities that have a salaried Building Administrator role (Amberley Village also has the largest number of village employees and some of the highest salaries among the six communities). Everyone else pays for this work on an hourly basis.

Other observations about those three different roles:

1. Village Administrator: the activities we believe are not getting done today are as follows:
 - a. Economic Development – we have an industrial zone that is significantly underutilized and currently we have no incentives in place for development there. With Kellogg notifying us that they are reducing their number of employees, we need to attract businesses, particularly businesses with higher wages, as our earnings tax typically accounts for roughly 60% of our total revenue.
 - b. Grants – Fairfax' Village Administrator has gotten \$4.75 million in grants for their village. Columbia Township's previous Village Administrator got over \$11 million in grant money. There are funds available if we have someone who has the time and the skills to go after them.
 - c. Fiscal Responsibility – between 2015 and 2019, the Village spent \$1.15 million more than our revenue. This in spite of a new safety services levy in 2018 that brought in an additional \$305,000/year. We need someone to drive planning, budgeting and accountability, and someone who also has experience identifying and implementing savings opportunities throughout the Village.
 - d. Long Term Planning – we typically only look 1-2 years out in our planning. We need to start planning out 5+ years, particularly in areas like capital improvements (streets, pool, sewers, etc.) and developing an overall master plan.
 - e. Communications – we need to improve communications with residents. We also need to improve working with organizations like Hamilton County Development Corp, Community Improvement Corp, Eastern Corridor Committee, Hamilton County Tax Incentive Council, and others, to share best practices and identify opportunities for Mariemont.
 - f. HR Manager – we have no program in place to assess and develop our non-fire and police employees. We also have no proactive succession planning, organizational analysis or compensation analysis and management.
2. Building Administrator: We are currently paying four people to do what two people previously did. For perspective, between 2018 and 2020, the total cost of our Building Department exceeded the permit fees collected by \$40,713/year on average (see attached table 2). In order for us to break even at today's costs, we would need to almost double our fees. Our fees are already more expensive than Glendale, Madeira, Worthington and the City of Cincinnati. Doubling our fees would put us significantly above all of the communities benchmarked (Wyoming and Hamilton County as well). We need to either find someone who can do all of the things our previous Building Administrator did and be paid on an hourly basis, or we should adopt the same model as Fairfax and Terrace Park, who have a Zoning Administrator but have contracted with Hamilton County to do the building permits. Also, permit fees should cover our expenses so we can eliminate a \$40,000 deficit from our budget, but the fees should also not be exorbitant.
3. Fiscal Officer: we are currently paying four people to do the work of one Fiscal Officer. While having a full time Fiscal Officer is important, we recommend waiting until either the Administrative Assistant or the Staff Assistant role becomes vacant, and then hire a full time Fiscal Officer instead of filling the vacant role. We could also then absorb the two-part time Fiscal Officer roles (saving roughly \$10,000/year) and return the Administrative Assistant role to being more of a typical administrative assistant. Having a full time Fiscal Officer would also help to drive more financial accountability and enable more in-depth financial analysis within the Village.

The following are the Finance Committee's specific recommendations:

1. For the next 90 days, the Mayor, working with Mr. Bartlett, will define the Village Administrator role and begin to interview potential candidates. During this 90-day period, alternative plans for hiring consultants to cover all of the areas that are not currently being addressed will also be developed by Mrs. Rankin. At 90 days or before, the Finance Committee will reconnect to develop a recommendation to present to council on what we think the right next steps are.

2. Over the next 60 days, the Mayor, working with Mrs. Rankin, will determine if a viable candidate exists to take over all aspects of the Building Administrator role, including doing the building permits and inspections, and to be paid on an hourly basis. Part of that analysis will also include how much permit fees would need to be increased to cover the cost of the redesigned Building Department. If a viable candidate is not located in 60 days or the necessary fee increase is determined to be too much, then the Village will start the process of creating a Zoning Administrator role in the Building Department and contract with Hamilton County for the building permits and inspections. This will also include a review all of the permit fees that will remain with Mariemont and the appropriate amount to charge for each.
3. When either the Administrative Assistant or Staff Assistant role becomes vacant, Mariemont should strongly consider hiring a full time Fiscal Officer instead and use the Fairfax Fiscal Officer role description as a guide for what the responsibilities should be.

Table 1:

	Mariemont	Terrace Park	Columbia Township	Newtown	Fairfax	Amberley Village
Village Admin		\$121,320**	\$130,000		\$103,000	~\$125,000****
Fiscal Officer	\$9,785*	\$45,000***	\$65,000	\$57,678	\$65,000	\$79,955
Admin Assistant	\$70,250			\$44,741		\$63,336
Staff Assistant	\$46,090					\$48,048*****
Building Admin	\$42,000	hourly	hourly	hourly	hourly	\$84,572

*Mariemont has 1 part-time Fiscal Officer and 1 part-time Assistant Fiscal Officer

**Terrace Park's Police Chief is also their Village Administrator

***Terrace Park's Fiscal Officer is also their Administrative Assistant

****Amberley Village did not provide the salary for their Village Manager, but in 2017 he made \$113,762

*****Amberley Village's Staff Assistant is a part time role. Their hourly rate translates into this level of pay if the role was full time.

Table 2

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>3 yr. average</u>
Building Permit Income	\$44,647	\$43,753	\$42,294	\$43,565
Building Department Exp	<u>\$85,753</u>	<u>\$67,664</u>	<u>\$99,415</u>	<u>\$84,277</u>
Loss	(\$41,106)	(\$23,911)	(\$57,121)	(\$40,713)

Mrs. Rankin said there was discussion about alternatives with regards to the Building Department besides hiring someone or going straight to Hamilton County. She and Mayor Brown had a good discussion with Gerry Stoker, Xpex, and the services they offer and how the Village could continue to offer in house services which would be paid on an hourly basis.

Mayor Brown did not like the wording that the Village would run down to Hamilton County at the end of 60 days. Mr. Bartlett said it can be changed to say the Finance Committee will come back at the end of 60 days with a recommendation. Mrs. Rankin said it is not an either/or – we are going to look at all options that bring a break-even situation than where we are now.

Mr. Bartlett said he would recommend amending the first line for the Administrator to change from “begin interviewing” to “begin talking to” potential candidates. Dr. Lewis asked how they are going to discuss the role with candidates if the role has not been defined and will they come back to Council once the role is defined. Mr. Bartlett said he and the Mayor are going to develop a role description for the Village Administrator. They want to get input from others who are already doing the role. Interviews would not happen until after 90 days and the Finance Committee can make a recommendation to Council.

Dr. Lewis said she would like a list of the grants that the Village of Fairfax and Columbia Township Administrators received. Mr. Bartlett said he has a list from Fairfax but does not have a list for Columbia Township. She asked the groups listed such as Hamilton County Development Corp. etc. how many of these are consulting groups that need to be paid? Mr. Bartlett said these are organizations that the Fairfax Administrator participates in and attends meetings. Mr. Stelzer said the Village has missed out on funding in the past due to lack of understanding the information given. Mr. Stelzer said the concept of a Village Administrator is not a new idea. The official MPF Vision 2021 Report did recommend the hiring of a Village Administrator. Mr. Keyes said MPF did meet to look to see if a Village Administrator was a good idea and unfortunately one individual making a very strong recommendation was not being straightforward with MPF. Thus, most backed away from the idea at the time.

Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to amend the report wording. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to accept the amended report. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Mr. Stelzer said an article should be sent to the Town Crier. Mr. Bartlett said he will handle the submission to the Town Crier.

Miscellaneous:

Village Offices will be Closed in Observation of Presidents' Day Monday February 15, 2021

The Outstanding Citizen Award nominations are due to Mrs. Van Pelt by March 11, 2021.

Mr. Stelzer said a recommendation has been made from the Pool Commission to change the Individual Pool Pass from age 16 to age 9. Dr. Lewis asked if the member would need to pass a swim proficiency. Mr. Stelzer said he is going on their recommendation. Dr. Lewis said she will check with Pool Manager Schad. She will clarify before the next Council meeting.

Mr. Stelzer said a Pool Commission Member is moving so there will be an opening.

Engineer Ertel said Choice One delivered final plans for the Murray Path. He sent them to ODNR, our funding partner. They had one comment of contract legality to add to the plan. He will send to Choice One for addition. The next step is to put together the bid document for soliciting for bids. We need to pass legislation to go out to bid on an emergency basis – if so, he can set up the legal advertising for the next day. The legal ad needs to run for two weeks. He has a list of contractors who he believes would be interested in submitting a bid. Mr. Stelzer said he will look into firms to reach out to after the legal ad has posted. Mr. Stelzer said they have surpassed the original fundraising goal.

Mr. Stelzer said there was a proposal about a Village composting site. Right now, the only obligation to the Village is to have a collection bin behind the Municipal Building. A business oversees everything including emptying the bin. Residents would pay a yearly fee if interested. Council voted unanimously to go forward.

Ms. Palazzolo asked to have her Rules & Law Committee assignments updated to reflect Email Policy Procedures and Retention Policy to be tabled.

Resolutions:

“To Reappoint Don Keyes to the Position of Building Department Administrator for Calendar Years 2021 and 2022; to Set Compensation”. Ms. Palazzolo moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to table the Resolution given that Council is looking at various aspects of the Building Department. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. The Resolution was tabled.

“Resolution to Update Swimming Pool Fees” had a second reading.

“Resolution to Update Tennis Court Fees for the Season” had a second reading.

“To Confirm the Reappointment of Christopher M. Ertel as Village Engineer for Calendar Years 2021 and 2022; And To Set Compensation” had a first reading.

Ordinances:

“Ordinance To Remove Chapter 79, Schedule II(B)(1) and (2) and (C) Restricting Overnight Parking” had a third reading. Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Mrs. Graves to adopt. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Ordinance No. O-4-21 was adopted.

“To Amend Mariemont Code of Ordinances Chapter 79, Schedule I(B)(1), No Parking; Chapter 79, Schedule II(A) Limited Parking; Parallel Parking” had a third reading. Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to adopt the Ordinance. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Ordinance No. O-5-21 was adopted.

“To Amend Mariemont Code of Ordinance Chapter 75.09, Riding on Sidewalks” had a third reading. Mrs. Graves moved, seconded by Ms. Palazzolo to adopt the Ordinance. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Ordinance No. O-6-21 was adopted.

“Ordinance to Remove Section 37.20 through Section 37.22 Regarding Civil Defense Organization” had a third reading. Mrs. Rankin moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to adopt the Ordinance. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Ordinance No. O-7-21 was adopted.

“To Amend Mariemont Code of Ordinances Chapter 95 Parks and Recreation: Municipal Swimming Pool” had a second reading.

“To Amend Mariemont Code of Ordinances Chapter 31 Executive Authority, Village Fiscal Officer” had a third reading. Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to adopt the Ordinance. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Ordinance No. O-8-21 was adopted.

“Ordinance Establishing a Tree Advisory Board in the Village of Mariemont and Creating New Section 37.06 of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances” had a third reading. Dr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mrs. Rankin to adopt the Ordinance. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Ordinance No. O-9-21 was adopted.

“Ordinance Amending Section 32.13 Rules of Council (Y), Rule 24, of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances” had a third reading. Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Ms. Palazzolo to adopt the Ordinance. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Ordinance No. O-10-21 was adopted.

“To Amend Section 34.02(A) of the Mariemont Code of Ordinance Regarding Residency Requirements for Marshal” had a first reading.

“To Amend Section 31.076(A) of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances Regarding Residency Requirements for Administrator” had a first reading.

“To Amend Section 31.004 of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances Regarding Residency for Police Chief” had a first reading.

“To Amend Section 31.060(A) of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances Regarding Residency Requirements for Street Commissioner” had a first reading.

“To Amend Ordinance O-16-20 of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances to Increase Payment for Employees” had a first reading.

“To Confirm the Reappointment of Elissa Wendler as Part-Time IT Administrator for Calendar Years 2021 and 2022; and To Set Compensation” had a first reading.

“To Repeal Ordinance No. O-10-20 Pertaining to Maximum Pay Rates for All Grades of Recreation Employees and To Enact New Legislation Pertaining To Maximum Pay Rates for All grades of Recreation Employees” had a first reading.

Port-o-Let Placement Process and Guidelines are referred to the Rules & Law Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

William A. Brown, Mayor

Anthony J. Borgerding, Fiscal Officer