



## COMMITTEE WORK SESSION DECEMBER 3, 2007

**Committee Members Present:** Ken Braman  
Brenda Hlas  
Tom Jones  
Bill Mowery-Excused  
Mike Zita  
Scott Pelot  
Dennis McGlone

**Also Present:** Mayor James A. Price-Excused  
Rick Ryland  
John Moss  
Jeff Pritchard  
Karla Richards  
Ann Campbell

The Committee Work Session convened on Monday, December 3, 2007 at 6:01 PM, in Council Chambers of the Safety Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Council President, Dennis McGlone. Following a salute to the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance, there was a moment of silent prayer.

### **Committee Work Session General Discussion:**

#### **Employee Health Care Insurance Renewal:**

Mr. Jones turned this discussion over to Mr. Moss for the details. Mr. Moss introduced Mr. Bob Lamm from Associated Underwriters for a brief overview of the proposed plan. Mr. Lamm stated that the underwriting process for the city was stopped on December 1, 2007 and the figures provided in the report are based on a worse case scenario. Mr. Lamm indicated that the discounts and or write off's are excellent for the year and would be even better next year. Mr. Lamm stated that 98.9% of the employee claims this year were within the network providers, which he felt was a win-win situation for both the city and the employees. Mr. Lamm indicated that his review did not indicate any abuses within the program by employees. Mr. Lamm stated that there is an increase of 26.8% for claims so far this year. Mr. Jones asked for an explanation on the number of employees listed (6 single and 48 family units) and Mr. Lamm indicated that the national average for a family unit is 2.8 persons.

**Employee Health Care Insurance Renewal continued:**

Mr. Lamm explained that this year we had several employees that exceeded the \$20,000.00 per employee stop loss amount, and that a total of \$206,000.00 has been paid above and beyond the city's responsibility. Mr. Lamm stated that the fixed amount of \$96,733.00 is based upon a lot of factors, such as the amount of claims for ongoing medical conditions. Mr. Lamm indicated that he asked eleven (11) different carriers to submit quotes, and the only one he received was from our incumbent carrier-Pan American. Mr. Lamm added that with Pan American there is no increase in their administrative costs for 2008. Mr. Lamm discussed the \$115,240.00 increase in the claims and stated that the diagnostics are already in the system and there is one employee that is moving forward with over \$130,000.00 in claims so far. Mr. McGlone questioned the dental increase of three hundred (300) percent and is this normal to offer dental to all employees? Mr. Lamm replied that he also noticed the increase and has asked for an explanation, which he has not received just yet. Mrs. Elaine Tompkins, a Norton resident, commented on the health care issue (see attached) Mrs. Tompkins asked if this is now the time to reconsider the benefits and to have the employees participate? Mr. Ryland indicated that it is a possibility, however when you go out and ask for a re-opener for one area it usually opens things up in other areas as well. Mr. Pelot asked for the total pay out so far and Mr. Lamm replied \$188,194.10 for January to October and as of November 30, 2007 this is now up to \$206,400.00. Mr. Lamm indicated that he expects the year to date figure to be somewhere around \$250,000.00. Mr. Lamm stated that the city has paid \$452,580.00 in the first ten (10) months of this year. The total billed amount was \$1,060,836.00 and the out of pocket amount was \$31,476.00 or (3) three percent. The city has paid \$550,133,00.00 for this same time frame in total claims. Mr. Ryland questioned if the \$182,000.00 premium was included in that amount and Mr. Lamm replied no. Mr. McGlone questioned the base figure used in the 2008 Budget of \$11,184.00 per employee for health care and Mr. Moss replied that this figure is kept at the same amount, however it we see that a worse case scenario is true, then this would need to be adjusted. Mr. Moss indicated that part of the worst case scenario is based on one of our higher cost employees continuing on next year and he already knows this will not be the case. Mr. Moss indicated that he expects a much lower number, which is more realistic and is what he has projected for 2008. Mr. Moss stated that we are continuing to spend down the carry over balance and we are not running at zero. Mr. Jones asked Mr. Moss if he was willing to contribute, and Mr. Moss replied that if Council thinks it is fair then yes. Mr. Jones moved to place this on Councils next agenda, waiving the second and third readings as an emergency, seconded by Mrs. Hlas.

Roll Call: Yeas: Jones, Hlas, Braman, Zita, Pelot, McGlone  
Nays: None

Motion passed 6-0.

**Consent Legislation for ODOT Projects:**

Mr. Pelot stated that this is a formality, which is done each year when Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) does repairs to State highways within the city. Mr. Pelot moved to add these items to Council's next agenda, waiving the second and third readings as an emergency, seconded by Mr. Zita. Mr. Jones questioned if there is any money coming out of the city for this, and Mr. Ryland stated that these repairs are one-hundred (100) percent funded by the State.

Roll Call: Yeas: Pelot, Zita, Braman, Hlas, Jones, McGlone  
Nays: None

Motion passed 6-0.

**2008 Annual Budget:**

Mr. Jones turned this discussion over to Mr. Moss. Mr. McGlone discussed the revenue and the difference from last year, and Mr. Moss replied the projected increase from 2007 and 2008 is \$360,000.00 in the General Fund, adding that \$120,000.00 is from the income tax increase. Mr. Pelot asked Mr. Pritchard for a total of new homes in the city this year, and Mr. Pritchard replied it would be approximately forty (40). Mr. McGlone reminded everyone that new homes do not bring in new revenue. Mrs. Hlas discussed the needs for the Service Department and new equipment, and expressed her concerns that she did not want our new ball fields and other parks to look like Frashure Park does now. Mrs. Hlas stated that she wants to be sure we have enough money to properly maintain the grounds and that we have the proper equipment. Mr. Ryland replied that there is money set aside for the purchase of a new mower. Mr. Pelot asked if the city was working with the baseball & soccer associations for an agreement on some of the maintenance. Mr. Ryland indicated that he has meetings scheduled after the first of the year. The city will be responsible for the mowing of the fields, the dragging and lining of the fields will be the responsibility of the associations. Mr. Moss suggested that instead of reviewing the proposed 2008 Budget page by page, he suggested the following order for review:

**Engineering:**

Mrs. Hlas questioned if the city is getting to the point where we need an in house engineer full time and Mr. Moss replied yes. Mr. Ryland stated that we did increase the contract engineer to a three (3) day a week program because issues come up more than once a week and we have a budget of \$76,000.00. The idea is not far fetched, the only problem is the stuff that this person will need to bring with them. Mrs. Hlas stated that we would need to look at a full time engineer down the road. Mr. Moss stated that in addition to an in house engineer full time, you would also have engineering costs beyond this contract. Mr. Jones questioned the salary of a full time engineer, and Mr. Moss replied it would depend on their skills and knowledge but \$60,000.000 would be appropriate.

**Engineering continued:**

Mr. Jones asked if this also included benefits, and Mr. Moss replied yes, and this would be in addition to anything extra for special projects. Mr. Pelot stated that you would be looking at close to \$100,000.00. Mr. Ryland mentioned the recent approval of \$88,320.00 for the Newpark Drive road project just for the engineering fees, and that this is a type of project that requires outside engineering services. Mr. Pritchard stated that these are types of projects that will have to be done by an outside source, and cannot be done with an in house engineer. Mr. Zita asked if we are using the current firm and engineer for other projects, and Mr. Ryland stated yes and the firm is billed appropriately. Mr. John Carris, a Norton resident, spoke regarding the finances of the city and asked if we are really running out of money in 2008 and 2009 like some Council people have stated before? Mr. Moss replied that the Fire Dept. will be taken care of because of the levy, and there is no other fund that appears to be running out of money at this time. Mr. Carris stated that he toured the salt dome at the Service Garage recently and stated that it holds sixty (60%) percent of the salt we use for a year. Mr. Carris asked if we have enough money to replace the salt that is used? Mr. Moss replied that we have enough money to buy a complete year of salt in addition to starting the season with the sixty (60) percent. Mr. Carris complained about all the accusations of running out of money and Mr. Carris suggested that in the future before Council states we are out of money some research should be done and those types of statements should always have the approval from the Finance Director first. Mr. Carris stated that he felt all financial statements should only come from the Finance Director. Mr. Andrew Lehner, a Norton resident, discussed the Mayor's Court and stated that with the way the State is thinking of doing away with Mayor's Courts, how would this impact our budget and community? Mrs. Hlas stated that the State is doing away with Mayor's Courts for communities of 2500 residents or less and changing them to a Community Court. Mrs. Hlas stated that if this passes, we could have a community court and would be exactly like the Mayor's court and we would not be losing any revenue as long as we pass legislation to have a Community Court.

**General Government:**

Mr. Moss stated that this was not included in the original packet that was distributed. Mrs. Hlas inquired if the city was buying a new computer system and Mr. Moss replied that this expense is for software updates, new programs, and internal systems. Mr. Pelot stated that the city does not have an in house internet technology person and asked if this area of service has increased. Mr. Moss replied that we do have a contract and for 2008 utilization is up however the cost per hour of use is down. Mrs. Hlas inquired about election expenses and that the proposed budget for 2008 shows a zero amount. Mrs. Hlas asked what if the city has an election in February or March? Mr. Moss replied that if the city has a special election at any time there are costs associated and he does not have this cost budgeted.

**General Government continued:**

Mrs. Hlas stated that if the costs were around \$1500.00 we could find this money somewhere else, and Mr. Moss replied that if this were the case he would ask for a decrease at some point. Mr. Moss discussed the \$30,000.00 for building repairs at city hall for 10,000 square feet of roof space. Mr. Braman stated that he had discussed the possibility of a gabled roof instead of a flat roof with Mr. Moss and asked him to expound on this idea. Mr. Moss stated that any time you have a flat roof to repair the question comes up if you should invest in a gabled roof, they require less maintenance. Mr. Moss indicated that he did not have an answer as to if this is appropriate to do now, and is reasonable to look into. Mr. Moss stated that there are mechanical systems on the roof that would need to be considered. Mr. Zita inquired about the costs for codification and Mr. Moss stated that this is three (3) percent above what is the known figure. Ms. Charlotte Whipkey, a Norton resident, inquired about the figures for the Health Board and asked if this includes the money for the Mosquito Abatement District (MAD)? Mr. Moss replied no, that is a tax paid for by an assessment to the property owners, the city does not pay for it.

**Police:**

Mr. Moss explained the change in format for the grants received in order to reflect this separately. Mr. Moss stated that there is a large grant for \$192,000.00 for Homeland Security and a significant amount of that would be passed on to PPG for security work in and around their plant. Mr. Moss indicated that some of this would also be used for increasing communications in the city hall, dispatch and city cars. The OVI grant is down because of the State's opinion on the need for this in our area. Mr. Moss stated that overall the 2008 Budget is down approximately ten (10) percent from 2007. Mr. Pelot questioned the different line items for grant vests, and Mr. Moss replied that is due to a carry over and will eventually disappear. Mrs. Elaine Tompkins, a Norton resident commented on creating a new fund for the Police Dept., similar to the Fire Dept., (see attached). Mr. Pelot and Mr. Jones thanked Mr. Moss for his efforts with the budget and the detailed information he prepared. Mr. Ryland briefly discussed the possibility of looking into purchasing more fuel efficient police cars, while still providing the torque needed. Mr. Jones asked Mr. Ryland what type of vehicle he would suggest, and Mr. Ryland replied possible the Ford 500, Ford Fusion, or a foreign vehicle. Mr. Jones expressed concerns about the proper suspension, and Mr. Ryland stated that the Ford 500 could be upgraded for this purpose.

**Transfers and Advances:**

Mr. Moss explained that this is a substantial number and this is where the money feeds from the General Fund to all of the other funds. Mr. Moss stated that advances are a temporary movement of funds, you send it out one year and it has to come back in the very next year. Mr. Moss stated that transfers are permanent movement of funds, it goes out and does not come back.

**Service:**

Mr. Moss stated that there was a rather large number for the durapatch equipment, and this is to keep this machine running. Mr. Moss indicated that with the change in the weather the Service Dept. has shut this machine down because they are not getting an acceptable patching job at this time of year. Mr. Moss stated that as soon as the weather breaks in the spring, they would be out patching potholes. Mr. Jones asked if this equipment is working out well in the summer months and Mr. Moss replied yes. They are able to get out there on short notice and all of the previous planning for this repair is no longer necessary. Mr. Moss added that the quality of the repair is better than the older cold patching process, it also looks nicer and will last longer.

**State Highway:**

Mr. Moss explained that the Auditor raised an issue that we were using money from this account that really should have come from the Service Dept. Mr. Moss stated that this was called supplanting. Mr. Moss explained that this was for salt and the first \$64,000.00 came from here and then any extra came from the Service Department. Mr. Jones asked who is responsible for the guardrail at the Hametown Road over I-76, and Mr. Ryland indicated that this is the city's responsibility. Mr. Ryland added that all bridges are the State's responsibility and that all approaches on either side of a bridge are the City's responsibility. Mr. Jones inquired about accidents involving damages to guardrails and asked if we go after the insured and collect? Mr. Ryland answered yes, we turn this in as a claim to the individual and we do get reimbursed.

**Special Events:**

Mr. Moss explained that this is mostly for the fireworks and that donations were not sufficient to support this and looking at this trend we need additional cutbacks. Mr. Moss stated that we can leave it or Council could consider supplementing this with a transfer to purchase more fireworks for the Cider Festival.

**Road Program:**

Mr. Moss explained that the money available from 2006 and 2007 was combined and the City paved three (3) big roads this year. Mr. Moss explained that there is an increase for next year for approximately \$417,000.00 and each year thereafter, due to more revenue being received into the General Fund. There was discussion on the number of roads, miles to be paved and method of repairs. Mr. Moss stated that in 2008 we are looking at twenty-two (22) miles of road for approximately \$507,000.00 to do that. Mr. Jones questioned St. Rt. 261 road repairs and that he thought it was set for 2009, and Mr. Ryland stated this is now set for 2008 for \$234,000.00 and he also originally believed this was to occur in 2009.

**Road Program Continued:**

Mr. Moss stated that we have two (2) State projects in 2008, one is for St. Rt. 21, which will not cost the city anything, and the other is for St. Rt. 261 for the \$234,000.00. Mr. Jones wondered if we could do something about the dump on St. Rt. 261 to keep them from dumping junk onto the roads. Mr. Moss replied that anything we can do to reduce the wear and tear on our roads would decrease our overall costs. Mr. Jones asked what streets would be addressed next year, and Mr. Ryland stated that has not been determined yet. Mr. Ryland stated that for chip and seal, it would be fifteen (15) miles in residential areas that do not have curbs and gutters. The 405 paving would be for places like Brentwood and Norton acres. Mr. Moss stated that we would also look at the recommendations from the Service Dept. Mr. Ryland stated that Ward 4 has the worst roadways within the City. Mr. Jones stated that in the past each Council member used to submit a listing of roads requested, and Mr. Ryland suggested that Council could submit their list and it would be looked into and considered.

**Johnson Meadows:**

Mr. Moss stated that this is high profile because everyone wants the project to go forward, but nothing is happening. Mr. Moss reminded everyone that we do have some costs that are associated with this and he is proposing renewal of the note. Mr. Jones asked Mr. Moss if he is recommending that we take it out of the 2008 Budget? Mr. Moss stated that last year he was on the fence with this. Mr. Pelot discussed the time frame for them to start paying it back and Mr. Moss stated that the assessment would occur at the end of 2008 and we would see the money in 2009. Mrs. Hlas suggested that we leave it in the budget and if need be we can address it next year. Mr. Ryland stated that he would agree with that, however he does not recommend renewing the note, we have spent a lot of money on this, it's been five (5) years and no dirt has been moved. Mr. Pelot asked about the city's recourse to collect what we have incurred. Mr. Moss replied that if nothing further is done with the project we would need to certify the amount actually spent and assess for that amount. We would then take the amount that was financed but not spent to pay down the debt, and the balance would be paid off with a bond and the assessments would pay back that bond over time. Mr. Pelot asked about the cost incurred so far, and Mr. Moss replied it is roughly \$200,000.00. Mr. Pelot asked where are they with the project, and what do we hear from them? Mr. Pritchard stated that they have filed their improvement plans with the engineer, they have paid all required fees with the city and Summit County. Their engineering firm is making their final adjustments based on the recommendation of our engineer. Mr. Pelot asked how much, have they paid in fees, and Mr. Ryland stated it would be less than \$10,000.00. Mr. Pritchard stated that they could break ground once the submitted plans have been approved, the question is will they succeed? Mr. Pritchard stated that the time line could be within the next two (2) months.

**Land Improvement:**

Mr. Moss explained the details and the projected carryover from 2007 for \$18,669.00 that goes away really fast if the grant for playground equipment for \$27,277.00 is not received this year. Mr. Moss indicated that he was getting a little nervous that it may not come in this year and rather than have the auditors getting into a tizzy he suggested considering authorizing an advance for this. Mr. Moss stated that in the event the grant money does come in then he would not need the advance. Mr. Pritchard indicated that he felt the grant money would not be received until sometime in January 2008.

**Service Garage:**

Mr. Moss discussed the \$62,500.00 coming in from income tax this year because that is what was proposed. Mr. Moss stated that just today he received notice in the mail for a title commitment to be submitted to the escrow account from Mr. Bernard. Mr. Jones asked Mr. Moss about their conversations this past Friday regarding the closing date and he replied that he was still waiting to hear their reply. If accelerating this by a few weeks, and we can save money then he is all for this, or it could even be a few weeks later than planned.

**Health Insurance:**

Mr. Moss stated that he already touched on this earlier and that he still does not think that we will have the worse case scenario. Mr. Moss stated that he believes the figure of \$839,786.00 is a more realistic budget amount. Mr. Moss indicated that the 2007 projections are well within range. Mr. Moss stated that as the year goes on, we may have to adjust this area.

**Debt Service Fund:**

Mr. Moss stated that we are doing what we can. Council did authorize an increase in funding for the Johnson Road Waterline and we paid this down \$50,000.00 instead of \$25,000.00. Mr. Moss stated that next year we have a balance of \$35,000.00 to pay on that note and we do expect to pay this completely off in 2008. Mr. Moss stated that we would take all of the money that was added to the Johnson Road Waterline and use that to pay off the equipment note in 2009. Mr. Moss stated that the Johnson Road Waterline and not the Equipment note would be paid off one year earlier than what was scheduled. Mr. Moss stated that the police cruisers were also paid off this year. Mr. Moss suggested we take the savings here and there and use this to be more aggressive on other notes. Mr. Pelot asked Mr. Moss what percent was he comfortable with as far as fund balances at the end of the year. Mr. Moss replied that in the operating fund he prefers to see this at about thirty-three (33) percent or higher and that is three (3) months of carryover. Mr. Moss indicated that this fund is not an operating fund, therefore the thirty-three (33) percent here is not necessary. Mr. Pelot questioned page #61, Gardner Phase II, and the notation of the need for an increase of \$97,000.00, and Mr. Moss indicated that this was an error and it would be removed in the final version.

**Debt Service Fund continued:**

Mr. Pelot questioned what to do with the Johnson Meadows project. Mrs. Hlas stated that when the note comes due we would deal with it then. Mr. Ryland stated that if you intend to leave it alone for now he is requesting additional transfers of funds for an engineering study for the culdesac we are supposed to do for this project. Mr. Ryland stated that the city's commitment was to put this culdesac in for this project. Mrs. Hlas stated that the note is not due until the second half of the year. Mrs. Hlas stated that the way she understands it is if we leave it in the budget the way it is, you want us to appropriate money to put a road in? Mr. Ryland replied yes, and if you are not calling a halt to this now we have that obligation to put in the road. Mrs. Hlas stated that at this point we don't know that they are moving forward so we do not put a road in. Mr. Ryland stated that if they are going forward with the project then the first step of the project is to do the road so they can get utilities run back. We have to have the road engineered and designed so that we know where we will put the storm water runoff, sanitation and water lines. If you are allowing them to go forward with this project then you have to move forward with the city's commitment, and this engineering figure is not in the 2008 Budget. Mrs. Elaine Tompkins stated that the city was supposed to only go 1030 feet in and that was all, not to do an entire culdesac. Mrs. Tompkins stated that there was a lot of dialogue and documents on this and needs to be looked at carefully. Mrs. Tompkins asked if they actually start this project this year, what is the time line for the city to receive their return on the note? Mr. Moss stated that would be next year. Mrs. Tompkins stated that she felt the city has stood on its head trying to help them and they have done nothing to return anything to the city. Mr. Ryland disagreed adding that from the plans he has had on file from 2003, this was approved for a culdesac to be installed.

Mr. Moss discussed the need for two (2) note ordinances that need to be adopted no later than December 10, 2007, in addition to the note ordinance for the Johnson Meadows knowing that we would convert that to a bond in 2008. Mr. Moss stated that he would also need legislation for advances in the General Fund and another for amending the appropriations and revenues for 2007. Mr. Moss explained that the Exhibit A is not attached at this point, and would be provided in detail. Mr. Moss stated that he would be working with Amanda Gordon, Bond Counsel on the note legislation.

Mr. Jones moved to place the advance ordinance on Councils next agenda, waiving second and third readings, seconded by Mrs. Hlas.

Roll Call: Yeas: Jones, Hlas, Braman, Zita, Pelot, McGlone.  
Nays: None

Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Jones moved to place the appropriation ordinance on Councils next agenda, waiving the second and third readings, seconded by Mrs. Hlas.

**Debt Service Fund continued:**

Roll Call: Yeas: Jones, Hlas, Braman, Zita, Pelot, McGlone.  
Nays: None

Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Jones moved to place the ordinance for the 2008 Budget on Councils next agenda, waiving the second and third readings, seconded by Mrs. Hlas.

Roll Call: Yeas: Jones, Hlas, Braman, Zita, Pelot, McGlone.  
Nays: None

Motion passed 6-0.

**Unfinished Business:**

Mr. Jones discussed his earlier request for the total costs of the Charter legal ads, and Mr. Moss stated that figure came very close to the \$10,000.00 figure as stated. Mr. Jones stated the total was \$9,334.00, and had we gone with the Barberton Herald the city would have saved \$7,934.00. Mr. Moss stated that he was unsure of that figure because we have to have a certain amount of advertising and this was covered in two (2) different papers. Mr. Moss stated that the overall costs could have been different if we had planned it differently. Mr. Jones stated that the Beacon Journal charged us \$7,600.00.

**New Business:**

None

**Public Comment-Non Agenda Items:**

Mr. Andrew Lehner, a Norton resident, wished everyone Happy Holidays and New Year. Mr. Lehner congratulated all of the residents that got out and voted this past election. Mr. Lehner asked for Council to pass a noise ordinance, and complained about loud cars and car stereos in his neighborhood. Mr. Pelot indicated that we already have a noise ordinance on the books. Mrs. Hlas indicated that this is complaint driven and the noise level is up to the officer's discretion. Mr. Lehner stated that Cuyahoga Falls had a noise ordinance and they actually banned licenses for one year. Mr. Lehner asked to get signal lights installed at St. Rt. 261 and St. Rt. 21 because at night there are too many vehicles coming off of the ramps and sometimes they don't stop.

Public Comment-Non Agenda Items continued:

Ms. Gayle Brenner, a Norton resident spoke regarding the article in the West Side Leader last week. Ms. Brenner stated that she was very upset with the statements made by the Ward 1 Councilperson to a resident because who at a previous meeting had asked him to resign. Ms. Brenner stated that he used her name and told her to “chose her words wisely”. Ms. Brenner stated that she felt that this was a threat and that it looks bad upon the Council members. Ms. Brenner stated that she was appalled that the Council President did not gavel him for using her name because we are not permitted to single you out by using your name. Ms. Brenner stated that she did not feel that you should be able to do that to us. Ms. Brenner stated that she feels that Ward 1 Councilman should also step down and resign. Ms. Brenner stated that it seemed to her that there is always some type of turmoil and it always seems to come back to one person. Ms. Brenner stated that she wanted to know why Council did not object to what he said last week, because it appeared to her that all of Council agreed with what he had to say. Ms. Brenner stated that she would like to see him step down, which Mr. Jones replied-no way.

Topics for the next Work Session:

None

Adjourn

There being no other business to come before the Committee Work Session, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.

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Dennis McGlone, President of Council

**\*\*NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM\*\***

**All Committee Meetings will be held at the Norton Safety Administration Building, unless otherwise noted. If you do not have access to Time-Warner Channel #15, you may request to view a copy of any VHS recorded meeting in Council Chambers. Please contact Ann Campbell in the Administration office to make the necessary arrangements at (330) 825-7815 ext. 14.**