
MINUTES OF SYMMES TOWNSHIP WORK SESSION

AUGUST 23, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. Elected officials present were: Mr. Phil Beck and Mr. Kenneth Bryant.

Also present: Kim Lapensee – Administrator, Kevin McDonough – Law Director, Bill Pitman – Director of Public Works, and Dan Frank – McGill Smith Punshon.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the Agenda. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Motion passes.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Home of the Brave Park Improvements. Mr. Bryant asked for an update on this topic. Mrs. Lapensee asked that MSP attend the meeting tonight to give us an overview of the project at Home of the Brave. Mr. Dan Frank with McGill Smith Punshon went through the drawings with the board. Mr. Bryant asked what the concession stand consisted of and whether or not there were two stories with a meeting room upstairs. Mr. Frank stated that it does have a room upstairs for viewing. He stated that they were hired to do the plans for the improvements to the three rear ballfields at Home of the Brave and the concession stand which will be 2-stories. He stated that there will be a large field that will meet major league standards and two smaller fields that will serve up to 12U. Mr. Bryant asked if they were 90’-0” bases and Mr. Frank stated no; they are 60’-0”. Mr. Pitman stated that our biggest call is for little league uses. Mr. Frank stated that they added an asphalt walking path around the two smaller fields which will connect with the existing paths. He went over the warning track areas (dirt), homerun fencing (safety type with padding), field lighting (large field only because the cost was prohibitive to do all 3), irrigation, bullpens (covered with a decorative tarp or roof) and bleacher areas (50 feet long that will hold 54 people), location of the concession stand, distance down the foul lines, vending area, protective netting, and the look of the stand. Mr. Bryant asked if there was storage inside the concession stand. Mr. Frank stated yes (concession storage). Mr.

Pitman stated that he would recommend that we empty out the existing maintenance garage and use that for equipment storage for the sports teams. Mr. Beck wanted to know why the concession stand was pushed more to one side and why the eating area faces the fields? Mr. Frank stated that we had to push the stand more to the south because there is a force main running through that area. The eating area is facing the fields so people can still continue to watch the games. He stated that the restrooms are around the back so if there is a line, it does not interfere with anyone trying to watch the game. Mr. Beck stated that he would like to see the building more in line with the fields so that each window faces the field and announcers could announce each game without a problem.

Mr. Bryant asked if there was a scoreboard for all three fields. Mr. Frank stated that they will only have a scoreboard for the large field. He stated that he was told by the Little League organization that most people nowadays keep track of the score on their phone with an app. Mr. Bryant asked what the distances were down the base lines between home plate and the bases? Mr. Frank believes that there is at least 320'-0". Mr. Bryant stated that he would like to see us meet the standards for a big-league field. Mr. Bryant wanted to know more about the protective netting. Mr. Frank stated that we have not made a decision yet. Mr. Pitman stated that there is a protective area overtop of Homeplate. Mr. Pitman stated that he has seen other fields where you can raise and lower the netting like flags. Mr. Beck suggested that we could just do a taller fence to protect the motorist and pedestrians. Mr. Frank stated that we have suggested an 8'-0" fence for the larger field and a 6'-0" fence for the smaller field. Mr. Beck wanted to know if Mr. Frank has done a cost estimate yet for everything. Mr. Frank stated no.

Mr. Frank stated that they shortened field #3 because they will need a 4'-0" retaining wall to hold the field. Mr. Beck stated that he would like to see us bring in dirt and just grade it out to make it work instead of shortening the field. Mr. Bryant asked how the dugouts would look. Mr. Frank had pictures available for what he was thinking (fencing area with a decorative tarp over the bench area). Mr. Frank also had example pictures of the bull pen area, bleachers, signage, scoreboards, etc. There was a discussion over where the on-deck circle should be located.

Mr. Frank stated that they will cut the asphalt path at the outer edges of the concession stand and have a concrete path poured to look nicer around the building. Mr. Bryant stated that he would like to see the announcer's booth added to so that people could sit on top of the building to watch the game. Mr. Frank stated that they could do that, but they would have to change the roof to accommodate that and steps would now have to be located on the outside of the building instead of inside. Mr. Frank stated that he would have to rework the bathrooms and vending area to accommodate the steps. Mr. Frank showed them the area where the logo could be located on the building and the name of the Park.

Mr. Bryant asked about timing. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we were trying to get everything done quickly so we could get the bid out by October. Mr. Pitman stated that if

have to prioritize projects, he suggests that we do the irrigation, lighting and field work done first and bid the building out separately. Mr. Bryant asked when we do the other things. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we would do them as money allowed.

2. Cemetery Billing and Payment Policies. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she modified the cemetery rules and regulations to help cover the township for liability reasons and changed the payment rules for buying graves. She stated that if the Board is okay taking a credit card for payment, then we all agreed that multiple payments over time will be eliminated. The Board stated that they were okay with that. Mrs. Lapensee stated that they would also like to purchase new cemetery software that will be window based, be able to be used by everyone and be linked to our website so that people will have the ability to search for their loved ones via our website. She stated that the new software will cost \$12,810.00 and it will roughly cost \$349.00 a month for support which is mainly to host the cemetery information through the website. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we have not spent any money on new cemetery software in almost 30 years. The Board agreed that we need to bring our IT information into the 21st century. Mr. Pitman stated that this new system will allow us to input more information into the computer than what we have now, keep track of all the payments, provide enhanced mapping which shows available lots, and provide a search engine on our website for those who can't make it into the building or will be here after hours. He stated that our current company will charge us no more than \$500.00 to import the information into our new system. Mr. Pitman stated that the monthly support fee is for 3 years. We have not had any support for our current system for a long time. Mr. Bryant stated that he is not crazy about spending the money, but he understands the need.
3. Mowing Contracts for 2019. Mrs. Lapensee stated that the Director of Public Works has recommended that we continue with the mowing for next year except for Symmes and Home of the Brave Parks. Mr. Pitman stated that we are on the contractor's schedule for a certain day each week and when it rains on that particular day, we get skipped and they don't come back until the following week on that same day and there are conflicts with the scheduled events. He stated that there have been multiple times where we need to mow it, but cannot because we have already hired a contractor to mow those areas. Mr. Bryant wanted to know who had the contract for those two areas. Mr. Pitman stated 4 Seasons has both contracts. Mr. Bryant stated that based on the data, it is cheaper for us to hire out that work and let our personnel concentrate on keeping the parks clean and performing other maintenance items. Mr. Bryant asked if we are going to have to hire any additional people to mow those two parks. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we could still use some part-time help. Mr. Pitman agreed, but stated that we need to be able to mow those two areas due to events happening in the park and if there is a rain out. He stated that we need some flexibility in the contract or we should be able to mow if we need to due to scheduled events. He stated that right now we are not allowed to put that on our time sheets without getting questioned. Mr. Beck stated that it is Bill's decision to make on how and when the grass gets cut. He stated that we are responsible for paying our employees for what is on their time sheet no matter what. Mr. Beck stated that it's not the

Fiscal Officers job to scrutinize the time sheets. The Board agreed that if Mr. Pitman needed to mow those two parks because of rain or events, then he should use his personnel to do that and let the contractor know they don't need to mow that week.

4. Refuse Contract. Mrs. Lapensee stated that Rumpke sent another email asking us if we made a decision concerning the letter they sent us back in March about providing recycling curb side pickup for free to the residents who have trash service with them or anyone who signs up with them. Mr. Pitman stated that the residents would have their choice of the sizes of the container and the pickup would be every-other week. Mrs. Lapensee stated that the residents will pay a flat fee of \$18.55 plus a fuel surcharge for trash pickup and curbside recycling. Mr. Pitman stated that the residents can also receive a senior rate of \$16.55 plus the fuel surcharge. He stated that this pricing will remain in effect until January 1, 2020 but he will ask Rumpke if we can extend that date to 2021. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we could also get rid of the huge recycling dumpsters out back and at the parks and we will save money because the residents will be able to recycle at the curb. Mr. Pitman stated that Sycamore Township switched over and they have added an additional 500 customers for recycling and they will eliminate their recycling dumpsters after the first of the year. Mr. Bryant asked about the mandated requirement from the Solid Waste District concerning the separation of funds to pay for the recycling activities. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she did send that information to the Fiscal Officer so that she was aware of the requirements to keep the money in a separate line item. Mr. Bryant asked if we could choose the size of the recycling containers. Mr. Pitman stated yes. Mr. Beck asked if the date to end this program could be extended to 2021. Mr. Pitman stated he would ask and did not think that would be a problem.
5. Hamilton County Sheriff's Mid-Contract Rate Increase. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she and Greg Bickford from Sycamore Township met with the representatives from the Sheriff's Office to discuss a rate increase that will be effective January 1, 2019. She stated that she highlighted certain sections of the Sheriff's contract where the sections dictated that the "Sheriff shall provide at no cost..." a supervisor for District 3 that we share with Sycamore Township, radios, weapons, uniforms, range, training, and education courses, liability insurance, workers comp, and medical reimbursements, admin support but not limited to and no cost to the township: Crime Scene Investigations, Organized Crime, Auto Accident Investigations, Bomb Squad and Helicopter Assistance, all acts and omissions of their deputies including any damages or relief awards and the cost of their defense, and all labor costs associated with the maintenance of the vehicles used by the deputies. She stated that the contract does state that Symmes is responsible for the salaries to fill two 24-hour cars a day plus two power shift cars that are weekly (40 hours a week), the OT for any cases related to Symmes Township or any additional enforcement patrol, automobile insurance, radar guns, and dispatching costs.

She stated that we get billed for each deputy that is in our cars and the rate associated with each deputy (which may vary from 23.00 an hour to 34.00 dollars an hour). We are not charged for any overtime associated with filling those two cars 24 hours a day and we

are not charged if the power shift cars are on vacation, sick or take a personal day. She stated on those days, we run short. Since April of 2016, we have averaged approximately 46 to 48 dollars per hour per deputy and we have saved at least \$100,000 a year (\$130,137.00 in 2016 and \$171,619 in 2017) under the max cap amount stipulated in the contract. Mrs. Lapensee stated that the Sheriff's Office has said to them that the Sheriff will be increasing our hourly rate for each car to \$55.1994 and bill us the max amount no matter what. She stated that the new rate will include those items that the contract states that the Sheriff will provide to us for free, such as: uniforms, range costs, workers comp, capital items, supervisor costs and admin support. She stated that she asked for additional information from them asking how they arrived at their multipliers established for billing (fringe benefits, etc.), why are we being billed for workers comp, unemployment when governments are a direct bill, and EAP, there is a cap set in the contract for 35% fringe rate and we are being charged more than 35%, how did they arrive at the personnel cost of 8% of a \$58,3384 number, what is capital referring to because the township already pays for cars, radar guns, gas, parts for cars and we provide them a free building to use, how did they arrive at the uniform rates (there are 2), and why would be billed for the range (that is a state requirement).

Mrs. Lapensee stated that this new rate increase mid-contract will cost an additional 6.8825 dollars per hour which is a 14% increase. She stated that she made it very clear to the Sheriff's office that they have a contract from 4/1/2016 through 3/31/2020 and that they should honor the amounts as noted in the contract. She said that they believe they have the authority to raise the rates mid-contract because they are still under the maximums listed in the contract.

Mr. McDonough stated that he has called the Prosecutors Office and was referred to the Sheriffs attorney who then referred him back to Kevin Horn (Fiscal Officer) and Bill Rarrick (Commander) who already met with Mrs. Lapensee. He stated that he will track down someone to talk to and get a better understanding.

The Board agreed that we should look at other options and see what else is out there and if we might be able to get better rates somewhere else and/or review our rights under the current contract.

6. Property Maintenance Code. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she went through the International Property Maintenance Code and compared it to our proposed language from the last work session. She stated that she has given all that information to our Law Director. She stated that she thinks we only need to adopt Chapters 1 – 3 but add in topics that were covered under our last proposal but not included in the International Code. Mr. Bryant asked why we have to adopt the International Code for our model. Mr. McDonough stated that Sections 504.13 reference 505.75 which states that if a model code is out there through a state or county, then we have to adopt their code. He stated that since the state or the county does not have a model code adopted, then we fall back to Section 505.73 that states that we shall adopt any model code available (which would be the International

Code). The Board agreed to move forward with those Chapters. Mrs. Lapensee will have the draft ready for them review by the next Trustees meeting (draft version 7).

7. Insurance for 2019. Mr. Bryant stated that he has asked Mrs. Lapensee to look into securing additional life insurance for those staff members and elected officials who had their life insurance cut in half once they turned 70 years of age. He stated that he did not even realize that this insurance had been reduced to \$25,000 from the \$50,000 that all the other staff members have. He asked the Board to consider getting another policy to bring his and others up to the \$50,000 that everyone else has. Mr. Beck stated that he did not have a problem with it.
8. Payroll/Finance Changes/Late Fees. Mrs. Lapensee stated that Paycor still has not been provided with the necessary information to get Paycor up and running for the employees. Mr. McDonough asked what information that she still needed to get from the township to get Paycor up and running. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she still needs payroll reports for all the employees and tax information. Mrs. Lapensee asked if anyone knew what the status was for the request to the AG's office and the Prosecutors Office concerning the Paycor resolution.

Mrs. Lapensee stated that she made changes to the finance policy resolution for everyone to look at. She stated that she added a section for items that the Board wants to approve for the Treasurer's report, added that the employee and elected officials be paid through direct deposit through Paycor, warrants, purchase orders and certificate of warrant release only need 2 signatures for approval, all bills have to be paid no later than the due date, that we can receive credit cards for payment of bills and the limits to the credit cards, bank transactions need 2 signatures and all depository decisions are made by the trustees, and that time sheets are designed and approved by the Township Administrator and employees can enter their information into the computer for payment through the Paycor system. The board agreed to put these items forward for the next agenda to talk about.

9. Sidewalks. Mr. Beck stated that he had some residents ask for additional sidewalks to be installed in the community. He suggested that we have a public hearing to discuss those additional areas and rate them for priority since we do not have enough money to install them all. The Board agreed to have a public hearing on October 23rd at 7:00 p.m. at the Safety Center. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she would put that on the regular agenda for approval.
10. Water Works Rates. Mr. Beck stated that he attended the Commissioners Meeting on Tuesday, August 21st where the topic for discussion was the water rates for townships. He stated that there was a task force set up in 2016 to discuss the renewal rates given by the City of Cincinnati (where we all buy our water from). The task force was disbanded in September of 2017 with no resolution in establishing rates for the townships. He stated that recently, the City of Cincinnati voted to establish a rate for Hamilton County

Townships that are serviced by Cincinnati Water Works at a multiplier of 1.43% (or 43% higher than what the city residents pay) while the 34 Municipalities and Villages came to an agreement using a multiplier of 1.25% (25% higher than the city price) through the year of 2047. He stated that the city argues that it costs more to service the townships than it does the municipalities and villages even though some of those lines run through the townships to get to those cities and villages.

Mr. Beck stated that OTA is going to set up an emergency meeting to discuss these water rates.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Beck seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows: Mr. Bryant - 'aye'; Mr. Beck - 'aye'.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Approved:

Kenneth Bryant, Board President

Carol Sims, Fiscal Officer