SHAKER HEIGHTS

Administration Committee
Tuesday, June 9, 2020
8:00 A.M.
Via Teleconference - Zoom

Members Present: Carmella Williams, Chairperson, Council Member
Tres Roeder, Council Member
Rob Zimmerman, Council Member
Kim Bixenstine, Resident Member
James Brady, Resident Member
Timeka Rashid, Resident Member
Brian Rosenfelt, Resident Member

Others Present: David E. Weiss, Mayor
Jeri Chaikin, CAO
William Gruber, Law Director
Julie McGovern Voyzey, Communications and Marketing Director
Sandra Middleton, Human Resources Manager
Frank Miozzi, Information Technology Director

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carmella Williams at 8:00 a.m.

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Approval of the March 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Chair Williams asked if there were any changes or comments to the minutes of the March 10, 2020 meeting, stating her correction had been previously submitted.

It was moved by Member Kim Bixenstine and seconded by Member James Brady that the minutes be approved as submitted.

Minutes of the March 10, 2020 meeting were approved.

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Amending the Codified Ordinances of the City of Shaker Heights to conform to current state law, and declaring an emergency

Law Director William Gruber stated the City annually updates its codified ordinances, including incorporating state law changes. This is usually done in December, so it is about six months behind. Although changes are incorporated for various codes such as fire and building, most changes are to the traffic and general offense codes. They are incorporated by reference to the offenses because when the City issues a citation/prosecution under City code, the City retains the fines. Whereas if a citation/prosecution is issued under State codes, fines are retained by the State.

Director Gruber explained, although actual codified ordinance sections are not displayed in the accompanying memo, he has reviewed each and provided a short summary of the state law changes. Prior to the Council meeting, he will prepare the actual pages of the codified ordinances showing the changes and additions. He indicated there are no major changes or any that will make a substantial difference regarding City enforcement. He did not feel it was necessary to go through each change but would answer any questions about the changes that are listed in the memo.

Chair Williams stated unless there was an objection, going through each was not necessary and her question of whether Council would be provided a comparison to view the changes between old and new, had been addressed. Director Gruber state if committee members would like a copy of the comparison, he would forward it to them.

The Committee was asked to recommend approval to Council of the proposed changes to the City's Codified Ordinances adopting State law changes and incorporating into the City's Traffic and General Offenses Codes.

It was moved by Member Brian Rosenfelt and seconded by Council Member Rob Zimmerman that the Committee recommend approval of changes to the City's Codified Ordinances.

The committee unanimously recommended the approval and the item will be presented to Council.

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Department Updates

Communications and Marketing

Communications and Marketing Director Julie Voyzey stated the path of the department since the last meeting has changed with the focus shifting to COVID with staff working almost fulltime from home on virus related communications which has consumed almost all work streams. In addition, since the opening of the emergency operation center, the director has taken on duties of public information officer. The department has been busy and is just now getting back to some pre COVID work.

Director Voyzey updated the committee on the department's undertakings from the period of March through May. Initially, the department implemented a COVID web page providing information from CCD, ODH and the governor. It has since morphed into multiple pages, a mini website of its own, to include city services changes, closure of public buildings, departmental changes, etc. There is a section for resident resources that includes information on virtual activities, support, food drives and distribution, all connected to the calendar, and multiple sub-pages related to PPP as well as a page devoted to volunteering and donating related to re-openings. In addition, the department created Shaker branded Zoom backgrounds with the shift to online City meetings.

On the social media side, which is one of our most interactive mediums, the department posted information on governor's orders, hand washing, social distancing, making and wearing face masks, which went out multiple times a day. An Instagram campaign was launched about what you can do such as go outside, social distance, etc., and recently outdoor dining at restaurants with engaging visuals

created by Shark & Minnow. In addition, a virtual Memorial Day celebration was produced and displayed across various social media venues.

Shaker Life magazine has been impacted due to the virus in areas including taking photographs, doing interviews, and employee absentee issues with the printer which have delayed production/mailing of the summer issue which will mail late July rather than late June. Plans are underway for the fall issue which is also a challenge due to social distancing. It will focus on reopening of Fernway.

Work has continued on the Shaker 365 campaign. WCPN ads aired in March and despite being scheduled during driving time when people began working from home, user data shows listeners at 122,000 in February and 550,000 in March. Digital kiosk ad placements for May and June began running downtown as businesses closed. However, working with the ad company, the placement has been extended to include July and August at no additional charge. Recently, during protests, kiosks were smashed and/or boarded up, so we are hoping to push to continue advertising into the fall. Purchased static billboard ads downtown will switch to digital at no cost so we are able to better respond to messaging based on context.

The pandemic has impacted everything the departments does and in light of the events surrounding the killing of George Floyd, the department has been working to be responsive and create sensitive messaging that the City feels strongly about and share the anguish and outrage with the community through the Mayor's report and to let the community know we are ready and determined to address issues of systemic racism. The department was congratulated on their work regarding communications and pivoting messaging regarding all that is happening and that residents are appreciative of the information the City has provided.

Human Resources

Sandra Middleton, Human Resources Manager, stated the City has been attracting highly qualified candidates for open positions and has several new hires including City Planner Kara O'Donnell who has over 25 years of experience, Project and Construction Manager John Wood with over 20 years of experience, and Accountant Adam Small.

The department has primarily been focuses on COVID-19 related issues. Most employees continue to work from home and an emergency employee policy allows employees to continue working from home through September 8. Other employees do come in, with HR employees staffing the front desk. The department is aware employees may feel disconnected and looks for ways to reconnect such as a Power Point presentation honoring employee and their family member graduations from kindergarten through PhD.

Additionally, the department is preparing to renew healthcare coverage for next year. They are monitoring costs and claims, which have significantly decreased particularly as a result of COVID-19 leading to less elective surgeries. Considering there was no increase in contributions last year and claims are down this year, it will be interesting to see how this is incorporated in the renewal. Workers' compensation claims are down as well.

Work continues on the time management system Executive Time which will be implemented through our MUNIS system, connecting all departments. Employee cyber training also continues. Face masks with the City logo are in production for use by employees as they return to work. The logo will assist others in identifying City employees.

Information Technology

Information Technology Director Frank Miozzi stated the department was significantly impacted by the virus. Previously there were about 15-20 employees with the ability to work from home and on occasion someone would be connected remotely. Currently there are over 130 employees with that ability with about 70-100 employees connected remotely at any time during the day. To accommodate employees, software licensing was added to provide connection over a VPN and the department contracted for additional internet bandwidth. The department spent an extensive amount of time assisting users in setting up home equipment, connections and bandwidth issues which required acquisition of remote management software. It was a challenge dealing with a variety of home equipment so from early March to April, the department was focused on remote support. Additionally, the court requested reconfiguration of the City's VPN so their employees could connect remotely to the Court Computer network utilizing the City's internet connection and VPN services. Although the court has a separate computer network, they utilize the City's internet service .

The department was not able to work on open projects until mid-April. This included server replacements and storage upgrades. However, it was later decided to extend the work from home scenario and the department shifted focus again to services, such as Zoom, to conduct City meetings via remote technology. IT quickly evaluated what was necessary to get Zoom running. This was challenging as Zoom's corporate resources are taxed and technical advice was not always available. Trials were conducted and it was determined which services were needed. The City is using a webinar service to increase security. The first Zoom meeting was successfully held last Friday. Meanwhile, Zoom services are now being used for other purposes such as non-formal meetings and conducting interviews.

The department has again pivoted back to other projects including support for the Executime program, assisting police with replacement of video body cameras, video digital interview room and digital evidence systems, and evaluating power issues for replacement of the generator at city hall by Public Works. In addition, the department assisted in setting up technology for fire station 3 at city hall and continues to support public safety operations that are still onsite as police, fire and public works have considerable staff reporting to the office.

Overall, the department is now supporting a split operation with a remote workforce and in office workforce, working to ensure employees have the technology to do their jobs, evaluating and making decisions regarding security, properly configuring the network, etc.

In response to an inquiry regarding expenses related to employees working remotely or obtaining additional services Director Miozzi stated funds have been expended and there may be additional ongoing costs if the situation continues indefinitely. Other expenditures still ahead may include items such as web cameras. Currently, much of the workforce is using personal equipment and if the

situation continues for a considerably longer period of time, there may be additional expenses to transition to city owned portable devices for employees which are more costly to operate than desktop computers. There are numerous factors that are being evaluated.

A comment was made that departments have done an outstanding job pivoting and keeping the City running well during these challenging times. The Mayor was then asked, given state budget cuts, and expected lower income tax revenues, what budget cuts will be made and how it will impact departments. The Mayor explained the City conducted a detailed process, identifying three different scenarios for reducing expenses, ranging from about five and a half to eleven million, with respect to potential loss of revenue. Costs are being monitored with some cost reductions already implemented with additional cuts possible dependent on revenues. Senate Bill 3 in the Ohio Legislature provides municipalities funds through the Cares Act for COVID related expenses. However, the funds are not lost revenue replacement, but rather direct reimbursement for out of pocket expenses so the City is tracking costs of all eligible costs for reimbursement.

The committee briefly discussed expense reductions, offering their assistance to the attending departments. The Mayor noted department directors have been flexible and cooperative, identifying creative ways to reduce expenditures. The PowerPoint presentation created by Finance Director John Potts showing the various scenarios for reducing expenses will be forwarded to committee members.

Law Department

Director William Gruber informed the committee staff transitioned well to working from home although they do come in at least once per week when things need to be completed in the office. The department had a substantial amount of work in assisting the court, including the judge and other cities, with the transition to virtual activities and taking into consideration what the Ohio Supreme Court would permit. Currently, the case load for general criminal matters is about half while code enforcement is about the same. There is a lot of catch-up due to citations issued previously, with approximately 30 pre-trials being held remotely per week. Remote trials take more time in preparing to ensure everyone is available and has remote access.

The department assisted with the transition to meetings being held via conference with respect to state guidelines as they changed and evolved over time. There were many questions about enforcing the state's order as well as discussion and research on employment issues. The department worked with Human Resources to establish a COVID related employee leave policy, which has been modified and extended several times based on changes in federal law, and state orders/guidelines, and is currently extended until September 8.

Additionally, the department has assisted other City departments including point of sale and code enforcement inspections for Building & Housing Department as well as federal and state funding for other departments, most recently on two fire grants, one for small departments in Cuyahoga County for which the City will be the fiscal agent. There were two license agreements related to COVID to use city property and right-of-way, as RMS and Picnic Hill wanted to do more outside. Other issues have come up such as permitting above ground pools, public events, etc.

Law has also worked on other COVID matters with the joint dispatch center and the Shaker Heights Development Corporation, both of which they represent. They worked on employee

problems with the dispatch center as well as ways to provide more information to police and fire departments, and COVID related emergency calls along with a tenant COVID related issue with SHDC.

Work continues on non-COVID matters including completion of contracts, preparation of legislation, answering resident calls on a variety of issues, public records requests, and public Board of Appeals meetings, one virtual for the first time. The department continues to work with Confluent Development on the Avalon Station 2 property as well as other developments in the area as well as property acquisitions and property transfers for SHDC. There has also been an explosion of side lot applications for which the department prepares legislation, purchase agreements, plats, obtaining owner signatures which must be completed in person, recording and delivering deeds to homeowners. Lastly, work continues with the Fair Housing Program as the departments investigates complaints that were received and, although the program entered into a contract with the Housing Center to do testing on discrimination, it has been postponed along with planned seminars.

An inquiry was made as to why there was an increase in side lot applications to which Director Gruber stated there was a change in policy. The Mayor spearheaded a move to simplify and streamline the process so it could be done much faster with a greater incentive for the buyer. Costs were reduced and it received a lot of publicity which helped make residents aware of the program.

Mayor Weiss added the City has been trying to get new construction homes in some of the infill locations while simultaneously streamline and simplify the side lot program, changing procedures whereas previously time was spent how the cost of the lot. It was better to sell them rather than let them sit for long periods of time. Council agreed with a set price and the City is working on other cost related items such as surveying the property in a more economical way. It costs the City approximately $750/year to maintain/cut the lawn of a lot so overall it was costing between $150 - $200k a year. In addition, no property tax is collected on the City owned lots. Rebranding and marketing the program seems to have worked, but there is a backlog in filing with the County.

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It was moved by Member Kim Bixenstine and seconded by Member James Brady that the meeting be adjourned.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 a.m.

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Carmella Williams, Council Member, Chair
Administration Committee