

On Tuesday, May 28th, 2024, the Council for the Village of Monroeville held a work session at 6:24 PM, in Council Chambers, to discuss the income tax rate and the oldest police cruiser.

Present were Mayor Joseph Galea; Council Members: Chris Raftery, Sue Rogers, Mark Miller, Tammy Schlachter, Bob Whitacre and Sam Wiley; Village Administrator Tom Gray; Fiscal Officer Bonnie Beck; Administrative Specialist Heather Alicea; Chief Gary Lyons; and Lt. Troy Kimball

The Mayor said that in addition to discussing the income tax rate and the police cruiser, he would also like to discuss appointing committee members for the semiquincentennial. The committee should have both Village government involvement and business owner or community civic leader involvement. Chris recommended asking Marcia Adelman to be involved.

The Mayor asked Chief to speak about the police cruiser. Chief said we've come to the point where it's not wise to put any more money towards repairing the 12-year-old police cruiser. The cruiser is rusting and the engine isn't running great. The Chief said it's a Ford Taurus, which isn't a very popular model among police cruisers anymore. The Chief isn't sure what, if anything, we could get for it. We may be able to get something for the parts. We could try to sell the parts and pieces or donate it. Chief isn't sure if the frame can be reinforced. The cruiser has almost 110,00 miles on it and it has new brakes. Chris asked where it could be donated to. Chief said we could try other police departments or EHOVE, as the last cruiser was donated to EHOVE. Chris asked if the cruiser is safe to donate. Chief said it would be buyer beware/as is, with full disclosure of anything that is wrong with it. Chief's recommendation is that we retire the vehicle from our fleet and look at adding an additional cruiser in 2025-2026, perhaps another hybrid or an all-electric vehicle. Mark asked if the MPD can get by with what they have now if we donate the cruiser. Chief and Troy confirmed they can for now, as the cruiser isn't being used that much. Both of the SUV's are damaged and will be going in for repairs once parts are available. Bonnie asked Council what their consensus is regarding the cruiser. The Mayor said he isn't opposed to donating it or selling it. Chris suggested offering it as a donation to EHOVE first and if they aren't interested, then sell it or scrap it out. The Mayor said a formal motion can be approved at the next regular Council meeting.

Tammy congratulated Troy on being awarded Officer of the Year during the Memorial Day festivities.

The Mayor explained that if a resident lives in the Village of Monroeville, but doesn't work in the Village, and they work in a community that has a city income tax, the Village gives that resident 100% credit on the city tax that they pay to city they work in. The Mayor used himself as an example. The Mayor works full-time in the city of Sandusky, but he lives in the Village of Monroeville. Therefore, he pays Sandusky city taxes and pays nothing to the Village of Monroeville, but is given 100% credit on his Village of Monroeville tax return for the taxes that he pays to Sandusky. Bob said that the majority of the people who live in Monroeville probably don't work in Monroeville. The Mayor said another question is if the people who work outside of the Village work in a city or work in a township. A township won't levy an income tax and a city will. Most of the bigger employers and/or retailers in the surrounding areas are in a city, so the majority of our residents may fall in that category. Bob asked if there is an approximate dollar amount that we are trying to accomplish. Bonnie said no, as there's no way for us to know that information. Bob asked if the Village needs more money and asked for an amount that is needed. Bonnie said she can't put a dollar amount to the need. What she knows is that we are talking about putting in a new parking lot, re-creating the sidewalk program, addressing the sidewalks in the downtown area and there have been multiple complaints about the conditions of our streets. Part of the reason for attempting to get a credit for taxes paid to another municipality is to build the funds up so that we can address the concerns that the citizens are bringing to Council. We can't address those concerns this year or next year.

The parking lot and the downtown sidewalks will cost over one million dollars each. Bonnie doesn't know what the street repairs will cost. We spent \$60,000-\$80,000 resurfacing the last two streets that we did. We are looking at some major projects right now and it's unknown what else may come along. We are trying to look into the future to see how these problems can be addressed. These issues have existed for a while, as Council is aware. Instead of just saying we are aware of the problems, it's time to address the problems. We need to alleviate the concerns that the citizens have, not just for the aesthetics, but for safety purposes as well. Bob said he agrees 100%. Bonnie said we are looking at a \$720,000 revenue on income taxes, and only \$60,000 of that is from individuals. Only 8% of what we receive in income tax revenue is from residential. Some of our residents work in a township. For example, Perkins Township is growing in the business aspect and they don't take out any taxes because local taxes are courtesy taxes and aren't required to be withheld. If someone works at Kalahari for 10-years and hasn't had any taxes withheld, it's not going to affect them at all. Council can determine what percentage they want to have credit wise and see what kind of income that brings in over the next couple of years, and then go back and adjust it if needed. Bonnie said we've not gone to our public to ask for any money to support the General Fund in years. The only increases we've done to our general public is for utilities. We also have the GATSO revenue. Bob asked where we would be if we weren't getting the GATSO revenue. As of right now, we're spending 30% more from the General Fund than what we are bringing in. We have everyday expenses that still need to be addressed and costs continue to increase. When we have unexpected costs, for example, the \$2800 that we have to pay for architect drawings of the salt shed, that takes a chunk from the General Fund. GATSO is not a guaranteed source of revenue. Bonnie asked Chief to share the new information that he has regarding GATSO.

Chief said if Council recalls, a new Ordinance was passed regarding GATSO violations. That Ordinance is tied to a new form that needs to accompany the Ordinance when it goes out to a violator. Chief said GATSO hasn't transitioned over to the new form yet and he isn't sure why, as we basically wrote it for them. With the most recent Ordinance, there are no late fees and instead of a 30-day waiting period to either contest the citation, pay it or do a transfer of liability, it's now 45-days or our solicitor will go to court to obtain a judgement against the violator. The current citation form that is being mailed out doesn't match our new Ordinance. As Chief shared with Jim Barney and his staff, Chief doesn't feel comfortable approving any violations right now when our current form isn't compliant with our new Ordinance. Per the last discussion, GATSO seems to be several weeks away from using the new form. As of a week ago, GATSO citations have been suspended. Chief is hoping that this prompts GATSO to get the ball rolling on the new form. When discussions first began about the new form, GATSO told Chief it would be two weeks for them to start sending out the new form. That was at least 5 weeks ago. GATSO is now telling Chief it may be June 4th. Bonnie confirmed, and said that this process originally began in March. Chris said this will be a loss of revenue for GATSO as well. Chief verified, and reminded everyone that there are other traffic camera vendors out there that we could work with. The Village of Newburgh Heights recently dropped GATSO, so Chief is guessing they weren't satisfied with GATSO either. Chief would like GATSO to be compliant with this process as it makes it easier for us rather than switching to a new company. The camera citation program is working as we are getting fewer violators and we've reached a plateau of consistency. Bonnie said if these citations are appealed through court, the court will not take the case without being paid a fee. We used to pay the \$64 court filing fee up front for the violator and ask them for reimbursement, but we can't pursue reimbursement anymore. The \$64 fee for every contested citation is coming from the General Fund, which is just another expense for that fund.

Bonnie said if any residents question her about changing the income tax credit rate, she is comfortable explaining why it's being done. There were a lot of naysayers about the MMC being built. All of the soft costs for this building came from our Star Ohio account and we didn't have to borrow any funds for those

costs. The only money we had to borrow was for the hard costs. Bonnie is very comfortable speaking with anyone who wants to see better and safer sidewalks and streets and is questioning changes that have to be made to accommodate those costs. The Mayor said he received a concern today regarding our responsibility for the section of Peru Center Road that is in bad shape. Tom said now that Memorial Day and yard waste is out of the way, the Village will put some time towards patching in that area. The Mayor said he has also heard complaints about Fulton Street, Hamilton Street and Herrick Alley. The Mayor asked Tom if the portion of street in front of the fire station is ODOT's responsibility. Tom said no, that is the Village's to fix. We were waiting for the most recent waterline break area to settle. It's now settled with the rain, so we will be purchasing a load of hot mix and resurfacing that entire area where the pavement has pulled apart.

The Mayor said in order to raise the Village income tax rate above 1%, it would have to go on the ballot, but the income tax credit rate is up to Council, with legislation. Other communities aren't generous to the extent we have been with income tax credit. We are relying on GATSO revenue and that's not a position we want to be in, especially with the collection efforts that we have to put forth, regardless if we have a judgment on a violator. Bob asked how we functioned before GATSO revenue. Bonnie said there have been a number of years where she expressed concern to Council about our General Fund. When we've had to do advances to pay for grants, they were done in small increments as the General Fund couldn't support the whole amount. At one point, the General Fund was down to \$200,000. Sue mentioned the wage increases also affected the General Fund but they had to be done. The Mayor said the wage increases have done what they were designed to do, which was to attract new employees. The rising cost of everything has impacted the General Fund as well. Chris said we have an old Village and things have to be done to improve it. We have to look at the big picture and see what we can do to improve sidewalks and streets. Sue asked if we need to go to the voters and ask for an income tax rate increase. Bonnie said Council can put it on the ballot, but it probably won't be successful. Chris asked when the income tax credit rate change would be enacted after the three readings are done. Bonnie verified the readings would be done in July, August and September and the Ordinance would be effective on January 1st, 2025, with the 2024 tax filing. Council needs to determine what percentage they want to give for a credit. Discussion. The Mayor said doing it in a graduated manner may give people the opportunity to adjust to the change and asked Bonnie if the Ordinance can be structured that way. Bonnie confirmed and said Council could also do it for a couple of years, see what they are looking at and then go back and adjust it. The Mayor asked Council for a consensus on the credit amount they are considering. Sam Wiley, Sue Rogers, Tammy Schlachter, Mark Miller and Bob Whitacre all stated they would like to see a ¼ percent credit. Chris Raftery said she would like to see a ½ percent credit. Bonnie asked Council if they want her to prepare legislation for a ¼ percent credit and leave it open as to the time that's it's there, effective with the 2024 tax filing year. Council confirmed.

Bonnie said Council will begin to see beautification on the corner of Monroe and Main Street. The plants and shrubs have been purchased and Marie Bischoff will be helping with that. Bob complimented Jess Wasserman on the bunting that's been hung on the downtown planters. The Mayor said Jess asked if the bunting can stay up through Labor Day and Council confirmed they are in agreement with that.

Bonnie said she had given Council a draft of the schedule of zoning fees that have been amended. The biggest change is to no longer collect the \$1000 for a non-residential site plan review. Rather than us having to seek out a professional to approve a site plan, we're going to put the responsibility on the applicant. Bonnie will present the changes at the next meeting.

The Mayor asked Bonnie for the current Star Ohio interest rate and asked where our CDs are at right now. Bonnie said the CDs are currently stable and Council and the Mayor will be provided with a six-month review. Star Ohio rates are starting to go down a little at a time. Bonnie said \$150,000 was transferred from the General Fund into a Star Ohio account in order to accrue interest for streets, sidewalks and the parking lot.

The Mayor asked Tom if the Village had recently received a \$75,000-\$76,000 grant for the parking lot. Tom verified and said the Department of Energy grant to bring the automated meter infrastructure program to completion is pending, along with the grid resiliency.

The Mayor said a hot topic lately has been code enforcement for the business on Sandusky Street and perhaps it can be discussed at a future work session.

Sam asked Tom how the water run-off issue from the truck stop to Eagle View Drive is progressing. Tom said it's progressing slowly. One of six outfalls in the hillside area was abated for Jim Ehrman's property. There are five other properties that need to be addressed. It's been discovered that during construction of the homes for Hammond, Ehrman and Underwood, there were some communications given to those property owners, (not by the Village), that caused some of the field tiles to be crushed and disconnected in the allotment. That has now created a residual water problem where the houses sit and where the pipes are located. It's a two-fold problem. The run-off continues to be addressed.

The Mayor would like to reach out to people and see if they are interested in serving on the committee for the semiquincentennial. Both Bonnie and Tammy expressed interest.

There being no other business to come before them, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Alicea, Administrative Specialist