

MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES
Portsmouth City Council Meeting on
September 9, 2019 – 6:51 p.m.

Members present:

Sean Dunne	1 st Ward
Charlotte Gordon	2 nd Ward
Kevin E. Johnson	3 rd Ward
Jerrold Albrecht	4 th Ward (Absent)
Gene Meadows	5 th Ward
Thomas K. Lowe	6 th Ward

Also present was City Manager Sam Sutherland, Solicitor John Haas, Auditor M. Trent Williams and City Clerk Diana Ratliff.

1. **Police Department Firing Range** **CM-19-63**

Manager Sutherland stated that dumping at Bertha Avenue had been an ongoing problem for years. He had some conversations with Police employees and thought it best to expand the firing range which might curtail some of that dumping activity.

Acting Mayor Johnson asked if this was behind Matiz Motors because he was having a dumping problem there as well. Manager Sutherland said that it did not reach that far north. Manager Sutherland stated that the Ohio EPA was now involved.

Councilman Meadows moved to adopt alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

2. **Acceptance and Appropriation of Grant Funds for the Fire Dept.** **CM-19-64**

Manager Sutherland stated this was a \$15,000 grant that was awarded by BWC. He said that since he sent it out to Council there was another update in which the Fire Department intended on requesting an additional \$8,500 to cover a third dryer for next year’s CIP. Chief Raison informed him that they have an updated quote and if Council would entertain the idea of modifying the request and appropriating an additional \$4,875 which would take care of the dryer and they wouldn’t need to ask for it next year. Solicitor Haas stated that it was two separate requests and would need to be separate from this original request, because one was asking to accept grant awards and the other was requesting additional monies.

Councilman Meadows moved to adopt alternative #1 and accept the grant.

There were no further questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

3. **Additional Funding requests for a dryer for the Fire Dept.** **CM-19-65**

Solicitor Haas was speaking but his microphone was off, Auditor Williams stated that this was a new ordinance and needed to have new additional appropriation wording. The additional amount would be \$4,875.

Councilman Meadows moved to adopt alternative #1.

There were no further questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

Manager Sutherland said that he sat in on a demonstration about some software that the city needed to actively pursue quickly and would basically update the Engineering software; complaints would be uniform and would be used by the whole city. Mr. Gedeon had a presentation and said that the first year would cost more because of setup fees, the city currently pays \$10,000 per year for the current database and it was not integrated with other departments. He said the new one would be \$20,000 per year which was double what we pay now and also had a \$9,000 setup fee, and the benefits were web-based so that other departments could also utilize it. The Service Department was currently using a public works code enforcement data base that could not be integrated with any other Department. The Building Department was using a very outdated system called the Franklin System, and this would allow them to upgrade to do online permitting which would bring in an additional \$6,000 per year. The Police Department currently could not see anything that any other Department was doing, but he gave an example of how the new system could help. "Say you have a property at 500 Main Street, a Police Officer pulls up on the site, (we're having a huge problem now with these condemned houses, and what these criminals are doing is ripping down the condemned signs) and when the Police Officer responds they have nothing to go by". The new system would allow them to type in the address, and it would pull up a picture of the property and the Officers would see every entry from the different departments. Another example was that the Water Department could enter that the water was turned off on a certain date, and the Health Department could enter their notes along with pictures such as "condemned signs" and any other things that they have found and each Department could see each other's comments and pictures. He said they had an incident on 7th Street which was referred by the Police Department for animal cruelty, he almost responded by himself with no police support, however he had found out there had been a domestic issue the night before and if he had shown up without backup, it could have been bad; this program allow employees to see warnings tied to an address. The Service Department could use it to track all of the work orders, they could refer any complaints to the Health Department and they would see the notes. The big benefit would be to the citizens of Portsmouth, citizens can enter any complaint into the database, however, citizens could not see notes that the departments have entered and it would allow them to track the progress of a complaint. Currently they have no idea if the Health Department, Police Department or Code Enforcement have been out to check out their complaint. A citizen could log in through their iPhone or website, type in the address their inquiring about and see the progress.

Councilman Lowe asked if there was a way to notify him of a complaint in his ward, Mr. Gedeon explained that Mr. Lowe could log in and track the complaints of addresses within his ward, the same as a citizen. If Council wanted access there would need to be some kind of agreement on what access Council would have or simply observe and track the progress of the complaints in their ward. Acting Mayor Johnson stated that this would require constant input, Manager Sutherland stated that they were somewhat doing that now but the notes just are not integrated and no one knows what the other departments were doing with regards to a particular complaint; this system would allow the departments to see all notes regarding the complaint. This allows more citizen input and better tracking of complaints.

Councilman Meadows ask if this would be for next year, Manager Sutherland explained that the quote was only good through the end of the month. They're asking that this be brought to the next Council agenda as an emergency ordinance and it would allow the program to go live by January 1st. Councilwoman Gordon stated that she thought this offered safety to employees who were going out to property's which doesn't sound like is in place now. She asked if there was someone that would maintain the system and where were they located. Mr. Gedeon said that the company would maintain the system and they were from out of State, but there was a local Ross County Building Department in Chillicothe, Ohio that was currently using the system. He said that they were going to set up another meeting with them to observe the system and it would allow us to sit down and work with the system. Ms. Gordon asked if there would be some kind of training for the new system, Mr. Gedeon replied "yes" and the price included all of the training. Mr. Lowe would be interested in going to the meeting just to see how it operates. Mr. Gedeon said that a demo could be set up for Council to view it. Councilman Dunne asked if we had other quotes for similar systems, Mr. Gedeon said that they had looked at other ones and found that they were quite a bit more for much less services. Mr. Dunne also asked if at the end of 2020 the city decides they want to move away from that system, would the City of Portsmouth get to keep the information stored, Mr. Gedeon replied "yes".

Mr. Lowe said that “it was an asset and that gentlemen standing at the podium needs to be over in Engineering, we’re really losing out on that, he’s been doing a lot of things on this side, that he’s doing for the Health Department right now correct? He needs to bring those services right here to the Engineering Department”. Mr. Gedeon said that currently they could not do online permitting and the new system would allow for it, which as he said before was an additional \$6,000 per year. Ms. Gordon stated that when the Museum spent a lot of money to update their database, they hadn’t realized was the calculation of staffing hours it would save and they ended up being ahead, even though the new system cost more money, it streamlined the staffing hours to be much more efficient. Auditor Williams ask what the name of the system was, Mr. Gedeon replied iWorQ, and said he could set up a demonstration of the system before the next meeting. Solicitor Haas would like to know where the money was being appropriated from.

Councilman Lowe moved to adopt alternative #1.

There were no further questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

Discussion

- A. Parks and Recreation Person** – Councilman Dunne stated that he was supposed to get a more concrete version of the draft to Solicitor Haas and was not able to get it to him before he left. He asked if he could send that to him before the next meeting.
- B. Utility Rate Study Proposal** – Councilman Meadows stated that he thought it was an excellent idea and he understood that it would cost a little money to have it done, but the city won’t know the right answer until we get the information. Manager Sutherland stated he would get a Council letter ready for the next meeting.

Councilman Meadows moved to adopt alternative #1.

There were no further questions or comments: **VOTE: 5 Ayes – 0 Nays**

- C. Non-Union Employees Salary Study** – Acting Mayor Johnson asked the rest of Council if they had had a chance to look it over. Councilman Meadows stated that he took the position with the budget that he’s always taken, and that was “Sam, it’s your budget, if you can afford salaries for them, pay them what you want, you’re the City Manager. If the budget works, great, if it doesn’t, we’ll cross that bridge when we get there.”

Mr. Johnson ask if everyone had reviewed and seen the numbers and compared the apples to the oranges and seen the difference for communities that were the same size but different in pay. Councilwoman Gordon said in some cases there was a large difference. Mr. Johnson said he understood that the city had a scale to balance as far as a budget and believed that the city needed to look at this because it had been behind for a long time and we need to see what we can do to move the pay structure up somewhat. Councilman Dunne stated that his fear was losing talented employees at the city and the temptation for employees to move elsewhere if there was a better package or deal. Mr. Johnson said that he believed some of these employees have served our city for a long time and have been told to hold on because better days were coming and he felt the better days need to begin. Ms. Gordon felt that as jobs open up, the city wanted to be able to attract competent people who would move here from the outside with new ideas and be competitive. Mr. Johnson asked again if Council wanted Manager Sutherland to start looking at realistic but good numbers that we could live with as a city to adjust the pay scale. Councilman Meadows stated that he would assume that would be what Manager Sutherland would do every year anyway. Mr. Sutherland asked if Council wanted him to wait until the budget was submitted and Mr. Meadows said, “it’s September now” and he was assuming that the budget was being worked on. Mr. Sutherland agreed that it needed to be looked at.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m. on a motion by Councilwoman Lowe.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk