

MANAGER’S CONFERENCE MINUTES
Portsmouth City Council Meeting on
October 11, 2021 – 7:35 p.m.

Members present:

Sean Dunne	1 st Ward
Charlotte Gordon	2 nd Ward
Kevin E. Johnson	3 rd Ward
Lyvette Mosley	4 th Ward
Edwin Martell	5 th Ward
Dennis Packard	6 th Ward

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

Manager Sutherland requested to add as #8 “Zoning Change for 2016 & 2032 Robinson” – CL 21-96” to the agenda.

1. **PROPERTY PURCHASE** **CM-21-89**

Manager Sutherland stated that this was for the possible purchase of property

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 Nay**

2. **COST INCREASE OF INSPECTION MULTI-USE PATH** **CM-21-90**

Manager Sutherland said due to the length of the construction for the multi-use path, they had a little overrun with the State Inspector and ODOT was asking for an additional \$45,000 to cover that cost.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 Nay**

3. **LEASE OF ALLEY FOR CORNERSTONE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** **CM-21-91**

Manager Sutherland said that there had been discussions with Cornerstone Church for a long time and they’ve finally obtained the property on both sides of the alley that runs east and west and north of their building and they want to use it for soccer fields. City Engineer Prosch had already drafted a legal description for them to lease the alley. Councilwoman Gordon asked what becomes the soccer field, the alley or the parking lot? Mr. Sutherland said that the alley would be grassed over and they will then have two fields and it wouldn’t interfere with trash pickup because that alley was not used. Solicitor Haas asked why it wasn’t being vacated and Mr. Sutherland said that there was an issue with the sewer line that was there and the other thing was that ultimately, they believe that they will be able to acquire the rest of the surrounding properties and when they do, they will be able to come back to ask for a vacation of the alley.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 Nay**

4. **BID FOR SUPPLIES** **CM-21-92**

Manager Sutherland said this was regular housekeeping that was done every year to be able to start bidding out for supplies for next year.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 Nay**

5. **McKINLEY POOL GRANT FUNDING**

CM-21-93

Manager Sutherland stated that Community Development Director Tracy Shearer had been looking into some grants for the pool rehabilitations and had found a 50% reimbursable grant but the only stipulation was that the city had to commit to all of the funds and then be reimbursed the 50%. He had already built \$200,000 into the general fund as part of the commitment and his thought process was that the other \$200,000 could come out of the Capital Improvement Fund and they were hoping for some donations, but this would be something to get the ball rolling. Councilwoman Gordon asked what the timing was on the grant? Manager Sutherland said he wasn't sure if it was for 2022 or 2023. Vice President Dunne stated that when they received theirs for the Skate Park it was opening day for Baseball. Mayor Johnson said that our share would be \$400,000 and Mr. Sutherland said that we had to commit to the \$800,000 and then once the project begins, the city would be reimbursed the \$400,000 and if they don't award the grant to the city, we would just back up. Mayor Johnson asked how it looked for the city being on fiscal watch and Mr. Sutherland replied that he had already committed \$200,000 into the general fund forecast and the CIP fund doesn't matter. Solicitor Haas asked for a fund number so that he can reference it. Mr. Dunne asked if the county was able to contribute at all and Mr. Sutherland stated that he hadn't heard from them, but would reach out to them. Clerk Ratliff said that they would know something by April 2022. Councilman Packard asked if the grant folks mind where the money comes from and Mr. Sutherland said "no" the city just had to commit to the money being there.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 Nay**

6. **CLOSING OF BOOKS 2021**

CM-21-94

Manager Sutherland said that this was basically his year-end housekeeping closing of the books.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1.

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 Nay**

7. **HEALTH DEPARTMENT CLINIC EXPANSION**

CM-21-95

Manager Sutherland advised that the Health Department was asking for \$35,000 to expand their clinic area and Health Commissioner Chris Smith was present if Council had any questions. Mr. Smith gave a brief overview. They've already given a job offer for a second Nurse Practitioner; the other NP was off and should be back around November 3rd or after and in November they will have two Nurse Practitioners in place and an additional Registered Nurse and they already have a receptionist in place and they will be able to double the clinic capacity and hopefully double their revenues and be able to see twice as many patients. With having only one Nurse Practitioner we couldn't provide services to the city employees and with having two, this would always give us backup. He said that grants would not pay for remodeling or changes to a structure, rent, housing or anything like that and they've received a good estimate of approximately \$26,000 to essentially redo the front registration counter which will make two work spaces and also currently they have two small rooms that they will expand and be used as additional exam rooms. He said that they will need two examine tables which would cost around \$1,500-\$2,000 each and he believed the sinks were included and was hoping that the cost would come in around \$30,000, but requested \$35,000 in case there were any unforeseen costs. He said that their budget was flat this year and they were not asking the city for more money and this clinic revenue was important. They've absorbed the raises, changes in longevity and also the increase in healthcare costs. They also didn't receive Capital Improvement money this year because it had been left out but he thanked Council because the city did buy them an air conditioner.

Vice President Dunne asked about Community Health Workers and Mr. Smith said there was a big expansion of those around the state; Jackson County received a really big grant to get about 20 workers and one of those workers will be hosted in Scioto County. There were other community entities looking into expanding that program. He said that they've just had horrible spacing problems and obviously they're not going to be in a new building this year or next year and most likely what we can afford was to get Water Works and Income Tax better facilities. This clinic expansion will help no matter what and if they don't do this, it would be a loss

in revenue. He also asked that if Council accepts and moves this forward, he would like to see it passed at the next meeting so that they could go ahead and get the exam rooms in.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 Nay**

8. **ZONING CHANGE TO 2016 AND 2032 ROBINSON AVENUE**

CM-21-96

Manager Sutherland said that this had come before the Planning Commission back in 2019. The gentleman had a business and was proposing to build an oil change facility in that stretch and if you look at the attached map, all of the lots in between those two parcels were zoned commercial and he wanted to make them all commercial and would be adding at least 10 jobs. Mayor Johnson asked why this had been delayed since 2019 and Mr. Sutherland replied that it was late in 2019 and then COVID hit and nothing was happening but he now wanted to proceed.

Vice President Dunne motioned to accept alternative #1

There were no questions or comments: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 Nay**

Discussion

1. **Lease of Alley 926 4th Street** – Manager Sutherland said this was for the lease of the alley at 926 4th Street. Mayor Johnson said that he spoke with the owner today and she was unable to be present at the meeting and asked that they put it on hold until the next meeting. Councilwoman Gordon acknowledged that all of Council got a second opposition letter from the adjacent property behind this establishment and last meeting there was a letter of opposition from the building right next door and both of these letters were adamantly opposed to the city leasing this alley. She asked if this was to go before Planning and Zoning, what would they do with these opposition letters? Mr. Sutherland said that from his years of sitting on the planning commission was that if there was anyone in opposition to a request, generally the Planning Commission would vote no. Mayor Johnson asked if the meeting ever happened with this owner, the Fire and Police Chief's and others that were supposed to meet with Ms. Colley. Ms. Gordon had asked for the owner's phone number and she would not give her the phone number but that Ms. Colley had Ms. Gordon's email and she would contact her to set it up. Ms. Gordon had not heard from her, and Ms. Colley had not come forward with a time to meet and go over her ideas. Ms. Gordon said that one of the neighbors had footage that they wanted Mayor Johnson to look at and ask if he had met with them and Mr. Johnson said that he had received calls from Mr. Ockerman and he addressed each one of them and once they were addressed and explained they didn't have a problem with what the business was trying to do. Mr. Johnson said that when you live in the downtown of a city, there was sometimes noise and sometimes that noise could not be controlled by the business owner and if people want solitude and quiet, then they move out to the country where you could hear the goats and cows and all. Ms. Gordon said that there was a noise ordinance that had been on the books for decades and she also received a packet of Police calls from that establishment and a lot of them were noise violations going back to 2018 and Ms. Colley hasn't been able to address the noise issues. Vice President Dunne said that he had concerns because Ms. Colley hadn't set up the meeting and in his conversations with people, they asked why the noise ordinance wasn't being addressed and what was the point of having codes if they're not enforced. Mr. Dunne also said that he was unaware, but the parking lot next to the bar belongs to Shawnee State University and students were being accused of making the noise and for people that were researching going to the University, they could get a report on things like crime etc. and that was a crazy situation if that space was being used late at night. He said that if something were to happen on that parking lot, it would go into the University's report. He said that the people he had spoken with said that the noise ordinance hadn't worked and one person suggested that if the bar could go at least one-year without any noise violations, then they could reapply. Councilwoman Mosley stated that she had been looking forward to going to that meeting as well because she wasn't familiar with Party Time so she drove by to look at the alley and noticed that there were two lower-level apartments with windows; personally, she wouldn't want a wall up that close to my living space. Councilman Packard said that it was significant to point out was that every other alley that we've leased, there was no opposing property owners and no adjoining residential area. Mayor Johnson asked Council to hear from the owner again because we're giving alleys to so many folks around town, but it's not fair if

we're going to pick one that we're not going to let have an alley. Mr. Packard said that it was unfortunate and it would be nice if the commercial property owner and business owner could enhance her business, but if the rule was that an adjoining owner was opposed, they would have to do an ordinance to break the rules. Mr. Dunne suggested that if they have a meeting within the next 2 weeks it could be discussed more but if they don't it could be removed.

2. **Street Art Lease** – Manager Sutherland said that as soon as their given the additional information on the expansion, they could move forward. Councilman Martell said that the Street Art project had two sections from the corner and they would like the rest of it which would be approximately 300 ft. He would love for them to have the rest of the wall because they've been doing a really good job of taking care of the wall which wasn't part of the lease. If they could just add that wall to the lease, they would take care of it like they've been doing. Mr. Sutherland said that basically it would be the rest of the wall that was parallel to the road and he would have a council letter for the next meeting.
3. **14th Street Community Center** – Councilman Martell said he would like the city to consider supporting the 14th Street Community Center in the way they support other organizations. Vice President Dunne said that we support Main Street Portsmouth with \$55,000 and Mr. Martell said that they would start off with a lot less than that and then quarterly or maybe even annually increase that amount to a max limit for them and that way the budget wouldn't be hit so hard and at the same time the city would be fulfilling the need. Mr. Dunne said that starting a relationship would be valid and he asked Mr. Martell to bring forward a number for the next meeting. He replied that he would and he had spoken with Manager Sutherland about what they needed it for and a breakdown of all the programs and everyone knows what the 14th Street Community Center does for the community. Mr. Martell stated that he would share the list of programs and then maybe at the next meeting provide that list to the public so everyone would know what they do for the community. Mayor Johnson asked where the money comes from and Mr. Sutherland replied that it came from the general fund community agencies fund which was the same fund that Main Street, Friends of Portsmouth and Buckeye Elite Basketball were paid. Mr. Johnson asked if we increase this, how does that look as far as the fiscal watch? Mr. Sutherland replied that it would go against the general fund which was one of the problems. Mr. Dunne said that we're buying an extra Police car every year, Mr. Sutherland replied that the Police car would come from the Capital Improvement fund. Councilwoman Gordon suggested getting specific projects that they're looking to fund and when we give money to Main Street or to any of the other groups it was usually project based and if they could provide each year where the money would be going, that would be helpful.

Mayor Johnson said he didn't want to sound like a grinch, but if we look at the next item which was the fire department staffing which was life-saving men and women and were having discussions that the city doesn't want to pay for three more firefighters because of fiscal watch. He understood the thought process, but how do we discuss putting money for this entity when it will have the same impact on the fiscal watch. Ms. Gordon said that Councilman Martell's idea of starting small and incrementally see what the city could afford in the future and not put forth everything they're asking for but start small because these were people who were feeding children who were not getting fed otherwise. Councilman Packard said that some of the work that the 14th Street Center easily seems life-saving also and they have programs such as after school homework assistant program to help kids understand safety measures in the home as well and that's important and shouldn't be taken lightly. Mr. Johnson was only asking where the scales and balances were because anything the city does at this point affects the general fund and will look bad for the city trying to get off of fiscal watch. Mr. Sutherland said that everything affects the general fund and impacts whether the city gets out of fiscal watch or not. Mr. Packard asked what happen to the information that the Fire Chief was supposed to provide for the State Auditor and Mr. Sutherland replied that he had provided the State Auditor with the information, but wanted Council to understand that this gentleman was being pulled every which way and gets to us when he can and this Auditor wanted the city to be out of watch. His concern was that if we don't get out of watch soon, the State would elevate us to another stage because we've been in this since 2012. He understood what the firefighters were saying but there were other issues and concerns and until we get out of fiscal watch, we shouldn't be throwing money at different things. Mr. Packard asked if the State Auditor gave any indication and Mr. Sutherland said that currently he was just looking at the numbers and the simple math. He's seen the \$367,000 number that it would cost for the three firefighters and that they would save \$179,000 in overtime and if you subtract the two, it would still be almost \$200,000 added to the general fund and until all of the numbers were put together and locked in, he cautioned

Council not to do anything. He knew that's not what the firefighters wanted to hear but he can't help it, we need to get out of this position because if we get elevated, it wouldn't be good for anyone and the State will give us 85% of our money, they don't care what we do with it and they'll start getting the city out of fiscal watch themselves.

Vice President Dunne asked what the general timeline was for city's time on fiscal watch, Mr. Sutherland said that it just depended on the city because they deal with villages also. His concern was that they had been in fiscal watch since 2012 and some progress had been made, but then stalemated and then more progress was made and stalemated again. Some might take the attitude that after nine-years the city doesn't want out, so they would take the reins and get us out. He said that he understood the plight, but they need to team up on this because we've cut AFSCME employees and all of us have taken a hit on raises and paying more for insurance and even though we've got \$11,000,000.00 in the general fund it still does not mean that 10-years from now that we're going to be in good financial position. The forecast had shown that the city needed to watch what they do. Mr. Dunne asked about Portsmouth Ambulance's contribution, Mr. Sutherland said that he would like to discuss it more with them because they just spoke briefly, but he believed that they were willing to help and that doesn't mean that the city doesn't need the additional staffing, but he would hate to make any more moves in the general fund until we know we're getting out of fiscal watch. He said that he was hoping that within the next couple of weeks that the State Auditor would be able to meet with all of the department heads and let everyone see what the city was facing. Yes, it's awesome that we got a bunch of COVID money and we're glad for it, but looking into the future, if we don't watch what we do, we will be back in the same boat. It's time that we get out of fiscal watch and if we don't get out, the State will push us out and it won't be the way we like it.

Councilman Packard asked if there was any safe alternative or measure that we could take quickly? Mr. Sutherland said that he didn't appreciate the comment that their request was falling on deaf ears, nobody had deaf ears and we're trying to figure it out and whatever we could do to get some help in this town as far as EMS we will try to do it. When all of this started with EMS, you all weren't taking on what you took on and now it had gotten to the point where private businesses have lost and the fire department had sucked it up. He added that he was grateful for what they do, but it was now to the point where, the Fire Department/EMS can't keep up and the city cannot afford to get them more people.

Chief Raison asked Manager Sutherland what was his solution? Manager Sutherland said that he wouldn't argue about it, everybody here knew the position that we've been in since 2012 and now he's had conversations with Portsmouth Ambulance that say they can help, do you want their help? Chief Raison said that they have used their help for years, but when our Dispatchers started transferring calls to them, they didn't have anyone available and sometimes they transfer calls to the Fire Department/EMS. Mayor Johnson asked Chief Raison to come forward to speak. Clerk Ratliff ask if we were still on the 14th Street Community Center?

Mayor Johnson asked Councilman Martell for any additional information regarding 14th Street Community Center and Mr. Martell said that it could be discussed at a later time.

4. **Fire Department Staffing** – Chief Raison said he was in a meeting last week of the county squad chiefs and Portsmouth Ambulance was there, as well as another ambulance company too. The issue across the county and across the United States was a shortfall when it comes to staff in responding to medical emergencies and was a problem industry wide. They have seen an increase in calls and when our Dispatchers try to transfer calls to Portsmouth Ambulance, their response had been “they don't have anyone available”. Chief Raison said that Mr. Adkins was having a difficult time hiring people and that he had a lot of people deployed with FEMA because it was very profitable for them. It was an issue and it wasn't their fault, but it was an issue and someone had to pick up the calls. He understood that the city wanted out of fiscal watch but they have to take care of the community. Mr. Sutherland stated that he agreed with that statement but they have to do it in the proper financial manner, but if the city doesn't watch what it's doing, we won't be in the position to get out of it by ourselves. Mayor Johnson asked if there was a way to sit down with the State Auditor and discuss the Fire Department and what our needs are and if there's a way it could work. Mr. Sutherland stated that the State Auditor was aware of Chief Raison's request. Mr. Johnson asked if they could discuss if there was a way to get the city off fiscal watch, but yet accommodate the fire department in some manner. Mr. Sutherland said “yes” but it would mean cutting other positions and he's not doing this to be adversarial to the fire department, he's

trying to look out for what Council had ask him to do, trying to be honest and upfront about everything. The City Auditor had increased his projections because everyone had said it was too low and now, he's brought it up, but he wasn't sure where the State Auditor stood with the new numbers yet. Councilwoman Gordon asked how the additional staffing looked with Trent's new numbers, Mr. Sutherland said it was better, but the expenses for three fire fighters haven't been plugged into it. Mayor Johnson asked Chief Raison what he would do if he were in their position? Chief Raison said he would make the adjustments necessary and watch the budget annually, but part of the problem they've had in the past was that no one would make those hard decisions when there were small decisions that had to be made. He said that he would increase the staff, watch the budgets closely, make adjustments going forward because we've all seen the revenue increase steadily over the past five-years and hopefully that will continue. He said he hears and sees projects going on around the city and that's great and encouraging because it's bringing increased revenue to our city, but he felt the forecast was so conservative that the city can't do anything and we can't get out of fiscal watch because the forecast was so conservative and the State Auditor had agreed that the revenue was overly conservative and Mr. Sutherland agreed, but he hadn't seen Auditor Williams new numbers.

Michael Adkins – Portsmouth Ambulance – they are a local ambulance provider and been in business for about 10-years and his parents also ran Portsmouth Ambulance (PA) back in the 1990's and up until 2017 they actually provided the 911 for the City of Portsmouth. He said it was a difficult job and the FD/EMS was doing a great job, but there was definitely some unforeseen volume and no one could have predicted a global pandemic. They operate around 8 units 24/7 and their primary client was SOMC, but they also provide 911 to Washington Township, South Shore and Lewis County Kentucky and they were very familiar with the 911 system. He said that there were times when they were overwhelmed and times when the FD was overwhelmed and there were unforeseen circumstances that happen which made it very difficult to say that there would be an ambulance 100% of the time, no matter how many units you put on the road. He said that he didn't envy Council's decision on what model they want for the EMS system for the community, the fire-based EMS was a great model and they do a really good job, but as you can see, they are having trouble expanding that model because that model was inherently difficult. He said that if the city wanted to provide PA with additional volume, they would be more than happy to set some trucks aside to help relieve the strain on the fire department, but they cannot be available 100% of the time and neither can the fire department. When the fire department first got into EMS, PA kept 4 trucks available for the city and that would include New Boston and now they only keep one truck available. For their company, they don't get any tax money, they have to transport folks for their bottom line and that's how their system works. Since they're having this issue, they would be more than happy to help out in whatever manner they can and the same with the county, because a lot of their systems were volunteer based. He said that across the country the EMS service was having trouble because it was hard to get volunteers out to do COVID runs or non-serious emergencies. He believed that's where they could help out and if they have a call come in that wasn't a chief complaint that would require immediate assistance then they could help out with that run. He said that currently they do around (29) 9-1-1 calls per week in the 45662 zip-code, but they would like to help out more.

Councilman Packard asked Mr. Adkins if he had 4 units set aside for the city, would they be pulled from time to time? Mr. Adkins said at the time before FD started running EMS, they did keep 4 trucks at no cost to the city and now they would need to talk about a subsidy for doing it because things have changed dramatically in the 5-years that FD has been running the EMS. If they needed to commit resources to the city "yes" they could but 4 units now would be difficult, but they could definitely devote some units to the city based on volume need. It was really hard on them as a back-up company not knowing when the FD/EMS was in service and when they were not in service. He asked the assistant Chief this evening to make sure they get the radio frequencies to them because they have been trying to get them for a while, if they knew when FD/EMS was out on a call, they could be on the bubble and try to keep a truck available and if there's a non-emergent transport coming out of the hospital, it was usually pretty good for them if they could keep that truck available to do an emergency and take the non-emergency transport out. It made economic sense for them because they're loaded in transporting the majority of the time and a lot of those transports were local. He's a paramedic, his sister Rachel is a paramedic nurse, his brother-in-law Brian is an EMT, the Dispatch Supervisor was an EMT Advanced, and the Education Director was a paramedic which gave them a little bit of flexibility for when the FD/EMS was overwhelmed or their company was overwhelmed they pitch in and provide the backup help and have done that for years. Mr. Packard asked if they would dedicate more than one unit, possibly two units that would be at a cost to the city as well? Mr. Adkins said that it would really

depend on volume because they're not tax based at all, they're bottom line depends on transports and what they would be able to do really does depended on the volume of calls and would take some work. He said that whenever a city had a fire-based model or most 911 models in the state, you're not paying for the transport, those were billed to the client/patient's insurance, you would be paying for the availability. EMS (Emergency Medical Service) was not where they make money as a company, 911 calls were not inherently profitable because you had to have a lot of availability to do it. For flow of the 911 system, they would love to say that they would keep an ambulance available, but they do (10) 911 calls in the city and not all of those calls come one at a time and that's where the FD/EMS was getting into an issue, they have three trucks that were fully staffed 24/7. If you have (3) calls from 911 at the same time or if there's an accident/fire, they had to pull trucks out of service.

Councilman Martell asked what the differences were in an EMT/EMS, Mr. Adkins said that EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) was the certification. Everyone in EMS were either EMT's, Advanced EMT or Paramedic. To make an ALS (Advanced Life Support) truck, you have to have an EMT and a Paramedic on board because it was the truck that had the heart monitor, IV, drug bag and usually treating people on scene. Basic EMT's were used for non-emergent transport or other emergencies they just don't have the drug bag and the Paramedic was a higher level of certification. Mr. Martell asked Mr. Adkins to elaborate on the number of calls that they've taken, Mr. Adkins said that they were on pace for about 1,500 911 calls for the year in the 45662-zipcode and in the past they've had around 1,900 per year and this year it will end around 1,500 because the FD/EMS was running three trucks. Mr. Martell asked how they could help the city and what kind of call volume could they handle? Mr. Adkins asked if he was asking how many calls could they handle if this was turned back over to them and Mr. Martell said yes and he replied in the past we've handled all of them because at the time we were the only company in the city. Mr. Martell said "you're saying you can help us, what would that look like, what does that transpire into, how many more calls do you think you could take?" Mr. Adkins sister Rachel said that they could take as many as the city wanted them to take, in the past they did all of the calls and if the city wanted them to do more, they'll do how many ever the city wanted them to do. Mr. Adkins said he had a conversation with Derek Allen who was the City Manager at the time and what they're staffing model looked like under a primary 911 service and keeping those trucks available to the city and also doing all of the transfers and transports and at the time when the city started adding trucks, they had to back off on their availability because their bottom line was based on transporting patients and they would now have to do a ramp up based on volume but with the pandemic and FEMA work coming to an end, they will be able to add some staff over the next few months. He said what the Chief said was accurate, hiring was very difficult in this economy and the wages have increased sizably and the employee pool had shrunk because some people have taken travel work, deployments and not just EMS but most medical and service industries. He said they would be a reliable option for the city, if Council wanted to look at how the 911 calls were distributed, it would be a good way to do it, and if the Chief was comfortable communicating with them when they're out of service. When the FD/EMS gets a call and was going to be out of service for a while, the FD/EMS needed to let them know, and if they get calls out of their normal coverage area, they could turn those down, but right now if someone calls, the expectation was that they would help them out. If they had more of the 911 volume of calls, they could devote more time to the city to assist.

Solicitor Haas asked to summarize what Mr. Adkins said in that they only made money and keep their business afloat when the ambulances were on runs or transporting and in order for PA to be on call for the city, they would need to hire more people or have an ambulance set aside that would be there for when the calls come in which was not profitable for them. Mr. Adkins said that was correct. Mr. Haas said that there was a mention of a subsidy which would depend on the number of ambulances the city might need. Mr. Adkins said that the caveat was that the City of Portsmouth had flexibility now and a fully trained Fire Department that was running three trucks 24/7. The city could ask Portsmouth Ambulance to devote X-number of trucks for X-number of hours or devote a truck to cover the first call during certain times, then that way the FD has a little more down time and if PA got overwhelmed, FD/EMS could do the overflow which could save the city. He said that it was good that FD/EMS had put in the work, effort and cost to get a fully trained staffed fire department and was definitely a resource that was needed for the city, but there were other options which was the reason they were all present at the meeting. He felt they do a pretty good job at covering a lot of territory and they've been in town for a long time and they would like to be looked at as an option to help out in a greater capacity.

Mayor Johnson said he understood what he was saying that if they're going to commit a vehicle, the vehicle must be worked. What if the city could guarantee a certain number of calls per day, would they be able to waive their service fee and their fee would be just what they're billing the patient? Mr. Adkins replied that they could look at a model that way because before FD/EMS bought their ambulances they did a lot of first response which was a solid model in the city because you had firemen going out in first response and PA would respond with their ambulances, but with FD/EMS arriving on scene first, they had already began treating the patient and had a lot more hands to help. There's a lot of different models, but the conundrum was that it was emergency medicine and there's an uncertainty that followed, because you may not get a certain amount of runs per day, but at certain times of the month there may be more. They knew at certain times volume would go through the roof and they've built that into their scheduling. This would definitely require further exploration and Council was in a position where they cannot approve more money to be spent; he was there to offer an alternative. He said that he and his family live in the city and when they go on runs, it's possibly friends, family or someone they know and they're accountable to the city. They are local and not an out-of-town company coming into the city telling the city that they could do the runs. Mayor Johnson said that the Chief told them a couple of weeks ago that their men and women were tired because they're working long hours and there were overtime issues. He asked Mr. Adkins if they had the staffing power to pick up and relieve our FD of some of their calls. Mr. Adkins said they definitely could assist the FD but there had to be a balance; PA could not handle this immediately if the city just handed it all back to them but the key would be working together with the FD make it work. They run multiple different shifts and that allowed the crews to remain fresh. They run 12 hour shifts and the FD runs 24 hour shifts which was a very long shift. Chief Raison said that he meant no disrespect to PA, but they went to three trucks a day because PA couldn't cover the calls, and that was the reason they went to an increase in the EMS capabilities. They were running two trucks per day and when their trucks were tied up, they were passing the calls to PA and have been doing that for the past four-years and it had worked well. The problem started in early summer and he believed that's when PA started seeing deployments and it wasn't that we didn't want to transfer calls to them because they're happy to transfer calls to them, but they were having issues being able to take the calls. Rachel said that they never knew when those calls were going to come in and they can't keep an inactive truck on staff. Mr. Adkins said that it needed to be a 911 model or a transfer staffing model, they keep enough trucks on hand to take care of their clients, they (FD) keep enough trucks to handle the 911 calls. He said if the city handed over the 911 calls, they would staff more trucks which was the exact thing that FD did when they started getting more 911 calls, they added another truck. He just needed to know how to staff because if it was just to handle overflow, they wouldn't need to add, but if they were primary, they would need to add staff because it doesn't make sense for them to keep a truck available for one overflow. Councilman Packard suggested a collaborative effort. Chief Raison said they had been collaborative; Mr. Adkins said a collaborative effort would be a rotation of calls and they were just keeping a truck there for overflow. He cautioned Council to realize that when you give calls in a rotation, that took away from the bottom line of the FD. Mayor Johnson said that would give the FD men and women a break, because the FD staff was overworked and would give them the break they need if PA fielded more of the calls. Chief Raison said that PA would have to be available to cover the calls and it was his understanding that they didn't have the staff to cover the calls. Vice President Dunne suggested that a rotation would be a guarantee of sorts and a schedule could be worked out ahead of time so that the proper number of trucks could be staffed. Mr. Adkins said that they didn't have the frequencies that FD/EMS uses since the city went to the MARCs system last summer and they were not on the same frequency. Mayor Johnson suggested a meeting of the Chief, the City Manager and PA to talk out the details.

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m. on a motion by Vice President Dunne.

Submitted by: *Diana Ratliff* – City Clerk

For the full audio version of the Manager's Meeting, please go to www.portsmouthoh.org under City Manager 2021 "Audio".