
COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

VILLAGE OF GEORGETOWN, OHIO

MINUTES

Utility Services Committee Meeting Village of Georgetown May 14, 2020

The Village of Georgetown Utility Services Committee convened in regular session on Thursday, May 14, 2020 from 5:00 p.m. until 6:55 p.m. remotely using the video conferencing application Microsoft Teams pursuant to Ohio House Bill 197 that temporarily amends public meeting laws to allow municipalities to conduct meetings by electronic, teleconference, web, or video means. Chairperson Dave Guenther called the meeting to order with the following council members present: Councilmember Buddy Coburn and Councilmember Ginny Colwell. Employees present: Mayor Dale Cahall, Administrator Tyler Thompson, Fiscal Officer Natalie Newberry and Solicitor Joe Braun.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

The minutes of the scheduled Utility Services Committee meeting held on April 23, 2020 were reviewed. Councilmember Coburn made a motion to approve the minutes with a second from Councilmember Guenther. With no objections motion carried.

Mayor Cahall gave an update on the completed 2019 paving project. Discussion held. Councilmember Colwell joined the meeting and Administrator Thompson rejoined the meeting. Administrator Thompson reminded the committee that this was the only bid received for the 2019 project; and with the engineering on our infrastructure the Village may want to wait and not do paving in the 2020 fiscal year.

Administrator Thompson gave an update on the infrastructure planning project. The proposed estimate is not a reoccurring cost and has been reviewed with the Village's finances for affordability. The result of this project will show the existing infrastructure needs that need to be brought up to standard or a better standard for water, sewer, street and electric; and includes finding all drainage easements. Administrator Thompson is asking for the Utility Services Committee's approval to move forward so that he could then take a supplemental appropriation to the Budget Committee. Discussion held. Councilmember Coburn asked where the funds would come from to pay for this project. Administrator Thompson has broken down the entire project; and all expenses if not directly effecting one fund will be split by percentage of the project between the water, sewer, electric and street funds. Councilmember Guenther asked if this would assist in future growth with annexations. Discussion held on how this would assist for growth and development within our existing boundaries. One example the committee considered was when the Village does get to take over the Duke lines currently in the process of this

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would inform the Village what changes or improvements would be needed to those substations taking on the additional load. This would allow the Village to make smarter decisions with projects and project future budget needs to complete the projects. Discussion held. Councilmember Colwell made a motion to recommend to Council to consider this project and send it to the Budget Committee for review of a supplemental appropriation. Councilmember Coburn seconded the motion. With no objections motion carried.

Administrator Thompson presented the committee with a resolution from Ohio Department of Transportation. This agreement gives the State permission to replace /update the guardrails on St. Rte. 221 and the Village assumes the maintenance for those guardrails. Discussion held. Councilmember Coburn made a motion to take the legislation to Council with a second from Councilmember Colwell. With no objections motion carried.

The topic of post emergency payment policy was brought to the table. Discussion held regarding when utility payments will be due once the Village comes out of the state of emergency. Councilmember Guenther suggested giving an additional thirty days to pay. Councilmember Coburn asked if there were plans if the coronavirus comes back. Administrator Thompsons advised that if that happened the Village would in turn need to re-declare a state of emergency. Solicitor Braun advised that the Village has control of its utilities and can set the due date. Fiscal Officer Newberry shared the following numbers received from Utility Billing Supervisor, Cassandra McCormick: 40 accounts remain unpaid from March Bills; 63 accounts remain unpaid from April bills and 18 accounts have made partial payment on March bills. Discussion held. The utility office has included a note on bills for notice of non-payment and are starting to work on sending letters to set up a payment plan. Mayor Cahall suggested having the utility clerks reach out by way of phone call to customers with non-payment. Councilmember Colwell made a motion to wait thirty days to implement late fees with a second from Councilmember Coburn. With no objections motion carried.

Andy Clift, as acting member of the Ad Hoc Fiber Optics Committee, and not as a member of Council gave an update on the Fiber Optics Project. The Ad Hoc Committee has met with a few times with representative Thor Sage, with Miami Valley Educational Computer Association (MVECA) about acting as a consultant for the Village on this project. This project is for phase one and is the construction of a fiber optic infrastructure that will give services to Brown County agencies and local schools. Sage presented the committee with a map that showed areal and underground fiber lines for this phase of the project and noted that this would only include businesses on the original list from initial conversations. Clift informed the committee that he has spoken with our County Commissioners a few years ago when the committee started to explore fiber optics for the Village; and all of them were on board with having an alternative to the current internet services. Sage had previously completed a cost analysis for the County and it showed

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that they would have a significant savings. Sage pointed out that having the fiber optics infrastructure would be an asset because the Village would not pay increases. Cliff said that the Ad Hoc Fiber Optics consensus was if the County and the local schools were on board then the Village would have a cost savings. Sage has not done the math for the Village but said that the Village's network would be lucrative. Sage advised the committee that in order to provide fiber optics services to the schools the Village would have to partner with a third party firm. Councilmember Coburn asked what the cost for maintenance on this system would be and if our current employees would be able to do the work entailed with fiber optics. Sage informed the committee that the Village would need to invest in training if its current employees were going to do the maintenance. Other expenses discussed included the cost to use OUPS; costs associated with removing fallen trees off of on lines and repairing those lines. Fiscal Officer Newberry asked if this phase of the project included the Village Waste Water Treatment Plant on Effluent Drive since it was not showing on the map and the plant is currently still on Frontier internet services. Sage confirmed that it was not; but seemed confident that it could easily be changed by adding a lateral line to the plans. Councilmember Colwell expressed concern regarding low and middle income households being able to pay for this service and what residents would think about the Village doing this project. Only residents who subscribe to the service would be charged. Discussion held on what fiber optic could offer residential customers. Solicitor Braun asked how other communities lure people away from current services to purchase from the Village. Sage informed the committee that there are huge resources available for implementation that could be looked at including the website muninetworks.org. The proposed next steps are to use Thor as a consultant to bid design costs for this project and then to use his resources for the construction process if Council moves to go forward. There is no charge for Sage to publish bids only when the Village would move into the construction phase. Discussion held on needing to get a RFQ. Solicitor Braun advised that a RFQ was not needed to move forward with the consultant process but the Village would need to get competing bids for the construction process. Councilmember Coburn wanted to confirm that bypassing the RFQ would not give the go ahead to do the project. Moving forward with Sage will do the following: confirm design costs; complete bid sheets; solicit bids; and break down all bids for the Village to review. Councilmember Colwell made a motion to enter into a consulting agreement with Thor Sage to bring bids back to Council on the fiber optics project. Discussion held on the agreement showing an hourly rate while saying there is no charge at this time. Solicitor Braun will review the consultant agreement and report back to Council. Councilmember Coburn seconded the motion providing that this is just a step in the direction to get more information and not approval for the construction of the project. No vote was taken. Solicitor Braun felt that he was hearing from the committee that they would like to see potential numbers and asked at what stage could you show revenue numbers. Sage said he has provided a budgetary background for phase one but cannot give us those revenue numbers. Discussion held. Councilmember Coburn made a motion to defer the matter to full Council at tonight's meeting with a second by Councilmember Colwell. With no objections motion carried.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Next Regular Utility Services Committee were set for Thursday, June 11, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. in the Georgetown Municipal Building, Council Chambers. Councilmember Colwell made a motion to adjourn with a second from Councilmember Coburn. Meeting adjourned.



Georgetown Mayor



Georgetown Fiscal Officer