

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
(amended)
July 29th, 2020, 6:30 PM
Via Zoom and Live-Streamed on YouTube**

Mayor Clark called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

ROLL CALL: Ben Prescott, Paula Tubalkain, Matt Rosolowski, Marty Hura, and Scott Weaver.

Other Village Personnel: Mayor Linda Clark, Clerk- Treasurer, Jenny August; Village Solicitor, Michele Stuck, Village Administrator John Trew, Police Chief Joe Urso, Village Engineer Rich Iafelice from CT Consultants.

Citizens Present: Mark Hamer from Garage Creative Studios, Harry Buchert.

Discussion Topics:

Garage Creative Studios

Mayor Clark said we have Mark Hamer from Garage Creative Studios with us tonight. They would like to do some filming in the village in October and November. They would film at the Police Department, the lobby of the Post Office, on Mill Street by Headwaters Trail, the E. High St. bridge area by the canoe takeout, Mantua Drug, the University Hospital building, the old Mantua Grain & Supply, the old livery building on E. Prospect St. currently owned by B & H Rental Properties, possibly the cemetery, and also several residences on W. Franklin St. and some Peck Road areas.

Mark Hamer said he was driving through Mantua and realized the village was suitable for a script he has. They would use the University Hospital as the V.A. hospital. The filming is in Cleveland, but they will need some rural areas as well and Mantua is a great fit. There will be 20 days of shooting with crews of 8-15 people. There will be a few actors in town. If Council approves this, Mark will meet with the Chief and work out traffic and parking requests and other specifics.

Matt said it is a great idea as long as there are no heavy political or social agendas. Mark said there are not. The rest of Council was supportive and agreed with the filming.

- ❖ Scott Weaver moved to allow Garage Creative Studios to film in Mantua. Ben Prescott seconded. All Ayes on vote.

Updates to the Water-Sewer Agreement with Portage County

Mayor Clark said Councilman Sluka called this meeting so he could share with the rest of Council where we are with the discussions we have had to amend the county agreement. Unfortunately, Dave resigned today due to family issues. She is not prepared to give this presentation, so she asked John Trew and Rich Iafelice to present.

John said it is the same agreement but they have made amendments. The county would like to consider using the EPA Greenbook using Equivalent Building Units (EBU) which will be easier for low income and low users. Top users will pay more. Ted Bixler and the Ad-Hoc Committee approve of the new methodology.

Rich Iafelice prepared a summary and wanted to emphasize three points of importance. The first point is how the billing would be amended. Instead of paying the previous \$86.79 surcharge, each account would be charged based on EBU. Each type of customer will have a different EBU. For example, houses are 1 EBU while a large user such as a school will have a larger EBU. Mantaline is our biggest user and they are going to actually see a savings. The County recently proposed calculating the surcharge using EBU's. The impact is as follows:

- ❖ The monthly bill would be approximately \$125.00 for a customer that uses up to 500 cubic feet. That customer now pays the village up to \$190.
- ❖ Customers that use 800 cubic feet currently pay the village \$250. They would pay the county \$153.
- ❖ Users of 1200 cubic feet currently pay the village \$340. The county would charge them \$195.

The base county bill of \$125 is comprised of a \$65 base rate for the county reserve to use for operations, repairs and maintenance, and other uses, plus an approximate \$60 surcharge (based on initial calculated estimates) to fund the village's Identified Needs list for water and sewer. The initial water calculation works out to \$32.93 and the sewer works out to \$26.32 for a total surcharge of \$59.25. The surcharge will be reviewed and may change annually.

The second point Rich wanted to bring up is that the county originally wanted to split the cost of the water interconnect 50/50. They are now willing to pay 75% of the cost, and there are strong possibilities of a grant that would pay 50-90%. The total cost is \$2.4 million. Ben asked why the village should have to pay for the interconnect. Rich said the county follows Best Practices for emergency backup water supply and this is recommended by the EPA.

The third point Rich shared was that the county agreed that any tie in fees generated by new users added to the system would go towards the Village's Identified Needs list.

Matt asked if we need to consider that if businesses are paying higher rates because of their EBU's, might they potentially move? Rich said the rates will be higher but not drastically. It would depend on which EBU is applied. Matt asked if the EBU's are set in stone. Rich said yes, the listing of EBU's is accepted. Rich said 70-80% of our customers are residences. Matt asked what other methodology is available. Rich said he proposed a tiered rate but the county was not interested because it complicates the billing system. The EBU method simplifies the billing and lowers the impact on 72% of our customers.

Scott asked if the county approves of our Reservoir rehab project. Rich said yes, and the county will absorb all debt.

Ben said this all started because we couldn't afford to operate and maintain our plants, yet we are still going to pay for it. It doesn't make sense to him. Rich said the identified needs are not the end of what is needed. In order for the village to pay for the identified needs, rates would need to double. In the long run, this is best. The surcharge covers the Identified Needs which are planned to be completed in the first five years. It will be reviewed annually and could be reduced as projects are completed and paid for.

Scott said he wanted to keep our plants also, but we have lost the battle. There aren't enough people in this village to pay for the plants and the infrastructure.

Paula said it is interesting that we would amend the current ordinance instead of going with a new one. She asked Michele if the changes are significant enough to get approval. Michele said that the Agreement approved by Council which is the subject of referendum needs to stay as it is until the election. If we come to an agreement with the county as to what amendments would be needed, primarily relating to the surcharge, we would use the time from now to the election to inform the public what the amendments would be if it passed at the election. This way is the best chance we have to have an agreement in effect for January 1, 2021. If we repeal the old one and create a new one, we risk another referendum, but not until November 2021. Paula said it would be difficult to convince the public to pass it based on an \$86.59 surcharge and trust Council and the county to amend it later. That is a tough call.

Michele said we could see this as an opportunity to increase the public's understanding of what the final agreement would include. Since it became a referendum issue, it brought us back to the negotiating table and allowed us to make some improvements. Prior to the election, Council would enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the county that lists the amendments that would be made after it was approved by the voters. If it doesn't pass, we would have to start a new agreement with the county anyway. Paula said we have not done a good job of educating our public in the past. Michele said our meetings are even more accessible now than before because of Zoom and YouTube. Mayor Clark said we hope to start holding meetings about this in August either by Zoom or possibly in person at the park.

Rich asked if the referendum petition could be withdrawn. Michele did not know of a mechanism to do that. She is going to contact the Board of Elections to get the ballot language so it can be made clear what the result of a yes or no vote would be.

Paula was looking at the EBU chart and noticed that churches will be paying a lot more. Mayor Clark is going to ask the county at their meeting next week if we can do any variations.

Scott asked if we need to have someone take Dave's place with the negotiations. Matt Rosolowski offered to attend next week's meeting with the county.

Harry Buchert asked if in the event of usage decreasing due to businesses leaving, how will that affect the surcharge? Rich said if the vacant business is removed, the surcharge would fluctuate, and if the business is replaced and usage increases, the surcharge would then be evaluated.

Mayor Clark said rather than wait until the next Council meeting, she will ask Jenny to put a notice in the paper that we are accepting letters of interest for the open Council seat so we can get someone in quickly.

Adjournment:

Paula Tubalkain moved to adjourn at 8:08 pm with a second from Ben Prescott. All ayes on vote.

Mayor Linda Clark

Jenny August, Clerk-Treasurer