

**Minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee**  
**SHEFFIELD LAKE, OHIO**  
**April 18, 2023**

This regular meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee was held Tuesday, April 18, 2023. Chairman Cizl called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:**

Present: Rosso, Kovach, Cizl, Gee, Shaw, Wtulich, Radeff, Mayor Bring, Finance Director Smith, Law Director Graves, Service Director Hastings.

Excused: Stark.

Attending: Citizen, ZBA Chairman Romolo DeBottis.

**PRESENTATIONS:** None.

**FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Finance Director Smith reports there is good news and bad news this evening. Good news is that with interest rates up, it has been good for our investments. Our ambulance billing is up, and our income tax is up. However, they have changed a lot of the income tax where people that work from their home are getting taxed in the city that they are working from now. Property tax is up about \$11,000 for the first half of the year, so probably around \$22,000 for the whole year. Then we get a settlement in March, that's our first for the year and we get another one in August. I got a call this afternoon from our insurance agent that our insurance premium is going up, our general insurance premium for buildings, property, etc. is going up by 63%. We hope it's not quite that much. Tonight's appropriations include increases in the funds in the accounts that we are going to need to pay for our policy in May. I spoke with our agent, and she is going to be working with another agency and what they do is they kind of have a consortium almost of a package of different insurance companies that will cover everything we need. Worst case is we pay our premium, almost \$200,000, and as they sort through things and get some other policies for us, we can reduce that and then we will cancel our current and pro rate everything. Right now, that's all we can do. We have had a couple claims that have really hurt us. If we want to try to go out for bid, we can probably do that next year. That doesn't always give you the better rates, I've done it several times and our current agent has always beaten all the numbers. As far as the ordinance is concerned, we have retained some legal service, so I have asked for other legal fees to be increased. We are putting a little money into our website, and we renewed it and want to upgrade. The other thing is our 2024 plow truck is finally coming in now that rates have gone up. I already appropriated for that thinking we were going to have it last year. We are shy a little bit, so the \$2,000 for the equipment lease will make that a doable payment for this year. Councilman Radeff asks when you say people working from home, are you saying our income tax has been going up because more people are

working from home? Finance Director Smith replies yes. Councilman Wtulich asks are there any other factors besides the claims we have had that caused the insurance to go up so much? Finance Director Smith responds not really. Everybody across the board is getting about 15%, that is the standard right now, rates are going up for everyone. I will say though, as things get ironed out, they readjust. Councilman Shaw asks when you talk about other legal fees and legal services retained, what's that about? What's that for? Law Director Graves replies we have an ongoing retainer with an employment law firm that we have utilized for years, and certain circumstances right now have resulted in us having to utilize them additionally. Councilman Shaw asks did they up their price? Law Director Graves replies no, we pay a flat, small retainer every month, but we are going to have to utilize their services. Councilman Shaw asks is that not something you can do as the law director and prosecutor? Law Director Graves responds we could, but we have determined that we are going to call upon them for their expertise and also their time. Councilman Shaw asks what company? Law Director Graves replies Clemans Nelson. Councilman Shaw asks who is the rep for them? Law Director Graves replies we work with a number of them. Councilman Shaw asks who is the main rep for the city? Law Director Graves responds the person we talk to the most is Mike Esposito. Councilman Shaw asks is it Clemans Nelson or are we paying Esposito's rates? I know there are two separate rates for those two. Law Director Graves replies Clemans Nelson. Councilman Shaw asks do you have bills we can see for them? Law Director Graves replies not with me. Councilman Shaw asks do we have a contract with them that I/we can see? Law Director Graves responds we do. Do you have it now? Law Director Graves replies no, but I'll be happy to provide it for you after the meeting. Councilman Shaw says I don't see how we can discuss legal fees if we don't have a contract in front of us. Law Director Graves states council passed an ordinance, and we will be happy to get you the legislation of the existing contract. President Rosso says this is not uncommon for the city to have to go outside for other legal services and we have used Clemans Nelson for the 20 years I have been on. Usually when we run into certain issues with the union or other city workers, sometimes we have to reach out to them. Councilman Shaw says I guess my concern with that is we pay a law director/prosecutor \$100,000 a year who should be doing all of the employment law. If we are going to contract out a law firm based out of Columbus, why do we need a law director or prosecutor? Why can't we do part-time then? Mayor Bring replies sometimes things get to a point where you are talking to an individual in a building that works for here and we have representation, but they use that against him, and we have to go to an outside representation to settle. Councilman Shaw asks so we are basically trying to avoid conflict of interest? Mayor Bring replies exactly.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Councilman Shaw asks the sidewalk money; I got the current expenditure report and I see like \$120,000 in there. I remember reading about it in

the past and there was a comment made that the city does not have a list of who is to be supplied with sidewalks, is that true? Mayor Bring replies that is absolutely not true. Councilman Shaw asks so we know who has money into it? Mayor Bring replies yes. Councilman Shaw asks where are we at with that? Service Director Hastings responds we just publicly bid that for the entire amount. Mayor Bring states last time we bid it out, nobody bid on it, so now we have an additional bid on it. President Rosso says another point is a lot of contractors don't want to deal with putting in two sidewalks on one street, three on another, they don't want to do it. It's not that the city is just holding onto it and doing something with it they aren't supposed to, it's hard to find a vendor. Councilman Shaw says I ask because I was informed today that concrete is supposed to jump up 15-20%. Mayor Bring replies you're right, the cost of all our products has doubled. Councilman Wtulich asks did that last public bid close yet? Did we get any bids? Service Director Hastings replies yes, the apparent low is Irving's Concrete out of Amherst, OH.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** With no further business before this committee,  
\*Motion by Kovach/Second by Wtulich to adjourn at 7:14 pm. Yeas All.

**CLERK OF COMMITTEE AFFIRMATION:** This meeting of the City Committee of the City of Sheffield Lake, Ohio was held and conducted under all rules and regulations governing the Sunshine Laws of the State of Ohio as they apply. All meetings are recorded and available in Council's office.

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**CLERK OF COUNCIL**

*Brandy Randolph*

I, Brandy Randolph, duly appointed Clerk of Committee of Sheffield Lake DO HEREBY CERTIFY that this is a true and exact copy of the minutes of the Finance & Audit of April 18, 2023.

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**CHAIRMAN**

*Mark Cizl*

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**COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

*Rick Rosso*