

Finance Committee
Monday, July 11, 2022
6:00 p.m. Medina City Hall – Multi-Purpose Room

In attendance: J. Coyne – Chairman, P. Rose, J. Shields, B. Lamb, R. Haire, and Dennie Simpson, Jessica Hazeltine

Also present: Mayor Hanwell, Greg Huber, Keith Dirham, Nino Piccoli, Chief Walters, Andrew Dutton, Dan Gladish, Jansen Wehrley, Chief Kinney, Kimberly Marshall, Matt Tomek, Rick & Tammy Kirby, Alyssa Alfano, Sara Crawford, and Kathy Patton.

1. Assignment of Requests for Council Action

2. 22-157-7/11 – 2023 Tax Budget

Mr. Dirham stated they pass this every year. This is the State's Budgeting procedure. Our revenues are solid for now. Mr. Shields moved to approve with the emergency clause, seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion passed 7-0.

3. 22-158-7/11 – Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant – Police

Chief Kinney stated this is their annual bulletproof vest grant, there is a 50% match so the maximum award that we would receive is \$1,988.00, the emergency clause is requested as the grant was due June 27th of last month. This is retroactive and is permission to apply for the grant and appropriate if awarded. Mr. Shields moved to approve with the emergency clause, seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion passed 7-0.

4. 22-159-7/11 – Grant application – OPWC – Medina St. Bridge Replacement

Mr. Patton stated this is a request put in annually every summer, this grant will be due the first week in September and will need approved the first week when council returns back from summer break. Emergency is needed due to council's break for summer and not returning until August 22nd. Mr. Shields moved to approve with the emergency clause, seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion passed 7-0.

5. 22-160-7/11 – Gates Mills Boulevard Appropriation – Engineering

Mr. Patton stated they need to secure three easements for this project. Currently have two of the three, the third property owner has not agreed to it yet and if not, we may have to begin appropriation proceedings when council returns from break. Emergency is needed due to project scheduled to start in September. The resident that is not in agreement would like the city to participate and do some stream restoration as part of the agreement at the city's cost. Mr. Shields moved to approve with the emergency clause, seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion passed 7-0.

6. 22-161-7/11 – Amend Code, Section 505.11 – Hunting Prohibited

Mayor Hanwell stated this is a request, at one of our budget meetings 6 of the 7 council members asked to bring this proposal forward and this request is asking the 7 members of council to take a look at it. When it went through Special Legislation for three separate hearings, one of the requests was that the proposed application and guidelines be attached for review and discussion. I would respectfully propose that we have this discussion tonight and then bring it back after the break to Finance on August 22nd to give council a chance during break to talk to

constituents and get input on both the guidelines and the application. The preference would be not to include the guidelines and application in the actual ordinance and if an amendment is needed we can do that before coming back if it passes Finance on August 22nd and come back to council on September 12th. And do our best to meet the guidelines of archery season for the State of Ohio.

Mr. Coyne stated the non-lethal method that came out of the Special Legislation committee meeting is moving forward so is this, a combination effort with lethal and non-lethal moving forward because at the last meeting council felt that any one method would solve our problem.

Mayor Hanwell stated that the administration is on record of stating they think both proposals should run parallel with one another.

Jansen spoke on some of the rules and regulations and stated they were reviewed internally with administration as well as with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Mr. Coyne asked if any of those rules are violated by the hunter what happens to them? Jansen stated they could potentially be charged with a misdemeanor of the first degree and subject to a penalty provided in section 501.99.

Mr. Coyne asked for all of council's opinion and questions to give an idea of the direction they would like to take.

Mrs. Hazeltine stated during the last Special Legislation meeting that she wanted to see some more clarification in the ordinance and that has been provided and she is happy with what has been presented and feels it will work best in conjunction with a non-lethal program but at this time she is in favor of the ordinance as written.

Ms. Haire stated she took a lot of time reading over the documents over the last couple of days. Regi has had numerous responses from constituents in her ward and they are in favor of culling the deer in a safe, humane way, they have educated themselves and to no avail, she has done the same thing. She had some people that are hunters read over the information and asked for their opinions. A couple of the comments were do you really need to charge \$75 for a new stand locator because currently in order to get a hunting license and adult 18 years and older they pay basically \$19 a year, you also need an Ohio Deer Tag and that tag for an adult resident is \$31.20 and allows them to hunt either sex deer and permits need to be purchased annually. For the 2022- 2023 season you can only hunt one antler deer with a total of 6 deer. If we are looking to have the deer culled, what we don't want to do is make this cost prohibitive to a hunter who already has to buy a license and a tag. Is \$75 a fair price to charge them? It may discourage hunters.

Mayor Hanwell explained that they had to come up with a number, it doesn't have to be \$75. They were only trying to cover some of the staff time from the Police, Parks and Service Departments who have to go out and do inspections and check different things.

Jansen stated they are not proposing a controlled hunt, and he interjected the number that can be harvested in Medina County for 2022- 2023 is 3 deer. One buck and two does. Jansen stated he has been advised by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources that that is not something we should consider right now, we need to get a program off the ground, keep good

data on how many hunters we have and how many deer are being harvested, and if that doesn't seem to reflect the changes that we are hoping to get through a program like this then we can proceed with a controlled hunt status where we can submit an application to the state to get that number increased from 3 to 6.

Regi stated they need to know how much acreage is needed in order to allow someone to hunt on. What are the requirements of a deer stand, can they attach it to a tree, or freestanding deer stand, what are those requirements? What's the number of deer being allowed to cull? Regi asked that in the ordinance to include adding the words "City Council" to it.

Jansen stated they did not specify a minimum amount of acreage because there are a lot of communities that initially started with five-acre minimums and then changed it down to three acres and some have eliminated it all together because we don't want to limit ourselves to an acreage size, especially when you have areas of contiguous property that have the right elevation. In addition, there are areas in the city near open space that have considerable elevation change where a stand may not be necessary. This will have to be worked out with the Police Department.

Mr. Simpson stated he respects hunters if they eat what they kill. He has never been for culling in the City of Medina when they first talked about this, he is in favor of a non-lethal plan but the numbers that have continued to rise over the years and the number of carcasses that our Service Department picks up every year has grown steadily and this year we are about to surpass last year's number and we are only half way through the year. From a safety stand point for the public, we haven't had any injuries, but laming and killing deer have occurred. Dennie stated the deer in his area you can see their ribs. He has changed his perspective as far as limited culling and is not in favor at all of doing it in dense neighborhoods, but there are a number of properties in the city that back up to a wooded area that as long as the safety is addressed, he would be ok with that. He is ok with limited culling in the parks as well, even some of the schools. Dennie feels the solution to not having the deer eat your plants is to not plant them. He is not in favor of killing the deer because they eat your flowers, but for the safety of the deer and the drivers, we have to address the numbers. Dennie is in favor of both programs.

John Coyne attended two of the three meetings and watched the one he missed online due to being on vacation and he felt the meetings were very informative. We have an issue in the city, otherwise we wouldn't be talking about it. How do we as elected officials address this issue?

We were given two proposals. Is either proposal the right answer - probably not. That is why looking at it as an effort of both lethal and non-lethal sounds the most appealing to him because we have to address the issue and have to do it with any means that we have available to us. Over the years many communities have adopted the lethal method and have had success with it and have been doing it or many years. There are at least 30 communities around North East Ohio and 80 communities in the State of Ohio that have chosen to do this practice, we are not the first! Over this summer break he wants to take a look at maybe adopting one piece of legislation that incorporates both the non-lethal and lethal parallel paths for our community.

Most people in his neighborhood want to see something done with the deer, trying to co-exist isn't working for them, they want number elimination and feels that may be the best thing to do. John would also like to look into ways of processing the deer at a lower cost and maybe having it donated to Feeding Medina County.

Mayor Hanwell stated the meat processing has to follow the USDA guidelines and things like that.

Mr. Shields stated he doesn't have a lot to add that hasn't been said by the other council members. He does agree that the \$75 fee needs to be looked at in order to make it easier for hunters. He agrees with both programs of lethal and non-lethal being used together. Jim stated they have dealt with the deer issues for many years at the ward meetings, had the Parks Dept. do studies, this didn't just come up last year. Overwhelmingly people are stating that we have to do something stop talking about this and do something. Jim feels as long as we can do this safely and humanely, he is in favor that it is time to do something. He feels the residents are expecting them to come up with a solution and majority of people are wanting a culling program to thin the herd.

Mr. Rose stated we lose so much as part of our ecosystem, too much of a good thing is just too much of a good thing. They are destroying the ecosystem around here. Last year when he was campaigning for council at large, the number one comment he heard from every ward he visited was when are you going to do something about the over population of deer. Since 2016 the Parks Department has done studies and surveys. Paul feels this piece of legislation is the combination of the existing non-lethal method that has been in existence voluntarily since March of 2016. The general feeling of this council is already in this ordinance in that we do want to have a non-lethal method along with a population reduction. In regard to processing the meat he has spoken with Mr. Keller at Keller Meats and he does the processing of headless carcasses that have already been field dressed, he does them now for the USDA for \$85 a carcass and you just get ground meat no steaks or backstraps.

Chief Kinney stated he and Nino Piccoli have spoken with the Strongsville Officers in charge of their program and they have stated that is has been fairly successful and they've not had any issues.

Nino has spoken with the Service Directors of both North Royalton and Independence, and they have not had any issues and seems to also be successful. Starting out with a mild approach and then evaluating and assessing as you move forward is the best approach for this program.

Mr. Lamb spoke about the three meetings he held within a three-month period, and he has looked at options, stating when you say the community has an expectation that we will act he looked at it as we will act in a way that demonstrates we are glued to facts, how we could really make a difference. Look at what to do to improve areas and deal with the issues resulting from the number of deer. We live in a pretty violent world and he looks at things in a more hopeful way. He proposed in the committee that we look at a humane plan after the Parks Director indicated he was generally called out when there were issues with deer and he didn't have the tools and to do more would have taken more man power.

Bill spoke of other issues that people said they would like to see us deal with such as recycling. Bill stated nothing at all will change all the issues the residents have with the deer with only taking out 75 deer, the response is well then hey we will cull every year. Bill stated with this process, you can't get anymore than 75 deer a year. The deer will reproduce and there is more food so if you look at the evidence the deer will just replace and so the next year kill 75 more or a hundred more and we will still have 500 and nothing will change in people's gardens and nothing

will change in people's yards or on the street for the Service Dept. to pick up, but what will change is we have developed a plan straight from the Department of Natural Resources whose main goal is simply to sell hunting licenses.

If you look at the budget of ODNR, take a look at how much money they have spent on trying to develop another method for reducing deer populations and you will find out it is basically nothing. He understands that there are 6 people on city council that are in favor of culling in some form or another. We can be better than trying to use violence in the community.

We held three meetings that were open to the public and City Council, and at every meeting there were council people here and he asked them if they had comments, and it was open to the administration. Bill stated we got all the information we needed and it was still voted down. He thinks it is an anomaly for a committee to hold hearings over that period of time and when they vote the vote is ignored and it comes straight to Finance. Not once since he has been here has city council or the administration ever turned in a request to council to deal with this issue. We have never dealt with this deer issue, not effectively. We are simply going to take the quick fix. Bill stated we are not recognizing that the vast majority of people in town may well not think this is a good idea. The survey made no sense, it was simply so that ODNR could determine if there were enough people that responded so they could say ok go ahead and do this. He stated he does not agree with any kind of culling of the deer without taking real action and investing in a better program. So now we are going to go ahead and do this, however, we are not going to do it in a way that might have had broader support such as closing the parks and control hunt with sharpshooters. If it's too dangerous with guns then you could do it with crossbows & long bows but it would be safer and eliminate that whole fear. Bill expressed that if this is safe, then the city should wave liability that we are protected and not liable if anything goes wrong, because everyone says it's safe. Mr. Lamb expressed his dislike in feeling like no public were able to speak tonight at the Finance meeting and have to do it during Council instead. His vote will be no.

John Coyne stated they will be developing plans with all the information gathered over the next 6 weeks and from those who attended the Special Legislation meetings, sent in emails and spoke with council outside of council meetings.

Mayor Hanwell stated they are just trying to find the balance of accomplishing the goal of trying to reduce the herd, in respect to Mr. Lamb stating that 75 deer won't create a significant difference, it is the Mayor's hope and belief that if you start thinning the herd pretty soon, they are not going to be as comfortable around people and you will have 75 less than if you didn't do it and they would continue to compound and if you do it for multiple years then hopefully eventually we will see some sort of impact. Not doing anything but talking about it has done nothing but grow the herd exponentially. If there is a strong feeling with the council members and we want to lock in a size mass, we can do that. We will also talk internally about the application fee and see what the average is around the region. If we can reduce it from \$75 to \$50 or \$55, whatever we think is reasonable and still account for staff time, they will do their best to do that.

Jansen stated Mr. Lamb mentioned at some of the Special Legislation meetings about trying to exhaust all of our resources and the way he is looking at this hunting by permit is a relatively soft approach. To put the responsibility on the property owner to find properties that they believe will be appropriate to hunt, authorize them to do so and continue to monitor that data, the number of hunters, the number of deer that are harvested. We are going to have to continue to do deer

counts, reengage the United States Department of Agriculture to do another either helicopter or thermo imager survey, to continue to monitor those numbers but deer hunting by permit is traditionally a management tool, it is not an immediate population reduction tool like sharpshooting would be. Sharp shooting program is usually paired together with a hunting program so you sharp shoot and then you are also allowing hunting to try and maintain those numbers and then you continue to monitor that trend data to determine whether or not you need sharp shooting again to get those numbers back down where the population is balanced within the environment. Jansen reiterated that this is a soft approach to permit hunting. If we need to increase the number of deer harvested, we can apply for a permit through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to allow hunters to take extra deer. There are a lot of other communities doing this such as Broadview Heights. As the next approach, if this doesn't continue to get our numbers down after continued monitoring, then we move on to sharp shooting. All of these programs will have to continue to develop to try and figure out what is going to work. Is this program we are trying to present to you going to be our cure all - No! Could it be successful, it depends, we will have to monitor it and see the numbers. Jansen agrees that the educational component is important and he agrees we could do better and we need to do more. It is a lot of work for his staff so a task force or something along the lines that Bill alluded to he would be in favor of.

Bill feels there are still lots of things to be discussed and resolved. Bill finds the term soft start a little hard to believe. Bill would like to send this back to Special Legislation Committee to answer all these questions and if you want these two packages put together which he doesn't think makes very much sense. Why wouldn't this go back to committee because everything we are talking about here a lot of it is brand new and didn't go through committee.

Mr. Coyne stated he appreciates Bill's concern but he feels the six weeks they have off for summer break and hearing all of the members of council it seems as 6 members of council want to move this forward there is no reason to move backwards. As a city we need to move forward and we've already had three meetings from the Special Legislation Committee where we have heard from the public and we have the input we need. August 22nd it will be back at the Finance meeting to discuss it and hopefully all these questions will be answered and we will have a presentation on the 22nd that will give us a full resolution of our questions and any modifications to the ordinance that need to be had.

Bill stated his expectation going forward would be then that anything that goes to committee regardless of voted up or down, you will be willing to bring it straight up here to Finance so we can go through the same process, because this is not an anomaly, this is simply a process that we have always followed and now we have decided not to.

John stated that is not exactly correct Mr. Lamb, if something goes to committee and there are two members of council that disagree with it it's not appropriate to have two members of council dictate what happens in the City of Medina, that is why the Mayor resubmitted his request to let all members of Council have a say so it's very easy for him to chose members for committees all around to make things pass but he doesn't do that. He puts people on committees who want to serve on those committees so he is not going to stack committees just because he wants to pass something, we are here as a council as a whole and as a council of the whole we need to make a decision like this.

Mr. Shields stated he really does appreciate everything Bill spoke on tonight, he listened, and

respects every time that Bill takes on an issue he studies it and puts work into it and is passionate about it. Jim stated in the next 6 weeks if there is some common ground or something we as Council can do that makes this more acceptable, he is willing to listen. He would like to see a reduction of the herd start in some way, shape or form and in his mind they are starting to work that way to reduce, but if there is a better way he is open to it.

Regi stated she too appreciates what Bill has done and the comments from constituents that have attended the meetings, but one of the concerns she has is just here over the last week she is concerned because the deer are living in her yard. Why are they living in her yard? They are sleeping right under her bushes right next to her house, sleeping in her backyard. There is a reason why they're residing in her yard instead of someplace else and she is concerned because that is not normal. Her property has become a bed and breakfast and that's not really what she is hoping to see when she is in her yard. There is a reason why they are doing that and it's because there are too many.

Bill views that as a wonder. Co-existing is something we all need to do.

There being no further business, the Finance Committee adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

John M. Coyne, Chairman