

BUDGET HEARINGS FOR 2019

March 14, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Vincent called the 2019 Budget Hearing meeting to order for March 14, 2019 and welcomed the special guests.

Council Members present: Sandy Gentry, Connie Norman, Jan Bradshaw, Ann Gildow, Joey Osborn; J. Rob Sharrer, Steven Foreman, Mark Baker and President Daniel Vincent.

Others in attendance were Mayor Jeff Tilton; Keane Toney, Public Safety Director; Rhonda Heskett, Budget and Finance Director; the presenters: Fire Chief Jeff Bell; Craig Stemm, City Maintenance; Tim Smith, Code Enforcement and Chief Building Official; and Susan Culbertson, Clerk of Council.

Council President Daniel Vincent opened the Budget Hearings for 2019. This is the budget for 2019 which we passed on February 25, 2019. At that time we still wanted to go with the Budget Hearings to hear the information that I value and probably all of Council values. This gives us a chance to hear from different department directors and chiefs to hear what is going on in their departments. It is good to hear directly from them and is a good time for learning. Yes, we do look at the figures. In my history on Council for 18 years I have only known of one time where we changed the budget. It had to do with the Fire Department one year when overtime was out of control and Council made a big change. That is the only time I know we have made any significant changes, but not to say we couldn't. As Rhonda (Heskett) explained before, if there are things we feel strongly about and want to change; we can do that at a later date. Not to say if we change something money wise the Administration or the City will spend that money in that area, but we do have that opportunity to make changes. With that, Rhonda, do you have anything to say before we get started? I know you have done a great job explaining a lot of things and we have heard a lot of this in different parts.

Ms. Heskett: I will just be here and be happy to answer any questions that might come up if anybody has any, but I didn't really prepare anything.

Mr. Vincent: We appreciate your being here. I know it is pretty complex and you sure do a nice job as far as answering the questions we have. It is rare that we stump you. If we do, it is only briefly and it comes to you and you get our answer before we leave. That is impressive.

Ms. Heskett: I appreciate that.

Mr. Vincent: Thank you. We will turn this over to the Fire Chief.

Fire Chief Jeff Bell: I would like to thank everybody. This is my first budget hearing. I would like to thank everybody for inviting me down. I get to talk a little bit about the department and answer any questions you might have. I would like to start out with thank you. I would like to thank Rhonda for the assistance on the budget, Billy Rosser and the staff at Vehicle Maintenance as they save us a lot of money on maintenance of the vehicles, Building Maintenance and Craig Stemm for all the help on projects and overseeing our in-house work.

The same thing goes for the Water Department, Tony Coury (Police Chief) and the PD (Police Department), Jeff Shook in Streets. They have been wonderful to work with. They have helped us with hydrants and closing down streets.

We are working with the PD to get with their SRT (Special Response Team) and adding SRT Medics to it. We are in the early stages of it, but we have actually been working with them for the past year. We are getting them the certifications they can obtain, so lord forbid if anything happens that we have a mass casualty event, we are going to have people trained and ready to work with the SRT team.

The savings provided by the other departments working with us leaves us money for the tools and training that we need to serve the citizens.

If you look at our budget, of course our largest expenditure is also our most valuable, our personnel; so that is going to be our salaries and wages. Because of our Civil Service Office and because of our interview process and the process we go through to hire our employees; we are getting the best of the best and we are able to retain them. They want to stay with us. Retaining employees is kind of hard to do in this day and age. When you talk about keeping paramedics, keeping firefighters, and stuff; it is a destination where people want to test and they want to come and they want to stay. It is giving us the quality of candidates and the quality of employees that the City wants and the City is going to need.

A little information from last year is in our budget. We spent some on tools and training as we need to keep up on our skills, getting the tools, and equipment to do our jobs. In 2018 we did both of our turn-out rooms at 2 and 3 stations. That helps with the carcinogens. With healthcare costs going up and cancer being something the fire service is looking at trying to limit the exposure to those carcinogens. Those turnout rooms are a big step toward that. Our extractor we got last year is to clean the gear and is a big step toward that benefit and keeping those costs down.

The Street Department was able to help us. We bought the materials and they paved the parking lot down at Central Station. We were able to do that last year. The mattresses that we replaced enabled us to have new mattresses in all the stations. We had the old ones since about 2004. The guys are very appreciative. Again that goes with retaining employees because they feel they are cared about, so we get to keep them.

Station 2 (Eppley Station) lighting project-we were able to get the lights on the apparatus floor with Craig's help and our guys doing a lot of the work. We are going to start looking at Station 3 as a lighting project. Craig and I have been talking about that. When the time comes with AEP we want to make sure we get the best deal that we can as far as being reimbursed for everything. So, when we do it we are going to do it as one big job so we get our total reimbursement if we go LED up there. We are still looking to make sure that is the best use of our funds for the year.

Last year we redid the downstairs bathrooms at Station 3. Our firefighters did the tiling, the re-plumbing, and the beginning of this year we started on the upstairs one. We are re-painting

stuff, we removed some of the stuff we didn't need, and we have put in new tile. New doors on everything are being worked on now. The guys have been stripping and spraying doors. We have new locks ordered for all the stations for security. There are new latches for inside and outside.

Some of the other things we are working on this year. If you get down by Central Station this week they are putting the garage doors in. They have been getting one door a day. The lowest bid was a local business so we feel good about that too. They are putting our garage doors up. They have three of the front ones done so they have one more in the front and next week they will start on the rear ones.

We got our two Toughbooks (laptop computers) ordered. I just gave Lisa the P.O. for that and we will get new Toughbooks in all of our frontline vehicles. The reason that was important was we had started out with Surface Pros that really didn't hold up to the kind of job that we do. They were separating and they were not made to be turned on all the time, the rough environment that we have, and the way we use them. We went with the Toughbooks and paid a little more, but we are not going to have to replace them near as often as we did with the Surface Pros. The Surface Pros are still being used, but we are going to give them to our other departments so when we are doing inspections or other things we can use them even for education. We are still getting use out of them, but on the trucks they weren't really durable for what we needed.

We are looking this year at replacing the 1998 pickup down at 2 Station. We have that in our budget. We are looking to replace windows at Central Station. We are discussing the parking lot at Station 3. It is a big area and we would like to at least do the Leonard Street side where the truck pulls out. It is a lot of area and we haven't decided what we are going to do with it. We don't want to pave the backside of the lot until we find out what we want to do with it. We might want to put up an additional building for equipment or how we are going to use it. We have been talking with the City Administration on this.

We also need equipment, hose, and nozzles. Our big expenditure this year is the MARCS radios. Our communication is usually where we find our problems or things fall short. These MARCS Radios help us on our communication. We have been all over the area and all over the state and we can hear from the southern part of the county to closets inside Genesis. We have clear communication and those will be put into service. We are hoping in the next couple of weeks. Right now our officers have them because all the officers' radios are dual band. They can use the MARCS system or the high band we are using right now so we have the radios out there for the officers and they are using them on high band. It also connects us to all the county departments. It connects us with the PD at just the flip of a switch. Like I said it opens up the whole area. With the MARCS Radios we can hear you anywhere you are: in any room anywhere in the City. It was a big piece out of our budget, but well worth it.

Mr. Vincent asked if that was from the Capital Outlay line item for MARCS Radios.

Ms. Heskett said this year it shows up

Chief Bell said I think we have \$59,000 a year is our budget. It is not in our Capital Outlay.

Ms. Heskett: It is under Equipment Lease. (Fund 270, Fire Operating-pg. 13)

Chief Bell said we are leasing them. We also have our vehicle lease payment and that would be for Engine 3. That is being paid for by the building rent of the Fairview Road property. If you look at that we are getting \$81,900 for it and that more than covers our vehicle lease payment of \$65,500. I believe we have four more years on that and we are still holding a bond. I think we have three more years on our Engine 2. As of right now in all of our meetings starting at the end of last year and through now our needs are being met. Everything in the budget has been approved that we need and Rhonda and the Mayor and I have sat and talked. We will start talking about our long-term ideas. We are already formulating those. There was talk about our niceties depending on how the rest of the year goes. One of the big projects we have right now is kind of exciting for the City was the TR Building. Craig has been in there and they have been renovating it. We have the PUCO office in there, the Safety Director, and we are able to use it for the training. I talked about using it for the Tactical or Mass Casualty. They came in and we used that building for it. Once the detectives move over to there and we have access to their vacated area it is going to open up the rest of the Public Safety Building for some of the projects and stuff that we are looking at. It will change our training room. It will change the way we do our interview room, our investigation bureau that we are developing, and some of the funds we are looking at on our Capital Outlay because actually Rhonda gave us more than we asked for this year. It is a nice thing to know that you can have some extra funds sitting there for when we do those renovations that we need to on those buildings. I think that is all I have. Does anybody have any questions on the budget?

Rob Sharrer: Chief, you built the new turnout rooms and everything; does every station now have an up-to-date turnout room?

Chief Bell: All three stations have an up-to-date turnout room with exhaust fans and everything else. That is, we are encapsulating the gear in there, so when it is off gassing, guys are washing their gear, and they do all of that, but when you come back and you put it away the carcinogens and stuff are off gassing so you keep the room closed. You have an outside vent and it pulls all that air to the outside so it keeps that air fresh. All of our new trucks have a regen on them. Some of the older vehicles and stuff you want to keep the gear away from it because if you start up that pickup just like if you would in your garage the carbon monoxide would form. We start them up and we pull them out. We are trying to keep the gear from being exposed to that also. All three stations do have functioning turnout rooms right now.

Mr. Vincent: Does anyone else have questions? Okay, that was easy.

Chief Bell: That was painless. They are saving it all for you, Craig. Thank you all very much. I appreciate it.

Mrs. Osborn: I have a question before you leave. Is it a boat that needed to be replaced or was that done last year? Is your boat old?

Chief Bell: No, our boat is fairly new. Our new boat, we have I want to say it is less than 5 years old. The boat has been good.

Mrs. Osborn: Okay.

Chief Bell: As far as the age of our vehicles we are in a good spot. Anything that we are thinking of right now is strategic on how do we plan ahead for the replacement. Our oldest front-line vehicle right now is Engine One and we have had some issues with it on maintenance. I think in the ten years that we have had it we have put \$94,000 in it for repairs and that number is muted a little bit because Vehicle Maintenance does most of our stuff on it so they are doing it at a discounted rate. It was also not counting that it was down for two months that we sent it back to Sutphen to get everything redone on it. All of our other vehicles are in good shape and are running well and we are formulating a plan, but we want to be smart about it. We already have a lease, we have a bond, and we have the MARCs radios, I would rather not have another big payment like that right now so we are going to first look at grants. It is kind of hard. Zanesville is in a good spot, but sometimes when it comes to the grants, we are too small to be big and too big to be small. When they are looking at a ten year old vehicle and they are looking at us sometimes they are looking at the department out there that is running a twenty year old vehicle, but they don't know that that vehicle might go out twice a month and we are going out seven or eight times a day. We are looking at other ways to find that money. Times are good right now, but we want to be able to tighten our belt later if we need to and we are working on that.

Mr. Vincent: This \$94,000 on Engine 1 does that kind of fit in on the maintenance and ongoing costs on the fire truck or is it just tired?

Chief Bell: It is very high. When you figure out days lost and stuff like that; it has had a lot of electrical issues. There are a lot of days it is down which means that our old Engine 1, which is now our Engine 8, now has a lot of days where it is pressed into service. We are thinking of that, but that is strategic thinking. We don't want to feel forced into making a quick decision that we would regret later. We are looking at everything. The Mayor had brought up let's look at grants first. Let's be told no first before we start looking at how we are going to finance it.

Mr. Vincent: So, reliability comes into play and later on, when looking at replacing vehicles, whether this company has more issues than other ones.

Mayor Tilton: You can bet we are not going to buy another one of those.

Chief Bell: It is going to figure in.

Keane Toney: It was \$400,000 to purchase and \$94,000 plus to keep it running.

Mr. Vincent: So a real lemon?

Keane Toney: Yes, that would be an appropriate term.

Dan Vincent: Unfortunate. Alright, thank you again.

Chief Bell: Thank you very much.

Craig Stemm, City Maintenance Division

Craig Stemm: As far as the budget goes we are about the same as we were last year. I don't see any issues. It is pretty much the same. I don't think there will be any problems, but if there is then we will come to the Mayor and Rhonda and go from there if we have some unforeseen circumstances.

- Out of the Maintenance there are really three components: Traffic Signals, Building Maintenance, and Street Lighting.
- The budget here is virtually for traffic signals when you get right down to it. A little of building maintenance comes out of it and it is just odd ball stuff from the General Fund just so our guys aren't just sitting around not doing anything. Building Maintenance in reality spends other people's (department's) money
- Street lights are a different line item out of Public Service. It is funded sort of separate.
- Most of what we worked on last year, we started out at the Police Annex in 2017. We spent two or three months there. Most of that came out of the line item from the Police Department. During the summer we pretty much worked on traffic signals and building maintenance stuff. The guys worked on servicing air conditioners and just whatever came along.
- We bought some LED pedestrian stuff last year for Main Street and pretty much changed them over, the pedestrian heads count down heads. We bought some stuff for Sixth Street. The guys started sticking that stuff in today.
- We also bought a new bucket truck last year and put it into service late last summer or fall. It was \$150,000 plus some stuff at maintenance. It is a nice truck. The guys use it every day.
- We did upgrade Blue and McIntire last year by putting a new cabinet in. We rebuilt all the signal heads, we put LED lights in, and we put pedestrian buttons in, and put some cameras in to help make the intersection run a little better.
- I had a few complaints starting out as we had changed some timing. I haven't really had any complaints lately so I think it is working. The cameras seem to be working to help get the buses out. Once the buses are out and the traffic is moving to Blue Avenue and letting it run so we can move traffic through. There is a lot of traffic on that road.

Mr. Vincent: When you say cameras, the cameras are up above?

Craig Stemm: The cameras are up above so instead of loops they are traffic cameras.

Mr. Vincent: So they are loops in the road that sense the metal and changes the magnetic field and triggers the light so the cameras actually spot the vehicle.

Craig Stemm: It does the same thing as a loop. There are three ways of doing it. There are loops, traffic cameras, and radar which is what ODOT is using. It is just starting to come into play. The reason for not putting loops in up there is there is no infrastructure there, so to put a loop out in the road you have to cut the concrete, cut curbs, and it just doesn't work right. These cameras seem to be getting better as we try them. They seem to be working real good there as far as I know. We put another one in down at 719 and Moxahala. I had more complaints down there and I am not sure if it is the location or by the river. It is working and most of the time it does a good job, but every now and then it seems like it holds traffic up especially coming north. We are still learning how to use them too. So that is where we are at on those.

We did put one up at Bell and Bethesda too to help move traffic there. It got zapped by lightening so I have it in for repair. That is the down side to some of those things. It doesn't make any difference. It could be a cabinet or something else, but we will probably buy a spare this year so we are not out of service like we are sometimes. The cost is about \$2,600 each. The cost of putting a loop in if we do it in-house it is cheaper, but if you are paying somebody usually it is \$2,000 plus, but then you have pull boxes and like I say to do it right, you need different infrastructure and we don't have the infrastructure so that is why we are using cameras. It is the same thing, like down at Moxahala and 719 I think I put it in four times down there and I just can't keep them because there are no pull boxes, infrastructure, and no conduit. So really in the long run it is cheaper where the stuff is already there, so sometimes it is cheaper to put a loop in. We may buy a couple more to put up at Maple & Taylor this year. The east side of Taylor the Columbia Gas Company cut our loop out there. On the west side the pavement is in terrible shape so I am not sure we can cut some in. We haven't made it that far yet. We are just working our way out of the annex now. We will get back to traffic signals. That is sort of what we did last year.

Most of the money this year is going to be spent on the traffic signal side. The first part, Pine and Maysville and Maysville and 719 are getting all new traffic signals put in. It is being paid for by the Ohio Rail Commission to get new railroad preemption down there for the railroad tracks. It was assigned to ODOT and they are doing the inspections. We will just be involved in it. We will have some hours in it, but it is really being paid for and done by them.

Mr. Vincent: What does that do? Does it help clear 719 where people could be held up on the railroad tracks?

Mr. Stemm: It is so they can't get on the railroad tracks. It ties the signals into it. It is a big thing for the Rail Commission. They pay for these things. It keeps people off the railroad tracks to keep them from being hit or ran over. When that train comes in it will put that signal in where it will stop it and put it red light so it will not permit any traffic to move. That is at 719. Then at Pine Street and Maysville it will let it move from Pine to Maysville, but it will stop Maysville. Then it is all on the updated standards and new equipment. What we own at Maysville and Pine it is obsolete and needs updated. It has a relay and controller in there from 1989. It has been in there running for 30 years.

Mayor Tilton: The weather changes and we have problems.

Mr. Stemm: We had problems with it and virtually the only person that knows how to program this thing is Fred Buck. I mean they are obsolete and there is no need in training people to use it because there are only two left. The other one is not in an intersection where we have any problems so after this year they will all be gone.

We are going to do some work at Linden and Adair this year. That cabinet is already ordered and it is encumbered. It is like \$14,400. We did a traffic study on it last year and they recommended putting in a protected left turn coming south on Adair to go north on Linden. That is the only phase on that particular intersection that doesn't have a left turn arrow on it. It is ordered and we are going to work on it this summer. Brighton and Ridge, we are going to re-do it. It is all paid for through a grant that Chip and Public Service got through paving and everything else. They just asked if we wanted anything else. Part of the first grant was to get pedestrian heads put up there. When they asked if we wanted anything else I just put down to buy a new cabinet controller and everything so it is all being paid for by grant money so we are going to have to work on it. We will have to put it in.

The Fire Department and Safety Director have asked us to do some work on Maple and Leonard to update that fire signal there because you can hardly see it. It is on old 8 inch heads. It is on a timer inside the station and you have to push a button and you have to wait to get out. We are going to try to put an opti-com on it so that when the fire truck pulls out the turn light is green coming out and red on Maple, but as soon as they get out it turns back to green on Maple so traffic can move on Maple Avenue. It should help Maple Avenue traffic. We have like 45 seconds on it so it stops that traffic for 45 seconds every time whether it needs to be or not. We should be able to get it down to 10 or 15 seconds to let traffic move again. As everybody knows the further north you go on Maple Avenue the worse it is for moving traffic especially in the afternoon.

Mr. Vincent: I think everyone probably knows, but just in case the opti-com is actually a flashing strip upon the safety vehicle, fire truck, and it flashes and picks that up and it gives them the green light for the direction they are going.

Craig Stemm: All of Maple Avenue has that on it, but not on most of the sides, but that is the only one. That was the original fire station in 1977 and those lights there. We are going to try to update those this summer.

Mr. Vincent: You turn those on and have 45 seconds, even if they get called off before they ever pull out on Leonard.

Craig Stemm: It still stops it no matter what or if for some reason they don't make it out quite as quick and you get part of the way out there and then it comes back to green on Maple and red on Leonard so they have had a couple of times they have almost gotten hit there. We have looked at it and we are going to use one of the old cabinets off of either Blue and McIntire or over at Ridge Avenue. I think we are going to use the one at Blue and McIntire and get started on it.

Like I said we have been down at the annex since November and we pretty much have this thing tied together down there. It is getting close for the police. It may take another month or so. On our end is pretty well done. The carpet is scheduled for a couple of weeks. After that the doors will be installed. Then Lisa Hittle out of IT is working on security, cameras, and door locks. It is all sort of scheduled and getting there. Now we are going to move on and go to these other projects.

There was a Pine Street Safety Study done too. I haven't really looked at it too close yet. I am not sure we will have much involvement in it or not or if we will upgrade any of those signals, but if it does it would be good, especially at the school at Pine and Pershing. That one is in need of an upgrade. Hopefully, somebody else will pay for it. Other than that, that is pretty much what we do.

Mr. Sharrer: Craig, I know you mentioned the only person that could do that one traffic signal is Fred. I know in some of our conversations there were others, how are we on training people or do we have backups, are we working towards a system that we will have more than one person.

Craig Stemm: We are working toward it. There is Fred Lane and me right now. We lost three people last year: Brad Mack went to the vocational school; Fred Buck retired and he could always fill in, and Mark Rucker retired too. He spent 30 years in signal. We have been working on it through Civil Service. We changed the job descriptions a little bit. One was an electrician and had some plumbing and stuff in it. We pretty much just made it an electrician because that is what the majority of stuff is that we do: traffic signals, street lighting, repairs at the airport, the beacons, that the majority of it and the other one that took Mark's job, which was part-time because all these jobs came out of the fire department originally as part-time, and have changed to full-time. When the next Maximum Strength Ordinance comes out both of those will be on there and once it passes we will post jobs and try to hire a couple people. Both of those people will be electricians and will have to work on signals and learn some of this stuff so we have more people qualified. It can be an issue with just two of us. A couple of times before I could get back and Fred was out of town or something; it was an hour or two before we could get back and there is really no one else qualified. You can't get into them things and just start pushing buttons. It has been a slow process, but we are getting there. I am hoping we are doing the right thing and hopefully we get the right people hired. That is what they are going to do; and basically, we are training our replacements here. That is the goal anyway.

Mr. Sharrer: Thank you.

Mr. Vincent: Is there anything else from Council? It is fascinating. There is a lot you are doing. There is a lot we don't know about.

Craig Stemm: That is pretty much what we do.

Mr. Vincent: It is very interesting. Thank you very much. We appreciate it. There is never a shortage, I'm sure.

Mr. Stemm: No, there is always something to do every day. It never gets boring. There is something different every day.

Miss Bradshaw: The team that did that safety study on Pine Street, are they the ones that will replace some of those lights?

Mr. Stemm: I am not sure how it will take place. I think they recommend, but I don't know if that frees up the money or not. I know there is a Traffic Committee meeting next Thursday and they are supposed to have a conference call with us. I am not sure. I think there is money out there, but I think we have to ask and they just do the recommendation. I don't know if that frees it up or we can ask for it out of ODOT. I am not sure how it works. I think Chip would be more knowledgeable on that than me. You have to start somewhere and the place I would start would be Pine and Pershing where the school is located.

Miss Bradshaw: Yes, they had their eyes opened up there when school let out and that all started. It was like Whoa.

Craig Stemm: It would be one that is in need of updates. It needs more than what we can do in house. It would be one that would really need a design on it and have somebody do it. Other than that, are there any other questions? That is what we do.

Mr. Vincent: Thank you again. Good to see you.

Craig Stemm: You are welcome.

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Mr. Vincent: Let's go ahead and get started. We have Tim Smith, Code Enforcement Thank you for coming, sir. We greatly appreciate it.

Tim Smith: What do you want to know about my budget? I am satisfied with it.

- The only thing we did talk about which we are working on is we still need to consider adding a position for basically what Matt Phillips handled at one time for litter, boarding up houses, and basically overseeing the weed crew. We are budgeted for six seasonal employees and we could cut back on them if we had someone who could run that division. We are looking at two different job descriptions now and we want to combine them to see what we can submit to get approved. What I would like for this position is in the winter time when things slow down I would like to be able to utilize this position as a Code Officer as well so the position is full time, but not idle and can utilize the position to help with a Code Enforcement standpoint. It will help the department.
- One of the biggest problems is the constant trash complaints and when it gets windy it gets worse because it gets scattered.
- A problem in the last couple of years is the number of crows that have migrated into this area. They destroy trash bags to get into things and scatter stuff everywhere. It is a problem.

- We asked for a mower last year and didn't end up having to buy it. We asked to set the money aside for this year and it was approved. If we can squeeze another year out of our old zero turn we may wait another year to buy it.
- We had one little line item I was baffled about and Rhonda and I figured it out. It was some of my money I had left over from last year that we didn't spend for demos and it ended up in the wrong place.
- The big number in contractual services, \$527,800 is where the demolition funds come from. The amount is larger in case we have to do the Kemp properties. We have been getting a budget of about \$180,000 a year for the regular demos and we had \$27,000 that we carried over from last year that we didn't get finished.
- Mr. Smith felt the prosecutor's office did not think this through when they dumped this on the City. The moment they put properties in a commercial entities name like the City it basically takes away my NIOSH (The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) exemption from having to abate these houses which essentially drives the cost of these demos up a lot. If the houses are in the City's name I have to have every one of them assessed which is \$500. Then we have to abate them. If we get into a case where the plaster is contaminated the abatement is usually twice as much as the demolition. We could be biting a big bullet if we end up having to take these down. If we can keep them out of the City's name and we have to take them down, we can take them down on behalf of Mr. Kemp and use that NIOSH exemption which saves us a considerable amount of money. Those are all things we have to look at.
- The department tries to demolish 16 to 18 properties per year with the \$180,000. Some of the demos are more difficult and expensive and are on the back shelf. We have one at 1307 Greenwood and there is no way to access it. So we had to go up and talk to the neighbors about crossing their properties and taking down fences and that gets expensive because we have to do restoration work on two different lots. We are at that point where we are getting to some of the more difficult properties. There is one on Beulah that the foundation has collapsed on. I have had a couple of the demolition contractors that we use go look at it and they all told me the same thing, no thank you. That one will have to be demolished at some point. I have to find someone who is willing to do it.
- We are catching up on the demo list. The Land Bank has helped a great deal. When we identify these abandoned houses early on in the activity of inspecting I go out and assess them to their potential value. If I think they would sell then I send that information over to the County Treasurer and urge her to proceed with the tax foreclosure on that property because there is a good chance it would sell. Quite a few of them have sold. With that tool in place we have been utilizing that to actually get these properties in the hands of people who will rehab them. There are people out there who are interested in doing that. We had a number of properties, and if you remember the name Kalie Santoki. He went to prison and he had seven properties. There is a gentleman who is buying up his properties and renovating them. We have spurred activity in a lot of these areas. We have a housing shortage in the City. My effort has been to try to get these houses in the hands of people that can renovate them, put them back on the market or occupy them. Or even, in the case of the Kemp houses, I went around and interviewed every tenant with the exception of two houses that I haven't gotten into yet, but every one of them is interested in purchasing that house. In many cases that is their only

option because there is probably not another landlord out there that would take them. Some of the houses they are interested in purchasing should essentially be torn down. In some cases the people have lived there for 10, 12, or 14 years under those conditions and that is all they know. They are comfortable with it. It is really not up to me to judge how they want to live as long as I can say okay, you need to do this, this, and this to make sure the house is in fact safe. Then we may overlook some of the sanitary conditions that exist, because frankly they are used to living in that. Almost all of them, I think 15 of the 18 were interested in actually obtaining ownership of those properties. Would they be a Code nightmare? They could be, but it wouldn't be any worse than it is now.

- In fact, it may get better because we would have an actual person that we could hold accountable where we have difficulty with Mr. Kemp being in jail. We file affidavits with the property manager now and certain things to that nature. I hope I have answered your question? We are really focusing our efforts right now; not so much on tearing them down as fast as we can, but trying to salvage what we can before they get to the point we have to take them down. In some cases, we have to move forward to take them down.
- We have a number of large issues in town that eventually we are going to deal with like Main Street; the Elk's building, these are problems; Munson School, that is a problem; McKinley School, that is going to turn into a problem eventually. We have out of state owners in that building and so unfortunately the City was doing a disservice when a lot of these schools were sold as opposed to being demolished. The gentleman who owns Munson School is deceased so there is no recourse on that one, but to eventually address that. I know we have looked at some different options on it, but I think most of those have kind of died out. So, eventually, we are going to have to look at doing something with that. It is an eyesore, we can't keep it secured. We spent \$1,500 to plywood it up and they still get in. They broke all the third floor windows out which were intact when we boarded it up. It is just impossible to keep them out of there. These individuals that want in there to scrap and vandalize are very resourceful. They climb pipes, trees, and stuff that normal people wouldn't go up to get into a building.
- The Budget is about \$180,000 a year for the demos. Of the \$527,000, the \$27,000 was encumbered from last year. We had demos that we had purchase orders on that totaled \$27,000 that were not completed due to weather conditions in 2018. Those have all been done now. They are all down. We were just recently invoiced for some of those.
- Mr. Sharrer asked if the remainder is extra money that has been set aside specifically for the Kemp properties. Ms. Heskett asked to keep in mind there are some funds in there for their contractual services like software agreements, cell phones, and things like that.

A brief update on Lear and Mosaic properties was requested.

- The Lear property (2200 Linden Avenue) I think is getting very close to a resolution. The Land Bank is going to be involved in that transaction. That property has been foreclosed on. It has been forfeited to the state of Ohio. The individual that wants to gain possession of that property, basically to do the cleanup, and we talked briefly about it in

our Land Bank meeting on Tuesday. The conscience of the board was that if they are willing to foot the bill for the cleanup the Land Bank is willing to pass it through to them with no strings attached. It is going to be whatever they are going to develop it for. There are no stipulations. We have a meeting on that tomorrow and maybe the Mayor can answer more of that.

- There is still the brownfield situation so we are looking at maybe doing a partial decertification of the brownfield which would be the southern part of the Lear property. We are talking with the EPA right now on maybe getting that decertified so it will be out of the brownfield. The rest of it we are still in negotiations. With that part of it you will never, unless they decertify it, be able to dig in the ground. There are seven acres which is where the contamination is, where they have the recirculating wells that are pumping the plume out. It will never come out. Seven acres of it will always be a super fund site. The rest of it we don't know yet. The prospects of getting it cleaned up are on the horizon. It has been a very, very long process. Since the property is now out of the people's hands the City can now move it along and we have a lot of people involved. A lot of stake holders that are willing to come in and look at this property to see how easily, how cost-effectively we can clean it up or at least get it to green space. Like I said, we have been having meetings for almost a year. We have another one tomorrow and hopefully we will kind of be finalizing tomorrow. We have somebody who is really interested in cleaning it up. Some think it is a real liability. We have had people dumping on it. The EPA has been in and several people have dumped stuff like black top, oil, and then we have people trying to scrap out stuff. It has been a problem and hopefully like I said in the next week or so we will have an answer and be moving quicker than we have been.

The Mosaic property (1525 Pershing Road) has the same owners, same situation, different LLC, but same exact owners, and unfortunately that property has about a two million dollar loan on it. The bank foreclosed on it. It went to Sheriff Sale the 14th of February. There were no bidders. Basically, the bank had reduced it to a minimum bid of three hundred thousand dollars. I have had several people contact me about purchasing it. We have laid down some guidelines as to what they can and can't do with that property. We are interested in getting it cleaned up and getting it secured. Several buildings were damaged and we have zoning issues over there because it is in a historical district. We are dealing with out of town owners and the only assets in this LLC are this property.

We have filed affidavits every day for 30 days so we could drive the penalties up extremely high. The property taxes on this property are now approaching one hundred thousand dollars. At some point we are going to push the same issue through and have that one foreclosed on for back taxes in the hopes it can be forfeited to the state. Again, the Land Bank can become involved in passing that through to someone. Basically, what we have told them is what we have told everyone else. Here are the zoning issues that you have to address if you take ownership of that property. Right now, that is what is turning a lot of them away, but that is what is essentially going to protect that property from development and activity over there that we really don't want to take place. We are not really going to back away from that, or at least I don't think the City is going to back away from that. Once we get the Lear thing taken care of

then we will focus and probably get a little more aggressive with trying to get some sort of resolution over there and utilize the same mechanisms that we used on Linden Avenue.

Can a bond or secondary insurance coverage be required in the future? Mr. Smith said that is beyond his capabilities to draw up. In a couple of meetings with the Law Director we have mentioned this and in fact back when we designed the vacant property registration that was part of that original program. I don't know who was on Council at that time, but there was a lot of back lash on that because people felt it would be a detriment to development in the city that has turned out to be exactly the opposite. It has been a nightmare for us because we don't require that. So at some point, we need to look at getting some legislation where people who are going to purchase commercial properties have a financial obligation to maintain them and some protection for the city if they pull out of or abandon those properties. We need to have a bond or a named insured or some way to protect the city when people purchase these big commercial properties. Case in point; the Houston guy that bought 608 Main Street property and paid \$500 for that building; he stripped some brick out of it and took off and went to Florida. That is all he wanted it for and we are left with a nightmare. Yes, we need to put something in place that protects us from that. The Law Director and other people are going to have to look at something because when I attempted to insert that into our property registration program that was beat out. Someone needs to encourage the legal staff to draft something to that effect that Council will adopt in order to protect the city from future liability and exposure. A committee could be formed to work on this issue.

The members of the LLC from Linden and Pershing properties are the same ones that had the Sunrise Center, and Hartstone properties. The Sunrise Center is under new ownership and is being used.

Mr. Smith said we take it from the farthest level that we can take it from the Code Enforcement standpoint. The Judge is cooperating. This is what we did with Pelican and Catfish is file an affidavit every day for 30 days and the fine is \$3,000 a day and that is what we did. Then we stopped, but we could have continued. You are not going to get blood out of a turnip. They would have been more than willing to say okay, it is yours. That is all they have in that LLC is that Lear property. Do we want that liability and all the cleanup associated with it? That is essentially where we are at.

Mrs. Osborn: You mentioned the Elk's building, what is going on with that?

Mr. Smith said the Elk's building on 4th Street has been abandoned for some time. The tax liability on it is approaching \$30,000 to \$35,000. It has been weathered now for an extended period of time. At this point the building is not salvageable. Basically what happens when you have a brick building with four or five widths of brick the brick on the inside of the building is not tempered. Moisture has a tremendous degrading effect on that brick and at some point that building becomes unstable because of that. That is the reason we had the blow out at the Nader Building was because of continual moisture degradation down that wall and it eventually deteriorated those widths of brick in there. We have had a couple of failures down there. The decorative cooper roof was putting strains on it and we had it removed a few years ago. That

building continues to deteriorate. Some block and brick fell off of it a month ago and Mr. Massey called about it. That is another issue. It has federal liens on it.

The Montgomery Ward building owner said at a ZDA meeting the quote he received to tear down the Elk's building was \$170,000.

These problems are not going to go away. We are going to have to continue to address them. Somehow we have to get creative to do that. We are fortunate there are a number of people who are interested in developing the downtown area. Shawn Glaub has plans for the Montgomery Ward building. I have no doubt he will follow through with that. Mark Manbevers is looking for a building downtown. I tried to get him to look at the Elk's building, but again his assessment was it was too far gone. He wants to open up an antique shop. We are looking for something for him in the downtown area.

Did the property on 7th Street across from the tire shop sell? It used to be a telephone gear company. Tim Smith was pretty sure it did sell. A photographer used to have it, Larry Marshall.

Mr. Vincent: Thank you. We kept you longer than we anticipated, but there were a lot of questions and a lot of valuable information provided. We appreciate that and we appreciate your work. We are glad Rhonda was able to work it out to get some additional money to tear down properties.

Mr. Smith: Don't hesitate to call me if you want to ask questions along the lines of what we talked about. I am not a wealth of information, but I can give you as much information as I have.

Mr. Vincent: Thank you, sir.

Several others thanked Mr. Smith.

Public Safety Director Keane Toney: I will be very brief as I know some of you including myself have somewhere to go after this.

I am not going to touch on the Police Department just to say the city is very fortunate to have people like Tim, Craig, Tony, Jeff Bell, the Mayor and Rhonda. These folks, I don't know if everyone knows what they do and how much time they put in and all of you as well. Seeing the service they provide makes my job easier because I am wearing a path between Rhonda's office and the Mayor's office. They have been very gracious with their help and I find along with that is service. My big thing as some of you know is we work very hard to coordinate our services between the different departments: from the police department to the building department, code, to work together more and more. I kind of pushed them a little bit to get that working because when you get the calls about property all of you take the heat. We take very little of it in comparison. We are working very hard to take care of some of your neighborhood problems. That is why it is so important to get an additional person as the Mayor and I have discussed in code to take care of the litter problem; well, not take care of it but manage it, address it, and respond to the complaints that all of you get. We are working on that.

I will give you a quick few number on the Fire Department. Last year they had 3,502 calls for service. They went up 85 runs. That is not with EMS. The EMS had 2,521 runs last year on top of that. So you see those increasing always. People are calling for services more and more. In response to that we did hire 3 fire fighters last year in 2018. Jeff and I met again today and we are going to start the preparation to hire three more this year as soon as the process will allow. Just to help bring the manpower up to where you graciously allowed us to have our staffing levels to fulfill those three vacancies because we can use them. We found the combat medics as Jeff said we are working to get them outfitted and included into the structure for the SRT of the police department. They are responding out already. They had been before I got here and now to get them equipped more and more. We are not going to buy a bullet proof vest for every combat medic. No. We are looking to buy two or three max. Those will be housed with the weapons separately in the police department and they would respond there as the SRT does at the police department so the combat medics would go with them and brought to the location of need.

Speaking of vests, you know we had the 25 vests donated to the city. Those have not gone onto the trucks. They are waiting for the labels to label them. That saved us \$22,000 plus last year by getting those vests. We did take the vests out ourselves and they were tested in Canton. We look them out to the range and tested them ourselves. They worked fine. What people don't understand about vests is there is an expiration date of five years, but what the manufacturer is saying is that vest is good, but we won't cover the stitching on the vests. That is why we can recycle vests like we do. There is no additional risk involved when we do that. The vests that the fire department has as far as their combat medics, now are the vests that were recycled two cycles ago from the police department, we have reordered new vests for the SRT so when the new vests come in the present vests will go to the combat medics saving more money for the city. The manufacturers of this equipment they don't want people to know that. They think that at a five-year mark these things are so reduced in efficiency, but they are not. They say to get rid of them so you can come back and buy more from them. It is basically a big scam. So to let you know when you see these things come across it is not costing the city. I think it will make our people safer in the long run.

We also have two new police cars that came today. Hopefully, they won't get wrecked. We will also start for officers involved in a crash where there is negligence involved; we will carry through with discipline which includes time off. I think that is a great motivator for people. This is according to contract of course. We are also sending them to driving school. If you have that second wreck, guess what? See you; you are going to driving school. That takes them out of the loop here. A lot of officers survive because of extra jobs like off duty work. They work for a funeral home for instance and they do the escorts. They are paid by that company. You are out of the loop directly to go to driving school. By contract we can't take money from an officer because what happens is if you get a day off without pay it doesn't come out of their pocket because they say I will take a vacation day and plug that in by contract. This way, a little bit of financial loss is another motivator. Does it circumvent the contract, of course it does, but it works. So you are going to hear about it if an officer has two crashes, you will say, they are out? Where have they been? They have been to driving school. They will live in Columbus at the State Highway Patrol for a week. They won't enjoy that. It is a motivator.

A little short rundown of what we have been doing at the Fire Department and Police Department. We are looking at another K-9 to bring another dog on. We are in the process of evaluating dogs. That is going to be a good move for us. In the future we would always like more people, but one thing we are doing at the fire department is not going to cost us any money. We are going to create an arson bureau; a separate arson bureau in the fire department. We have Assistant Chief Hobson who is the most qualified and experienced so he will head that bureau at no extra cost. He will train and we are in the process of training additional fire fighters to be arson investigators. They will go out on the minor fires to get their experience. That way after they are certified by the state, they would report to him and he would still do his forty hour duties. It is a win, win for all of us. All that is going to take place after the move is made over to the Safety Annex by the detective bureau. When that space is free, we have planned it out and we will move forward from there. So, that is short and sweet. Once again some of you have called. If you need me you can call me anytime, it doesn't matter. You can call my cell phone. We will address the problems you are having as quickly as we can.

The public thinks we are slow about things. We have a framework we have to work within the legal framework. We can't kick people out, we can't! So we are moving forward.

Mayor Tilton: Sometimes we would like to, but we can't.

Keane Toney: Are there any questions? None? Okay. Tony Coury is not here. He is at school for a week in Columbus. He is not in driving school. He will be back Monday so we rescheduled to have him come in the next time.

Mr. Vincent: We will see everyone on the 26th for the second part of the budget hearings. It will be a little longer night, but again this is very important.

Ms. Gildow moved to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. Sharrer. A voice vote was taken with all in favor. None were opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Vincent thanked everyone for coming.

The meeting adjourned about 5:15 p.m.

Susan Culbertson, Clerk

Daniel Vincent, President of Council