

Finance Committee Special Meeting Minutes

December 28, 2021

Members present: Gale, Gremel, McCann

Staff present: Craker, Edmondson, Scott

Public: Anne Harper, Will Harper (briefly)

The meeting was called to order via Zoom at 1:00 PM.

Public comment: Will Harper suggested funding the Housing Ready Director position on the taxable property base rather than population.

The members considered the funding request from Housing North. They would like a commitment of \$90 - 100,000 per year for three years, split 50:50 between governmental units and private donations. They have received \$30,000 from the Leelanau Township Community Foundation. Chair Gale considered basing any contribution on population. Leelanau County has a population of 22,301 and Northport 496 or about 2%. If we contribute 2% of the funding, it would require \$1,000 or about \$2.00 per person each year. Trustee Gremel questioned the value of the position, whether Northport would see tangible benefit. Anne Harper commented that the Village could put deliverables into the contract with Housing North. Chair Gale believes the position description contains expectations that could be used to define deliverables. The committee will look into all three ideas before making a final recommendation to the Council.

Trustees Gale and McCann, along with President Wetherbee attended a recent meeting of the LTCF Early Childhood Committee for an update on Children's Center lease. It is clear that the Foundation will not renew the lease. The County-wide effort to attract home daycare providers to use the space is still underway.

They have grant funding in place and are recruiting providers. President Wetherbee said the Village would be flexible if a solution is in sight when the lease expires. It was agreed that the Village would restore utility service to the building and the Foundation will assist with funding.

Clerk Scott shared a draft of the 2022-23 General Fund budget. Revenues from property taxes are projected to increase, however personal property taxes and revenue sharing may decrease. Again this year, the Marina Fund is dedicated to major upgrades and will not make a general fund contribution. Professional service fees (attorney and auditor) will need to be increased based on recent trends. Treasurer Craker has noted an increase in electricity costs that she will explore. With the switch to LED streetlights and the effort to turn some of them off, our costs should be down. Historically, the Treasurer has been paid from the General Fund. Treasurer Craker has taken on an expanded role and her wages could be spread across other funds in the same way the Clerk and Liaison's salaries. The Village needs to extend water/sewer service along Flees Road to accommodate new connections in the sewer assessment district. Water Operator Tompkins recommends increasing the minimum quarterly water usage fee from \$30 to \$36. At the last meeting, the committee authorized the Clerk to calculate salaries and wages with a 5.9% cost of living adjustment. She was asked to calculate the savings if the COLA is reduced to 5%. The committee will look at the fee schedule before the budget hearing. Adding a short term rental registration fee could generate some additional income.

We will recommend several 2021-22 budget amendments that will be prepared by the Clerk for February :

General Fund - \$22,400 to cover additional Professional Fees (attorney, planner, bank)

Major and Local Streets - \$28,484 to cover resurfacing work done this fall

Water Fund - \$16,000 to cover increased cost of studies and supplies

Marina Fund - \$34,047 to cover engineering work, credit card processing fees and bond interest payment

Chair Gale proposed establishing a review of Village ordinances that include monetary penalties/fines. The current ordinance that holds contractors liable for damage to Village roads and right-of-ways assesses a fine of only \$20. The committee agreed to add ordinance review to routine business. The Chair will be responsible for identifying ordinances for review and including them on agenda.

Public comment: Anne Harper thanked the committee and staff for being thoughtful and making difficult decisions. An earlier comment is incorporated into the discussion of the Housing North proposal.

Motion to adjourn by Gremel, seconded by McCann. Roll call vote: Aye - 3 Nay - 0.
Meeting adjourned at 3:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Gale