

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Employee Benefits Committee Meeting

Held on October 7th, 2024



EMPLOYEE BENEFITS COMMITTEE Village of West Jefferson Council

MINUTES

October 7th, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Jimmy Little called the Employee Benefits Committee Meeting to Order at 5:46 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Council Members: Jimmy Little, Samantha Cahill and Erica Bogner.

Quorum Declare: 3 present, 0 absent.

Also in attendance: Mayor, Ray Martin; Director of Finance, Rebecca Shipley-Arnott; Director of Information Technology, Mark Crosten; Director of Public Service, John Mitchell; Lieutenant, Josh Jacobs; President Jen Warner, and Clerk of Council, Tisha Edwards.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:

Motion to Adopt the Agenda moved by Erica Bogner and seconded by Samantha Cahill.

·All in Favor

The Minutes from the July 15th, 2024 Employee Benefits Committee meeting were approved at the August 5th, 2024 Regular meeting of Council.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Discussing the possibility of a new IT position vs. Contracting-** Director of Finance Rebecca Shipley-Arnott explained that the Director of Information Technology, Mark Crosten would like to speak to the committee about the possibility of getting assistance in his area with either a full time employee or by contracted help and opened the discussion. Director Crosten stated that since he started here in the Village the workload has been high and there is a lot to do. Everything he does he always has the Villages best interests in mind. Since he has been here he has not had a vacation and since January he hasn't had a day off. He stated that he knows part of that is him and his need to work and then part of it is that he just wants to do the best job he can for the Village. He has waived about asking for full time help in his area for some time and he has had multiple discussions with the Finance Director and HR Manager about this. He is not sure that he can justify two

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Employee Benefits Committee Meeting

Held on October 7th, 2024

full time IT employees in a Village of our size. One way would be hiring a full time person to assist him, and he is not totally convinced that this is the best option. He has fully believed that once he began working on the upgrades and changes in the Village that the workflow would be stabilized, and another person would not be necessary. Currently the Village is in a lot of "Big Bang" projects such as replacing PCs for everyone, getting a new website, changing software in the Development Department and working with the Police on various projects. Things that require a lot of upfront work but once they are implemented will slow down and just be maintained. The other option is to make use of continued contractual services which is what he has been doing. Bringing in consultants on an as needed basis. Of course, the concern with that is they are from the outside and there is no internal knowledge or continuity of help. Another option that was discussed with the Finance Director is if he would like to take vacation then he could employee temporary help for someone to come in and lack of terms "babysit" that knows the environment just to watch in case something would happen. He knows that if he continues the way that he is currently going that he will burn out and does not want that to happen. The Mayor also wanted to add that everyone knows that Mark is doing a wonderful job, but he noticed that a few pay periods back he had 101 hours for salary work. The Mayor feels that if Mark gets to the point where he is asking for back up then we really need to get some one in to help him out. The Mayor stated as you all know we live and die by computers in these days. Council member Samantha Cahill asked if there is someone that Mark has been contracting with that he would feel comfortable taking over for two weeks while he is out on vacation. Director Crosten stated that there is a gentleman that is working with the company that the Village used to use who is familiar with the environment that would be willing to be a resource. He could not promise that he will always be available because the company that he works for is short staffed themselves, but he is willing to work with Director Crosten and the Village. You can of course bring in any IT person to assist but when you bring in someone who has no knowledge of the environment and something goes down in a specific area they will not know anything about it, and they will call the Director anyways. Public Service Director John Mitchell stated the concern is that none of those companies have our best interests at heart. His fear is something would happen to Mark, and no one knows how the system is built or where things are located off site. He feels that something internal would be a better fit. The Mayor stated they are looking at some hybrid theories within the Village for employment as well that could work for IT and those discussions have been happening. Committee Chair Jimmy Little asked where the Village was at with a succession plan if something would happen to one of our Directors or if they decide to retire. What kind of cross training is happening. Council member Samantha Cahill stated that we need someone now to allow Mark to be able to take vacation and fill in when needed. She asked the Mayor and other Village employees if there was anyone we have in the building now that would fit that position. Mayor Martin stated that Garreth Sheppard has been working with Mark, but Mark would be the one to speak on his knowledge base. Council member Jimmy Little asked what have the Directors been doing to track their time and justify the position and are the roles and responsibilities wrote down. Council member Samantha Cahill asked what Garreth's current title is. Director Mitchell stated that he is the Villages Construction Inspector and handles our GIS mapping. Director Crosten stated that Garreth has been helping him with the GIS because that takes it off of his plate. He has been able to step in with issues such as installing monitors and software. It would be comparable to an IT technician 1 or help desk support person. Council member Samantha Cahill asked if taking Garreth would affect Developments area. Director Tom Hale stated that Garreth is not certified to be a building inspector he only does civil inspections for construction, not the building area. Council member Erica Bogner asked if it would be more cost effective to have someone in house. When we use third parties, doesn't that cost more? The Finance Director and HR Manager stated that it is a lot less expensive to hire contractors because you aren't paying benefits, and they are only temporary. It also depends on how often you need them. Director

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Employee Benefits Committee Meeting

Held on October 7th, 2024

Mitchell explained that is why we went with a construction inspector in house because we used to contract it out. With a job like West Chester, we were paying a contractor \$50,000 to 60,000 to oversee the project so it varies with what is more cost effective. Council member Erica Bogner then asked are we sure we couldn't use part time help, or wouldn't that be sufficient right now? Would it be better to get full time help to get over the hump to implement all of these things. Director Crosten stated that by this time he would be closer to having everything implemented but we aren't there yet. He has wavered about what would be the best thing. If you look at other Villages our size they may not even have full time IT. Then if you look at our needs in the Village it justifies it. The problem he has is just saying that this Village needs two full time IT people, and he just can't seem to go there if he is being honest. If he is being more selfish he knows that he needs help in some form so that is what we are trying to figure out. Finance Director Shipley-Arnott stated that if you hire a qualified IT person with a degree once Mark gets everything that he needs to be set up say two years from now, then they wouldn't have enough to do here in the Village. But, at that point we could contract their position out to the surrounding counties because they will always have needs for back ups as well. You would have to have someone who has a lot of versatility and knows a lot. Council member Samantha Cahill stated that what she is hearing is that Garreth has been just doing basics like helping with set up but does not have the IT background or experience. Director Crosten stated that he doesn't want to diminish that work that he has done, and the most important part is that he is smart and willing to learn. He does have to keep in mind though does he have time to train another person right now to get them up to speed on things. Council member Cahill asked if we could just look into getting a contractor for now so that Director Crosten could have some time off and then at the beginning of the year look more into how to manage the situation. Committee Chair Jimmy Little asked if Director Crosten could put together the roles and responsibilities and track his time to justify what the other employee's role would be. Director Crosten said he would do that for the Committee. Council member Erica Bogner asked if we did hire someone full time and down the line contracted them out to the County could we give them a guaranteed two years instead of just hiring them for possibly 6 months to cover. She listens to each Director in the Village sing Marks praises at many meetings and she just wants to make sure that we get someone in to give him the time off he deserves, and she doesn't want him to get burnt out. If he were to leave it leave a lot of issues in a lot of Departments. Director Mitchell stated that when you contract out in many cases you are paying them for 5 to ten times 10 more for a few hours a week then what you would pay an actual employee, and they do not have the Villages best interest at heart. Mayor Martin did state that Director Crosten stated that he would only be using the contractors for projects and not for everyday servicing. Council member Erica Bogner asked if we were to hire someone would it be an assistant to Director Crosten or a coworker. Mayor Martin stated that we wouldn't need someone on the same level as Mark it would be more of an assistant position. Director Crosten stated that he would look into contacting the resource who he would choose to be an immediate backup for now and then he will put together a formal write up of what a position would look like if we go that way. He will also put together a list of what it would look like to contract the work out.

- **Discussing the potential pay increase for the Police Department at the 2025 Budget meeting.**

The Finance Director asked if the Chair would like to move on to the next item of discussion and he stated yes. She introduced Lieutenant, Josh Jacobs who would be speaking to the Committee about possible increases for the Police Department in 2025 and what issues the department is facing currently. Mayor Martin asked the committee to keep in mind that insurance is going up 48% and the Finance Director stated she will be speaking to them about that in the Finance meeting. The Mayor stated that he will be talking about retention, shift differential, a possible Officer leaving, maybe 2 and he wants them to keep an open mind. Council member Samantha Cahill stated to remember that with some people they can

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the

Employee Benefits Committee Meeting

Held on

October 7th, 2024

say they are leaving and will never be happy with the pay that they are receiving. HR Manager Jackie Tiberio stated that she has been conducting exit interviews and she started that as of December of last year and the main reason has been money. Lieutenant Jacobs stated that Shaun Soward gave his resignation today and his last day will be October 20th, 2024. He will be the third consecutive Officer that has left to go to Whitehall, Ohio in Franklin County. His starting pay will be \$48.00 and some change per hour which is \$3.00 more an hour that what he as a Lieutenant who has worked her for 15 years is making per hour. He stated that in no way is the Department asking to make Franklin County money, but we want to stay competitive with Plain City and the Madison County Sheriffs Office. They both received large raises, and we need to stay competitive. There is another Officer looking to leave in January of 2025. Now that Officer Soward is leaving the Lieutenant will need to redo the schedule around, move the K9 Officer, bring someone to 1st shift and fill in 3rd shift and be at minimums. Our goal needs to be about retention and attraction of Officers. We just denied one candidate that was in the running after background checks were done and they did not pass the check. We currently have one potential candidate to interview but they have not begun the background check process yet. Council member Erica Bogner asked the Lieutenant if the candidate pool was getting worse as far as not enough people applying and the HR Manager stated that it has been an issue for the Police Department for the past few years. She states that it's possibly the climate and or politics that make less people go into the field. Council member Bogner stated that she understands and that it's a hard job and no one envy's what they do. Lieutenant Jacobs stated that the Sheriff's office has two to three candidates that West Jefferson and London have passed over and they have hired. Finance Director Rebecca Shipley-Arnott passed out handouts that showed the Madison County average for all levels of the Department. She will review this more in the Finance Committee meeting. Lieutenant Jacobs stated that Plain City did receive the 15% increase for their Department last year and they spoke with the Plain City Lieutenant after the increase and asked how their recruitment was going and they said a night and day difference. Council member Cahill asked if we could get some type of call log from Plain City that showed their emergency call volume. She would think that it would be much greater because they have 2,000 more homes. Mayor Martin stated that the next time they meet with the Committee they will have some ideas of how to make some changes and we were the best in the County before Plain City gave the increase. But after the last contracts we are down again, and we have to do something to stay competitive. We do not have longevity pay, shift differential, or what about the Officers that don't take the insurance from the Village. We do not give stipends or anything. Council member Samantha Cahill stated that they shouldn't because they are saving money obviously by taking another insurance. HR Manager Jackie Tiberio explained that we don't want to encourage employees not to take our insurance because the more people we have on our policy the better our rates can be. The Mayor stated that there is also the conversation that some feel the percentages of what our different levels of rank should be making vs others. Lieutenant Jacobs stated that a Sergeant makes 7% more than an Officer. A Lieutenant makes 10% more than a Sergeant in our Village. Industry standard is 10-15% difference between rank. London is at 15%, The Sheriffs office is at 19%. Finance Director Rebecca Shipley-Arnott asked if she could mention one more thing before we moved on to the Finance meeting and that is about the 27th pay that will happen this year. This has been discussed in the past and she would like to know how they would like the pay to be distributed. If you look at the calendar our last pay day falls on Tuesday the 31st. In the employee handbook the official day of pay is on Wednesday. We pay on Tuesdays because when ACH first started out some employee's banks it would take extra days for it to go in. If you banked with Huntington that was not the case, it was in very quickly. Payday is January 1st if you look at the Calendar so is that a 2024 pay or 2025. After much discussion it was decided that the work was done in 2024 so the pay would be in 2024 on the 31st.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Employee Benefits Committee Meeting

Held on October 7th, 2024

Motion to Adjourn by Chairperson Jimmy Little at 6:14 pm. Motion moved by Jimmy Little and seconded by Samantha Cahill.

All in favor.

	<u>10.22.24</u>		<u>10/21/24</u>
Tisha Edwards Clerk of Council	Date	Jimmy Little Chairperson	Date