

Held

June 21, 2016

20

The Council of the City of Milford met in Council Chambers at 745 Center Street at 7:00 p.m. on June 21, 2016. Vice Mayor Brewer called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence.

Roll Call: Present: Vice Mayor Brewer, Mr. Brady, Mr. Bonnell and Ms. Russell, Mr. Haskins. Mayor Howland and Ms. Evans were excused with a motion from Mr. Haskins and seconded by Mr. Bonnell, all voted to excuse the absences.

Standing Committee Reports

Safety Services Committee Meeting Minutes
June 16, 2016

Called to Order: 8:00 a.m. by Laurie Howland
Present: Amy Brewer and Ted Haskins
Staff: Michael Doss, City Manager; Police Chief Jamey Mills; Administrative Sergeant Sean Mahan; Dan Burke, Finance/Tax Director; Fire Chief Mark Baird; Mark Flanigan Sr, MCFD; Nick Thiele, MCFD
Guest: Dave Spinney, MCFD Board Member

Milford Community Fire Department Fire Levy

Chief Mark Baird presented findings regarding the Clermont County Auditors millage for renewal and additional millage for the Fire and EMS levies. He presented information regarding statistics related to population needs, demands and their impact on Fire and EMS services. Chief Baird along with Dave Spinney presented revenue and expenditure projections using the current millage as well as several various millage scenarios related to additional tax revenue. There were indications that the additional millage would provide for additional fire/EMS personnel to assist with the increasing call demand on safety services.

Laurie Howland inquired about the existing fund balance and if it could be used for emergency expenses to cover the increase in call demand for safety services.

Dave Spinney discusses the rolling capital expenditures of the department and various projected expenditures associated with fire/EMS safety operations.

Laurie Howland asked about additional available revenue realized from the fire station pay-off and TIF funds from the Milford Parkway. She followed up with asking about adding an additional ambulance to meet the increased call demand. Chief Baird stated that current staffing level could not accommodate another ambulance.

Amy Brewer inquired about fire/EMS staffing rotation in relation to adding additional personnel. Chief Baird stated that a rotation would stress the additional internal services provided by current fire/EMS personnel.

The Committee agreed to make a motion to draft an ordinance declaring a necessity for an election for a renewal of 12.5 mill tax levy with an additional 1.5 mill tax levy for Fire and EMS protection for three years for the City of Milford, Ohio

Selection Process of Adding Two Additional Police Officers

Chief Mills asked the Committee to approve testing for maintaining a list for additional police officer personnel. Chief Mills stated that the State of Ohio is placing strenuous guidelines and requirements for maintaining part-time officers and he would like to discuss adding two additional officers during budget discussions for the upcoming 2017 budget. He stated that the department would prefer to hire two additional officers in

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2017 and one additional officer in 2018. He also indicated that calls for service have increase by twenty-nine percent over the last several years.

The Committee approved and authorized Chief Mills and the Milford Police Department to issue a test for staffing police officers.

Other Business to Come Before the Committee

Amy Brewer inquired regarding the status of the stop sign at Price and Miami. She indicated that she would like to see a continuous right turn. Chief Mills and other members of the Committee concurred with her comments regarding the issue. Chief Mills recommended speaking with Tim Casto of Kleingers and get his thoughts and opinions regarding the issue.

Laurie Howland brought a couple of crosswalk issues before the Committee related to several bike trail crossings as well as various other crosswalk issues throughout the city. Michael Doss indicated that he would contact Kleingers and relay the crosswalk issues discussed before the Committee for consideration in the pedestrian traffic study.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Doss, City Manager

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The committee agreed to make a motion to draft the Ordinance 16-1222 .June 21, 2016; seconded by Mr. Brady. All voted yes.

New Business:

Chief Baird offered to answer any questions relating to the necessity of placing a fire levy on the November ballot.

Mr. Bonnell had some overall questions prior to Chief Mark Baird’s presentation. Is the primary need for the levy is the 1.5 additional millage for additional staffing?

Chief M. Baird:

It is to sustain the additional staffing that the Fire Department Board of Trustees authorized beginning in January of this year. Prior to January of this year the minimum staffing at the Fire station was 6 members. Those six members were assigned to two people on the primary ambulance making EMS runs and four people on the primary fire engine who is responsibility varied between answering fire calls answering protocol EMS runs and all other fire protection and supporting primary ambulance on its day to day mission. In the event that we have a back-up ambulance run, we previously and still do, take 1 to 2 people off the engine to provide coverage to the back-up ambulance. So the end result prior to the beginning of 2016 was if we had two people on one ambulance two people on the other ambulance that only left two people to go back on the engine to provide fire protection to basically the entire city. We have a few volunteers, we have some officers, Mark Flanigan, assistant Chief Nick Theil, Jim Nichol, who all live in the city, a few other part time and full time employees who live in the city who have the option of answering calls when they are off duty but are under no obligation to do that.

It is against any reasonable safety standard, national standard from the National Fire Protection association to try to do anything related to fire protection with minimum staffing. Our goal has always been as a department, mirroring the national standard which is a minimum of 4 people on the fire engine at all times. The basic premise is that in the event that they are called to a situation where there is an immediate danger to health and life situation, example: a structure fire, that for the two people that are going inside to put out the fire, there remains two people on the outside available to potentially assist and rescue the two who are working inside. So in the end, the goal is to meet National Standards for staffing on the fire engine at all times and not just those times when convenient. And that is the problem. When we take the second ambulance, out on a call, that immediately decreases the fire protection in the city, it causes a dangerous situation for the firefighters to be in that situation and it is a danger to the city as well since we are not adequate numbers of people sending to take care of the problem. We use mutual aide and other things to assist and build up the manpower we need on the high acuity runs but number one it takes time for the people coming from other communities, if they are available. And we find that in our situation we are no different than other communities. We are all stretched to the limit manpower and to do more with less and we simply cannot rely on mutual aide as our savior in this case. We have to be as self-reliant as we can be. And doing it safely requires that we have a minimum of four people on the engine at all times.

At the beginning of 2016 we were authorized to increase our daily staffing to 7 people so the end result is take 2 of those are on the primary ambulance and if we have a back-up ambulance run that would take 2 people off of the engine leaving 3 on the engine which is certainly better than 2, but which again does not meet any reasonable standard applied for safety to those personnel. This is why we have been talking to the Council since 2012 about the need. By increasing to 7, this was our first effort to getting at a better number. And what we are counting on for when the engine is staffed with 3 people and both of the ambulances are out on runs, those people that I named a few minutes ago, hopefully will be around to come down to the station, basically as a volunteer and jump on the truck and help put the 4th person on the fire engine. We have that luxury now. We will not always have that luxury. Mark will retire at some point in time and the two officers will be around but nothing requires our employees to live in the city. We cannot require them to. As things move on, our volunteers will meet the same fate as other communities. We love our volunteers. It is very difficult to be a volunteer firefighter or volunteer EMT. In Southwest Ohio and pretty much in the industry as a whole we are progressing toward completely paid compensated staff.

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Mr. Bonnell:

How are operations going on day to day? And how is the department able to sustain the cost of the added staff this year on the millage that we have now, but wouldn't be able to moving forward?

Chief Baird:

The department is currently dipping into the cash reserve. The Fire department, just like the city, maintains a cash reserve. It is currently 1.3 million dollars which is about 6 months of operating money that we have in reserve. Example: If we there were to be a disaster, a tornado or a flood, and we had to pay out for overtime to answer the emergency, our employees of course are going to want to be paid. That gives us a cash reserve to take care of employees' payroll. If for some unfortunate reason we are not able to pass our renewal levy, it allows us to operate approximately another 6 months until we have made other arrangements. This basically would give us a cushion. We started with a cash reserve of about 1.5 million dollars when I started in 2013. Since then we paid cash for the newer ambulance which was about a \$250,000.00 purchase. We paid cash for the refurbishment of the 2002 fire engine to make it last another ten years or so. WE have taken about 350,000 dollars out of our cash reserve in capital purchases. And that was a conscious decision by the board to do that to not finance things and go into debt. And now we are about at 1.3 million in our cash reserve which is approximately 6 months operating budget.

Bonnell: So we kept additional staff members. IS there an estimated figure that you think you department would have to utilize?

Chief Baird:

Mr. Spinney/Treasurer of the Fire Board figures which are in the package that was given to Council shows Deficit spending for 2016 and 2017 of approximately between 161,000 and 171,000 dollars. That is basically the amount it cost to add two full time employees, transitioning an existing full time employee into a new role, and additional part time hours that we needed for paid time off, to establish that seventh person. The answer to the question is: The Fire Board made a decision at the end of 2015 to dip into the Fire Departments reserve knowing that it was going to deficit spending in order to establish and add the seventh person on a daily basis beginning January 1st of this year. They knew when that decision was made that we were going to have to try to answer that at the time that we came for this renewal levy which is due to begin to go on the ballot in November of this year. The board made a conscious decision to take the first step and spend in the reserve to do it knowing that when we reach this point and time this discussion, we were going to have to make a decision whether we were going to have to sustain seven people on duty as a minimum or what the pleasure of the Council would be at that point in time.

Bonnell:

How long does the Fire Department anticipate running on seven before they move to eight personnel?

Chief Baird:

In the handout to Council, we actually gave alternate scenarios. We showed the current, remaining at seven personnel and the estimated cost through the life of the upcoming tax levy. But we also presented an alternate scenario with millage of 2 additional mills, 3 additional mills and both of those cases proposed the scenario of adding the eighth person. The only way to do that is to go to a 3 mil additional tax levy, so renew twelve and a half and add 3. The pleasure of the Fire Board is that it is an awfully large chunk of money. And while we still have the people available to us, the dedicated volunteers, the off duty people who live close by, most of the time we can get that fourth person from that pool of people to respond back to the station to help cover the open position on the engine, we felt like for the next five years we would just try to limp our way through again at seven people.

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I would also like to point out the fact that over the past 5 years our total runs have increased by 20%. Including a 24% increase in our EMS runs and a 12% increase in our fire details. The fire details are often times first responding in the engine for the next ambulance coming into the community mutual aide. Also a few of those additional details are related to the fact that we began observing a new medical protocol which quite frankly started sending more people to the more acute medical emergency so that we could take better care of the patient vs. the ambulance arriving on the scene, realizing they have a really critical patient and now they are waiting 10 minutes for the rest of the personnel to arrive from the station to assist. On the higher acuity runs, unconscious people, diabetics, seizure runs, gunshot wounds, anything that you could imagine, or whose life was in immediate danger, we started sending the fire engine also at the time it was dispatched. And this reflects a little bit of the 12% increase in fire runs/details.

Bonnell:

Is that an increase over the span of the last five years and not an annual increase?

Chief Baird:

Increase is over a 5 year span. Over the last two years, EMS runs have gone up roughly 20%.

Our population in the city is aging. And this is not unique to Milford. The family structure is not what it used to be. We are getting the calls to go help people up off of the floor which in the past, the family unit would take care of. And that is not the state of the culture anymore in the United States. No other way to say it. That is just the way it is. Our runs are increasing on assisting families, where traditionally families would assist before calling, which reflects a chunk of the increase as well.

Bonnell:

Are you thinking that most likely now, that the Board of the Fire Department would think that this millage would be sufficient to sustain operations for the next 3 to five years without another increase?

Chief Baird:

The way the levy cycle works is the previous election was in 2013, which was to renew the existing 12 and a half mills. Elected in 2013, collected in 2014 and basically distributed in 2015, 2016, and 2017. This levy cycle which is hopefully elected in November 2016, then collected in 2017 and the revenues available in 2018, 2019 and 2020. In 2019, we will be back here having the same conversation again about renewing the levy.

Bonnell:

Not to be taken the wrong way and does support the Fire department and what they do, but does have one reservation when looking from 2013 to now, we have had about 40% tax increase. 10.5 to now going to 14. The biggest concern is if we do this and in a couple of years we are going to come back and re do this and come to the 8th staff member and then we are looking at a 16% increase over 7 years.

Chief Baird:

In 2010 there would have been an election where a replacement fire levy, one large 10.5 mill replacement fire levy, was put on the ballot, and was elected. That 10.5 mill tax levy was intended to roll back and discard the previously separate Fire levy and EMS levy, which not at the same level, the Fire department level caused a great deal of angst. Understood that they had to when doing payroll, they had to look back on the schedule to see who ran on the fire truck on one day and on the next shift if they ran on the ambulance because the money would be accounted for separately and would be paid from two different funds at the fire department level. To clean that up they ran one large replacement levy of 10.5 mills. But when they ran that levy, the Fire levy took about a 100,000 revenue decrease to do that. The Fire Department revenue went down 100,000. It was a conscious decision. The Fire Board felt that they were comfortable making the recommendation to the city that they do because the cash reserve was adequate to meet the needs of the department. Prior to that replacement levy, the understanding is that there had not been a tax increase for Fire and EMS protection in the city for twenty years. Twenty years prior to 2010 since an increase of any kind for the Fire and EMS protection.

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The argument can be made that 100,000 dollars a year less compounded over a number of years plus it had been a number of years prior to that they were behind. Does not want to increase taxes and if we could live within our means to do this and keep this 7th person on duty we would. The argument could also be made that about every 3 to 5 years you should have small increases to the voters so that you are not putting yourself behind. Concerned as well, but as a department, we provide premier service to the city and not just making Fire and EMS runs that the value added to the residents, and the trust in the department is such that when we make a recommendation to you, the elected officials, in our professional opinion, we really need to start looking at increasing our staffing and the only way to sustain the additional staffing is to ask the voters to elect a little bit extra to do it. The Fire department is like any other business. They need to keep money in reserve in case of emergencies.

E.Brady
Is there a National Standard of money to keep in reserve?

Chief Baird:
The department follows General business practices for reserve money which is approximately 30% of cash compared to budget. The department has about 2.2, 3 million as expenses. Fire Board likes to keep at least 6 months in reserve for emergencies.

E. Brady
At least 3 other communities are proposing Fire/EMS levy at this time: Anderson, Columbia Township and Fairfield. There are others as well. This is not atypical just for Milford. Other communities are looking at levy renewal increases as well.

Chief Baird
Reminder: One of the advantages of the city contracting with a private entity to do this work is that we do not have a statutory Pension requirement. We are shielded from the Labor Union. The labor union would start looking at the comparables around our city.

J. Bonnell:

He would like to feel comfortable justifying the 40% tax increase over the last 4 years; he can then give a comfortable, confident answer.

Chief Baird:
It is simply a matter of safety. Even though the bulk of the details are emergency medical runs, when the two ambulances are gone, we continue to have a statutory responsibility to provide fire protection to the community. And that has to be provided with a safe number of people doing it. National Standard is 4 is the safe minimum on the first responding fire apparatus. We use mutual aid to augment the numbers and bring people in but you are assuming that mutual aid is coming from the closest neighbor when in fact, especially in the case of Miami Township being as busy as it is already, it may not be the closest neighbor coming to assist. It is a tight rope to walk and it can be questioned to death but in the end it is safest for the community, safest for the employees to follow the National Standard recommendations. What we are asking you to approve, is to let the voters make the decision as to what level of protection that they want.

A. Brewer:
Any other questions?

A. Brewer:
To Justin's point – she believed the discussion was to be 2 and 3 mills. Clarifying that it is for 1.5 and planning on coming back in 3 years to the Council.

Chief Baird: The staffing issue will have to be addressed as well. The hope is that in 3 years the community's evaluation value has increased because of construction and other things going on in the city. Maybe a renewal of what is elected in this election will be adequate. But that is several years down the road.

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A. Brewer:
Ask if Dan Burke had any additions. No

A. Brewer
Addressed Michael Doss at this time: No

M. Minniear:
Explanation of process:
This is actually a 3 step process:

Tonight we are here for the 1st step in the process.
The 1st step is for the Ordinance for the Necessity for an election based on the millage that is being requested.
Once passed it goes to the Auditor's office.
Certified copy goes to Chuck Tilbury/Batavia once passed
Next step is for Chuck Tilbury to certify the amount of revenue that is going to be generated By the 12.5 and a 1.5. That will then come back to the city
2nd step:
Ordinance to proceed to the election

Tonight mtg. determines the necessity for this millage and then the next step would be an Ordinance which we will anticipate and we will read at the next Council mtg. That is the Ordinance to proceed to the next election. Then that will be personally delivered to the Board of Elections. And then Mike will work with the Board of Elections to develop the language for the ballot. It will then go to the voters in November and then be voted upon.

Basically Council is voting on the necessity for this and we would like the voters to decide if it is going to be passed. The voters have the ultimate decision in November whether it is going to pass.

To pass the Ordinance tonight will require 5 votes and it needs to be unanimous.
If it gets 4 votes tonight, then it is passed, but we have to come back either the next Council mtg. or set another special mtg. to come back and vote on the ordinance again assuming we have 4 votes.
If we do not have 4 votes, then it fails.
The reason for the 5 votes is that we need a super majority to pass the Ordinance the same evening that it is read.
The same process is going to be followed for the Proceed to election.

E.Brady:
Question – We will vote on it tonight and have the opportunity to vote on it again one more time?

M. Minniear:
After the revenue figures come back from the Auditor, we will actually see how much money will be generated and then we have a second chance to vote.

Example: If the Ordinance passes tonight, and council decided it was not such a good idea, it could be voted down next time.

A. Brewer:
Any questions before we proceed to last step?
A. Brewer – had question: if after the revenue figures come back and council would like to change the proposed information, can we change the proposal?

M. Minniear:
We would have to do another necessity ordinance.

D. Burke: The revenue figures presented are preliminary and not final that was given to Council tonight. The numbers will be relatively close.

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Mike Minniear: Reading of the Ordinance:

16-1222 An Ordinance declaring a necessity for an election for a renewal of 12.5 mill tax levy with an additional 1.5 mill tax levy for Fire and EMS protection for three years for the City of Milford, Ohio.

A. Brewer:
Motion to adopt or suspend the rules?

M. Minniear: suspending the rules

A. Brewer:
Motion to Suspend the rules and read by title only
SECOND: E. Brady

Vote: All voted: Yes

A. Brewer
Motion to Adopt the Ordinance

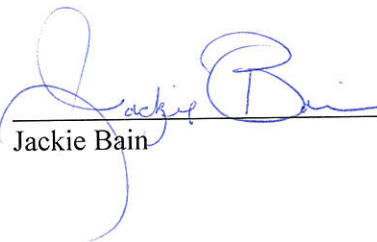
Second: E. Brady

Vote: All voted: Yes

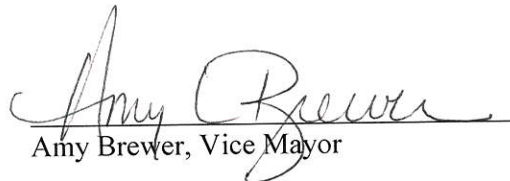
Old Business: There was no old business to be discussed.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by Miss Brewer, all voted yes.

There being no further business to come before the City Council; Vice Mayor Brewer adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.



Jackie Bain



Amy Brewer, Vice Mayor

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