

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
JOINT UTILITIES & SEWERS COMMITTEE AND STREETS &
SIDEWALKS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
DECEMBER 2, 2020 4:30 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

Present: Chairman James Trakas – Utilities
Councilperson Kenn Synek - Utilities
Councilperson Dale Veverka – Utilities (arrived at 4:40 p.m.)

Present: Chairman Dale Veverka – Streets
Vice Mayor Dave Grendel – Streets
Councilperson Tom Narduzzi – Streets (arrived at 4:51 p.m.)

Also Present: Councilperson Kathleen Kapusta
Councilperson Chris Walchanowicz
Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
Finance Director Vern Blaze
City Engineer Don Ramm
Economic Development Director Jessica Hyser
Service Director Leon Karas

Chairman Trakas called the Utilities & Sewers Committee virtual meeting of December 2, 2020 to order at 4:36 p.m.

Chairman Trakas said we will get this joint committee going as soon as we have that opportunity to do so.

We wanted to talk about a number of different proposals that Mayor Kurtz has been discussing over the course of the past several weeks through the budget process. This would be a meeting that is free flowing, so everybody just raise your hand if you have a question. I will turn it over to the Mayor and City Engineer and Service Department for much for it and just let me know if you have any questions.

We will start out with Item Number 1 on the agenda which is the proposed staff hiring at the City Engineering Department, and either Mayor or Don or whoever would like to handle that give her a roll.

Councilperson Kapusta said excuse me Chairman Trakas, it appears that Chairman Veverka of the Streets Committee is now in attendance.

Chairman Trakas said then why doesn't the Streets & Sidewalks Committee get called to order Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Veverka said we are calling the combined Utilities and Streets & Sidewalks Committee meeting of December 2, 2020 to order.

Chairman Trakas said so we are a joint committee operating, and Don why don't you kick us off.

City Engineer Ramm said hello everyone. Mr. Chairman we talked a little bit earlier internally about the order of the agenda and commitment that Jessica Hyser has coming up shortly on 5:00 p.m. We were hoping that we could take Item 2 first.

Chairman Trakas said without objection, no problem.

Economic Development Director Hyser said we just wanted to talk a little bit more in depth about the GIS Coordinator position. As you all know, that was something that was discussed a little bit more in detail at the Finance Committee meeting when you guys were reviewing my budget. We believe that the GIS position is something that's vital, but we took it out of the Economic Development Department and are proposing to relocate that position in the Engineering Department.

Just to give everyone a little bit of framework around GIS and what that allows us to do. So, GIS is the Geographical Information System, and really it's a depository of geospatial information; and really the end product is being able to take that information, put it out into a map format. So, information that Don would capture, sewer line information, fire hydrant information, utility pole locations for capacities, as well as information about response times to various businesses. That information can be displayed in a map form. You are asking why is this information in this format important; and really it kind of goes back to some ideas that we are trying to lay out for 2021, and that's related to expanding the enterprise system that we implemented in the Building Department. I believe it was in 2018, and someone could correct me if I'm wrong; but City Council approved the purchase of Tyler Enterprises. They are a provider of municipal and public sector software for the management of the permitting process for the Building Department. The acquisition of that was obviously to handle the City's permits related to building and other permits; but the capabilities are much more beyond that. It relies on the back end on GIS information.

We are working to kind of take that and expand that to an enterprise system. We want to talk about that in more detail at a later date; but having somebody manage the back end data of the system is crucial. As the Building Department knew as they were building out this system that they just recently launched earlier in November, it really relies on the GIS system; and they had to bring in consultants to get the baseline data up to snuff so that it could be used. We are looking at this as a global system to manage data and assets throughout the City and maintain records of work that has been done, of assets that are in the ground and be able to really communicate, not only interdepartmentally, but with residents about what is going in our physical space.

City Engineer Ramm said to dovetail real quick Jess on that element. For certain we will make strong use of this platform with our utility assets. We are going to talk a lot here later about the proposed (inaudible) and the emphasis and priority on managing and maintaining our sewer

systems. So, this GIS platform will be I think critical and key for us to be more efficient and to really prioritize that effort and get very sophisticated in doing that. That's just one aspect of it relative to our infrastructure. So, I will speak a little bit more to that as we go forward here.

Mayor Kurtz said if you look at it from an enterprise standpoint, bringing Tyler on board several years ago, it's another finger off the hand in terms of our global strategy in terms of IT, information, and utilizing this similar platform to be able to link this all together. Linking is important, it's like organization going forward, and a GIS is a vital component to that. So, that's why we shifted it to Engineering; but really it's global in nature.

Chairman Trakas said if I can, it's probably a question more for Don. So, what are we doing now or what have we been doing? How many times a day or a week are we doing it, and how is that inadequate to our long term goals?

City Engineer Ramm said well a number of years ago we took it upon ourselves, we hired a consultant, CT Consultants, and they went out and did a field exercise where they gathered all the information on locations of manholes, catch basins, hydrants, all of those physical features of our infrastructure and basically put together, in essence layers of a GIS system. Ultimately, it has kind of been sitting on a shelf so to speak because we have been limited in our ability to access that information or utilize it to the full potential. It's really something that has been our goal for a while now, but we have been unable to get there. Everyone has had occasion to use the County GIS for auditor information, and that is sort of the benefits and the beauty of this system is having information at your fingertips in real time. So, to answer your questions Chairman Trakas, right now it's rather limited. We have certain people, we have Joe Potoma and Coral Troxell, they have certificates in GIS so they have skill sets, and they do use them in a nice way with the available information from the County and even some limited from our own system. We are ready to take it up a notch, and hence the proposal for a person who is going to be able to own the system, develop it, build it. It's a high level program, and as the Mayor and Jess mentioned it's enterprise in nature.

Mayor Kurtz said Don, would you say that all the data that we collect from all the different projects we do would be also incorporated into this as another layer of information?

City Engineer Ramm said yes, very much so from a management, it would be a very good management tool for us.

Mayor Kurtz said so when people have a problem, any property issues, and all of you know that we see a lot of questions due to property lines, due to where's my catch basin, where's my clean out. With this GIS component, which is actually being managed on a daily basis, we have a real time situation to be able to utilize that, whether it's someone coming to Planning Commission or someone needing information relative to their particular property or the City with its vast resources needed to coordinate that in order to expedite some of the projects as we will talk later with sanitary and storm sewers.

Economic Development Director Hyser said it also eliminates the fact that a lot of people around here retain the knowledge, and it's historical and it remains with that person. So, it gives it a

physical environment where it can live. So, if that employee happens to be hit by a bus, that information isn't lost.

Chairman Veverka asked Don why is the CT information that was collected a couple of years ago? Why is that so inaccessible?

City Engineer Ramm said well it's not that it's inaccessible, it's just the manpower and resources and our ability to get to it based on all the other demands on our time. We still hold records of all of sewers, and we do things somewhat the old fashioned way when we have to pull records. I feel like it's a product that we have paid for. It's valuable, and we just haven't been able to extract the value to date.

Chairman Veverka asked is that information digitally stored?

City Engineer Ramm said yes, correct.

Chairman Veverka said so to access it now, how would you go about accessing it now?

City Engineer Ramm said it's accessible on the mainframe; I don't do it, but Joe and Coral would have access to it. I don't think it's a difficult issue to get to it, just in terms of our ability to make use of it.

Chairman Veverka said okay, so in other words, when I contacted Joe he was able to pull that information on the house on Highland for what information that we did have stored, he was able to pull that up.

City Engineer Ramm said correct, I think we could get to it.

Mayor Kurtz said we will continually add fresh information. So, any jobs that we do, locations that we identify as a project, this will be a constant building process, it's my understanding.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked this is more than just sewers then, it includes other utilities, road work and things of that nature?

City Engineer Ramm said yes Vice Mayor Grendel, I think we can utilize it. In fact, Service Department, as you know, they clean catch basins out. It could really track all that data, the day-to-day work such that on any given day if you ask them what catch basins were clean in any given day or month of any given year, that stuff is already uploaded and input into the database then. It's available. That's just one example.

Chairman Veverka said so Don when a project is being completed, for example, when they are looking for a clean out, and they know where it is, is that then loaded into what we currently have?

City Engineer Ramm said we have the GPS devices that can locate things like that. It's just a matter of having somebody locate that in the field and then upload it. Once it's uploaded and put in the right layer, I think it's there with the coordinates into the system. So it can be accessed.

Mayor Kurtz said there are several communities that have, Hudson, Dublin, Columbus, they built complete departments around their GIS.

Economic Development Director Hyser said absolutely. If you go to Hudson's website, they have a really robust GIS Department. The information that they put out in their mapping system is phenomenal. It really kind of rivals what Dublin has been able to do. Dublin has their GIS information, and since it's so valuable, they have created, it used to be in their Engineering Department, and it moved under IT and now it's its own standalone department because of what information they are able to provide. You go on to Hudson's website, I have it up actually on my screen; the information that they provide just to the public is phenomenal in terms of people being able to locate their utilities, seeing where their infrastructure broadband is located. They were able to pull together a map of businesses along with their hours specifically related to Covid. They were able to map their cemetery. So, if you want to see where someone is buried in the City of Hudson or what lots are available, that has all been geocoded.

Again, they have been able to map their leaf pickup system. So, this is what some of the sophisticated cities are doing in terms of providing more transparent information to the public as well as managing information on an internal side.

Chairman Veverka asked Don what's involved in the protection of this particular system? In other words, if people can readily access it, is there a potential risk to security? How is that handled?

City Engineer Ramm said my understanding is as the owner of the information, we are able assign access and limitations and control what's able to just be seen and queried versus who is able to actually edit. There are different approvals and permissions so to speak. So, that's carefully controlled.

Mayor Kurtz said both Chairmans and Council members, this is part of a component of a comprehensive analysis; we are in the process of putting together that we can formulate and pass along for Council's input, review and approval for 2021. This is another finger on that hand I mentioned earlier that we would like to build into this because of the timing of this Sewer Department creation and the need to be more real time in terms of information and the fact that we have information stored that's not being utilized on a regular basis or updated; it just lends itself to doing something that we can have for a long term.

Chairman Trakas said one thing that I was just curious about is this something that could be done on a part-time basis until we see what the need really is? Right now you have people handling it, maybe not as robustly as you want, but it just doesn't seem to me that a full-time job is warranted at this time, maybe in the future it could be. We are doing this without the function, and we are finding the information. Maybe it's not as readily available, but we are talking about developing.

We don't have that much more developable land to go and some of this is available publicly anyway. Is that not correct?

City Engineer Ramm said Chairman Trakas I could just give you an example from our end. We are routinely inundated with requests for information, requests from companies putting together plans for our utility information or just public records requests in general; and it's always an arduous process for us to pull together information from different sources and locations. It's time consuming, it's inefficient, and then just that element alone, having the information at our fingertips could really just make us so much more efficient when dealing with these sort of inquiries that we get very often. It's part of our daily regimen to respond to inquiries such as that.

Chairman Veverka asked Don with the information we already have from CT, what other information would be dovetailed into that?

City Engineer Ramm said well keep in mind, those are layers. I think every department in the City could make use of the information. It's all a matter of how you can build it to your specifics of the need. So, it's unlimited I think in its potential for use.

Mayor Kurtz said it is. This is a raise the bar moment for us really professionally.

Vice Mayor Grendel said Don, for example, we had Mannik & Smith Group, you had hired them to do right-of-way inspections and things of that nature; is that information that can be used by this? How wide of a scope are we talking about that we would be able to provide? I noticed that we spent a lot of money on these different for just general engineering to do tasks, not anything specific; but I know they were hired, well I went back to 2018, and I think we had three different contracts for \$50,000.

City Engineer Ramm asked Vice Mayor are those for right-of-way inspections?

Vice Mayor Grendel said two of them were for right-of-way inspections, the other three were general engineering. I just want to see if we are hiring these, if we could capture the information that they are doing in one spot so that we don't have to use experts down the road, I think it would be well worth it. I compare this person as a librarian that's taking all of our information that we have, and the engineering, the roadways, that Service could use, that the Building Department could use, that being a person who is an expert who can handle those duties and help us not have to have these individual contracts for engineering firms.

Mayor Kurtz said that's exactly Vice Mayor. One of the goals is to be less dependent outside our nucleus.

Vice Mayor Grendel said very good.

Chairman Trakas asked so this would limit outside contracting in what amount do we think eventually?

Mayor Kurtz said Chairman Trakas you are going to see a little later as Don develops his presentation today, a lot of these questions I am sure will be answered during the presentation with personnel, streamlining, less dependency on outside vendors, etc.

Mayor Kurtz said all good questions.

Vice Mayor Grendel said Mayor, as a matter of fact, the information that Vern provided from the Finance, if you look at all the different, we have well over a million dollars; and if we could capture a lot of that information. A lot of it is for general engineering, not any particular project. If we could capture that and keep it in an orderly place because I know that we have at one time Don you had a big room of all kind of records that had to be organized and put together. I think that's what we are looking at here is sort of that.

City Engineer Ramm said it's a big part of it.

Mayor Kurtz said you are going to see in a few minutes how we go back in history and show how Engineering has evolved. Councilperson Synek has a question.

Councilperson Synek said my question goes along the lines of as you think about hiring someone, are you talking about one position or multiple employees in this job? Assuming it's one position, are we looking for kind of a technical doer sort of person, or are we looking for a more seasoned, experienced person who could build this into something bigger and better. What are we aiming for at the start here, again, a technical person or somebody to kind of bring in?

Mayor Kurtz said really both. The latter is probably more appropriate, bring somebody who could build, integrate all these different variables because we have different departments that will be integrated into it; so it's not just germane to one, it's going to envelop into IT as well as all the different branches, whether it be utilities, Service Department, Engineering, Economic Development. It will blossom into that in my opinion, but initially one person we are looking at.

Councilperson Synek said these people would make \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year, that's kind of what we are aiming for.

Mayor Kurtz said unless we can steal or get somebody who is more seasoned that can fast forward us, then we would probably have to go higher.

Councilperson Synek said I have a client that deals with this sort of thing, it's maps, it's data, and find good people who can do it is a challenge. Lots people want this sort of stuff. You need to access it the way you want the data; and there's a lot of good information on the County's website or Zillow. It's not to the level of detail that I am sure the Engineering Department would need. Can you order things? Is it utilities mapping first? You have to start somewhere right? You bring this person in and describe it so they will comfortable.

One of the top three tasks that this person is going to be asked to do would they be primarily reporting to Engineering Department, primarily reporting to Jessica? Is it a shared thing between

Economic Development and Engineering? Help me understand where this person fits in the organization chart.

City Engineer Ramm asked Jess can you speak to that briefly?

Vice Mayor Grendel said I am thinking we should look, does Westlake have somebody like this or Hudson?

Economic Development Director Hyser said Westlake has one. Hudson has one. The City of Green has a person. She is housed inside the Planning Department. It just depends on the city's structure, and we haven't determined exactly where this person lives; we see the function being critical, but there's still work to be done.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I was going to say, we should look at some of these departments that have maybe somebody's who is an assistant or that; you might have a person who is willing to move to become, to start the department here. I hate to say we are poaching somebody, but we have lost two IT people the same way, and instead of inventing the wheel, we should see if there's somebody ready to move up into that position and grow with our City and everything. I don't know if it's ethical or not, but you might find that there's a good person who is looking to relocate or that and we would be able to go with a more seasoned person. We are going to have quite a bit of demands on a single person there.

Economic Development Director Hyser said it's a really specialized field too.

Mayor Kurtz said Councilperson Synek said the same thing. We are on the same page all of us I believe.

Chairman Trakas asked do you have job descriptions for these positions that you have been talking about and can you share them with us because these jobs would have to be created, and Council would have to approve a scale, right?

Mayor Kurtz said sure, that's correct. You will get job descriptions on all, what we are going to talk about in a few minutes.

Chairman Trakas asked anyone else have anything on the GIS position?

Why don't we move on to the next topic then. Jessica, thanks and good luck at your 1700 meeting here.

Economic Development Director Hyser said thank you.

City Engineer Ramm said we will move on to the original item Number 1. I have prepared some information here, and I just want to walk you through. I want to first start off with all the duties and responsibilities, just kind of put things into context in terms of the new hires that we are looking to bring on. This department has our hands in a lot of different work. There's a lot of volume work comes at us at a significant pace that deals with many duties and responsibilities,

and there is a wide range. Nothing that you don't know, it's when you see it altogether there's a lot that we are responsible for. Similarly, we have customers; so we are accountable to a lot of entities; and it's daily that we are accountable and have to be responsive. It's challenging, and I think it's important to understand. A lot of these things we have no control over. So, we have our own projects and our own initiatives that we control; but a lot of times a lot of this stuff is outside customers, and we have no control over how it comes in, when it comes in. We are constantly challenged to prioritize and shift gears; and here recently there's more work than there are hands to dispatch it to, so hence the need for the new hires. It's really how I wanted to frame the discussion.

Mayor Kurtz said and there's one more component on here, and it's called Mother Nature. None of us can control that.

Chairman Trakas said we have heard of her.

City Engineer Ramm said and some of this, the flooding.

Chairman Trakas said I think she made an appearance yesterday Mayor, didn't see?

Mayor Kurtz said yeah, and not until late.

Chairman Trakas said I heard sirens a lot yesterday.

City Engineer Ramm said moving forward here, this is just a quick chart. It has a lot of very detailed items, but the things to focus on are in the columns. Engineering Department, everything checked off here, these duties and responsibilities are things we handle internally in-house largely on a daily basis. We do share and/or utilize exclusively consultants and/or vendors; and we will get into a little bit more detail later on as we talk. Briefly, things like new home construction, we do all the site plan reviews; but we do rely on surveyors for which they do field survey checks, that stuff. That work in that particular instance is 100% reimbursable. Similarly, over here in right-of-way permits, we receive permit applications from utility companies routinely. We are involved exclusively on reviewing those plans, but then we also use inspectors which is also 100% reimbursable by the permittee.

Down here we have surveying. We don't do surveying, that's exclusively consultants. Our stormwater program, we do a lot of it; we also rely on Cuyahoga Soil and Water, Regional Sewer District entities to share those duties. Construction inspection and management, that's another item where a lot of our maintenance contracts, we are able to oversee the management of those, but for inspections, we utilize consultants; and then of course down here, complex detailed engineering design, that should have a check mark right here on consultants exclusively for a lot of our larger million dollar projects. I won't focus too much on this until later.

I thought this would be, I think Councilperson Kapusta at the last meeting, you asked about a historical perspective of the department; and this is just when I started here in 2008, specifically a lot of these folks at Elewski were either there or I had heard that they had worked there in the not too recent past. Their employees, at least on this list, had totaled 14, 13 full-time and 1 part-

time. Granted, they did other work, they were not exclusive to the City of Independence. I don't mean to convey that message, I am just trying to tell you and show you that this was the department before 2008 when I started.

Councilperson Kapusta asked do we have a sense because if I remember correctly, the intent was to do this so not only to be able to have the work done in-house by our own people; but also to moderate the costs perhaps. Do we have a sense what that package there cost us at that point and time? Now granted that was 12 years ago.

Mayor Kurtz said I could give you a perspective, it was about \$100,000 a month.

Councilperson Kapusta said okay.

Mayor Kurtz said so it was over a million dollars at its peak.

Councilperson Kapusta said thank you.

City Engineer Ramm said this is a chart we put together. It kind of shows how we evolved here starting in 2008 and working all the way down through the present. So, in 2008 I started, and Janine had already been in place in the Building Department; so we were just a two person department. Then the following year we transitioned Joe Potoma from Service Department and had three full-time people; and then so on and so forth down through Clark joining us late 2010, and we grew to four. Then over the subsequent years we took on some part-time inspectors, part-time Admin Assistants. We kept growing incrementally. These are just the years in between major changes. Then moving down through, Milt started as a part-time employee in 2016. Coral started in 2018 as a full-time, going from part-time in 2016. So, we have started picking up people; and here's the current scenario. It's a little bit misleading in what I would call to your attention that this past year what with Covid, even though we are showing three part-time people for a total of eight; it's a little misleading. Milt has been gone largely since March, and so we have been down that part-time employee. Then these last two, Jim Riley and Becky, have only just recently started here in October and November; so by and large these three part-time people have really not been around too much, I wouldn't say anywhere near the majority of the year. So, in essence, we have been a five person crew here, which is down one from the prior years.

Chairman Trakas asked Don, could you describe what each individual's specific role is with the organization?

City Engineer Ramm said that's a good point. So, highlighted in green always since the beginning and what this note here is meant to show that Joe because of his skill set and his experience with the Service Department has kind of been, his emphasis since he's been here has been working with and dealing with sewer issues and working with the Service Department men and crew to handle issues with sewers, flooding, things of that nature. It's a significant amount of his time, particularly now with the recent climates and the storms, and it's significant. The takeaway there is that even though we always show him as a full-time body, his work and emphasis largely has been in somewhat of a sewer division role or sewer component role and not so much on the engineering side of things.

Mayor Kurtz said another thing if I may Don, he started out in the Service Department. He educated himself. We supported him in that, and it's part of what we are looking for the future is interns. Getting interns embedded in our culture as a part-time summer internship and then have them evolve to like the private sector does to where eventually they could use their knowledge and experience and keep them in our system rather than have them go out in the private sector in situations.

City Engineer Ramm said correct, and Joe does have a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering; so he does have a four year degree.

Clark Merdes is a professional engineer with 20 years of experience plus. A lot of his duties pertain, and it's very detail oriented work. As you know we hire a lot of consultants, and they put together detailed plans and bid documents. One of his major roles is looking at detailed review of the plans, making sure that the constructability is there to minimize, catch things early on and make edits to the plans and documents before they go out to bid where they can become expensive with change orders. Also construction management, we do have maintenance contracts out there; and we do manage those contracts. So, part of his responsibility is some of that. Even when we do have construction managers; we do hire consultants to also perform as managers, well they manage the day-to-day work, but ultimately all the decisions that need to be made, conflicts that arise, ultimately they drop those in our lap, and we have to respond and evaluate and assess the situation as they present it and make decisions. So, there's always work that we get involved with. It's not something we could just hire somebody and kind of walk away from it.

Chairman Veverka asked Don, is Clark a civil engineer?

City Engineer Ramm said correct.

Then Milt is part-time. He is extremely knowledgeable with his history in the City with utilities and survey work. He had a wealth of experience. He is able to review a lot of our utility permits. We let him look at our house topo site plans initially as a first review. He kind of glances over and catches a lot of things and kicks those to us; so it's kind of a pre-screening. So, he does a nice job with that work; and it helps keep the work moving as opposed to sitting and stacking up on a corner of a desk waiting for one of us to get to it. It's very invaluable, and we definitely have missed him these last 8 or 9 months.

Then the Administrative Assistants, obviously they support us in every way every day with all our different duties and responsibilities. Janine is heavily focused on all of the pay applications and invoices with all of our vendors, contractors, consultants.

Coral lately has taken on a significant role with me, almost like an Executive Assistant to me to help me put together these presentations and briefings. She is extremely knowledgeable and skilled in those areas.

Becky has just transitioned over to us from Building. She had been off for maternity leave, and had a baby and was taking care of her family; and then with the Covid was also at home. We

just brought her back to help us out because as Coral has transitioned away from more of the day-to-day administrative, focusing more on assisting me specifically, it's really opened up a need to fill the void to backfill for Coral. So, that's what Becky's role is as she has come on now on a part-time basis.

Jim Riley has really helped here in the short time he has been here. Again, just another set of hands, eyes and ears to help me keep up with just the demands of work and inquiries and complaints and concerns that come at us via e-mail, phone calls on a daily basis. He's helped with some property owner disputes, helped us with some drainage issues, going out and investigating them and looking at things in the field, assisting property pin searches for residents. You name it, it has really helped, his involvement here thus far in the short period of time.

Of course, me, I try to oversee all of this work; but I am in the trenches in many different aspects of the work which is also kind of speaks to why we need. It hampers my ability then to kind of rise above everything and manage and put together strategies and kind of direct because I am kind of into the weeds on a lot of things just by necessity, by manpower. So, I think by these new hires that we are proposing, it will definitely help spread the load, and help me to be able to get a little bit out of the trenches and help me be just more strategic and better at dotting the i's and crossing t's in every level of managing the operation. Any other questions before I move on?

Councilperson Kapusta said the organizational chart was very helpful Don, thank you.

City Engineer Ramm said you are welcome.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked and Don will we have copies of this too? Maybe Debi can provide them in our weekend packet.

City Engineer Ramm said sure.

Moving on, this kind of brings the snapshot back to the present. This is our current staff and just again bringing back the prior slide to show that even if you said back in the day 12 to 15 years ago that half of the company, 50% to 60% of the company was working for the City or billing the City; 12 years later I think it's a modest staff, and I am very proud of the work that we do, the volume of the work.

Mayor Kurtz said another component Don if I may, the volume of work that's being done too. You have to, another measure is, the millions and millions of dollars that we do today that we didn't do nearly that type of volume ten years ago.

City Engineer Ramm said obviously the absent thing here is the financial aspect of it, and I didn't have too much time to kind of dig into that; but I know the Finance Department has given you some good information here in those regards.

Chairman Trakas said things have changed in nine years.

City Engineer Ramm said so getting to the proposed. This is a draft of a proposed staffing plan, and it really brings back into the things you have seen in the prior Operating Budget discussions; and certainly earlier, just seconds ago about the GIS Coordinator position being housed in the Engineering Department and the new hires here. There will be one Civil Engineer and two potential Technicians. I kind of colored some of these in green, and really all that's meant to say is as we transition into a discussion about the Sewer Division I think between Joe's continued assistance and oversight of that work in addition we make a more focused purposeful effort to just prioritize the sewer management program; I think it's going to really emphasize and require additional time for other people, just not Joe to spend and these new hires to assist in that program.

Then of course that will bring these numbers here again back to 12 total, 9 full-time and 3 part-time positions, bumping up from the prior 8.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I have a question about Joe. If Joe has the potential of moving in and directing this Sewer Department that we are going to build, is he going to work under your department or will he be moving into the Service Department as the Head of Sewer? I don't know if that's for you or if that's for the Mayor.

City Engineer Ramm said it's a great question. I can speak real quick to that. We haven't really, I think Joe he rises as the candidate, and definitely rises to the top because of his experience and his skill set with dealing with residents and his ability to troubleshoot and work great with the Service Department. If we had a person who we would propose for that to kind of oversee the whole shooting match, Joe is definitely up there; but that's certainly a question we have been kicking back and forth. A couple of slides here later, it kind of shows how that Sewer Division, again this is just a draft in speaking with Leon; there are two components of the Sewer Division. You can see it's going to need to be staffed with additional manpower, employees and equipment. You have seen those items in the Service Department's budget; but what we are trying to pull in here in this organization is to show the continuing and even increased oversight. So, if the Service Department provides the labor and equipment to facilitate the program. We still feel like we are going to be heavily involved in the oversight of a lot of that work and assessments of the sewer data that they collect, prioritizing the work as a result of all that maintenance activity. This slide kind of transitions right to what a lot of these duties, and a lot of this stuff we didn't have to make up; we sort of know what we need to do. We have been doing it, but the key takeaway is we have been doing it among many other duties and responsibilities. We try to fit it in.

The difference here going forward with this new division is that it's going to be their primary focus with resources and employees that it won't be many other duties and responsibilities. It will be the primary function and focus. So, if it pertains to cleaning catch basins, cleaning manholes, cleaning sewers, televising; ideally we would like it to transition to actually repairing and replacing. So, a lot of the physical work that we might otherwise have to farm out to our vendors with physical activity between the sewer maintenance contract and creek, utility and infrastructure maintenance contract; right now that's kind of what we do, but we would like to with all these additional resources be able to take on a lot more of those duties and lessen the burden. That's why we have here the potential to reduce these costs of these contracts over time.

The color coding here is just to emphasize that the stuff that is not blue would be Service Department, the physical work of going out in the field and actively managing this activity. Our role in the Engineering Department is to supplement and support and do all the work behind the scenes to help them make good decisions and to help them schedule and prioritize the work. Again, we try to do it now with the limited people; but we are going to get a lot better at it.

Vice Mayor Grendel said Don, you said Joe to transition to your department from Service, he originally was with Service and then his first number of years with the City and then transition to the Technician. Do we have anybody else who can do something like that, they move up from Service and be kind of like Joe's understudy or that because it's good to have somebody who is knowledgeable in both the Service end of it and the Engineering end of it.

City Engineer Ramm said I don't know too many of the guys over there, but Leon can speak to that.

Service Director Karas said we have a lot of employees who have a good working knowledge of the City's infrastructure, the sewers, the storm and sanitary. However, the employees within the Service Department don't have the technical background that Joe Potoma has; but I think as we grow this division, I think we can search out and locate and Joe is still young and hopefully it would be ideal to get him an intern to learn and gain some knowledge as well to help out and build this division. Currently right now we just have employees who have a good working knowledge of the infrastructure, but do not have that technical background that Joe does.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked what's their ages Leon? Do they have any younger fellows there who would want to move up and have the time to study?

Service Director Karas said currently the sewer crew that we have on a normal basis is Curtis McCollum and Chuck Wolfe. I know Curtis is one of our more senior employees, and Chuck is a little bit more senior in age; but he has been with the City a little less time. We do have another employee who is currently housed within the water and sewer which is John Calabro. He's in his 30's. He's young. He has a good working history of working sewers prior to coming to the Service Department. He has a lot of experience in that aspect, but again nobody has a degree or that technical background; but we do have a lot of individuals that have a good working knowledge of what needs to be done and how to take that forward, but not the technical background that Joe Potoma has.

Chairman Veverka said I know that you just don't want to lose anybody unnecessarily; but I hope if any of those Service Department members have skills that match up, I hope they will investigate.

Mayor Kurtz said we are going to do cross-training as much as possible so that we can build a bench. Our goal in 2021 is to start building the bench for some of these specialized disciplines.

Chairman Trakas said with respect to this chart, and I appreciate the information Don. These are 11 new jobs, are these people working in the Service Department and in this division or your department and this division or are these just 11 new jobs that you are creating here?

City Engineer Ramm said this is a little bit of a mistake here. One of these, there are only supposed to be 7 here, but there's 8. One of these is supposed to be deleted; but what I am trying to represent here is that in my department, whether it be, it could 2 of the 3 new positions; or it could be these 2 guys that I have presently in this capacity to help support all this work. Certainly, all the Service Department employees, I do believe they will be new positions.

Chairman Trakas said so these will be new positions, and if they move over from the Service Department, we would replace people in the Service Department?

Mayor Kurtz said we are not adding staff to the extent of, we put draft on here just to give you a flavor of the ultimate goal; but that would be driven by that list of different duties, responsibilities, and you can see it's quite extensive. One of the things that you have to do in a service operation, you need to have some people with specific skills, like drivers have to have CDL's now. So, you have to have certain licenses, and when you get in the sewers and the more sophisticated equipment and training necessary; we are going to have to build a bench, get some people who have some working knowledge of this and the equipment needed for this. Then we will build around that nucleus.

Chairman Trakas said but we could be potentially creating 10 new jobs out of this, it's possible.

Mayor Kurtz said unless there is, no it's going to be a cross over. That's why we put draft, we are just trying to outline the parameters for you. We are not going to hire anybody that we can't put to work in a specific discipline or a specific need on a regular basis. We don't have the time, we don't have the ability, we don't have the people who just sit around. There's too much work to be done.

City Engineer Ramm said Chairman Trakas I just want to gravitate back to this. So, in our proposed staffing plan, and I was just trying to emphasize that of the new positions that we are looking to bring on into the department; I am saying that some of those duties would fall under, and the responsibilities would be of the many other duties and responsibilities of the department, a lot of the potential focus could be in working and overseeing this program.

Chairman Trakas said understood.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I am all for hiring people where we can prevent our City from having to hire these outside vendors. I am an advocate of in house, of doing as much as possible. If you could give me an estimate on what do you think the City would save through a 12 month period from not having to hire, if it's a Geotech or one of the engineering consultants, what would be our City's savings by not having to constantly hire those outside vendors.

Mayor Kurtz said you will see in a little while some of the costs associated with all of this as we get further into the presentation.

City Engineer Ramm said and while we are here on this slide Mayor I would like to gravitate to real quick, as a lot of this work gets performed, and it's going to require the need for the reporting and tracking of all this maintenance work; and that's right here under the GIS platform

and previously stated that Joe Potoma has the certificates and is able and ready and willing; I think he is somewhat disappointed that he hasn't been able to utilize those skills that he went and got certified for. I think he would be well suited to implement this.

For an example, one of our problems has been the management of the data. If you ask me when the last time we televised a sewer on Elmwood Avenue, I would have no idea. It would take me a week to dig through folders from United Survey and discs of the data, the DVD's that they would give us. That's the problem with, the data is not at the fingertips; and going forward we would like to be able to kind of keep good, exact records of this information so that we know exactly what was done, when it was done, when the last time it was done, if there's any deficiencies that need corrected we are tracking those things, populating them to a work order. It would just raise the bar and implement the GIS platform, which is really the housing of the information.

These slides were really just meant to show you that these were nice Elewski maps that I inherited when I started in 2008. What this was meant to show, and one of our goals has always been to kind of work through the City, much like a snow plow out in a five year period get through the entire City, sanitary and storm sewers, get to every sewer in the City to be able to clean it, televise it and assess it and then prioritize any required work that needs to be done. This is by and large been aspirational since I have started. What we have tried to do with United Survey's contracts is because of our limited resources, we have been really just keeping out in front of our big infrastructure jobs that we knew were programmed so if we knew a street was going to be reconstructed; those were easy candidates to send United Survey out to televise and clean everything and make sure that we knew what we were coming into. We kind of fell a little bit behind with just the maintenance, and I think this will be more a target a more attainable with the new division because this really will be what their marching orders are; and I think we will be able to get there. Then it's the voluminous amount of data that's going to result from this effort daily that we will need to manage. The GIS will really be a tool that we use to do that.

Moving forward into this slide, just to transition away from the sewers and kind of get to discussing; this was a creek bid. We put together alternates that largely pertain to backyard drainage projects, neighborhood projects outside of the right-of-ways; and there's a good amount of work. My thought with bringing on a couple of new people in our department would be to try to, as we have already seen, we are trying to get more in the public/private partnerships. The challenge with these is really to engage. We have been limited in our ability to go out and engage with these residents and really make a pointed effort to engage them, meet with them, spearhead the conversations about trying to move forward with these jobs. That's going to be a lot of legwork, and I do believe with the new people coming on board we can really start to focus and prioritize these jobs and try to craft some public/private partnership projects either via the assessment jobs, or I just think we can make some more strides. Right now we take bids, we know prices. We have schematic designs. We know how to solve problems, but we have been limited in our ability to pull the trigger on them because we just can't, we haven't gotten there.

So, I want to bring this to your attention because this list is what we put out in the 2020 bid; but it could be probably one and a half times as long based on some of the recent stuff that we learned or have been requested of us here within the last six months with the rain.

With the new Sewer Division, with their ability to excavate and actually physically perform drainage improvements, we may be able to use the Sewer Division to go in here and do some of these projects and not have to use contractors if the schedules work out and the workload is such that we can do that. So, that's an option too, maybe to offset and minimize costs.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said now you are talking my language.

City Engineer Ramm said some of these aren't overly complicated or complex. You see some of them are a smaller variety, others are larger. So, it depends from job to job, but I think there's definitely.

Mayor Kurtz said we dabbled with the one on Pleasant Valley, but these are all potential, those public/private concepts that we talked about; we solve the problem, but we share in the costs.

Vice Mayor Grendel said going back to that chart, how much savings say hypothetically if we are able to do that work ourselves, from those prices we see, would there be a 20% savings or 40% savings if we have our own people do it? What kind of savings are you looking at from what we bid out to Geotech, Catts and that, that we can look at having our people eventually. I guess that would be what we are trying to accomplish.

Mayor Kurtz said well the goal would be a minimum of 20%, wouldn't it Don?

City Engineer Ramm said in one creative way we have done, there was one resident on Sunset who agreed and was willing and was able to put in some sewer materials. They installed them with their people and their equipment. That was one unique scenario where we just bought pipe. We bought it and delivered it, pipe and catch basins. So, the cost of that job because the contractors mark materials up; they were able to buy direct.

There was also a property owner on Brettin Drive where we had a similar arrangement. In that instance the costs are.

Mayor Kurtz said oh my gosh, the one on Sunset was significant.

City Engineer Ramm said and it was one of these alternates as a matter of fact.

Mayor Kurtz asked which one was it?

Vice Mayor Grendel said H is Sunset, I see one of them.

City Engineer Ramm said I think that's the one. So, if you look at the dollar values, it was, now I think it wasn't the entirety; so let's just say the whole project was 1,000 feet, and this was probably 500 feet. It was the lower end, the most important end of that sewer; so I think we purchased those materials for \$10,000 or \$15,000.

Mayor Kurtz said it was about a \$75,000 exposure for us.

City Engineer Ramm said yes if we were going to try to do that in house or with these vendors.

Chairman Veverka asked on some of these larger projects, would you be comfortable with the City doing some of these projects as far as bonding and other issues?

Mayor Kurtz said you know Dale, I am as comfortable as the people who work for us can convince me that they are capable and motivated to do it. Once they do that, then they own the outcome. I think it's one of the criteria of some of these larger projects. Nothing is off the list. I have to tell you, there's a lot of potential here.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked does this incorporate possibly we talked about a joint venture like we had this year with the private resident and everything; maybe some of these projects could, maybe a few, could be a joint venture too, especially ones that just affect one resident or maybe two residents.

Mayor Kurtz said you know we had one recently, a property line dispute. Quite frankly, Jim Riley went out there and negotiated with both of them, and they both split it. We just checked and made sure it was done right. They paid the contractor to come and do it. We just monitored, and guess what, they still might get along now.

Vice Mayor Grendel said very good.

City Engineer Ramm said a couple of slides here, I will speak to this. This is talking straight on through. So, the goal would be to try over time, to try to reduce our reliance on our maintenance contracts; but not eliminate them. Right now we have for our sewer maintenance, our budget was \$200,000 and so potentially in 2021 we might reduce that, if we were able to get our in house Sewer Division up and running, we propose to cut \$50,000 right out of the gate and then just over time try to reduce our reliance. Of course, it's going to be predicated on what we are able to do and how the year goes, what challenges come at us; but we will gauge that and every year we will learn from the prior year. We will make better decisions.

Mayor Kurtz said going back to that other map, productivity has been the key word. It's not a matter of saving some of this money, but productivity in terms of making sure that our sewers are being managed and cleaned on a timely basis, staying in compliance with Regional Sewer and permits, mandates. There is a level of sophistication in all of this, or professionalism, that is needed because you have to be responsive to other agencies.

Councilperson Narduzzi said I am just going to go back to the Don Elewski days for a minute. When Don Elewski was our Engineer we reacted to situations. We were never in control. We were never on top of things. When something went afoul, Don Elewski stepped in and helped us handle it. I see what Don and the Mayor are trying to do here is to be on top of things; so we don't end up in the situations. So, we were always under the gun with Don Elewski, and you know we were always putting out fires. Not to blame Don, it was just the way things happen, and it would be nice if we weren't in those situations that we were ahead of the game and making sure that there wasn't a potential problem coming down the pike in a year or so, handling

it now rather than spending a lot of money and handling it when it became an emergency or a big situation.

One other thing, I know the Mayor mentioned about \$100,000 a month. I can remember being in John Veres' office, arguing with Don Elewski on the phone over \$250,000 for a month of bills. So, I don't know when you guys want to put that into perspective with the budget that this is going to create; but I believe that it was more than \$100,000 a month if you look at the big picture of things. So, that's just my two cents.

Vice Mayor Grendel said and Tom you are right. There was a lot of uncertainty about those prices and arguments between the Finance office and Don's office on what was being charged and the documentation of that. It was really time consuming and draining on everybody concerned, from the Mayor's office to the Finance office to the Council. It really consumed a lot of our time trying to settle those arguments between the Engineering Department and our Finance Department.

Councilperson Narduzzi said I can remember it was very tense at some Council meetings because we were trying to okay a number that we had no idea what that number was even for.

Vice Mayor Grendel said we had Council people taking sides and Councilpersons pitted against each other; and then you had somebody in Don's office that was insulting us and calling us buffoons. That whole thing was very ugly.

Mayor Kurtz said well all I can tell you, hiring Don Ramm was one of the best decisions I ever made as Mayor.

Vice Mayor Grendel said that is true Mayor. He hasn't called me a buffoon yet, maybe he has privately.

Councilperson Narduzzi said I don't know about that Dave. He might have called me one once or twice.

Councilperson Trakas said I'm not weighing on this.

Mayor Kurtz said Jim, you and I are staying out of this one.

Chairman Trakas said Don, with respect to the screen share that you are showing right now. So, these are the amounts that we have been using with United Survey and C& K; that's an aggregate amount correct that is being spent?

City Engineer Ramm said I think the budget is \$200,000. This year was unique in that we awarded both vendors, but United certainly had some old money in P.O.'s that were already encumbered; so I don't think, I think they each got a \$200,000 contract, but one of them was funded old encumbrances. That's my recollection.

Chairman Trakas said with respect to what we are talking about, and we are talking about creating new positions and plus buying equipment; we are going to be able to bring this in under that amount or above that amount? When does the cost savings kick in because I see where you are coming from, there's less money being spent on outside vendors, but you are also spending a lot more money now on City employees and City equipment.

City Engineer Ramm said correct. I think we were talking internally about the need, ultimately you might say why we should bring these to zero, but the Mayor brought up a good point about Mother Nature and safety nets and not wanting to completely be reliant just on internal and being able to have a safety valve to be able to still perform work on an as-needed basis and for the peaks and valleys of work and circumstances that arise. So, I think it's something we are going to learn over time, but ultimately would still never propose to not have some vendors at our disposal.

Chairman Trakas said understood. I guess maybe in the middle of your presentation maybe there's other screens that I haven't seen yet; but it would appear to me that we would be spending a lot more money than \$150,000 on creating this department. Is that an accurate statement? This isn't really an apples-to-apples comparison. This is what we are spending on a vendor; we aren't including the costs of what this department is going to cost, correct?

Mayor Kurtz said well Jim keep in mind, this is just one component of our costs. We have many of the dollars in terms of other consultants that we pay for some of this work too.

City Engineer Ramm said and Mayor I think to the level of service is one thing to measure. Right now we are very reactionary, we are pulled in a lot of different directions. We are not doing a real good job; this will force us to really prioritize and then make it a priority and not something we react to. So, the level of service and sophistication is going to be extremely ramped up. I think to what it should have been all along when you have assets that are important as these sewer systems are.

Mayor Kurtz said it's going to take several years to ramp this up by the way; but this gives you a comfort level to support these initiatives through GIS and through this consolidation of resources into a division that we can manage more effectively and efficiently and on a more real time basis.

Chairman Veverka said for example on Springview Drive, I remember because I spent some time there; but United Survey was doing pipe lining, heavy duty cleaning and those type of things. Wouldn't there be a pretty substantial outlay of money to provide that equipment also?

City Engineer Ramm said I think Chairman Veverka the key on that; so when we are talking about managing this program. When we come up to the data that shows that we have problems and we need treatments; I think that's another reason why we are always going to need to rely on vendors. I don't anticipate this Sewer Division being able to, or the need to purchase equipment to do lining work or grouting work. I think when it rises to that level of treatment and rehabilitation and work; I think we would certainly then be able to put out a bid specifically to a project. So, I think there's another reason why I think we are always going to need to rely on some outside vendors who specialize in some of this work.

Chairman Veverka said obviously then you have that list of the various vendors, the various providers along the way. Some notation would probably be appropriate as to which one would be ones that would be within the realm of yeah that's something we easily could cover; or gee that's something we would still need to reach out to an outside vendor. Otherwise, just anybody with the idea they think that pretty much you can wipe out all of the outside work or a huge amount of the outside work; I don't have a really good feel for that. I just know that certain heavy duty type jobs are going to require certain equipment that might be used so rarely that we would have to farm it out. So, that's part of my question is as we look at this list of various providers, about how much of that list are ones which could be handled within a Sewer Division and which ones we would still continue to farm out. That goes along with Chris's comments, it makes great sense if there are things that we can accomplish with the equipment that we have or the investment of a reasonable amount of equipment that would be used frequently, but with certain jobs, it wouldn't be fair to say we are going to invest in this expensive piece of equipment when we are only going to use it on a seldom used basis.

City Engineer Ramm said right, and I don't believe we are proposing that. I think the equipment we are talking about is the routine maintenance equipment, the jet trucks, the televising equipment, the stuff we are using for inspection and cleaning of the sewers which these companies do both. These companies do that work, and they also do the pipe rehabilitation trenchless technology work. So, it's really more the function of the company, not the company itself; and these are just two companies. There are other companies that are capable. These happen to be the two that we have had contracts with.

This next slide is a similar slide but with creek maintenance. Right now we have two vendors, Geotech and Catts, and there again they are geared for the physical excavation, point repairs, catch basin repairs and those things could also be offset by this new Sewer Division potentially; and here again, it is showing the depletion of right now I believe that the budget for that creek maintenance is \$400,000. We could potentially reduce that year to year going forward but never depleting altogether because we know with the major storms, we will always be in need of some vendors.

One item Leon talked about was when we react to, we utilize these vendors for repairs and restoration of our water main breaks around town. We do anticipate the potential for this Sewer Division to be able to take a more active role to follow up behind Cleveland Water's work to backfill holes, fix sewers that were damaged, perform the pavement repairs; so there could be some offset with that work with the new Sewer Division.

This kind of gets out of the sewer discussion and gets back to more of the consultants in the Engineering Department, and with the new additions of a Civil Engineer and some Technicians I do believe we could take a more active role with some construction management of our capital projects. It would be with people full-time. We could potentially take some of that which we ultimately farm out to some of these large consultants; we could take more active roles in that and save those dollars. Also, the inspection of our maintenance contracts; traditionally we have QCI, GPD and now ACM is a company we are utilizing for some of this work. I think with the addition of some Technicians with some experience in construction inspection and management,

we could take on some of that to offset the costs that we use for consultants with the hiring of the positions.

Then of course small design projects, we think with skilled experienced Engineers and/or technicians we could potentially save some consultant fees and perform some of that work in-house with those new positions.

One thing that's not on the list here is major capital complex design work. That's one thing that I think in our environment here with municipal engineering, and with our customers and the diversity and the volume of work; those detailed design projects require very focused concerted efforts with minimal disruptions. This environment here is challenged to have that. We have a lot of things coming at us. We have to shift gears, and that's not conducive to a detailed design process. So, I think we are definitely going to still need to rely on those design consultants for that; but I just wanted to share with you what we are thinking about some offsets. I don't have dollar values here obviously, but that's hard to quantify.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked Don how much do we spend on inspections? We spend quite a bit of money on outside companies doing the inspections of these projects. Did you look at that having a possibility of big savings with people who we will be bringing on? That could be one area that we would be able to save quite a bit for the City.

City Engineer Ramm said I think again it depends on the workload and being burdened with some of these new services with some of the things that I mentioned previously. We are spending a lot of time and oversight of some of the Sewer Division work and/or public/private partnerships; it all has to fit. We just have to make it fit, but I think we don't anticipate of that effort from these new personnel in any one specific function. I think there will be opportunities, and with the use of the GIS I think we will all become more efficient. It will help further offset and free up time to be able to then better focus on some of these other things that can save funds.

Councilperson Kapusta said I realize that this is just a preliminary discussion, but I never sat on Council with the development of a brand new department of this magnitude; so maybe my questions are shared by other too; but I would be interested in knowing, you talked about some potential numbers of staff, I would like to see some costs associated with that, full costs not only including salary but benefits and so forth. I would also like to see some, I would imagine if we are going to bring on these people that in the Service Department, correct me if I'm wrong Leon, we would be needing some support staff at some point and time; and I didn't see those accounted for anywhere, maybe I missed that. I would like to see the same kind of information about that. Then the equipment that was frequently talked about; I know nothing about this area so, given the fact that I know sitting on Council that much of the equipment that we need to run this City as well as it is run is not inexpensive. So, I would like at least some baseline data on some of the equipment that would potentially be necessary and what the cost related to that would be.

Service Director Karas said Councilperson Kapusta, during the Operating Budget in the Finance Committee meetings last week we had laid out some numbers for the personnel needed to man this department for this division.

Councilperson Kapusta asked so that was inclusive of the other costs beyond just salaries then Leon? Is that what you are saying?

Service Director Karas said and then in our Five-Year Capital Plan we had the equipment highlighted, and some of the equipment has already been purchased and some of the equipment is already planned for.

Vice Mayor Grendel said so Leon correct me if I'm wrong, but we did anticipate; and that appears in our Operating Budget and also the Five-Year. The fact that it's in there again is still up to Council to individually approve this. So, it's in there, but we still have to approve the proposal sometime next year. So, it's accounted for, but it's not approved yet. We have to be on board for that.

Service Director Karas said yes.

Councilperson Kapusta said thank you.

Chairman Veverka asked Don, is this some kind of a trend going towards going things in-house? I kind of thought a number of years ago North Royalton went the opposite direction and went with consultants.

Mayor Kurtz said that was one of the best decisions they ever made for us because that's how we got, as a result of them going outside to consultants; we got Don and Clark. So, their change, look what they did for us.

Chairman Veverka said that was a plus, but I am curious, is that something that works successfully for them? I mean that definitely would come into play. Obviously, there are a couple of possibilities; you could switch to all contractors. You can have that all in-house or some, currently I guess we are in some kind of a hybrid situation where we utilize contractors and we do certain things in-house. I just am curious about like you said North Royalton, where you migrated to us from; and we are very pleased by the way. Just how successful their program is where they went that direction.

Vice Mayor Grendel said it would be interesting because North Royalton has a lot of flooding issues so I don't know how they are handling it now; but I know over the past 10 years because of their growth and everything else, they have had a lot of issues in neighborhoods there.

Mayor Kurtz said what we are looking at, it's a hybrid. It's always going to be a hybrid for us because the volume of work; I would never want to build this City up to be able to manage 100% of the work because things change, financially, functionally. You have to have that balance in my opinion. You are going to pay a little bit more if you have outside, but that balance and having a little bit of a flavor for the outside but not being so dependent like a lot of communities. Migrating to this is going to work very well for us. We will continue that.

Chairman Trakas asked Don do you want to forge ahead?

City Engineer Ramm said we are at any other matters. I do have a couple of items to bring up; and if we could just keep pushing forward.

Chairman Trakas said and then we will have discussion at the end Don on the proposal based on your feedback. So, go ahead.

City Engineer Ramm said I would like to bring up a matter regarding the ongoing design for the Hillside Road Sidewalks Project. We have had Euthenics working on this project for some time, and we are finalizing the design and trying to get approved soon to move into the appraisals and easement acquisition and trying to be in a position to bid this project out here. We are going to be ready to hit the ground running this spring with physical work, and one item; if you recall, the limits were very, the goal, the objective was to build a sidewalk where it did not exist, and that was generally from the new Hawthorn Trace intersection to South Great Oaks. That was very plainly understood. There was always an existing sidewalk that is there from South Great Oaks towards the freeway overpass; and we really didn't focus too much on that initially. However, as a result of a site meeting that we had with the consultant back in the middle of September, we were actually there to kind of talk about the logic of providing a safe crosswalk now that we are tying in along new sidewalk on the north side of Hillside to tie in a safe crosswalk for the Valley Woods intersection. That had got us thinking about kind of this piece specifically. It was never part of the scope of the work, and we talked about how it's a very unique kind of odd set up in that right up against the edge of the road the concrete abuts at grade so the drainage is poor, the condition of the sidewalks are poor. I had anticipated early on that we would in the overall project here, that we would include some quantity of sidewalk replacement to address these conditions. From the meeting on site, we got to talking about how much sense it would make to just extend, kind of similarly how we are working with the main project adding curb and adding drainage and making it safe to build and kind of continue here.

Mayor Kurtz asked Don do you want legislation to authorize the extended work for Euthenics?

City Engineer Ramm said correct, yes. They gave us some fees of about an initial \$30,000 worth of design work to design and incorporate this work which would include fancy, safe pedestrian LED solar crosswalk signs at the east turnout of Valley Woods, similar to what we installed recently on Stone Road down by the Hemlock Creek Trail. So, these were not in the original scope of work.

Mayor Kurtz asked is there any objection to Don putting it on the agenda for next Tuesday?

Vice Mayor Grendel said it makes sense. It would be foolishness I think on our part, poor planning.

Mayor Kurtz said at least it's a safe crosswalk, and you can see by the condition of that sidewalk, it is much more deteriorated than we originally thought.

Chairman Veverka asked Don would you have one crosswalk or two, considering there are two sidewalks coming out of Valley Woods?

City Engineer Ramm said the logic was that because we are bringing in a new sidewalk through here, and ultimately the goal is to get pedestrians safely to the City complex; that if the predominant, so there is already a safe crosswalk here across Valley Woods that ultimately people coming from Valley Woods would benefit. If they were going to the park, they would want to be coming from this side; so we strategically think it would make most sense to put it on that easterly side. That was the strategy premise.

Chairman Veverka asked what about sight lines there. I know there is a hump over in this area somewhere.

City Engineer Ramm said that's right. There is a sight distance condition. So, that's another reason. Initially, we were thinking about over on this, pushing it further east I think is a benefit for that reason as well.

Chairman Veverka asked you are going to push it more towards the highway?

City Engineer Ramm said correct, to the east.

Chairman Veverka asked you can run a section of it along the south side of Hillside and then jump across where there are better sight lines?

City Engineer Ramm said to kind of reconfigure this turnout and bring this sidewalk slightly around the radius here and cross here to get it on the other side of this. So, right now if you try to cross here near the drive apron.

Vice Mayor Grendel said that would not be good.

City Engineer Ramm said we can bring it further to the east and then cross right here with those traffic signals.

Councilperson Synek asked Don, what's the determining factor for why you put those traffic signals there and not at every intersection, every crosswalk in Independence? Is there something special about this one that requires it to have some signals?

City Engineer Ramm said we would phrase it as a mid-block crosswalk; so driver expectation is that at a stop sign condition, you expect pedestrian crossings. When you are on a mid-block of a road with a speed limit of 25 or 35, you don't anticipate having to stop, coming to stop, but for stop signs and traffic signal lights themselves. Those devices are really for safety and to really warn motorists that there is, they are flashing beacons. They blink when a pedestrian activates the button to cross. Otherwise, they are sitting dark. They are not activated until the button is pushed.

Vice Mayor Grendel said and Don you could almost argue where we are at here on Wood and Chestnut, it's a similar situation. You have a lot of pedestrian crossing to go the park and everything; and you probably could utilize the same safety measure because there's a lot of traffic, a lot of people coming out of Wood onto to Chestnut. I have seen a few near misses and

everything there because people don't go 25 down Chestnut as you know. It's usually 35 or so. There are other areas in town that this could be utilized.

City Engineer Ramm said Vice Mayor Grendel, we do have on some of those other areas, when we put the mid-block crosswalks in, we have had occasion, in fact right outside here on Selig going towards the Fire Department, we have pedestrian signs. So, there is signage that it warns motorists. There are not flashing lights. I think that has to do with traffic and the route, whether it's a highly traveled, higher speed street versus a local traffic road where cars are already going kind of slow and the volume of cars are less which is what you see in subdivisions. In Lafayette particularly, where we put a lot of new crosswalks in because of the sidewalks that we had up there; I do believe we have either installed or they need to be installed. They are part of the scope of the work to put these signs up to warn motorists of these crossings.

Mayor Kurtz said to keep going, we would like to pay these guys the additional money to do this, get this completed; and we would like to put legislation on for next Tuesday.

Vice Mayor Grendel said well I am for it Mayor. I think it makes common sense to do the project properly.

Councilperson Synek asked is this a fair price or is this change order pricing that because we are adding this at the last minute, we are paying a premium?

City Engineer Ramm said there's a little bit of some loss economies of efficiency because of the add on. If you will, they did have to massage and adjust the plans as they were already previously drawn up when the scope was kind of terminating here. It's nothing extremely, the price.

Mayor Kurtz said the bid price, when we take the bids, it's going to be all inclusive of that.

City Engineer Ramm said correct. I appreciate the input.

This is the estimate of this project. It's pushing a million dollars, and that is inclusive of this piece that we are talking about, this additional 385 feet of sidewalk and curb and drainage and crosswalk.

Mayor Kurtz asked Don, I think the other one was \$700,000, correct?

City Engineer Ramm said initially, and then as we developed the plans, it was creeping up; but it was about \$150,000 less than this.

Mayor Kurtz said right.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked where do we stand with the eastern project, Don where are we at there now?

City Engineer Ramm said DiGioia Suburban, we have awarded that contract. We haven't issued the Notice to Proceed; we are waiting through the winter. They have agreed to just sit in abeyance and wait until the spring or late winter to get started on the underground. We didn't want to tear everything up for the holidays and have a road sitting with a lot of disruption over the winter.

Mayor Kurtz said we will start that in the early spring to get the underground in, and then be able to advance the pavement as soon as the weather affords us to. The goal would be to do the same thing here.

City Engineer Ramm said correct.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I had a question regarding the Upper Brookside. I know we had the bidding process and everything else. Do we expect to move on that also or not until next year because I have had residents up there asking what we are doing regarding that project, residents who live on Brookside there.

City Engineer Ramm said I can update Council on that. We have not formally awarded that project. We have the bid period, we had a 60 day award period, and we opened bids I believe on September 11th. So, November 11th the award was set to expire; we did reach out to the lowest bidders just to keep ourselves in the game if we desired to still award the project. They did give us letters agreeing to extend the contracts as opposed to having to rebid it. We have no commitments, we are not obligated in any way; but we still have the ability if necessary, and we are coming up here on December 11th. The extension was for 30 days; so December 11th is coming up here, and I can easily reach out to them again if we are not ready to ask for another extension, I do believe they would be amenable if we need more time. We could just decide to rebid it.

Vice Mayor Grendel said Dale I don't know with you being the Chairman of the committee and everything; but I would like to see that. We made a commitment to those people. I would like to see that move forward. We went through the bidding process once already. Either one of those, I think one company did the job of the other part of Upper Brookside. It was CT Consultants, and I think they are one of the two finalists, aren't they?

City Engineer Ramm said it was Catts Construction.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I'm sorry, I meant Catts. It seems to me, we are set on that. We made a commitment to those residents up there, and a commitment to the whole Brookside. I would like to see next year also do, there's one stretch of Brookside that we haven't repaved and everything. That is west of Brecksville Road. I would like to move forward, but I give Dale whatever he would like to comment on that being the Chairman of the committee.

Chairman Veverka said I would totally agree with that Vice Mayor. I think we are at the point that we need to, if both Catts and the other company are nickels to nickels; we have already ordered the cages, I would be positive about awarding the contract.

Mayor Kurtz said the only outstanding issue if I may was the, I am not sure we ever formed a direct conclusion relative to the Lake Charles entrance.

Chairman Veverka said well, I know that I think that trying to do a boulevard entrance there after all the decisions made in the past, I know that recently it was that area in front of Lake Charles was just repaved. I don't know if it was done by the City or a contractor; but I don't think that it's a worthwhile pursuit. How do you feel about that, the other two committee members?

Vice Mayor Grendel said well Dale I agree with you, we discussed it between ourselves even; and Lake Charles has been there many, many years without that kind of entrance. I think it's almost all built out. I don't really see a need. That part of Brookside is not as heavily traveled as Hillside or that; so I don't see a need. I would rather just concentrate on the project itself, and the drainage and the sidewalks and the pavement going to Sprague Road. I do not favor a new entrance.

Mayor Kurtz said if that's the consensus of Council, then we will put together where we are at on trying to get this thing before you to get approval.

Chairman Veverka said okay. Tom, did you want to comment?

Councilperson Narduzzi said I agree with Dave. That development has been there for a long time, and it's been without that boulevard entrance. I really don't see a need to spend the extra money to do it. Sooner and later, we are going to have to maintain it also; so I think it's working fine now. I don't see a need to spend some extra money to do.

My other concern with the sidewalks on Brookside Road going to Sprague is that they are sidewalks going to nowhere. I mean there are 5 or 6 residents on that east side that are going to have sidewalks. They can't go to Sprague, there are no sidewalks on Sprague unless it's all future development. I think the big thing there was to have curbs and gutters on the east side of Brookside for water control. If that's still on the table to decide if we are going to do sidewalks or just redo the road with curb and gutters; I think that's something we should look at.

Chairman Veverka said well I would say one thing Tom, by putting the sidewalk to Sprague Road, it does provide some connectivity to those houses up Sprague and down Sprague that are not that far away that really have no access to safe walking areas, definitely on Sprague Road. So, if they are able to brave going down Sprague Road a little bit, then they could walk Brookside and walk Lake Charles and have an opportunity to more easily connect.

Mayor Kurtz said the only thing we had a challenge Mr. Chairman, I believe it was the extensive drainage area on the west side just to the south of Lake Charles that would have to be bridged; and so what are your thoughts in terms of just putting sidewalks on the east side with a crossover at Lake Charles?

Chairman Veverka replied yes. With the design, the basic conversation was related to putting them on the east side with a crosswalk in the area of Lake Charles. So, yes.

Mayor Kurtz asked so you agree Council, if Council agrees, then we will pursue finalizing and recommending to you no boulevard entrance, sidewalks on the east side and taking it to Sprague on the east side. Is that what I am hearing?

Chairman Trakas said I would only say that Mayor that the consensus the last time this was discussed was no sidewalks, not on the east side. The property owners didn't see the reason for it. They thought it was intrusive. The terrain issues were rather substantial, and it was going to cost a pretty decent buck for something that nobody in the area seemed to want. That was my recollection of the conversation.

Mayor Kurtz said I have to tell you, we had the same rebuffing comments relative to the Lafayette area, and even there was some discussion on the Brookside that we just finished. Today if you ask people in that area, they are overwhelmingly supportive of what we did. So, I think we have to have them on one side per our ordinance and everything and for safety. So, I thought you said the east side there was a consensus, but whatever Council wants to do, I will do it; but believe me I think the east side is probably the right place to put them.

Vice Mayor Grendel said Mayor, I agree with you. I think the east side and all the way to Sprague. I talked to a couple of residents; I don't think all of them were against having a sidewalk there either, but I think we need to do exactly what you had recommended to have a sidewalk on one side on the east side and have it connect from Sprague to Lake Charles and then cross at Lake Charles over to the other side of the street. I would like to see it done that way.

Mayor Kurtz said if that's the direction, we will work at trying to get that finalized as quickly as we can.

Councilperson Narduzzi said I agree with that, and just as long as we are doing curbs and gutters on that east side also that was a main concern of two or three residents there.

Vice Mayor Grendel said exactly.

Councilperson Narduzzi said as long as we take care of that problem, I am fine with the sidewalks on the east side.

Mayor Kurtz asked we can have the same curb we have on the rest of the road, is that right?

Councilperson Narduzzi said yes.

Mayor Kurtz said at least on the east side.

Councilperson Narduzzi said yes.

Mayor Kurtz said okay. Don, let's talk about that and see how fast we can put something together and get it to Council.

Chairman Veverka asked talking about the standing curb on the east side, what about the other side?

Mayor Kurtz said yes. The standing curb on the east side for sure.

Chairman Veverka asked but on the west side Don, what do you think?

City Engineer Ramm said I kind of like symmetry so I would propose like we had by the highway there. We put the rolled curb because there was a need for some off street parking that residents have been accustomed to; but up in this stretch, I think.

Mayor Kurtz said let's talk about it Don because we are not going to have a sidewalk over on that side.

City Engineer Ramm said right, I think we can.

Chairman Veverka said that would be a safe place for people to move over onto the berm or get a little bit more off the road for whatever purpose, whether it be a garage sale or anything else. I know that it's a fairly traveled County number road.

Mayor Kurtz said you are right Chairman, we have to do the straight curb on the east side for water management, but it might make more sense to just do the softer roll curb on the west side in case people want to park or have something going on.

Chairman Veverka said right.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I think that was done Dale on the other new portion there of Brookside that was just recently completed, so we do have precedence.

Chairman Veverka said yes.

Vice Mayor Grendel said Mayor I would like to see, maybe in the budget for next year, that we do the Brookside from Brecksville Road up to Eastview, maybe a grind and fill or whatever. That would complete that road all the way from Bramley all the way through to Sprague. It will be all new road then.

Mayor Kurtz said well now Mr. Chairman, is that on the list?

Vice Mayor Grendel said I hope. Don, I hope you are listening there.

Mayor Kurtz said well it's on the list, I am not sure if it's highest on the list. Absolutely Dave, we are going to look at that because like you said, then we connect the whole thing together.

Chairman Veverka said and initially when the project was let out, the project was supposed to have curbing, what I will call the Upper Brookside, was supposed to have curbing and asphalt; and we optioned for the concrete in that area. That kind of then made it less attractive to run the

asphalt Lake Charles all the way down to Bramley. Basically have the paving company pave the whole thing with asphalt at the same time. So, when we switched to concrete, that kind of kicked it in, and then Don started talking about a project in Parkland; and that kind of put a little bit of a delay on it.

Mayor Kurtz said I think it's Don's fault for sure.

Vice Mayor Grendel said he needed more people there.

Mayor Kurtz said okay, we will look at that too.

Vice Mayor Grendel said very good, thank you Mayor.

City Engineer Ramm said Mr. Chairman I have one more item if we could real briefly. This pertains to some property conditions at 6030 Brecksville Road. Mayor, did you want to speak to this?

Mayor Kurtz said this is another example of what we are looking at more intensely, some of these abandoned properties, the old Todt farm and taking a more active role in trying to clean these up or put ourselves in a position to force clean up or condemn the property. So, if anybody has driven by there they can see it has been abandoned. This one and then you have the Grunt property on Bramley, and that's going to be the next one; but we are going to use the same technique that they use in Middleburg Heights. We will do our homework, and once we have confirmed that it has been abandoned or we can demonstrate that, we will bring legislation to Council. That will then put us in a position then to force the clean up or condemn the property to buy it.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I agree Mayor. That has been such a terrible eyesore for years.

Mayor Kurtz said so again, you can see if you have driven by the house on the corner of Kingscote, we are making a little bit of progress. We are done. There are three approaches we use now going forward; we talk to the people first. We no longer just send a letter out; we are going to talk to people first and bring to their attention the concern we have. The second one is a letter informing them about our concern, and the third one is going to be a nuisance using the law to enforce. There are several isolated cases that they are just abandoned, and if we don't take this step, and you can see we made a beautiful improvement on Bramley, but what did you do about Grunt. It is terrible what it looks like, and this one here the same way, and then the one further north. So, we are just going to bring to your attention, and then you can either support what we are trying to do or give us a different direction; but we are going to bring them to the surface so we can have the discussion.

Chairman Trakas asked Mayor, who is the property owner here?

Mayor Kurtz said it's an LLC or corporation, I will tell you in a second. I have to get my GIS out to review this.

Chairman Veverka asked you are speaking to the farm?

Mayor Kurtz said yes.

Chairman Veverka said I thought that was the Finley property.

Mayor Kurtz said it is, but it's called 6030 Properties, Inc.

Chairman Trakas asked and there's nobody living at the property currently?

Mayor Kurtz said it's totally abandoned.

Vice Mayor Grendel said who knows what you can find there, you might find some bodies. It's horrible.

Mayor Kurtz said we hope not.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I used to play there as a kid. Dan Todt was a friend of mine growing up and everything; and it's shameful to see what it has turned into.

Mayor Kurtz said it really is.

Chairman Veverka said one question. Realizing that Harold Todt lives in town, might it be worth a conversation to see whether or not that site has any historical value; and the reason I mention that, it might be something on the journey from Cleveland to Akron along Route 21.

Mayor Kurtz said we can reach out to Harold.

Chairman Veverka said I mean he would probably have the best idea of what he knows about the property so we don't decide to push forward and knock something down and then have it turn around and be something, a portion of the historical period of Independence.

Mayor Kurtz said well Dale, you or I should call him and just find out.

Chairman Veverka asked do you want to or do you want me to ask?

Mayor Kurtz said go ahead, you can call him.

Chairman Veverka said okay, I have his number.

Mayor Kurtz said that would be great.

Chairman Trakas said so the vision here Mayor is to what we have done in the past, is to give the property owner a certain amount of time to clean the property up and bring it up to City standard, is that correct?

Mayor Kurtz said that's correct.

Chairman Trakas said and then if that doesn't happen, what are the next steps?

Mayor Kurtz said well look, you can take this, you can take the hotel, you can take the Grunt property on Bramley; for 10 years we have been looking at Grunt's, and the pictures the neighbor just sent me this week, it's worse than it's ever been. That one is beyond, this one is just abandoned; and so we are not evicting or trying to displace anyone who is living in a place. We want to assist them or help them reach our standard or at least find out what the problem is so that we can help them through their problem or their dilemma; but in this case or the Grunt case, no one is living there. They don't maintain the property. So, we just feel it's important that we start putting these places, you can't continue this. You have to have a policy.

Finance Director Blaze said that Grunt property probably has been unoccupied for the better part of a decade or more now.

Vice Mayor Grendel said the same with the Todt property or the Finley property.

Finance Director Blaze said by the way, the tax bill for that 6030 Properties, the tax mailing address says c/o W. Finley. So, that gives you an idea of who 6030 Properties might be.

Mayor Kurtz said we went to their house, there was no response to communication.

Chairman Veverka asked are you talking about the house on Greenwood?

Mayor Kurtz said yes sir. Is it Greenwood or Hemoga?

Someone said Hemoga.

Chairman Veverka said the house on Hemoga, and then there's his son's house on Greenwood.

Mayor Kurtz said I have to remember which one we went to. We will find out.

Chairman Veverka said neither one of them is K. Finley though.

Mayor Kurtz said anyway that's the last issue we have relative to Council.

Chairman Trakas said so one last question Mayor, so what I remember we have done in the past is that if a resident isn't willing or a property owner isn't willing to clean up their property; the City comes in, cleans the property, brings it up to code and then puts it on the tax bill. Is that the next option if there's no response?

Mayor Kurtz said well neither of these can be fixed up. They are both beyond repair, the physical structures; and so at a minimum, to go in and just clean up the premises, cut grass, clean up. At the same time, find out what their status and to see if they're not going to do anything to the property, there's no sense leaving it abandoned.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked do we know how many acres are on the old Todt farm?

Finance Director Blaze said if you give me a second.

Vice Mayor Grendel said it's 1.55 acres.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I didn't see that, thanks Dave.

Vice Mayor Grendel said it was built in the 1880's so it does have some historical significance.

Chairman Trakas said they got their use out of it.

Mayor Kurtz said anyway, the sale price was \$140,000. Don, what else do you have?

City Engineer Ramm said that's it for now Mayor.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked Don are you buying dinner?

Chairman Trakas asked Utilities Committee members, do you have any other issues to come before the Joint Committee at this time?

We do have the one pending ordinance that was mine on the trillion tree resolution, and I have not reached out to the County Planning; so we will just keep that and try to organize a meeting a little bit later on to go over that. I didn't want to put that on the agenda tonight seeing that we had a pretty busy agenda.

As far as the Utilities Committee, there's no further business Mr. Chairman of the Streets & Sidewalks Committee.

Mayor Kurtz said I would just like to wrap things up, we will continue to put numbers and the budget numbers and articulating our earlier discussion relative to the sewer GIS. We are going to move forward with the Upper Brookside, around the parameters discussed, no boulevard entrance, no sidewalks on the west side, rolled curb west side, high curb on east side, sidewalks east side. We are going to look at the remaining Brookside from Route 21 to Eastview. We are going to look and see where that falls on the list in terms of condition for streets through our report, and we are going to have legislation relative to the Euthenics additional cost. Did I miss anything?

Chairman Trakas said one other point, I was just wonder the feedback from the Utilities Committee on this concept of Engineering Sewer, creating a Sewer Division, GIS. As we are planning to make a recommendation to Finance, is this something that we need more information, are we endorsing, are we not, what's your views?

Mayor Kurtz said thank you, I forgot Mr. Chairman. It's a good question.

Chairman Trakas said you need some direction, right sir.

Mayor Kurtz said look at, this isn't something, Rome is not going to be built in a day. This is a strategy. It's an overall strategic directional issue, but believe me it's not something that we are going to turn the light switch on and off. It's going to take several years to implement; but it needs to be, at least a majority or consensus has to be on how we are going to drive this forward. You heard it from Economic Development, you have heard it from the Engineer and the Service Department, how they all believe that these recommendations are in the best interest of the community long term. That pretty much sums it up. Their goal is to save money, be more efficient and be able to deal with things real time and be more professional to our customers when they need or request any additional information, whether it be Planning Commission, Zoning Board, residents, business community, etc.

Chairman Veverka asked if you are going to have someone, you are going to involve the GIS program, is that potentially an incremental piece that wouldn't be necessarily be tied to a totally different department, Sewer Department?

Mayor Kurtz said if I understand the questions, there will be a total cost, but it will be spread out over several different, and again I don't know for sure; but if the utilization is the question, it will be utilized by a variety of departments. How this evolves, it could end up with Engineering, with IT, there's a variety of places it could land permanent; but it's going to have to evolve over time.

Chairman Veverka said that was the other question. When you mentioned IT, it came to mind that we are in the process of considering a Help Desk person related to IT, and I wondered how IT might tie into this program.

Mayor Kurtz said between what we are dealing with for Tyler in terms of CRM and building off the foundation that was established with the Building Department. The comments earlier about losing people to other communities as the previous two Directors; we are really taking a hard look at a long term vision for IT, recognizing that firewalls, security and then efficiency are all part of that GIS built into that system. So, we don't have all the puzzle pieces formulated today, but recognize that leaning on a Tyler to expand more fingers as I mentioned to begin with relative to what we did with the Building Department makes sense; but it has to be integrated into the overall strategy.

Councilperson Synek said so Mr. Chairman if I may I guess a question about the Sewer Department. Don Ramm if you are done sharing your Power Point, could you put us back so I can see everybody?

So, my rough understanding with sewer systems in northeast Ohio is that it's up to the local community, i.e. the City of Independence to maintain all of these miles and miles of sewers. The homeowner has a certain responsibility. The Ohio Regional Sewer District provides the wastewater treatment plants and the main lines; but everything between the homeowner's house and sewer district's pipe is the City of Independence's responsibility. It always has been for a very long time; well I should say at least since the mid 1970's when there was a big lawsuit that created the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. It's always been the City's responsibility, but it's sewers. No one wants to think about it, talk about, the City has been doing it for a long time, it just hasn't gotten to this level of attention; but it also needs more attention because we all

know the stormwater in this region is a big issue, and it falls on the City in cooperation with the sewer district to a certain extent for stormwater. We are just formalizing in a better way the responsibility, and a prime function of City Government is to maintain the sewer system. No one has talked about it, no one wants to think about it because it's just very ugly. I have no issue with bringing that to a more professional level than what has been done in the past which when something breaks we went out and fixed it. Well, the system is aging, just repairing what breaks isn't good enough anymore. We have to be more proactive, otherwise things are really going to fail and really ruin a lot of people's homes and none of us wants that to happen. I think it's a wise move to sort of specialize in a separate department work that has always been done, and to the extent that we can improve services to our residents, that's a good thing.

Chairman Trakas said thank you.

Vice Mayor Grendel said Mayor I had one question, and I was looking at November's agenda, and we kept that ordinance regarding the hotel on First Reading, and that's the procedure we were going to look at for the Finley property. Has there been any movement on that with the hotel, with the owners there and everything?

Mayor Kurtz said discussions, but no real, let me just mention a couple of things then. We will go into Executive Session maybe on Tuesday to discuss some of these legal real estate issues, that might be an appropriate venue. We can keep that on First Reading unless something changes between now and next week.

If we are prepared, we will have this one on First Reading for Finley, and with no compressed time schedule, no urgency.

Then the third one, I am asking that we come back with the Kin Properties to finalize that agreement. The agreement will be on my desk signed before next Tuesday, and there was a situation that came up relative to fees and securities. They were working off a 2014 contract, and we were working off a 2020 contract; and so we split the baby so to speak, and there was a \$15,000 change. We are going to pay \$15,000 more, and I thought you know what, it was up to Council; but I told them if the signed contract is not on my desk by then, I am not doing it. So, anticipate seeing that on the agenda.

Those are the three real estate issues I can talk about, the rest of them we will talk about in Executive Session, along with any pending legal issues.

I will get with you Vice Mayor about the agenda, listing items on the agenda, the timing of everything if that's okay with Council.

Chairman Veverka said okay Streets Committee, any other issues you want to bring forward? Tom?

Councilperson Narduzzi said I'm good.

Several people began speaking at once.

Chairman Veverka asked Vice Mayor Grendel if there was anything else?

Vice Mayor Grendel said I think I brought up everything Dale.

Chairman Veverka said in that case, I would entertain a motion to adjourn the Streets & Sidewalks portion of this combined meeting.

Moved by Vice Mayor Grendel, seconded by Councilperson Narduzzi, to adjourn the Streets & Sidewalks portion of the Joint meeting of December 2, 2020. Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.

Mayor Kurtz said thank you Council. I really do appreciate your taking the time to let the Department Heads share their knowledge, their information and their passion about what they do to support our constituents. I really do appreciate the time you guys invested in this. Thank you very much.

Chairman Trakas said Utilities, I will entertain a motion to adjourn the Utilities Committee meeting.

Moved by Councilperson Veverka, seconded by Councilperson Synek, to adjourn the Utilities Committee portion of the Joint meeting of December 2, 2020. Committee Polled: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.

There being no further business, the Utilities Committee meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

