



City of Independence, Ohio

"THE HEART OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY"

6800 BRECKSVILLE ROAD

INDEPENDENCE, OHIO 44131

(216) 524-4131

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
Members of Council

From: Finance Director Vernon Blaze

Date: Friday, February 25, 2022

Re: Finance Office Updates

Capital-Infrastructure Budget Update

The Finance Office reached out to the Mayor's Office and Vice Mayor Grendel this week to propose four dates in March for Council to meet with Mayor Kurtz and various Directors to review departmental capital purchases and infrastructure projects.

The tentative timetable would set aside two of those dates for directors to primarily review 2022 capital purchases and touch on years 2023 – 2026, and the other two dates for Engineer Ramm to primarily review maintenance contracts and infrastructure projects for 2022 and also touch on years 2023 – 2026.

A head-start/primer was obtained on the maintenance contracts and infrastructure projects at yesterday's joint Street-Utilities Committee Meeting. A deeper dive into the maintenance contracts and projects can be completed at these meetings, especially the projected cost aspect of them.

Watch for meeting confirmations after Dar and Debi are able to inquire with Mayor Kurtz and Council Members about schedule availability during March.

Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA's) Update

The City currently has four (4) remaining bargaining units after Chagrin Valley Dispatch took over the City's dispatch services a few years ago:

- The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) represents the Service/Public Works Department
- The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) represents the Fire Fighters
- The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) represents both the Officer and Supervisor units in the Police Department



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Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA's) Update Continued

All four (4) CBA's expired on December 31, 2021.

At the December 16, 2021 Council Workshop, Council unanimously approved Ordinance 2021-165, an Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2339 and Ohio Council 8 (AFSCME). So a new contract was agreed to with AFSCME members prior to the expiration of it.

Contract negotiations have been ongoing with the IAFF, and contract negotiations with the two FOP units are set to commence soon. If a new contract is not agreed to prior to the expiration of an existing one, the existing contract terms "roll-over" and continue in place until a new contract is agreed to.

Collective Bargaining in Ohio is regulated by Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 4117 – Public Employees' Collective Bargaining - <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/chapter-4117>.

Anyone interested in learning about public sector labor contract bargaining in Ohio will find that section of the ORC to be quite informative and extensive.

Finance Office Operational Upgrade

In 2021, the Finance Office began investigating options to upgrade the long-standing accounts payable process of writing paper checks.

In late 2021, the City's financial software vendor announced a new module that it was working on that would do exactly what the Finance Office was looking to do – significantly reduce the number of paper checks written and the time and cost spent issuing them.

This week, the Finance Office Team received an introductory demonstration of what this process will look like within the financial software used here. It's not exactly as simple as this, but almost: When Molly or Anissa get to the point where they previously would essentially click a link to "Print Checks," now they will essentially click a link to "Pay Batch" and the queued invoices will be paid without either of them having to write paper checks, stuff envelopes, run them through the postage machine, etc.

The Finance Office looks forward to working with Software Solutions Inc. (SSI), its financial software provider, in implementing this more productive accounts payable process once SSI officially rolls it out sometime this year.