

**ST. BERNARD COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 21, 2006**

The regular meeting of the St. Bernard City Council was held Thursday 21, 2006 in Council Chambers.

President of Council, Mr. Curtis Walden – On behalf of the Administration and the City Council, I would like to wish the citizens of St. Bernard a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

The meeting was opened with a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call showed that all members were present: Ms. Hausfeld, Mr. Asbach, Mr. Schildmeyer, Mr. Burkhardt, Mrs. Brickweg, Mr. Meier, and Mr. Zix.

Mr. Burkhardt made a motion to suspend with the reading of the minutes. Mr. Asbach seconded the motion. Council agreed 7-0.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS

MAYOR, Mr. Estep – Working with Mr. Sawtell, I have prepared letters for area realtors to present to prospective home buyers. The letter includes a brief overview of our community as well as the City's brochure. Our goal is to present St. Bernard as the viable community that it is and to enhance community relationships with new residents and property owners.

I have received a promising report from Mr. Geiser about development of the Bertus Street Park area. After the first of the year we will begin discussions concerning the best approach to work with citizens and the resources available to us for this area's potential development.

As we come to the close of 2006 and I began to prepare the State of the City Report, I was reminded that the City has a wonderful team in place which ensures our success as a City.

To Council, thank you for your support and your dedication to writing new laws to govern our City and for your spirit of teamwork. I appreciate the efforts of the Service Dept. in maintaining the grounds and the appearance of St. Bernard. The Police and Fire Depts. work tirelessly to ensure the safety of our residents. The employees at City Hall work to coordinate major projects and events in the City, and to ensure the integrity of our data and records.

From the bottom of my heart thank you for your support and dedication to this City and with that I'd like to wish all the citizens Merry Christmas and have a safe and happy holiday season from Council, the Administration and all the elected and appointed officials.

AUDITOR, Mr. St. Clair – Reports for the City's investments and bank accounts have been distributed to Council and the Administration.

Before Council tonight is Ordinance Number 44, 2006. This Ordinance makes appropriation adjustments in the General Fund for the Law Director, Civil Service Commission, Fire and Recreation Depts; moving \$100 from Solicitor Stationary and Incidentals to Unofficial Juvenile Court, moving a total of \$442 from Several Civil Service line items to their Legal Consulting line item, moving \$6,200 from Fire Dept. Paramedic and Firefighter

Training to Firemen Overtime, and moving \$709.26 from Recreation Incidentals to Water Aerobics. This Ordinance also adjusts appropriations in the Employee Health Plan Fund, moving \$20,000 to Service Department Expenses with \$5,000 from Police Dept. Expenses and \$15,000 from Fire Dept. Expenses. All these items were discussed at the COW except for the adjustments in the Recreation Dept.

At the last Council Meeting I went over the various Auditor's reports for expenditures, receipts, cash balances, and revenues and expenditures by fund. Tonight I wanted to go over the budget process and how that ties to those reports. Unfortunately I was not able to get that done for tonight, so I will try at the next Council Meeting.

DIRECTOR OF LAW, Mr. Geiser – Absent.

TREASURER, Mr. Kathman – I have no report Mr. President, but I would like to wish the citizens a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

SAFETY DIRECTOR, Mr. Stutchell – I would first like to start by wishing all of the residents of St. Bernard a Merry Christmas. This has been a year of many challenges and I must tell you what a pleasure it has been working with the other members of the Administration and Council to achieve a common goal. I would like to thank the following people and departments for their assistance over the last year: Fire Chief Steve Scherpenberg and the entire St. Bernard Fire Dept., Chief Steve Moeller and the entire St. Bernard Police Department, Gerry Wiedman, the Planning and Development Director and Walt Moeller, our new HIP Inspector who is doing a fabulous job, and also the Service Dept. for everything they have done for us. I also have some good news regarding our Police Dept. We have two candidates who have received conditional offers based upon the successful completion of the final evaluations in the hiring process. Pending the outcome, I would like to have the two candidates hired by the end of January.

Also for those of you who may have wondered why the countywide siren system went off yesterday afternoon. It was set off accidentally while being worked on to set up a quadrant system in the four activation points. County dispatch apologized for the confusion and we will keep you updated as needed.

In closing, I have a warning regarding a robbery pattern that has been developing in the Cincinnati area that involves the elderly. In all instances the suspects have observed a senior citizen out shopping then followed them home and used a series of ploys such as; my car broke down, may I use your phone in the house, or approached them while unloading their cars in the garage or on the street and robbed them. We ask that you please be vigilant while out and be aware of who is around you especially when you come home and are unloading your cars etc. If you notice anyone suspicious please call the police immediately.

SERVICE DIRECTOR, Mr. Kempe – Before I give my report, Ed Geiser asked me to say something about Ordinance No. 47. He stated that this Ordinance in the future will have to be done on a quarterly basis in order to keep the information online up to date as possible; so he recommends passage or adoption of Ordinance No. 47 tonight.

On behalf of the employees of the Service Dept., I want to wish all the citizens and employees of St. Bernard a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year.

Christmas Day and New Years Day are both on Mondays this year and there will be no trash pick ups on those days. Consequently, the normal Monday pick ups will be moved to Tuesday and the normal Tuesday pick ups will be moved to Wednesday for both weeks. Christmas is a special time of the year, so please do not set any trash out on Monday, December 25th or Monday, January 1st.

I recommend adoption of Ordinance No. 45, 2006, accepting the bid and authorizing the Service Director to enter into a contract with the Fred Nemann Company in the amount of \$1,062,711.60 for the Woodside Heights Subdivision improvement Project for 2007. This project will incorporate the cooperative improvement of water lines with the Cincinnati Water Works Co., storm water flow with MSD and new sidewalks, drive aprons curbs and pavement of the streets by the City of St. Bernard. The City has received a grant for this project in the amount of \$600,000.00. Informational letters will be mailed to the affected residents of Woodside Heights, Redwood Terrace, Dartmouth Drive and Minmor Drive after the pre-construction meeting takes place in early January.

I also recommend adoption of Ordinance No. 46, 2006, accepting the bid and authorizing the Service Director to enter into a contract with Adleta construction in the amount of \$26,080.00 for the Gateway Wall Project. \$23,000.00 of the cost to build this wall will be paid through the Community Development Block Grant Program of 2006-2008.

TAX COMMISSIONER, Mrs. Williams – Absent.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

FINANCE, Mr. Zix – The Finance Committee would like to recommend passage of Ordinance No. 40 and Ordinance No. 44.

SAFETY, Mr. Burkhardt – The Police Report for November, 2006; the Cincinnati area has seen a dramatic increase in copper thefts. Many times these thefts are occurring in vacant homes or even homes that are occupied, but the residents are away. Individuals are entering homes and removing the copper pipes in that residence. This includes all the plumbing in the house. If anyone notices any work at any residences that is apparent that copper pipes are being removed, please call the police. We would rather check on a legitimate contractor to be sure that everything is OK than have a homeowner come home to a house that has been destroyed and all the copper piping removed.

SERVICE, Mr. Meier – First of all I would like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. As we've completed this first year in Council I would like to say I've enjoyed it very much and I'm looking forward to doing a good job in this next year and one thing I would like to point out to people, I think one of the unique things about the City of St. Bernard and the people in the City are the tremendous light displays that people have on their homes. Not every Community has the lights that we have and a lot of other Communities, when they have the lights, after Christmas night they are turned off and I've always been very pleased to see

that the citizens here keep their lights up through the entire twelve days of Christmas through the 6th of January.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS, Mr. Asbach – The Committee recommends passage of Ordinances Nos. 45 and 46 this evening. Also the Committee will next after Mr. Kempe and Mr. Geiser's meeting with the Enquirer on January 9th next year.

LAWS, CONTRACTS AND CLAIMS, Ms. Hausfeld – I have no report tonight except for my Committee is going to meet on January 10th, which is a Wednesday @ 6:30p.m. in Council's Meeting room downstairs to finalize our solicitation ordinance and to discuss our residence ordinance. I too would like to wish everybody a happy holiday season.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, Mr. Schildmeyer – I recommend passage of Ordinance No. 40, and 44 and also want to wish the citizens of St. Bernard a very Merry Christmas.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION, Mrs. Brickweg – I received an email and it looks like most of Council did, but according to the email I received the Administration didn't receive it and I think it would be a good thing for them to know about this. This email came from Chief Moeller and I'll read it to you because what it is about is grant writing and I really think this is another opportunity that we need to take to go get some free money out there.

He was asked to pass this around by Lt. Steve Ashton from the Forest Park PD. It says that there is a grant writing workshop in Forest Park on January 11th through the 12th, the Forest Park PD in partnership with Grant Writing USA will present a two day grant writing workshop in Forest Park. More than 5,000 government and non-profit agencies across America now turn to Grant Writing USA for grant training. All non-profit and government professionals are welcome to attend. Forest Park is 17 miles north of Cincinnati. This workshop is suitable for beginning and experienced grant writers who desire to increase their fund raising competitiveness and broaden their fender focus. Tuition is \$445.00 if you register more than one month in advance. After that the tuition is \$495.00. All necessary materials and full alumni benefits are included. Work book, the 250 megabyte resource CD, two days of terrific instruction, one year free proposal review and lifetime free access to Grant Writing USA exclusive alumni support forms. I think this is something that, I would hope that somebody in the Administration or we can discuss who can go but I think that this is something that we should at least look into or consider doing. I'd also like to announce that at 7:00p.m. on January 3rd, Wed. night I'm going to have a town meeting and for my Ward, but anyone is welcome to come at 7:00 in Centennial Hall and one of the things that I would like to discuss at the meeting is ideas for 2007 and what the citizens would like to see done and answer questions that everybody has and at this time I'd like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mr. Burkhardt – The Committee of the Whole Report has been submitted to the Clerk.

Committee of the Whole
Dec. 14, 2006

1. Council approved the minutes of the Dec. 7th Council meeting, 4-0. Ms. Brickweg and Mr. Zix were absent.
2. Mayor, John Estep
 - A. John gave Council sample letters from the Chamber of Commerce and a letter to realtors. These letters are geared towards prospective homebuyers.
3. Auditor, Walt St. Clair
 - A. Council agreed 4-0 to put an ord. on the table for appropriation adjustment to several line items.
4. Law Director, Ed Geiser
 - A. Council agreed 5-0 to put an ord. on the table to update the codified ordinances.
5. Safety Director, Jonathan Stuchell
 - A. Informed Council that they have two candidates for the police dept. openings. They have been sent for their final polygraphs and physical exams. Jonathan also gave Council the proposal for the traffic study on Ross Ave. This will be discussed at the next COW meeting.
6. Service Director, Joe Kempe
 - A. Council agreed 5-0 to put an ord. on the table accepting the bid from the Fred Neman Company for the work on the Woodside Heights sewer project. The cost of the project is \$1,062,711.60. The City will receive \$600,000.00 from grants. Council agreed 5-0 to put ord. on the table to accept the bid from the Adleta Company for \$26,080.00 for the Gateway Signage to be constructed at Ross & Vine Sts.
7. Tax Commissioner, Sheri Williams
 - A. Sheri asked Council to look into Dept. Head longevity pay. Presently the Tax commissioner is not part of this pay.
8. Laws, Contracts, & Claims, Patty Hausfeld, no report.
9. Public Improvements, Steve Asbach, no report.
10. Business & Industry, Mike Schildmeyer, no report.
11. Safety, Bill Burkhardt, no report.
12. Highways & Transportation, Peggy Brickweg, absent.
13. Service, Kevin Meier
 - A. Kevin asked to be on the next COW meeting agenda to discuss the Tax Abatement Council and asked everyone to suggest people that might want to be on the Council to bring their names to the next meeting.
14. Finance, Greg Zix, absent.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Burkhardt
President of Council, Pro-Tem

COMMUNICATIONS - None

RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES

Motion by Mr. Burkhardt, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld to read this evenings Ordinances by title only. Motion passed 7-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 40, 2006, AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE APPROPRIATION FOR EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF ST. BERNARD, STATE OF OHIO, DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2007 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Walden – As this is the third reading of this Ordinance, the rules do not provide for any “remarks” therefore, I will accept a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 40, 2006 at this time.

Motion by Mr. Zix, seconded by Mr. Schildmeyer to adopt Ordinance No. 40, 2006 as read. Motion passed 7-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 44, 2006, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE AUDITOR TO ADJUST CERTAIN APPROPRIATIONS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Burkhardt, seconded by Mrs. Brickweg to suspend with the second and third reading of Ordinance No. 44, 2006. Motion passed 7-0.

Motion by Mr. Burkhardt, seconded by Mr. Asbach to adopt Ordinance No. 44, 2006 as read. Motion passed 7-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 45, 2006, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH FRED A. NEMANN COMPANY AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Burkhardt, seconded by Mr. Asbach to suspend with the second and third reading of Ordinance No. 45, 2006. Motion passed 7-0.

Motion by Mr. Burkhardt, seconded by Mr. Meier to adopt Ordinance No. 45, 2006 as read. Motion passed 7-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 46, 2006, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SEVICE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH ADLETA INC. AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Burkhardt, seconded by Mr. Asbach to suspend with the second and third reading of Ordinance No. 46, 2006.

REMARKS

Mrs. Brickweg – This may have been discussed at the COW, I'm sorry I was not there. I did notice that it is a lot, originally we had been told it was going to be \$20,000. Patty informed me that it did go over, that we got extra money so that's why we got \$23,000. My question is, well two parts, I'm hoping that JMA gave us a good reason why they were so far off and the second thing is does this include the landscaping or will we have to come up with additional money for that?

Mr. Kempe – No, there wasn't a reason given by JMA, the landscaping will be done by the City.

Mrs. Brickweg – I guess my question is, just so I know for the budget next year, it'll be an additional cost, correct? That's not included in here?

Mr. Kempe – The additional cost will be \$3,080.00 and we will have to come up with that.

Mrs. Brickweg – For the landscaping?

Mr. Kempe – Well, yes, that will come out of the Service Dept.'s budget.

Motion to suspend passed 7-0.

Motion by Mr. Burkhardt, seconded by Mr. Asbach to adopt Ordinance No. 46, 2006 as read. Motion passed 7-0.

ORDINANCE NO. 47, 2006, AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE EDITING AND INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ORDINANCES AS PARTS OF VARIOUS COMPONENT CODES OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF ST. BERNARD, OHIO, REVISING THE TRAFFIC, GENERAL OFFENSES AND FIRE PREVENTION CODES TO COMPLY WITH STATE LAW, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Burkhardt, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld to suspend with the second and third reading of Ordinance No. 47, 2006. Motion passed 7-0.

Motion by Mr. Burkhardt, seconded by Mr. Schildmeyer to adopt Ordinance No. 47, 2006 as read. Motion passed 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Asbach – I have been asked by a couple of the citizens and I know that this is not the time of the year to do this, but a couple of people have told me that some of the dogs on the banners look a little tired and I thought that we may have had some other banners that they had requested, and I don't know if we have them down the garage or not, but if we do, if we could maybe check into maybe putting some different ones up and retiring some of the old ones.

Mrs. Brickweg – I have two things, the first thing is, I did go ahead and vote for the budget tonight because I know we needed a budget to run the City but I am disappointed to read that it was not discussed at the COW because at the last Council Meeting when we were discussing it, it was put on the

agenda to discuss it and what I wanted to be discussed is what I had read last week is, I feel it would be a good thing for our City to finance the entire amount of the Quint truck and to put that money to purchasing property and that it was, I thought, was to be discussed and it wasn't and the budget stayed the same way it is, so I guess I'm going to put trust in some Council members. Bill and Kevin and Patty and I were leaning towards the \$620,000.00 and purchasing up blighted property and investing in what we weren't using. I did go ahead and vote and I guess we'll find out in the winter or in January or February if we're going to do that but I am very disappointed that it was not discussed. I will give somebody else the opportunity to speak before I read my second part.

Mr. Meier – As Mrs. Brickweg was talking about the financing, I did a little bit of number crunching, just rudimentary. In that budget we have \$620,000.00 for the Quint and there's an additional \$300,000.00 that is in there for the acquisition of property for a total of \$920,000.00. To work on this really simply, if we are to finance the entire \$620,000.00 in bond issues, we would be paying 4 ¼ % interest and the interest that we're currently receiving on our investments is 5%. The net, just in simple interest, if we were to finance the entire amount we would gain ¾ of a percent in interest, which is roughly \$7,000.00 about \$6,900.00. Another part of that discussion was, if we were to use the \$300,000.00 to buy property, if in the scenario that we bought \$300,000.000 worth of property and then sat on that property, the cost to the City on an annual basis would be about \$28,000.00. We would be paying \$12,750.00 in simple interest, that's 4 ¼ % on \$300,000.00. In addition to that, because we've taken the money out of our fund, we would no longer be gaining the interest, the 5% interest that we would be making on that money, so the cost would be \$27,750.00. One of the comments that I made before is that if we're looking to buy property we have to have some kind of an exit strategy to get out of it. And what I propose, and I'm not going to put this in the form of a motion, I'm just putting this out here so people know exactly what my position is on this, that if we're looking to buy property, what I would like to see us do it to utilize the CIC, we could work with a partner, a development partner, to identify the properties that would be purchased. In the ideal situation the City could buy those properties through the CIC, hold those so we could maintain ownership, our development partner would then do the work or the renovation to the properties, put the properties up for sale and sell them. At the time of the sale of the property the City would recoup the acquisition cost, and in addition it would recoup 4 ¼ % interest carry so the net cost to the City should be zero. I think that if we go along and we can work on this after the first of the year, but if we put together something like this, I think it makes sense for the City in the long run and the other part of this is; as long as we have those funds borrowed, if the rate that we're getting in interest were to drop below the 4 ¼ % that we're paying for the cost of borrowed money, we can always withdraw those funds and payoff that note. So again that's something else that we have to make sure that we are at least breaking even on this and if we can do that, then I think it makes sense. So the reason I'm putting this out here tonight is so that everyone knows exactly what my position is and there can't be any questioning on that. I think it makes sense and it is something that we should work on after the first of the year.

Mr. Asbach – Remarks on that same subject, Peggy since you weren't at COW Mr. St. Clair, I don't know if you have a copy of the interest rate? OK, but he also said he's looking at the end of Feb. before any bonds would go out for that anyway so I just wanted to let you know that.

Mr. Stuchell – I placed information at everyone's seat and also in their box for those that weren't here regarding the traffic corridor study for Ross Ave. The traffic engineer has called me and asked if we had any questions, or if Council had any questions that I could pass on to him and I also wanted to try to maybe find out maybe what Council's intentions were and if this is something we could discuss possibly at the next COW meeting, but this gentleman's following up with me with his proposal so I would just, out of courtesy, give him a response of some sort.

Mr. Burkhardt – I do have that on for the next COW which would be the 11th.

Mr. Walden – I believe, Mr. Burkhardt, at the last COW Council voted to not have the final COW in Dec. in case anyone in the audience missed that. Is that correct?

Mr. Burkhardt – Yes, and the next COW will actually be Jan. 11th.

Mr. Meier – We had discussed in the past couple of COW and Council meetings about the need to have a council to sit on for the property tax abatement. A question has been brought up what these people would need to do and what skills would be involved. Basically what we would have to have on this council is the council, the people up here, have to have two people to appoint to this council. The Mayor in turn would appoint two additional people and the Planning Director, or Gerry Wiedman, would select the fifth. The majority of those five people in turn would select two additional people. The members of this council would serve three year terms. There is no specific requirement, the main thing people have to have is an interest in serving the City. The top thing that these people would have to do is make sure that when somebody would want to apply for an abatement that they would have the appropriate application, they would have and know the appropriate permits to do the work, they would know to get the invoices for their work and the main thing is that this council would have to review that project and make sure that it accomplishes the goal of increasing the value of the property, so if somebody would take \$2500.00 and merely repaint the inside of their house, that's not going to add value to the property so that council will have to say, no, what you want to do isn't going to increase the value of your property the same as if you put on for example, put on a new roof, if you replace gutters and downspouts, replace siding things of that nature. There are a lot of comments made by people, the wringing of the hands, the gnashing of teeth on the people selling their houses and what's going on with the City, this is your opportunity to step up and do more than just call people and complain. All it takes is an interest in serving the City. If people have questions, there is a lot of resources in here but there has to be 7 people within this City of 5,000 people who can step up and spend a little bit of time during the year. Again, I'm going to encourage the people to please contact Mayor Estep, contact Steve Asbach, the Chair of the Public Improvements Committee to please step up and take some time to

serve the City. I think it would do a world of good for us and can make a big difference in the City.

Mr. Estep – I’ve talked to a few people and I have one person that is going to serve on there, she’s pretty sure.

Ms. Hausfeld – The last couple of meetings, we have discussed and actually about a month ago, I felt Council came to a consensus to have the Police Chief, the Fire Chief, department heads to be at one meeting a month. I know now that a couple Council members disagree with that. I do know and John, correct me if I’m wrong, Mayor Estep sent a letter to everybody, with the consensus that that is what Council wanted. I don’t know if we have to put it up for a vote, I don’t know if we have to discuss it at the next COW but it was my consensus that we agreed on it about a month ago. I agree with Mr. Stuchell, he made a comment to me, if we’re going to have them here, which he doesn’t necessarily disagree with that, we should put them on the agenda so that they can give a report, they can inform the citizens of a couple things that are going on in their dept. I guess right now what I would like to do is put this in the next COW to discuss it and see exactly where you guys stand on it because I feel like Mayor Estep wouldn’t have sent that letter to the dept. heads if he did not have consensus of all of us that evening when we discussed this about a month ago.

Mrs. Brickweg – I was surprised to hear that the subject of longevity was discussed at last weeks COW meeting. I was out of town and unable to attend the meeting so I would like to express my thoughts on this now. The Tax Commissioner, Sheri Williams brought up the subject because she feels she should be included in the group of employees that receive an “extra” longevity pay. It seems many people do not understand longevity pay, who receives it, the amounts the employees receive and the history behind it. I would like to take the time to explain to the citizens how the longevity works in St. Bernard

First there are two different scales for longevity pay. The Fire, Police and Service Depts. have the same scales and some of the City Hall Employees and Dept. Heads have an “extra” one.

The Fire, Police and Service Dept. receive the following:

The wording in their contracts vary but they all basically state “All members, in the calendar year in which the member completes five or more years of continuous service, will receive longevity pay as follows:” These amounts are paid once a year and it is a set amount for each category. Some people get confused and think they receive the amount for each year the employee has worked, but it is not. For example an employee that has worked for the City for 26 years receives \$1,000.00 one time a year on their anniversary date.

5 through 9 years they receive \$350.00

10 through 14 years they receive \$525.00

15 through 19 years they receive \$700.00

20 through 24 years they receive \$850.00

25 years or more they receive \$1,000.00

The City Hall Employees and Department Heads receive the following:

These employees received their longevity benefits from ordinances. In 1989 Council voted that the Service Director, Street Commissioner, Auditor, Tax Commissioner, Code Assistance Officer, Health Nurse, Record’s Clerk,

Auditor's clerk, Mayor's Clerk, Planning & Development Clerk and Tax Commissioner's Clerk shall receive the same benefits as are bargained for in any current Service Department collective bargaining agreement, which included longevity pay. This same ordinance tied the Fire and Police Chiefs to their department's contracts. The amounts of this longevity pay were at the same scales as above, so basically all City employees were receiving similar amounts.

Then in 1997, that Council voted to pay an "extra" longevity pay to the Fire and Police Chiefs and the Code Assistance Officers in addition to the total years of service longevity which I listed above. The reason for this increase was to keep these department heads above their employees which are tied to contracts. Then in 2001 that Council voted to include the Service Director and the Auditor to the "extra" longevity. The amounts of the extra longevity are as follows:

2 through 3 years they receive \$1500.00, 4.2 times higher than Civil Service Employees.

4 through 5 years they receive \$3000.00, 5.7 times higher

6 through 7 years they receive \$4500.00, 6.4 times higher

8 through 9 years they receive \$6000.00, 7 times higher

10 years or more they receive \$7500.00, 7.5 times higher

After reviewing the history of the longevity pay I am shocked that elected officials voted to increase the pay for fellow elected and appointed officials. I am not in favor of the Tax Commissioner receiving the "extra" longevity pay and I also think the Service Director and the Auditor should not be receiving this "extra" longevity pay benefit. I am in favor of continuing the regular longevity for them and the others because it would not start until after five years of employment and the amounts are the same as what is in the contract they are tied to. I really question how elected officials in the past felt it "ethically" appropriate to vote on an additional pay benefit at a much faster step increase for fellow appointed and elected people. Since when is working two years "a long time"? It appears to me that the party in control of Council was also in control of the Administration and they just "padded" their buddies pocket books.

Another item I discovered while reading through past ordinances is that in 1999 that Council passed an ordinance that stated the Fire and Police Chief will always make the same salary. It also stated that the Auditor, Service Director, Code Assistance Officer and Tax Commissioner will make the same salary as each other. It states that "Any change or increase in salary in one shall cause the same increase to become effective to all." How can this be just and fair? For example we have a Code Assistance Officer that has worked for our City for twenty plus years and when a newly elected Auditor, and appointed Service Director and Tax Commissioner are employed they receive the same amount of pay. This is wrong and I feel an abuse of the tax payer's money. I am sure many of the tax payers would agree with me that they would love to come into a job making the same amount of money as an employee of 20 plus years is making.

This is not the first time I have presented this information to Council and some of it has been put into committee to discuss. I feel it is time we fix this situation and amend the ordinances. I would like to ask that we discuss these ordinances at the next COW meeting.

Mr. Stuchell – The Tax Commissioner did call to say that she was not able to be here tonight but I'm glad they were asked so she could be here in her

defense to at least discuss her point of view so that it's not going to be discussed further but she could not be here tonight but just in her defense she wanted to at least discuss this further.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Asbach – I don't know that we officially did it at COW but I would like to make a motion that we do skip the Dec. 28th COW.

Ms. Hausfeld – I'll second that.

Motion by Mr. Asbach, seconded by Ms. Hausfeld to skip the last COW meeting in Dec. of 2006.

REMARKS

Mr. Asbach – It was also stated by Mr. St. Clair because I asked if we had to advertise that, but since we are on TV, hopefully everyone will see that and I have already asked Mrs. Kathman to put a notice in the boxes around town when she posts the ordinances as well.

Mrs. Brickweg – Could I make the suggestion that if Glenna has the time maybe we can put it on the website and then I'll email to my list also.

Motion to skip the last COW meeting in Dec. passed 7-0.

Mr. Zix – Right now the Finance Committee has the benefits ordinance in review and I didn't know if possibly Mrs. Brickweg could give us some suggestions that she might have to solve that and that you might be able to help us with.

Mr. Brickweg – I think I pretty much said what I would like done, I could give you a copy of this again. I personally feel that the elected and the appointed positions should not be receiving this longer longevity pay and I also question the amount and the steps in it and that's why maybe we can discuss it at the COW but I'm not sure what you didn't understand but I tried to do my best telling you what I thought should be done but given specific questions I'd be happy to answer them.

Mr. Zix – So one of the suggestions would be to totally eliminate the longevity, is that what you mean, Peggy, I'm sorry.

Mrs. Brickweg – That's OK, I would eliminate the "extra" longevity pay for the appointed and elected officials and I do not have a problem with the basic longevity pay scales that we have, I mean at the max it's \$1000.00 for working over 25 years and I realize there are appointed positions in City Hall, some of the Clerks, and that is all they are getting and I have no problem with that, I mean some of these employees have been here 10 years or something like that and we're talking \$525.00 but I really have a problem with the large amounts and these being elected and appointed positions and I find it amazing that elected people voted on that, it just blew my mind when I read it and the other ordinance that I really think we need to look at is the one that says they all make the same amount of pay. That's just unrealistic

in the world that people make the same amount of pay coming into a job where somebody's been working 20 plus years, I'll be honest, I told it to my employer and he couldn't even believe there was such a thing. He says that would be everybody's dream job. So, I really think we need to change that one also.

Ms. Hausfeld – Can I ask Walt, can you get us all a copy of the updated longevity for everybody? Like what the first longevity is and then the dept. head longevity, make a list. I know I got one last year but its been updated I'm sure since then so.

Mr. St. Clair - Are you just asking for who gets what, what amount of longevity? OK. I would like to make one remark about Mrs. Brickweg statement about people being paid the same, the Service Director and Auditor, we're not tied to the Code Assistance Officer any longer, there was an ordinance passed that we're now tied to the percent of the County Commissioners wages. We not tied to the Code Assistance Officer any longer.

Mrs. Brickweg – My question to that is, OK so basically you were tied and now you're not but you're all making about the same of money and correct me if I'm wrong, but did the Tax Commissioner and Service Director come in making the money that the previous people made?

Mr. St. Clair – The only difference Peggy is the longevity pay. In other words when I first started here I made the same as the Service Director and he had been here he was starting his 9th year and I was starting my first year. The only difference in our pay was the dept. head longevity. I think that's one of the reasons it was done like that.

Mrs. Brickweg – I think that somebody coming into a job should not come in at a salary that somebody else has been worked up 9 years to making and secondly, the Service Director and the Auditor do two different things. I don't even, that's like saying where I work as an office manager, if I'm there the same amount of years maybe I should make the same amount as the CPA. I just don't understand that and I think that's something we need to look into and I'm not saying nobody deserves to make what they make but this system to me, it's not right and that's just my personal opinion but I think a job should have a salary of what that job should be and when you come in, OK here's a prime example, a police officer, a police officer starting a job, the new ones are not going to come in making the same pay as the top police officer. They're good police officers but they're not going to make the same pay because this is a new police officer and that's kind of what I'm saying, it doesn't happen in the real world, it doesn't work that way. You start at the bottom or you pay the person the appropriate amount to do the job and then they get raises and they move up. But I've never went and got a job where I was replacing somebody and made the same amount of money as the person that just left. That's the part, I mean we can word it any way we want but they are tied together, they're all making basically the same thing and if it's tied to an ordinance it's still the same amount of money and I really think we need to look at the system and how it was set up and I did ask for all the ordinances regarding this and I definitely didn't get that one so if I could have a copy of that one I would really appreciate it.

Ms. Hausfeld – Under those same lines Mr. Zix, couldn't we, I thought we put that in a committee as far as to looking into step up pay and stuff like that. Is it still there?

Mr. Zix – Yes, it is still in the committee. The whole benefit structure is still in the committee.

Mr. St. Clair – We received a call from our attorney this week on the C-9 law suit. He would like to see some of our committee that was formed from last meeting to get together and pursue some discussions on how to go about settling over intending to settle and with a law suit decision. Mr. Zix were you on that, I can't remember who was appointed what or

Mr. Zix – Yes, we should take that, the Finance Committee, myself, you and Eddie and we were just sort of waiting for that call.

AUDIENCE WISHING TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

Forrest Hudson, 4297 Redwood – I have two items, the first item was concerning the information about the grant writer and some other issues. Slightly over or not quite two years ago I secured and passed out to a number of individuals information concerning a lot of grants that could be applied for, but we have had no grant writers. It's my understanding one of the institutions here in town employ one for a certain percentage of the grants that are written. To give you an example, Dept. of Justice, Dept. of Homeland Security, there was or probably still is about 150 more items that are available that through a grant writer we could secure. One of those bits of information was that the State of Ohio was divided into five districts and one of the district representatives were from somewhere up above Oxford. Those names were passed on also. I think at this point in time it would probably behoove us as a City, as a Council, maybe as an Administration to look into the possibility of securing a grant writer, not only to provide us with what's out there, but to make sure we don't have another foul up like we did with the smoke house. You know \$28,000.00 against \$600,000.00 don't quite add up you know it's kind of an unfair balance here, OK. The second thing is and I don't know who on Council or the Administration could deride this but I've had a couple of people ask me this question and very frankly I don't know. How many vacant lots does the City actually own in town? How many is there? You know. You can include parking lots in there if you'd like but I said I would come to the floor and I would put it out there for maybe someone to provide us with an answer. Their reasoning and I could not disagree with them is that it seems that in the past, it least it does to me or to them, that we go out, we purchase pieces of property without a plan about what we're going to do with it. That's kind of like throwing money away I think. You know, develop a plan, you know, years ago we had a master plan written by you know, Mr. Young whose wife just passed away and Bob Morel. We kind of got away from that, we've been in and out of that, over the years we just don't seem to have a goal set out there in front of us that's attainable and rather than just go blindly into buying pieces of property that we feel is blighted, at least lets have a plan with what the "h" we're going to do with it. OK? That's it.

Mr. Estep – If I could just comment on a couple of those, on the grants, I think it's almost illegal to hire somebody, I don't think you're allowed to hire somebody on a contingency basis. Say you apply for this \$300,000.00 grant and we'll give you 10%. I think you have to have this person under contract. It sounds good. On the "smoke house" I think we applied for a grant, we didn't write a grant, did we? Did we write that grant?

Mrs. Brickweg – Chief Scherpenberg did. Yes, he did.

Mr. Estep – I commend him for that. There is a little bit of difference there but in going back to the blighted property, the purchase of the property that we just did, and I applaud Council for that, we do have a plan there and we're trying to work on the second phase of that and if we can get that the part that we did buy isn't quite suitable for a building there. Part of the reason we bought that is to clean up that area and we received a lot of positive feedback from the neighbors in that area for what it has cleaned up and gotten rid of up there.

Bob Hausfeld, 4257 Bertus – One real quick thing John just talked about. What's the plan up there because I haven't been coming, I think that would make a good lot for a house, especially for St. Bernard, lots aren't that big. But I don't know that there's a bigger plan, I'm guessing maybe the house next door is part of the plan. OK.

The reason I came up here is a couple things is one, longevity. I work for the City. I work for the Fire Dept. everybody knows. I was absolutely amazed when I got five years in and I started getting an extra check for \$350.00 a year. That blows me away. I expect a fair salary for my job, I make a good salary for my job and that's what I expect. I don't agree with the longevities for any of the employees, any of the civil service or City Hall employees. I just think it's they're out of control but to defend Sheri and before anybody makes any comments cause this a year ago when I made a comment in favor of Sheri that I'm dating her. That's not why I'm up here. I'm up here because if you're going to give it to dept. heads which I'm saying I'm against it and I told Sheri that I don't think the dept. heads should get it especially the amounts they're getting. After two years, \$1500.00, that's crazy. My dad was a brick layer for 50 years, that's longevity. But if you are going to get it and like I said I told her this, I disagree with them, but if you are going to give it to dept. heads, I think it's crazy that you got three dept. heads getting it, I think it's three I might be wrong, Walt, Joe, Gerry and you're not going to give it to one. I just think that is very, very unfair and that's my biggest beef with the City is being fair, treat everybody the same. That's all I'm going to say about that.

Secondly, I guess the thing that really disturbs me because I was one of the ones that got laid off a year and a half ago. Back a year and a half, two years ago when all of that mess that was going on that you guys hated to see, everybody up there was talking about a five year plan, five year plan we got to do a five year plan to be healthy, we can't keep spending all this money and not invest it in the City, which I agree 1000%. But I don't see anything going on with the five year plan, I brought up an idea of cross training some of the firemen to patrol the streets and stuff like that. I've said it to numerous people, nobody ever takes it and everybody I talk to thinks it's a good idea. They talk about part timers at the fire dept. which down the road if that's what has to happen, that's what has to happen, I just don't want to

see anybody go through what I went through last year and lose their jobs. But what amazes me is they're turning around and hiring new policemen, new service dept. employees and they're hiring brand new ones when why aren't they looking at part timers there if they're thinking about it for the fire dept. They work just as good at the service dept. and the police dept. I'm not saying go to all part timers, I'm saying keep the full timers we have and supplement them a little bit. But it just absolutely blows me away that because we're bringing in the money that we, we're bringing in more money than we expected the last two years, nobody in the Administration and when I say Administration I mean Council everybody is talking about a five year plan to make sure this City is healthy five years from now. We're already two years into that five year plan and there's nothing. I just don't understand that. Anyway that's all I got to say.

Mr. Estep – Two more things, I have to agree with Bob, I think we've been so busy being reactive to things that we haven't been proactive enough with a five year plan. I think that's something Council and the Administration should look at in the new year. On the longevity have no opinion either way but I think one thing we need to look at when give this longevity or any type of raise, is there any performance evaluation in there or are we just handing things our way. I think we need to look at the performance that these individuals are doing. Do they deserve a raise, should we just give it out automatically, and I'm not saying that anybody doesn't. but I'd like to see something a little bit objective and something that we can justify so when somebody does come to that microphone we can tell them they did get a raise and here's why. I'm sitting next to the guy over here and I'd surely sign off on a raise for him because of the way he's run the City efficiently in the past couple of years. So I think we need to look into performance evaluation.

Mrs. Brickweg – Mayor, I'm talking about longevity and I'm sorry because nothing you do with Joe and how well he does his job but two years is not longevity, OK, that's just my opinion and as the Mayor I think you should have an opinion on longevity. I think maybe that might help us somewhat as Mayor if you spoke up and gave your opinion on what you felt on things. You don't have to tonight but I do find it kind of odd that you're supposed to be the leader of our City and you say, I don't have an opinion either way, when you probably should.

Mr. Estep – Thanks for telling me what I should have an opinion on and that's my opinion. I can't undo some of the ordinances that have been written and some of the votes that have been taken on Council over the last five, ten, twenty, thirty years. I think before I have an opinion either way, I'd like to see the whole package and then I'll tell you whether I'm for longevity or not for it. Right now my opinion is we should have a performance evaluation and that's my opinion.

Mr. Zix – John if you would like for me to put a proposal together when we look at this whole benefit package, we will put it together and then present it back.

Phil Stegman, 19 Orchard – Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you. About a year and a half ago when I was on Council I tried to put steps

into these positions and we were very successful with the secretaries and nurses and various ones but when we got to the higher paid ones, I started to get some static and it just became a dead issue. I do feel that any time a new Mayor or these positions are taken over there should be steps to that, they shouldn't come in at the top pay. How you make those percentages is up to Council and the Administration for the jobs that they are pursuing. I do think that should be one, that's my view on that and I'll get off that story. I do want to ask some questions tonight about grants. Are we not able to obtain a grant for this fire truck, I know that one time we were and I think we were denied but does that mean that from now on that we're never going to be able to get a grant and a year ago when I was on Council, or back then there was some problems with the aerial truck, one was like \$25 to \$30 thousand for a cracked engine where the antifreeze was going back into the transmission. The ladder had some cracks or something. I think before we go out and spend another \$600,000.00, I know this Quint truck is an ideal truck that takes over two pieces of equipment, I'm not saying that we shouldn't do it but here again a couple of years back we took a Chief's opinion on a rescue piece of equipment and a couple years later it bit us by saying, did we really need that piece of equipment. Now we know it didn't, all I'm asking is let's take a look at the equipment we've got, there's a lot of depts.. around here that has old equipment. We don't have to have new but I think we should repair some of the stuff we've got and keep it a lot longer if we can, until we get grant money. \$300,000.00 in grant money goes a heck of a long way.

Mr. Stuchell – If I could please respond to that. We're not red flagged from getting grants and further purchases and at the time when we were turned down in the last application process for that Quint truck was that we had not closed out a previous grant that was awarded to us. We had not actually received a piece of equipment, we were paid for that piece of equipment that we were awarded the grant but had not closed it out and actually received it. Once that happened then we would be able to be put back into the process where we could be considered for further grants. That was the only reason at the time, that's how we lost that particular grant. At that time when we also made that application the likelihood even when we had that grant out there and if we could have received it we were only talking about a 10% matching funds. On this current application we actually wrote in 30% matching funds to increase the likelihood that we would actually be awarded that grant. As the Dept. of Homeland Security funds are starting to be depleted, they're not being so generous, they're application process is much more scrutinized to communities that might be more needy or actually need a piece of equipment worse than what we might. They're scrutinized, but as far as further applications we can continue to try, but yes, we do have what is developing to be an aging fleet at the fire dept. and we do need to look at making an investment in our equipment. I do believe that this is actually a good purchase because it will recycle out two pieces of equipment, we're combining pieces of equipment so that there will be something that will be taken out of the replacement process there. I think we need to look at this but we're not permanently red flagged. I don't want anyone to think that, when we can still continue to try.

Phil Stegman, 19 Orchard - I still think we need to keep on trying for any grant whether it be for a policemen's revolver or anything, whatever it is.

Like I say, when somebody says, aging of equipment, there's quite a few communities around the area and I'm not going to name them on the microphone that have older equipment than we do and I think we need to invest in putting some money back into them if they needed repair to keep them a few more years. These are big expensive tickets, I've asked for a couple years back to have a line item for equipment to spread it over a five or six year period instead of one \$600,000.00 bill every year for equipment. This could have been of great help this year if we'd had done that a year and a half ago.

Mr. Stuchell – I don't totally disagree with what's being said but not just the fact that we have aging equipment there, we also have equipment that no longer meets certain safety standards that might be beyond just a standard repair of an engine, we're talking complete rehab to bring them up to standard so that's where I'm coming from, I'm not disagreeing with what he's saying, making an investment and upkeep of equipment is important and if we can prolong it, fine, but we're at the point where we need to look at some replacement.

Bob Hausfeld, - Just a couple of last things I was thinking of, first of all, a grant writer, why don't we look at maybe a couple of our employees that are pretty good at things, sending them through school, get them into that stuff. You know there's some guys around here I'm sure they could do a decent job at that. Before I say what I want to say, I'm first going to say that, you know with the budget and the reserves we do have to watch our spending in the City, we can't spend like we have in the past. What I was saying that I did talk to a couple of citizens yesterday on the street and actually they started talking to me about things, about how well the City has been doing the last two years compared to what we thought we were going to be at and it's just something to think about, the two guys I was talking to, they were pretty upset, either A. they wanted to see their services restored to where they were, which I understand, you know we have to be careful on how we spend and I understand that but they were upset because they're paying more taxes, a lot more taxes on property and their services are cut, I know some of the elderly people are, the Dial-a-Ride is a big thing to them, but anyway they either want to see the services restored back to the normal or see some kind tax, I guess you could call it a roll back, you know if the City wasn't in the bad shape that they thought they were in, how about giving some of the taxes back to the citizens. That is just something that they brought to me and said something to me and I just thought I'd pass it on to you guys because both of those ideas sound like good ideas to me either you know lets increase some of the services that we took away from the citizens or lets give them some money back you know there's a few things, Dial-a-Ride, I definitely think the older people in town definitely need it and they might need a little bit more hours, I don't know if you bring it back quite the same but it's something to look at. A fire inspector in the fire dept. I definitely think is an important thing. The police dept. I think they're all important buy anyway that's all I want to say.

Mrs. Brickweg – Just to what Phil said, I agree 100% and I brought it up at the budget committee this year. What happened, I mean that was a great idea, the \$300,000.00 line item for equipment and it wasn't in there last year, it's not in there this year coming up either. Like you just said, it would have

been so nice if we would have budgeted it, then we would at least have half of it. It kind of goes along with having a five year plan, we're not really thinking of the future here and I agree that that's something that we really need to think about and I could be wrong on this and I want to think it was Lockland but I'm not 100% sure, they have a grant writer that works on commission and brought in tons of money. The man that runs the Valley Courier knows the person. I'll try to get, well maybe Forrest knows the person too, but I know other communities are doing it and so maybe we can find out the way if its signing a contract or whatever it is on commission but I'm almost 100% sure that's how Lockland works and that's how they're getting a lot of their improvement and I just think we're missing a huge train to get on here with grant writers. I mean, there's money out there and we're just saying, we don't have the time to mess with it and I want to commend Chief Moeller and Chief Scherpenberg for taking the time because I tried to study grant writing, it doesn't look that easy you know but they've taken the time and put the effort into getting us some free money and we need to find somebody or hire somebody or commission them, but we need to open up our eyes and get on this band wagon and work on a grant writer but maybe if Forrest can say something about the Lockland, I will do my best to find more information also.

Forrest Hudson, 4297 Redwood Ter. – I believe the guys name is Creige, Kreage, he's the ex Hamilton County administrator that about a year and a half ago they released and he's, it's my understanding according to the editor from the Valley Courier, he's being paid a flat rate of \$50 an hour. I think that is what it is OK and you know before we get into a lengthy discussion as to whether a grant writer is legal or illegal, John could you ask Eddie for a clarification as to what we possibly could do about securing a grant writer? I think that that would be a simple approach to it.

Mr. Estep – I will and please don't interpret what I said wrong. I didn't say it was illegal, I just don't think it's legal to hire somebody on a commission basis. We could surely hire a grant writer, I think you have to budget those funds and that person is on a salary, I don't think you can pay them a commission, I think you're right though, the guy in Lockland, the former County Commissioner Cringes, I think he gets \$50.00 an hour, just on a commission.

Forrest Hudson, 4297 Redwood Ter. – I think that's what their rate is and the other point was Mrs. Brickweg when you were talking about longevity, I think it's in the fire dept. I believe is seven years step up pay from point of entry and I believe the police dept. is five years, four or five years, so these people don't walk into top salary. OK? The three depts.. I believe Service, Police and Fire are evaluated on the job performance each year. In fact it was part of the documentation for the lay off procedure that we followed.

Ms. Hausfeld – One more thing about what Phil was asking about as far as the equipment outlay program that you suggested, I was actually late at that Finance Committee meeting and I did not realize that it had already been mentioned, but when I mentioned it I was told that they didn't want to put say \$300,000.00 aside every year for that one particular line item because they did not want to tie their hands in case an emergency came up or

whatever that we could not use that money. That was what another point as far as that equipment outlay.

Phil Stegman, 19 Orchard – Yes, Patty, yes you are right, there was a big debate about taking money and putting it into a fund or an account that couldn't be used for various things and I think Walt looked into that and found out they could but it was still somebody didn't want put money into a fund because then it wouldn't be spent for stuff that is was going to be spent for. We know, you know, everybody knows we're going to need this equipment, it's just a matter of time, when it's going to be spent. We know we're going to have to replace fire trucks, we know just like right now, next year I think we're going to be budgeting for Police cars. Every three years we have to budget for five Police cars. Are we looking for grant money for that now so that we should move that next year? These are the things that need to be looked at now, but these equipments are being replaced every year. We know it, it comes in the budget, you can look back the last ten years. Every year we're spending x amount of dollars, it's not like we're not putting it into a fund that's going to sit there and never be spent.

Mr. Zix – Yes, these are all correct, the Finance Committee did not recommend the equipment fund this time. The reason was just that. That was our recommendation, we did not want to tie the money up. The money was there and we'd use it this way until we still turn the corner on our finances and that's why the proposal wasn't there from us.

Mr. St. Clair – Greg, just one comment on what Mr. Hausfeld was talking about, about the possible restoration of services or a tax rebate to property owners. The rate that expenses go up will be much higher than the rates that our revenues will be going up, so the caution there is, yes, we're building up some reserves but the rate that the expenses will go up over the next few years will, the revenues will remain flat now. The expenses will not. That's one caution on tax rebates and bringing back services.

Mrs. Brickweg – Just to ask a question on that, Walt, if we think the revenues are going to be flat now, I would like, maybe the tax commissioner or somebody can give us an explanation to why because over the last two years they were going to be flat or low and we brought in two million more so it's OK but when someone makes a statement like that I think we need to start backing it up with some figures to tell me why it's going to be flat.

Mr. St. Clair – That was just off the top of my head, I don't want anybody to put my feet to the fire with that statement. It's just that, let me just say that the rate of increase to the revenues will not be at the same rate of expenses.

Mr. Estep – If we could, just so we don't overlook former Mayor Red Young, his wife Marian passed away this week and if we could just have a moment of silence for her.

Mr. Burkhardt – The next COW will be Thursday, January 11, at 7:30p.m. and also we do have a Council meeting January 4th at 7:30p.m. so everybody is aware of that.

Motion by Mr. Zix, seconded by Mr. Asbach to adjourn. Motion passed 7-0.