

**MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF AVON, OHIO HELD MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2024
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
AT 7:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Council Members: 1st Ward – Jennifer Demaline; 2nd Ward - Dennis McBride; 3rd Ward - Tony Moore; Council-at-Large – Michelle Patton; 4th Ward - Scott Radcliffe; Council-at-Large and Council President – Brian Fischer; Mayor – Bryan Jensen; City Engineer – Ryan Cummins; Planning/Economic Development Coordinator – Pam Fechter; Law Director – John Gasior; Finance Director – Steve Presley; Safety/Public Service Director – Duane Streater; Clerk of Council – Barbara Brooks

ABSENT: Council-at-Large – Mary Berges

1. UPDATE ON THE SERVICES THAT COMMUNITY RESOURCE SERVICES PROVIDED TO RESIDENTS OF AVON IN 2023 Pam Ohradzansky, Executive Director of CRS

Ms. Ohradzansky thanked Council for allowing her the opportunity to give an update on what has been happening at CRS and the assistance that they provided to the residents of Avon in 2023. She thanked them for their generous support that the Council and the City provides to CRS every year. The funding that Avon provides is critical to their ability to help the Avon residents who are struggling, and it is the foundation for the success that CRS has seen. CRS experienced a very busy and successful 2023 with countless examples of assistance with emergency needs as well as support through our personal development program. They served a total of 636 individual Avon residents from 212 households; that is 34 senior citizens, 258 adults and 344 children that CRS served through one or more of their many assistance programs. Ms. Ohradzansky said their biggest program continues to be the food pantry. Residents of Avon accessed the food pantry over 2100 times in 2023. Additionally, CRS distributed 208 food-only gift cards so that people could purchase perishable food items. In 2023, CRS distributed over 104,000 pounds of food to both the Avon and Avon Lake residents combined. The food pantry is stocked many through food drives from local churches, schools, businesses, and organizations but also from individuals who drop by to support their local food pantry with donations. She gave a special shoutout to the Avon Meijer store as they continue to be a big donor to the food pantry. Since the Avon Meijer store opened their doors in May of 2019, they have donated over \$35,000 in food gift cards through their Simply Give campaign that CRS uses to purchase items for the food pantry. Ms. Ohradzansky stated this incredible support from Meijer has really enabled CRS to expand and enhance what they are able to offer in the way of perishable food items. CRS has a volunteer who goes shopping at the Meijer store once a week for perishable food items that they then are able to distribute to their clients. CRS also provides financial assistance for emergency expenses for things like rent, car repairs, utilities, school fees, medical assistance, eye exams, eyes glasses and other emergency expenses.

Ms. Ohradzansky advised using all funding sources CRS helped 115 households with rent or mortgage assistance totaling \$57,550.00. CRS provided financial assistance 140 times to prevent utility disconnections totaling \$29,455.03. CRS spent \$23,421.76 on car repairs and distributed \$5,818.75 worth of fuel only gift cards. She said that the categories of the type of assistance that CRS has provided from both the \$30,000 received from the City of Avon and all of the funding sources combined are detailed on the one hand out with the total spent on assistance to Avon residents in 2023 at over \$181,000. This amount is an increase from 2021 where the total spent was approximately \$104,000 and \$162,000 was spent in 2022. In 2023 they had 4,789 requests for one or more types of assistance. CRS's seasonal programs continue to be very well utilized and they had 254 children from Avon receive toys, coats, pajamas and family baskets from CRS's Santa's Workshop. 162 Avon students received backpacks, school supplies, a Kohl's gift card, a Famous Footwear gift card and a Walmart gift card for other incidentals through the School Readiness program. CRS also distributed Easter baskets; holiday food baskets for Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving; Mother's Day gifts to do a little something extra and special for our families.

Ms. Ohradzansky provided an update on the enhanced client Personal Development program that was started a couple of years ago. As a reminder, CRS expanded their definition of basic needs assistance to include Personal Development programs with the opportunity for scholarships or payment of fees for various programs. CRS created a referral system within the staff where they would talk to a client and figure out what they needed and what could help them move forward in life and possibly paying for the program. She said CRS paid for probably 6 or 7 women to get their STNA State testing license, which helps them move forward and earn a better living. Topics in the Personal Development program include financial literacy, health and wellness, education, and job training. CRS also provides opportunities for students such as job training classes as well as babysitting and lifeguarding at the YMCA. Additionally, participation in extra-curricular or educational summer camps. Avon families accessed one or more of these Personal Development programs more than 200 times. This includes 14 families that have been able to join the French Creek YMCA because of the partnership that CRS has formed with them.

Ms. Ohradzansky stated that most recently she has been working on a partnership with the Avon Little League and she was just notified that the Avon Little League is going to waive the registration fees for their summer softball and baseball programs for all CRS clients. She said they will be pushing out that information starting tomorrow to get some kids signed up for that program. It is so important for these kids to participate in things like this to feel like they belong and to have something constructive to do with their time. Ms. Ohradzansky advised she is grateful to the Avon Little League Board for helping CRS breakdown some of the barriers to these children being able to participate. The Avon Little League provides pretty much everything to these kids with the exception of cleats and gloves, which CRS also assists with providing.

Ms. Ohradzansky advised CRS is so grateful for so many community partners that help them be able to do what they do, whether it is Rays Auto or Discount Tire that CRS trusts to give estimates on clients' cars, or the schools, churches, and businesses that support CRS in many different ways. She said CRS also could not do what they do without the generous support that they receive for all their programs and that includes monetary and in-kind donations from all of the local organizations, businesses and churches as well as the grants from private foundations including of course the grant that CRS receives from the City of Avon. Ms. Ohradzansky stated CRS has the most amazing volunteers many of whom live in Avon, from the front desk volunteers to the pantry volunteers and the many women who serve on the volunteer fundraising committee.

Ms. Ohradzansky said the biggest fundraiser is the annual Charity Ball, which is coming up on April 20, 2024 at the Shipyards in Lorain. The ball is a formal event featuring a sit-down dinner, music, dancing, auctions, and raffles, with all kinds of ways to raise money for CRS. Those tickets will be going on sale at the beginning of March, and she invited the Council and Administration to go to their website and purchase tickets or she is happy to send them a hard copy invitation if requested. It is predicted that this event will sell out as it did last year.

Ms. Ohradzansky stated CRS also has the Souper Bowl food drive, which is a friendly competition between Avon and Avon Lake to see which community can raise the most money and food for CRS. The Souper Bowl winner is announced at half-time of the Avon vs. Avon Lake football game. Since its inception in 2010, the Souper Bowl food drive has raised almost \$170,000 in monetary donations and over \$84,000 pounds of food. It is CRS's biggest food drive and fundraiser outside of the Charity Ball. She congratulated Avon for winning the coveted Souper Bowl trophy for five years and counting. It is an extremely competitive fundraiser.

Ms. Ohradzansky advised that at CRS they help so many people that are really just trying to do their best to make ends meet. It might be a single parent working one job, it might be a senior citizen on a fixed income, or it might be someone who just recently lost their job or had some kind of medical emergency. Many people moved to Avon because they want to raise their family in a safe neighborhood and send their kids to excellent schools, but because they are working paycheck to paycheck or living on a fixed income, one catastrophic event such as a car repair or missing work to care for a sick child can have a devastating effect on the household finances. The impact of increased costs for basic essentials like food, gas and rent are significantly greater for low-income families because these essentials represent a larger portion of their household income. At CRS they know that at any given time anyone might find themselves in need. With the help of so many who support CRS, they are often able to help them get through their difficult times. As they look ahead, CRS is more committed than ever to a

vision of a community where everyone is free from poverty and all individuals have the opportunity to thrive regardless of their economic circumstances. She thanked City Council again for allowing her to speak and for their support as it is greatly appreciated.

Mr. McBride said they know this is a great program. He remembered back to when he was serving his first term on Council and Mayor Jensen was a Council Member and it was a big step to decide whether to give an outside entity money. Mr. McBride stated CRS has served a lot of Avon residents. He advised it seemed as if there was a big jump in the number of people served from 2022 to 2023. Mr. McBride asked about the fastest growing category.

Ms. Ohradzansky said from 2021 to 2022 it was car repairs and stated they could imagine as CRS's clients are not out buying new cars but are trying to fix the ones they have, and car repairs can be very expensive. From 2022 to 2023 the fastest growing category was rent. Ms. Ohradzansky advised rent has gone through the roof and income has not gone up as much. In 2022 CRS went from \$41,000 in 2023 to over \$57,000 in rent assistance. The average rent payment that CRS assisted with was \$500.

Mr. McBride asked if it was safe to assume these are lower income individuals.

Ms. Ohradzansky answered absolutely. She said CRS's guidelines for a household are 200% of the federal poverty guideline or under or a loss of 50% of the household income. An example would be for a family of 4 earning a \$60,000 annual income or less to qualify for assistance at CRS.

Mayor Jensen thanked Ms. Ohradzansky for what she and her organization do for residents. He said hearing the stories about how CRS has helped so many people in different areas especially with food and while they are a no judgment zone, people are also having to meet the guideline criteria for their need. Mayor Jensen advised many want to help people in need, but they want to give a hand up and not a handout. He felt CRS does that for people and still allows for them to have some dignity and gives them a safe place to seek help. Thank you very much.

Ms. Ohradzansky stated she has to give full credit to her staff and said they are the most compassionate, hardworking, kind women. She said it can be the hardest thing for some people to ask for help and the ladies who work at CRS including the volunteers at the front desk make everyone feel so comfortable, worthy and heard. Sometimes people just come to talk and they at CRS are there for that as well. Ms. Ohradzansky advised they are glad that they can do the hard work of making sure they have all their income and residency information, and sometimes they provide some tough love, but they form those relationships so that they can do that.

Mayor Jensen asked if she was seeing more of the senior population needing assistance.

Ms. Ohradzansky advised seniors were CRS's biggest increase in demographics in 2023 but it was all in Avon Lake. She said last March was when the temporary pandemic food stamps ended, and a lot of seniors only use CRS for food. CRS went from around 130 to 180 seniors who sought assistance in 2023, but it was almost all in Avon Lake where there is a bigger senior population.

No further comments were made.

2. [ORDINANCE NO. 20-24 – APPROVING THE EDITING AND INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ORDINANCES AS PARTS OF THE VARIOUS COMPONENT CODES OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR THE ADOPTION AND PUBLICATION OF NEW MATTER IN THE UPDATED AND REVISED CODIFIED ORDINANCES; REPEALING ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS IN CONFLICT THEREWITH](#) Mr. Gasior

Mr. Gasior advised Section One is fairly straightforward as those are the Ordinances that Council passed last year and he did not see a problem with any of them. Section Two deals with legislation that the State may have passed and it could have an impact on our Ohio Revised Code. He said there were updates to the Traffic Code

and General Offenses Code. Mr. Gasior stated he would be going through those updates and double check to make sure there was not anything in there that might be unusual. He suggested that Council should feel free to look the updates over as well. Mr. Gasior advised when the State Legislature passes laws of a general nature, for example there may be a provision about reckless driving that was updated then it would appear in that section of the Traffic Code. He said it is up to the City to decide whether to adopt that change that the Ohio State Legislature passed or as a Home Rule City, they can elect to keep Avon's Code the way it stands. Mr. Gasior stated that is something they could look at over the next couple of weeks, because he does not believe they will be acting on this Ordinance until March 11, 2024. He said if Council has any questions they could give him a call any time but other than that this is a boilerplate piece of legislation.

3. ORDINANCE NO. 21-24 – TO AWARD A BID FOR THE LONG ROAD PAVEMENT RESURFACING PROJECT Mr. Cummins

To Be Addressed at a Special Meeting Immediately Following this Work Session

Mr. Cummins advised bids were opened on January 8, 2024, for the Long Road Resurfacing Project and they received seven bids that included an excellent selection of companies with good prices with the low bidder being Specialized Construction Inc. He said Specialized Construction Inc. did a couple of projects in Avon last year and they did a nice job and worked well with the City and his staff at CVE. Mr. Cummins stated based on the bid that Specialized Construction Inc. submitted, it was found to be complete and based on that he would recommend that they be considered the lowest and best bid for the Long Road Resurfacing Project.

Mrs. Demaline advised she is pleased to see that the lowest bid came in at 19% under the engineer's estimate. She asked if he would attribute that to the project being scheduled and the work will be completed early in the season.

Mr. Cummins believes that is part of the reason. He advised they anticipated that the asphalt prices would continue to rise and that turned out to not be the case, at least in these initial bids. Mr. Cummins said being early in the year for this work when all the contractors are hungry is certainly a factor contributing to a good selection of seven bidders competing. He stated all those factors came together for the City to get some really good prices.

Mrs. Demaline asked when he anticipates the project getting underway once the legislation was approved.

Mr. Cummins advised it likely will not get started until mid-April, which is generally when the asphalt plants open up.

Mr. Fischer advised it was nice to see a bid come in at 19% under the engineer's estimate.

4. ORDINANCE NO. 22-24 – TO AWARD A BID FOR THE SCHWARTZ ROAD PAVEMENT RESURFACING PROJECT Mr. Cummins

To Be Addressed at a Special Meeting Immediately Following this Work Session

Mr. Cummins advised the bids were also opened for the Schwartz Road pavement project on January 8, 2024. He said they also received seven bids for this project and Specialized Construction Inc. was also the low bidder for this project. Mr. Cummins stated the low bid also came in at roughly 19% below the engineer's estimate. He advised while there was not as big of a gap between bids, they still received very good prices. Mr. Cummins said again this is a company that has performed well recently in the City of Avon and based on those facts he would recommend that they be considered the lowest and best bidder for the Schwartz Road Resurfacing Project. He advised Specialized Construction has been around for a few decades. Last year was the first year that they were successful in a long time in winning bids in Avon. Previously, they bid sporadically over the years since Mr. Cummins has been here. He said but they are a well-known company in this area and have a good reputation all around.

Mr. Fischer asked about the timeline for this project to begin.

Mr. Cummins stated once this legislation awards them the bid and they get the contracts all signed then there will be conversations about scheduling and there will be a pre-construction meeting in mid-March or so. That is when

they will really know how this company is going to attack these two projects, whether the crews go from one to the other or how that was all going to work. He indicated there would be more information to come, but he anticipates them getting started in mid-April.

Mr. Radcliffe said after the pre-construction meeting, he would love to hear the timeline and how they were going to coordinate the two projects whether simultaneously or one then the other. He stated the residents on each of these streets want their street to be completed first and it would not be an issue if two different companies were awarded these contracts.

Mr. Cummins advised there are different crews that do different parts of the work and he could envision something where they would plane one area for one of the projects and then that crew moves over and starts working on the other project. He said they do have tight time limits on how long the planed asphalt surface can be open to traffic so they do not want that to drag on too long. Mr. Cummins stated they will have all those conversations with the contractor and when they get ready to get started on the work, he would convey all that information back to City Council.

Mayor Jensen advised last year when this company did some work for the City, they hit it hard. He said once they got started, they moved from the one area to the next. Mayor Jensen stated he believes they will be one of the first projects of the season for this company.

Mr. Cummins clarified this company did Just Imagine Drive and they also did the improvement on Main Street and Middle Road.

Mrs. Demaline said she again is pleased to see that the lowest bid came in 19% below the engineers estimate. She asked if they would be looking at adding any other projects since that leaves them with some additional funding similar to what they did with Northgate last year.

Mr. Cummins advised he and Mayor Jensen had a brief conversation about possibility last week. He was sure they would be having more discussion about that as well as talking to the contractor to see what areas make sense to bring something back to Council and issue a change order to the contract that would allow the contractor to do additional work.

Mrs. Demaline thanked them for the forethought.

5. [ORDINANCE NO. 23-24](#) – AMENDING SECTION 1042.02(e) OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF AVON TO PROVIDE FOR PAYMENT OF SANITARY SEWER TAP FEES THROUGH A VOLUNTARY ASSESSMENT COLLECTED ALONG WITH THE PROPERTY OWNER'S REAL ESTATE TAXES

Mayor Jensen

Mayor Jensen indicated there have been some discussions about providing assistance by way of allowing residents to pay for their sanitary sewer tap-in fees over time through their real estate taxes if needed. He said in talking with Mr. Presley and the Utilities Department it would be nice to have this tool available to the City to be able to assist residents should they need it. Mayor Jensen advised North Ridgeville has a program similar to this to assist residents and he believes there would be very few residents who would need to utilize this option, but as the City looks at installing sewers in other areas of the City this would be a help for those who need it.

6. [RESOLUTION NO. R-14-24](#) – TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS FOR THE 2024 PAVEMENT MARKING PROGRAM

Mr. Cummins

To Be Addressed at a Special Meeting Immediately Following this Work Session

Mr. Cummins advised this Resolution would authorize the public bid of the 2024 Pavement Marking Program. He said the City did not do a Pavement Marking Program in 2023. The thought was that there had been a mild winter that year and the markings did not take such a hit through the wintertime, so they stretched it over two years. Mr.

Cummins stated they will advertise and receive public bids and come back to Council with those results and ask to award a contract.

Mr. McBride advised at one point the City had a lot of reflectors on the lines on the streets particularly near the intersections. He asked if replacing some of those was part of the bid and if not, could they ask for some alternate bids to include doing those.

Mr. Cummins advised he is happy to talk that over with the Service Department and see how they want to proceed. He explained it was under the direction of the Service Department that they have not replaced some of those in many areas. Mr. Cummins said he was happy to open that discussion and see what the preference would be and if they need to have an alternate bid item or go back to installing those in certain areas that was something they certainly could do.

Mr. McBride advised there was an attitude among some of the past Service Department employees that these reflectors do not stay in the pavement and the snowplows knock them out. He said but his attitude was that perhaps they were not being installed correctly as ODOT seems to be able to get it right and he did not understand why Avon was having so much trouble. Mr. McBride stated it would be nice to have them as they were a help during inclement weather.

7. REPORTS AND COMMENTS

MAYOR JENSEN advised in talking with Mr. Streater, that the owners of the property were contacted, referring to a property adjacent to Mrs. Demaline's property by the ditch. He said hopefully those property owners would be starting to get that area cleaned out. Mayor Jensen stated the City was in a bit of a quandary as to how the City was going to access the easement area, but it sounds as if the bank that owns that area is going to be cleaning it up so that will help.

Mayor Jensen advised Mrs. Demaline also asked about the barn located across the right-of-way on the corner Moon and Detroit Roads. He said Mr. Gasior is again working this week on trying to contact the property owner to discuss removing that structure and install sidewalks along that right-of-way.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

MS. BERGES, AT LARGE was absent.

MRS. DEMALINE, WARD 1 thanked Mayor Jensen for the follow-up. It is appreciated.

MR. MCBRIDE, WARD 2 advised this is a follow-up as there is an abandoned swimming pool in the Northgate Subdivision. He understands it is currently winter, but spring is just around the corner and then the complaints will start coming in as the weather warms about mosquitos breeding in the abandoned swimming pool. Mr. McBride explained it is an absentee landlord situation and there is a renter who really should not be in charge of cleaning up the landlord's pool. He said It has been like that a number of years and it would be great to be able to jump on that.

Mr. McBride said the other follow-up was that he has not heard any complaints from the nextdoor neighbor about the house that has been being remodeled for the last ten years on Chester Road just west of 83 on the southside. He said the owner does not live in the City and is rehabbing the house very slowly. It would be nice to just be able to get it done or tear it down, he did not really care which.

MR. MOORE, WARD 3 advised he would be absent for next week's meeting on February 26, 2024.

MS. PATTON, AT LARGE had no comments.

MR. RADCLIFFE, WARD 4 had no comments.

MR. FISCHER, AT LARGE advised the solar eclipse will be occurring on April 8, 2024 and since that is on a Monday, they should think about moving the meeting to another date. He said in talking with Mr. Streator and Mr. Gasior and since they have no idea how congested the traffic was going to be he suggested they have a combined meeting night of a Work Session and a Regular Meeting on April 1, 2024. Mr. Fischer stated as the date draws closer, he would be working with Mr. Gasior to make sure that everything is coordinated for the meetings and get legislation passed.

Mrs. Demaline pointed out that she will more than likely be absent on April 1, 2024. She agreed it was good to plan ahead.

Mr. Fischer advised he would take that into consideration.

Mr. Fischer wished everyone a Happy President's Day!

DIRECTORS/ADMINISTRATION:

MR. CUMMINS, CITY ENGINEER advised in talking with Mr. Gasior about the sidewalk program and moving toward having a Resolution of Necessity for the various proposed improvement areas around the first set of meetings in March. He said if there are any other revisions or additions to the sidewalk areas that he noted previously, please let him know because they are starting to put together a listing of addresses and preparing the resident letters and all those items.

MS. FECHTER, PLANNING/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR wished Mr. Radcliffe as Happy Birthday!

MR. GASIOR, LAW DIRECTOR had no comments.

MR. PRESLEY, FINANCE DIRECTOR had no comments.

MR. STREATOR, SAFETY DIRECTOR/PUBLIC SERVICE DIRECTOR had no comments.

AUDIENCE:

There were no comments from the audience members.

8. ADJOURN: 8:07 p.m.
There being no further business, the Work Session of Council was adjourned.

PASSED: _____

SIGNED BY: _____
Brian Fischer, Council President

ATTEST: _____
Barbara Brooks, Clerk of Council