

CITY OF GROVE CITY, OHIO

COUNCIL MINUTES

November 13, 2017

Finance Committee Meeting

The Finance Committee meeting of Council was called to order by Chair Davis at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 4035 Broadway.

Roll was called and the following members were present:

Steve Bennett *Steven Robinette* *Roby Schottke* *Jeff Davis* *Ted Berry*

1. Mr. Davis explained that we will be hearing from some members and organizations that receive funding from the City. We will also hear from some members who collaborate with the City.

City Contracts:

- a. Mr. Stephen Smith, Dir. of Law, explained the annual contract with the City for legal services. He passed out a letter showing the agreement for 2018. He said they provide municipal services for most of the Cities & Villages in Franklin County. He said there have been 24 lawyers in their firm that has worked on matters for Grove City in the last year. He said all monies go to legal services and nothing is used for overhead. Mr. Smith said he is the full-time Law Director for the City. He oversees the other attorneys that cover services for the City, such as - Planning Commission, BZA, Mayors Court, and other legal services. They have a flat rate for the General Retainer. There are some other matters that could fall outside the general retainer, which are billed hourly. When an issue falls outside the General Retainer, a proposal is submitted to the City Administrator for the cost of that issue. The final amount is negotiated with Mr. Boso and agreed to. Mr. Davis had many questions for Mr. Smith about his services. He asked when the last time this contract was bid. Mr. Smith said the Law Director has never been bid out to his knowledge. Mr. Robinette asked if there is something legally we should be doing that we don't. Mr. Smith said probably more trainings on issues.
- b. Mr. Mike Keller, Consulting Engineer with EMH&T, explained the contract with the City for engineering services. He has been providing engineering services for Grove City for the past 36 years. He has been part of those services for 17 years. He is the City's point person for all City personnel. He said they assist with finding funding for large capital projects. They have a basic service rate of \$100,000.00 for the year. Then there project specific service and those costs are negotiated with the Administrator. The third level of support is developer deposit support, such as plan review, inspections, etc. He said they also go through an annual renewal for their contract. They try to be a one-stop shop. Mr. Robinette asked if they still provide GIS service. Mr. Keller said they do a few items and help support it, but 80% has been transferred to in-house staff. Mr. Robinette asked who owns all the knowledge he & his firm have. Mr. Keller said it's in the GIS system and it's at the Service Dept. Council clarified certain services provided. Mr. Davis asked the last time this contract was bid. Mr. Keller said it was 2008. In 2011, the City did a Request for Qualifications.

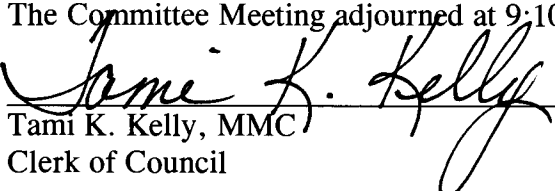
Funded Organizations:

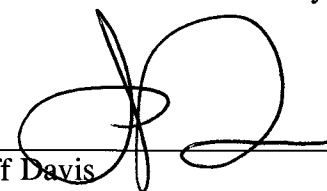
- a. Ms. Amanda Davis, Director of the Grove City Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, provided a presentation about the services they provide the City. She explained that they also go by Visit Grove City. After a professional review of their organization was completed, they chose to also market as Grove City Adventure. She shared their brand narrative. Portions include: "Altogether Adventure" "Preservation with a purpose" & "Grove City is up for fun and down to earth". They hope each organization will adopt this brand narrative and use their words to include their organizations within it. She shared their awards; the top events; the top website pages reviewed on their website; the number of guides distributed; welcome bags for weddings, etc. She shared a Power Point presentation of the marketing they do for the City. There is also a new UTube video that can be accessed. She said in order to increase collaboration and partnership with Town Center, Inc., the Chamber and City they will be moving their offices back to the Town Center. They will be ramping up their retail center; have art shows and special hours during special events. Mr. Davis said he is excited to hear about the collaboration efforts. He is very interested in becoming more unified. Ms. Davis said they are hoping to get everyone at the table so there is some type of uniform branding. Each entity has their own audience and being on the same page can bring all parties together. Mr. Robinette asked questions about more hotel and meeting space. He asked what the opportunities to increase visitors are. Ms. Davis said there is a halo effect to say "we are a suburb of Columbus" that gets us more visitors. She said we can start talking locally to change the perception and educate our residents so we all speak so highly about our community. Mayor Stage said they promote Grove City well. He asked for some figures for: daytrips, blocks of rooms reserves; average weekday and weekend vacancy. He asked how the \$1,600,000.00 has been used. He asked about the current lease and if they are on the hook for the last year, since they are moving back to the Town Center. Ms. Davis said they are looking for someone to sublease the existing space for the final year of their lease agreement.
- b. Mr. Andy Furr, Director of Town Center, Inc., provided a review of the services they provide the Town Center and the City. He provided a history of how the Town Center, Inc. came to be. He said their goal and objective is, and will continue to be, in. Their mission is. He said their focus has been many over the years. Their Facebook page has exploded since its inception. They have built relationship with the Town Center Property Owners and help them promote space openings. They also provide a Town Center education packet with new tenants. They attempt to make people aware of what the Town Center is and have local contacts. He said their Board has created a process so they can integrate the business owners, when there are events in the Town Center. He discussed their very popular events. He said when he started there were more service oriented businesses and now there are more retail businesses. Mr. Davis asked what challenges remain. He said space availability is becoming a nice issue to have. Mr. Davis asked about collaborative efforts. Mr. Furr said having a unified message is big advantage. He said they have meetings and the energy is great. Mr. Schottke asked how much of the City's grant dollars fund their budget. Mr. Furr said they have a reimbursable grant and it currently funds 75% of their budget. They are working to become a 501c3 in order to gain other monies. Mr. Robinette asked if we are all working together to move in the same direction. Mr. Furr said he believes it is moving in the right direction. Mayor Stage asked if they are part of the Grant Program for business owners, at all. Mr. Furr explained how they are involved with that program. They do have a Block Grant from the Franklin County Commissioners for a portion of their membership fees.

Special Guest Presentations:

- a. Mr. Matt Yerkes, Ex. Dir. of Cultivate, shared slides about his company and the outcomes for Grove City economic development. He said they are partly funded by the City with a three year - \$25,000.00 per year Grant. He shared that they have helped start seven businesses and are 17 resident companies in the old Hardware store; 50 member companies; and have 100 employees working out of their building. He said they meet with entrepreneurs every week and direct them to resources. He said their board came up with the Unified Economic Development Platform to further engage entrepreneurs and get them to start their business in Grove City. He said with help from the City, they feel this could bring the CV B, Town Center & Chamber together to unify all their efforts. They propose to build an e-commerce platform to promote/buy local product makers. The second platform would be an on-line site database of all commercial properties listed. The Third platform is to promote and host monthly learning events to draw people to Grove City. This would help provide a pathway for companies to do business with the big guys. He would create a database of who is buying what, so businesses could buy with each other in Grove City. He said they have developed a pathway to assist businesses in getting started. He finally showed their funding conduit. It showed the existing \$25,000.00 from the City and their request for new funding from the city of \$100,000.00. Other funding would come from corporate funding of \$80,000.00. Mr. Davis asked for the challenges for their efforts. Mr. Yerkes said there is a limited amount of space to start up a small business. Mr. Robinette asked if this would be in competition with Real Estate agents. Mr. Yerkes said they would list all properties, not just those with agents. Mr. Robinette asked if the \$100,000.00 is seed money or an ongoing request. Mr. Yerkes said it is operational funding and would be an on-going effort. Mr. Bennett asked how they are doing in retaining these new businesses and continue to keep them in Grove City. Mr. Yerkes said once they leave their building, they have no control over where they go. He said their whole goal is to promote Grove City and bring jobs to Grove City. He said they work with existing businesses to help them grow and continue to thrive in the City. Mayor Stage asked if being in the Town Center still has a great deal of appeal. Mr. Yerkes said yes. The CVB helps them tell that story and make Grove City and the Town Center more appealing.
- b. Ms. Shawn Conrad, Director of the Grove City Area Chamber of Commerce, presented information about the Chamber. Their goal is to promote and support Grove City businesses. She said they are the third largest Chamber in Central Ohio. They are successful through their partnerships. They receive tremendous support from the City. She said they will continue to seek ways to make a better Grove City and keep Grove City first.

The Committee Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.


Tami K. Kelly, MMC
Clerk of Council


Jeff Davis
Finance Chair