

**Ravenna City Council Public Health and Safety Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 14, 2012**

The Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairman, Bruce Ribelin. Present were: Amy Michael, Scott Rainone, Frank Seman, Jack Ferguson, Fred Berry, Sharon Spencer and Fran Ricciardi. Also attending the meeting were Mayor Joe Bica; Service Director, Kelly Engelhart; Finance Director, Kim Cecora; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Marc Resnik of 1102 East Riddle Avenue, Ravenna and Nick Dudek of 328 North Prospect Street, Ravenna.

Mr. Ribelin said the first item on the agenda is the health task force update. He noted there was a very nice article about the new interim Health Director. It seems that he is highly qualified. For the money they are spending, he thinks they are getting a real bargain.

Ms. Engelhart said they are excited about the opportunities and potentials that lie ahead with the new health director. The update on the task force is that the task force is meeting again on June 5. As part of that meeting, they are also bringing the three boards of health together from both Kent City as well as Portage County prior to the task force meeting. Primarily, this was spearheaded from the fact that they have had a brand new board with several additional new board members to the board of health in Ravenna. They felt they needed some orientation to what does it mean to be a board of health member in regards to governance and their authority, etc. they are having a speaker come in from the National Associations of Local Boards of Health out of the Bowling Green area to give a presentation to all three boards of health. They felt if they were coming in for the City of Ravenna, they might as well have the same training done for all of the boards. They piggybacked on to the task force meeting so that the new members of the boards of health as well as those who had not been part of the task force process can also come and meet those representatives who are on the task force and talk about where they would like to see the movement go in regards to improving public health in Portage County.

Ms. Michael asked who are some of the new members of the health board now?

Ms. Engelhart said the new board members are Sandy Meyers who is a representative for Coleman Professional Services; Bill McClusky who lives in the Edinburg area and has a background in geriatrics and rehab. and health administration; Katy Dubinsky who is Kay Dubinsky's daughter who has a background in community health education, just recently graduated from Kent State University. She is by far the youngest board of health member. This is a diverse board with a lot of different expertise they were able to bring. They are excited about where the future might go with public health. One of the other updates is on the agenda.

Mr. Ribelin said the next item for discussion is the environmental study at the former street garage. There has already been a number of environmental studies down there.

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Mr. Cecora said this is the Tier 2 of the environmental remediation study. Bjaam performed the first part. The agenda item is to continue on with the environmental study. The proposal from Bjaam is in the amount of \$17,850.00 to conduct the Tier 2 environmental.

Mr. Ricciardi asked if there is ever an end to this.

Mayor Bica said there is. That is what they asked as well.

Mr. Cecora said that it's the Spruce Street location. It defines the scope of services.

Ms. Engelhart said her understanding is that this is site specific monitoring to the certain areas where most of the contamination was found. It's actually soil sampling so they can differentiate whether it was from a contamination or if it's something that was in the soil from asphalt or grindings that were there from when the street garage was there. The good news is that the wells that were sampled outside of the property have not contaminated outside of the city limits. The hope is that they can bring back to council, a covenant that the city will not allow that property to be utilized for anything else and the city will always own it so that they can get an end to this process.

Mayor Bica said they are going to do one last round of testing, isolate where the contamination is. As they enter into a covenant guaranteeing the EPA that the city will never build on there or put wells on there for drinking water, identify where the contamination is, remediate it, dig it up, clean it up and then they are pretty much done. They'll monitor it for one more year after that. Then they can get on with paving that lot, cleaning it back up. They don't want to do anything to that lot because they're just going to end up digging it up anyway. Entering into this covenant with the EPA allows them to have much higher contamination levels. You don't have to clean it up as clean as if it was going to be residential property. This is the best, most cost effective solution.

Mr. Ribelin asked how much of this work would be done in-house, for the cleanup.

Mayor Bica said they're not sure. The last cleanup estimate received, probably 16 or 18 months ago, they couldn't have handled it. They are at about \$150,000.00, worse case scenario of having an outside contractor do the cleanup. Sixteen or 18 months ago, it was more than \$300,000.00 because they were talking about going 12 feet deep. It's getting better. He knows it seems like it's draining them, all these small samplings but it's the process.

Mr. Ricciardi asked if, other than paving this property, would the city be able to utilize it for any other purpose.

Mayor Bica responded that it would be for any purpose they see fit. They just can't live on it or get water from it.

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Mr. Ricciardi asked if the city could place a structure on it and have people working there on a regular basis.

Mayor Bica responded in the affirmative. It can be commercial. It can be commercial/industrial.

Mr. Rainone asked if that is the plan right now so that the neighborhood won't be stuck with just an empty asphalt lot.

Mayor Bica said the intent, again, is to continue to clean it up, repave the lot. It will always be the police motor pool unless they decide to reuse it for something. They are going to tear down the salt storage shed, which is the probably the last eyesore down there. There may be additional cars parked down there only from an impound kind of thing but they don't anticipate any noticeable change for the residents down there. There are some vehicles in evidence but they are locked in the storage building. There are others that are impounded.

Mr. Ribelin said that building has been refurbished and the project looks really good.

Mr. Cecora said they're asking for an appropriation from the capital improvement fund; that's where they have done it historically. There will also be a contract.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that a tracking sheet would be submitted for Finance Committee approval.

Mr. Ribelin said the next item for discussion is the health department contract with KSU.

Ms. Engelhart said this is another opportunity that they felt, when they started looking at improving public health in the City of Ravenna and what is going to be needed. One of the things they talked about before with council is how do they begin to figure out where to put their limited resources in regards to public health and prevention if they're not exactly sure what their needs are. They were able to approach Kent State University through the College of Public Health. They prepared a proposal in that they would do three things to help out giving additional information to help the health commissioner and help the board of health make decisions. The first one was that they were going to do an operational assessment to look at what are the current services being provided at the health department. As part of that assessment, they would be interviewing city leadership, the health department staff, trying to look at what are those services. They would also look at examples of what are the same services provided in other health departments and use a model to say if the city is still going to provide those services, here is a different model of how you might provide them. The second piece KSU will be able to provide is to conduct a county level community health assessment. The reason they say county level is that it is very difficult to get health data drilled down to a city level. It's easier to get health data that is currently available at the county level. Initially they would be able to provide some data that would include the City of Ravenna but it wouldn't be just specific to the City of Ravenna. When they look at health data, they feel that when you look at health data across the county, the needs in the City of Ravenna are not necessarily going to be that much different than the health needs that are going to be out in the different communities.

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Ms. Engelhart said that the last piece is they talked about applying for the Local Government Innovation Fund Grant. That's the same grant they talked about for the asphalt. It's the same grant they talked about with the dispatch center. They would look at coming together with the other two health departments to apply for that grant and Kent State University would assist in writing that grant which is a huge asset to the city because of the time commitment that it takes just to write that grant and submit it. The county and the City of Kent did share with them last week that they are interested in collaborating with Ravenna. Ravenna, again, would be the lead agency. Primarily they find themselves being the lead agency because in the LGIF Grant, they give you extra points in regards to the scoring criteria to those communities that have the least population in the collaborative partner. Because Ravenna is the smallest, they would score the highest in that area.

Ms. Engelhart went on to say that what Kent State did was come to them with a proposal in regards to how much this would cost for them to provide these three services. Their actual estimate would be \$30,518.00 but they told them that the City could not support paying them \$30,518.00 so they are giving a \$10,518.00 in kind that the College of Public Health will actually cover that cost and that they could do these services for the City for \$20,000.00.

Ms. Engelhart said she really feels these are essential to kick start this new opportunity to defining what it is they want for public health in the City of Ravenna and it's a great opportunity to partner with the College of Public Health. They are the first ones to enter into this kind of agreement with the College of Public Health. When they talked to them about, why Ravenna, they said that the county or the City of Kent had not approached them yet. The money is currently budgeted but it's budgeted in the health commissioner salary line.

Mr. Ricciardi said if they are talking about Kent and the county health department entering into some form of collaboration, if not actually joining departments, perhaps they would be interested in at least funding a portion of the county study.

Mayor Bica said this is strictly City of Ravenna study.

Mr. Ricciardi said he understands but they have to go out into the county to acquire information to make this work and make a determination based on the countywide data as to what sort of health issues we would face as a city within the county.

Ms. Engelhart said there is not enough data available specific to just the City of Ravenna.

Mr. Ricciardi said that he is assuming that would be the case if it were strictly the City of Kent. If that information is going to help us, it would probably also help those two departments and perhaps when they come to be informed on June 5, someone might open some discussion with them about at least partially funding this study.

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Ms. Engelhart said that the county is also doing a community needs assessment through a grant they have but it is only specific to maternal child health. It is only addressing children up through the age of 18. What they hoped was that this component could be broader. They aren't going to replicate what is being done by the county. Let them focus on the kids and Ravenna City will take what information Kent State can provide and look at the populations over 18.

Mr. Ricciardi said that his understanding is that the county department is pretty well funded at the moment. Perhaps they would be willing to kick in a few bucks on this countywide study; maybe \$5,000.00 or \$8,000.00 would be helpful; maybe Kent will kick in \$2,000.00 or \$3,000.00, assuming they could be convinced that they will somehow benefit from this as well.

Mr. Rainone asked what the end result is of the Kent State study; is it the application for the Local Innovation Fund?

Ms. Engelhart said there are three end results. They are going to provide a report in regards to the operational assessment of what is currently being provided and some examples of how to do things differently in regards to the services or compare them with other departments and how those services are provided by those departments; then there is the assessment in that they will provide some actual analysis of the data. When she talks about health data is they can get a whole bunch of numbers on a spreadsheet and they can put that in front of the board of health but it doesn't mean anything unless it's actually analyzed by an epidemiologist, somebody who can take the numbers from a spreadsheet and turn it into information so that the board of health and the health commissioner can make informed decisions based on what the health needs are. That is the piece that Kent State can do that they don't have the expertise to do within the health department that nobody has really done countywide, City of Kent or the City of Ravenna for this community which has been basically providing public health services in regards what has been mandated by law or something you can generate a fee from.

Mr. Ricciardi asked if Ms. Engelhart is saying, assuming the go forward with this study and it is completed and they provide information, the city will then be able to determine what health needs our population requires and take some steps to provide those services.

Ms. Engelhart responded in the affirmative adding that the next step, based on that, is to take some of this data they are going to be collecting, help write the grant that the City could get up to \$100,000.00 for that could continue moving forward with developing the strategies needed to get resources into the right places. So they are actually going to improve health. When she talks about public health improvement, the biggest challenge is that the baseline is not measured. You can never tell if you're improving something if you don't know where you started. If you don't know for instance, improve childhood immunizations by 10%. What are the current childhood immunization rates or what is the obesity rate if they want to reduce the obesity rate from 30% of our population to 25%. They need to make sure they know where they are starting so that when they are measuring it along the way, they know they are actually having an impact in putting the resources in the right place.

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Mr. Rainone noted then their deliverables would be an action plan and best practices of where to go with the department, data set that will allow them to make decisions and may make them more competitive to get outside funding from either the government or foundations so it is really an investment in attraction.

Mayor Bica said that it's giving them a baseline. It's digging into what our community truly needs from a proactive public health approach as opposed to what they do now which is very little and they're not doing proactive, specifically about our community. It's more, what is mandated by the state regulations.

Mr. Ribelin said that he thinks sometimes people are thinking within the box and really don't have a vision as to what public health is really becoming, with an aging population, obese children and a variety of other things, he thinks this is a very visionary thing to do. He does believe, even if there is a merger, that there will be a lot of networking between the various departments.

Mr. Ricciardi said he thinks that is why he's saying they approach these other departments, they may be willing to fund at least a portion of this study and also, his biggest gripe is that they often do studies that they often pay a lot of money for and they often throw it in a drawer somewhere.

Ms. Michael asked about NEOMed. It seems they would be an ideal fit at some point.

Ms. Engelhart said NEOMed doesn't have the public health expertise and the epidemiologist is really what is needed. It's the people who are trained to take bio-statistics and data and turn it into information they have. NEOMed has medical research but they don't really have what is needed. When she worked at the county health department, they tried to contract NEOMed to do epidemiology for them but they weren't really able to provide what was needed.

Mr. Rainone said he thinks it is a hard pill because of the initial investment but just knowing how much money there is out there for prevention programs right now, it may pay off.

Ms. Engelhart said she doesn't think it's just a study, it's really going to be data they are going to be able to utilize when the grant is written.

Ms. Michael said with the new health commissioner's experience with public health, is he able to do more of the study or help Kent State.

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Ms. Engelhart responded in the negative stating not at 20 hours per week. That is the issue. That's part of the reason why they went to Kent State was because they are the analytical arm and that they could support the commissioner who is part-time to make the best informed decisions. What she doesn't want to see is that they continue to spend \$300,000.00 on a health department and they don't see they are improving the public health in our community. She wants to see that in the next five years that they have made some impact with those dollars. She thinks this is the first step in the process. It's never been done. She knows it is a lot to swallow.

Mr. Ricciardi said that obviously, it's going to be an important study if it's never been done, which says to him that other health departments in this county will benefit from this study, which takes him back to his broken record saying they need to see if the other departments are willing to kick in.

Ms. Engelhart said she will do that if they are willing to start forward with the process. They are going to start with the operational assessment first and before they get to the community assessment, she will talk with the other two departments and ask what, if anything, they can pitch in.

Mr. Ricciardi noted how much of this can they use and if they are going to use it, help us out.

Mayor Bica said the significance is this is with the City of Ravenna and not the City of Kent. This is going to be a significant collaborative effort with the university and our health department.

Mr. Ribelin said the new interim health director will be reporting directly to Ms. Engelhart who certainly has a lot of expertise in public health.

Mr. Rainone asked if this would involve or would it be another phase for asset mapping, once they figure out what the needs are and then figure out where they are going.

Ms. Engelhart said that would hopefully come out of part of this \$100,000.00 grant, if they are awarded.

Mr. Ricciardi said that it's his understanding that \$20,000.00 is available and not something they are going to have to reach back into the general fund and pull out some new amount.

Mr. Cecora said that it would be an interdepartmental fund transfer.

Ms. Engelhart said that doesn't take the entire amount that was budgeted for the health commissioner's salary so there is still a portion left there.

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Mr. Ricciardi asked if they are going to have to add to the part-time health commissioner's funding to pay him.

Mr. Cecora responded in the negative.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that a tracking sheet would be submitted for Finance Committee approval.

Mr. Ribelin said the next item for discussion is the FireCom radio equipment.

Ms. Engelhart said when they came and asked for the transfer of the equipment from FireCom to the township to the city. They neglected to realize they also needed a maintenance agreement. In order to protect the equipment, maintain it and make sure there are no problems with the equipment operating, a maintenance agreement is required. The amount is \$12,440.00 that would need to be appropriated into the dispatch line item. There currently is \$4,200.00 appropriated but it will need to be increased. So they will need about \$8,000.00 more.

Mr. Cecora said they will need to appropriate an additional \$12,000.00 on top of what is already in there.

Mr. Ricciardi asked if that is the contract price or just the appropriation that is needed.

Mr. Cecora said that the contract in front of them right now is \$12,400.00. Radio maintenance has \$2,634.00 right now which was left in tact. This was appropriated on top of that. This appropriation is requesting the full amount of the service contract. It does not net it out.

Mr. Ricciardi asked if that is for one year.

Mr. Cecora responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Ricciardi asked if every year they will have this repeating expense until the equipment gets so old it's not worth maintaining?

Mayor Bica said this is an emergency service contract agreement. Any time there is anything breaks, this is a 24 hour a day, seven day a week maintenance contract. That locks them in with the company for the maintenance of the equipment.

Mr. Ricciardi asked if they know whether or not the township had any problems in terms of this equipment.

Mayor Bica responded that they have not that he is aware of. They had the same type of maintenance agreement but with a different company.

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Mr. Ricciardi asked if there is a reason they are changing companies.

Mayor Bica said B&C handles all of the other radio equipment. They thought it would be best to standardize with a company that already handles it.

Mr. Ricciardi asked if the existing contract with B&C on the existing equipment is separate.

Mayor Bica responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Ricciardi asked how much that maintenance contract costs.

Mr. Cecora said he thinks it's about \$5,000.00 a year.

Ms. Michael said with what is going on with all of the different radio systems; what is the MARKS system; will this interfere with that system?

Mayor Bica said they have a couple of MARKS radios within the city but they do not currently subscribe or utilize any MARKS radio equipment.

Mr. Ricciardi said hears the Sheriff is thinking about going with MARKS because there are several dead spots in the county they are having problems with. MARKS is a real proprietary system. The radios, as they know, are very, very expensive. They are Motorola and about \$5,000.00 each.

Ms. Michael said she had heard there are other areas switching to that and she didn't know if Ravenna was equipped for that.

Mayor Bica said everybody in the county, except the Sheriff, has made a significant investment in the narrow banding VHF systems, including Ravenna City. It's a totally different, completely different network.

Ms. Engelhart said after looking at the service agreements, it appears they need to clarify with PD with regard to the actual amount. All of this might have been bundled together. Right now they are paying a daily rate to cover the equipment until they can get a service agreement signed.

Mr. Ribelin said he thinks they can agree to move it forward as long as they get the figures before Finance Committee.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that a tracking sheet would be submitted for Finance Committee approval.

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Mr. Ribelin said the next item on the agenda is the assistance to firefighters grant.

Ms. Engelhart said this was basically Chief Cleveland saying he would like for the ability to apply for the grant again this year. This is the same grant he has applied for every year and has not been awarded but is interested in applying again.

Mr. Ribelin said that in the past, he was approved for applying for this grant.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that a tracking sheet would be submitted for Finance Committee approval.

Ms. Engelhart said that Chief Adkins has suggested that maybe council would be willing to give all departments to go ahead and apply for grants as long as it didn't exceed a certain dollar amount and they can set what that dollar amount would be and as long as there is no match. Anything that would have a match, they would have to come to council and present. Department heads are out always out there seeking opportunities to apply for grants and if they had the ability to go ahead and apply, as long as they know there is no match and if there is a not exceed amount, that can be put in too. This would be legislation just as a blanket authorizing those applications.

The clerk noted she thinks that question will need to be posed to the law director.

Mayor Bica said he thinks it would be necessary that as soon as they do apply for a grant, they would need to inform council that they applied for it, if there is no match. If there is a match, they would have to come before council. He would like to see more proactive approaches by the department heads in doing that. Some of these are very short time frames and if they latch onto something, they need to expedite it. Each department does go out and seeks them but Ms. Macomber comes up with a lot of these. She has full access to the grant website. Then she will let the department head know about it.

Mr. Rainone asked if there is any opportunity with maybe Kent State for an internship position to help with grant writing, or searching for them.

Mayor Bica said there is a new intern that started last week in the Economic Development Department. He is working on writing a grant. There are opportunities out there.

Mr. Rainone said that it's one thing for the department head to find it, then they have to actually sit down and write it.

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Mr. Ricciardi said that when they created that economic development position, grant writing was part of the job description.

Mr. Rainone said that grant writing is really labor intensive.

It was decided that if approved by Mr. Cimino the issue could move forward to Finance Committee.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 P.M.

**ATTEST:**

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**Clerk of Council**

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**Bruce Ribelin, Chairman  
Public Health and Safety Committee**