MINUTES OF A FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING May 21, 2012

The May 21, 2012 Ravenna City Finance Committee meeting was called to order at 7:07 P.M. by Council President, Francis Ricciardi. The following members were present: **Fred Berry, Bruce Ribelin, Scott Rainone, Sharon Spencer, Frank Seman and Amy Michael.** Also attending the meeting were: Mayor Joe Bica; Finance Director, Kim Cecora; Service Director, Kelly Engelhart; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Firefighter Brad Ryczek and Marc Resnik of 1102 East Riddle Avenue, Ravenna, Ohio.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 1 is the approval of minutes from the Finance Committee meeting of March 19, 2012 and April 23, 2012.

There being no questions, comments, deletions or modifications, a motion was made by Mr. Ribelin, seconded by Ms. Michael to approve the minutes. **Voice Vote: All Ayes.**

President Ricciardi said Item No. 2 is a request to authorize the mayor to enter into a contract with Family & Community Services for an IT Technician and appropriate \$28,600.00 for the contract price.

Mr. Berry said this has come up in the past and there has been a lot of discussion about the initial proposal for assistance with the IT Supervisor. This is a new proposal in that it contracts with Family and Community Services who will hire a person and the city will utilize that person part-time.

Mr. Ribelin said he thinks this is a good compromise.

President Ricciardi asked if there is a contract yet.

Mayor Bica said he distributed a draft contract at the committee meeting. He passed that along to Mr. Cimino and has not yet received it back.

President Ricciardi said just so everybody understands, the city's share is \$28,600.00 and that includes everything. Of that amount, how much is coming from the general fund.

Mr. Cecora said no appropriation is needed. The money is in the budget. It's in the IT department budget for this year. That was set up for the initial person the city was going to hire on their own books.

President Ricciardi noted that he wasn't aware they reached any conclusion on that issue.

Mayor Bica said they did not but it was incorporated into the budget during the budgeting process so that money was allocated in the budget.

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President Ricciardi said that when they say it was budgeted they are really saying those monies were projected for this but not appropriated.

Mayor Bica responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Cecora said that \$21,700.00 is the amount from the general fund.

President Ricciardi asked the balance in the general fund.

Mr. Cecora responded that it is \$1.3 million.

President Ricciardi asked what the projected deficit is for the end of the year, if any.

Mr. Cecora responded there will be a \$900,000.00 surplus at the end of this year.

President Ricciardi noted that is based on the one time funds received from the state of Ohio in terms of estate taxes.

Mr. Cecora responded in the affirmative adding that would include any operating balances, if any.

President Ricciardi said the figures Mr. Ribelin gave them prior to the meeting in reference to a negative \$126,000.00 in the fund balance, he would assume general fund, in 2013? Is that what they are looking at?

Mr. Cecora responded in the affirmative, that is at the end of 2013.

President Ricciardi said let's say they have the funds to do this, this year. They are in terms of the contract, is that for more than a year, is it long term?

Mayor Bica said that it is a one year contract with a 60 day termination clause for either party.

Ms. Michael asked what happens in the situation if the school likes this employee but the city doesn't.

Mayor Bica said he doesn't really know because they haven't had the meeting where they are all sitting down actually talking about the actual posting and hiring process. It is a good question if once you hire the individual the school says they like this person and the city says they like this person and then it turns out four months down the road, one party doesn't like the person; he doesn't know.

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President Ricciardi said that the answer is that the third party involved in this is going to do the hiring and firing. The only reason they would have any concern as to whether the schools or the city likes that person is that they have the option of opting out in sixty days. If they don't like this person and Family & Community Services doesn't do anything about it, they can opt out of the contract.

Mr. Bica said he would assume the school would have the same type of opt out clause. It really is the third party, as President Ricciardi said.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 3 is a request to authorize the mayor to apply for the FY 2012 CDBG Formula grant.

Mr. Seman said this is the Formula money that has come every year. The amount shrinks annually. This year the amount is \$43,000.00 coming to the city. This is the one he mentioned that if it drops below \$50,000.00, they would become party of the county in the future. As it is right now, it is \$53,000.00 less the administration and fair housing. It was \$57,000.00 last year. Mr. Finney plans to use this money for street paving.

Mr. Finney said he will pave West Highland Avenue which will consume that plus some.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 4 is a request to increase line items for the RAC Supplies and Parks Operating Supplies.

Mr. Rainone said that the RAC increase is needed to get them through the year. This is used to purchase equipment, light bulbs, everything for the RAC. They are asking for a \$5,000.00 increase. In the Parks Supplies Budget, there are some individual equipment needed for the employees and also the uniforms. They are requesting an additional \$3,800.00. These monies will come from the Park Levy Fund.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 5 is a request to accept a donation of \$180.00 from Richard and Marjorie Grund in the Parks and Recreation Department, record estimated revenues and appropriate funds.

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Mr. Rainone explained that the Portage County Snowbirds organization has disbanded and they wanted to make a donation to the Parks Department to be earmarked for future purchases of playground equipment or a shelter at Chestnut Hills Park.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 6 is a request to authorize the mayor to enter into an agreement with National Exercise Trainers Association for classes at the RAC.

Mr. Rainone said in the past the RAC has been a site to hold NETA classes. They are holding two certification classes this year. This is a standard contract at no cost to the city.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 7 is a request to authorize the mayor to enter into an agreement with Community Action Council for sponsorship of the Summer Food Service Program at City Park.

Mr. Rainone said this has been done for many years and once again, City Park will be a site for the CAC sponsored breakfast and lunch program. This just authorizes them to use the city as a site.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 8 is a request to authorize the mayor to enter into a contract with the city of Stow for arborist services.

Ms. Engelhart said this is the collaborative agreement with the city of Stow. They have a certified city arborist. Ravenna does not. They have agreed to share that arborist for an hourly rate plus the travel time, as needed.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 9 is a request to amend the Codified Ordinances by limited the height of grass permitted on property to six inches.

Ms. Engelhart said this was brought to Committee last week. There was some discussion about the height requirement. She suggested eight inches. Council recommended six inches. Other communities have suggested that six inches may be very difficult to enforce and that they may want to go higher than eight inches. They are currently having some issues with the current contractor who is doing the nuisance mowing and some of the city lot mowing. She will be asking, at the end, for some consideration in changing that contract.

President Ricciardi asked if they are bound by this contract for a period of time.

Ms. Engelhart said they have a seven day out clause. She just needs to have a backup.

President Ricciardi said he has noticed a few places around town that are extremely high.

Ms. Engelhart asked if they wanted to stay with the six inches or if they would like to make it higher. Actually enforcing the six inches, she is told, is going to be very difficult and will create a lot of concern in regards to the residents. Other communities have suggested their limit is 12".

Mr. Ribelin said he thinks 12" is too high. He mows his at five inches.

Ms. Spencer said that if somebody is away on vacation for three weeks or so, they can have that kind of growth.

Mr. Berry said that this is a difficult situation because there are some people out there. If you set it at eight, they're going to wait until it is eight before they cut it. If they set it at 12, they'll wait until it's 12 before they cut it.

Mr. Ribelin and Ms. Michael both noted that they think 8" would be acceptable.

It was the consensus of those present that the height at 8" would be acceptable.

Mayor Bica said that if it's set at 8", they will notify the owner, give them three days and then they mow. It might be five days before getting to it and it could be 12" before it gets mowed.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 10 is a request to authorize the mayor to enter into a contract with Direct Energy to provide natural gas to city residents as a natural gas aggregation provider.

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Ms. Spencer said there were communications going back and forth and Direct Energy came back with a new proposal that was better than their previous proposal.

President Ricciardi noted that the citizens can opt out of this if they wish.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 11 is a request to authorize the mayor to enter into a contract with R & R Sanitation for the citywide spring cleanup.

Ms. Spencer said this is to award the contract for the city cleanup. She knows there has been some friction with the neighborhoods and residents being unhappy and she knows they will be able to get that remedied.

Ms. Engelhart said that she did send out an email on Saturday. The biggest issue is that they were only going to have it on the one day, May 19 but there weren't enough bidders but the communication was already sent out to the residents in the water bill that the community cleanup was going to be the 19th. Then when they got a bid that was an alternative and it came out a week early, they knew there were going to be a lot of residents on Saturday who were still putting stuff out. R & R was out doing Wards 2 and 4 today and may still be actually in those wards tomorrow to finish what was put out on Saturday that wasn't there last week. They did commit to run through the entire city on Friday. If there are still things out, they will follow up on Saturday to make sure everything that is out will be picked up.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 12 is a request to authorize the mayor to enter into an agreement with B&C Communications for service on the FireCom dispatch equipment and appropriating \$3,480.00 for said service.

Mr. Ribelin said the service contract on the FireCom dispatch equipment was given to them from the Township for \$1.00.

Mayor Bica asked if everybody is clear regarding the amount of the service agreement. The total amount for everything owned by the city is \$8,400.00. The FireCom equipment is \$3,500.00. That is the cost of adding FireCom to the existing maintenance agreement. They were already paying roughly \$5,200.00. The total cost for radio maintenance citywide is \$8,400.00.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

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President Ricciardi said Item No. 13 is a request to authorize the mayor to enter into a contract with Kent State University to perform an operational assessment of existing and future public health needs of Ravenna City and transfer \$20,000.00 from the salary line to cover the cost of the project.

Mr. Ribelin said the money was budgeted under the salary line item.

Ms. Michael asked if the money is what they are saving by Ms. Blasiman not being here.

Ms. Engelhart said that before they hired a health commissioner. Basically, when she was doing the job, that money was being saved because it was budgeted for Ms. Blasiman's salary at 32 hours for the entire year.

Ms. Michael asked if Ms. Blasiman's salary wasn't paid for by the SAFE Communities Grant. With her not being here and the city not getting that grant money, where did that go.

Mr. Cecora said that the offset wasn't that great. They're not losing any money toward the salary for that position.

Mayor Bica said that amount is less than what is normally budgeted for that position. There were some hours reimbursed through SAFE Communities grant but it certainly wasn't compensating the city properly. That is one of the reasons they moved away from the SAFE Communities grant. They went into 2012 thinking they would have a health commissioner for the entire year, which was not the case, when the budget was prepared back in 2011.

Mr. Cecora said that \$47,500.00 was budgeted, including rollups, for a part-time health commissioner. They have gotten to this point where someone has come on board to work 20 hours a week. They certainly aren't going to spend the \$47,500.00 plus the rollups.

Ms. Michael asked if that isn't part of the savings they were looking at with changing the health department and cutting hours.

Ms. Engelhart said they did save; for eight months.

Mayor Bica said they are still saving because the actual budgeted amount is still only the 32 hour combined gross. There is still some savings going on there from the health commissioner salary.

President Ricciardi asked if there has been any conversation with either Kent or the County health departments.

Ms. Engelhart said she did have conversation today with Duane Porter from the county and said they would be sending a letter requesting a portion of the payment. He said to send the letter.

Ms. Michael said that \$20,000.00 really bothers her. It seems like a lot of money to spend on a study.

Ms. Engelhart interjected that she wants to be clear that it is not a study. It's an assessment of what the health needs are. It is information about the health needs that will help guide the health department and the health commissioner as to where to put the resources as they start to restructure. It's not a study. It's not something that is going to say this is or is not feasible. It's a health needs assessments. It's really something that has been needed in the county and the city and all three health departments for a long time.

Ms. Michael said that she thinks the county should also be paying for it since they are benefitting from it.

Ms. Engelhart said the county is also doing a community needs assessment for maternal child health. They had their first meeting today. The county, through a grant they are receiving, is paying for that portion.

President Ricciardi asked if that assessment is also being done through Kent State.

Ms. Engelhart responded in the negative stating they are using a consultant called Round River Consulting.

Mr. Rainone said that he is currently working with a county that is doing a similar study. The scope is a little more robust but the cost is \$400,000.00. If they do what they need to do and it makes the city more competitive for state grants or federal grants, it will pay for itself; with just one grant.

Ms. Engelhart said KSU is cutting \$15,000.00 off what they are perceiving to be their actual costs.

President Ricciardi said this study can only help Kent and the county with grant applications as well.

Ms. Engelhart said it will help the entire community. Ravenna City is part of the entire community.

Mayor Bica said they are definitely going to ask the others for assistance with the cost of this assessment.

Ms. Engelhart said they also have to understand that the city of Ravenna is being provided a service that is covering the city as well. They are doing the maternal childhood healthcare component where they aren't charging the city for that portion of the assessment. Right now, it's Kent City that isn't providing anything, if you look at it, in terms of money toward these assessments.

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Mr. Ribelin said he would like to thank Ms. Engelhart for wearing two hats and that she has saved the city a lot of money in assuming that position.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 14 is a request to authorize the mayor to enter into a contract with Bjaam Environmental for phase 2 of the environmental remediation at the former street garage and appropriate \$17,851.00 for the study.

Mr. Ribelin said there has been a series of tests at the former street garage. They also tested outside of the site and it was determined there were no toxins outside of the fenced area. This would be phase 2 testing to determine how much if it they're going to have to clean up. Originally, they talked about a price tag of about \$200,000.00 to clean it up. They are looking now at something much lower than that.

Mayor Bica said the additional testing and complying with the EPA regulations to ensure this site will never be used for residential or water usage, they are able to mitigate, not as good as they would have, if it was residential. There are a couple of things they have to do; entering into a covenant that this property will never be used for anything but; and then the cleanup will be less intensive. They are thinking, at least the initial estimates are, no more than \$150,000.00 for the complete cleanup of that site.

Mr. Ribelin noted they are using that former street garage as a depot for the police cruisers right now. That building has been refurbished.

Mayor Bica said they are using it for evidence and the fire department is using it as well.

President Ricciardi asked if any of the cleanup expenses are budgeted.

Mayor Bica said they discussed this with the environmental company and said that when they go back to the EPA, after this round of testing, they are going to submit a plan on cleanup. That plan will outline that they will be accruing a sum of money for the cleanup over a period of years. They are going to start putting away a little bit each year. They are going to try to push it off as long as they can but it's probably going to end up happening in 2015.

President Ricciardi asked if they are looking totally toward the general fund for this cleanup.

Mr. Cecora responded that it will come from the capital improvement fund. Phase 1 was out of capital improvement and that's where it began.

Mr. Ribelin asked if they weren't talking about digging like 20 feet out.

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Mayor Bica said they were talking about four Olympic sized swimming pools, 20 feet deep, being taken offsite and then putting in backfill. It was digging, transporting the dirt south of Canton and bringing in materials to fill it. It was huge.

Mr. Ribelin asked if they don't have the ability to excavate that in-house.

Mayor Bica said they could but they still need to identify how expensive and how deep they have to go. They may do some of it in-house.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 15 is a request to authorize the mayor to apply for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant through the Department of Homeland Securities.

Mr. Ribelin said the city has applied for this grant previously. They haven't been awarded it yet. Some of the smaller items require a 5% match, if awarded. There is also a request for a grant where the city would hire three firefighters. There would be no matching funds on that for two years.

Mr. Cecora said this is grant where if you can prove there is an economic hardship, the SAFERS grant, there is no obligation to keep those employees on the payroll. The intent of the grant is to bring people on board and keep them on fulltime. However, this is the one with the out clause that says if there are extraordinary economic conditions, they won't hold your feet to the fire on it.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 16 is a request to authorize the mayor to enter into a contract with Clayton Morris & Associates to conduct an audit for the city's current human resources functions.

Ms. Michael said that this is an audit where this firm will come in for the amount of \$2,250.00 and do an assessment as to where the city is with its HR status. It will give them a baseline of where they are and where they need to go.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 17 is a request to appropriate \$43,900.00 from the sewer fund for retirement payouts.

Ms. Michael said there are two people retiring from the wastewater treatment plant and monies need to be appropriated to cover their sick and vacation leave pay.

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- Mr. Cecora said there was \$35,000.00 in the budget and they need to up it because both employees opted to retire.
 - Mr. Ribelin noted that a supervisor has been hired.
 - Ms. Engelhart said they have hired a chemist who will begin working on May 30.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi said Item No. 18 is a request to appropriate \$2,132.80 from the Recreation Levy Fund for unemployment compensation liability.

Mr. Cecora said that the city is self-funded when it comes to unemployment liability. Those who apply and are awarded unemployment compensation because the city doesn't pay any state unemployment tax, they are on the hook for that, much like a healthcare claim.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi

President Ricciardi said Item No. 19 is a request for the retroactive approval of advances, appropriation transfers and fund transfers completed in April, 2012.

Mr. Cecora said the only advance to report was for grant activity.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

President Ricciardi noted one additional item which was requested by Ms. Van Hoose.

Mr. Rainone said this came up at the Planning Committee meeting just prior to this meeting. In the past, the city has worked as a worksite for the Workforce Investment Act, clients are from Family & Community Services. They would like to use the Parks and Recreation Department this year to put some of the teenagers to work. There is no cost to the city. F&CS pays them and takes care of their transportation and liability insurance. This is a program that helps at risk youth and needy families learn job skills.

Ms. Michael said she received some concerns from people whose children walk to school at the Central and Chestnut Street intersection are really concerned about that light being removed. They said there is no problem with it blinking in the summertime but when school is in session, they can't get out of there and people feel coming out of Lincoln, that it's difficult enough to get out of there. The congestion is just going to get much worse.

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Mr. Finney said they need to study that corridor now that every bus has to stop at the railroad tracks whether they are coming or going in the morning or in the afternoon. It's his understanding the residents do not want the buses going down Lincoln. But the school sends two buses down Lincoln anyway. It's his opinion that they could send five buses down Lincoln. He wouldn't let the residents dictate. However, the school is accommodating them and only sending two buses there. The school buses people from McElrath Park. The buses are what congests a lot of this. Yes, there are a lot of students that drive.

Ms. Michael said that she is not referring to the buses. There are people leaving from the hospital around 3:00. The shifts change at the hospital between 2:30 and 3:00. A lot of those people are coming down Chestnut to catch SR 76 because a lot of those people live in Youngstown. She just cuts town Lincoln herself when she goes to work. There are times when she hits it just right and sees the concern there because it is very busy that time of day and very congested.

Mr. Finney said they need a study for that whole corridor. He doesn't think the light at Central is the answer. He thinks maybe something further toward the railroad tracks or Lincoln go into service better. Until they study it and get the traffic data, he knows the accidents have dwindled to where they were in the past for whatever reason. The school bus stop is at Beecher. They don't drop at Central any more. They drop at Beecher. Their standard walkers from Carlin do not cross Chestnut Street any more. That was one concern as to why the signal was there. There are other changes that will probably happen in the school system in the next couple of years that will change things again. It is definitely something that needs to be studied. Unfortunately, the city will have to pay for it.

Ms. Engelhart said she would like to ask to bring to Council, approval to enter into a contract with Freedom House. They are getting bids for mowing. They have their own mowing company and this is through Family & Community Services. It is the same agency that they entered into for the cleaning. They're not sure they have enough resources to do the entire city but at least to do the nuisance mowing so they can get somebody out there. What they are finding with the current contractor is they are only able to get out there once a week and that's just not frequent enough to handle the nuisance mowing. The proposal will be based on a per lot basis. Right now they are paying \$30.00 per lot for nuisance mowing. It was under \$20,000.00 total last year.

Mayor Bica said they believe Enviroscape was very aggressive in coming in here and growing. They think they have taken on more than they can handle. They really need to have a truck every day in this city going around handling these.

President Ricciardi said they are assuming it will be under \$20,000.00 so they don't need to bid this.

Mayor Bica said that it was under that and it wasn't bid.

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Ms. Engelhart said they are looking for additional service to help with the nuisance mowing at this time.

Mr. Finney said they want someone who is available to them within 48 hours of a phone call.

There being no further comments, questions, objections or discussion, President Ricciardi declared that an ordinance would be prepared.

Ms. Engelhart said the mulch giveaway took place last weekend at the transfer site on Lake Avenue. They only went through about half of the mulch the company supplied. They are probably going to open up for another free mulch giveaway. She does need to speak with Mr. Dowdy when he gets back from vacation about this. It will probably be in June.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 7:53 P.M.

ATTEST:	
Clerk of Council	Francis M. Ricciardi, Chairman Finance Committee