CITY OF NORTH CANTON, OHIO

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF

APRIL 6, 2020, MEETING

VIA TELECONFERENCE

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Transcript of Proceedings of the North Canton City Council, taken by me, the undersigned, Laurie Maryl Jonas, a Registered Merit Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Ohio, at the North Canton Civic Center, 845 West Maple Street, North Canton, Ohio, on Monday, April 6, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

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APPEARANCES:

(Via teleconference)

Daniel Jeff Peters, Council President, Ward 2

Daryl Revoldt, Council Vice President, At Large

Doug Foltz, Ward 1

Stephanie Werren, Ward 3

Dominic Fonte, Ward 4

Mark R. Cerreta, At Large

Matthew Stroia, At Large

Patrick A. DeOrio, Director of Administration

Timothy L. Fox, Director of Law

Jina Alaback, Director of Finance

Robert G. Graham, Engineering Services

Catherine A. Farina, Deputy Director of Administration and Development

Stephan B. Wilder, Mayor

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MR. PETERS: Okay. Good evening, everyone. I'd like to welcome you to the North Canton city council committee of the whole meeting Monday, April 6, 2020, 7 p.m. We are live streamed and we are having a telephonic meeting.

Ben, could you please call the roll.

MR. YOUNG: Member Revoldt?

MR. REVOLDT: Present.

MR. YOUNG: Member Fonte?

MR. FONTE: Here.

MR. YOUNG: President Peters?

MR. PETERS: Here.

MR. YOUNG: Member Foltz?

MR. FOLTZ: Here.

MR. YOUNG: Member Werren?

MRS. WERREN: Here.

MR. YOUNG: Member Stroia?

MR. STROIA: Here.

MR. YOUNG: Member Cerreta?

MR. CERRETA: Here.

MR. YOUNG: Seven present.

MR. PETERS: All right. Fantastic.

First up, Community and Economic Development. Chairman Revoldt. Floor is yours.

MR. REVOLDT: Thank you very much, Jeff.

Everyone has in their packet draft legislation for reestablishing our community reinvestment area. You should also have the housing study which accompanies that draft legislation. For those who are listening, the question is why would we be interested in doing this, and there are two basic answers, for the record.

The first is that the CRA is designed to improve the housing stock in a community. And pursuant to the Community Reinvestment Area housing study, over half of the homes in North Canton, about 7,500, are 50 years old or older. And their values, at least half of those homes are valued at less than $150,000. I pulled up some valuations from the Stark County auditor some months ago, and if you look at the property valuation between 2009 and 2018, in North Canton it only grew by $11 million over the decade.

And what does that mean? Well, it means for our school system that every time it has to go back for property, it's a heavier burden on the existing property owners because they have to -- they have to -- they have to meet an amount. We can't spread out the costs more. For the city, obviously, there are a plethora of policy issues that are associated

with an aging housing stock. So if we look at the legislation that has been drafted, it basically, in Section 4, speaks to our desire to encourage knockdowns, demolitions and rebuilding. We've excluded from the ordinance -- proposed ordinance -- minor exceptions. Those really don't add much; they're an administrative headache.

MR. YOUNG: Excuse me, Chairman Revoldt.

MR. REVOLDT: Pardon?

MR. YOUNG: Excuse me. Councilmen Fonte and Stroia, I believe, have something they wish to state before we continue.

MR. REVOLDT: Yes. Well, can I finish and then we'll go on?

MR. FONTE: Hey, I need to be -- step out of the meeting. So I'm no -- there's no comment here from me. I'm just going to abstain.

MR. REVOLDT: Okay.

MR. STROIA: Same here. This is Stroia. I need to abstain.

MR. REVOLDT: Okay. Duly noted. The record should reflect that two members of council have withdrawn from the discussion and will likely not participate in votes in the future.

So at any rate, we've got -- we've got some

language, and you may have it in your packet, we did a little change this afternoon, I'll have a clean copy for you later, but it talks about demolition and subsequent new construction. And what we're doing is -- first of all, is we're stating in the ordinance you've got to demolish the property. And second is the new construction has to be valued at at least $250,000. So we believe that that effort may help our schools by adding more taxable real estate long term to the -- to the -- to the tax rolls. So that's really kind of it from -- from my standpoint.

I think it -- as we look at the language in Section 4, what we've tried to do is avoid the problem that we had down on Harmon where somebody just waltzed in and put up a house but it may not have had quite the value that we thought would be useful for the community. So and by having demolition, it means that if you're out in one of the newer developments on the east side, unless the property's demolished, you're not eligible for the abatement. So that's kind of it. I'll be happy to take some questions right now or open the floor up for comments.

MR. FOLTZ: Chairman Revoldt. Foltz.

What we're saying is if there's a vacant

piece of property, they wouldn't be eligible for this.

MR. REVOLDT: That is correct.

MR. FOLTZ: Because that was --

MR. REVOLDT: What we want to avoid, Doug, what we want to avoid is the kind of situation we had over on Summit and Woodland and Glenwood.

MR. FOLTZ: Correct.

MR. REVOLDT: They want to put up those homes and, you know, they wanted an abatement. There was no reason to abate those homes. They weren't eliminating any blight.

MR. FOLTZ: Yes. No, I concur. That was a very volatile issue with the schools and we had a lot of discussion on council floor on that and so, you know, I'm happy to see there's, you know, other incentives versus just build a house on vacant property, so I concur with that.

MR. REVOLDT: And I think it -- I think it illustrates that we did listen, and as we go to this, and I think the second thing, as many of you know, we're looking at some new economic development projects or prospects, and while I don't expect that we'll be deploying this in each and every one of them, particularly smaller projects where it's

probably not that valuable, but it's good to have this in our arsenal in case we need it because -- we'll get to the timeline in a minute -- it's better to have it ready to go and not use it than to need it and not have it.

And in the commercial -- the commercial, as you'll notice, I think Ben has put up, you'll notice that the process has been mapped out. So by taking the statute, mapped it out to ensure that we don't have mixups about who's supposed to do what before the abatement's granted.

MR. PETERS: That's -- that's key, Daryl.

MR. FOLTZ: Yeah.

MR. REVOLDT: Yeah. And so, I mean, we could -- we could have this attached to the minutes, and frankly, we could have it attached to the ordinance as an attachment.

MR. FOLTZ: Yeah. No, I concur. I think it's well done. I think it shows, you know, the process and procedures that need to be in place and it's defined and people can follow it. Our residents can follow it and our developers can follow it and understand what the expectations are for everybody and so I like that very much.

MR. REVOLDT: So my sense is, again, this

will be used sparingly. I would challenge everybody who's listening in the community, the CRA is one residential tool. There may be other things that we could do, and I would certainly welcome some input on how we might encourage property owners to demolish properties. I've seen this work in Atlanta, I've seen it work in other communities. I know that it works. We've just got to get the ball started up here.

MR. PETERS: Yeah.

MR. CERRETA: Daryl, Cerreta here.

Good idea. Now, this is just for the residential part of it; correct?

MR. REVOLDT: No. This will do both. But as you'll notice that the map that's in front of you, the CRA process flow chart, talks about the process on the commercial side. And again, I think that's where we had a little bit of problem in the past was getting the thing done legally. So what we're trying to do is make sure that there's no misunderstanding about what's required.

MR. FOLTZ: Right. Well, you have my support to move it forward, Daryl. I don't know if there's any questions or comments.

MR. REVOLDT: Here's what we need to do then.

Ben and I tinkered with some language today. I spoke to our economic development consultant. We have some other language, I'm particularly looking at Section 4 that deals with the residential side. We'll have finalized, or language for your consideration, get it out to you sometime in the very, very near future. And then what I'd like to do, Jeff, if we can, is set a first reading for the 20th of April. That gives us two weeks out and we'll have three full readings on this to entertain public -- public opinion.

MR. PETERS: Okay. April 20, first reading.

MR. REVOLDT: Yes, please.

MR. FOLTZ: One followup, Daryl, if I could. Is there somebody in the northeast Ohio or somewhere in the state that is utilizing this similar language in their city or CRA area?

MR. REVOLDT: You know, Doug, I'm not. We have been consulting with The Montrose Group, who specializes in economic development. It was very encouraging when we broached this language. They thought it might work.

MR. FOLTZ: Okay. Thank you.

MR. DEORIO: Chairman --

MR. REVOLDT: So, Jeff, if we could do that.

MR. PETERS: Yeah. Yep. That sounds good,

Daryl.

MR. REVOLDT: We'll just get started and I'll have a clean copy to everybody for their consideration and input.

MR. PETERS: Okay. Sounds good. And Ben, can we make sure we get Matt and Dominic back in?

MR. YOUNG: Yes. I will now unmute and let them rejoin.

MR. FONTE: Thank you.

MR. REVOLDT: Would you like me to proceed, Jeff?

MR. PETERS: Yes, sir. Please.

MR. REVOLDT: All right. The second item on the Community and Economic Development agenda is the discussion of property acquisition. In consultation with administration this morning, we have concluded we'd like to defer this discussion to a later date. So we're not prepared to proceed.

MR. PETERS: So no action. Okay.

MR. REVOLDT: No action. None.

MR. PETERS: Okay. All right. Very good.

MR. FONTE: I lost my video feed. It's Dominic.

MR. PETERS: Okay. I'll pause until we get Dominic back up on video.

MR. FONTE: I'm going to relog in. Is that what I should do?

MR. YOUNG: I can see you.

MR. FONTE: I lost the screen then, that's what happened. All right.

MR. PETERS: Can you refresh?

MR. FONTE: There we go. Okay, smiley.

MR. PETERS: Looking good, Dom. All right. Thank you.

MR. FONTE: All right.

MR. PETERS: Next up, we'll do Ordinance, Rules & Claims. Chairman Stroia.

MR. STROIA: All right. Hey, we met -- myself, Ben and Tim met for several hours, and I just kind of wanted to open this discussion up for we met basically about simplifying, uncodifying and potentially bring back the three-person committee meetings. So I think this is a good time to make these changes and I'm opening up the discussion for whatever the floor wants to talk about for it.

MR. YOUNG: If I may, Jina and I have some information regarding the codified non-verbatim minutes. So I'll let Jina start.

MS. ALABACK: We pulled how much we've been paying the court reporter, and we began that in

middle -- around April of '18. It was over $6,000. In 2019 we had the court reporter doing verbatim minutes for council meetings, planning, zoning, board of control, and the CRA, the Tax Incentive Review Council, and we were at 22,840. We were looking at that cost for verbatim minutes because there's a reason that you made that decision, to look at maybe changing that, having a full-time clerk back on staff, if we're talking about that. So Ben has a second piece of that.

MR. YOUNG: Yes. So Catherine and I have been speaking with two primary automated clerk software program providers. And those are CivicClerk and Granicus, and we have received two quotes from CivicClerk Plus and one from Granicus, which you can see onscreen how it would break down cost-wise to replace our current court reporter system with an automated minutes-generating software that would give summary minutes instead of verbatim minutes.

MS. FARINA: CivicClerk is a software program that we already engage with. Our website, it is based from CivicPlus. And then we also manage our recreation rentals through CivicRent. So it's a software program with multiple platforms geared at municipalities. And then Granicus is another option

that we are still looking into.

MR. FONTE: So what's the benefit, guys? Do we save money or what's happening? Explain. So I'm looking at 23,205.

MR. YOUNG: Yes. The total in 2019 plus the CSE and water board only had costs in 2020 so I added them to give a more accurate reflection of all the boards that use this.

MR. PETERS: Hey, Ben. Can you touch on what the difference is between CivicClerk Standard and Premium?

MR. YOUNG: So CivicClerk Standard only includes automated minutes and agenda preparation. What the Premium adds is electronic voting, electronic packet disbursal to you, the council, as well as something called staff reports, which we don't currently use as a city in our legislative process.

Granicus includes all of those things plus a city boards and commissions management module in one software program. They don't have two different levels.

MR. FOLTZ: Okay. This Councilman Foltz.

Now, will this process, or these new programs, still do verbatim minutes? Will that be

recorded the same way or how -- is there going to need to be an adjustment there?

MR. YOUNG: So there would no longer be verbatim minutes. There would only be summary minutes. However, if council or a member of the public wanted verbatim minutes, let's say that someone put in a public records request for verbatim minutes from this date, then we would essentially staff that out to Premier Reporting and charge the cost of the transcription to the initial requester.

MR. PETERS: Now, would what that cost be, Ben?

MR. YOUNG: We can't say for sure, although I can tell you that it averages out to about $200 per half-hour meeting.

MR. PETERS: Okay.

MS. ALABACK: There would be a recording of the meeting available.

MR. YOUNG: Yes. So not only will we have the YouTube recording, but the software I use to stream to YouTube records prior to the streaming. So, for instance, tonight YouTube has dropped 41 frames, which is .1 percent of our video, and that just -- what that means is there's just a couple spots where the public, if they're only watching the

stream, it will seem to jump one millisecond forward and they might miss one syllable in some of the words, but the recording that I have from the streaming software includes those 41 dropped frames.

MS. ALABACK: Ben, can you unmute Dominic?

MS. FARINA: So another thing important to note, if you haven't noticed already, our interim clerk, Ben, is highly technical, so these type of programs, you know, they streamline a lot of processes. It's a fresh new way to do things that with online, you know, for adding agendas, minutes, everything a lot more streamlined, and he is someone that absolutely would run with this and organize things better and utilize this technology available to us.

MR. FONTE: So -- Dominic.

Real quick. So looking at the premium package, it says 7,500 down there. Is that what the cost is guestimated at? Am I reading that right?

MR. YOUNG: So those are quotes that we have received from the company. So they have told us that one year of service would cost 7,500. So each quote is for one full year of license.

MR. FONTE: And we're spending 23,205 now; correct?

MR. YOUNG: Correct.

MR. FONTE: That makes sense for me.

MR. FOLTZ: That's for verbatim minutes. That's different. We're not getting that with these new programs. And that goes back to our discussion three years ago.

It's Councilman Foltz.

You know, there's -- there's discussion on how these are archived, and I always thought there was merit to having something written out that people could access. I understand there's other technology improvements that can be used here, but I don't know if I really changed my thought process on that. I enjoy the streamlining of the software that you might be able to do with everything else, but I think that's my real discussion point to consider is not to have that written document available to the public whenever we want to give it to them. Or archived forever when no one here is around. So those are some of the discussion points that happened three or four years ago also.

MR. PETERS: Hey, Ben, I've got a question regarding the verbatim based on request. And Daryl and I -- and I think Daryl, I think he spoke at council meetings about this at length before. That

if there was an issue discussed on council floor that could potentially go to litigation, that it's important to have the verbatim minutes. So we would still have the ability to go back and retrieve the verbatim minutes for a meeting, whether it be two weeks ago or two years ago? Would I be correct in that?

MR. YOUNG: Yes. And actually, I would hope to back up all of the recordings indefinitely. So 80 years from now someone could pull up the video and watch you guys have a council meeting.

MR. PETERS: Okay. So we're not really losing anything per se from the verbatim standpoint, it's just that weekly it would change to just a summary unless it was a hot-button issue that we would need to go back and get verbatim.

MR. YOUNG: Yes.

MR. REVOLDT: Can I join you?

MR. PETERS: Yeah, Daryl, please. I'd like to hear what you have to say on that one.

MR. REVOLDT: Let's go back. Doug -- Doug has carried us back three years. Think about how contentious matters were because we didn't have good minutes.

MR. FOLTZ: Yeah.

MR. REVOLDT: I would argue that a summary is only as good as the person who's doing the summarization.

MR. FOLTZ: Uh-huh.

MR. REVOLDT: And our goal here is to not only explain what happened, but why it happened. I fear that summaries by and large don't capture the whys. You know, we have -- we have put this issue of recordkeeping to bed and I would really hesitate to reopen that issue, A. B is this: I'm old-school. I'm a Luddite. I appreciate technology, but I like to have a record of our proceedings that's complete and full in our possession, not somewhere else out there.

You know, one of the problems that the State of Ohio has had over the years is that every time it goes out and creates a new software program, it's always contingent upon the people in state employ who manage it. Those people go away, they have problems. I would argue that we're delighted we've got Ben. What happens when Ben goes away? Or we have a turnover in the leadership team. And then what happens? What happens to your recordkeeping? I am very, very reluctant, folks, to encourage us to look at something that's like this. I think we're just

going to create problems for ourselves.

MR. CERRETA: So, Ben, you're saying that this program will save us 20 grand, just about. Or, I'm sorry, what am I saying? Yeah, close to that. About 19,000 bucks. And if somebody wanted the minutes, they can get it at any time?

MR. YOUNG: Yes. So we essentially treat it like the public records request. So if someone would request the minutes and then we would send the recording to be transcribed and then charge the requester for the cost of the transcription.

MR. CERRETA: How long would it take to get those when somebody requests it? Do you know that?

MR. YOUNG: It would depend on Premier Reporting's workload and how quickly their staff can get to it.

MR. FOX: They normally turn those around in about a week and a half, two weeks. And the important part about the cost is that it, just like in the court system, if one requests a transcript from the recording, they pay for that, that first one. And I believe it's right around 4.75, $4.75 a page, roughly. But, once that first one is done, you have a verbatim transcript, now that's a public record and anyone that asks for that record

afterwards would simply pay whatever our public record cost is per page, and right now we (inaudible).

MRS. WERREN: Ben, let me ask you. Have you researched what other communities are doing? Because I think we did that three years ago and we really found that we were one of the only communities that was doing verbatim minutes for those scripts. And so I guess I'm thinking if we have the digital recordings and people can access at any time then there is a permanent record.

MR. CERRETA: Stephanie is right.

MR. YOUNG: Yes. We are one of the few municipalities around that still has verbatim minutes for every meeting, no matter what's being discussed or what kind of meeting it is, committee or regular.

MR. FOLTZ: Well, Councilman Foltz here.

That's a good point. Because if we go, Daryl, we'll go old-school, when you had committee meeting minutes, the committee chair transcribed some basic notes and then those weren't verbatim. The council meetings were verbatim but not the committee. And maybe that's -- that's something to look at as far as a middle ground; that you would still have verbatim for council meetings with public discussion,

you know, on the floor.

Second point would be, I would have to really see CivicClerk Premium, Standard, or the other -- the other vendor, how good are they when there is a public request? Because I thought, and Pat, maybe you could weigh in. I thought when we tried to do this a different way there was a lot of confusion about who said what when when someone did ask for verbatim minutes. It was too confusing for that to be, I don't know, transcribed in a way that was -- that we needed, I guess. You know, there was words omitted; it wasn't sure who was talking at what time. So those are things to look at as far as the future of that. I mean, I'm not in favor of it right now. I'm in favor of the other streamlining that you guys want to do with the program, but that's just me. I'm one vote, but I'm just letting you guys know. It's been some good discussion.

MR. REVOLDT: This is Daryl. Can I come in?

MR. PETERS: Yeah, Daryl.

MR. REVOLDT: You know, one of the things that we've done over the last year is we have a verbatim transcript and we have a record of what's said and who says it. We've walked away from having the committee chairman complete -- complete a

legislative report. And we're required to have a report, but the minutes in their -- in their complete context serve as that report. So if we're going to go to something that's far more abbreviated, then we're going to have to go back and we're going to have to go back and rethink how we have those committees function and if there's going to be a report. I think your rules (inaudible).

MRS. WERREN: But, I think, Daryl, the problem was that everyone was doing their reports differently. Some people would write two sentences, some people didn't know they had to do the report. I don't feel like that's going to help anything.

MR. REVOLDT: Well, it's right now what you've got is we have the verbatim transcript of the council of the whole meeting. That is the report.

MRS. WERREN: Right.

MR. REVOLDT: And that gives you the cleanest and clearest sense of what council considered and why it acted. You don't need anything more.

MRS. WERREN: But you still have that. You just have to listen to it.

MR. REVOLDT: You'll have the minutes.

MR. YOUNG: And we would generate summary for council meetings -- committee meetings as well. Not

just council meetings.

MR. REVOLDT: Ben, I'm sorry, I just -- I just don't think summaries are good. And here's the other thing.

MR. PETERS: Can I weigh in here?

MR. REVOLDT: Can I continue just for one more? I'm going to go way back. One of the reasons that we record those council meetings is because we've had executive abuse misleading council. And it was imperative that we captured everything that was represented when council was -- was prior to action. Because we were misled. I'm going to be kind about it. We were lied to. And that's the reason we went to recording the council of the whole meetings.

MR. DEORIO: Can I speak?

MR. PETERS: Yes. Go ahead.

MR. DEORIO: Oh, thank God.

All right. Listen, we did this three years ago. And the problem that we have is that summary minutes are more problem than what they're worth. Now, if you look at your graph, you have one item that applies to you, council. The administration has the other five things: planning, zoning, TIRC, housing, water boards, this, that and the other. And what you're asking someone to do, and we tried this.

We tried this. This is the way it used to work with planning commission, there would be summary minutes. It's who is summarizing it. And then we're in a position where we have to oversee what's being summarized. How do I know, as the administrator, that those summaries were correct unless I'm sitting there listening to it, too, and making contemporaneous notes while the meeting is going on to know what it should be summarized as. It is a complete hassle.

So we -- since you guys were going back to verbatim minutes, back then three years ago, we in the administration, the mayor at that time, said we're going to be consistent. If they're doing verbatim, then we'll do verbatim on everything else.

And to Daryl's point, you know, three years have gone by. We put this issue to rest. In the grand scheme of your budget, you're talking about $16,000. $16,000 difference.

MR. FONTE: I've got a question.

MR. DEORIO: Is that worth all the hassle that you're going to go through to save that? It seems like we're tripping over dollars to pick up dimes.

MR. FONTE: Stepping over a dollar to pick up

a nickel.

Hey, question. So why don't we just let everything ride the way it as, and as technology evolves maybe we'll have verbatim minutes through AI, in another year or so we can revisit this when the technology is a little bit better. I think Daryl is correct. If we have an issue we'll have to go back on, that's the only way we're going to be protected.

MR. REVOLDT: You know, let me just add -- may I? This is Daryl.

You know, I'm looking at our -- right now our codified ordinances. And it's very clear in 111.06 that legislation may be placed on the council agenda only upon the clerk's receipt of applicable committees' favorable report. So, you know, what we've done is we've taken that report requirement out of our meetings and we've put it into the -- in effect into the transcript, and I believe that's the smart way to do it so we have a good record of what we've done and why.

MR. PETERS: Well, Daryl, if I may, and I'll go back to what you said, and there is some history where council was lied to. And you also mentioned it's more important about why it was said than what was said. And the committee is where the meat of the

legislation is done. So I would tend to agree with you on that one. However, you know, I do like the fact that we can go back and get the verbatim if we want. But to your point in the codified ordinances, that verbatim minutes are our committee report at this time.

MR. FOLTZ: Yeah. Catherine.

MS. FARINA: I wanted just to say I really appreciate the discussion on this. And I think where Jina and Ben conferred on the court reporter versus automated software was to kind of, you know, look at, you know, the funding for this. But keep in mind, no matter how this discussion comes out, one of the things that we wanted to look at with either Granicus or CivicClerk is just this automated-type software is beyond just minutes. It keeps track of board appointments, you know, open and filled seats and applications. It has all your council meetings, videos, agendas. It's digital access with a searchable portal. There's just a lot of other functions and we could even shoot you information on both of those platforms to look at because it was beyond just the minutes. It was really automating the clerk.

MR. REVOLDT: If this is to automate the

clerk and we can push the minutes aside, I'd consider it.

MR. FOLTZ: Yeah.

MR. REVOLDT: If we had better management of that clerk's office through some software, hey, I'm all on board. I just don't think the minutes should be the propellant for this change. It should be better management in the office.

MR. FONTE: So maybe you're looking at CC standards. Or what you guys need.

MS. FARINA: What was that, Dominic?

MR. FONTE: Maybe what you could do is, you know, get the standard package for everything with the exception of the minutes and we continue the verbatim minutes like we've been doing and see if it makes you more efficient, you know, and saves you money on that side. Then we can afford that extra. We can always --

MS. FARINA: We can get you more information.

MR. FONTE: We can also see a report to understand what you're talking about.

MS. FARINA: Yes, Ben can do that.

MR. YOUNG: Yes. So the intention wasn't to immediately stop verbatim minutes but rather to pick one of the softwares, move forward over the summer,

see how we can adapt it, because both companies are offering to give us 90 or 60 days of free access before we commit and then see whether or not it really did improve how council meetings function.

MR. PETERS: Well, Ben, I'm certainly intrigued by the possibilities here and the capabilities that this will allow us. I would be -- I would be in favor of a trial run, you know, on the side to mirror what we're doing now.

Daryl, what do you think?

MR. REVOLDT: Well, again, you know, if we're going to look at the software as a management tool, I support that. I think that's great. Particularly if it allows better tracking of legislation, public hearings, et cetera. I think that's one of the clerk's principal jobs. And if we read our job description, you know, that -- this would help him achieve that potential. I really don't think I'm prepared to support walking away from transcripts. We've had -- and as Pat put it, we had huge problems with planning commission. Because is the person who was summarizing those planning commission meetings wasn't capturing it.

MR. FOLTZ: Right.

MR. REVOLDT: And it wasn't being done

timely.

MR. FONTE: I would say it sounds like we have a decision here, the way it's going. I think it makes sense. Let's move on to something else. What do you say?

MR. REVOLDT: Okay.

MR. YOUNG: If I could just make one last point of -- we could maintain verbatim minutes for all of admin's boards. The biggest motivator to looking at it was that 50 percent of council's budget is dedicated to the court reporter at this time. Of a $42,000 budget, $20,000 is allocated just to pay for verbatim minutes every year.

MR. REVOLDT: Yeah.

MR. PETERS: That's okay.

MR. REVOLDT: That's okay. That's a cost of doing business.

MR. PETERS: Hear, hear.

MS. FARINA: Okay. We can get you more information on these software programs, how they integrate with all the other platforms we use with streaming and we can discuss further later.

MR. FONTE: Thank you.

MR. PETERS: Okay. Thank you. Sounds good. Chairman Stroia, anything more on that?

MR. STROIA: Just it kind of took a turn to the minutes and everything, but what -- how about some discussion on the three-person committees and some structure on that. Any feedback from that?

MR. CERRETA: What's the concern about the way it is now with the committees?

MRS. WERREN: Yeah.

MR. CERRETA: I think it's kind of nice you got everybody involved. Why go to three people?

MRS. WERREN: Well, we did. When we first -- I first started we had three-person and then this was --

MR. CERRETA: So what's the concern right now?

MR. STROIA: What's my concern? Are you talking to me?

MR. CERRETA: Yeah. Who wants to go through to three-person committee meetings? Right now it's kind of open, gives everybody a good input. Is there an issue right now that we're having?

MR. STROIA: I mean, personally, I think it would cause a lot more participation. I think it would encourage discussion.

MRS. WERREN: It doesn't.

MR. STROIA: Give me some feedback. I mean,

tell me why does it, why doesn't it.

MR. CERRETA: Matt, we were at three before and then you just have three people on a committee discussing. You know, like right now. We would only allow those three people to discuss it in their committee. If we're talking about -- let's say the verbatim minutes right now, it would be those three people discussing it and then you can open it up to someone else not part of that committee. Whereas now anybody could be. And you just have more feedback, I believe, in the way it is now rather than the old three-person, and that's the reason we went to the open kind of process. You have seven people now trying to help and make the decisions for the community rather than three people.

MRS. WERREN: Well, is there something that started this conversation to go back beyond that? Just more engagement or --

MR. PETERS: Well, I know one of the issues we had was if we were having a meeting to discuss whatever the topic was and, say, only two members were able to make that meeting; however, if they both served on the same committee, that meeting could be open -- well, you could be in violation of open meeting law if the press wasn't made aware of it.

And it was kind of -- we did that to kind of take that out of it.

MR. FONTE: Is it not working good the way it is right now? Matt?

MR. STROIA: Are you talking to me?

MR. FONTE: Whoever wants to chime in. I didn't really think there was a problem before, but if you think there is a problem, please, put it on the table so I understand.

MR. STROIA: I mean, personally I think it would work better, but when I watch the way other councils work there's more discussion. I mean, there's more activity and, I mean, it doesn't have to be a three-person committee, it could be whatever, but now's the time, when we're looking at our procedures, to have the discussion about it. That's why I bring it up.

MR. FOLTZ: Well, that's -- let's have that discussion again. I guess when you're looking at -- I'm sorry, Matt, I couldn't have the discussion we talked about earlier this week because of conflicts at work, but discussing a format of meeting minutes, now we're talking about the whole process of committee chairs and rules of council, so to speak, which doesn't mean we can't look to update those, but

I think, you know, that again, is an older system in place where the committee chair ran the meeting, then it went to vice chair, then member, and then open to the floor and there was still participation. But I -- maybe you're right, there was more of a committee participation because that -- it had to come out of that committee unless you had four votes to move it forward. So just kind of the process that is there that's evolved. So there's good and bad to both of those, I think. I shouldn't say good and bad. There's just a different process for both of those type scenarios, you know, committee-run meetings. Back -- back 20 years ago, if you weren't on that committee, you didn't have to come to council of the whole.

MR. PETERS: Right.

MR. FOLTZ: If it wasn't in your committee you didn't have to attend it, you just came to the council meeting. I mean, that's the way it worked. Daryl, you'll have those memories; right?

MR. REVOLDT: Well, you know, I guess I would make two comments. Number one is, I would like to see us look at our rules and think about -- think about how we operate.

But number two as a subset on the committee

thing, let's just -- you know, what happens is, if you've got a committee of seven, you basically put the political authority in four people. And one of the reasons we had three-person committees is it diffused the authority across the entire council. And that's not a bad thing. It was a way -- I believe it was a way to ensure that no members got left out of a role in the city business.

Doug, you may remember, we've had members before who have just gotten cut out.

MR. FOLTZ: Yeah.

MR. REVOLDT: Really unhealthy. So I don't know.

MR. CERRETA: I think we're going backwards with this kind of thing.

MR. REVOLDT: Well, you know, Mark, again, I've lived in both. I can appreciate the advantage of both. But as long as everybody gets to weigh in at the council meeting, council of the whole meeting, the three-person committee is not that big a deal. I can argue a case for both of them. But participation, if you've got a -- if you've got a three-member committee and you can't get ahold of a chairman, well -- or the chairman elects not to return phone calls, you know, that really puts --

puts pressure on participation. So that's my two cents for tonight.

MR. PETERS: Okay.

MR. CERRETA: So that's not changing anything. If that's --

MRS. WERREN: I'm not even --

MR. YOUNG: If I may, one of the things Councilman Stroia and I discussed at our meeting on Wednesday is that the current structure of only committee people could potentially stifle a minority. So right now we don't have a very strongly contested council where there's a clear bloc of three versus a clear bloc of four, or two blocs of three with one swing vote. But if we were to ever if get in that situation then the bloc of four could prevent the bloc of three from ever getting anything on the agenda.

MR. REVOLDT: That's correct.

MR. PETERS: Yeah, that's certainly an interesting take, and I've seen that happen in some of the communities around us.

MR. CERRETA: Yeah, that's that political crap. So I would just as soon stay with all of us making a good decision.

MR. FONTE: Let's stay on track. Let's get

the mission accomplished. Come on. Moving on.

MR. PETERS: Okay. Well, Dom, we'll go with you for now. Is there anyone else wants to comment on that before we move on?

MR. REVOLDT: Let's continue the conversation.

MR. PETERS: Okay.

MR. REVOLDT: Not tonight.

MR. PETERS: All right. Okay. All right.

Moving on, let's go to Street and Alley Committee. Chairman Fonte.

MR. FONTE: So what we have here, guys, something exciting heading into the corridor to Walsh University. 4,700 linear feet, 8-foot wide decorative concrete, 36 decorative light posts and, you know, so there's going to be the bridge, there's a lot of components here. It's over $2 million worth of work. And the breakdown of how that's going to look, guys and ladies, we have 2,049,000 is the estimation of the project. We have 1.524 million from ODOT grant in the bank waiting for us to move on with the project.

We also -- Rob applied for the municipal road fund of 75,000, and then once we see exactly how much that's going to be, our portion will be around 450

towards the 200 -- $2 million project. And this would be on an emergency because we want to try to get estimates and quotes as quick as possible. But it's going to be a fantastic corridor all the way from Marquardt Avenue through the Hoover Trail area where the bridge is all the way up to Washington Square where the post office will be.

So Rob Graham is on the line, if there's anything he wants to add, or anyone else feel free to chime in. But we want to get it on an emergency as soon as possible.

MR. GRAHAM: All I would add, Chairman Fonte, is, as I described on the legislation request, the last page in your packet, the portion of the work is also the rehabbing of the roadway bridge, and that's owned by the Stark County engineer, so anything above and beyond our granted, so that's 450 of our money, the county commissioners would be reimbursing us for that.

MR. PETERS: And, hey, Rob, I've got a question for you regarding that. I think Member Cerreta brought this up a couple months ago when we first started discussing it. That wooden structure, the walkway across that.

MR. GRAHAM: Yeah.

MR. PETERS: What kind of structure -- because that's kind of ugly. What are we looking at?

MR. GRAHAM: What we're doing, what we're proposing to do with that pedestrian bridge, and yeah, it's hideously ugly, is number one, the railing is way too high. It only needs to be about 4 1/2 feet high. So what we're going to do is basically shorten it up and kind of keep the bulk of the railing there but shorten it up, get rid of those long bolts, cut those off that are sticking out where it looks like we could impale people on the side, and then we're going to paint it gloss black is what we're proposing. That would match the streetlights, and the county engineer's vehicular bridge is going to have a gloss black railing. So that's what we're looking to do with that. Kind of salvage what we can, but trim it up so, you know, when we had our site walk last summer, you know, you stand on that bridge, you can't even look down and see the fish or whatnot that's in the stream channel. And, you know, it's got to be high enough to provide the safety you need, but the thing now is, you know, 5 1/2 feet high. You can't look over.

MR. CERRETA: So Rob, what would it take to spruce that up a little bit, put some stone on that

and make that presentable when people come into our community. Because even that sounds like a band-aid on something that's really ugly.

MR. GRAHAM: Yeah, that would be talking a whole different scope. We'd have to look structurally because you're adding a lot of weight to the structure. If we were to look at some kind of decorative stone, and that would almost be a project on its own, then we can certainly look at that someday.

MR. PETERS: Hey, Rob. There are some decorative stone that is made from a material that's lighter weight. Could that be something we can look at?

MR. GRAHAM: Yeah, we could certainly look at that. But it still has to function as a guardrail, you know. If a kid does hit it on a bike, it can't be styrofoam and he blasts through. So we would have to take a hard look at that, see what we could do, look at the structural calculations on the bridge itself. Look at the remaining width. One of the things, you know, we don't want to lose the existing width that we have by losing a foot on each side for the wider stone. So all great questions, all things we can look at as we move forward.

MR. FONTE: The decorative railing will make it look really nice. I know what Mark's saying. This may not be the application for it, is my guess.

MR. GRAHAM: We could even -- it's not a big expense to do what we're doing but we could certainly look at anything. And we will have adjacent do it that retaining wall, if you recall, just east of that, that kind of ugly wall is coming down and the project will construct a newer decorative wall.

MR. CERRETA: It just seems sad that we're redoing that whole bridge and that thing is really not changing much.

MR. GRAHAM: Yeah. I mean, it will be better than it is, but it's certainly not a full-blown structural redo. Again, something we can look at. I'm not opposed.

MR. CERRETA: I'm not throwing it at you, but these are the character things that makes our community a little bit higher and stronger when you come in and you see those kind of little things that you put in place like that. What we're doing here is just we're putting paint over, you know, something that smells.

MR. GRAHAM: Yeah. Absolutely. It's a relatively inexpensive treatment that gains us some

esthetics, that is for sure, but not the full-blown. We can certainly look at that in the next couple of weeks, see if there's any affordable --

MR. CERRETA: I'd like you to do that, if you could. Because if you do it later, we're not doing it later.

MR. GRAHAM: I agree.

MR. CERRETA: Yes. You just redid something. People are going to say, "You just redid the bridge. Why are you redoing it now?" This is the time.

MR. GRAHAM: Yeah. Okay.

MR. DEORIO: We don't have the funds budgeted for that.

MR. CERRETA: Pardon? I couldn't get that. What was that?

MR. DEORIO: This year's budget was laid out last year. There's no money in the budget to do the other couple hundred thousand-dollar bridge.

MR. CERRETA: Okay.

MR. FONTE: It's not in the budget.

MR. CERRETA: Well, let's create the budget for God sakes. It's what we do. Let's find some money somewhere and let's fix it.

MR. REVOLDT: This is Daryl.

Rob, quick question for you. We have grant

money on this project?

MR. GRAHAM: We do. We have a lot of grant money. We have up to 1,524,000, or 80 percent of the project cost, from ODOT sitting in the bank waiting to spend.

MR. REVOLDT: Okay. It's ready to go?

MR. GRAHAM: Yeah. And we also applied for municipal road funds. We think at a minimum it will be 75,000, but last year for Easthill we got over 200. 203,000.

MR. REVOLDT: Yeah. So those who are concerned about the state of the economy, is we basically have $1.5 million in the bank for this project. And the potential for significant additional monies to complete it.

MR. GRAHAM: Yes.

MR. REVOLDT: Okay. Perfect. So we're not spending a lot of our money, in other words.

MR. GRAHAM: Right. Of the 450 we've allocated of ours, even a portion of that, the county commissioners will be reimbursing us for the work on the roadway bridge outside of those grants.

MR. REVOLDT: All right. Very good. Thank you, Rob. I just wanted to clarify that.

MR. PETERS: Well, with that being said then,

Rob, if you could research it a little more to see what our options are on the bridge, what the costs would be attached to that, and if we come out to the good on this maybe we could apply those funds to that.

MR. GRAHAM: Yeah. Absolutely. I'll take a look. And we have to keep the plans moving forward because we have to be under contract to not jeopardize the federal money this fiscal year, so by June 30. So I don't want to put the brakes on everything, but we could certainly keep looking ahead and then have a change order once we have someone, you know, under contract.

MR. REVOLDT: We could go ahead, and what's your recommendation, Rob is -- this is Daryl. That we have legislation Monday night calling this an emergency; correct?

MR. GRAHAM: Yes, sir.

MR. REVOLDT: In the interim, you will backfill with that information.

MR. GRAHAM: I will see what alternatives are out there for our decorative bridge railing, yes.

MR. FONTE: Thanks, Rob.

MR. PETERS: Okay. Sounds good. Are you good, Dominic?

MR. FONTE: Yep. Moving on.

MR. PETERS: Okay. Very good. So that concludes our committee of the whole agenda. I'll entertain a motion and second to adjourn.

MR. REVOLDT: So moved.

MR. FOLTZ: Second.

MR. PETERS: All in favor, say "aye."

("Aye" in unison.)

MR. PETERS: Okay. We are adjourned.

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(Meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.)

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Attest:

Benjamin R. Young
Clerk of Council

Daniel Jeff Peters
City Council President

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF OHIO)
)SS
STARK COUNTY)

I, Laurie Maryl Jonas, a Registered Merit Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Ohio, duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that this meeting was by me reduced to Stenotype and afterwards prepared and produced by means of Computer-Aided Transcription, and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcription.

I further certify that this meeting was taken at the time and place in the foregoing caption specified.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee of or attorney for any party or counsel, or otherwise financially interested in the event of this action.

I do further certify that I am not, nor is the court reporting firm with which I am affiliated, under a contract as defined in Civil Rule 28(D).

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office at Canton, Ohio, on this 12th day of April, 2020.

Laurie Maryl Jonas

Laurie Maryl Jonas, RMR & Notary Public.
My commission expires January 6, 2022.