The Finance Committee for the Village of Monroeville met on Tuesday, May 17, 2022 at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers for the purpose of reviewing the wage ordinance.

Present were: Mayor Fries-Seip, Chris Raftery, Sue Rogers, Joe Galea, Bob Whitacre, Tom Gray, Bonnie Beck and Ann Beck.

Chris Raftery opened the meeting and asked the committee and those attending for their conclusion on how to tackle the wage ordinance. Bonnie advised wages were discussed in August of 2021. It was determined that the wage ordinance needed improvement due to inconsistencies. It was also decided to review and amend the job descriptions, which would allow Council to have a better description of each employee’s job duties. The wages would then be reviewed based off the most current job descriptions. Bonnie said those issues still haven’t been tackled. The wage ordinance was discussed in November of 2021. There is no consistency with a step program in the wage ordinance, it’s been piecemealed over time. Chris asked if the employees have submitted job descriptions for themselves. Bonnie answered no, not yet. Bonnie said in order to prevent having to come back to this issue all the time, it’s a good idea to start from square one and encompass all the departments in order to maintain the current staff and gain new employees along the way. Bonnie advised the departments co-mingle in regards to their job duties and this needs to be incorporated into their job descriptions. This will make it easier to do performance evaluations and possibly a peer review group, while allowing Council and Administration to stay fiscally responsible and adhere to the budget. Bonnie recommended “stay” interviews with employees every ninety days rather than one exit interview when an employee is leaving. Encouraging communication and connection allows employees to provide feedback. Tom added that a solid position description will be conducive to furthering a wage and salary plan. It will close the current gaps in the wage ordinance and will take into account specific work duties. Job descriptions need to be better aligned to what the current duties are and seeking input from employees and supervisors will assist with that process. Obtaining and retaining certifications is part of that and it goes hand in hand with a wage increase. The Mayor said that since the Village has a small staff, a peer review may inhibit response and turn hostile. Tom advised a peer review would address commendation and additional training. It isn’t to find fault in what an employee is doing, nor is it meant to be adversarial or hostile. It creates a layer of opportunity instead, whether it’s commendation or constructive criticism. Bob asked who has access to the peer reviews. Bonnie advised nothing has been decided yet. A new process will allow Council to see the evaluations in order to determine wage increases. Chris advised the focus needs to be on job descriptions at this time. The employees need to provide their job descriptions and the information they provide will need to be evaluated. A work session would need to be held to make determinations. Tom advised Bonnie can tell Council what the budget looks like at the end of this year to see if a wage increase can be supported. If the position descriptions are in play and if the peer review documents are ready to go, beginning in 2023 a more even process will be in place to do the reviews. That same year, wages would be increased based on the anniversary date. Doing this will create the review process and allow it to properly align with the employee’s anniversary date. Joe made the point that putting a statement in the wage ordinance that allows for an across-the-board increase based on the current climate may be in Council’s benefit. Discussion. Chris asked Bonnie if Administration has asked for other municipalities wage ordinances. Bonnie advised that last year, Administration obtained wage ordinances for municipalities of similar size who also own their utilities. Sue asked if employees can turn in their job descriptions before the next work session in June. It was decided that the next work session will be scheduled for Tuesday, 6/21/22, at 6:00 PM. Bob asked if the current employee evaluations aren’t working. Bonnie advised evaluations are not consistent. Tom advised a more definitive or global review would be better for vetting and Q and A. Bob said he is concerned with an employee giving a lower grade to another employee and that could cause problems, as it’s a supervisor’s job to evaluate, not a co-worker. Tom advised its constructive criticism. If the employee can be an adult and take personalities out of the equation, it’s not as adverse as one believes. This is subject to whatever Council wants to do. Joe said that each workplace has a different dynamic depending on the job being done. Council needs to walk through this process and see how it’s going to work before making a decision.

The Mayor brought up the issue with a new tier being reviewed for water and sewer usage, per the concern that Andy Betschman brought up at a prior meeting. The Mayor asked if there are enough “small usage accounts” in order for Council to consider a new tier. Bonnie advised there are only fifty-eight “small usage accounts” and that’s not enough to create a new tier. Bonnie checked with John Courtney to verify after the Model Railroad Group made the inquiry. Bonnie and John agreed that the Village has debt service commitments that are affected by water accounts. The Mayor advised she had heard of a water tower in another state being vandalized. The Mayor asked Tom if there are concerns with the Village water tower. Tom advised there is always risk of exposure due to vandalism. The Mayor advised that Chris expressed to Chief that the Finance Committee would discuss his request for a three dollar an hour increase. Chris said that Chief previously said he was not going to enter into the three dollar an hour pay increase. Since then, he talked to his wife and she encouraged him to inquire about it. Chris needs to have a conversation with Jim Barney to amend Chief’s contract to include the three dollar an hour increase and to retroactively date it as well. Bonnie advised that it’s in the prior minutes three times that Chief was satisfied with his rate of pay and she doesn’t think it’s fair to make it retroactive since he turned it down the last time. Joe agreed with Bonnie’s statement. Chris advised the contract would be amended to include the increase, but without a retroactive date. The Mayor asked Chris if this means the Chief wouldn’t get the raise at all or will he get the raise without the retroactive date. Joe and Chris advised that he would receive the increase, but it wouldn’t be retroactive to the first of the year (1/1/22). Bob inquired about this and asked if Chief took extra vacation time when it was discussed before. The Mayor advised the Chief didn’t take an increase at the time, but he did take an extra week of vacation when his contract was decided upon. The Mayor said that in her opinion, the Chief is entitled to the increase just like everyone else. However, she doesn’t have a problem with the non-retroactive date. Chris asked Bonnie if Council would have to change legislation for that. Bonnie advised his wages aren’t in the legislation, it’s per his contract. If Chief’s contract is changed then a motion would need to be made to accept the agreement. The Mayor suggested taking care of this under Council business at the next meeting.

There being no other finance business to come before them, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Beck, MMC