

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF SILVER LAKE

Thursday, November 8, 2007

5:00 p.m.

The special meeting of Council was called to order by Mrs. Carol Steiner, President of Council.

Mrs. Steiner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A roll call of Council found the following members present: Mrs. Karen Fuller, Mr. William Church, Mr. Gerald Jones, Mrs. Carol Steiner, Mr. Adrian Achtermann, and Mr. Christopher Scott.

Roll call of Council – 6 members present, one absent.

Other officials present: Mayor Bernie Hovey, Solicitor Robert Heydorn, Chief DeMoss and Clerk-Treasurer Teresa Spohn.

Others present: None

Mr. Jones moved to excuse Mr. Alexander from the meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Church. All Council members agreed with the motion.

Mrs. Steiner asked Mrs. Teresa Spohn, Clerk-Treasurer, for the reading of the pending legislation to be considered at this Special Meeting.

RESOLUTION NO.: 90-2007 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VILLAGE OF SILVER LAKE AND VECTREN RETAIL, LLC, FOR THE PROVISION OF RETAIL NATURAL GAS AND RELATED SERVICES FOR THE VILLAGE'S GOVERNMENTAL AGGREGATION PROGRAM, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mrs. Steiner assigned the resolution to the Planning, Zoning and Insurance Committee.

Mr. Jones, Chairman of the Planning, Zoning and Insurance Committee asked if this legislation needs to be adopted tonight.

Mayor Hovey stated the legislation is needed as soon as possible. The “adder” can change at any time. He reported this is a two-year agreement. The blanks in the agreement will be filled in when presented to Mr. Mark Burns from Independent Energy who is the Village’s contractor for gas aggregation.

Mr. Heydorn suggested adding the word “substantially” within the text of Section 1.

Mr. Jones moved to amend Section 1 to read as follows:

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“That the Mayor is hereby authorized to enter into a Master Services Agreement between the Village of Silver Lake and Vectren Retail, LLC, for the provision of retail natural gas and related services for the Village’s Gas Aggregation Program **substantially** in accordance with “Exhibit “A” attached hereto and incorporated herein.”

The motion was seconded by Mr. Church.

Roll call on the amendment: Yes 6 No 0

Mr. Jones moved to suspend the rule that legislation be read at three meetings for Resolution No.: 90-2007, seconded by Mr. Church.

Roll call on suspension: Yes 6 No 0

Motion to adopt by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Scott.

Roll call on adoption: Yes 6 No 0

The balance of the meeting focused on discussion on the Fire/EMS and dispatch services contracts with the Cities of Stow and Cuyahoga Falls. Officials from both communities were in attendance.

Mrs. Steiner turned the floor over to Mr. Jones, Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Committee, to lead this evening’s discussion.

Mr. Jones stated, for the record, he spoke to Mr. Alexander last night. Mr. Alexander will not be able to attend tonight’s meeting. Mr. Jones asked the city officials from both communities if there were any last comments they wished to make regarding the issue.

Stow Mayor, Karen Fritschel thanked Silver Lake Council for their time, deliberations and the amount of effort they gave. Stow is very passionate about this matter since it thinks of Silver Lake as a part of Stow. When Stow enacted its fire levy, Stow included Silver Lake in considerations during those discussions.

Cuyahoga Falls Fire Chief, Mark Snyder, also thanked Council and the Mayor for allowing the Falls to submit a proposal for Fire and EMS services. He stated he is quite biased in the matter. Chief Snyder believes Cuyahoga Falls can offer an excellent service with excellent response times. “We measure everything we do. And what gets measured, generally improves.” As Chief of the Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department he is confident that the Village will be offered comparable, if not superior service on all levels. Chief Snyder invited anyone to visit the Falls’ new dispatch center. “It’s coming together...It looks like a NASA launch site. The technology

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available will move Cuyahoga Falls into the 21st century. The Falls would love for Silver Lake to be a part of it.

Mr. Jones asked if anyone on Council wanted to make their comments to begin this evening's discussion.

Mrs. Steiner stated there are several areas which need to be addressed to ensure the Village is getting comparable services. Mayor Hovey initially stated the Village would have to have comparable service in order to make a move to Cuyahoga Falls. We wouldn't want to put any of the Village residents in peril. One of Council's jobs tonight is to compare these different areas.

First, is staffing comparable? Falls has three stations servicing Silver Lake with staff of thirteen, including a supervisor. Stow has three stations which could service Silver Lake. Three personnel plus a minimum of seven downtown plus a supervisor would staff the stations.

Mr. Jones reported he spent a lot of time on this matter the past several weeks. He visited Cuyahoga Falls and toured the new facility for about 2 ½ hours. Mr. Jones stated it is very impressive. The Chief showed him around that facility as well as the station across the street from the Sheraton Suites and also up on High Street.

Mr. Jones concluded the services are going to be the same. Response time is dependent upon each situation. The only railroad issue that comes to his mind is the Bailey Road track which may never be an issue.

Mr. Jones distributed a spreadsheet based on the proposal from each municipality on the costs which does not include the \$8,000 Stow came back with reference the COG for dispatch. A copy is attached to the original minutes. Over 15 years, the Village will save \$1,534,344. Mr. Jones has personally talked with several people in the Village. Not one person has expressed a strong opinion for staying with Stow for emergency services. The dollars are significant when we're talking about services that are very comparable.

There was a question as to Cuyahoga Falls' willingness to guarantee in writing their average response time. Would the City of Stow be willing to do the same? During past discussions, Stow Fire Chief Kalbaugh stated their response time does not include firefighters' turn-out times. Chief Kalbaugh stated the turn-out time would add another minute to minute-and-a-half to Stow's response time. Mr. Jones stated we could go back and forth on this issue forever and we will never really know.

Mr. Jones was in Chief DeMoss' office when an emergency call came in to Stow dispatch. They looked at the clock on the wall and timed the call. It came in at 5 minutes, 20 seconds from the time the call came in until the crew called in and said they were on site.

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Again, several people commented on the large savings the Village will enjoy and don't see how the Village cannot make a change. Change is difficult but many times it is inevitable.

Mrs. Fuller indicated response times are "averages." Silver Lake Police have first responder status. All cars are equipped with AEDs (defibrillators). Not all communities have that. She corresponded via random e-mail addresses to people she knows. Only one person was very passionate that the Village stay with Stow.

Other comments included that Stow has been wonderful to Village residents but they charge too much. Falls will offer quality service and we ought to try it. If we wanted to go back to Stow in the future, will we be able to do so? If Silver Lake stays with Stow could they offer a price more in line with what the Falls is offering?

Mr. Church stated the decision is a very difficult one to make. People he has talked to are all over the board on this issue, depending on where in the Village a resident lives. Those that live closest to Stow's station are interested in staying with Stow. Others near Vincent think Cuyahoga Falls service would be closer. "Interestingly, there were more people in the audience when we were discussing the garbage issue." "There seems to be a great deal of indifference with this issue."

Mr. Church reiterated the different philosophies regarding the use of certain types of drugs between Stow EMS (Akron General) and Cuyahoga Falls EMS (Summa). He asked if it is a significant issue or are all things equal?

Mr. Scott stated he is like everyone else, "right on the fence." If the numbers were the same, he would opt to stay with Stow, mainly because residents are familiar with their service and Stow emergency personnel know the Village. But, the numbers are not the same. Council has been going over budget figures for 2008 and there are many things that can be done with the savings. He believes response times will be comparable.

Mr. Achtermann stated Council has been spending a considerable amount of time on the budget developing a positive economic status for the community. Council agreed to look at all costs of services. The difference in this case is significant. All things being equal, the difference comes down to dollars.

Mr. Church added that all things being equal, he was hoping there would be further price negotiations taking place.

Mrs. Steiner stated she has reviewed all of her notes many times. She cannot see any loss of service if the Village goes to the Falls. We've talked about all of the issues, and it seems they are all pretty much a wash. Mrs. Steiner quoted Mayor Hovey, "Saving money while putting any person in any kind of risk is a foolish thing indeed. Too much money on even essential services is also foolish." Are Village residents going to receive \$400,000 more value in services if we

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stay with Stow? She cannot justify that the residents will receive that much more value. We would like to stay with Stow, but she cannot justify the cost differential to the citizens of Silver Lake.

Mrs. Fuller stated she thinks everyone would like to stay with Stow. There is a comfort level which exists with the relationship. EMS protocols are as different as three people going to different doctors for the same illness. Each doctor may do something different, but none of them are wrong. She does wish, though, that Cuyahoga Falls would have loproressor available for heart patients.

Mr. Jones mentioned Mr. Alexander's letter to Council stating his vote to stay with Stow. After reading about the discussions which have taken place, Mr. Alexander mentioned to Mr. Jones that he would have no problem going with the Falls. Mr. Jones stated that there really is no other option than to go with the Falls.

Mr. Achtermann stated if it was his business or even a personal family decision, why wouldn't you take the equal service at a lower cost?

Mr. Church stated he thought the issue regarding the fire personnel's lack of knowing the Village streets might be much bigger. But in this day and age of GPS, he sees it as an equalizer.

Chief DeMoss thanked everyone for their consideration on this matter. He has been a police officer with the Village for 33 years. He lived 23 years in the City of Stow. The Village has shared things with Cuyahoga Falls in the past years, ie dispatch, FOP. The capability of dispatch became an issue and couldn't be done, hence the Village went with the City of Stow.

It is very difficult to sit here and listen to both proud and responsible communities compete for this contract. Financial issues aside, Chief DeMoss stated he would recommend staying with the City of Stow because the Village has been "woven into the fabric" over the years. "We are more than just a contract."

Mrs. Steiner stated that is why everyone is so uncomfortable with this issue and rather saddened by it. "We all agree with you, that is why our hearts are heavy about it. But, it's the justification to the community. If we can say Stow is going to give the Village \$400,000 added value, then we would all say great."

Mayor Fritschel asked if the meeting tonight was a committee meeting or a Council meeting.

Mr. Jones stated this is a Council meeting.

Mr. Heydorn added, nevertheless, this matter was presented as a discussion on the agenda. The committee can ask Mr. Heydorn to prepare legislation for a certain subject which would then be voted upon at a regular Council meeting.

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Mr. Jones asked Mr. Heydorn to prepare the legislation for a contract with the City of Cuyahoga Falls for fire, EMS and dispatch services. Final discussion will take place during the recess (posted on the agenda) of the November 19, 2007, Council meeting.

Mrs. Fuller asked if Stow chose to come back with a better offer, would it be considered at that time?

Mr. Jones stated he does not think it is fair. Stow has had a number of opportunities to change their price. "We're coming down to the wire, and I don't think it is fair for Stow to come back with changes at this time."

Mrs. Esther Underwood, 1654 Graham Road, raised her hand to make a comment. She stated she is very passionate about staying with the City of Stow for emergency services.

Mrs. Steiner thanked Mrs. Underwood for her brief comment. Mrs. Steiner stated not many people have come forward to state their opinions on this issue and if they do, they are rapidly running out of time.

Mr. Achtermann distributed a handout reference the Park Board he would like everyone to take a look at. A copy is attached to the original minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

APPROVED:

Carol A. Steiner, President of Council

ATTEST:

Teresa M. Spohn, Clerk-Treasurer