

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 7, 2004 - 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Hinterlong called the meeting to order. Committee members present: Aldermen Hinterlong, Bellon, Nolan and Hay. Also present were Alderman Dikun, Administrator Nelson and members of the press and audience.

Elected Officials Compensation

The Finance Committee discussed health insurance benefits for newly elected officials. The general consensus was that the aldermen, city clerk and treasurer should have access to health insurance but should pay 100% of the premium and that the Mayor's position should continue to have access to health insurance at the current 80/20 split. It was noted that the city's premium would increase if the number of people on the policy drop below 50 members.

Moved by Hay, seconded by Bellon to recommend to the City Council that the compensation for health insurance for the mayor remain the same, but that for all other elected officials (aldermen, city clerk and treasurer), health insurance would be offered, but they would have to pay 100% of the premium. Roll call vote: Hay, aye; Nolan, aye; Bellon, aye and Hinterlong, aye. Motion approved four to zero.

The Finance Committee also discussed aldermen's compensation for attending City Council Meetings, Committee Meetings and Special Meetings. The general consensus was to continue at the current rates until the City is in a better financial position with full staffing in every department.

Train Regulations

The Finance Committee reviewed Administrator Nelson's memo pertaining to the train horn rule which will require all trains to blow their horns upon coming to an at-grade crossing with a road; this ruling will have an impact on four of the City of Harvard's six crossings - Diggins St., Ayer St., Jefferson St. and Brink St. The crossings at Ratzlaff Rd. and Lawrence Rd. are exempt because the train travels at less than 10 mph at those locations. Administrator Nelson stated that the Ayer St. and Jefferson St. crossings could be automatically exempted because the risk factor is less than what the federal government has determined for what is safe for the motoring public. There is a quiet zone which was put in place in 1989 as part of the Illinois Commerce Commission at three of the crossings: Brink St., Jefferson St. and Ayer St. According to Union Pacific, there are 23 trains daily - 12 commuter and 11 night freight. Administrator Nelson reviewed the two options available:

1. If the City wants the horns to blow at all four crossings, nothing needs to be done - effective January 1, 2005, the pre-existing rules expire and the train will blow the horns at all four crossings
2. If a quiet zone is desired, the City needs to immediately apply by written notice sent via certified mail to federal and state government that the City has two crossings (Ayer St. and Jefferson St.) that do not require any federal oversight and that the city wishes to carry on with the whistle ban. If the City wishes to continue the ban at the Brink St. crossing which is already on the list, the City would have to hire a consultant and determine a list of improvements which would be submitted to the federal government for approval. After approval, the City would have five years to construct the improvements. On Diggins St., the procedure would be the same, however, the City would only have three years to construct the improvements because it was not on the pre-existing quiet zone listing. Should the City decide to let the pre-existing rules expire January 1st, the City could go back at a later date and explore options to establish quiet zones, but there would be a whole new set of rules which would apply to all four crossings.

Moved by Nolan, seconded by Bellon to recommend to the City Council that Administrator Nelson follow the federal government rules to apply for a quiet zone at the Ayer St. and Jefferson St. crossings and to wait and see what the impact is at the Diggins St. and Brink St. crossings; if there are problems and complaints about the train horns, the City will take a look at those crossings under the new rules. Roll call vote: Hay, aye; Nolan, aye; Bellon, aye and Hinterlong, aye.

Moved by Bellon, seconded by Nolan to adjourn the meeting. All ayes. Motion carried.

Submitted by:
Mel Hinterlong, Chairman