SPECIAL SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
September 27, 2004

Members of Safety Committee present: Antoinette Newman, Lane J. Beougher, Ron Stake, Brett Baxter, Preston Stearns, Eric Gilbert. Councilman Mel Clemens was absent.
Other member of Council present: Council President William L. Hills.

Mr. Stake: I'll call the September 27 Safety Committee to order at 6:30. Tonight we have Mr. Moore going on with the fee structure.

Mr. Moore: Thank you, Mr. Stake. We left off at Steam and Hot Water Heating Permits was the thing we were going to go to next. 1305.13. But before we start that, I'd like to explain a little bit. I handed out a sheet there that Chairman Hills had asked me to look at Hilliard, Gahanna, and Westerville, also besides the three cities we looked at. And just to show you where they're at kind of permit wise. We also put at the bottom there if you'll look where these fee changes were as far as in progress. Hilliard, which you can see is really low fees. They're in the progress of doing a fee update. When we called them they said they realized ours were, we were going to find that they were really low. But they are in the process of updating their fees. And also Westerville is. Because if you look at their single-family's, Hilliard and Westerville are way behind everybody as far as the fees they charge. And then we looked at Gahanna and on their residential its pretty much way above everybody else. And commercial, we couldn't get enough information from their fee schedule or get them to call us back to compare their commercial. That's why there's no fees there. So if we can get that we'll add it to it. But at this point we just wanted to show that, kind of show you where we were going to be in the process when we're done. So I think we'll bring ourselves pretty even with most of the cities on this side of town. So if you have any questions on that, I'll be glad to try to answer them.

1305.13 Steam and Hot Water Heating Permit Fees. Basically what we did again on this is, we went and got rid of residential and non-residential and just said for all buildings you have to have a separate steam and hot water permit for each address. We changed the minimum heating permit fee to $40. And then we just went down through and changed each one of the fees down through there on the BTU's. And then at the, over 300,000 we upped the fee plus we changed that from 29,300 BTU's to 30,000 to match the other one that we did. Just make it an easy number to divide into and into footage. And then if you go down to (f), we got rid of that because subsection (c) for boilers and stuff, we actually went into, let me see if I can find what we did there, if you look at (i), well that's dampers, let me see here, because that was kind of a repeat. Steam and hot water heating permits required for boilers, that would just fall into up here for new and replacement boilers, it was double worded so we got rid of the one wordage. There's no sense in saying that same thing in both places just in a different way. Which in turn changed (g) to (f), (h) to (g), (i) to (h), and (j) to (i). And then over on (h), the new (h), we just changed the fees again. And then on (i), we just changed it from $15 for these retro fit dampers to $40. So we basically just changed fees there. And again, the 3% that's struck out, you'll find that later on where we just made that a comment that covers the whole code section so we don't have to keep repeating that in each part.

Then we go into 1305.14 Fire Protection Systems.

Mr. Hills: Stephen.

Mr. Moore: Yes.

Mr. Hills: If you don't mind. One question on the steam and hot water, you used the word replacement a few minutes ago. Clarify something for me. If the water heater goes out in my house and I call Bozman or whomever and replace it, is there a permit fee on that?

Mr. Moore: Yes. Franklin County charges a fee to do the plumbing inspection. We issue a plumbing permit for replacement of water tanks.

Mr. Hills: Well, does Bozman pay it and I pay it through them?

Mr. Moore: Yes.

Mr. Hills: And then somebody from Franklin County actually comes out and looks at it?

Mr. Moore: Yeah. They're supposed to. Yeah. I'm not saying everybody gets permits for those. Those are probably one of the ones we get the least permits for, but it is required and there's supposed to be a plumbing inspection. Because if you don't get the relief valves and things like that and the tubes put on them, those can be very dangerous. Those can blow up a house. A hot water tank can.

Mr. Hills: There's no doubt what they can do. I'm trying to see where if we don't do anything and if Franklin County doesn't come out, why a homeowner pays for a service. Now they don't know they're paying for it. I guess because that just probably goes in the installation cost of the heating contractor. I don't want to give anybody any specific names, but whoever replaced it for you. But many people will do this themselves. You can go buy a water heater.

Mr. Moore: Well, that's correct. We have that on every permit we issue. People don't get permits but they are required. And if there's a permit given, it's up to the contractor or the owner that gets the permit to call Franklin County for the inspection.

Mr. Hills: I'd be willing to bet 99% of our residents have no idea that if they replace their water heater, they have to go get a permit.

Mr. Moore: I would say you are close. We do actually issue quite a few of those because there was such a, in Franklin County, the last time we came to you, Franklin County had upped their fees to, I mean they really took them up. They about doubled all of their fees. People went through the roof because it was $50 to do a hot water tank. For us to issue a permit. Well, Franklin County came back about a month later and dropped it down to 35. So there is a $35 permit for hot water heaters. And they're supposed to do an inspection on them. And that's why we basically, it's issued under the plumbing permit. It's not a heating permit or anything like that.

Mr. Hills: How would we become aware if Franklin County went out? Do they then notify you? That they went out and inspected a replacement water heater at such and such an address? Or how would we ever know? And if we had the information, what would we do with it.

Mr. Moore: Well, I'm not saying we would do anything with it other than the fact that we've issued a permit and the county has inspected it. I'm not saying there would be anything we'd do with it.

Mr. Hills: Do we issue many replacement permits?

Mr. Moore: Yeah. Actually we issue, I can't give you a number without going and checking. But I'm not saying we issue as many as we should. But yeah, we do issue some.

Mr. Hills: Okay then. What I've heard is right. Thank you.

Mr. Stake: Mr. Stearns.

Mr. Stearns: Yeah, Stephen. If you see somebody that's got a hot water tank sitting out front of their house to be picked up, can you ____________ inspect to see whether they got a permit?

Mr. Moore: If we would see that or if somebody would call us and say they saw one sitting out there, we would check our records to see. If they didn't then, yeah, I would either send them a letter or leave a door hanger saying you need a permit for your hot water tank. The same as we do with decks, or sheds, or anything else that we see that's supposed to have a permit.

Mr. Stake: Mr. Baxter.

Mr. Baxter: Thank you. My question's more based upon the fact that we're charging for a permit but we're not doing the inspection. ________________ by Franklin County.

Mr. Moore: We have a contract by Franklin County to issue those permits.

Mr. Baxter: So then the funds that you collect go to Franklin County?

Mr. Moore: Sixty percent of it. Yeah. The other 40 is for us to do the paper work.

Mrs. Newman: Could I ask a question here?
Mr. Stake: Yes.

Mrs. Newman: The way I read this, it sounds like it's talking about heating systems. You have a steam heating system and a hot water system.

Mr. Moore: What we just went over is just heating systems. It's not really the hot water tank.

Mrs. Newman: It's not the hot water tank.

Mr. Moore: Yeah.

Mrs. Newman: Okay.

Mr. Moore: There are certain heating systems that are used, the hot water tank's used as the boiler per se.

Mrs. Newman: Oh, I see.

Mr. Moore: And that would fall under this. But that's a whole different animal than what Mr. Hills is talking about. That's actually a plumbing permit. Not a heating permit.

Mrs. Newman: Thank you.

Mr. Stake: Mr. Beougher.

Mr. Beougher: And I was thinking the same thought. And I was looking for where we do charge for water heaters and all I see is 1305.08 Plumbing Permit Fees. Is that all that's there?

Mr. Moore: It's on the form that Franklin County provides us.

Mr. Beougher: It's on their form? Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Moore: Okay. We can go to Fire Protection Systems. Fire protection systems in our code covers fire alarm systems, and fire suppression systems, kitchen hoods, those type of things that are regulated by the OBC. So basically what we did, we put in there for all buildings, again a separate is needed. If you're installing this type of system, it falls under the requirements below. The minimum, we had a minimum of $15 and we took that to 50 because we don't run into too many things. We were running into stuff like, because our system here is really old and antiquated, we were doing like sprinkler changes in buildings and all we could charge is $2 a head. So if they did 10 heads, the building permit fee was $20 for us to go in and do all the inspections, do the witness tests and everything for something like that. So what we wanted to do is put something in there that at least covered us being out there an hour. Because you can't, the code requires a two hour pressure test. So we have to be out there for a certain amount of time to see that it complies with the building code. So we kind of covered our costs on the small projects, and then what we did was went through and did some wordage change here. The state doesn't license sprinkler contractors. They certify them. So we wanted to change the language to what's appropriate. They're certified to do sprinklers, and certified to do fire alarms. Not licensed. And fire suppression systems. We added "and fire suppression systems". It was only talking about alarms. And this is for suppression systems and alarms. So we needed to add that to it. Then we got rid of of course the schedule. Because what we did was, we basically, fire protection permit fees _________________ and alarm systems shall be assessed according to the following schedule. We just changed the wording there. And then we went to, instead of a, just a dollar for each thousand, we went to 40 plus $1.50 for each head, or no, this is for the, excuse me, I'm at the wrong place. This is for the fire alarms. We were charging $1 a fixture for the first 1,000.

Well, it would take quite a few to actually get a fee up to where it was covering our cost. So we went to a flat fee of $40 which covered us being out there and then $1.50 for each head after that. Or each fixture. Which is like a horn, a strobe, all those types of things that go along with fire alarms. And if they go over 1,000, which I don't know if we've ever had a building, The Limited probably came the closest, then it's 75 cents a piece after that.

Then if you turn to the next page, the Water Supply Piping, we added "inside the building shall be included in the fire protection permit". Because before that was, we didn't have anything that said what piping was included. When we do that, that's done by a separate contractor than the one that does the outside under ground piping. That's usually an excavating contractor who is certified to do sprinkler lines. And we weren't charging for that but we have to inspect that to make sure what's called thrust blocking's in place. The pipe's the right size. The fittings are right so the system doesn't blow apart if it kicks on in the building. So you'll see down later, we've added underground supply piping, a fee. And then in here we wanted to pinpoint that this was a piping inside and above ground. Not the outside type piping. And then in (c), the supply piping from the main water line to the building shall be required to have a separate permit which is the under ground. That's where we defined the inside and outside piping. And then down here, we just changed the fees from $20 to $100 on stand pipes, (b) on site water supply piping which is $100, which they said beyond the water meter. But that's the above ground that we talked about before. (C) is the under ground which is $50. Because that requires the same tests and all the stuff on the outside that we have to do to the inside piping to make sure it's not going to come apart when the system's activated. Then we changed the fees to $75. We put a flat fee plus $2 a sprinkler head. That stayed the same as, all we were charging before was the $2 for each sprinkler head. Now we're putting in a flat fee plus the $2. Because we're going to go out, we're going to spend time out there. $2 a sprinkler head just doesn't, unless you've got a really big building, you're not going to cover the cost of the inspector being out there. And then we never had in there, if you look at (c), (c) before said, "No permits shall be required for portable fire extinguishers or fire protection systems within kitchen range hoods". Probably, we'll go back and change that no permits, we'll allow the no permits for portable fire extinguishers. But we needed the suppression systems and the hood. We actually have to do tests on those hood systems. We have to go out and literally test them like they're having a fire. So the inspectors have to go out and make sure the nozzles are in the right place, they're the right type of nozzles. Then they have to pressurize the system, blow water or air through it depending on the type of system, and actually do tests. So we're out there for some time doing inspections on these. Probably back when this was written, maybe the code didn't require the inspection testing and stuff like that on the hoods. Today it does. So we need to cover our costs out there. So that's why we added in the $50 per hood. Right now, if somebody does a hood, basically I charge an inspection fee which is the $50 which is back in the beginning it says, "if there are no other permits required, then you can charge an inspection fee". And that's kind of the, we find that covers the cost. That's why we made this $50. It covers the time we're out there.

Then we get into Certificate of Occupancy Fees. This is the piece of paper I write that says people can legally move into a building and occupy it. For residents, we've put in there, they had in there some wording, it really wasn't real clear. I know how we interpret it but it really wasn't real clear about separating out residential and commercial. In a way it did but it really wasn't very specific.

So we wanted to be able to make it more clear as to what fee fit what thing. It kind of had that Certificate of Occupancy partial or final which was the temporary, which is what's called temporary right now of a final Certificate of Occupancy. But it really didn't talk about residential/commercial. It had $50 for one and then it said all other buildings, $75. It's interpreted that it must have meant residential was at $50 and all other buildings or commercials were $75. That's how it was always interpreted in the past and that's what we continue to do. But we didn't think that was really good language. So we wanted to make sure everybody understood the difference between residential and commercial, or industrial or whatever. So residential is going to go up to $75. All other buildings, which would be commercial projects, things like that. Temporary Certificate of Occupancy. That's where I issue a Certificate of Occupancy based on the fact that they have some small part not completed and needed a couple of additional weeks or a month to complete it. Some of the buildings where we get people to move in without doing all the paper work they're supposed to, instead of telling them, you can't be in the building, as long as there's no safety issues, I'll issue a temporary to let them get through the paper work part, occupy the building so they can be making money and then be able to do whatever needs to be done to the building. We try to work with people in that way. So we need a temporary, and then the final Certificate of Occupancy, that's when everything's done, they're ready to have people, the public in, that's $100. So if somebody requires a temporary which is extra inspections and stuff for us, that's where they pay for it. And then we go through, in their original permit they pay for the final Certificate of Occupancy. The only time they pay extra is if they want the temporary for some reason. So those are the fee changes in that.

Then we have this 1305.16 Permit Fees for Junk Yards. To tell you the truth, we don't even have any junk yards.

Mr. Stake: That was going to be my question.

Mrs. Newman: Glad to hear that.

Mr. Moore: Well, this is one of those where we looked at it and we thought, what do we do with this thing? Because it probably, truthfully should be in zoning. A junk yard would be a Special Exception Use Permit. It probably should be in that area. And that was one of the things I wanted to discuss and find out what you think we should do with this. To me it's not a building issue. We issue the building permits. A junk yard, we really don't have one per se and I don't know that we would ever get one but it really is more of a zoning issue than building. I think this is one of those crossover areas. To me it probably should be repealed out of here and added in. Although it would probably already get a fee with a Zoning Certificate and stuff with a Special Exception Use Permit in zoning at the time. But this was kind of like an annual, supposed to be an annual fee. And I don't know who was supposed to look at them or what they were supposed to, I'm really not sure.

Mr. Beougher: It's not a structure.

Mr. Moore: Right.

Mr. Beougher: And I think we already regulate it in the zoning code. I'm pretty sure.

Mr. Moore: So we can just get rid of that piece because it really doesn't fit in ours. And we're also working, just so you know, a lot with the new Zoning Officer to try to look at what's in our code that were kind of crossovers when the two departments were together. And you'll probably be seeing some stuff coming from her to pull some of our stuff out where we have duplicate stuff and things like this where we want to get them in the right places at this point instead of who knows where.

Mr. Beougher: Before we go on to the next page, I did see something I'm not quite sure I understand. Back on fire protection. You have (a) stand pipe, (b) on site water supply piping. It used to say beyond the water meter installation and typically you don't have a meter in the sprinkler lines supply.

Mr. Moore: Actually, you do.

Mr. Beougher: You do?

Mr. Moore: Yeah. There's a water meter on every sprinkler system. They have to pay for that water when it goes off. If that system goes off.

Mr. Beougher: Okay. But then you have (c), under ground supply piping.

Mr. Moore: Right. That's the stuff outside the building.

Mr. Beougher: Isn't that on site? What's the difference between (b) and (c)?

Mr. Moore: Well, if you go up to the above, that gives you definitions. B, the water supply pipe inside the building is the above ground which is on site. Maybe we need to change this to above ground water supply piping. And then the other one's under ground. We gave the definitions up above. Right above the number 2 there.

Mr. Beougher: So you're calling...

Mr. Moore: That's what I say, maybe on-site's the wrong thing. Maybe we should do above ground or inside building. Because under ground...

Mr. Beougher: You're saying after the riser, you're saying above ground.

Mr. Moore: Right.

Mr. Beougher: Wouldn't that be part of the sprinkler system?

Mr. Moore: Well it is. That's what this says. You charge for the piping and you charge per head.

Mr. Beougher: Okay.

Mr. Moore: These are accumulative. They're not just like the one fee. You would charge that.

Mr. Beougher: Okay. Well, that seems unfair to me because, you know, supply piping you know, may or may not have heads in the line which means it does not, the branches seems like those have heads, are we charging them to inspect the pipe and then the heads as well? So that's something that's not real clear to me after reading this. Having enough knowledge to be dangerous. It's been a while.

Mr. Moore: Well we changed some of that. Like on-site, we'll get rid of that since we got rid of it up in (b). We'll call that above, I don't know. We'll come up with something that tells you it's piping inside the building. Because we do have to check it. We actually get up on lifts and make sure it's the right size, the right distances, the hangers are the right, we do the whole thing and then check each head to make sure they're not blocked or painted over, or remove the foil when they're painting it, and the right size and temperature heads and all that type of stuff. So yes, we charge for the piping and then we charge for, maybe we need to put this and then put plus, like (d) or something like that. I don't know how to make it. I'll look at it. I put something by it so we'll look at it and see if we can come up with something to make it more clear.

Mr. Beougher: Okay. I'm still having problems with the water meter situation. My understanding was that we didn't allow water meters in a fire line. And I thought that was an NFPA 13 pipe. I could be mistaken. Every installation I've seen did not.

Mr. Moore: I believe that's part of our city Water Department requirements. Because Mark even specified the type of meter they have to have.
Mr. Beougher: But when the fire pump pulls up and goes out to a city hydrant rather than private hydrant, they know we're not charging them for that water and having to pump that back into the sprinkler system at the ______________.

Mr. Moore: I can't answer if we do or not. I don't know how that works.

Mr. Beougher: Okay.

Mr. Hills: An internal sprinkler system is metered through the master meter going to the building, service meter any way. And if you require a meter on the sprinkler system, the only that thing I'd think it would be is when we ______________ it would be used for a deduct. Because you're going to use, the water coming through your water meter going into the commercial building is being measured and you're going to use it and your sprinkler system is coming off the down ___ side of the meter, which unless you're running direct line for sprinkler system only. A separate line into the building.

Mr. Moore: We do.

Mr. Hills: Is that what we're doing?

Mr. Moore: It's a whole separate line off the water main.

Mr. Hills: So there's two water lines going into the building. One for sprinkler suppression or fire suppression and the second for water usage.

Mr. Moore: That's correct.

Mr. Hills: Okay.

Mr. Beougher: Right. And the system I'm most familiar with is at a plant I worked at and it split off before the meter and the fire line was not metered. And the explanation I had at the time was that the meter wouldn't be able to keep up and it would slow down the flow.

Mr. Moore: All I can tell you is the designers design them right into the system. So they would have to put in meters that would be able to keep up.

Mr. Beougher: Okay.

Mr. Moore: So junk yards, I guess the consensus is that should go out of the Building Department thing and if we would ever, I'll talk to the Zoning Officer and we'll put, some how that would have to be in there or see if it's already covered. I think it would be under Special Exception Use Permits to tell you the truth.

Mr. Hills: One would think so. But why don't you run it by the City Attorney too and ask him? Because we may, Mr. Clemens isn't here but he may like this $200 fee to try to go after some of the junk in the yards that we see now. I'm not sure if it's viable to use that way, he may want to use it.

Mr. Moore: Well, I'll check with Bill Underwood too.

Mr. Beougher: If we want to discourage them, I think we should raise the fee to $200,000 or something like that. $200 is a bargain.

Mr. Baxter: What are we defining the junk yard any ways? Two cars? Five cars?

Mr. Moore: I couldn't tell you that. That's why I think it's a zoning issue because the zoning code's going to define what a junk yard, or auto repair, or whatever is.

Mr. Baxter: I think that's the point I was trying to make is you make more logical sense putting this into a zoning area rather than the code because it isn't implying what a junk yard is.

Mr. Hills: It appears to have been modified in 1995. Does it not, Nancy? 5-8-95.

Mrs. Frazier: That's the last time they changed the fees I think.

Mr. Hills: So in '95 for some reason, at that time the Building Department thought they needed it and made some modification to it or it wouldn't show that date.

Mrs. Frazier: They may not have changed that section and just may have, the date just might have been there. I don't know that they changed...

Mr. Hills: Even if there's no change in the _____________.

Mrs. Frazier: It just got added.

Mr. Beougher: You're not concerned about your holiday display are you, Brett?

Mrs. Frazier: I'd have to look at it.

Mr. Hills: It's certainly one we need further thought maybe.

Mr. Moore: Okay. I'll check with Mr. Underwood and then I'll see if zoning already covers it too.

1305.15 Permit Fees for Moving Buildings and Structures. Issue (c), you have to go over to the next page to look at. They had a lot of stuff in here about different sizes and you know, _______ did not exceed 2,000, 2,000 to 10,000. I mean, like I said before, we've only had I think one house since I've been here. Or it was moved before I came here and tore down after that. So what we did is, we went over here and tried to make it a little simpler. So if it's from 200 square feet, which would be bigger than, if somebody wanted to move a little shed, we're not going to charge them to move that little shed from one, and we actually do have people that want to move from one, they're moving from their old house to a new house and they want to bring their shed with them. So as long as it's under 200 square feet, which is kind of like a one car garage size building, there isn't a fee for that. If it's 200 to 2,000 square feet, which would go from a garage to a house, it's $100. 2,000 to 10,000, $150, and over 10,000, $200. And then we have in here, building ________________ 8 feet or less in width and not exceeding 1,000 cubic feet don't require a permit. So basically we're saying, we don't need permits for these little sheds and stuff if you want to move them from one place to another. The only thing they would still have to do is come in and make sure they're set off for zoning requirements. They'd get a zoning certificate through the Zoning Department.

Mr. Beougher: Are we inspecting the foundations separately?

Mr. Moore: On?

Mr. Beougher: On relocated buildings?

Mr. Moore: Yes. We would have to.

Mr. Beougher: So that's covered under the new structure fee schedule?

Mr. Moore: Actually, that's what this fee's for.

Mr. Beougher: That's what this fee's for. Okay.

Mr. Moore: That would just be looking at the foundation system. They pay a plan review fee plus we would do the inspections for $100.

Mr. Beougher: That wasn't clear to me when I read through this.

Mr. Moore: Do you think it needs to have an explanation of what those fees cover?

Mr. Beougher: I think it needs to be spelled out a little bit.

Mr. Moore: Okay.

Mr. Beougher: I also heard an anecdote about somebody who had a house moved and once they got there they realized they needed to build a basement for it. It could be an old wives tale, but.

Mr. Hills: I think that may have been the one over on Jackson Street.

Mr. Beougher: Is that right? Maybe it was.

Mr. Hills: The donated house to the historical society.

Mr. Moore: That could have been.

Mr. Hills: That's the only one I'm familiar with that was moved.

Mr. Moore: There was one that was over off of Bartlett that came off of Main Street and it got set in a field. They actually put a foundation under it but then it sat there for about, it's been 15 years I think and we finally had it torn down because it was filling with water and falling apart. Nobody ever fixed the house. Actually, there is a new house sitting there right now. But that's the only one I know. I forgot about the one on Jackson.

Mr. Hills: They moved that from the five corners and moved the house down.

Mr. Moore: And the problem with moving structures any more, with what the utilities charge and everything, it's just getting out of reach for people to actually do those things any more.

Mr. Baxter: Do we consider trailers part of this structure? Homes?

Mr. Moore: What do you mean trailer?

Mr. Baxter: Trailer homes. Double wides, those type of things.

Mr. Moore: No. Those can only, by our zoning code, those can only go in mobile home parks any way. We can have manufactured housing which is different than trailers. And those would be, yeah, those would fall under this. If somebody wanted to move a manufactured home which is a HUD approved thing and move it onto a lot or something, yeah. But I don't know where our zoning would say yes or no you can do that. This is just a fee.

Mr. Baxter: Not for trailers. It doesn't impact trailers. _____________ structures I think if anything.

Mr. Moore: No. Because Franklin, actually mobile home parks are regulated by the county rather than our electric and plumbing, or the plumbing, they do plumbing. But we issue the permits for that stuff. We have no, we can't say anything about the mobile home parks as far as moving new ones in and out. Okay. Any other questions?

Contractor Registration. Now you'll see some changes in this because we had to catch up with today. When this was put in back years ago, the $5,000 bond was plenty. Today you can't build a deck for $5,000 hardly. I see room additions. This was all put in place to really protect people from Home Improvement Contractors who come in and take off real quick or something like that. All the projects today really aren't covered by $5,000. We've had a couple where I've collected on bonds and didn't even get enough money to cover all the work the person had done. So we looked at this, looked at a couple of places. Columbus, I believe unless they've changed theirs, the last time was up to about $15,000. I'm looking at $10,000. It should cover most things. It's amazing we still have a lot of people that do things without contracts. Shaking hands and stuff still. We have, I've probably collected on about 4 or 5 bonds in the last two years to get money from people who, people who haven't completed jobs or they got the down payment, half, 50% down and then never showed back up. We want to get something that's going to cover people from what happens to them. So we went up to $10,000 to be able to, what we feel will be adequate to cover. In a couple of years we may find out that's still too low and we need to move it up again because of the cost of stuff. Most of the little metal room additions that we're seeing go on, the three season ones, those run $20,000. So we're not seeing, in-ground pools are $20,000. We're seeing a lot of stuff that the prices went way up. And usually people aren't caught for all of it. They're caught for a piece of it. So I don't know that you could ever have a bond that's big enough to cover every piece of a project. But we feel this is at least adequate at the time to cover what we're seeing most people running into. Fortunately, we have a lot of good contractors here. We don't run into this very often at all.

Mr. Baxter: What's the cost to the contractor in that bond?

Mr. Moore: I'm not sure. I believe it's 10% of whatever the bond amount is. That's what I've heard. With the $5,000, I've heard contractors say it costs them $50. So I'm assuming it's 10%. I think the biggest issue for them is the fact that they've got to show that they're worth the amount of the bond. Because the bond isn't insurance. It's a bonding company saying, you show us you're worth it and we'll guarantee it and if we have to we'll come and take whatever's worth up to that of yours. So it's not really an insurance policy. And a lot of times I have called bonding companies, or the insurance companies that __________ bonding companies, and the contractors come back and either give the people their money because they don't want to go through that. A lot of companies don't understand it's not insurance. So insurance is a separate issue. And I've heard that once somebody gets a bond collected on, it's really hard for them to get bonded again.

Mr. Stake: And they need to prove to the bonding company that they're good for the money in order to get the bond, really.

Mr. Moore: Exactly. They have to have assets worth that amount. Or more. They have to at least show assets worth the amount. So we took that up to 10,000. And basically in here we changed it. This just said building inspector. Everything in here talks about the Chief Building Inspector. That's why we added the word "Chief". So it's more obvious not one of my inspectors, but it was me that they dealt with.

And then we went down here and, today the $300,000 property damage and bodily insurance, I don't see anybody come in with less than a million. But most of the other cities are requiring at least $500,000. Which I think for a small contractor doing small projects, that's probably adequate. I'm sure most of them either carry more or they carry a rider on the homeowner's insurance or something to protect them from the bigger law suits if that would happen. So we took the bond and the insurance amounts up. And then we took the fee up from $35 to $75 for us dealing with the paper work and all the stuff we have to do dealing with them. I checked with the City of Columbus. It's about $350 to be a contractor there. So most of the other areas have it between $75 and $100 for it. If they register. A lot of cities still don't register contractors. We were way ahead of the game when Council did that years ago. But $75 is fair to do business here. And for the paper work and the other issues that we have to deal with for the contractors. So I don't know if anybody has any questions or not.

Mr. Stake: The state licenses contractors as well. Correct?

Mr. Moore: Some, they do.

Mr. Stake: A lot, most of them?

Mr. Moore: Just the mechanicals. Electric, plumbing, heating, refrigeration. Generals aren't registered. Home Improvement Contractors are not registered. Now there's been some talk of legislation to get Home Improvement Contractors but some of them are for it and some of them aren't. But yeah, the state went through and did, and we require a copy of their, if they have to be state certified, we require a copy to get our certification, or registration. That's one of our requirements.

Mr. Baxter: What advantage is given to be registered with the city from a contract standpoint?

Mr. Moore: What advantage?

Mr. Stake: Stay out of trouble.

Mr. Moore: Well, it doesn't keep them out of trouble, but...

Mr. Baxter: As a homeowner, what does that say to me? Does the homeowner even know that we offer that and they have registered?

Mr. Moore: Actually, what they do is, I'm not saying it gives the contractor any advantage other than the fact that the name's on the list and we have a lot of people come in and ask for copies of the list of different contractors to do work. The homeowner, it gives them the guarantee of, we have some money sitting back there. If the guy doesn't finish the job, he doesn't do it to code, we can go back and get some money to help you finish it. A lot of homeowners don't realize that if they don't have property damage and liability insurance, the homeowners property insurance will pay for those issues. They've had contractors turn around and sue the homeowner because they didn't have insurance to cover those things if their equipment or something gets, so it's more, it was never meant to protect the contractor. It was meant to protect the homeowner is what it was for.

Mr. Hills: Stephen, do you issue a permit unless it's a registered contractor?

Mr. Moore: No we will not.

Mr. Hills: So if they're going to do work in the city, they have to be registered.

Mr. Moore: That's correct. We won't issue permits until they get that.

And then if you look down in here, we kind of went through and, before they didn't have Plumbing Contractors as the ones who had the state registration. We got rid of the Columbus license because Columbus, really we're more interested in that the state licenses them and if they're able to come up with the qualifications. Columbus doesn't test any more. They don't do all the things that they used to do that gave it, I'm not going to say they don't have credibility, but they don't do some of the things they used to do which is why we asked for either a copy of Columbus or something like that. So since the state does the license on mechanicals, that's all we need. If they pass the test and show they have the years of experience, I don't think we can ask for much more than that.

Mr. Stake: On these contractors, why are we not, part of the requirements, why are we not doing criminal background checks?

Mr. Moore: I don't know that I...

Mr. Stake: Or requesting those to be done and passed on?

Mr. Moore: I can't answer that. We've never, that was never an issue back when this first came in. I can't answer that.

Mr. Beougher: We'd probably have to raise the fees to cover the cost.

Mr. Moore: I think the police are the only ones that can do background checks. So I suppose you could tell them they have to supply them to us. I'm not sure. I don't know that, I mean, would that make a difference if we're going to register them or not?

Mr. Baxter: It would to me.

Mr. Beougher: Well I think the ability to be bonded goes toward that end.

Mr. Moore: Yeah. I think that was the protection at the time that was felt was needed was the bond and the insurance.

Mr. Beougher: Maybe not enough.

Mr. Moore: There's a lot of people with a lot of different names that are out there that you could get a background check and nothing show up.

Mr. Stake: It depends on what kind of background check you get.

Mr. Hills: The background checks you hear from the police department are quite extensive. VCI does the background check out of London and I think the cost on that, because everybody in nursing, health care have to have it. ________________ someone with the company or city can get them. I think they're $17 or $18 or something like that.

Mr. Moore: I guess my question is, if we got one and it came back bad, what would we do with it? We would have to have language stating they couldn't get it and I don't know where we'd run into that legally. I don't know that because they had something going on in something else, we could deny them a registration to work. That would be something to ask Bill.

Mr. Stake: I guess though, I might have a problem with us registering a contractor that's a convicted petafile or something and they're going and working in peoples homes maybe when the parents aren't home, and the kids are coming home after school. There's that other side of the coin too is what I'm saying. I guess if you know you can deny...

Mr. Hills: Usually when a background check is contingent upon employment, there's a list of what crimes it is that have been committed. There are some exclusions and I can assure you that the legislature's fought with this for years as to which crimes.

Mr. Stake: You could simply say convicted felons are not eligible.

Mr. Beougher: So then they need to run a background on every employee of the contractor. That's way expensive.

Mr. Moore: You have a company like Jesse Howard who does electrical, he may have 1,000 employees. We don't know who's going to which job. Just like at the state, a company gets registered but they could have 100 employees work under that license.

Mr. Hills: And someone that is just convicted may not be a reason to keep them out of the house.

Mr. Stake: I think though, they won't license convicted felons to be electricians unless it's past 10 years or something like that. The state won't. Isn't that correct?

Mr. Moore: I can't answer. I don't know what OCEIB allows and doesn't allow for that.
Mr. Stake: My understanding is, that if you are a convicted felon within the past 10 years, you're not going to get an electricians license. I may be mistaken, but.

Mr. Hills: Why would that be a problem?

Mr. Stake: Personally, I've got a problem with convicted felons coming to work in my home. A lot of these are home, these are contractors that might be working in your home or your business. I'm not sure I want a convicted felon in my home or business.

Mr. Hills: There's a convicted felon practicing law right now in the State of Ohio. There are unusual circumstances. I don't disagree. I know when the nursing homes got into the background checks it's a real touchy subject and there's a long list of which crimes are there. The general, just a convicted felon can't do this or that, I'm not sure I've seen too much of that. But I know there's some Bills kicking around right now that that language I believe is in there drafting those Bills. But I think we may have some constitutional grounds when it gets so far. Because a convicted felon who is currently an electrician, and maybe got his training in prison, which would be sort of different, but I guess it's the crime, what's he convicted of?

Mr. Stake: You can't get insurance license if you've been a convicted felon. What's the difference?

Mr. Hills: The City Attorney just ran in. He'll leave when he hears this subject.

Mr. Stake: Any ways, I didn't mean to get stuck on that. We're about at the end of our time here.

We'll adjourn the special Safety Committee meeting at 7:15.

Safety Committee
- -Nancy C. Frazier, Clerk of Council
(Transcribed - Susie Smith)
September 27, 2004