

**HIRAM VILLAGE
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Unofficial

Rosser Municipal Building
11617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

December 10, 2024

- I. Call to Order by Mayor Anne Haynam at 7:02 pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
 - A. Roll Call: Christopher Szell, Ed Frato-Sweeney, David Smith, Christopher Perme, Justin Bisutti
 - Others Present: Mayor Anne Haynam, Solicitor Charles Gasior, Village Administrator Steven Schuller, Police Chief Brian Gregory, Fire Chief Bill Byers
 - Citizens Present: Diane Hladky and Jo Cobb
 - Mr. Szell made a motion to amend November 12, 2024, Council Meeting Minutes to add times for executive session. Mr. Frato-Sweeney seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
- III. Mr. Szell made a motion to approve the November 12, 2024, Council Meeting Minutes as amended. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
- IV. Mr. Bisutti made a motion to approve the December 10, 2024, Agenda. Mr. Szell seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
- V. Guest and Public Comment
 - A. Resident Diane Hladky spoke on her concerns regarding zoning, public comment policy, and accessibility to documents.
- VI. Department Heads Report
 - A. Mayor's Report: *See attached report.* Mayor Haynam provided an update from Hiram's Recreation and Parks Board, the Board requested \$7,500 to be added to the 2025 Appropriations. Update Couch Farm cleanup.
 - Mr. Szell made a motion to approve a 3% Merit Raise for the Village Administrator Steven Schuller. Mr. Frato-Sweeney seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
 - Mayor Haynam requested a motion to approve Debrorah Wordell's consultant contract at the current rate, until March 31, 2025. Mr. Szell made the motion. Mr. Perme seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
 - B. Village Administrator's Report: Service Department has been doing snow removal, update on the new water tower installation, vehicle maintenance is continuously in the works, and update on the NatureWorks Grant approval.
 - C. Safety Service's Report
 1. Fire/EMS Report: Chief Byers updated Council on an upcoming grant application and that he will be seeking legislation at the January Council meeting.
 2. Police Report: Chief Gregory updated Council on the success of Shop with a Hero, traffic appeals, and emergency calls made to the Hiram College Campus.
 - D. Financial Report:
 1. Mayor Haynam requested a motion to approve the Fiscal Officer Report. Mr. Perme made the motion. Mr. Frato-Sweeney seconded. Motion passed 4-0-1, with Mr. Smith abstaining.
- VII. Hiram Township Report
No Township report tonight.

VIII. Legislation

A. Ordinances:

1. 2024-24: An Ordinance to Put in Place Permanent Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2025 with Exhibit A. Mr. Szell made a motion to amend Ordinance 2024-27 by appropriating \$7,500 to Hiram Village Recreation and Parks Fund, \$152,000 to the Fire Department payroll (2914) and \$254,000 to the EMS payroll (2901), and \$192,880 to Police Department Payroll, \$74,236.81 to Police Department Fringe Benefits, and \$10,218 to Other- Professional and Technical Services (0109). Mr. Perme seconded. Motion passed 5-0. 3rd Reading.
Mr. Perme made a motion to approve changes made to Ordinance 2024-24. Mr. Frato-Sweeney seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
2. 2024-27: An Ordinance Amending the Village of Hiram's Zoning Code with Exhibit A. 2nd Reading.
3. 2024-28: An Ordinance Amending the Village of Hiram; s Employee Handbook, Appendix A. 2nd Reading.
4. 2024-33: An Ordinance Amending the Permanent Appropriations and Declaring an Emergency. Mr. Szell a motion to Suspend the Rules. Mr. Bisutti seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
Mr. Frato-Sweeney made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-33. Mr. Bisutti seconded. Motion passed 5-0. 1st Reading.
5. 2024-34: An Ordinance to Transfer Twenty-One Thousand Dollars from The General Fund (1000) to the Fire Department Operations Fund (2914) and Declaring and Emergency. 1st Reading. Mr. Smith made a motion to Suspend the Rules. Mr. Frato-Sweeney seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
Mr. Smith made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-34. Mr. Szell seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
6. 2024-35: An Ordinance to Transfer Two Hundred Eighty Dollars and Twenty-Eight Cents from Unclaimed Monies Fund (9101) to the General Fund (1000) and Declaring an Emergency. Mr. Szell made a motion to Suspend the Rules. Mr. Perme seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
Mr. Perme made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-35. Mr. Szell seconded. Motion passed 5-0. 1st Reading.
7. 2024-36: An Ordinance to Transfer Ninety-Two Cents from Fund (9924) to the General Fund (1000) and declaring an Emergency. Motion passed 5-0. 1st Reading.
8. 2024-37: An Ordinance Suspending the Water Rate Increase for the Calendar Years 2022-2024, As Well As Any Future Increases Until Approved by Council and Declaring and Emergency. 1st Reading. Discussion on Ordinance 2021-18, and the 0.5% increase annually, between 2022-2027. Hiram Village did not incorporate this increase for the following years: 2022, 2023, and 2024 and is recommending there be a hold placed on the water and sewer increases until further evaluation. Mr. Bisutti made a motion to Suspend the Rules. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
Mr. Bisutti made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-37. Mr. Szell seconded. Motion passed 5-0. 1st Reading.

B. Resolutions:

1. 2024-37: A Resolution Authorizing an Independent Contractor Agreement with Lilly Johns to Perform a Records Retention and Declaring an Emergency. Mr. Szell a motion to Suspend the Rules. Mr. Frato-Sweeney seconded. Motion passed 5-0. 1st Reading.

Mr. Frato-Sweeney made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-37. Mr. Szell seconded. Motion passed 5-0. 1st Reading.

IX. New Business

A. New Council Member: Mr. Szell presented two candidates, Juan Fernandez, and Chris Cobb. Mr. Frato-Sweeney made a motion to table discussion until after the Executive Session. Mr. Perme seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

B. 911 Program Representative: Discussion on what representative options exist and Mr. Perme requested his name be submitted for board consideration.

X. Mr. Szell made a motion to convene the Executive Session for the purpose of personnel issues per ORC 121.22 at 8:15 pm. Mr. Bisutti seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Bisutti made a motion to reconvene in Regular Session at 8:45 pm. Mr. Perme seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Smith made a motion to nominate Chris Cobb as a new Council Member. Mr. Frato-Sweeney seconded. Motion Failed 2-3.

Mr. Bisutti made a motion to nominate Juan Fernandez as a new Council Member. Mr. Perme seconded. Motion passed 3-2.

Mr. Bisutti made a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:45 pm. Mr. Perme seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

XI. Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Szell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 pm. Mr. Bisutti seconded. The motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.

Mayor Anne Haynam

Mayor Report - December 2024

Recommend a 3% merit raise for the Village Administrator, Steve Schuller who went above and beyond this year completing an audit of the water/sewer system and restoring the integrity of the billing system.

Recommend extending the consultant contract with Deborah Wordell until March 31, 2025 at her current hourly rate. This will allow the new FO to have a resource for learning municipal finance, closing the 2024 books, and updating our methods of accounting.

Committee Updates:

Beautification Commission - will next meet after the Portage Soil & Water releases their 2025 tree/shrub listing for continued work on the Village tree canopy and project in Fairview Cemetery.

Website Committee - we will soon be holding trainings for the office staff as well as the VA and interested website committee members.

Trail Town Initiative Task Force -

The Florence Couch section bridge is 80% completed with a handrail yet to be added.

Hiram Historical Society/Historical Trail - The Garfield Flag event is scheduled for Feb 20-22nd with hopes to have another visit from Charlie Goodyear during the celebration of both President's Day as well as the 175th Anniversary of Hiram College.

Village Pass Committee — Everything is still on hold while the college works through the new identification system

Investment Committee — nothing at this time

Records Retention — meeting before the December council mtg. Will discuss contracting Lilly Johns to address our records retention and bring us up to state standards.

Recreation & Park Board - meeting before council and will report in session their recommendation for a return of appropriations for the park board after their budget was completely cut the prior two years. The Board is working to outline their 2025 events in order to better coordinate with other constituents in the Village and encourage co-programming.

Economic Development Committee - no meeting this month as Finance moved to their scheduled meeting date

Zoning & Planning - Updating the zoning map via Portage County Planning is on hold until the light plant sale is finalized.

Finance & Safety - will be reorganized starting in 2025 with safety committee being folded into the work of council and the finance committee will meet quarterly instead of monthly. Their focus will be on reviewing contracts, forecasting, and setting a plan for capital needs. Chairman Szell applied for PEP grant to fund crosswalk markers at the Hinsdale/Garfield Road intersection.