

Hiram Village Council Meeting

Rosser Municipal Building

11617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

August 10, 2021

The following Members of Council were present: Mr. Dempsey, Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Hemphill, Mr. Smith, Mr. Spencer and Mr. Szell. The following were also present: Mayor Lou Bertrand, Village Solicitor Tom Reitz, Fiscal Officer Susan Skrovan, Police Chief Brian Gregory, Fire Chief Bill Byers, Village Administrator James McGee and Assistant Village Administrator Steve Schuller.

The following persons were present: Steve Pancost; Hiram Township Trustee, Bill Steiner; Director of Portage County Recycling District, Denny Taylor, Stacy Turner with The Villager, Devin Brown; K9 Officer, John McNeil & Randy Callieham with PC Surgeons, Norm Christley; retired Planning & Zoning Commission Chair, Steve Romberger, several others.

Mayor Bertrand called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Mayor asked that all cell phones be silenced. There was a moment of silence followed by the pledge to the flag.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the Special meeting minutes of 6/29/2021. A motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the Budget workshop minutes of 6/29/2021. A motion to approve the workshop minutes as presented was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the Budget hearing minutes of 7/13/2021. A motion to approve the hearing minutes as presented was made by Mr. Greenwood and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the Regular meeting minutes of 7/13/2021. A motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the proposed agenda. A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

GUEST AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Hiram Township Trustee Steve Pancost asked about the Village providing water to their new building on S.R. 82. James McGee said he is getting an opinion from the Ohio EPA to determine where the Continental Divide actually is located and whether or not the Village can supply water across it. This has been the issue trying to move forward. The Mayor said we have an expert in the room tonight; Mr. Dennis Taylor. Mr. Taylor said there is an agreement between Canada and the United States that says that no water can be moved from the Great Lakes or put into the Great Lakes without authorization, so, this would be a big deal! More discussion followed.

John McNeil and Randy Callieham from PC Surgeons were here to present their proposal for the Village's computer system protection plan. Their proposal will protect from Ransomware which is occurring everywhere and includes a backup plan, 24/7 monitoring, improved firewalls and training. The Village will also go from Gmail to .gov for their email accounts. They plan to provide uniform antivirus and up to date security patches.

Norm Christley, retired from the Planning & Zoning Commission as Chairman after almost 13.5 years, was presented with a proclamation. Mayor Bertrand declared August 31, 2021, his birthday, as Norm Christley Day!

Bill Steiner, Director of the Portage County Solid Waste Recycling District, explained to Council their issues with recycling service. They are having staffing issues with two recent retirees, lost five drivers this year and cannot find CDL drivers to run their routes. It takes about two months before a new hire can go out on a route. Their drivers have been working 60-70 hours a week which is very stressing on their staff. They have had to cut service in half; pickup every other week rather than every week. January 1, 2022 they will have to raise their fees to \$5.50 per month. Other companies have offered his drivers \$8.00 more an hour, full paid medical and a company truck. Portage County cannot compete with those benefits and perks. The County Commissioners have tasked Bill with standardizing all the contracts and rates. The Mayor read from the contract regarding pickup schedules. Paul Spencer asked Bill what their base pay is for drivers. Base pay for a driver with a CDL is \$20.12 per hour with standard benefits. The Mayor spoke about other agencies like the County Engineers paying more per hour for their drivers. Bill said he thinks their hourly rate is about \$4.00 higher than his base rate. Bill said he is working with the Commissioners to try and come up with a solution to their wage package to make it more attractive. The Mayor stated that if push comes to shove, Bill, you have admitted that you are in breach of the contract. Dave Smith asked about notification that the recycling was not going to be every week; do we not have a system now to notify everyone. James said the reverse 911 is not in place yet; we need everyone to sign up first. Steve Pancost said they do not want to switch; we have a good deal and everyone agreed to it. Bill said they cannot be there every week to pick up. Bill added there is a 4 to 6-week lead time for the larger 95-gallon carts. Paul felt Bill was not paying drivers enough compared to the average pay for drivers. Paul felt it is more of a management problem than a driver issue. Everyone agreed to have Hiram Township Trustee Jack Groselle be the point person to negotiate with the County. Bill said he would need 4-5 months lead time to look into other companies to bid. The Village can amend the contract or cancel and look elsewhere. Paul said the Village did offer their residents weekly pickup service and entered into a contract under those terms. We have not done anything on our side; everyone is paying their bill. Paul felt this was a shortcoming on the Commissioners side. When it comes to pay, Paul said everyone is paying through the nose for labor right now! \$17.00 - \$24.00 per hour for entrance level factory job making boxes. The recycling center is offering \$20.00 basically for "skilled labor" to drive a truck. Paul felt in today's society, that is really sad. Rob said it is costing us .15 cents a day; not work talking about really. Bill is working to standardize the contract; he will send it by September. Dave asked what the legal ramifications were; we have a contract, we are in breach of a contract? Solicitor Tom Reitz stated if Council is talking about what their legal options are, he would suggest they enter into executive session. Tom Reitz asked if Bill has a proposal moving forward; when you would pick up and how much you would charge. Bill said they are converting the County over to every other week with a uniform rate of \$5.50 per month beginning January 1. Bill does not foresee them going back to weekly pickup. They are trying to hold that rate for a number of years. Bill is working to standardize the contract; he will send it out by the middle of September. Paul said Bill may have to break down and pay \$10.00 more per hour to their drivers! More discussion.

North
S.J.S.

Steve Romberger said on the matter of recycling, which he found out last minute as well. He would rather have bi-weekly than none at all! His second question was regarding the brush pickup. Why did it go away and what is the Village doing about it? Paul said the Village received a letter stating we cannot burn brush or pile leaves at the water plant area. So right now, we do not have a way of handling it without spending a lot of money that the Village currently does not have. Paul said it had been an added benefit to the residents; unfortunately, the only option would be for residents to hire a landscaper and have them carry it away. That is where everyone is in the Village right now until Council can come up with a solution. Paul believes the most practical thing for the Village would be to supply a list of landscapers to the residents. James said they have started looking into storage options from the EPA; he forwarded that information onto our Solicitor. His concerns are with some of the terms used such as "composting facility". There are EPA permits and regulations if we become a composting facility. When we pick up from resident's properties; we become a composting facility. James has looked into a drum grinder which would cost about \$10,000 each time they bring the equipment out. They have also looked at hiring a landscaper to go and pickup as well as a chipper truck. A chipper is approximately \$10,000 for a used one and then we need a truck to catch it and be dedicated for it. Paul said, then what would we do with it once we chipped them? James said there are places we can take them but there will be a cost. Dave Smith spoke about some other communities that get grants to do this; chip the branches for pickup by residents. Dave does not believe all costs should be pushed onto the homeowners; for 20 years the Village has provided a service. Paul said it was shut down because of complaints. Dave said it was shut down because we are in violation of the law not to burn. Chris felt James and Steve are working to find out what we can do there and bring some options to Finance.

Denny Taylor talked about supporting green infrastructure; here in Hiram we value that. We have invested in sidewalks and roadways; we have not put the same investment into green infrastructure. He felt the Village should pressure the EPA to look into green alternatives in our infrastructure. Paul spoke on a shortfall of available funds.

Steve Pancost asked about the capacity of the leaf wagon and felt he may be able to help with finding a location for it to be dumped off for composting. Chris said everyone is working on a solution.

Steve Romberger asked for better communication between the Village and residents for updates/changes to services.

Devin Brown, K-9 Officer, recently injured in the line of duty. Devin spoke regarding the Village Employee Handbook and felt it needs to be updated. Moving forward, your employees need to understand the procedures. The Mayor thanked Devin for his service and said Council will work to try and get this resolved.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

***Police Chief Brian Gregory provided their monthly report.** There were 404 offense reports for July.

Brian did highlight some items in his report including two pursuits and provided some details.

***Fire Chief Bill Byers provided their monthly report.** The report was sent out by email to everyone. Dave Smith asked Bill whether the surrounding communities have provided any feedback regarding the proposed legislation to charge for mutual aid calls? Chief Byers said he has not yet provided the legislation to them until it is passed. They are aware that it is in the works and is on first reading with Council.

The Mayor asked about the problems with retaining firefighters and EMT's. Chief Byers spoke on the difficulties with finding staff and retaining them; it is very difficult. They are not attracted by the pay or benefits in Hiram, OH.

***Village Administrator James McGee presented the monthly report.** James provided project updates.

Bids for the water tower replacement project and water treatment plant improvements have been advertised. Bid opening will be Friday, August 27 at noon.

There is nothing new to report on the water meter project at this time.

The Garfield Road watermain project is complete.

There were two OPWC grants that the Village applied for; one for the Hinsdale Drive/Winrock Road resurfacing at \$300,000 and the other for the water treatment plant upgrade \$496,000. We did not receive either of those grants. We may be able to use ARPA funds as the Village's match. The Mayor said there is an upcoming webinar on August 18 regarding the ARPA funds and what you can use the funds on that may be beneficial for us to attend.

Paul asked James and Steve about the reverse 911 phone system; didn't Council approve that system and pay for it. James said yes. Paul asked if we can integrate the current phone system we have for residents into this system. Steve said no, residents have to sign up. The home phones are automatically on there; the rest are cell phones and must be signed up to receive messaging. The Mayor said he had just received the email today about the recycling. Chris asked what our department has to do. Steve said we will have to put out flyers and go door to door. Steve said after legislation was passed, we were all sitting around trying to figure out how to notify all residents during a global pandemic. Chris said why not put a flyer in with the Communicator. We could do that.

Chris Szell asked about the sidewalks at Maggie's Donuts; can we fix them? Steve said they are waiting on Alba Contractors to sign off on the job as finished so they can have another contractor come in and finish the job. Solicitor Tom Reitz explained to Council what steps led up to them not finishing the job and what steps have been taken between James and Steve to notify the contractor. Dave and Chris wondered if our own service department could put those couple of sidewalk sections. Dave said there is a liability; it is a hazard walking that section of sidewalk.

Mayor's August 10, 2021 Report to Council

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING:

There was no Planning & zoning Commission Meeting on Tuesday August 3, 2021.

Mr. Norm Christley, Esq. who has served on the Village P&Z Commission as Chair since March 2008, 13 ½ years, is deserving of special thanks and a Mayor's Proclamation and Council's Resolution.

Portage County is proposing a Vision Plan and Comprehensive Plan. The Commissioners are requesting a Steering Committee. I have discussed with Council member Chris Szell to determine if he would serve as the Village's representative for the proposed 5, 10, and 30-year plan. A letter from the County Board of Commissioners is attached as Exhibit "A".

The CDC COVID-19 REPORT AS OF TODAY:

Portage County confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the past two weeks is: 189/100,000 pop. Portage is 47th out of the 88 Ohio counties. The highest being Scioto County with 299/100,000 pop. Unvaccinated people, by comparison, are extremely susceptible to the coronavirus, particularly to the Delta variant and the data on deaths and hospitalizations show this discrepancy clearly. This past month CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky revealed that 99.5% of recent US deaths from Covid-19 were of unvaccinated people. **"Those deaths were preventable with a simple, safe shot,"** she said. The Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services recently stated that all new hospitalized Covid-19 patients in Los Angeles were unvaccinated. In the state of Maryland, every patient who died from Covid-19 in June was unvaccinated. The vaccines are doing exactly what they were designed to do: prevent severe Covid-19 with amazing efficiency. With vaccines free and widely available, for most people in the US it's a choice: Do you want to be part of the unvaccinated America or the vaccinated one?

OHIO MAYOR'S ASSOCIATION/OML WEBINAR

Wednesday, August 18, 2021 – 11:00 a.m.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Funding for Non-Entitlement Units of Local Government

Program Description: OBM will review the application process, discuss allowable uses, and walk through some of the rules and reporting that apply to this funding.

Submitted by:

Mayor Lou Bertrand

***The Fiscal Officer Susan Skrovan presented the monthly financial reports for July.**

The following reports were provided to Council for this meeting:

The May, June & July Bank Reconciliations balanced with the UAN system with no adjusting factors and are available for signing by the Mayor and Council.

Cash Summary by Fund as of July 31, 2021 was provided to Council in their packets.

List of bills as of August 6, 2021 was provided to Council by email yesterday.

Council Special meeting minutes for June 29, 2021 were provided to Council by email last week.

Council 2022 Budget Workshop minutes of June 29, 2021 were provided to Council by email last week.

Council 2022 Budget Hearing minutes of July 13, 2021 were provided to Council by email last week.

Council Regular meeting minutes for July 13, 2021 were provided to Council by email last week.

R.I.T.A. income tax receipts YTD report was provided to Council in their packets.

The Comparison of Budgeted and Appropriated YTD report was provided to Council in their packets.

Susan announced that the Village, with the grateful help from former Police Chief Ed Samec, is signed up for the ARPA funding. Deadline to register was September 4, 2021!

A motion to approve the Fiscal Officer's report for July as submitted was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

The Bill's list was reviewed. A motion to approve the bill's list was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

HIRAM TOWNSHIP REPORT

Steve Pancost reported their new building should be finished by year end; COVID-19 delayed the materials.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCES

2021-11: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ACCEPT THE MATERIAL TERMS OF THE ONE OHIO SUBDIVISION SETTLEMENT PURSUANT TO THE ONE OHIO MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND CONSISTENT WITH THE TERMS OF THE JULY 21, 2021 NATIONAL OPIOID SETTLEMENT AND TO SIGN THE ONE OHIO SUBDIVISION PARTICIPATION FORM, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Spencer. Solicitor Tom Reitz explained how this all started and why the Village is participating. The settlement is not expected to be large, depending on the participation rate. We could receive between \$4,000 and up to \$6,500 over seventeen years! Tom Reitz would encourage the Council to act on this, it is better than what you would otherwise get. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

2021-12: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS IN THE KIDS AND COPS FISHING DAY SPECIAL REVENUE FUND (2274-110-420-0127) BY \$500.00 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Dempsey. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

RESOLUTIONS

2021-19: A RESOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF THE PORTAGE COUNTY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN. 2nd READING.

2021-20: A RESOLUTION OFFERING A CONTRACT UNDER WHICH THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM FIRE DEPARTMENT WILL PROVIDE MUTUAL AID TO OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS. 2nd READING. Solicitor Tom Reitz said, after talking with our Fire Chief, this should be sent to adjacent communities who request our mutual aid so that we know they have signed off on it in advance before Council passes it. This would make it a good binding agreement.

A motion that this be sent out prior to 3rd reading was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. Chief Byers said this would be sent to Mantua Village, Troy Township, Community EMS and maybe Windham Village for their review.

2021-22: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH THE PC SURGEONS FOR COMPUTER MANAGED SERVICE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Dempsey. Chris Szell said it would be \$3,900 per year. The Mayor said \$325.00 per month. Paul said this will handle all the computers we have. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Rob Dempsey let Council members know that the Dreisbach's are leaving the Hiram community and want to donate trees to our cemetery. They are going to Maine.

A motion to convene in Executive Session at 9:15 pm for pending or imminent litigation, personnel and matters which would cause a competitive advantage to someone on the other side of the table from the Village; contractual negotiations was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to come out of Executive Session and reconvene in regular session at 10:00 pm was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to authorize Mr. Tom Reitz as Village Solicitor to proceed with his proposal letter demand and, if necessary, court filing and litigation for the remedy of the blighted property on Plumb Ridge Road was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to pay injured Hiram Police Officer Devin Brown wage continuation during his on-the-job injuries resulting in incapacity was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

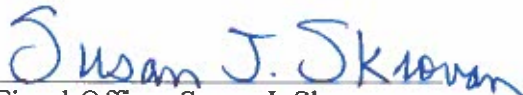
A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:04 pm.

These minutes are pending approval by Council.



Mayor Lou Bertrand

ATTEST:



Fiscal Officer Susan J. Skrovan