

Hiram Village Council Meeting

Rosser Municipal Building
11617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

January 11, 2022

The following Members of Council were present: Mrs. Greenwood, Mr. Hemphill, Mr. McCreight, 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, Assistant Fire Chief Jason Groselle and Assistant Village Administrator Steve Schuller.

The following persons were present: Stacy Turner with The Villager and Ed Frato-Sweeney.

Mayor Bertrand swore in Councilman David Smith; Mr. Smith has been a Councilman for 24 years!

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.

The Mayor asked for a motion to nominate Council President for 2022. A motion to nominate Chris Szell as Council President was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Smith. There were no other nominations from the floor. Chris Szell accepts the nomination. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

The Mayor asked for a motion to adopt the rules of Council. A motion to adopt the Roberts Rules of Order 10th edition was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

The Mayor asked for a motion to approve the calendar for 2022. A motion to approve the Council meeting calendar for 2022 as the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm was made by Mr. Spencer 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 12/14/2021. A motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. 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. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

GUEST AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Ed Frato-Sweeney wished everyone a happy new year and thanked Chris McCreight and Beth Greenwood both for running for Council. Ed informed Council they experienced a major COVID outbreak in mid-December at Hiram College. In response, college classes went online until January 24th. Ed also announced the Hiram Community Trust grant applications will be available February 15th; deadline to submit a grant application is April 1st.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

*Police Chief Brian Gregory provided their monthly report. There were 339 offense reports for December.

Traffic stops have been decreased, mostly due to officers limiting their stops because of COVID.

The Chief handed out his annual report for Council.

Brian said the dispatch contract was up with the sheriff's department at the end of the year. The Fire/EMS and Police departments have agreed to go with the Sheriff for a three-year contract. The price remained the same as last year.

Plans are for a pancake breakfast fundraiser in March or April, it is still up in the air depending on the College.

There has been no additional training in December.

Six speed humps have been ordered for use on our secondary roads to reduce speeders during the summer months.

Brian explained the K9 issues his department is facing. There have been some medical issues covered by insurance.

Brian welcomed our new Council members and reminded them to take the Sunshine Law training course. It is a three-hour course and is required of all elected officials.

***Fire Chief Bill Byers provided their monthly report.** The report was sent out by email to everyone.

Chief Byers spoke on the dispatch contract; it is new for us with the Portage County Sheriff since they had never dispatched for police or fire before. Bill did initially have some reservations. The hiccups we had was knowing which side of a given road such as Vaughn was ours versus another community, how they would handle the first working fire or landing a helicopter. They have done a really nice job; we are very happy with how it has gone the first year.

They responded to a fatal house fire- in Shalersville Township. Chief Matthew Roosa called commending our crew on a great job! The ER doctor also commended our crew!

Fire inspections have resumed at Hiram College. They had taken a break last year with inspections following a request from the College during COVID to not expose the dorms while they were cleaning the dorms.

Chief Byers welcomed our new Council members and invited them to come by and tour the fire bays & equipment.

***Asst. Village Administrator Steven Schuller presented the monthly report.**

Steve also presented Council with their large projects' completion report covering projects since 2016.

The Spectrum new phone system update; we are expecting our new system up and running the second or third week in February. We will have training the first or second week of February and install a week after the training. Steve explained to our new Council members that our building was stuck by lightning which took out our phone system.

PC Surgeons is currently working on converting our emails from Gmail to .gov.

Steve provided details regarding the Cat generator at the water plant and submission to our insurance company. We had a very large pine tree fall on our generator. Waiting from CAT for costs and parts availability. We have a temporary generator set up there now. A new generator has a lead time of 50 weeks at a cost of approximately \$60,000. However, the rental unit until a new one could come in would run over \$90,000! The insurance company is pushing for repairs to our existing unit's enclosure. The Service Department has been clearing the area around the generator of any other trees that may fall and hit it. We have had two pines hit the generator in the past nine months!

Water meter project update; is waiting on Core & Main, the main contractor and the sub-contractor to get us a modem and a date for them to come back. We have approximately 16 meters still to be installed.

Paul Spencer asked if one of those meters not yet installed was for Mr. Dunn. Steve said Mr. Dunn's meter has been installed, his puck has not. The wires have not been run to the outside of the house. The Fiscal Officer received another letter from Daniel Dunn. Paul thought we resolved that at our last meeting. Solicitor Tom Reitz asked if Mr. Dunn was still unhappy? Chris Szell said Mr. Dunn states in his letter that he is not satisfied that a resolution was found. Council members felt they did come to a resolution.

Solicitor Reitz suggested to Susan that a verbatim transcript of the discussions with Mr. Dunn be generated. It does not have to be done immediately, but should be completed and on hand. Tom Reitz will review his letter and provide some more concrete options to Council at a future meeting. Chris Szell explained to our new Council members what has occurred with the water meter project and with Mr. Dunn. He is asking for an "opt-out" policy for him, which would require his meter being read manually. If we do this, we must create an "opt-out" policy for anyone else who wants to opt-out. Chris' concern is that this could create inefficiencies in a system that was supposed to create more efficiencies! Chris is not in favor of an opt-out program. Paul would like to turn this over to Tom. More discussion. Chris added that to be clear, we have not shut Mr. Dunn's water off. It is being metered by the meter. Steve says right now since the RNI system is not fully installed, we are estimating everyone. Tom Reitz asked Council to give him a chance to review Mr. Dunn's letter and respond with options for their consideration at their next Finance meeting.

Steve presented some creative finance options for completing the water tower project. Steve said he first wants to speak with our engineers, CT Consultants and the auditor before presenting their solution. Steve explained the project thus far to our new Council members. Chris Szell said he knows Linda Bailiff, the Director, with OPWC and would like to be kept in the loop from Steve on any loan options.

Mayor's January 11, 2022 Report to Council

Ohio Revised Code §733.41 states: "At the first regular meeting in January of each year, and at such other times as the Mayor deems expedient, the Mayor shall report to the legislative authority concerning the affairs of the municipal corporation, and recommend such measures as seem proper.

Report to Council

This is the 116th annual meeting of Hiram Village Council and I again report the Hiram Municipal Government is in stable financial condition operating in an efficient manner and providing good service to the general public, village residents, businesses, Hiram College faculty, staff and students. My understanding because of COVID-19 Pandemic the college is meeting virtual mode until January 24, 2022.

This is my 15th Annual Mayor's Report as elected Hiram Mayor, furthermore, this is my 43rd year as an elected official in Hiram Village, after three (3) years as an Assistant Portage County Prosecuting Attorney and prior thereto as Portage County Juvenile & Probate Court Officer.

Your Mayor is a graduate of Mercersburg Academy, Mercersburg, PA, the State University of New York at Buffalo (B.A.) and the University of Toledo, college of Law (J.D.).

OVERVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR

When the COVID-19 Pandemic was discovered by the World affecting all those in the media, economy, business, government, faith-based institutions, education, commerce and travel, families, the arts, basically everyday life for the entire world.

Last year Council considered and passed 22 Ordinances and 37 Resolutions, the highlights are:

LEGISLATION:

VIRTUAL MEETINGS:

- In March, legislation was approved for \$320K state of the art water meter replacement project and the relocation of the Garfield Road water main for a cost of \$342K.
- In April, there were concerns as to the abandoned residential property on Plumb Ridge that so far as I can determine are currently unresolved to date. Also, Hiram approved the employee medical insurance benefits with Southern Ohio Chamber Alliance Benefit Plan (SOCABP).
- In May, it was noted that the General Fund Property Tax Levy passed by a vote of 89 to 15. Further the speakers for the 2021 Memorial Day Service were Admiral Michael Parks (USCG, Director Red Cross Northern Ohio Chapter) and introducing him was Hon. Tony Badalamenti, Portage County Commissioner.

IN PERSON MEETINGS BEGAN ON JUNE 8, 2021.

- In July, Council approved the application for the proposed mural on college property on the Colton Science Building. Also, pick up of branches and twigs was suspended and later leaf pick up was also suspended because of equipment breakdown, but was remedied through contract with an outside vendor. Also, Council unanimously authorized the implementation of speed bumps for slowing traffic on Village streets only.
- In August, the Director of Portage County Recycling came to Council and announced the County could only collect recycling every other week. Also, a computer security contract was approved with PC Surgeons of Kent, OH.
- In September, the phone replacement agreement and the College Police, EMS and Fire agreement were approved by Council.
- In October, the County indicated it would not renew the recycling contract and the bidding process was initiated. The Mayor, Council Member Szell and Council President Dempsey attended the three-day OML Convention virtually.
- In November, 271 water/sewer meters were replaced and \$21,400 was authorized for the replacement of the gas line to the generator at Village Hall. Later a report showed damage to the Utilities Dept. generator near the water plant on east hill of SR 305. Also, a special Council meeting was held on November 30, 2021 approving the recycling bid of Kimble Recycling and Disposal, Inc.
- In December, much of the meeting was consumed by the 285 new state of the art water/sewer meters and the financial gap in the Water Tower Replacement Project. Also, the sudden and unexpected death of the Hiram Township Clerk, Diane Rodhe at age 62. A Mayor's Proclamation was issued and signed by all Department Heads recognizing and thanking Council President Rob Dempsey for his faithful ten (10) years of service to the Hiram Community.

FINANCIAL HISTORY

- At the end of 2007 when I took office the total balances in all funds was **\$1,367,231**, thirteen (13) years later at the end of 2021 the balances in all funds was **\$1,906,986**, with Village annual resources estimated at approximately **\$3,220,000**. The Village has acquired the following real estate for public enjoyment and use: 5+ acres of the old Hiram School property valued at \$300,000, Hinsdale extension Approximately 200 yds., Hike & Bike Trail approximately 2,500 ft.
- On a very disappointing note the College has sold off its annexed 88-acre property for \$400,000 after investing approximately \$100,000 in legal fees in annexing it to the Village.
- Again, in 2022 with the fluctuation in Hiram College enrollment and the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Village must be cautious in its economic future.

COMMITTEES FOR 2022:

The Appointed Committees are as follows:

Finance & Safety: David Smith, Paul Spencer, Beth Greenwood & Chris Szell

Investment: Chris Szell, Mayor and Fiscal Officer

Beautification, Recreation & Parks: Beth Greenwood, Chris McCreight and Ed Frato-Sweeney

Public Records Retention: Chris Szell, Mayor, Fiscal Officer and Solicitor

Economic Development: Paul Spencer, Chris Szell, Tom Bollenbacher, Administrator's office & College representative.

Fire & EMS Advisory: David Smith

Planning and Zoning Commission: Paul Spencer - Chair

Blighted Properties & Sidewalks: Chris Szell, Paul Spencer, Ed Frato-Sweeney and David Smith.

Web Site Committee: Chris Szell

Submitted by:

Mayor Lou Bertrand

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

The following reports were provided to Council for this meeting:

The December Bank Reconciliation balanced with the UAN system with one adjusting factor, however, it will not be posted to the UAN until Temporary Mode is closed and then will be available for signing by the Mayor and Council.

Cash Summary by Fund as of December 31, 2021 was provided to Council today in their packets.
List of bills as of January 7, 2022 was provided to Council by email last week.
Council Regular meeting minutes for December 14, 2021 were provided to Council by email last week & in packets.
R.I.T.A. income tax receipts YTD report was provided to Council today in their packets.
Comparison of Budgeted and Appropriated YTD report was provided to Council today in their packets.

Susan wanted to ask Council regarding COVID time off pay. In the past with the CARES Act funds when someone tested positive for COVID or had to be quarantined due to exposure, full-time employees were compensated using the CARES Act funds. Those funds are now exhausted. We currently have someone out for five days with COVID; do I use their sick time? How would Council like the Fiscal Officer to proceed. Dave Smith said in Macedonia, they did use the CARES Act funds at first and now they are using an employee's sick time. Paul said his employer is doing the same. Paul said the employee has the option of using their sick time or have it as unpaid time off.

The final report for the CARES Act funds has been completed online with the Ohio Office of Budget & Management.

Dave Smith asked about the discrepancy for the Fire Department's revenue being at 84%? Susan said Chief Byers brought this to her attention today; she is working on determining why it is off from what we estimated.

Dave Smith asked about the Portage County Sheriff's dispatch services invoice; is this for half a year? Susan said yes, it is for both. The bill's list did not say it was for Fire and Police.

A motion to approve the Fiscal Officer's report for December 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. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

HIRAM TOWNSHIP REPORT

No Township report tonight.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCES

2022-01: AN ORDINANCE RATIFYING THE PAST ACTIONS OF THE FISCAL OFFICER OF THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM IN ORDER TO AUTHORIZE THE NECESSARY PAYMENTS ON INVOICES RECEIVED INTO THE VILLAGE BETWEEN THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING IN DECEMBER AND THE FIRST COUNCIL MEETING IN 2022 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

RESOLUTIONS

2022-01: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND THE FISCAL OFFICER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE PORTAGE COUNTY SHERIFF FOR THE PROVISION OF DISPATCHING SERVICES TO THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM POLICE DEPARTMENT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Szell. Dave asked about the contract, the 3rd whereas should read to adopt a "Resolution" rather than an "Ordinance". Paul said the exhibit should be labeled "Exhibit A". The date should be 2022.

Solicitor Tom Reitz explained to the Council how legislation is written and errors that are sometimes found from year to year. Chris Szell called the question. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

2022-02: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND THE FISCAL OFFICER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE PORTAGE COUNTY SHERIFF FOR THE PROVISION OF DISPATCHING SERVICES TO THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM FIRE DEPARTMENT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. 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. Szell. Chief Byers explained why we have two pieces of legislation for the dispatch contracts. They base it on population; the Fire Department covers Hiram Township as well. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Paul Spencer brought up discussion about COVID and vaccination records. Paul felt we should have a record on file of who has received the vaccination. If someone has not been vaccinated; there should be a mandate that you wear a mask! Anyone that does not wear a mask and does not provide a vaccination card, this is an ethical issue and treated appropriately, even with termination. Paul would like to see something in writing. The Mayor felt Council should submit their thoughts to the Solicitor. Village Solicitor Tom Reitz said this issue has been acted on by the Federal Government and it applies to employers with 100 or more employees. There is a lot of disagreement on this within the court system. It is before the U.S. Supreme Court. At this time, Tom does not know what Council would like to see in a policy. He can provide some options at Finance once Council members provide him some feedback.

Council members spoke about providing a new Council packet to new members. It could include the NIMS and the Sunshine Law requirements, etc. Email addresses have been set up for the new councilmembers.

Assistant Village Administrator Steve Schuller brought up the old 1995 Chevy Dump Truck. They were offered scrap for the vehicle. It does not run and is no longer needed by the Street Department. Cost to repair could be upwards of \$4,000. They would like to scrap the vehicle and believes it is worth less than \$1,000. Solicitor Reitz said Council can dispose of it by motion because it is valued less than \$1,000.

A motion determining that the 1995 Chevrolet Dump Truck is no longer needed for any municipal purpose and that it's likely value will be less than \$1,000 and authorizing the Village Administrator to sell it for scrap was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

These minutes are pending approval by Council.


Mayor Lou Bertrand

ATTEST:


Fiscal Officer Susan J. Skrovan