

# Hiram Village Remote Video Conference Council Meeting

Rosser Municipal Building  
11617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

July 14, 2020

The following Members of Council were present online: 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 Asst. VA Steven Schuller.

The following persons were present online: Stacy Turner, reporter with The Weekly Villager.

Mayor Bertrand called the regular meeting to order at 7:03 pm. 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 regular meeting minutes of 6/9/2020. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the special meeting minutes of 6/30/2020. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Dempsey. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

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

## **GUEST AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

***\*Police Chief Brian Gregory provided their monthly report.*** Chief Gregory reported 305 traffic offenses for June with 51 traffic stops. His department also assisted with three canine mutual aid calls.

Senate Bill 72 to allow fireworks in Ohio is going to pass this year. The Village will need to address this when it does pass with legislation for our codified ordinances.

The Police Department was awarded a grant for PPE and cleaning supplies reimbursed due to the COVID-19.

There will not be an event this year for fishing with a cop or to shop with a cop; they will shop for families.

The Ohio Collaborative, which we are members of, will need to be re-certified every five years.

The Chief addressed the chip-n-seal projects that ODOT is undertaking on state routes; there are problems on the roads with skidding on loose stone. ODOT is aware of these issues.

For the dispatch contract, Brian is not sure what is going on with it right now, he is fact-finding. Aurora is still the least costly route.

With regard to vehicles using Jake brakes in the Village, Brian has been monitoring our roads; he has only caught one using them.

**\*Fire Chief Bill Byers provided their monthly report for tonight.** Chief Byers reported his report was emailed to everyone. Their response times went down to the five-minute range.

Bill received correspondence from the State Fire Marshall's office regarding the Fire Department's reporting software. They believed our department was not compliant with the reporting requirements to the State. There seems to be a glitch in the system either on our end or on their end with reporting calls for mutual aid. His department is working on this with them now.

Fire Department has PPE masks, N95 and disinfectant. He wanted to reach out to anyone who might need these.

The Mayor asked Bill about an item on his report with regard to Atwater. Bill informed Council they recently had a call out to Atwater for mutual aid and then was disregarded. Dave Smith said the response times for Community EMS Ambulance district looks like they are going up. Chief Byers explained how Community EMS operates.

The Mayor invited Bill to stay for executive session later on in the meeting.

**\*Village Administrator James McGee presented the monthly water/sewer report.** James and Steve spoke with Mrs. Chinchek regarding the water line that needs to be replaced on Wrenwood. She did not want to pay for a sewer line to be installed while they replace the water line; however, she considered it could be a possibility.

James reported along with student summer help they have cleaned and painted all the buildings and the hair salon.

Hydrant flushing has been completed; there was one more break at Hiram Farm.

Regarding the trash bids, Kimble is the lowest and best bid. Hiram Township is supposed to vote on it tonight. Legislation will be before Council at their next meeting to accept. The Mayor spoke with Jack Groselle; the Township will pass a resolution this evening.

James asked if there were any questions on the water & sewer report; it was sent late.

James brought up the income tax credit; it needs to be looked at again as a source of revenue. Steve added that if we were to cut it to a 50% credit, it would be an additional \$49,000 to the Village. If it were reduced to a zero tax credit, it would bring in \$94,000 back to the Village. Steve said the General Fund is running in a deficit of \$100,000 to \$120,000 per year. The legislation before Council tonight to move the capital funds back to the general fund will help for next year, however moving forward, we need to find a permanent solution to our deficit. The only other option we came up with would be to try to pass a levy to help support the Police Department in the Village and possibly the Township. More discussion on what size levy would be sufficient to cover expenses. Village Solicitor Tom Reitz spoke about requesting Janet Esposito, Portage County Auditor; to specify what amount of money a certain millage would generate. You have a very short amount of time to put a levy on, if that is Council's desire. Steve said none of us was thinking this would be ready for November of this year. The Mayor spoke about not pursuing a levy this year; it is an off year election.

Dave Smith said he walked the hike & bike trail; the brush pile back there was burned. That would be a violation of the Ohio Fire Code and should not be done, it should be ground. James said he would look into a grinder/chipper.

## **HIRAM MAYOR LOU BERTRAND'S JULY 14, 2020 REPORT TO COUNCIL**

### **CORONAVIRUS aka COVID-19 PANDEMIC:**

In Ohio, 3,064 people have died of the novel coronavirus and at least 66,853 have been infected, 8,915 hospitalizations according to the Ohio Dept. of Health reports Monday, July 13, 2020. Further PORTAGE COUNTY, Ohio: 487 reported cases, 95 hospitalizations and 57 DEATHS.

**FROM THE CDC:**

Based on death certificate data, COVID-19 Cases: 3,296,599, Deaths: 134,884 as of July 13, 2020.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:**

Economic Development Committee consisting of volunteer initial members: Tom Bollenbacher, Rob Dempsey, Paul Spencer, Anne Haynam, Ed Frato-Sweeney, Steve Schuller and the Mayor met initially to consider input from community members on an agreed vision. Can Hiram Village make significant progress creating new business and additional income streams?

**MR. BRADFORD R. EHRHART**, President of the Portage Development Board, a 501C (3) Corp., 217 South Chestnut St., Ravenna, OH. 44266 | 330-297-3470 Cell: 330-389-8027 (Mr. Ehrhart spoke at length on opportunities and Ohio economic assistance available to communities.) A second meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 21, 2020 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

**PLANNING & ZONING:**

The Commission met on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 and discussed a request for a hot tub to be installed by a resident in Hiram Village. A ZONING PERMIT was approved and issued.

**BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION:**

A 7:00 p.m. meeting is scheduled this THURSDAY, **July 16, 2020** in the Service Garage. The HIRAM VILLAGE ORDINANCE SECTION 143.01 *et seq.* enacted in 1989 and amended in 1993 and 2013 needs to be further amended to simplify the convoluted structure and streamlined for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Submitted by:

**MAYOR LOU BERTRAND**

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

**The following reports were provided to Council for this meeting:**

The June Bank Reconciliation balanced with the UAN system with no adjusting factors and is available for signing by Mayor & Council.

Cash Summary by Fund as of June 30, 2020 was provided in Council packets.

The list of bills as of July 13, 2020 was provided in Council packets.

Council Regular meeting minutes for June 9, 2020 were provided to Council by email.

Council Special 2021 Budget public hearing meeting minutes for June 30, 2020 were provided to Council by email.

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

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

The OPWC check sent for the street infrastructure was returned to us; they have deferred all payments until 2021.

Susan spoke about the property tax on properties purchased for our parks; we have had to pay the taxes until the exemptions could be recorded. We have been refunded all the way back to 2017 and 2018 for taxes paid, \$965.84! All Village properties are now exempted, except of course the Hiram Salon because it is a rental property.

We received back from the State Auditor's office, our new fund for the Hiram Energy Special Improvement District. It took some time due to the COVID-19 and them working from home. Our new Custodial Fund is 9904 for ESID.

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

A motion to approve the bank reconciliation 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 the bills list was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

## **HIRAM TOWNSHIP REPORT**

No Hiram Township report tonight.

### **LEGISLATION**

#### **ORDINANCES**

**2020-13: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS IN THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FUND (4901) FOR FIRE/EMS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. 2<sup>nd</sup> READING.** A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Smith 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. Smith and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

**2020-15: AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE RECODIFICATION, EDITING AND INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ORDINANCES AS PART OF THE VARIOUS COMPONENT CODES OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF HIRAM, OHIO. 1<sup>st</sup> READING.**

#### **RESOLUTIONS**

**2020-15: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 2021 PROPOSED BUDGET AND AUTHORIZING THE FISCAL OFFICER TO SUBMIT THE BUDGET TO THE PORTAGE COUNTY AUDITOR. 3<sup>rd</sup> READING.** A motion to approve was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Dempsey. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

**2020-17: A RESOLUTION TO TRANSFER \$120,413.34 FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND (4901) TO THE GENERAL FUND (1000) AND REPEAL RESOLUTION 2009-08 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. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Greenwood. Dave Smith asked, since he was not present at the work session, how we came up with this amount. Susan explained how we transfer money into the capital improvements fund and how Susan tracks each department's capital on a separate spreadsheet for Police, Fire, Streets and Administration. The Fire Department capital will not be touched, they will hold onto all of their capital. This amount is what remains in administration; the street and police departments have no capital left this year. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

**2020-18: A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE CITATIONS SET FORTH IN RESOLUTION 2020-16 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.** A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Szell. 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. Smith. Solicitor Reitz explained what changed. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

Chris Szell spoke about several cities passing mask ordinances, would this be useful for us to do especially with Hiram College starting again in the fall. Chief Brian Gregory spoke about the College already requiring masks. More discussion. Dave Smith said it is coming; Cuyahoga and Summit Counties are already doing it. Solicitor Tom Reitz said once the Ohio Director of Health issues a mandatory order requiring masks in Portage County, and then we have some enforceability. Once that happens, he can put legislation together and have it ready. The issue will be enforcement! More discussion followed and all Council members weighed in on the topic. Fire Chief Byers spoke about the cross contamination factor with hands and touching their mouths or face. Department heads and elected officials have control over making sure our employees are protected and wearing masks. Tom Reitz asked whether the Village has a policy, which mandates employees wearing masks when out in public. Chief Gregory said it is up to each individual department. Brian said he did mandate his employees wearing masks in public and every call his department has been on with the Fire Department, they all wear masks. Tom Reitz stressed to Council that it is significant that your two safety chiefs took the initiative to tell their members of their departments

to wear their masks. It makes no sense to take a chance where there are reasonable, rational, easy steps to avoid it! The Mayor asked Tom Reitz to draw up the appropriate legislation requiring masks so that Council can debate it and see what they want to do moving forward.

Steve Schuller spoke with Tom Reitz regarding the income tax credit. Tom Reitz explained that unlike an income tax increase which must be voted on by your electorate. The credit is a feature of your municipal income tax ordinance; the Village has the option to repeal it by virtue of legislative action with three readings! It can be repealed in whole or in part. Should Council desire it, Tom would be happy to put legislation together. Paul Spencer thought this would not become effective until next year, is that correct. Tom said he believes Council can make it effective whenever they would like; he would suggest consulting with R.I.T.A. and determine what kind of administrative action they would need. Paul is not for repealing the income tax credit. He believes there are other avenues to explore; however, they all will be painful.

**A motion to convene in Executive Session for the purposes of negotiating a contract at 8:21 pm was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. The Mayor invited the Fire Chief and Fiscal Officer into executive session.**

**A motion to return to regular session at 9:25 pm was made by Mr. Greenwood and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.**

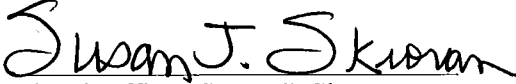
The next Finance & Safety Committee meeting will be a special meeting with Council and Village Solicitor attending. The Finance & Safety meeting on July 28 will be by Zoom.

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.**

These minutes are pending approval by Council.

  
Mayor Lou Bertrand

ATTEST:

  
Fiscal Officer Susan J. Skrovan