

# Village of Hiram

## Finance/Safety Committee Video Conference Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2021

**Call to Order:** Chairman Rob Dempsey called the meeting to order at 6:22 pm.

**Committee Members Present:** Rob Dempsey, Councilman  
David Smith, Councilman  
Paul Spencer, Councilman  
Chris Szell, Councilman  
Susan Skrovan, Fiscal Officer

**Committee Members Absent:** Lou Bertrand, Mayor

**Hiram Officials Present:** Frank Hemphill, Councilman  
Brian Gregory, Police Chief  
Bill Byers, Fire Chief  
James McGee, Village Administrator

**Others:**

**Agenda:** A motion to approve the agenda for Finance/Safety as presented was made by Mr. Smith with a second from Mr. Spencer. Motion passed unanimously.

**Minutes:** Chris Szell wanted to make a minor change to the minutes to clarify on page two, the second to the last paragraph to strike, "Chris pointed out that the 'trust' owns the land". Chris felt he and Paul were talking about two different properties during that discussion. A motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 26, 2021 as amended was made by Mr. Szell with a second from Mr. Spencer. Motion passed unanimously.

**Guests/Public:** None.

**Department Updates:**

**Police Department:** Police Chief Brian Gregory reported approaching Hiram College last month regarding a proposal for additional funding for a third shift officer. President Haney with the college said not at this time, he wishes to revisit it once this entire COVID-19 pandemic has passed and the sporting and other events are going on.

Members may have seen cones along Hinsdale and Garfield roads; Hiram College is currently installing new signs. Rob Dempsey asked whether they were exempt from our zoning laws. Paul said no, they should have come with a plan to zoning; they need a permit. James said Hiram College contacted our Zoning Inspector, Dominic; he believes it was all approved through him. Paul said P&Z has never seen a site plan. Paul said he did speak with Steve about it as well; they wanted to move a sign. However, they did not own the property they wanted to move it to and did not have an easement on the property. This was the one near Maggie's Donuts. They have to be reviewed for the right-of-way of the highway as well. Paul asked James if he has reviewed any sign for within the right-of-way. James said no, he did not. It was all sent to Dominic, our Zoning Inspector. Paul said Brian should have reviewed it as well.

Chief Gregory said he does not know of any signs in the devil's strip, they are mostly back on their own property. Paul said then they will only need a permit for the sign, \$25.00. However, that only allows them one sign. Chief Gregory said the College has installed at least 10 new signs. They will need to pay a \$25.00 permit fee per sign. Dave Smith felt they were too large, in his opinion, for the properties they have put them on.

**Fire Department:** Fire Chief Bill Byers reported his department running smoothly, nothing new to report.

**Village Adm/Utilities:** James McGee reported on the Garfield Road Water Main Project; it did go out to bid. Low bidder, Grade Line Inc., came in at \$342,108.50, which was well below our estimates. Legislation will be prepared and brought before Council. Dave Smith asked when the project would begin. James said the contractor will need to be contacted and he estimates this spring. Chris Szell asked when the project is ready to begin; we put something in the Communicator.

Paul Spencer said he had spoken with our Zoning Inspector, Dominic who told him that our Asst. VA, Steve was the one who told Dominic that the college was simply replacing existing signs.

**Fiscal Officer/Admin:** Susan Skrovan reported she received a letter from the Board of Elections; our galley proof from the Board of Elections for the 4.4 General Operating renewal levy will be available for viewing on March 1. It will be on the ballot May 4, 2021.

Susan asked about reimbursing employee's sick time pay for those who quarantined due to the COVID-19 exposure. There were only three employees. Susan does not have any problem with doing this; however, most of our current Cares Act funds are sitting on purchase orders. Unless we close purchase orders that we no longer need or get more funds, she cannot reimburse their sick pay hours using the Cares money; she could credit their sick time hours back to them. She needs approximately \$2,100.00 for the three full-time employees. Paul Spencer felt it should not come out of their sick time. Paul stated that even if we have to pay them out of the General Fund to make up the difference because we have already spent the Cares Act money, it is probably the route we should go. Susan said two were paid out of water and sewer; the third was out of the General Fund. Rob Dempsey said we still may receive more funds from those entities that return unused Cares Act funds to the State and it is re-allocated.

Susan said now that we have the Fire Department in their own special revenue fund; she asked for direction from Finance how best to breakdown the costs associated with the utilities, maintenance and operations of the Village Hall building. Before, they were shown as in-kind costs to operate the Fire Department and the General Fund was paying the costs. Will she now be charging them for these costs? Rob felt this seems fair. Paul said it would be a line item, but the General Fund would still be putting funds into their budget. Paul said we could either put money into their line items and then take it back out, or could you have a separate line item in the General Fund expenditures for Fire expenses. Susan believed that we were going to transfer the money from the General Fund, our portion to operate the Fire Department, and then if there were expenses to be paid it was going to be paid out of the line items in the Fire Department. Paul said that sounds reasonable go ahead and do it that way to keep it clean. Chief Bill Byers said whatever funds are put into the Fire Department budget are equal to what the utility rates have been in the past. That way, the Township does not perceive it as payments coming out of the Fire Department fund when it was coming out of the General Fund. Whether it was \$2,000 or \$4,000 in utility costs, whatever we were showing as in-kind. Dave Smith said he believed it was by percentages, not a fixed rate.

Paul Spencer wanted to inform Finance that he did place a call to Dominic Gualtieri, our Zoning Inspector, regarding the signage at the College. Dominic told Paul at the time, Steve, our Assistant Village Administrator, did talk with him and said it was just sign replacement. Therefore, nothing needed to be done. Dominic said that was what he was directed to do by Steve. Dave Smith said that is not the case. Paul said he has not spoken with Steve; this is what he was told by Dominic. Paul said if they are larger than what they should have been, something should have been done. Dave said they had placards on each of the individual houses, now they have signs in the yard. Paul asked James to touch base with Steve and find out what was determined. James said yes, he will.

**Mayor:** The Mayor was not feeling up to attending following his first COVID-19 shot.

**Bills List:** The list was reviewed. A motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. Spencer with a second from Mr. Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

**EMS Collections:** None to review.

**Any Other Business:** Denny Taylor has joined the meeting and asked about the right-of-way issues regarding the Ohio Edison poles. Rob said it has been taken care of. Chris Szell said Council passed legislation approving an easement that was before Council. Mr. Taylor asked if that was 16 feet from the south side of the road or from the center of the road. Chris said no, it was an easement of 15 feet from the northern right-of-way line on S.R. 305.


The next Finance/Safety Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 30, 2021.

**Adjournment:** A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Spencer with a second from Mr. Szell. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

**Attest:**

  
Susan J. Skrovan, Fiscal Officer

  
Robert Dempsey, Finance Chairman