

Hiram Village Council Meeting

Rosser Municipal Building
11617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

February 8, 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, Village Administrator James McGee and Assistant Village Administrator Steve Schuller.

The following persons were present: Ed Frato-Sweeney.

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 Regular meeting minutes of 1/11/2022. A motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented was made by Mr. Smith 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. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

GUEST AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Ed Frato-Sweeney reminded anyone interested that the Hiram Community Trust grant applications will be available next week, February 15th; deadline to submit a grant application is April 1st.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

***Police Chief Brian Gregory provided their monthly report.** There were 310 offense reports for January.

The Chief reported a lot of training this past month; they are getting a jump on their CPT training now because they want to receive the grant funds.

Our K9 unit is back to full duty! The insurance claim has been approved.

Plans for their pancake breakfast fundraiser is still up in the air; he still needs to coordinate with the College.

Brian reported the Police Chiefs in our area have a meeting with the Portage County Sheriff tomorrow. They wanted to talk with the Chiefs to clear the air regarding the use of the Sheriff to provide added coverage.

His department has purchased body cameras even though we did not get the grant. Brian will re-apply for grant funds.

The snow ban/parking ban that our Street Department put in place during bad snow storms works great!

Brian is working to set up a first aid class for recertification of his officers; he is hoping to open it to the public.

***Fire Chief Bill Byers provided their monthly report.** The annual fire report was provided and reviewed by Council.

Chief Byers reported they plan to have legislation prepared for next month to purchase a new squad.

Village Administrator James McGee did not present the monthly report. He could not locate his regular report in his Computer and is working on a new and improved report.

Reporting on the new phone system; Spectrum have run the new wires, training is scheduled for February 15th and we should be live on February 17th. If everything goes as planned.

The new gas line from Dominion Gas has been pushed back to Thursday.

His department and the water/sewer department personnel all have their lab license recertifications on Thursday.

Steve reported the Water Meter project; we are waiting on the general contractor Core & Main and the sub-contractor Newman Plumbing to schedule a time to finish the project. There were issues with some of the College meters.

Regarding the Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA) loan application for the water tower project; we are moving ahead with the application. The repayment on a 30-year loan including OPWC would be \$27,000 per year. Susan and Steve have been discussing any options and believe we can pay for most of the water meters using sewer capital funds because the meters also meter the sewer. It will free up some funds on the water side. Steve said the water tower is supposed to have a 50-year lifespan. Chris McCreight thanked the Street Department for the great job plowing and the good communication for the parking ban. Chris asked about the lab recertification licenses? James explained who is getting them and what they are used for; daily testing. James and Steve also got the licensing to relieve the guys at our water plant. Chris Szell thanked James for helping Mr. Kercher with the telephone pole.

Discussion regarding Village residents volunteering to help with snow removal on streets and possible liabilities.

Mayor's February 8, 2022 Report to Council

Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting:

There was no Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, February 1, 2022 as no business was on the Commission's agenda.

Reminder: Council Committees for 2022 are as follows:

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

Investment: Chris Szell

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

Public Records Retention: Chris Szell

Economic Development: Paul Spencer, Tom Bollenbacher, Chris Szell, Village Administrator's office, College Representative

Fire & EMS Advisory: Dave Smith

Planning & Zoning Commission: Paul Spencer, Chair

Blighted Properties & Sidewalks: Chris Szell, Paul Spencer, Ed Frato-Sweeney, Dave Smith

Web Site Committee: Chris Szell

The Park Board is in need of some new members:

Suzann Bennett and Retired Professor Dr. Steve Zabor have both resigned and Jo Cobb is nearing the conclusion of her term. From reviewing the policies, I understand that you are to make the appointments.

Rev. Chris McCreight has proposed several candidates for consideration:

Stacy Romberger – interested

Isabel Kopp – considering

Dawn Liotta – still need to discuss with

COVID-19 News:

Unvaccinated people are extremely susceptible to the Corona-virus, particularly to the DELTA and now OMICRON variants and the data on hospitalizations and deaths show this clear discrepancy.

Prevention and Control: The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to COVID-19. The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks or breathes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of who are nearby or possible be inhaled in the lungs. Spread is more likely between people who are in close contact with on another (within about 6 feet).

To Prevent Illness:

- Get vaccinated (if age eligible)
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, stay at home as much as possible, and put distance between yourself and other people.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Submitted by:

Mayor Lou Bertrand

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

The following reports were provided to Council for this meeting:

The December/January Bank Reconciliations balanced with the UAN with no adjusting factors, however, they will not be posted until Temporary Mode is closed and then will be available for signing by the Mayor and Council.

Cash Summary by Fund as of January 31, 2022 was provided to Council today in their packets.

List of bills as of February 4, 2022 was provided to Council by email last week.

Council Regular meeting minutes for January 11, 2022 were provided to Council by email yesterday & 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 let Council know that besides working on closing the year end, we have an audit coming up. She has already been in touch with them; they are requesting some reports be sent to them so we can pull out some examples. Council will receive all the paperwork to begin the audit and to finalize it. It will be Alger & Associates, Inc.

Susan and Wendelin discussed and decided to do an internal audit for our Regional Income Tax collections. There seemed to be some discrepancies in their reports as to how much was receiving to the Street Infrastructure fund and the General Fund. We determined the Street Infrastructure was not getting their full amount of income tax they were expecting. Susan had to correct any receipts from 2021 before she would be able to close out the year. Over a two-year audit period, it was about \$47,800. We are working this out with RITA but plan to track it in our own reports.

A motion to approve the Fiscal Officer's report for January 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. Dave Smith asked about the property tax assessment. Susan explained the only one we normally get is on the salon building and they reimburse us for the taxes. The second one is for the water tower property which has been filed for exemption. 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

2022-02: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM'S EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK, APPENDIX "A" AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Hemphill 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. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

RESOLUTIONS

2022-03: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC FUNDS OF NO MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS FOR A RECEPTION FOLLOWING THE MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE ON MAY 30, 2022. 1st READING.

2022-04: A RESOLUTION APPOINTING CHRISTOPHER SZELL AS A DIRECTOR OF THE HIRAM ENERGY SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT, INC. 1st READING. 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. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Paul Spencer brought up four properties in the Village needing something done. The house on Plum Ridge, any activity? Solicitor Tom Reitz said that has got to be done through your Zoning Inspector, call him! S.R. 700 south and the house on the Hiram Farm? As Council, Paul thinks this is the year that they need to start cleaning things up in the community. Solicitor Reitz said he has provided a step-by-step process to follow to take action on these properties. Dave Smith said we may need to get a new Zoning Inspector. The Mayor said he could call Dominic in for our next Finance meeting. Paul spoke about the safety concerns for these properties. Chief Byers said the fire code really does not apply to residential structures; their scope is very limited. Solicitor Reitz said with regard to any questionable structures, it is your Portage County Building Department's jurisdiction.

Paul Spencer said there is something else on the P&Z side; Hiram has properties in the Village that do not conform structurally to our current zoning code. Paul said he believes there is no such thing in zoning as "grandfathered", would that be correct? Solicitor Tom Reitz said it is called a "non-conforming" use. The use has to have been legally established by the Village at its onset and he provided some examples. It is a legal pre-existing non-conforming use. More discussion. Solicitor Tom Reitz read from the current zoning code and suggested the Village may want to consider revising their zoning code.

Chief Bill Byers spoke regarding seeing an increase of errors on paperwork, subpoena's and even MARC's billing. With COVID and staff shortages; we are all seeing more errors over the last several months.

A motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing imminent litigation and personnel status report at 8:14 pm was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to return to Regular Session at 9:03 pm was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to authorize the Village Solicitor to draft a letter to be signed by the Mayor to Mr. Daniel Dunn stating that he will be accommodated for his water meter but must bare all the costs was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 5-1 in favor with a nay vote from Mr. Spencer.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. McCreight. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

These minutes are pending approval by Council.



Mayor Lou Bertrand

ATTEST:



Fiscal Officer Susan J. Skrovan