

Hiram Village Council Meeting

Rosser Municipal Building
111617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

February 14, 2023

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

The following persons were present: Robert Bohrer with Hiram College, Denny Taylor, Stacy Turner; Reporter with The Weekly Villager and Hiram College student Madison Palmer.

Mayor Bertrand called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The Mayor asked that all cell phones be silenced. There was a moment of silence in memory of the Hiram College senior nursing student, Gerardo (Jerry) Carrillo Ramirez 25 years old, who lost his life Monday in a car accident on Route 5 followed by the pledge to the flag.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 10, 2023. A motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the special meeting minutes of January 31, 2023. A motion to approve the special meeting minutes as presented was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the proposed agenda. A motion to approve the proposed agenda as submitted was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

GUEST AND PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

***Police Chief Brian Gregory provided their monthly report.** They had 252 offences for the month of January. Traffic stops and citations are way down; perhaps the lowest in five years. There is a little bit of a moral issue; it should improve. This month, traffic stops are already up at seventeen. They will be monitoring the traffic more closely for violators. His department will be working to raise funds to support his budget and the General Fund.

His department will be receiving their 24-hour CPT Training from the Ohio Attorney General's office again this year.

Distracted Driving Law, SB288 was put into law. It becomes effective April this year and will be a primary offense. For the first six months, violators will be given a "warning", after that it will be a minor misdemeanor with a \$150.00 fine! Last year, the Ohio Highway Patrol reported 34 deaths by distracted driving; that is a lot! There probably is more than that; that is just what is reported from the Highway Patrol.

There will be a departmental training on March 4th for Less than Lethal training. We will be transitioning from the 12-gauge shotgun to less than lethal with the bean bag rounds and the rubber belt rounds 40 mm which is a lessor impact.

Pancake Breakfast fundraiser; no date has been set at this time; hopefully for next month or April.

Chief Gregory said everyone has probably seen by now the news about the train derailment in East Palestine. What a serious impact to the community with the explosion of chemicals; it looked like a nuclear bomb went off! We have the Rave Reverse 911 here set up to notify residents; however, if something like that were to happen here, we would not use that system. We have the IPAW system which is the Integrated Public Alert Warning system from Portage County. Anyone who has the alerts set up on their phone, like the Amber Alert system, would receive the IPAW alerts. The EPA is handling a lot of conspiracy theories regarding East Palestine. At the Chief's meeting today, Brian said they got to see a lot of the air quality and water quality readings from there. They were within the normal reads; you can still smell and taste it in the air; they said the readings are within the normal parameters. Hopefully, that never happens here; we do have trains through Garrettsville. The Mayor said that train went right through Ravenna and Kent! The Mayor said it was the wheels; they were on fire, it wasn't the track!

***Fire Chief Bill Byers provided their monthly report.** Chief Byers also provided his annual report to Council.

The challenges his department and many other departments face is with staffing! This is a problem across the country; a shortage of available, trained recruits! Chief Byers provided some highlights from his annual report. The Mayor asked the Chief to explain to everyone what the ISO ratings are. The ISO rating or International Service Organization, they are kind of like a report card for communities. The insurance industry rates your community's fire department on ISO. A large portion of that comes down to your community's water supply and available water flow.

A primary PSAP is an answering point for 911 calls. When a 911 call comes in, where that call go depends on your dispatch center. The ISO rating affects your homeowner's insurance costs. Hiram Village is an ISO rating of 3; Hiram Township is an ISO 5. Beth Greenwood asked where we are on the scale. The scale is 1 to 10; 1 being an A+ rating!

Bill reported their dollar loss for the year, he was very proud to say, was only \$5,500! They had one small structure fire in a house; they were there quickly and prevented it from spreading. It was in a century home which it could have spread very quickly! They do track their fire dollar loss from private residential calls; just for Hiram.

Village Administrator James McGee provided their monthly report.

The Hinsdale/Winrock repaving project's timeline has been moved up; it is planned to start in the spring. The director of OPWC wants these projects completed sooner in the year. COVID had backed them up. It has been advertised for bids; the bid opening will be on Friday, February 24th at noon in Council Chambers. A resolution for the necessary easements for the project is before Council tonight.

Mayor's February 14, 2023 Report to Council

Planning and Zoning:

- The Commission met on Tuesday, February 7th and discussed blighted properties, possible zoning amendments and the sale of the four (4) structures on Dodge Court. Our Village Solicitor is working with Hiram College's legal counsel to effectuate a plan for the sale of those individual structures and property.
- In that vein the Village needs a representative to attend the County Planning meeting scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month in Ravenna beginning at 4 p.m. (Tomorrow)

Financial History:

- At the end of 2007 when I took office, the total balances in all funds was \$1,367,231, fifteen years later at the end of December 2022 the balances in all fund were \$1,876,684.
- The Village currently has cash collateral loans of \$389,000. However, the Middlefield Bank is now paying approximately 2% APR on the balance of our general funds, up from .02% last September.
- So, I contacted Star Ohio. What is Star Ohio?

- The State Treasury Asset Reserve of Ohio (STAR Ohio) is an investment pool managed and administered by the State Treasurer of Ohio. Participation is offered to subdivisions of the State of Ohio as defined by Section 135.45(G)(2)(a), Ohio Revised Code.
- By the State Treasurer for the investment of interim monies of the State and to the State's various custodial accounts. The investment objectives of STAR Ohio are the preservation of capital, the maintenance of liquidity, and providing current income.
- Who can invest in STAR Ohio? Cities – School Districts – Townships – VILLAGES – Counties – Public Libraries – Fire Districts – Port Authorities – Community Hospitals – Housing Authorities – State Institutions of Higher Education – Soil and Water Conservation Districts – Parks and Recreational Districts – Transportation Boards – Joint Vocational Schools – Other Governmental Entities. NOTE: FUNDS IN STAR OHIO ARE COMPLETELY LIQUID!
- STAR Ohio participants have the advantage of the security of an investment pool that has Standard Poor's highest rating, AAAM.
- The STAR Ohio website provides accurate information regarding current balance, month-to-date 24-hour access to account information via 1-800-648-STAR (7827)
- Consolidated monthly account statement.

Money in the Village General Fund:

As of the end of January 2023, the Village has **\$1,760,537.15** (over \$1.7 million)

Deposit/Investment of 1.3 million in STAR Ohio would yield **\$60,000/yr.** whereas our current yield through Middlefield Bank is currently **\$26,000/yr.**

Motion to have the Village's Fiscal Officer invest in STAR Ohio was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

***The Fiscal Officer Report: Susan Skrovan-DeYoung presented the monthly financial reports for January.**

The following reports were provided to Council for this meeting:

December & January Bank Reconciliations have balanced with the UAN with no adjusting factors, at this time, they have not been posted to the UAN due to year-end work in Temporary Mode, once posted, they will be available for signing by Council & Mayor.

Cash Summary by Fund as of January 31, 2023 was provided last Friday by email & in their packets.

List of bills as of February 10, 2023 was provided to Council last Friday by email & in their packets.

Council Regular meeting minutes of January 10, 2023 was provided to Council last Friday by email & in their packets.

Council Special meeting minutes of January 31, 2023 was provided to Council today by email & in their packets.

R.I.T.A. income tax receipts YTD report was provided to Council last Friday by email & in their packets.

Comparison of Budgeted & Appropriated YTD report was provided to Council last Friday by email & in their packets.

Temporary mode in the UAN must be closed out by February 28th so Susan is diligently working on getting that done. Payroll cannot post on March 1st until temporary mode is closed. Susan will then work to finalize the permanent appropriations to get them before Council in March to be passed and in affect before the end of March.

Next month there is Local Government Official's Conference training in Columbus, Susan will be attending the two days of classes at the end of March.

Susan has the information for STAR Ohio; she will contact them to see what is needed to get things started with them.

A motion to approve the Fiscal Officer's report for January as submitted was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mrs. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

The bill's list was reviewed. A motion to approve the bill's list as submitted was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

Chairman Chris Szell asked if Susan would let them know at Finance how much she will be moving to STAR Ohio; if she knows at that time. The cash collateral loans will have to stay with Middlefield as well as some operating funds.

HIRAM TOWNSHIP REPORT

No Township report tonight.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCES

2022-18: AN ORDINANCE ENACTING TITLE 7 CHAPTER 351.16 OF THE TRAFFIC CODE. TABLED ON 3rd READING. Chris Szell said he is waiting for the public forum on February 22nd.

2022-20: AN ORDINANCE ENACTING SECTION 351.17 OF THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM CODIFIED ORDINANCES TO ESTABLISH PARKING PERMIT PROVISIONS. TABLED ON 2nd READING.

2023-02: AN ORDINANCE ENACTING SECTION 941.19 OF THE HIRAM CODIFIED ORDINANCES TO ESTABLISH A PENALTY FOR VIOLATING THE PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 941 OF THE VILLAGE CODIFIED ORDINANCES. 1st READING. Solicitor Tom Reitz explained what is going on here with this piece of legislation. You had a representative from your trash collector show up at your last meeting asking for some assistance from the Village. Your code really did not give you much leverage; this will give you some leverage. Once this is enacted, if you decide to enact it, then your Village Administrator can send a letter to anyone that is not using the recycling and say, you have a month to do this otherwise this new ordinance that is set in place is going to be imposed on you; we hope you choose to recycle. Dave Smith asked how many are not participating? Tom Reitz said he cannot answer that question, he just knows when that representative from Kimble was here, that we do not have any provision that would allow us to enforce the non-compliance. Tom's understanding is that the Great Northern Apartments are the ones not participating in recycling at all, the whole complex! Tom said this proposed amendment is not directed at the individual households.

2023-03: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 521.10 OF THE HIRAM CODIFIED ORDINANCES TO PROHIBIT SMOKING IN VILLAGE OWNED PARKS. 1st READING.

2023-04: AN ORDINANCE ENACTING CHAPTER 191 OF THE HIRAM CODIFIED ORDINANCES TO IMPOSE AN EXCISE TAX ON LODGING WITHIN THE VILLAGE. 1st READING. Solicitor Tom Reitz wanted to draw to Council's attention something they should contemplate over next month or so. In the exhibit, section 191.05, the authority for the tax, there are two separate provisions within the Ohio Revised Code. One is a straight 3% excise tax on transient lodging; that one is pretty straight forward and can be done without much additional action. The second part is an additional 3%; 1.5% of which is retained by the Village for your General Fund, the other 1.5% has to be sent to a convention center or a visitor's bureau; something that is designed for encouraging tourism or travel to your location. Some municipalities have their own Chamber of Commerce or visitor's bureau. To his knowledge, Hiram does not. If you wanted to send it to a County one you could. If you keep it in house, you would have to establish a special fund; which is not real convenient. It is written so that if you decide the second 3% excise tax is more cumbersome than it is worth, that can be removed. It is in there now, but can be revised.

2023-05: AN ORDINANCE REDUCING THE STAFFING IN THE HIRAM POLICE DEPARTMENT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mrs. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 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 5-0 in favor.

RESOLUTIONS

2023-02: A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TWO EASEMENTS FROM KEITH R. AND ELISA L. HOLMES FOR STORMWATER UTILITY ON REAL ESTATE LOCATED ON HINSDALE ROAD, A PUBLIC STREET WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM. 1st READING. Solicitor Tom Reitz said based on his conversation with Tim Lannon from CT Consultants, our Village engineer, he would like to see this in place as soon as possible for the project to stay on track and to allow him to inform the bidders that all easements are in place. Chris Szell asked to clarify the two exhibit easements. Tom Reitz explained the two easements; one is permanent and one is temporary. The temporary easement is a larger area so that when the installation of the line takes place, they have a staging area to move earth and keep things organized to install the pipe. Once the initial installation is completed, within six months of the date they start, then that larger temporary easement is over. Steve provided some additional details on the project and what it will correct. Chris Szell said the “temporary” easement indicates a “perpetual” easement? Should that not be removed? Tom said yes, that is a good catch. Council should strike that word “perpetual” in Exhibit “B”, the second easement and it should read, an easement. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor. A motion to approve on 1st reading as amended was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Police Chief Brian Gregory wanted it noted for the record that the reduction of staff and the reduction of hours within the Police Department is to help out our General Fund.jm

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.

These minutes are pending approval by Council.



Mayor Lou Bertrand

ATTEST:


Fiscal Officer, Susan J. Skrovan-DeYoung