

Village of Hiram

Finance/Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2023

Call to Order: Chairman Chris Szell called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm

Committee Members Present: Lou Bertrand, Mayor
Chris Szell, Chairman
Beth Greenwood, Councilperson
David Smith, Councilman
Susan Skrovan-DeYoung, Fiscal Officer

Committee Members Absent: Paul Spencer, Councilman

Hiram Officials Present: Brian Gregory, Police Chief
Bill Byers, Fire Chief
James McGee, Village Administrator
Steven Schuller, Asst. Village Administrator
Jason Groselle, Asst. Fire Chief at 6:32 pm

Others: Frank Hemphill, Councilman at 6:08 pm

Minutes: A motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 28, 2023 as presented was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mr. Smith. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Agenda: Chris Szell asked for a motion to approve the agenda. A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mrs. Greenwood. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Guests/Public: None.

Department Updates:

Police Department: Police Chief Brian Gregory reported on the success of their annual pancake breakfast fundraiser; it raised \$1,586.00 for their Shop with a Cop program! Brian thanked all those who attended or who volunteered to help.

Brian applied to the Hiram Community Trust grant for one portable speed/radar unit for \$2,800. These go on the poles around the Village; he would like to eventually have a total of four.

Brian had mentioned before about the vehicle lock boots. He talked to other departments who use them; they cost around \$100.00. He would like to purchase one to start.

Regarding his department looking into a Village police levy; he called the Portage County Auditor's office and spoke with Bethany Wagner. To bring in \$75,000 he would need a 6.95 mill levy! It would cost a person with a home valued at \$200,000 around \$486.50 annually. More discussion followed on the options of having a five-year levy versus a permanent levy. Brian needs to do some more research on levies before moving ahead.

The annual Car Show originally scheduled for June 3rd may not happen at that time due to the lack of available officers. Brian is still working out some details of having the car show.

Brian spoke about the parking lot for the hike & bike trail regarding the AVI van using it for parking. Mr. Smith had brought it to his attention. Brian said he does not have enough officers covering shifts when they should not park there. David Smith thought they could mark the tires.

Fire Department: Fire Chief Bill Byers reported working with the Portage County EMA to acquire six more multiple band radios; which will be on the MARCS system. It is through a grant with the State Homeland Security division; Portage County EMA actually wrote the grant application.

Last year, his department submitted a fire truck grant application; it is in peer review.

There has been a slight uptick in overdose calls.

Following the last Council meeting that evening, our fire department personnel delivered a baby boy here in the front apron of our parking lot!

Village Adm/Utilities: VA James McGee reported the Village trash pick up day is set for Saturday, May 6th.

There will be a pre-construction meeting on Friday at 10:00 am for the Hinsdale/Winrock resurfacing project.

James reported meeting with the electricians at the water plant for a control panel. A new control panel will not be ready until sometime in August; they will plan to change the panel over Christmas break. The tower will probably be built before that happens. Our contingency plan is if the new tower is built, we can have both of them built to allow some time to get the panel installed. Once we disconnect the water plant from the panel, we cannot make any water until that new panel is installed and everything is re-connected.

The soccer goals purchased for the Reign Hadsell Park through a HCT grant have been assembled by Chris McCreight and volunteers.

Steve reported the Phase I water plant improvement grant; we were top 15 in the project listing! There is a good chance we may get it and if we do it would be an 80/20 grant/local match. It is a 1.5-million-dollar Federal grant.

Steve reported they have been keeping an eye on the General Fund. Status as of the end of March is that we have spent \$100,000 less but we are also down \$60,000 in revenue. It is early in the year but we seem to be trending right.

James said with regard to the storms along the state routes; ODOT will be working on them when they get a vacuum truck secured.

Brian wanted to mention that our phone system on his side of the building does not work! The telephones through Spectrum do work; not the landlines! He is running his fax off the fire router. Brian is not sure whether it is cost effective to fix the landlines just for the faxes and the red phone in the lobby. James said the old system we had was damaged from lightning; the landlines were running through that system. Brian said the priority still is having a fax; it is more secure to send by fax than by email and some of the agencies he works with will only accept a fax!

Mayor:

The Mayor mentioned the recent NOPEC letter; if you opt-out of their program, instead of getting 6.45 cents per kwh, it will cost you 10.5 cents per kwh!

The Mayor presented the Portage County 2050 Comprehensive Plan! This is extremely impressive! It is online. It is the only "master plan" the Mayor can ever remember being done!

The Mayor said there have been emails back and forth with the Park Committee regarding the idea of installing solar panels by the sewer plant. We should reach out to an electrical engineer. Steve said Chagrin Falls did this and he believes they were going to bring in \$30,000 per year. Chris McCreight brought this up because it is really easy to get funding for them right now. Our engineers, CT Consultants, have that information because they did it for Chagrin Falls.

The Mayor would like to see the annual car show happen this year.

Regarding the blighted properties in the Village; Lou talked with an engineer who came out and looked at the properties as well as our light plant property. He is interested in some properties.

He is working on obtaining an easement on the light plant property from Hiram College.

Fiscal Officer/Admin: Susan Skrovan-DeYoung reported on her office having a new mailbox which James installed at the end of our sidewalk. We will be phasing out our post office box and save on that cost; \$114.00. We are notifying all of our vendors. More discussion on some issues with post office.

Susan provided an update on the insurance claim for the water plant generator. We are in the final stages of the claim and working with the insurance adjuster; about \$13,500 is the balance.

Susan attended a class at the Local Government Official's Conference last month on the reporting requirements for the ARPA funds. She will be reporting the entire amount under the blanket of revenue loss as the standard allowance. They have provided a sample resolution which will be before Council at their next meeting for approval. Deadline to report is April 30th.

Bills List:

Bills list was reviewed. A motion to pay the bills was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mr. Smith. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

New Business:

a. Street Parking and Update from April 19th Town Hall: Beth Greenwood said it was sparsely attended; Theresa did a nice job with the presentation. The Mayor said there were maybe 23 people including our own attendees! Chris Szell said there were no students and very little input from Village residents! David Smith questioned whether there was a need; Peninsula is not a fair comparison to us. It would take 24 cars per day at the minimum just to cover our costs of the system! Chris explained the costs versus revenue. The Mayor asked what we are going to do about our residents? We should have a special dispensation for them, a break. Finance members need to develop the parameters. The Mayor could not understand the no overnight parking if they pay for a permit? Brian said no, not overnight and explained why. Steve said they would never move their vehicle! Chris Szell passed out the notes that he took from the meeting for members to digest. More discussion followed including not allowing parking overnight and lots available. Chris said we need the revenue!

The Mayor would like to see a special rate for residents; even rentals, not including students, of 50% less. We will need to set up a "merchant" who will do collections.

b. Traffic Cameras and Village Speed Limits: Chris Szell likes the idea of this targeting people who are just passing through the Village, not people who work or live here. Steve said Chagrin Falls instituted it five years ago. Brian said he has not had a chance to look into this; it is a revenue generator. His concern is who will handle all the phone calls from people upset with a ticket. Members discussed this further; there is more to learn about how it will all work. Beth asked the Police Chief how many people drive through Hiram. Brian said about 2,600 vehicles per day. These tickets would not go through the court system; they would be paid directly to the Village, or not. Beth said she would much rather raise revenue from people outside of this Village than from an additional tax on our residents. Chris will contact our Solicitor, Tom Reitz. Brian will research it further. David agreed that this would not put officers at risk trying to enforce traffic laws. Chris said he is going to charge Chris McCreight with finding out more information about reducing speed limits in the Village.

c. HV/Twp. Fire Contract: Chris Szell said we are in the first year of our two-year renewal. Chief Byers said our contract automatically renews every two-years. It can be opened up for re-negotiations. Chris said the clause that causes the biggest issue is where it says 2/3 the Village will contribute of what the Township contributes. The Fire Chief, Susan and Chris Szell have been looking at the numbers. We need to get with Hiram Township to begin discussions about the contract and current levies; do we want to add more to a levy or not. The Township is 70% of the calls; the Village is 16% and Hiram College is 14%.

Susan will check when our levies are up for renewal for Fire and EMS and will send that information out to everyone by email. Chris said we need to plan for capital and staffing.

The Fire Chief will check with Hiram Township on possible meeting dates available. Chris Szell said he and the Mayor will want to meet with them.

Unfinished Business: a. Any Other Outstanding Matters: None.

EMS Collections: None.

The next Finance/Safety Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 30, 2023.

Adjournment: A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mrs. Greenwood. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Attest:


Susan J. Skrovan-DeYoung, Fiscal Officer


Chris Szell, Finance Chairman