

Village of Hiram

Finance/Safety Committee Video Conference Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2021

Call to Order: Chairman Rob Dempsey called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Committee Members Present: Rob Dempsey, Councilman
Lou Bertrand, Mayor
David Smith, Councilman
Chris Szell, Councilman
Susan Skrovan, Fiscal Officer

Committee Members Absent: Paul Spencer, Councilman

Hiram Officials Present: Frank Hemphill, Councilman
Brian Gregory, Police Chief
Bill Byers, Fire Chief
James McGee, Village Administrator
Steven Schuller, Asst. Village Administrator

Others:

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

Minutes: A motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 30, 2021 as presented was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mr. Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

Guests/Public: None.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Department Updates:

Police Department: Police Chief Brian Gregory reported looking into our noise ordinance and finding some conflicting language. Chapter 911.22 talks about excavating noise not allowed between the hours of 10:00 pm – 7:00 am. Section 531.03 has all other noises are prohibited between 9:00 pm – 8:00 am. Chief Gregory would prefer having 9:00 pm – 8:00 am for “all”. He would like approval for the change before sending it onto our Solicitor to draft legislation. Dave Smith explained what brought this subject to the forefront. There was a building on the Lily Pond property that was demolished and burned. They should have had to obtain a demo permit through our Village Administrator, a zoning permit and one from Portage County. The Zoning Inspector should look into this as well. There are exemptions for emergency repair work.

Chief Gregory brought up the portable radar speed signs that he would like to get through a grant. For the speed only signs, the cost is \$2,800.00, with data included the cost is \$4,700.00. The Chief felt our Village would benefit from the simple speed only signs.

Cost for duty and range ammunition for the department are extremely high, double in some cases and the waiting period is 9-18 months!

Dave Smith asked the Chief about a \$500.00 deductible on the bills list for the police department. Chief explained their police cruiser unit #12 had incurred some damage. The officer backed up over a stump and put a small crease in the passenger side door. We cannot pound these out ourselves anymore. There was another incident last night with an officer assisting the Sheriff's department, when he pulled into the property, the offender tried getting away and floored their vehicle into our police cruiser! The damage looks minimal; Brian will be taking to the repair shop to have them look at it tomorrow for an estimate. They had insurance.

Fire Department: Fire Chief Bill Byers said he will be brief, are there any questions for him. Chris Szell asked Bill whether the property owners of the Lily Pond contacted him? Bill said no, they did not and they should have gone to the EPA for a burn permit.

Village Adm/Utilities: James McGee reported that there will be a pre-construction meeting this Thursday morning for the Water Meter Replacement and Garfield Road projects.

James said Simon Bednarski, our water/sewer employee, has achieved his Wastewater 1 license. James will be looking to increase his salary.

The water heater in the Village Hall went out; it was replaced yesterday.

Dave Smith spoke about when someone receives a pay increase, it usually comes with more responsibility. Just getting a license and then paying someone else to do the work really does not benefit the Village. This was his only concern.

Chris Szell asked on the water meter replacements, how is this going to be communicated to the residents. Chris assumes the contractor will replace the water meters and will also make repairs to the homes where the old ones were located? James said the contractor will be inside every home! The company will work that out as they get to every residence; to be in contact with the resident for access. Chris would suggest that any information to the residents be put in our Communicator and on our website. James said, as soon as they know, they will get the information out to everyone.

Fiscal Officer/Admin: Susan Skrovan reported the new UAN laptop computer has arrived and all data from the old computer will be uploaded to the new laptop tomorrow morning.

There was a meeting today at 1:00 pm to go over the HRA plan for employees medical. Sarah and Steve with Ohio Health Benefits were here to explain the plan and answer questions. Susan will set up HRA line items for each department for reimbursement to employees for their deductibles and co-pays. Some appropriations may have to be amended moving forward.

Dave Smith asked if Susan has received a list of appropriate expenditures for the next round of COVID-19 funds? Does the Village have anything earmarked?

Susan said she has not seen any list of appropriate expenditures. We were supposed to get half of the allocated funds in April, have not seen any of it yet. The Mayor said the Record Courier published that we were to receive approximately \$227,000. There is a 5/31 deadline for a forgivable loan for employers, if we qualify for it.

Mayor:

Because of the zoning and planning problem we had, the Mayor met with Todd Peetz from Portage County Regional Planning to work on a possible meeting held by the Prosecutor's office for zoning/planning commission personnel in the fall.

The Mayor reported his new iPad is finally operational; his cell phone downloaded everything!

There are four Councilman up for re-election this fall. He was asked to bring up the possibility of increasing compensation for both the Council and Mayor positions. The total last year pay and benefits for all elected officials was \$37,765. That would compare to the Village Solicitor's original expense of \$39,747; however, Council approved his healthcare so that raised his compensation package to \$51,747 per year. The Mayor felt their compensation is extremely low compared to Township Trustees and Council has not gotten a raise in quite a while. There are a lot more meetings to attend in recent years. Susan spoke about the legislation that passed not too long ago that will provide those councilmen that are re-elected or newly elected an increase in their compensation. They could not get the increase during their current terms. The Mayor asked Finance members their thoughts on an increase. Rob Dempsey said the Township has close to the same budget as we do and they are compensated \$1,000 per month. Chris Szell said he does not want to see an increase at this time. Dave Smith said he was fine where we are now. Rob Dempsey said he was the one who brought it up to the Mayor and felt \$400 per month would be reasonable. The Mayor will present something at the next Council meeting.

Bills List:

The list was reviewed. A motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. Szell with a second from Mr. Hemphill. Motion passed unanimously.

EMS Collections:

None to review at this time. Chief Byers had just received an envelope today; there will be some to sign in a day or two once he has gone through them.

Any Other Business: None.

The next Finance/Safety Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 25, 2021.

Adjournment: A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mr. Hemphill. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Attest:


Susan J. Skrovan, Fiscal Officer


Robert Dempsey, Finance Chairman