

Village of Hiram

Finance/Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

January 31, 2023

Call to Order: Chairman Chris Szell called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm

Committee Members Present: Lou Bertrand, Mayor at 6:08 pm
Chris Szell, Chairman
Beth Greenwood, Councilperson
David Smith, Councilman
Paul Spencer, Councilman
Susan Skrovan-DeYoung, Fiscal Officer

Committee Members Absent:

Hiram Officials Present: Brian Gregory, Police Chief
Bill Byers, Fire Chief
James McGee, Village Administrator
Steven Schuller, Asst. Village Administrator
Frank Hemphill, Councilman at 6:06 pm

Others: Josh Wilde, Firefighter

Minutes: A motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 20, 2022 as presented was made by Mr. Smith with a second from Mr. Spencer. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Agenda: Chris Szell asked for a motion to approve the agenda. A motion to approve the agenda as presented for Finance/Safety was made by Mr. Spencer with a second from Mr. Smith. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Calendar: Finance & Safety meetings are scheduled for the last Tuesday of every month. Members agreed to the meeting calendar for 2023.

Guests/Public: None.

Department Updates:

Fire Department: Fire Chief Bill Byers reported receiving word today that the bumper for Engine 2 has arrived at the body shop.

Chief Byers provided an update on their recent grant request for additional full-time personnel. Grant writers would not accept their grant to write it! It is based on the number of calls; less than 1,000 calls per year, would not be awarded. Bill spoke with Chief Mark Kozak with Ravenna Township, he said this type of grant is very cumbersome; he would not even attempt to apply. Paul Spencer mentioned a grant writer they could try and contact; Amy McCoy.

Bill brought up their idea of going to the voters to increase staffing. He did not have any details at this time on what millage they would need; he first wanted to be sure this is the path Council wants him to pursue. Right now, the levies we have in Hiram Township; the 3 mill EMS levy brings in \$199,000 annually and the 2 mill Fire brings in \$136,000 annually. Bill would like to see three firefighter-paramedics at \$90,000 per employee, full-time with benefits. So Paul asked Bill if they were talking about putting on full-time staffing? The grant would pay the first year, partial on the second year and then we would pay for the third year. David Smith said both Macedonia and Cuyahoga Falls applied for this grant and both were denied. Paul asked what the millage would have to be for this. Bill said based on what we collect in the Township, \$200,000 is 3-mills. The Village would also be additional levies. Bill said we are currently the lowest "milled" community in our area! The Mayor said if that is what our Fire Chief is proposing; put it to the voters and let them decide. Bill said there are a lot of hurdles between here and there. More discussion followed on the tax burden to the residents and the idea of creating a fire district. Beth Greenwood asked Chief Byers to explain why he felt we need three full-time EMT's? Bill explained how the pandemic created a staffing shortage! Now, people can go work elsewhere for more money with benefits. EMT/fire classes had shut down for a year! We do not have a stable workforce! As our community grows, ever so slowly, we will need to look at our staffing and increasing it. Susan said the Village's fire millage is 3% and brings in \$27,000 annually and the EMS levy is 2 mills and brings in about \$17,000 annually. Chief Byers will approach Hiram Township to discuss our current millage on levies.

The Township/Village contract needs to be re-evaluated and revised!

Chris Szell asked either Bill or Brian whether they reviewed the current dispatch contract with the County to see if it was going up? Brian said our current dispatch contract signed last year is for three years with no increase!

Chief Byers had one issue with EMS billing. A young lady thought her insurance took care of it; she is a college student and is now getting a collection notice. Bill said it was identical to the lady in Oberlin that we wrote off. They are going to try and re-submit the claim. Can he get a motion from Finance to honor this the same way if the insurance does not cover it; it was from 2020! Lifeforce is going to try and appeal it to show they did submit it within the timeframe. It is a \$600.00 bill. Paul said to try and run it back through the insurance and then bring it back to Finance.

Police Department: Police Chief Brian Gregory reported an incident at Hiram College last Friday. There was a posting by a student to social media of a possible Columbine incident! It was reported to the FBI who then contacted Chief Gregory. They are taking the threat seriously! The student was luckily in his room, otherwise they would have had to lock down the whole Village!

Chief Gregory said he is working on his budget and cuts needed to be made.

Brian had no further information on the liquor permit application by the College. Since the Village is not appealing the application; they will get their permit.

Village Adm/Utilities: VA James McGee reported having a water break on Hinsdale last Sunday into Monday. There was a valve issue. A foot valve for the hydrant across from Whitcomb was installed some time ago using cheap bolts; they rotted off! They tried just changing the bolts, however, when they tried to remove the valve, the gasket blew out so they had to replace the valve. Stainless steel bolts have been installed! There is a boil advisory in that area only until tomorrow.

Mayor: The Mayor said the State of Ohio is flush with tax revenues! He would like to see the Local Government Funding restored to the municipalities! There is a Mayor's Association zoom meeting tomorrow at 4:00 pm. There are 640 Mayors in Ohio. The LGF will be brought up for further discussion. Rumors are the State wants to drop income tax, which is already low.

The Mayor and his wife recently had COVID; they are fine now.

Fiscal Officer/Admin: Susan Skrovan-DeYoung reported having the year-end taxes complete for the Village and employee W-2's. All tax forms are done. Working on a State audit and BWC true-up.

The Auditor of State is resuming live in-person training again for the Local Government Official's Conference March 28 and 29th. Susan plans on attending in Columbus.

Bills List: Bills list was reviewed. A motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. Szell with a second from Mayor Bertrand. Chris had asked Susan to split out our General Fund on the bill's list; which she did. Special revenue funds are separated and Utility. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

New Business: a. **PayByPhone Permit Parking:** Chris provided some details on the program. Your vehicles license plate is your permit. Startup costs are \$1,500 - \$3,500 depending on the options you choose. The Village must set up a merchant account. You can override any sort of calendar you set for special weekends or a special event day.

Optional items are the Rights or Rates program; at \$1,000 setup and \$200.00 per month fee. Or you can give certain people a "placard". IVR at \$1,000 is an additional option, which would allow you to call to pay. The company recommends every 200 feet a sign?

February 22, 2023 is scheduled a "Public Forum" at Koritansky Hall to discuss the parking permitting system. Paul Spencer would invite all of Council and make it a special workshop!

Beth asked about the fees? Chris said transaction fees are .35 cents every time you log in! If you do not have enough transactions in a month; you are charged \$250 additional per month.

Unfinished Business: **Snow Emergency Ban:** Tom Reitz provided edits for review.

EMS Collections: None.

Any Other Business: None.

The next Finance/Safety Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 28, 2023.

Adjournment: A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Szell with a second from Mr. Smith. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Attest:


Susan J. Skrovan-DeYoung, Fiscal Officer


Chris Szell, Finance Chairman