

Hiram Village Council Meeting

Rosser Municipal Building
11617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

July 12, 2022

The following Members of Council were present: 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, Village Administrator James McGee and Assistant Village Administrator Steve Schuller.

The following persons were present: Stacy Turner; reporter with The Weekly Villager, Ed Frato-Sweeney, Keith Holmes and Mike Wilkinson.

Mayor Bertrand called the regular meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. following the budget hearing. The Mayor asked that all cell phones be silenced. There was a moment of silence for the passing of one of our citizens; Darlene Jackson, whose husband served on our Council for eight years. followed by the pledge to the flag.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of 6/14/22. A motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the special meeting minutes of 6/28/22. A motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. 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 agenda as presented was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

GUEST AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Ed Frato-Sweeney asked about the deadline on the vacant property on Plum Ridge? The Mayor thought our police will address this; criminal complaints, he believes, have been filed.

Ed's second question was regarding the legislation for the tax that is tabled; will that be up for reconsideration? The Mayor said he will encourage Council not to act on it tonight since we do not have a full Council present.

Mike Wilkinson said he was just here to witness. He was told there was a complaint filed against the house he lives in on the Couch Farm property? Paul Spencer said through zoning & planning there was a complaint sent by letter to perform repairs to the structure and they were informed they need to make the necessary repairs.

Keith Holmes wanted to thank Council for working with him on his property. He asked about his easement for his carport? Solicitor Tom Reitz said he drafted the easement; however, he will need to get a legal description of Mr. Holmes' property. You probably will need a survey or perhaps obtain that information from your engineer.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

*Police Chief Brian Gregory provided their monthly report. There were 270 offense reports for June.

Chief Gregory explained with regard to the property at 11846 Plum Ridge; on June 9th our Council granted a 60-day extension. There has been no work done on the property so on Monday July 11th, formal charges were filed in Portage County Municipal Court. It is up to the courts to deliver the summons. Solicitor Tom Reitz further explained the process; it is a criminal charge. Once the individuals are served with the summons itself, it has the actual complaint attached to it, it has a date where they must appear in court and enter a plea.

The plea options are guilty, not guilty or no contest. Depending on how they plea; the Village may or may not have an active role in the courts. If they plead not guilty, then the Village goes to court with all the documentation and information they have on the property. Chief Gregory said it will not happen overnight. The Mayor said they are going to try and be more aggressive in order to maintain the properties around our Village! Keith Holmes said the 22 years it has sat unoccupied is what boggles his mind! More discussion followed. It is a long process to see any results.

The 4th of July event brought out 52 children for the bike rodeo! There were no major issues during the event.

Fishing with a Cop is scheduled for Saturday, August 20th at Camp Asbury from 9:00 to 1:00 pm.

Police, Fire and Community EMS responded to a bad traffic accident involving three vehicles on State Route 82 just outside the Village limits; it was caused by distracted driving! Kudos to our Fire Department and Community EMS!

HB 72 was passed July 1, 2022; the Fireworks Bill, which has been changed recently. Brian read the house bill. We have local legislation to regulate this within our Village.

***Fire Chief Bill Byers provided their monthly report.** Bill had emailed his report.

Chief Byers said their report reflects a drop in their response time; there is no explanation to account for it.

Squad #1 did break down, needed a part which was out of stock. Community EMS loaned us a squad for 24 hours! Luckily the part was available from the warehouse and our squad was back in service the next day.

Preventative maintenance has been completed on the tornado siren. Chief Byers said he received only a 40-minute notice they were coming; he apologized for the Then-n-Now purchase order. Township siren is still waiting on parts.

The 4th of July was a success! The Police Department did a great job! It would be nice to get community volunteers for these events. The helicopter again this year was a huge draw! The Fire Department ran out of hot dogs w/buns! There were 1,800 to 2,000 in attendance!

Village Administrator James McGee provided their monthly report.

James explained the progress with PC Surgeons; they need to finish installing the Office 365 software and then we can assign new email addresses.

CT Consultants is working on a legal description for the easement on Hinsdale Street storm and they will then forward it to Mr. Reitz.

His department has been flushing hydrants and performing the EPA valve turning program.

There are two pieces of legislation before Council; one for the loan on the skid steer and one for the rear parking lot.

Steve went through the steps to file the EPA application for a composting permit down at the water plant. They ran into a problem; the property we have been using is actually not our property; it belongs to Hiram College! They marked off the College and Ohio Edison properties with cones for Council to see. The Mayor said he spoke with President Hancy about the property, which is landlocked; President Hancy would like more information before making any decision. Steve said we do own a piece of property to the west of the water plant; there is a small grassy area, the rest is all trees. Paul Spencer asked about this property; could the woods be logged out enough to set up a composting facility? It could be something to consider, we would have to cut a driveway in as well. The EPA composting application is on hold until we have Village property large enough for a composting area. James spoke with Kimble; they will pick up bagged leaves @ \$3.00 per bag and branches bundled for \$5.00 per bundle. More discussion followed. Steve can be appointed as our liaison with Hiram College to discuss the properties in question.

Steve said they are working on getting more quotes in for the work needed on various Village buildings.

Dave Smith asked if we ran the proposal for our rear parking lot improvements past our engineers; CT Consultants to see if it is what we need there? Dave has concerns about the heavy vehicles on it and the proposal showed 4" or 5" of asphalt. Steve said that is along with a base. James said we did not run it by them; he could have them look at it. Steve said it is more than we put on our roads, which may be 5.5" total! The parking lot will have base material. James said he spoke with Mr. Dave Dreimiller who had concerns with the later runoff from our parking lot. Steve said it currently already runs off there. James said that area will need to be built up and should remove some or all of that water runoff.

Dave Smith asked whether the ARPA funds could be better spent elsewhere, like for the EMS squad or for storms, catch basin replacements. That is his opinion but would be better spent on infrastructure improvements. James said we do have a lot of heavy equipment running across our rear parking lot; if we do not pave it, it is going to get worse. More discussion on the rear parking lot and past issues. Discussion turned to the water issues with the historical building. Steve said they have not been given any direction on what to do about the water being dumped onto our park area from the historical house. Council has to make a decision on it. Solicitor Tom Reitz spoke about the current lease with the historical society that Council does not enforce either! Solicitor Reitz will look at the documents to prepare for a discussion with Council to address this issue. More general discussion followed.

A motion to have the Village Solicitor, Tom Reitz, look into an enforceable way to handle this issue with the Historical Society building was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

Mayor's July 12, 2022 Report to Council

Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting:

The Planning and Zoning Commission did not meet the first Tuesday of the month as there was no quorum and therefore has been continued until 7 p.m. on Tuesday, July 19, 2022.

July 4th Celebration and Community Activities:

On Sunday July 3rd because there's no longer a 4th of July committee, Hiram Village's Police Department sponsored the children's bike rodeo; Police & Fire conducted the parade and the fireworks were sponsored by the Hiram Fire Association. My thanks, along with the entire Hiram Community is extended to those Departments and especially their Chiefs and all safety force officers.

As an ancient proverb states: "*Yet it is far better to light a candle than to curse the darkness*".

Meeting with Hiram College President David Haney, PhD:

The President stated he was in favor of placing the additional .25% earned income tax levy on the November ballot to assist in the shortfall in the Police Budget since a major portion of the tax increase will be paid by the beneficiaries, that is the Hiram College employees.

Negotiations on the College Safety Contract are ongoing.

Cash Collateral Loan from Middlefield Bank:

Mayor Bertrand:

It was a pleasure to speak with you this morning.

In follow-up to our conversation, we will adjust the interest rate on deposit accounts; the NOW Checking and the Money Market to 0.85%. To address the borrowing needs for the Kubota tractor (\$95,000), we would provide a 48-month Certificate of Deposit at 1.00% and an off-setting loan rate at 3.00%.

You will note that I have copied Kathy Vanek, our Mantua Branch Manager, and Mike Ranttila, our Chief Financial Officer.

Jim Heslop
The Middlefield Banking Company

In 2019 the Village financed the sidewalks, a balance of \$300,000, with a commercial loan of twenty years at 3% APR. Shouldn't this also be a cash collateral loan of 2% APR?

Fiscal Officer, Susan said the sidewalk loan IS a cash collateral loan against our cash on hand at the bank.

Discussion on Village Budget:

The proposal to increase the earned income tax rate by 0.25% to 2.5% has failed to be placed on the November 2nd ballot raising between \$50,000 to \$60,000 annually. In addition, the 50% up to 1% credit for municipal earned income taxes paid by residents to other municipalities and/or school taxes, which would increase the money raised in the projected amount of \$50,000 - \$60K annually, was tabled on 2nd reading. In your Mayor's opinion that proposed Resolution should remain tabled until a full Council membership is present to vote.

Submitted by:
Mayor Lou Bertrand

Chris McCreight would be willing to spearhead the 4th of July committee next year.

A motion to appoint Chris McCreight as head of the 4th of July Committee was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

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

The following reports were provided to Council for this meeting:

June Bank Reconciliation balanced with the UAN with one adjusting factor, a \$0.10 error on a water/sewer receipt, has been corrected and posted to the UAN and is now available for signing by Council & Mayor.

Cash Summary by Fund as of June 30, 2022 was provided to Council today in their packets.

List of bills as of July 8, 2022 was provided to Council by email last week and today in their packets.

Council Regular meeting minutes for June 14, 2022 & the Special meeting minutes of June 28, 2022 were provided to Council by email today & in their 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.

We did receive notification that our second tranche payment from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will be coming in sometime this week.

Susan reported that our 2020-21 audit is complete. The auditors asked whether Council wants to have an exist audit conference to discuss the results of our audit. If so, the auditors would schedule it for Tuesday, July 19th at 6:00 pm. Council members agreed they would like to have an exit audit conference with the auditors. Susan will send an email to all of Council reminding them of this meeting.

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

HIRAM TOWNSHIP REPORT

No Township report tonight.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCES

2022-08: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 182.081 OF THE INCOME TAX REGULATIONS OF THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM. TABLED ON 2nd READING.

RESOLUTIONS

2022-16: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE USE OF AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS BY THE VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR OF \$45,000 TO MAKE NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS TO THE REAR PARKING LOT AREA OF THE ROSSER MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. FAILED ON 6/14/22, RESCINDED AND UP FOR RECONSIDERATION. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. Paul Spencer asked whether Council can amend this to include a review by CT Consultants. Council felt this was a good idea. Steve said he has already texted Tim Lannon with CT and emailed him the proposal copy. With some help from the Village Solicitor, a motion to amend Resolution 2022-16 such that action on this contract is to be preceded by review and approval of the proposed improvement for suitability by the Village Engineer, CT Consultants was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. More discussion followed on details of the proposal. Paul Spencer called the question. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor. A motion to approve as amended as an emergency was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

2022-20: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 2023 PROPOSED BUDGET AND AUTHORIZING THE FISCAL OFFICER TO SUBMIT THE BUDGET TO THE PORTAGE COUNTY AUDITOR. 3rd READING. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

2022-23: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND FISCAL OFFICER TO APPLY FOR A LOAN FROM MIDDLEFIELD BANK, FOR FINANCING OF THE PURCHASE OF A 2022 KUBOTA TRACK LOADER AND ATTACHMENTS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor. A motion to amend the legislation to approve a Certificate of Deposit (CD) to be issued as cash collateral at 1.0% in order for the interest on the loan to be no more than 3.0% was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor. A motion to approve as amended as an emergency was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. McCreight. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Dave Smith asked about the light plant building issues. The Mayor said our Street Department have some bids but are still waiting on more quotes. James and Steve said they are also still waiting on the surveyors; they are really backed up right now. The Mayor would like to use it for storage rental.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

These minutes are pending approval by Council.



Mayor Lou Bertrand

ATTEST:



Fiscal Officer Susan J. Skrovan