

Hiram Village Remote Video Conference Council Meeting

Rosser Municipal Building
11617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

June 9, 2020

The following Members of Council were present online: Mr. Dempsey, Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Hemphill, 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 Asst. VA Steven Schuller.

The following persons were present online: Ed Frato-Sweeney with Hiram College, Stacy Turner; reporter with The Weekly Villager, Brenda Smith, Ann Patella, Tom Bollenbacher and Tim Sommer; baseball coach.

Mayor Bertrand called the regular meeting to order at 7:01 pm. The Mayor asked that all cell phones be silenced. There was a moment of silence recognizing events of our time with the COVID-19 Pandemic followed by the pledge to the flag.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of 5/12/2020. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the proposed amended agenda. A motion to approve the proposed agenda as amended was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

GUEST AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Brenda Smith wanted to read a statement regarding police brutality in the U.S. 1089 people were killed this year! She tasked Council with taking a look at their policies. Police Chief Brian Gregory replied to some of her concerns. Chief Gregory explained what he initiated with the Ohio Collaborative, which is a twelve-person committee made up of Ohio Chiefs of Police and a citizen committee consisting mostly of people of color. We were certified in 2018 in the Ohio Collaborative. Brian has no personal feelings with regard to the banners placed at the intersection; his email was to explain to Council that his job is to protect the Village. Chief addressed Council with further comments regarding his department and how he works to hire all ethnicities and gender.

Tom Bollenbacher addressed Council regarding the newly formed Economic Development Committee. He would like to create a vision; not try for a perfect plan. He is willing to be the chair. The committee members will be Tom, Paul Spencer, Rob Dempsey and Ann Haynam. The terms will be staggered two and three-year terms. Paul spoke about following procedures with open meetings, public notices and minutes. Tom spoke about his ideas to enhance our community and felt their mission will be to "polish our diamond in the rough!" Dave Smith is in favor. Village Solicitor Tom Reitz clarified that if it is a "Blue Ribbon" committee, the Mayor can set it up. If the committee wants some teeth, then legislation will need to establish the committee. The Mayor felt it should be legislative and they should work with Garrettsville and even Mantua. This area is not anticipated for high growth. It has a great potential! Paul discussed setting up their initial meeting on Tuesday, June 23 in Council chambers. It will begin at 7:00 pm. Susan will advertise for the meeting. Solicitor Tom Reitz said the first order of business would be the structure of your organization.

Ann Patella, former Fiscal Officer, brought before Council that she has been in touch with the Village Administrator, Fiscal Officer and the Mayor. It is regarding her letter about the shortage of red geraniums for our veterans at Fairview Cemetery! She came to see if anything is being done to remedy this situation. James explained what had happened with the flowers and the need for an additional 87 plants. Ann said she can have volunteers to plant the flowers and will help to locate any missing veterans' graves. Dave Smith asked Ann what her timeframe is to plant. She will also need a plot plan for the cemetery. James will make sure she has one. Ann said as long as James lets her know when they are coming, she will make the arrangements. The Mayor said he is sensitive to this issue being a veteran's son, a veteran's father and grandfather. The Mayor added the Village used to have the Boy Scouts, Brownies troops and others plant the flowers. Fiscal Officer Susan wanted to let Ann know that we did take her list and Wendelin, Assistant Fiscal Officer, is matching it to the list that we use every year.

We do take markers out when volunteers place the flags on the veterans' graves.

Tim Sommer, Softball Coach, is requesting permission to begin using the ballfield. Two teams use that field. The Mayor said we must have an insurance certificate (ACORD) on file. Solicitor, Tom Reitz, spoke about the Ohio Health Directive issued on May 29 regarding playgrounds, ballfields. He will take a closer look at this and notify Council. Chris Szell has concerns with their ability to "social distance". He would like to know what the configuration would be and how they will handle the limited parking. There was discussion by Council members. Tom Reitz talked about spacing out the parking. Dave Smith felt the Village should post the guidelines. Tom Reitz felt he could provide a "release" for the ballfield users to sign. This release would be to cover the COVID-19 and would need to be signed by participants and/or their parents. Tom Reitz will send the form to Mr. Sommer.

Ed Frato-Sweeney indicated a small delay in the Hiram Community Trust grant reviews. They should have the reviews by next week. There were many applicants. Ed also wanted to note regarding the black lives matter movement; students and Police need to work together. Ed wanted to thank James & Steve last week for the water situation/boil alert and how they handled the situation!

Village Administrator, James McGee, read an email he received from Matt Sorrick regarding traffic on S.R. 305, the speed and engine brakes! He offered several corrective actions including eliminating the use of engine brakes within Village limits by ordinance, making the intersection a four-way stop rather than a streetlight, and/or reducing the speed limit to 25 MPH. Police Chief Brian Gregory responded to prohibiting the use of engine brakes, which has been discussed several times in the past. He is more than happy to see that passed by Council. He does have concerns with speeders; during this COVID-19, speeders know that law enforcement has not been out there. He has not issue with a four-way stop other than for 18-wheelers in the winter who may not be able to make it up and over the hill. ODOT wants to see statistics there, a death. I hope that we do not have one there! Chris certainly agrees with Mr. Sorrick, especially with a reduction in the speed to 25 MPH. Others agreed with speeding being an issue. Dave would support legislation to eliminate the use of Jake brakes. Paul explained the importance of Jake brakes and is opposed to eliminating their use by large vehicles. Steve Schuller asked the Solicitor if the Village has the right to change the speed limit on a state route. Solicitor Tom Reitz said a reduction in speed typically could only be accomplished with approval from the Ohio Department of Transportation. You do not necessarily need a death to occur; however, you will need an engineer's study done. Frank agreed with a speed reduction.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

***Police Chief Brian Gregory provided their monthly report.** Chief Gregory reported 285 traffic offenses for May with 20 traffic stops. His department has had some suspicious activities with the majority coming from the Bancroft apartments.

There are no event dates set for this year including Shop with a Cop.

Three new reserve officers have been sworn in.

His department is stocked for PPE/cleaning supplies for the next round of COVID-19.

Chief Gregory apologized if he sounded harsh or short with Mrs. Smith. The Chief takes pride in his training!

***Fire Chief Bill Byers provided their monthly report for tonight.** Chief Byers indicated they emailed the monthly report as well.

Paul Spencer asked if there are any cameras on EMT's or in the squad. The Chief said no. There are cameras on the building as well as in the fire bays. Paul felt, with everything going on, it may be a good idea to have them in the squads. Bill said he would check with our Solicitor, Tom Reitz, regarding the HIPPA laws and will look into other communities that may have them already, such as Green.

***Village Administrator James McGee presented the monthly water/sewer report.** James McGee reported cameras have been installed and are operational for the parks and the water/sewer plants.

His department has been working on two water breaks; James and Steve were here 36 hours straight! Utility Contracting Inc. was called in for emergency repairs. James is looking into having a Village wide emergency communications system.

The Water Department has been flushing hydrants. Our water meter project is on hold due to the COVID-19.

The water tower is still moving forward; plans have been submitted by C.T. Consultants to the Ohio EPA for approval. It can then go out to bid. It usually takes about a month.

James reported a water line issue at Mrs. Chenchik's home on Wrenwood Drive. Her water is not drinkable and they cannot wash their clothes in it. The line belongs to the Village. James will have some figures at the Finance meeting.

HIRAM MAYOR LOU BERTRAND'S JUNE 9, 2020 REPORT TO COUNCIL

CORONAVIRUS aka COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

As reported in the May 2020 Council meeting, the World continues in the midst of the worst Pandemic experienced in over 102 years since the Pandemic of 1918-1919. In Ohio, at least 2,377 people have died of the novel coronavirus and at least 38,476 have been infected, according to state figures Sunday, June 7, 2020. Ohio Dept. of Health reports: hospital admissions: 6,550|ICU: 1,668. Median age: 49 | Sex-Males 52%, Females 47%. Portage County: 341 reported cases and 57 Deaths. From the CDC: Based on death certificate data, the percentage of deaths attributed to pneumonia, influenza or COVID-19 (PIC) decreased from 13.7% during week 21 to 8.4% during week 22 but remained above baseline. This is the sixth (6) week of a declining percentage of deaths due to PIC, but this percentage may change as more death certificates are processed, particularly for recent weeks.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Council should consider an ordinance creating an Economic Development Committee. Suggested meetings would be monthly on Wednesday night. Thomas Bollenbacher is willing to chair unless someone else would volunteer. Initial members: Tom Bollenbacher, Rob Dempsey, Paul Spencer and Anne Haynam. Committee needs input from community members on an agreed vision. Question: Should the Village put in place the zoning and incentives necessary to commercially market various projects. Hiram Village should make significant progress creating new business and additional income streams. Further, in the future the Village may want to engage an architect or urban planner. In addition, a commercial broker could be retained to assist the Village in acquiring new businesses that will locate and/or invest in Hiram Village.

Mr. Bollenbacher voiced a few initial ideas: Hiram College's Old President's House could be a destination gourmet restaurant (partnership with college). Industrial Park (partnership with college) could be expanded with northeastern land for new tenants. Zone and gradually build a small "Restaurant Row". A side street like Brown or Bancroft could work. Rethink what downtown could be. With Hiram College partnership along with Windstream, Post Office and other owners, space could be planned for mix use development and Hiram could have a real downtown.

PLANNING & ZONING:

The Commission did not meet on Tuesday, June 2, 2020, as there was no business and/or zoning applications to consider and/or approve.

NEW REVISED VILLAGE WEBSITE:

If you have not already, take a look at Hiram Village's new and improved website. Thanks and praises to Council Member Chris Szell.

Submitted by:
MAYOR LOU BERTRAND

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

The following reports were provided to Council for this meeting:

The May Bank Reconciliation balanced with the UAN system with no adjusting factors and is available for signing by Mayor & Council.

Cash Summary by Fund as of May 31, 2020 was provided in Council packets.

The list of bills as of June 5, 2020 was provided in Council packets.

Council Regular meeting minutes for May 12, 2020 were provided in Council packets.

R.I.T.A. income tax receipts YTD report was provided in Council packets.

The Comparison of Budgeted and Appropriated YTD report was provided in Council packets.

A motion to approve the Fiscal Officer's report for May was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to approve the bank reconciliation was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to approve the bills list was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Susan provided Council with an update for the special Fire/EMS audit analysis and meeting with Hiram Township. She received a spreadsheet from the auditor, which was reviewed by the Fire Chief and Fiscal Officer. They do not agree with all of the figures in her first draft analysis and have placed a call to her. Susan indicated the Township wanted to hold a joint meeting next Tuesday, however, we do not have the final figures yet and Council should review these numbers prior to a joint meeting. We may be able to have a joint meeting on June 30 pending a final analysis from the auditor who also wishes to be present for that meeting. Solicitor Tom Reitz spoke regarding the Director of Health's restrictions that are still in place for meetings. You must maintain six-feet apart and not have more than 10 people. Mayor Bertrand has concerns with a live meeting at this time; you cannot control the number of attendees. Fire Chief Bill Byers spoke about digesting the numbers with Council once we receive a final report. Her numbers do not provide a clear, accurate picture at this time. The Mayor felt we need a final finished product before we all meet. Council should leave it up to the Fiscal Officer and Fire Chief to iron out the details first. Moreover, the auditor should attend the final review.

A motion to authorize the Fiscal Officer and Fire Chief to inform the Hiram Township Trustees that a post audit meeting is acceptable and desired as soon as the Health Department's regulations permit an open and full meeting with the public available to observe was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

The Mayor brought up the need to appoint a Records Custodian for the Village. The Assistant Fiscal Officer, Wendelin was asked and she is willing to represent the Village in this capacity.

A motion to appoint Wendelin Taylor as Records Custodian effective immediately was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

HIRAM TOWNSHIP REPORT

Debra Blake, Hiram Township Trustee could not make the meeting tonight. She does not have the ability to Zoom.

A motion to have Wendelin Taylor, as the Village's Records Custodian, attend the Open Meetings Records seminar on behalf of all newly elected Village officials was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCES

2020-10: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODIFIED PARKING FINES IN THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM. 3rd READING. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 5-1 in favor with a no vote from Mr. Smith.

2020-13: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS IN THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FUND (4901) FOR FIRE/EMS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. 1st READING.

2020-14: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS IN THE WATER OPERATING FUND (5101) 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 6-0 in favor. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

RESOLUTIONS

2020-06: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SPECIFIC ENUMERATED TRANSFERS BY THE FISCAL OFFICER BETWEEN FUNDS OF THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND. 3rd READING. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

2020-15: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 2021 PROPOSED BUDGET AND AUTHORIZING THE FISCAL OFFICER TO SUBMIT THE BUDGET TO THE PORTAGE COUNTY AUDITOR. 1st READING.

2020-16: A RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THE EFFECT OF THE COVID-19 STRAIN OF THE CORONAVIRUS ON THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM, AUTHORIZING AND RATIFYING ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS TO APPLY FOR CARES RELIEF FUNDS, DIRECTING COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Smith. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

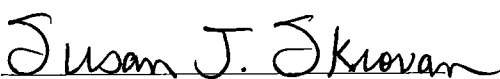
A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Hemphill and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.

These minutes are pending approval by Council.



Mayor Lou Bertrand

ATTEST:



Fiscal Officer Susan J. Skrovan