

**Village of Hiram  
Finance/Safety Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

**March 28, 2023**

**Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Szell called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm

**Committee Members Present:** Lou Bertrand, Mayor  
Chris Szell, Chair  
David Smith, Councilman  
Paul Spencer, Councilman

**Committee Members Absent:** Beth Greenwood, Councilperson  
Susan Skrovan-DeYoung, Fiscal Officer

**Hiram Officials Present:** Brian Gregory, Police Chief  
Bill Byers, Fire Chief at 6:30 pm  
Jason Groselle, Asst. Fire Chief  
James McGee, Village Administrator  
Steven Schuller, Asst. Village Administrator

**Official Recorder:** Wendelin Taylor, Asst. Fiscal Officer

**Others:** Frank Hemphill, Councilman

**Minutes:** A motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 28, 2023 as presented was made by David Smith with a second by Paul Spencer. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

**Agenda:** Chris Szell asked for a motion to approve the agenda. A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Paul Spencer with a second from David Smith. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

**Guests/Public:** None.

**Department Updates:**

**Police Department:** Chief Gregory reported the pancake breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, April 15, 2023 at Dix Dining Hall, 9:00 to 1:00 p.m. The car show is scheduled for June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Hiram Police website is up and running again.

Independence Day events: Chris McCreight is doing a good job organizing the events. Unfortunately, he does not realize the situation the police department is in. To cover events, officers must be scheduled and paid for each shift. Currently our police department does not have the funds or personnel to cover additional shifts. Chief Gregory will reach out to Mr. McCreight to discuss the issue. Assistant Fire Chief Groselle state the fireworks would take place on July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

College 911 calls: In the last week and a half there have been eight (8) emergency 911 calls. Only 4 of those calls were legitimate emergency calls. The remainder of the calls were false or "swat" calls, which is a call that is fake. The college is aware of the issue; their security department is experiencing the same problem.

Devin Brown has picked up his final check.

Mr. Smith reported that a white van has been parked in the public parking lot at the Hike & Bike Trail head. It has been there for weeks. Chief Gregory said that van belongs to AVI and they have parked there for years. The location is convenient to the dining hall and allows them to load and unload without parking on Winrock. Chief Gregory said he would speak to AVI and campus security if necessary.

Mr. Szell asked if the lot should be posted as public parking. Mayor Bertrand responded the Town Hall meeting regarding the parking legislation has been rescheduled for Wednesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at Hiram College Koritansky Hall.

**Fire Department:** Bill Byers stated a change in EMS collections. Life Force will now be processing payments from the various insurance companies. In recent months many of the health insurance providers are issuing what is basically a paper debit card for payment which our bank will not accept for processing. Life Force can process these payments. One insurance company in particular will charge us as the payee a fee of up to \$5.00 for each payment issued to direct deposit their payments into our account and they will charge the patient as payer \$5.00. Bill has had a discussion with Community EMS which has Life Force do billing as well as payment receipts. Wendelin suggested Council may want to introduce a resolution to allow the Fire Department to move forward.

**Village Adm/Utilities:** James shared an update on the computer system/email upgrade. PC Surgeons provided a written update on their progress to date. James made that list available to the Committee. James will keep everyone updated as to when emails will switch to Microsoft 365. PC Surgeons is following Department of Homeland Security guidelines. The upgrades to our system will enable us to accept utility and traffic fine payments online.

Residents on Route 82 are periodically experiencing rust colored water. James and Steve stated that well #3 is shutting down due to the power brown outs that have been occurring. They are working on the problem.

Mr. Smith asked when the hydrant located outside the fire bays will be installed. James stated the service department has been overwhelmed with projects lately and the hydrant is on the list of things to get done. James will move it up in priority.

**Mayor:** Mayor Bertrand read a letter from NOPEC that has circulated among program participants in the Village. NOPEC has been re-certified through the PUCO. The letter also detailed electricity rates and the plan to reduce their rates in June.

**Fiscal Officer/Admin:** Wendelin reported on the guaranteed interest rate of 4.65% being provided to the Village by Middlefield Bank for the next six (6) months. The Mayor and Mr. Szell researched other investment opportunities and had provided the Committee and Council with information on a STAR Ohio account through the State of Ohio Treasurer's office. At the time Middlefield Bank was providing the Village with a rate of 2%. Susan contacted Middlefield Bank to negotiate a new rate and we now have a signed letter guaranteeing the new rate.

**Bills List:** The bills list was reviewed. There were no questions. A motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. Spencer with a second from Mr. Smith. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

**New Business:** Mr. Szell asked if anyone had any additional questions regarding the lodging tax legislation. It will be on third read at the next Council meeting. The 3% additional revenue will be added to the general fund.

Mr. Szell provided information on the hair salon (11613 Garfield). He asked the question as to whether the Village should sell the building. We have replaced the HVAC system and will be redoing the roof soon. Steve stated the salon is paying \$7500 annually in rent and we spent \$12000 in repairs last year. Steve has requested McCumbers Brady Realty provide a restricted appraisal on the property. Mr. Spencer would like the Village to keep the building. Mr. Szell provided a map showing the property lines and it appears that the property line on the south side of the lot goes through a portion of the neighbor's garage. Mr. Szell would like to give the idea of selling the building some serious thought.

Light plant: Mr. Szell mentioned there will be structural engineer coming out to inspect the old light plant.

Village employee health insurance: Wendelin provided the Committee with information on the pending renewal. It was decided to leave that for discussion by Council.

**Unfinished Business:** Catch basins clean out: Mr. Szell agrees that the storm water catch basins need to be cleaned out but he worries about the cost of doing that at this time. Mr. Szell suggested the Committee give the service department some direction as to what the budget for the clean out should be.

6894 Wakefield Rd: Bill asked the Committee if they all received the email forwarded by him regarding the house owned by Leonard Hanlon. Bill received that email from a new home Village owner Mr. Fabich. Mr. Spencer explained the building is in a state of disrepair, and the owner, Mr. Hanlon, has been sent letters requesting he come to a Zoning meeting to discuss his plan for the property. Bill stated that the basement is open giving access to any one and is a danger and nuisance to the public. Mr. Hanlon has failed to appear at a Planning and Zoning meeting. A short discussion followed.

Mr. Smith inquired about a new business in town. Mr. Spencer stated Dave Dreimiller is moving his digital graphics business from its current location in Willoughby to the unused education portion of the Hiram Church office building. The property is zoned commercial and the usage of the building will not be changed.

**EMS Collections:** Bill reported the State Attorney General will continue to collect delinquent monies due to the Fire Department for EMS services. There was nothing new to report.

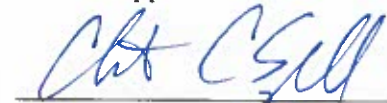
The next Finance/Safety Committee meeting is scheduled for April 25, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Paul Spencer with a second from David Smith. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
Wendelin Taylor, Asst. Fiscal Officer

Approved:

  
Chris Szell, Finance Chairman