

Hiram Village Council Meeting

Rosser Municipal Building
11617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

May 9, 2023

The following Members of Council were present: Mr. Szell, Mrs. Greenwood, Mr. Hemphill, Mr. McCreight, Mr. Smith arrived at 7:15 pm and Mr. Spencer. The following were also present: Mayor Lou Bertrand, Village Solicitor Tom Reitz, Fiscal Officer Susan Skrovan-DeYoung, Police Chief Brian Gregory, Fire Chief Bill Byers, Village Administrator James McGee and Asst. Village Administrator Steve Schuller.

The following persons were present: Mr. & Mrs. Robert Summers and Joanne Sawyer.

Mayor Bertrand called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Mayor asked that all cell phones be silenced. There was a moment of silence followed by the pledge to the flag.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of April 11, 2023. 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 as presented. A motion to approve the proposed agenda as submitted was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

GUEST AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Summers had sent out an email to all of Council requesting a 30-day notice prior to beginning any construction projects. She is asking for the Village to be a good neighbor. Mrs. Summers had a question about the pit that was dug for the storm sewers. She does not know where that water is going to flow; it is ponding and doesn't go anywhere. James said the construction co. came across a gas main during excavation where a storm catch basin will go; Dominion Energy has been notified and asked to move their line. James explained his contact with Mrs. Summers. James said they were not working on the Summers property; James reached out to them as a courtesy to move items located in the construction zone. James said the notice to proceed was for May 29th; the contractor had a project of theirs get moved so they started ours earlier than anticipated and just showed up. Mrs. Summers is concerned about standing water. She believes they have a ditch that goes nowhere! Mr. Summers said she did not understand the ditch; it is a pool for mosquitos! James said that is to take the water away from their property. There is a storm that goes across their property that goes into a ditch in the back; we are adding another ditch to bring the water from the road where it floods to that back ditch. Mrs. Summers said the runoff ditch is higher than the catch basin. James said he has not been over there yet to see it. More discussion on the engineer's design and water drainage issues. She also said two trees that were cut down were rare! Steve Schuller said the property owner where those trees were located was happy with having the trees cut down. The Summers were notified the day before work was to begin that they had items stacked on the neighboring property where the work was to commence. This was due to the contractor showing up a month early! Joanne Sawyer asked if they have to move the gas line; will that mean a disruption in gas service? Steve said he has no idea until they come out and tell us what they have to do. James said they have not said if they will move their line; we may have to move ours. Steve said residents will be notified as soon as we know. James said if the gas main gets moved or cut, there will be an interruption in service. Chris McCreight asked James and Steve what the general process is to notify residents of an upcoming project. Steve said every project they have done, they have gone door to door with flyers. We have made sure to communicate so no one is surprised. David Smith said contractors are supposed to notify the Village Administrator before they begin a project, especially if it is very early. He believes we have legislation in place for this process. Paul Spencer apologized to the Summers for not having sufficient notice; our crew were also not given sufficient notification. The survey on the property was done last year and then they came out last week to mark the right of ways on the property for the easements.

Joanne Sawyer said she was here to hear about the parking.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

**Police Chief Brian Gregory provided their monthly report.*

There were 199 offense reports for the month of April, 38 traffic stops and 20 citations. These numbers will remain low with the reduction in staff and with their current budget.

The Annual Car Show has been rescheduled for Saturday, August 5th from 9-1 pm on Hayden & Dean Streets.

Cops and Kids fishing day is set for Saturday, August 19th from 9-1 pm at Camp Asbury.

The Click-it or Ticket campaign was cancelled for this year.

Brian has applied for the Hiram Community Trust grant for a portable radar unit as well as an application to the Bulletproof Vest grant program.

Hiram College commencement is this Saturday, May 13th. They do expect an uptick in traffic; officers will be present.

Brian brought up a question from one of the AVI staff at Hiram College who wanted to know about smoking on the hike & bike trail. The College is a non-smoking college. Brian asked Chris McCreight if the hike & bike trail is included as one of our parks in our no smoking legislation? Chris McCreight said yes, it is part of our park system. AVI needs to address this with the College as to how they remedy it.

Brian wanted everyone to be aware that May is motorcycles safety month; motorcycles are on the roads again and that traffic is getting heavy! 28% of motorcycle crashes were fatalities!

Beth Greenwood asked Brian about the size of the portable radar units. Brian explained they are about the size of a binder; they go up in a matter of minutes on poles. They are run with batteries and monitor speed only. His goal is to have one at all four intersections. Brian added with regard to speed; Brian gave Councilman McCreight the study he conducted within the Village on speed. We had a high speed of 60 mph with the average being 32 mph.

**Fire Chief Bill Byers provided their monthly report.*

Bill received an email two hours ago from Hiram College requesting a quote from them for EMS service for their sporting events in the fall. He will discuss this further with the Mayor and with the Finance committee. Bill said they normally bring in extra staffing to cover the College events so they are here for our Village and Township residents. Bill said the College did reach out to him to contract for the squad this Saturday during commencement which used to be covered by the contract. His department is not able to fulfill their request due to manpower and staffing; Bill got back with them.

Paul Spencer asked the Fire Chief if we are doing any EMS billing for mutual aid? Bill said bills have gone out but nothing has been received. Paul asked if we gave them 30 or 60 days? Bill said he could not remember what the ordinance said. Susan thought we were giving them 30 days; we have not heard anything. Usually it is a wash because we give mutual aid and sometimes surrounding communities provide us with mutual aid. Susan said no, we have not received any actual payments from the billing. Bill said as he recalls, Community EMS and Troy Fire received bills. Susan said yes. Bill said he will get with Wendelin to see what we have sent out and bring it to the Finance meeting.

Village Administrator James McGee provided their monthly report.

James reported they are preparing the cemetery for Memorial Day as well as putting up flags around the Village.

The new roofs on the hair salon building and the wastewater plant have been completed. We have a balance due of \$12,000 on the roofs; James is asking Council for a motion to authorize payment since they did not make the bill's list.

Paul asked what happened with the light plant property? James said that was put on hold because we are going to try and sell that property. The Mayor will take the check and deliver it to the contractor. Paul asked if it would become a Then-n-Now purchase order? Susan said no, the purchase orders were already approved by Council; Council approved paying them a down payment last month to order the materials. This is the balance due to be paid on the projects.

A motion to pay Jim Litsinger Roofing the balance of the bill owed by the Village of \$12,000.00 was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Dave Smith asked about the status of the water tower? James said the last they heard, they have plans to start clearing ground; the tower should be completed before the snow falls.

Mayor's May 9, 2023 Report to Council

PLANNING & ZONING:

- Your Mayor attended the Portage County Comprehensive Plan meeting on April 20, 2023 at the New Center, Cook Hall, Northeast Ohio Medical University Campus at 4211 SR 44, Rootstown, OH 44272 and received a copy of the draft document.
- The Plum Ridge property was recently sold at Sheriff's Sale for \$100,000.
- The Village and College are diligently engaged in assisting and planning for the development and sale of the Dodge Court properties. It has been suggested that further college property could be developed into a subdivision/allotment for residential use.

LIGHT PLANT PROPERTY:

The "Old Light Plant" property is to be advertised for bids and sold. Our learned legal counsel has prepared an Ingress and Egress Easement to and from the college property to access Wakefield-SR 305. I recently emailed this easement document to President Haney for his approval and signature. The Mayor said he did take an engineer down to look at this property; he is very interested in purchasing this property! Paul asked whether we have exhibit A for the legislation for this easement? We are waiting for the survey. Solicitor Tom Reitz said what we are actually waiting for are copies of the deeds for these properties which he requested from the Portage County Recorder's office. The Village property is clearly delineated on the County tax maps; Tom does not believe we need to have it surveyed. The copies of the deeds will come in the mail! Paul said he called the Auditor's office and the tax record map department who told him they would send him a copy of any deed! Tom said he would like to talk with Paul after the meeting. Tom told Council that without having to pay for a survey, the legal description for this property as exhibit A, is on the way.

LEASE WITH COLLEGE:

The proposed 99-year lease with the college for property to deposit Village compost has been prepared and signed by President Haney on behalf of Hiram College.

MEMORIAL DAY:

As previously announced, the keynote speaker for the Hiram Memorial Day service LTC Barnard S. Kemter (USA, Retired). Col. Kemter is noted for his 2022 Memorial Day speech in Hudson, Ohio where his microphone was silenced, because certain members of the Hudson American Legion were offended by the subject of his speech. 11th District Court Appeals Hon. Judge John Eklund and State Representative Hon. Gail Pavliga are participating together with Rev. David Gray of the First Baptist Church of Garrettsville. 90 yr. old Hiram College Music Professor Emerita Damaris Peters Pike has been invited to sing "The National Anthem" accompanied by the Crestwood Scarlet Guard. A public reception at Koritansky Hall will follow.

Submitted by:

Mayor Lou Bertrand

Chris Szell noted that the new Portage County Comprehensive Plan is on the Village's website through a link.

Chris Szell asked if we have the original signed lease for the 99-years for the one acre? James took it over to the College to have it signed and brought it back to Susan. Susan said yes, we have that but it still needs to be recorded. We need the legal description first. Susan did not pay for that lease yet; we need to wait until we get the legal description.

***The Fiscal Officer Report: Susan Skrovan-DeYoung presented the monthly financial reports for April.**

The following reports were provided to Council for this meeting:

April Bank Reconciliation balanced with the UAN with no adjusting factors, has been posted to the UAN and is now available for signing by Council & Mayor.

Cash Summary by Fund as of April 30, 2023 was provided last Friday by email & in their packets.

List of bills as of May 5, 2023 was provided to Council last Friday by email & in their packets.

Council Regular meeting minutes of April 11, 2023 was provided to Council last Friday by email & in their packets.

UAN Municipal Income Tax receipts YTD report was provided to Council last Friday by email & in their packets.

Comparison of Budgeted & Appropriated YTD report was provided to Council last Friday by email & in their packets.

Susan did remind Council that she will be starting to work on the 2024 Tax Budget for the Village which following a public hearing, will need to be passed and down to Portage County no later than July 20th. She is waiting for the Certificate of Estimated Resources from the County.

A motion to approve the Fiscal Officer's reports for April as submitted was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

The bill's list was reviewed. A motion to approve the bill's list as submitted was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

HIRAM TOWNSHIP REPORT

No Township report tonight.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCES

2022-20: AN ORDINANCE ENACTING SECTION 351.17 OF THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM

CODIFIED ORDINANCES TO ESTABLISH PARKING PERMIT PROVISIONS. TABLED ON 2nd

READING. A motion to remove Ordinance 2022-20 from the table was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. Chris Szell said the Town Hall meeting on April 19th had a low attendance; 23-24 people which included some of the elected officials and staff! Comments made at that meeting were generally not in favor of parking permits. Chris said he explained that this idea was brought up to help with Village revenue; we do not have a parking problem. He is not convinced, at this time, that we should dismiss it. Theresa with Pay-by-Phone gave a presentation. Chris Szell said he will summarize the comments and present them at our next finance meeting. The legislation may need additional edits. Chris spoke about the College maybe seeing some benefit to this proposal and possibly working together with the College. Beth Greenwood agreed with Chris' summary; the general sentiment was not in favor of paid parking. Joanne Sawyer said she was out of town and could not attend the Town Hall meeting. She did send a letter to all of Council and the Mayor. Joanne said she hopes it can be resolved amicably. She wanted to know whether the parking permits would apply to the residential areas in the Village? Chris Szell said any 'striped' area marked will have to pay. More discussion. Chris felt that residential could be discounted or even excluded from the parking fees. Chris said the angle they are going toward; do we continue to tax our residents or find ways to generate revenue with visitors to our Village.

Paul spoke about the willingness of Council to work with residents but there is revenue out there that we could bring in versus raising our income tax! The Mayor spoke about our police services and the hours our Police Chief is putting in to cover shifts. We lost the contract with Hiram College which in 2011, was \$75,000 per year! We do not have that revenue anymore. We have already raised the income tax by .25%. It is a revenue problem and a safety issue with our Police Department! Chris said economic development is a long-term play. We are trying to look at any options that we have to increase revenue! A motion to table Ordinance 2022-20 was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mrs. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

2023-09: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE PERMANENT REVENUE AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE HIRAM ENERGY SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (ESID) FUND 9904 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Spencer 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. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

2023-10: AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE RECODIFICATION, EDITING AND INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ORDINANCES AS PART OF THE VARIOUS COMPONENT CODES OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF HIRAM, OHIO. 1st READING. Solicitor Tom Reitz asked that Council allow him to complete his review of the updates to our codified ordinances before this is passed.

2023-11: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ADVERTISING FOR SALE OF VILLAGE-OWNED PROPERTY TO HIGHEST BIDDER 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. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. Dave asked where the exhibit "A" is? Solicitor Tom Reitz said the exhibit A is the legal description which we are waiting for. Tom has a copy of the County's property description and could present that as exhibit "A". Paul asked, do we have an "Enterprise Zone"? Solicitor Reitz said we do not! Chris Szell asked what happens if we get bids less than what we are asking of \$100,000, does it come back to Council? Solicitor Tom Reitz said he was simply putting in a place holder; if there is a better dollar amount, please amend it. The Mayor said the appraised value according to the County is \$51,600. Paul would like to see what the bids come in at and then Council can always amend at that point. Paul Spencer called for the question. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

RESOLUTIONS

2023-09: 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. 2nd READING.

2023-11: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM TO USE THE STANDARD ALLOWANCE FOR THE LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUND AS AUTHORIZED BY THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules 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 as an emergency was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Spencer. Chris asked the Fiscal Officer how much of the original \$121,000 is left in the ARPA funds? Susan said approximately \$31,600. Chris Szell called for the question. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

2023-12: A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING AN EASEMENT FROM HIRAM COLLEGE FOR NON-EXCLUSIVE USE OF REAL ESTATE LOCATED NEAR THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM "OLD LIGHT PLANT" ON TERRIER DRIVE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mrs. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 5-0-1 in favor with an abstention from Mr. McCreight. A motion to approve as an emergency was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mrs. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 5-0-1 in favor with an abstention from Mr. McCreight.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Paul Spencer provided an update on the Planning & Zoning Commission's efforts on blighted properties.

The Ruby Brown property is making progress, given her situation, and keeping us informed.

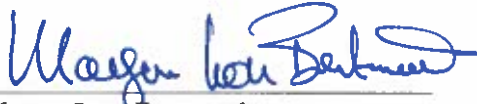
The Couch property is reluctant to take any action on repairs! The Portage County Building Department was out to the property; many things need to be addressed. Paul said Tom Reitz has been in contact with their attorney. Tom said they are playing it very cagy! They seem to have a different end game than the Village. Your Zoning Inspector sent a letter indicating what the building department showed as needed to be addressed and a deadline of 30 days for a plan of action. We are within that 30-day period now. More discussion. One structure on the property, the PC Building Inspector would not enter and stated it needs to be razed!

Paul noted that on the Hanlon property, there have been some updates to the property. There has been no successful contact with the owner. The Village may have to push for legal action to stop all work on the property since there are no permits issued for any of the work going on!

Paul said the Dodge Court property had an informal meeting with their attorney and Tom to discuss the issues with it. We need to get a request from them to have it rezoned if that is what they want to do.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.

These minutes are pending approval by Council.



Mayor Lou Bertrand

ATTEST:



Fiscal Officer, Susan J. Skrovan-DeYoung