

Hiram Village Council Meeting

Rosser Municipal Building
11617 Garfield Road, Hiram, Ohio 44234

October 12, 2021

The following Members of Council were present: Mr. Dempsey, Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Hemphill, Mr. Smith, Mr. Spencer (arrived at 7:03 pm) 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 and Assistant Village Administrator Steve Schuller.

The following persons were present: Stacy Turner with The Villager.

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 9/14/2021. A motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented was made by Mr. Greenwood and seconded by Mr. Smith. 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. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 5-0 in favor.

GUEST AND PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

***Police Chief Brian Gregory provided their monthly report.** There were 345 offense reports for September. Traffic stops are down again this month. There were 19 criminal arrests. He is working on some past projects.

The Mayor asked the Police Chief what his thoughts were on when to hold Halloween and what safety issues there may be. Chief Gregory said he would prefer Saturday October 30 from 4-6 pm. Sunday's are not good because people are observing the sabbath. He would like the time moved to 4-6 pm in order to have trick-or-treat during daylight hours. The Mayor noted the number 1 month for vehicular/pedestrian accidents nationwide is October!

Chris Szell asked the Police Chief about his report regarding suspicious activity versus just activity for the College. Brian Gregory explained the suspicious activity they are being cited/arrested; activity is more like vehicle lockouts.

***Fire Chief Bill Byers provided their monthly report.** The report was sent out by email to everyone. His department just completed the pump testing today for the vehicles.

The Mayor asked the Fire Chief what his thoughts were on when to hold Halloween. Chief Byers said the Fire Association would like to go ahead with a Halloween event and he would again ask the Village Council to approve a donation. Chris Szell and Dave Smith would both agree as long as it was a drive-thru event! They do not wish to see our personnel put in a position where they could get ill.

A motion to donate \$300.00 from the Village of Hiram to the Hiram Fire Association for a public Halloween event was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Chief Bill Byers will take Council's concern back to the Association.

***Asst. Village Administrator Steven Schuller presented the monthly report.** James is out ill.

Steve reported on the water meter project; work is to begin Monday, October 18th. Paul Spencer was concerned with liability and asked when the company replacing the water meters encounters lead pipes; who will cover the expense? Steve explained there is a contingency in place to do repairs if there are leaks; the contractor and sub-contractors are licensed and bonded. Dave Smith thought we do not have any lead pipe in our system? Steve said the Village does not, however, we do not know what the homeowners may have. Our system goes to the curb valve; the line through the homeowner's property to the meter belongs to the property owner. Steve added regarding the RF frequency coming from the water meters, it is all outside of the house. The frequency will go off every hour, however, the signal is so small, your cell phone gives off 50 times the RF frequency of the meters. We have 285 total meters with 50 of them at Hiram College.

The Street Department has been working on the Hinsdale Street storm replacement.

There is an issue with the sump pump which drains from the basement of the Historical Society house; they received a quote to repair the drainage system for \$15,000! Currently it is being dumped out into our park; it is too wet to mow. Solicitor Tom Reitz wants any documentation showing ownership of the Historic house and the property. Tom thought it was a very unusual arrangement for the property to be owned by the Village and the house to be owned by the Historical Society. Chris Szell looked on the Portage County property taxes and found that the property is indeed belonging to the Village. Paul believed this arrangement dates back to 1974.

Regarding the recycling contract; the Portage County recycling contract will expire on December 15, 2021.

Steve handed out their first Village Administrator's monthly report providing updates on projects.

The sidewalk project with Alba Contractors; we have not heard anything back from them. Tom Reitz will apply some pressure.

Chris Szell asked about the telephone poles, when we might see some of them disappear? Steve said First Energy will remove the old poles once the other public utilities have moved their lines. This could take a year!

Chris asked if we were almost done with PC Surgeons? Council wanted Steve or James to ask them how to port our old emails to the new .gov emails.

Steve asked about using the ARPA funds for the storm sewer work they are doing including on Hinsdale? Council discussed the options and funds available. This would be an allowable expense for the ARPA funds.

A motion to set aside \$15,000 of the ARPA funds for storm sewers was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

Mayor's October 12, 2021 Report to Council

Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting:

There was no Planning & Zoning Commission meeting Tuesday, October 5, 2021 as no business was on the Commission's agenda.

The CDC COVID-19 Report as of Today:

The best way to prevent post-COVID conditions is by getting vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as you can. CDC recommends all people ages 12 years and older get vaccinated, including people who have had COVID-19 or post-COVID conditions.

The COVID-19 vaccines recommended for use in the United States continue to offer protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

If you are not yet fully vaccinated, you can reduce the risk of long-term complications by taking steps to protect yourself and others from getting COVID-19. To find a vaccine provider near you, visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or your state or local public health department website.

Ohio Department of Health reports that thus far there have been a total of 1.2 million cases resulting in 22,819 deaths in Ohio due to COVID-19.

Estimated number of unvaccinated adults hospitalized for COVID-19:

June 2021; 51,000

July 2021; 108,000

August 2021; 297,000

Total: 456,000

Both the CDC and Ohio Department of Health hold by the previous order, dated July 23, 2020, which is still in effect, requiring all to wear a facial covering in any indoor location that is not a residence; outdoors if you are unable to consistently stay 6 feet away from anyone who doesn't live in your household; and when you are waiting for, riding, driving, or operating public transportation, a taxi, a car service, or a ride sharing vehicle.

Unvaccinated people are extremely susceptible to the corona virus, particularly to the Delta variant and the data on deaths and hospitalizations show this discrepancy clearly.

QUESTION:

When do we have Halloween and what about the Hiram Fire Department reception and party?
Saturday, October 30, 2021, 4 to 6 pm.

AMATS:

I attended, nothing to report, except, October each year is the highest month for pedestrian motor vehicle injury accidents.

OML CONVENTION:

The 70th Ohio Municipal League Annual Conference will be held virtually this year, Oct. 20 - Oct. 22, 2021. The Mayor, Rob Dempsey and Chris Szell are signed up for the virtual conference.

Submitted by:

Mayor Lou Bertrand

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

The following reports were provided to Council for this meeting:

The September Bank Reconciliation balanced with the UAN system with only two small adjusting factors and are available for signing by the Mayor and Council.

Cash Summary by Fund as of September 30, 2021 was provided to Council by email today and in their packets.

List of bills as of October 8, 2021 was provided to Council by email last week.

Council Regular meeting minutes for September 14, 2021 were provided to Council by email today & in packets.

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

The Comparison of Budgeted and Appropriated YTD report was provided to Council by email today & in packets.

Susan provided details concerning the two adjusting factors with the bank reconciliation. One was a .03 cent adjustment from a water/sewer payment and the second was a reduction to an electronic payment for Anthem Life.

Susan asked Council about the ARPA funds; she wanted to know if Council wished her to appropriate all of the funds available so far or just the \$15,000 that was approved for the storm sewers? Council asked about separating the amounts, can Susan keep the balance of the funds separate. Susan said yes, she can place \$15,000 in a line item for storm sewer infrastructure and the remaining funds in an "other operations" line item until Council determines what they want to use it for. We will receive the balance of the ARPA funds next year. Paul said we could, depending on how much of those funds we want to put towards a new squad, if we can purchase one using these funds. Susan said following the last Finance meeting; she was asked to find out what Franklin Township was doing since they were planning on purchasing a new ambulance. Susan called their Township Administrator who told her, yes, they are going to be purchasing a new ambulance; however, they are not using the ARPA funds. She told Susan you cannot use the ARPA funds to purchase equipment. Franklin Township is going to use what they have remaining in the Coronavirus CARES Act funds.

A motion to have the Fiscal Officer appropriate all the ARPA funds available and bring legislation before Council was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Dempsey. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to approve the Fiscal Officer's report for September as submitted was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mr. Greenwood. 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 was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. Dave Smith asked about the two RAVE bills? Steve said they did not want to start the program until the phone issue was resolved. Susan added that it is really only one bill; it is split between General Fund and the Water/Sewer funds. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

HIRAM TOWNSHIP REPORT

None.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCES

2021-14: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM'S EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK, SECTION 4.10 E. 2nd READING.

2021-16: AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING SECTION 8.10 F, G, H OF THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM'S EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK. 2nd READING. Solicitor Tom Reitz would like some direction from Council as to what they wish to see from this legislation. Does this legislation do what it was intended to do or do you want it changed in some way. Paul said this came up at Finance; we talked about tabling this until some more comfortable verbiage is arrived at. Susan did speak with our Aflac agent who is planning on attending our next Finance meeting to present some short-term disability options.

RESOLUTIONS

2021-24: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM'S NOTICE TO THE NORTHEAST OHIO PUBLIC ENERGY COUNCIL (NOPEC) TO ELECT NOPEC'S GREEN COMMUNITY CHOICE PROGRAM FOR THE VILLAGE'S ELECTRICITY AGGREGATION PROGRAM STARTING JANUARY 2023. 2nd READING. Paul Spencer again stressed that the numbers do not seem to work or add up! He would strongly recommend Council decline this! Chris Szell asked if Council was making a decision just for the Village's electric or for "all" residents? Paul said for everyone.

The Mayor mentioned the annual NOPEC meeting is set for November 9; the same day as their next Council meeting. Maybe we should ask a representative from NOPEC to attend our next Council meeting and explain their program and their calculations. Solicitor Reitz had reviewed the legislation originally and said if Council takes a closer look at this, they will see the amount of increase is only .425 cents. Paul was indicating it was 42 cents. This is really only a very slight increase over a two-year period. Tom asked if Council really wanted a representative from NOPEC to come out and explain for .425 of a cent? Council said no, they would not need anyone to attend.

2021-26: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND FISCAL OFFICER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH HIRAM COLLEGE FOR THE HIRAM FIRE DEPARTMENT AND HIRAM VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO HIRAM COLLEGE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. 2nd READING. A motion to suspend the rules was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Dempsey and seconded by Mr. Greenwood. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

2021-30: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ADVERTISING FOR BIDS FOR A CONTRACT TO PERFORM COLLECTION OF RECYCLABLE MATERIALS WITHIN HIRAM VILLAGE AND HIRAM TOWNSHIP 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. Chris Szell was confused between the legal ad and the bid specifications. Solicitor Tom Reitz said Council should follow the bid specifications. Chris asked what materials they would be picking up. Different companies pick up different items. Steve said to look under Section III, 1.7 for the list of accepted recyclable materials. Paul Spencer called the question. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

2021-31: A RESOLUTION RETAINING THOMAS REITZ, ATTORNEY AT LAW, AS SOLICITOR FOR THE VILLAGE OF HIRAM, OHIO, AND FIXING HIS FEES FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. 1st READING. Solicitor Tom Reitz explained the emergency language was to be sure it starts on January 1st, so the Village has continuous legal representation. It should go three reads. The Mayor would like to see Tom's bi-weekly salary set at an even number of \$1,380.00. Council agreed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Chris Szell brought up Juneteenth; the Ohio General Assembly did pass legislation making this a legal holiday. It was already a Federal holiday.

A motion to add Juneteenth to our list of paid holidays beginning 2022 was made by Mr. Szell and seconded by Mr. Hemphill. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to enter into Executive Session at 8:20 pm for the purpose of personnel; hiring, firing, discipline or evaluation was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Szell. The result of the roll call vote was 6-0 in favor. The Mayor and Council remained; everyone else was excused from executive session.

A motion to return to Regular Session at 8:52 pm was made by Mr. Greenwood and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the roll call vote was 6-0 in favor.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Greenwood and seconded by Mr. Spencer. The result of the voice vote was 6-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.

These minutes are pending approval by Council.



Mayor Lou Bertrand

ATTEST:



Fiscal Officer Susan J. Skrovan