

# Village of Hiram

## Finance/Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

September 28, 2021

- Call to Order:** Chairman Rob Dempsey called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm
- Committee Members Present:** Lou Bertrand, Mayor  
Rob Dempsey, Chairman  
David Smith, Councilman  
Paul Spencer, Councilman  
Chris Szell, Councilman  
Susan Skrovan, Fiscal Officer
- Committee Members Absent:** Frank Hemphill, Councilman
- Hiram Officials Present:** Brian Gregory, Police Chief  
Bill Byers, Fire Chief  
James McGee, Village Administrator
- Others:** None
- Agenda:** A motion to approve the agenda for Finance/Safety as presented was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mr. Smith. Motion passed unanimously.
- Minutes:** Dave Smith corrected the minutes during the discussion about what branches would be picked up. Susan said there were a few items that needed corrected from the draft minutes that were emailed, which she has corrected. Dave said on page two; Steve is his "mother's" neighbor, not his neighbor. A motion to approve the meeting minutes of August 24, 2021 as corrected was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mr. Smith. Motion passed unanimously.
- Guests/Public:** None
- Old Business:**
- a. Department Heads list possible uses of the ARPA Funds:**  
James McGee said his number one priority for those funds would be the storms on Wakefield Road. It is much more difficult to apply for funding for storms than it is for water or for sewer projects. They had a quote originally for the two on Wakefield that had collapsed at \$5,500 each; they are working to get another quote. There may be a total of 12 along Wakefield that they would like to replace including to continue the curb down S.R. 305 near the water plant.
- Paul Spencer was hopeful they could fix the water issue in front of his parent's house on S.R. 82. James said they tested that water and found no evidence of additives which are put in our water; they believe it is ground water and not from a municipal source.
- More discussion on the ARPA funds, what each municipality is receiving and the Ohio Municipal League's upcoming virtual conference.
- Brian Gregory said there is a hole in the first bay of the Fire Department; the pad near the wall is caving in! Members went out to take a look at the situation.

Chris Szell said we could consider using some of the ARPA funds to pay PC Surgeons to modernize our cyber security coverage. That is an allowable use.

Susan said if she could use any of the ARPA funds for infrastructure; she would purchase the day care building from the church for offices, the land in front of our building or update our records storage room! However, we cannot use these funds for that type of expense.

Bill Byers said he heard the list of allowable expenditures will probably change! They want to add provisions for law enforcement, violence reduction, staffing overtime. Bill spoke with someone who said they are looking into maybe allowing these types of expenditures.

Dave Smith said he heard that Franklin Township in Portage County has designated their money towards the fire department to purchase a new squad. Bill said the township checked and said they found out they could purchase that. Bill said as of Hiram Township's meeting last Tuesday, they still plan to earmark a large portion of that money for a squad. Dave said Susan may want to check with the fiscal officer in Franklin Township to find out more.

Paul felt we should hold off until next year to spend the ARPA funds until we know more and get a quote on the storms in the meantime. The Hinsdale storm is covered for this year.

#### **New Business:**

##### **a. Ordinance 2021-16 concerning "Safety Force injury leave":**

Members asked about the duration of this coverage. Brian said this should be for "all" Village employees. It does need to be re-worded. Susan spoke about her conversation with Jason Groselle who informed her that fire fighters are scheduled a month in advance so they too should be included. We then thought all employees should be included. Paul spoke about BWC and what they cover for injured workers. The Mayor felt we should look at what other communities are doing. Brian spoke about what he found. Several larger communities are compensating for continuance of pay. Brian felt it should be 90 days tops; this is written to allow for 180 calendar days. BWC covers 60% of their wages. Rob thought we could look into a short-term or long-term disability income policy. Paul thought we already had a short-term disability policy. Susan said we have a life insurance policy attached to our medical, but not a disability policy. We could look at Aflac or our own insurance carrier to see what they offer. Dave agreed this should include all employees; part-time and full-time. Does BWC reimburse the Village for the 60% of wages that they pay out? Susan explained the BWC process. Dave felt we should revisit the amount of days paid; he would agree with capping it at 90 days. Paul felt we may want to form a review board and handle it on an individual basis.

#### **Department Updates:**

**Police Department:** Police Chief Brian Gregory provided his report. The Shop with a Cop event is tentatively planned for December 11<sup>th</sup>. If COVID numbers continue to rise; they will do the shopping ahead of time for the kids, which Brian prefers anyway.

Unit #16, the K-9 unit, will be back in-service tomorrow. We were waiting on parts backordered from May's accident. We paid the deductible up front with the insurance company going after the responsible party for reimbursement.

Hiram College has been very busy this year; we have doubled the arrests from last year. It is through students and campus safety calling our police department. Drugs are now an issue.

Brian applied for the Justice Assistance JAG grant back in early spring; he had to re-submit.

DEA National Drug Take Back Day is Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>; it promises to be a busy day. It is the same weekend as homecoming for Hiram College. We will also be conducting multi-jurisdictional training at the College; Koritansky hall.

Corporal Brown was released back to full duty and will be back on the road October 1<sup>st</sup>. Brian received a resignation from Anthony Battista as well as Josh Wilde. Josh would like an exit interview with the Finance/Safety Committee over his resignation.

With restraints on our General Fund budget; police still do not have 24/7 coverage. Brian is covering hours when he cannot get any other officer to fill shifts; it has gotten old! He feels he has a responsibility to Hiram College and to the Village residents. Hiram Township pays his department for patrol services; he can cover those shifts because he charges against those funds. Finance members discussed the College; their contract and re-negotiating the terms and costs.

Frank Hemphill arrived to the meeting at 6:55 pm.

**Fire Department:** Fire Chief Bill Byers reported having only one write-off; nothing else to report.

**Village Adm/Utilities:** VA James McGee reported that Davey Tree is mowing Ohio Edison rights-of-way. They will be behind and on some property owner's properties.

James said he spoke with Solicitor Tom Reitz regarding Alba Contracting; Tom suggested we wait a while longer for them to respond. More discussion.

James mentioned the recycling contract; does Finance want James to try and work with Portage County to stay with them and break away from Hiram Township? James will check with Kimble as well. Members felt we should stay with Hiram Township and go out for bids. We did receive a ninety-day notice of cancellation with Portage County for December 15<sup>th</sup>.

The water meter installation notices to residents are being mailed out with installation beginning October 18<sup>th</sup>. This will be on a bright orange card from Newman Plumbing. Paul said post cards are not always received from the post office! They get lost in transit between here and Cleveland. James anticipates some issues and problems over the course of this whole project.

Hiram Township waterline is in the hands of their engineer. James told them he would be happy to supply them with water, however, he does need EPA approval and an engineer's plan.

James finished the crack seal on the hike-n-bike trail.

Regarding the new phone system from Spectrum; we are waiting on state pricing from them. Once we get the state pricing; we will receive a new contract to be signed by the Mayor.

**Fiscal Officer/Admin:** Susan Skrovan reported having just finished up on our state audit for the ESID or Energy Special Improvement District. There was an issue with uploading the first financial reports to the Auditor of State; this has been corrected and re-submitted. One of the things to take care of coming from the audit was to appoint Rob Dempsey, our Council Chairman, to the ESID board.

**A motion to appoint Rob Dempsey to the ESID Board to go before Council in the form of a Resolution was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mayor Bertrand. Motion passed unanimously.**

Susan said someday in the future, she would like to see the Village having a company vehicle for employees to use when on official Village business.

Susan said we may have to look at amending our permanent appropriations in several funds.

- Fund 2012: For the Alba contract. Original PO was from several years ago.
- Fund 5101: Water operating for repairs.
- Fund 1000: General Fund for Police personnel and for comp time payout.

**Mayor:**

The Mayor reported working with Hiram College on the Police & Fire contract amended to run retroactively from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Brian sent Solicitor Reitz an email.

He is beginning to work on Department Head reviews. They should be sent to him by email.

The Mayor will be attending the virtual OML Conference October 20-22.

The Mayor would like to have again this year, a mass swearing in ceremony on December 10<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> at Koritansky Hall for all newly elected and re-elected officials in our northeastern area.

The Mayor stressed to everyone to get their shots to prevent COVID-19!

Department head reviews will be done at the November Council meeting.

**Bills List:**

The list was reviewed. A motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. Szell with a second from Mr. Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

**EMS Collections:**

One was reviewed and signed.

**Any Other Business:** James informed Finance members regarding a place to dispose of leaves; he has found a farm who will take them until he hears from the EPA on approval for us to store them.

The next Finance/Safety Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 26, 2021.

**Adjournment:** A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mr. Szell. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

**Attest:**

  
Susan J. Skrovan, Fiscal Officer

  
Rob Dempsey, Chairman 