

Village of Hiram

Finance/Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2022

Call to Order: Chris Szell called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm

Committee Members Present: Lou Bertrand, Mayor
Chris Szell, Chairman
Beth Greenwood, Councilperson
Frank Hemphill, Councilman
David Smith, Councilman
Paul Spencer, Councilman
Susan Skrovan, Fiscal Officer

Committee Members Absent:

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

Others: Police Officer Devin Brown, Ed Frato-Sweeney, Mantua Village Mayor Linda Clark, Mantua Village Police Chief Joseph Urso, John Clark, Mark Trushel; President of Mantaline Corporation, Dan Fines with Hiram College and firefighter Jason Daily, Portage County Deputy Sheriff Ralph Spidalieri and several others.

Agenda: Chairman Chris Szell brought up the 2022 calendar for meetings as the 4th Tuesday of each month. Finance/Safety meetings were usually the last Tuesday of each month with several months having five Tuesdays. Several members had scheduling conflicts with it being the 4th Tuesday; especially with the Economic Development Committee. The consensus was to stick with the last Tuesday of every month. A motion to approve the proposed agenda for Finance/Safety as amended with the noted correction of the calendar for 2022 was made by Mr. Spencer with a second from Mr. Hemphill. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes: A motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 30, 2021 as presented was made by Mr. Spencer with a second from Mayor Bertrand. Motion passed unanimously.

Guests/Public: Everyone present were here to listen to the Portage County Sheriff's proposal.

Old Business: None

New Business: a. Deputy Sheriff Ralph Spidalieri with the Portage County Sheriff's office presented their proposal to serve the Village of Hiram and other area communities with police coverage. Their proposal is to build a team concept with shared services and to consolidate. There are tours available at the County jail. The Mayor felt the sheriff's office needs to go to the various police chiefs and see what their needs are. Paul Spencer questioned their proposal and felt the Portage County Sheriff should already be providing this service! Our taxes pay for it. Deputy Sheriff Spidalieri said the sheriff's office is only providing information on what they do.

Out of 88 counties, Portage County is #3 in meth seizures! Mantua Village Mayor Linda Clark asked about current coverage with Portage County. Deputy Sheriff Spidalieri said they estimated a 3-4 officer increase if all four Northeast communities go with the sheriff. Hiram Village, Mantua Village, Garrettsville Village and Windham Village. Fine money for Village Codified stops; would stay with our Village.

Chris Szell said we are 70 minutes into discussion, are there any more questions? Ed Frato-Sweeney asked what their proposal is, is it a consolidation? He has not heard any figures/cost. As a Village resident, he would not interested in seeing this happen! Chris Szell said he is taking this as information gathering only, not a proposal at this point. Mayor Clark said the reason they were here was because the Sheriff's office did not go to our Police Chiefs; they went to the Mayors privately. Mantua Village Police Chief Joseph Urso said they just had a Chief's meeting in December; why was it not brought up then. They went to our Mayors who then came to their chiefs and because of this, he felt it was back door! Paul Spencer thanked them for coming but does not see it happening anytime soon. Mayor Linda Clark thanked the Finance/Safety Committee and Mayor Bertrand for allowing the Sheriff to come and present their proposal and for them to listen. Brian Gregory spoke to Finance/Safety members on the Portage County Sheriff changing their original proposal! What the Sheriff's office passed out tonight has no figures in it whatsoever! Dan Fines with Hiram College spoke on the contract they have with Hiram Police and what he saw as the Sheriff's plan to dismantle the command structure to have more of their officers on the road! Not necessarily to help our communities!

b. Discussion on employee vaccination. Village Solicitor Tom Reitz sent out an email regarding mandating this. Paul Spencer would just like a record of whose vaccinated! Fire Chief Bill Byers said it is not a true vaccine yet; it is a shot, an inoculation. There was more discussion. Chief Byers spoke on hospital protocol. Nothing has come up that may affect payments from Medicare or Medicaid. Paul asked Chief Byers how he feels about having on record who has and who has not received the shot? Chief Byers said what he has researched on the internet and with the CDC; it is not illegal to ask, it is not a violation of the HIPPA law to ask. Chief Byers does not think it's a bad idea to have a list of who is vaccinated, the same as when we send a new hire for a physical. Officer Devin Brown said this would be a completely voluntary statement, correct? Paul said the way the Village would handle it is, either you are vaccinated and you show proof of it or you wear a mask while you are at work! And, if you are not wearing a mask and have not shown proof, that is sort of an ethics thing, we terminate on an ethics violation. That is a way to handle it. Paul could see an incentive program set up for employees, say paid for 4 hours to get the shot. The Mayor would like our Solicitor to look for legislation from another entity that has already been put in place, makes sense and has been tried. Steve Schuller said if someone tests positive, we need clarification on what procedures we follow? Paul said if you test positive, there is a quarantine order for 14 days. Steve and Chief Byers said that is no longer the requirement; the CDC says 5 days. Chris Szell asked the Mayor if he would talk to Solicitor Tom Reitz about legislation.

Department Updates:

Police Department: Police Chief Brian Gregory provided his report. His department was not approved for the State's body camera grant again this year! Many agencies did receive the grants; agencies without body cameras. Brian will make application again later this year for the second round of grant funds. Our cameras are from Amazon and need updating.

Brian is putting together an auxiliary program of non-commissioned officers. They are volunteers and are intended to supplement and support our sworn officers. There is no compensation for services rendered. These non-commissioned volunteers will help with community events, traffic details and Hiram College details.

During these past two weeks of snow and inclement weather, Hiram Police responded to 9 motor vehicle accidents and 7 disabled vehicles; only 4 were in the Village. It has been a busy two weeks for the Police, EMS and our Road Department.

Mayor Bertrand thanked our Road Crew, Police and Jason Groselle for his help with the snow removal. The Mayor thinks we should look at getting some sidewalk cleaning equipment because the residents cannot get them cleaned off. Paul said it is nice to offer the service of cleaning the sidewalks but that is an expense we sometimes do not have the money for. The Mayor thinks we do and should be cleaning them. Paul said the landowners should be out there shoveling their sidewalks. Dave Smith wanted to publicly thank David Dreimiller and Jim Kircher for cleaning off the sidewalks on the south side of S.R. 82 all the way to the cemetery! The Mayor felt we should invest in a snow blower. Steve said we do have a snow blower for the Kubota tractor, it lasted about six minutes and blew a hydraulic line. They are waiting for the part from Kansas City. Dave said there is a hydraulic shop in Mantua. Steve said that is what they are looking at now. James said there is a snow thrower for the front of our RTV at a ridiculous price of \$15,000! James also tried borrowing machinery from Hiram College but he could not get it to work with our equipment.

Fire Department: Chief Bill Byers had emailed everyone that his department was successful in being awarded the MARCS radio grant for \$38,000! Every Fire Department in the County wrote for at least a \$2,000 grant for one radio so this was considered a countywide grant award. These radios have statewide capability, if needed. The Mayor noted that 44 years ago today; the blizzard of 1978; January 25, 1978!

Fire inspections for residential dorms went well; he thanked the College for their cooperation!

Replacement of Squad 1: Chief Byers would like verbal approval to order through PFund a new squad to replace our 2008. They only have until January 31, 2021 to hold the chassis. It would be a Ford Lifeline rescue squad: \$223,940.00 plus a power load system and a power cot for a total of approximately \$265,000. Delivery right now is a year out. Hiram Township, tonight at their meeting gave Jason Groselle a verbal commitment to contribute \$159,000 with the Village's portion at \$106,000 less what we would get with a trade. Dave Smith is in favor of ordering this now; is this on the state bid? Yes, at State pricing.

A motion to move ahead with starting negotiations to purchase a new squad, this is with Hiram Township contributing their 60%, was made by Mr. Spencer and seconded by Mayor Bertrand. The result of the voice vote was 7-0 in favor.

Village Adm/Utilities: VA James McGee reported battling sickness and the snow storms.

Asst. Village Administrator Steve Schuller reported on the final numbers for the completion of the Garfield Road Watermain project. The original bid estimate was \$475,000; it closed at \$407,000. Cost to the Village will be around \$2,700.00 per year for 30 years on a 0% loan.

The Water Tower project; Steve and Susan have been reviewing payment options and are determining whether the Village can pay its portion of the water meter project strictly out of our sewer capital; if we can, then we can afford to go out for OWDA loans for the water tower. We are allowed to pay for the meters out of sewer because we bill for sewer through those meters. The grant we received could be considered our water portion.

The status of the phone system, we have heard nothing on their whereabouts. Wiring is next.

The natural gas line is scheduled to be installed tomorrow; underground boring.

PC Surgeons on our email upgrades; they will provide a report the 1st of each month.

Mayor:

The Mayor reported the municipal training is coming up on March 26th at the Rockside Road Embassy Suites. He will be attending and encourages everyone to go.

The Mayor met with President Haney today; an interesting meeting. The Mayor told him about the Sheriff's proposal; was hoping there would have been more substance in their proposal.

We have done a good job of cleaning up our streets; much better than some other communities.

Fiscal Officer/Admin:

Susan Skrovan reported her office is continuing to work on closing out year-end for 2021. She is expecting to run the W-2's and W-3 this week, if all goes smoothly. Closing purchase orders; final bills coming in now in January for December expenses like utilities. It usually takes about two months to close everything, finish our financial reports and set up the new year.

Her assistant, Wendelin Taylor and Susan attended a three-hour Regional Income Tax webinar. The issue was people working from home and how to collect income tax. Basically, people that work from home must track their time and time at work and then report it. There is a three-year statute of limitations to go back for a refund for time worked at home. 44% of RITA clients have no employees working from home. Most of this really does not apply to Hiram. If people do request a refund, those communities will have to pay it back and most of those communities no longer have those funds from several years ago! They used it to run their communities!

Back at year end we needed a resolution to appoint someone to the Hiram ESID Board. There was a motion passed for Rob Dempsey but since he was not re-elected, we need someone else.

A motion to nominate Chris Szell to be the Director for the Hiram Energy Special Improvement District (ESID) Board was made by Mayor Bertrand and seconded by Mr. Spencer. Motion passed unanimously.

Bills List:

Dave Smith asked about the invoice for CAT on the generator. Susan explained why that was paid with our credit card. A motion to pay the bills was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mr. Szell. Motion passed unanimously.

EMS Collections:

There were none.

Any Other Business:

Paul Spencer informed others there is a death benefit available through FEMA for COVID related deaths; they will pay \$9,000 to bury a loved one who died of complications related to COVID-19. The death certificate must say, COVID related.

Paul also mentioned something of interest for Ohio; Intel is going to build the world's largest IC plant, Integrated Circuits, in Licking County, east of Columbus! 1,000 acres under roof, \$20 billion for the building itself and over \$100 billion to tool it!

The next Finance/Safety Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 22, 2022.

Adjournment: A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Bertrand with a second from Mr. Szell. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:


Susan J. Skrovan, Fiscal Officer

Attest:


Chris Szell, Finance Chairman