

Present: President George; President Pro-Tem Hrydziuszko; Members: Abboud, Kecskemeti, Mooney, O’Gorman, and Peddie

Absent: None

Also Present: Interim Village Manager/Village Clerk/Assistant Manager, Rutkowski
Village Attorney, Ryan
Public Safety Director, Torongeau
Finance Director, McCarthy
Director of Public Services, Lawrence
Interim Planning & Zoning Administrator, Brown

President George called the regular Village Council meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. in the Village Council Chambers located at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road, Beverly Hills, MI 48025. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Hrydziuszko, second by Peddie, to approve the agenda as published.

Motion passed.

O’Gorman arrived at 9:07 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

I. FINANCE

McCarthy provided an update from the Finance Department. She stated the Village is in good financial standing. She gave an overview of the 2020 millage, Headlee reductions, General Fund rates, and Public Safety rates. She noted that the Public Safety Fund gets the bulk of the millage funding. She said the Park Improvement Fund was new to the budget this year and will bring in approximately \$200,000 per year. She provided an overview of the cash and fund balance. She discussed transfers from the General Fund to the Road Funds. She stated that the OPEB funding levels could be decreased in future years. She said the Village has funded its obligations very well compared to other municipalities. She stated that the Water Fund cash balance has improved over the last few years and that new rates are to be set during the annual budget process.

McCarthy stated inflation is currently close to 7%. She said the Village’s debt is very low. She informed the Council that budget amendments will be forthcoming to account for purchases like the generator for the Village Office. She noted that the PSO Collective Bargaining Agreement is expiring this June and she likely will not have the updated figures for that agreement by the time the budget is before Council for approval.

McCarthy provided Council with information on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). A separate account (287) has been set up for ARPA funding per the auditor’s recommendation. McCarthy expects that these funds will be audited. So far the Village has received half of its \$1.1 million allocation. She stated that ARPA rules have changed several times and expects them to

change again. She went over reporting requirements and deadlines. As of January 7, “any government service” could receive ARPA funding. McCarthy does not recommend divvying up the funding into too many different projects.

McCarthy talked about what an appropriate fund balance looks like, which would be at least 20% of total annual expenses, and noted that the Village is more conservative than that. She spoke about the Village’s CDs.

McCarthy answered questions from the Council regarding fiduciary funds, the Water Fund, and the Rubbish Fund.

II. PUBLIC SERVICES

Lawrence gave an overview of recommended projects in the Public Services Department. He thinks ARPA funds should be use for water infrastructure projects. As examples, Marguerite and Hummel are in need of main replacements and road repairs. Fairfax also needs road repairs. He said there is very low water pressure in the area and noted it would cost less than the ARPA’s \$1.1 million to fix. He recommended a new salt shed which would cost about \$100,000. He talked about 4” pipes in the Village and recommended replacing them with 8” lines. He also recommended replacing several 6” lines.

Mooney asked what the timeline would be for the Village Engineering firm to prepare information on the 4” line replacement project. Lawrence stated it should take them about a month to prepare.

III. CADANCE OF DEPARTMENT UPDATES MOVING FORWARD

George recognized that the Village is still operating with an Interim Manager right now, but in the future would like to see quarterly reports from Village departments. He suggested staggering the reports so that there would be one per month at a Council meeting.

ITEMS FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION

I. INFRASTRUCTURE

Council discussed how to fund infrastructure projects, such as using bonds.

Mooney stated it is a good time to borrow money from the State Revolving Fund. He suggested a possible millage to fund big infrastructure projects over the next 30 years. He stated the goal is to maintain the Village into the future and provide maintenance.

George discussed a timeline, obtaining a bond counsel and a bond rating. He noted that there is aging infrastructure in the Village.

Peddie talked about the possibility of creating a roundabout at Southfield and Beverly Roads.

George would like to see a comprehensive list of projects, priorities, and costs.

Keckemeti discussed stormwater management projects.

The Council talked about a timeline for these projects.

The Finance Committee will meet with Director McCarthy to discuss funding infrastructure projects.

A. SIDEWALKS

George talked about getting a 10-year loan up to \$2 million to finance sidewalks if the Village does not use grant money for the projects.

II. ARPA FUNDS

George stated the Village now has more flexibility with the ARPA funding and it could be used as leverage to apply for matching grants.

Lawrence stated the ARPA funds could also be used for service line verification required by EGLE which would cost roughly \$354,000 and must be completed by 2024. Since the Village does not have all of the appropriate equipment to complete the verifications, it would have to rely on WRC.

Mooney suggested using ARPA funds to provide a bonus for first responders. George suggested the bonus could be paid over 3 years as a retention mechanism. The Personnel and Finance Committees are to explore these options.

III. PARKS & AESTHETICS

The Council discussed landscaping/aesthetics for Park #5, the Village Office, Southfield Road Corridor, and Beverly Park. They would like input from the community and business owners.

Mooney suggested hiring a professional to provide ideas for the design of these spaces. He suggested adding Riverside Park and “pocket parks” as well.

Hrydziuszko stated she would like the list of areas solidified to be able to present to a professional. A subcommittee of Hrydziuszko, Mooney, and Peddie was created to finalize the list.

The Council discussed signage outside the Village Office and Beverly Park. They discussed amending the Village Ordinance to allow for digital signs on Village property.

O’Gorman stated we should be cognizant of the locations of the signs and the speeds vehicles are traveling in those areas. O’Gorman offered to lead the effort on digital signs.

Peddie talked about welcome signs throughout the Village. The effort began before the COVID-19 pandemic to update each sign. Hrydziuszko stated that it would be cheaper to update them all at once.

A Sign Subcommittee was created consisting of members Abboud, O’Gorman, and Peddie.

Hrydziuszko talked about having a prescribed burn at the Riverside Park island to eradicate invasive species.

IV. PUBLIC SAFETY

A. NEEDS

Torongeau said the generosity of the Beverly Hills community, especially over the holiday season, was phenomenal. He stated that the Public Safety Department is always hiring and that staffing is

its biggest need. He noted that they are competing with agencies all over the state for new hires. He suggested looking at the retirement policy as a retention mechanism. He commended the School Liaison Officer.

O’Gorman asked about recruiting efforts.

There was discussion about going back to a defined benefit plan, but it was noted that it could be detrimental to the budget.

B. POLICY & PROCEDURE REVIEW/CONSULTANT

The Council discussed a policy and procedure review for the Public Safety Department and bringing in an outside consultant. Peddie will work with Torongeau on a policy/procedure review and with a consultant on best practices.

Mooney asked if there are any pending lawsuits or complaints against the Department within the last five years. Torongeau stated that there are not.

Mooney asked if Council could see the policies and procedures and if the Director had an issue with someone coming in to review them. Torongeau said he did not mind.

A subcommittee consisting of members Peddie, O’Gorman, and Abboud was created for the Public Safety Policy & Procedure Review.

C. COMMUNICATION

O’Gorman asked about disseminating information to leadership. His goal is to curb rumors. He will work with the manager to define a communication procedure for emergencies.

Kecskemeti stated that having a public information officer was an administrative function. She commented on other communication efforts such as notifying residents of downed power lines, etc.

V. STAFFING/PERSONNEL

George stated the appropriateness of staffing levels is difficult to ascertain while there are two people currently serving in interim roles. He commented on a review process of staff. He talked about issuing RFPs for contracted services such as IT, etc.

O’Gorman noted that there seemed to be a gap in office staff and that there was a need for an office manager or receptionist type role.

George asked if Comeau provided a model that still works for our Public Services Department.

Abboud stated that the new Village Manager should do annual reviews.

Mooney stated that the new Manager is to handle personnel and administration.

VI. OTHER

O’Gorman stated that there was a short turnaround time for meeting packet distribution. He would like more time to review documents, specifically for the Zoning Board of Appeals. Brown stated

she could send the ZBA notification letter to the Board at the same time she sends it to nearby residents.

Abboud requested to be copied on all Board packet emails. Going forward, all of Council will be copied when meeting packets are emailed out.

Peddie suggested revisiting the fence ordinance.

Council discussed whether Homeowners Associations should set the guidelines for fences.

Mooney noted that the fence ordinance discussions were contentious in the past. He was hesitant to change the ordinance.

Hrydziuszko stated that she has spoken to many residents who are upset with the current fence ordinance and that people should have the right to improve their private property.

George stated fences can be a topic of discussion at the joint Planning Commission/Council meeting in February.

George called a recess at 12:38 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 12:43 p.m.

The Council discussed a Village-wide tree planting program.

Hrydziuszko stated that she would work with Lawrence on the specifics of the program. She suggested a resident sponsored program to plant trees in the public right of way where the Village would provide a list of acceptable trees and provide planting services. She stated it would be a way for more young trees to be planted and offset the loss of the older Silver Maple trees. She discussed a timeline and whether it would be doable for the Public Services Department to take on.

Mooney said he was on board with a tree planting program but would like to see an affordability option for low-income residents.

Peddie suggested adding language onto building permits that restricts clear cutting lots.

Abboud discussed short-term rentals and marijuana growing laws. He would like more local control over these two issues.

O’Gorman stated that he would like more community events and a dog park in Beverly Hills.

VII. COUNCIL MEMBERS WORK FOR 2022

George stated that he hopes his fellow Council members take ownership of the issues discussed today and move them forward. George’s top priorities are sidewalks, backflow preventer program, Park #5, RFP for professional services, and having a Council manual as a living document. His other goals are tree replacement, online Code, and Douglas Evans parking.

Abboud wants to work on infrastructure, water/sewer projects, short term rentals, marijuana regulations, Codes & Ordinances, Finance Committee, digital signage, and ARPA funding.

Keckskemeti's goals are to hire and onboard a new Village Manager, revisit expectations, work on stormwater and flooding, and communication/PIO.

Hrydziuszkowski stated she will work on a street trees program, support sidewalks, and the Park #5 roundabout.

Peddie will work on the Public Safety policy/procedures subcommittee, Village sign subcommittee, and help Keckskemeti with water/sewer projects.

Mooney's priorities are infrastructure/sidewalks, working with the Finance Committee to obtain estimates and how to pay for these projects, Village aesthetics with Hrydziuszkowski and Peddie, working with the Personnel Committee and the new Manager to get them acclimated, and ARPA funding. He stated that Douglas Evans was intended to be a nature preserve and does not know if making it more accessible is in line with the purpose of the gift. He suggested installing a kayak launch at Riverside Park.

O'Gorman thanked everyone for the discussion. His priorities are working on packet timing and digital signs. He would like as much up front information as possible about the Village Manager candidates.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Karen Gilbert, Amherst stated that she recently learned that she has a back flow prevention device at her home that was probably installed in the 1960s that she did not realize she had. She was concerned that the data regarding flooding Village-wide was not that good and offered to help compile data.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mooney, second by Abboud, to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Motion passed.

John George
Council President

Kristin Rutkowski
Village Clerk