

OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
July 10, 2023 7:00 PM

Call to Order – Mayor Kevin Gilmore

7:00 PM

Village Representatives in Attendance

Councilman Edward Shimborske III
Councilwoman Dana Dunbar
Councilwoman Heather Phillips
Mayor Kevin Gilmore
Councilwoman Katherine O’Connell

Solicitor Sarah McHugh
Councilman Marc Thompson
Councilman John Lewis
Clerk / Treasurer Eric Shreve
Village Administrator John Wenzlick

Citizen Attendees

See Attached List

Minutes

A motion was made by Mrs. Dunbar to approve the minutes, from the June 5, 2023 Council meeting, and Mr. Shimborske seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance & Future Planning – Mr. Lewis

Mr. Lewis stated the Finance Committee met and discussed the tax department and the future retirement of our Tax Administrator, Diane Haas. We have a few options; hiring new employees in the tax department or moving to an outside agency to collect income tax. One agency, Regional Income Tax Agency, better known as RITA, had given the committee a presentation and information to review. RITA was formed in 1971 to administer income tax ordinance of any Ohio municipality that joins the agency through the Regional Council of Governments. Nearly 400 cities and villages in Ohio utilize RITA to handle their income tax collection. Mr. Lewis stated there would be cost savings to the Village by moving to an outside agency. Mayor Gilmore stated that he has worked with RITA in the past and has not had any problems. Mr. Shimborske stated RITA is not a private firm and Mayor Gilmore stated the municipal income taxes that RITA administers belong to the Village and RITA administers these taxes on our behalf.

Citizens Comments

Mr. Wolfe asked how long the contract would be if we chose RITA and Mr. Lewis stated it should be yearly, with an option to return to administering our own taxes. The Finance Director would be the contact person if residents have any questions or concerns if we decide to utilize RITA. Mr. Wolfe asked if there were any options other than RITA and Mr. Lewis responded that CCA is another option, but they are a Cleveland based organization. Mr. Cousino stated that he is glad the committee is looking into other options. He understands the difficulty of having a small staff trying to handle the volume of taxes that the Village administers. Mrs. Mierzwiak asked what the delinquency rate is and commented that the legal fees could be high if we move to RITA. Mayor Gilmore stated that our solicitor is not employed by the Village, and we pay an hourly rate when our solicitor is needed. A resident asked about the cost savings if we used RITA, and Mr. Wenzlick stated that Ms. Haas believes we would need at least 2 full-time employees and a part-time employee to fully staff the tax office. Currently, we have one full-time employee and our recent part-time employee left to seek full-time employment with the City of Oregon. Mr.

OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
July 10, 2023 7:00 PM

Gutchess stated he does not like the idea of RITA and would not like the cultural change. A resident asked if we could invite RITA to a meeting and discuss this in more detail and Mayor Gilmore stated that could be possible in the future. Mrs. Wiley asked for a financial breakdown of savings and Mayor Gilmore responded that a financial breakdown is not ready yet since we are in the early stages of discussion.

A resident stated he had not heard of RITA before today, so he asked some acquaintances, and they have mixed reviews of RITA. He stated that he prefers face to face interactions, especially with a personal topic like income tax. He does not agree with choosing private services because the interactions are too impersonal. Matt Franklin stated that he appreciates that Council is looking into all options. He agrees with other residents that this would be a cultural change. He stated that Council should try and find someone as qualified as Ms. Haas. He stated that keeping a tax department is a good idea because our residents have trust in our tax department.

A resident stated he read negative comments about RITA while doing an online search. Jim Yavorcik stated he went to the RITA website for the FAQ sections, and it discussed admin subpoenas. Mayor Gilmore said we are in the preliminary stages of deciding and have flexibility with the way RITA handles our rules. John Card asked about the tax department workload and Mr. Lewis stated there are some complicated returns and some take more time than others. A resident stated that an agency like RITA can spread their expertise to different people rather than one person researching each tax question. Mr. Effler stated it takes time to advertise and six months doesn't seem like a lot of time. Mr. Lewis reminded everyone that Ms. Haas would like to retire in July 2024.

Darren Moore commended Council for looking into the tax options and said some firms are more efficient and have more expertise. Mr. Wolfe stated that he has never had good experience with outsourcing and has never had a problem hiring good people. Mr. Irving stated he runs a staffing service, and the best people he has found come out of the military. Mr. Arnos stated he appreciates the immediate help he receives in our tax office. He likes in person interaction and appreciates the current efficiency. Mr. Ehmann stated his son has had difficulty with RITA, the follow-through is less than satisfactory with long wait times. Mrs. Mierzwiak stated that Council needs to read a RITA contract and gather more information to present to the residents.

Mrs. O'Connell and Mr. Thompson both stated that making these decisions is a function of local government. At this time, there is no plan to put this issue on the ballot or send out a survey.

Mr. Wolfe stated that he lives on Bancroft and would like to see the speed limit lowered to 25 mph with a round-about near Richards and Bancroft. Mrs. Phillips explained that our engineer, Fishbeck, is currently doing a study regarding Bancroft. We will be discussing this at the next Streets and Safety meeting, and we encourage residents to attend.

A resident asked if we are purchasing the Avis property and Solicitor McHugh stated the closing has not occurred. Currently, the Village is doing its due diligence. The visioning plan for that property has been deferred until it is determined if the Village can acquire the property. Solicitor

OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
July 10, 2023 7:00 PM

McHugh stated the purchase price would be \$750,000 and the environmental study has already been completed.

John Hull stated he would like to discuss our water pressure issues with Council. With the fire that occurred earlier this year, the residents lost water pressure. The hydrants are not spaced adequately and are in terrible shape. He stated he is aware of grant programs to help facilitate funding to resolve the problems. Mrs. Dunbar asked for clarification on the hydrant issues and asked how we can get Lucas County to prioritize Ottawa Hills. Mr. Wenzlick stated that he received a 2021 master water plan from the City of Toledo but has yet to receive a cost for an analysis from the consultant. Mr. Wenzlick stated he does not have a timeline on water pressure testing in Plat 1. He stated there will be around 15 hydrants replaced this year with the Bexford reconstruction project.

Mrs. Mierzwiak asked Council if the street lighting legislation would increase resident taxes. Mr. Wenzlick explained that it is our annual legislation, with no tax increase.

Human Resources – Mrs. Dunbar

None

Safety – Mrs. Phillips

Mrs. Phillips reminded residents and Council of the upcoming meeting with Streets and Safety Committee on July 31st.

Services & Environment – Mrs. O’Connell

Mrs. O’Connell stated there will be an upcoming meeting regarding the sled hill, the date has to be finalized. Mrs. O’Connell stated the committee met and discussed the deer cull and they recommend reducing the deer cull from forty to twenty this year. A motion was made by Mrs. O’Connell to renew the deer cull program with a limit of 20 deer, and Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The committee does not authorize a deer count for the 2023-2024 year.

Streets & Bridges – Mr. Thompson

Mr. Thompson stated there is legislation on the agenda to authorize a contract with Fishbeck, for our 2024 road projects. Mr. Wenzlick stated that the Central Ave. bridge and Secor Rd. bridge are anticipated to be open in mid-August.

Utilities, Equipment, Buildings & Grounds – Mr. Shimborske

None

Solicitor’s Report

Mrs. McHugh stated Lewandowski Engineers does have insurance and she has filed a claim with them. The limits are unknown at this time, but she will keep Council updated.

Administrator’s Report

None

OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
July 10, 2023 7:00 PM

Mayor's Report

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Mrs. Dunbar stated that a few years, Council was invited to a GoZero informational meeting, which did not move forward in the Village. Lucas County has a new program, and she asked the Services and Environment committee to review it.

Ordinances & Resolutions

Mayor Gilmore read Ordinance 2023-5

Ordinance 2023-5	To assess a special tax for the planting, maintenance, and removal of shade trees on and along the streets and public rights-of-way of The Village of Ottawa Hills in accordance with section 727.011 of the Ohio Revised Code, for the year ending December 31, 2023.
------------------	--

Motion to waive three readings:	Motion – Mr. Lewis
	Second – Mr. Shimborske
	Unanimous Approval

Motion to adopt legislation:	Motion – Mr. Lewis
	Second – Mr. Shimborske
	Yeas (6) – Mrs. Dunbar, Mr. Thompson, Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Shimborske, Mr. Lewis, Mrs. O'Connell
	Nays (0) –

Mayor Gilmore read Ordinance 2023-6

Ordinance 2023-6	To assess a special tax to pay the cost and expense of lighting the streets and public ways of The Village of Ottawa Hills, for the year ending December 31, 2023.
------------------	--

OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

July 10, 2023 7:00 PM

Motion to waive three readings:

Motion –	Mr. Lewis
Second –	Mr. Shimborske
Unanimous Approval	

Motion to adopt legislation:

Motion – Mr. Lewis
Second – Mr. Shimborske
Yeas (6) – Mrs. Dunbar, Mr. Thompson,
Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Shimborske,
Mr. Lewis, Mrs. O'Connell

Mayor Gilmore read Resolution 2023-15

Resolution 2023-15	Authorizing a contract with Fishbeck for engineering services related to the 2024 street repair and reconstruction project including Riva Ridge, Secretariat, Avatar, Exmoor, and Bancroft.
--------------------	---

Motion to waive three readings:

Motion –	Mr. Thompson
Second –	Mr. Shimborske
Unanimous Approval	

Motion to adopt legislation:

Motion – Mr. Thompson
 Second – Mr. Shimborske
 Yeas (6) – Mrs. Dunbar, Mr. Thompson,
 Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Shimborske,
 Mr. Lewis, Mrs. O’Connell
 Nays (0) –

Next Meeting Date

August 7, 2023 7:00 PM

Adjournment

9:22 PM

Ken M. Johnson

Mayor

COUNCIL mtg
7-10-23

Name

Robert Ehmann

DARREN S. MOORE

Brent L. Cousins

Lynn Phillips

MIKE PHILLIPS

John Hull

~~1 Doug B...~~
~~John Hancock~~

Thomas Killam

Mrs. Meyer

Margaret Bergman

BARBER

JAMES WOLFE

Dora Crowther

Val Wiley

Carol Sargent

Matthew Franklin

Freeman Irving

Patricia Page-Ross

~~Robert Ufer~~

Douglas Hoblet

Deborah Ayres

Kristin Kirschbaum

Bret Penrod

John C. Thompson

Ken R. Lee

Bybrook

Jaylata Patel.

JOHN CARO

Lixia Wang

B. Ann Merrill Halin

JASON ELLIS

Matthew Devilbiss Gutches, 4th generation Village resident. NO RITA, HIRE STAY

TODD MIERZWIAK

Diane Rusk

Jessica Brand

SCOTT J. SAUM

Daniel H. Effler

Jim YAVORCIK

Dan WIMMERS

Mark Mockensturm

Bryan Cohen

Maureen J. Mays

Christine Speer

PAUL HENNON

NO RITA

Celia Williamson NO RITA

REUBEN BROWN

NO RITA NO FIELD