

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
AMBERLEY VILLAGE COUNCIL  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2015**

The Council of Amberley Village, Ohio met in regular session at the Amberley Village Municipal Building, 7149 Ridge Road on Monday, February 9, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Muething called the meeting to order. The following roll call was taken:

**PRESENT:**

Richard Bardach  
Bill Doering  
Peg Conway  
Ed Hattenbach  
Thomas C. Muething  
Ray Warren  
Natalie Wolf

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Scot Lahrmer, Village Manager  
Kevin Frank, Village Solicitor  
Nicole Browder, Clerk of Council  
Rick Kay, Treasurer  
Lt. Brian Blum, Police/Fire

**ABSENT:**

Chief Rich Wallace

Mayor Muething welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Amberley Village Council. He then led those in attendance through the pledge of allegiance.

**MINUTES**

Mayor Muething presented the minutes of the January 12, 2015 regular meeting. He asked if there were any corrections or additions. Since there were none, Mayor Muething stated that the minutes were approved.

**FINANCE REPORT**

Village Manager Scot Lahrmer presented the December, 2014, Finance Report (a copy of which is attached hereto). Mr. Lahrmer reported a summary of this report and noted tax collections for the month of December totaled \$377,521. The total general fund revenue for the month of December was \$411,714 while expenses equaled \$457,988. At the end of December, the unencumbered General Fund balance was \$4,011,668. The report was accepted as submitted.

**GUEST SPEAKER**

Vice Mayor Wolf introduced Mary Ellen Kramer with the Hamilton County Public Health Department to update the Council on new WeThrive! initiatives. Vice Mayor Wolf noted that Amberley became a WeThrive! Community in 2011 and has since engaged in community gardening and improved exercise options along the Amberley walking trail. The Environmental Stewardship Committee is now in the process of updating the change tool and pathways to consider a new environmental pathway. Prior pathways included chronic disease and improving health.

Ms. Kramer shared that WeThrive! has been active since 2009 and in March 2014 the program was expanded to include new pathways. She commended Amberley for their continued efforts with the program. She stated she will be working with the Environmental Stewardship Committee to develop the environmental pathway for the Village. Ms. Kramer presented Vice Mayor Wolf with new WeThrive! signs to post in the community.

Vice Mayor Wolf commented that resident Jim Rulli is the community representative at the WeThrive! collaborative meetings, and Merrie Stillpass and Kathy Kramer have also been very involved with the program. Vice Mayor Wolf stated that once the change tool

has been completed, it can be used as an aid to Council in identifying needs of Village and where to focus next.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **LAND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Mayor Muething reported that in 2014, the committee spent time examining the Village's underutilized properties to get a better understanding for development on those sites. The committee met with various members of the professional real estate market. He noted that as part of that process, the proposed next step is to enter into a listing agreement.

Mayor Muething presented, read and moved to approve Resolution 2015-2, Resolution Authorizing the Village Manager to Enter into a Contract with Jones Lang LaSalle to Market the North Site. Seconded by Mr. Doering and the motion carried unanimously. The resolution designates the 7 acres (approximately) that was the former swim club as well as 7 acres on back side of property near cell phone tower. It excludes the portion used as the service department.

The committee reviewed this site and concluded that utilization for the maintenance operations was very valuable to the Village for a number of reasons including response times. It is hopeful the other portions of the site can be developed. Mayor Muething noted that on the listing agreement under first whereas clause, the total should be listed as 14 acres and the Exhibit for the listing agreement is accurate.

Vice Mayor Wolf commented that this step is in keeping with the Long Range Plan previously adopted by the Village, which was approved in 2010.

Mr. Warren thanked the committee and the Village Manager for helping council better understand the properties.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

Mayor Muething announced that there will be a lecture by Dr. Janet Klem on March 2 at 7 p.m. in the community room. Klem is a veterinarian whose office is in Deer Park. She will talk about challenges with wildlife in our area.

Mayor Muething announced the Village's One Stop Drop recycling event has been set for Sunday, March 29 from noon-4 p.m. at the Amberley Green parking lot. The items accepted at the event are old electronics and secure paper shredding. The Village benefits from the tonnage recycled from this event as it increases the dollars awarded to the Village from the Hamilton County Recycling Incentive program. A new collection item this year is kitchenware. A Village resident is involved with a Hamilton County program that provides kitchenware to mentally challenged individuals who are able to move into their first apartment. Kitchenware items include lightly used plates, pots, pans, and utensils.

Mayor Muething announced that April 22 at 6 p.m. has been selected for the Village's Arbor Day/Earth Day celebration. The location for the tree planting is being discussed and will be announced closer to the event. The initial presentation takes place by the flag pole in front of the Village's municipal building.

Mayor Muething stated that Merrie Stillpass, former Mayor and Councilmember, has been very active in the Mill Creek Watershed Council which has set a charette for

February 19 to review elements of the Mill Creek for environmental maintenance. The lower Mill Creek portion is the area to which Amberley is connected. The event is open to residents and is an opportunity to improve water quality and drainage. The charette will be held at the American Sign Museum located at 1330 Monmouth Street in Fort Washington from 4:30-6:30p.m. Mrs. Conway noted that a charette is a brainstorming day where groups walk the area and each group has a different focus; it is very interactive and no expertise is needed.

### **HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE COMMITTEE**

Vice Mayor Wolf reported that the committee met on January 28 to continue discussing improvements to make Village streets safer. Some pedestrian improvements made include 80 reflective vests obtained through Safe Cincinnati which are available to residents; the crosswalk at Section/Elbrook was improved with signage and spinners; two speed monitors are being rotated in the Village and the installation of signs to tell pedestrian walk facing traffic have been added.

Vice Mayor Wolf stated that the next focus will be to slow traffic in Elbrook, Rollman Estates, Sagamore, Fair Haven Lane and develop improvements for safer crossing at Longmeadow and Appleridge.

The committee plans to continue to meet regarding pedestrian safety. She then thanked staff for including a lot of information in E-News regarding the topic.

### **MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Lahrmer reported that the Ohio Department of Natural Resources has notified the Village that the dam, since the modifications have been completed, will no longer be regulated. The letter dated January 9 was received by the Village last month.

The Village received a report from the energy consultant that reflected savings for the first 11 months of 2014. The gas aggregation program saved \$26,000 and the electric program saved \$60,000 for residents and businesses in the Village who participated. The consultant also shared other community aggregation rates, which are higher than the Village's locked-in rate.

Mr. Lahrmer reported that the Village has 2 vacancies to be filled from the maintenance worker hiring process. The Village received 76 applications which were narrowed to 42 applicants who took the fitness test. Then 18 were chosen to interview with a panel format. The top six candidates were interviewed on February 9. It is anticipated that the selection process will conclude by month's end.

Mr. Lahrmer reported a software glitch in regards to distributing the e-blast of the council packet materials to website subscribers on Monday afternoon. The hyperlinks on the agenda were not viewable for end-users.

Mr. Lahrmer commented that the Village's 2014 Financial Statement was advertised publicly in the Enquirer and is available for public viewing in the administration office. It will be posted on the Village website for viewing.

### **CHIEF'S REPORT**

Lt. Blum reported that the department ordered another digital speed sign which is solar powered and has analysis capability. It will arrive in 2-3 weeks and be placed at Elbrook and Section.

Lt. Blum commented that the department has encouraged officers to be proactive in the area of pedestrian safety as well as educate individuals. As a result, citations and drug arrests have increased.

Lt. Blum shared that Darlene Waldron has been hired to fill the vacant second shift dispatch position. Ms. Waldron has over 10 years experience with Hamilton County and the Kenton County Police Department. After 2-3 weeks of additional training, Ms. Waldron will work the 3 p.m. - 11 p.m. shift.

Lt. Blum announced that there is an active selection process for a police officer/fire fighter position. The application deadline is February 16.

### **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Muething presented, read and moved to approve Ordinance 2015-1, Ordinance Amending Section 31.10 of the Village Code to Allow Meetings to be Rescheduled by Motion and waive three readings of the ordinance. Seconded by Mrs. Conway and the roll call showed the following vote:

AYE: Bardach, Conway, Doering, Hattenbach, Muething, Warren, Wolf (7)  
NAY: (0)

Mayor Muething moved to pass Ordinance 2015-1 as an emergency measure to enable Council to change the date of an upcoming meeting without delay to promote the efficient operation of the Village. Seconded by Mr. Hattenbach and the roll call showed the following vote:

AYE: Bardach, Conway, Doering, Hattenbach, Muething, Warren, Wolf (7)  
NAY: (0)

Mayor Muething moved to change the regular September Council meeting date to September 9 at 6:30 p.m. Seconded by Mrs. Conway and the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Muething reported that the Council has completed its evaluation process for the Village Manager. He noted that it was a vigorous multi-step process that has taken several months to complete and it included a self-evaluation, evaluation by members of council, and upward feedback from direct reports. He presented a list of seven objectives as the final step in the process and described the objectives, over and above the manager's job description, as follows:

1. Update the sustainability process plan which was completed in 2013.
2. Develop marketing plans for the Amberley Green and North Site.
3. Develop plan for use of social media to improve two-way communications.
4. Continue to examine pedestrian safety.
5. Review technology software and website to ensure best practices.
6. Review ways to enhance the Village, i.e. sign replacement, guardrail replacement.
7. Continue program of regular meetings with Village businesses.

Mayor Muething moved to approve the objectives and include them as part of the evaluation in 2015. Seconded by Mr. Hattenbach and the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Muething reported that at its January meeting Council held executive session regarding the Village Manager's contract. The ordinance would amend the manager's pay to \$103,000 annually, which is an increase of three percent. Mayor Muething presented, read and moved to approve Ordinance 2015-2, Authorizing Addendum to Village Manager's Employment Contract and waive three readings of the ordinance. Seconded by Mrs. Conway and the roll call showed the following vote:

AYE: Bardach, Conway, Doering, Hattenbach, Muething, Warren, Wolf (7)  
NAY: (0)

Mr. Warren noted that the CPI for 2014 was .8 percent and the manager is receiving nearly three times that amount.

Mayor Muething commented that all of Council believes that the Village Manager has done a great job and moved the Village's financial position and other items in a very positive direction over the last few years. The evaluation process is important and Council will review its process to look for areas for improvement to make the process better. A new element this year was the upward feedback from direct reports.

Mrs. Conway shared that the Council considered the process from the viewpoint of what is the best way to evaluate a village manager, not this village manager. She noted the ordinance highlights that the manager has diligently and admirably represented the Village.

Mr. Warren commented that this was the second year that the Village has reviewed the manager. He noted that as the Mayor mentioned the process was built over the last year. He stated he felt it benefits everyone involved and found the Village Manager's performance has been extraordinary. He also noted that no complaints were received about the manager from residents or others and the manager has done a commendable job.

Mayor Muething moved to approve Ordinance 2015-2 as an emergency measure is to timely effect a change in the Manager's compensation and to ensure the continued efficient operations of the Village. Seconded by Mrs. Conway and the roll call showed the following vote:

AYE: Bardach, Conway, Doering, Hattenbach, Muething, Wolf (6)  
NAY: Warren (1)

Mr. Doering and Mr. Warren held discussion in regards to when it is appropriate to utilize emergency clauses. Mrs. Conway noted that if the Council met more often legislation would only wait weeks rather than three months. Ms. Wolf clarified that the use of the word emergency in a municipal setting is an efficient means of processing business. Mr. Doering suggested changing the Village's processes so legislation does not need the emergency clause. Ms. Wolf noted that when ordinances that impact residents are considered, such as the panhandle legislation, the process of conducting three readings as well as public hearings has been utilized. Solicitor Frank noted that Council can restrict by ordinance to utilize emergency clauses less, however, it would be difficult to define when it is appropriate.

Mayor Muething shared that residents recognize the quality of staff and that this month it was highlighted with two letters regarding the professionalism of the police force, and he attended two public events where people made positive comments about the great

police force in Amberley. He noted it was good to hear positive feedback about the police and maintenance departments and staff who are viewed as proactive and friendly. He commended employees for their excellent work. Mr. Warren noted that included the administration staff as well.

There being no further business, the Mayor adjourned the meeting.

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Nicole Browder, Clerk of Council

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Mayor Thomas C. Muething