

EMERGENCY MEETING

April 1, 2020

MINUTES

The Emergency Meeting of the Village of Moreland Hills was called to order by Mayor Fritz at 7:04pm, via Zoom.

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Mr. Emerman, Mrs. Kozminski-VanderHart, Mr. Richman, Mr. Spencer, Mr. Stanard, Ms. Sturgis

Also Present: William Hanna, Law Director, Chief Kevin Wyant, Prashant Shah, Treasurer, Jeff Filarski, Village Engineer, Ted DeWater, Service Director, Paul Kowalczyk, Building Commissioner, Sherri Arrietta, Clerk of Council, Fire Chief Frank Zupan, Richard Bain, Pepper Pike Mayor

Mayor Fritz thanked everyone for being here and stated that this meeting was being coordinated with consultation with our Law Director, William Hanna, who is also present. We are currently following the guidelines currently set forth by the Ohio Attorney General, Dave Yost, who has expanded the ability for us to conduct a public meeting using this venue.

This Emergency Meeting has been called to update everyone, from a legislative standpoint, so that legislative and administrative can get together to discuss the issues facing the Village, its' employees, and our local government. This is not a Council Meeting; therefore our agenda is not one that is typically found when we administer and send it out for a Council Meeting. The meeting is being recorded and the link will be made available to the public. Mrs. Arrietta, Clerk of Council, has utilized the normal venues that are used when announcing this public meeting. He stated that he also contacted a member of our local newspaper to ensure that she had access using this platform, and held a practice session to be sure. A link to this meeting was also made available on our Facebook page and our website as well as to local media members to allow members of our community to view and listen to this meeting. There is no public comment section for this meeting, so for those checking in, we are happy that you have joined us and that you are showing an interest in your community, however, he informed them that they have been muted. He encouraged them to take notes and reach out after the meeting with any questions; email addresses can be found on the Village's website, and we will respond in a timely manner. The link to this recording will also be made available after the meeting on the Facebook page and the website for those who were not able to attend tonight.

Updates from Mayor Fritz

Mayor Fritz explained the Village's Emergency Action Plan (see attached) and stated that we started out at Level 1 and are currently now at Level 3 of this four-level plan. The good news is that thanks to a wonderful staff and department heads, we planned for Levels 2, 3, and 4 with contingency plans. He is confident we communicated enough on this plan, prepared contingencies, and had a lot of "what if" conversations. Mayor Fritz stated that he is very proud of his staff as they did an outstanding job.

Currently we are moving forward now under Level 3 and have contingency plans in place should our critical or essential services be comprised. They are not at this point, which is good news. Critical services are still at work, like the Police Department. Essential workers includes everyone else, such as Service, Payroll, and Building Department, etc. are still working.

The following staff is working from home: Finance Department, Building Department, Mayor's Admin/Clerk of Council and both the Police Department and Service Department Admins are doing a bit of both; working in the office and at home. Finance is coding purchases and payroll if there should be any reimbursements for COVID-19 related items and those who are working from home are documenting their hours and the duties performed, etc. Mr. Hanna will speak to what is allowed as far as the use of sick time.

The campus is closed to outside visitors. Determinations were made by department heads on which employees could and could not work from home, so we do still have employees on the campus every day, but it varies as to the amount as many are working from home, but may be coming in to pick up items that are being dropped off. Service and Police are still on campus, but are being split up to work in different locations to maintain social distancing and are not allowing one employee to walk through another employee's work area when they are both on campus.

Ms. Sturgis asked if employees who come to work on campus are having their temperatures checked. Mayor Fritz stated that they are asked to take their temperature at home, per CDC guidelines; however there are two thermometers available on campus; one in the Service Department and one in the Police Department. He stated that there have been instances where an employee has been out sick with a fever and they went through the proper vetting process through the Ohio Department of Health. They have since come back to work and are doing fine.

Mayor Fritz reported that Moreland Hills initiated their Stay-At-Home order on Sunday, March 22, in the morning and the state issued it later that same day. We had already gotten the VPN's set up for those that could work from home so they could access their desktop. He thanked Chagrin Valley Dispatch Tech Support as they got that done quickly and have been quick to solve any issues that may arise.

While we navigate this issue, we have two goals. 1. We have to adhere to State and Federal Law and 2. We want to try to take care of the employees to the maximum benefit possible. There may be a situation where federally, we are being told that we have to reimburse someone that is being quarantined, which Mr. Hanna can update us on later. There are also things legislatively, down the line, Council and Mayor may be able to come to an agreement on in the way we can code some of these losses to give sick time back to some employees.

Mayor Fritz addressed residents that were logged onto the meeting and informed them to take notes and email him or others with any questions (emails can be found on the village website). He does have them muted for this meeting and asked for their patience during this Emergency Meeting and the way it has to be navigated.

He addressed budget issues at this time and stated that it is unknown what to expect, but we will take a hit with our income tax. It could also affect us down the road with real estate values. Each department head will discuss the cuts that were made to this year's budget. We do have reserves but our goal is to make significant changes to the budget to minimally impact the reserves, if not at all.

Mayor Fritz gave an update on the Capital Budget request. Moreland Hills and other local communities have requested these funds, and there are two schools of thought when it comes to those funds; it may be re-appropriated to handle some of the financial damage throughout the state and the other is that it may be freely given out in hopes that it would spawn rapid economic growth.

Mayor Fritz gave an update on Fire and EMS services and where they currently stand. He stated that they are doing some positive things locally. He discussed the stats from CVD, which was provided to Council (see attached) regarding the number of calls related to COVID-19 symptoms/COVID-19 suspicious (coded as "Med-10"). He stressed that these calls do not mean that they were COVID-19 positive, just that they are highly suspect and that the fire and ems workers need to take every precaution to protect themselves. He stated that they are all wearing N95 masks and gloves and goggles. Any interventions that need to be done in the field

(intubation if someone is not breathing or suctioning of a compromised airway) called “splash interventions” require that a gown is to be worn. Regarding the lack of PPE, Cuyahoga County has asked for inventory from every department, which they document, and log. There is a local representative from each area, Chief Frank Zupan being ours, who calls around to local departments to find what they are low on and will then pull from this mutual bank of PPE to provide to them.

Mayor Fritz discussed the ability to share local firefighters should one department be down several firefighters due to COVID-19. However, that can all go out the window if the order comes down that firefighters cannot work their part-time jobs at other fire departments. It is a concern of local chiefs associations who are against it, so it is something to keep our eye on.

Mayor Fritz stated that there is an expected spike coming in three weeks, but hopefully we have flattened that curve based on progressive measures taken by Governor DeWine and Dr. Amy Acton. While they could be wrong, they still have to plan for the worst and he is confident that Chagrin Valley Fire Department and other local fire departments can share services and navigate their way through this.

Mayor Fritz discussed the zip code breakdown of COVID-19 positive patients. He stated that we do not need to panic by the numbers and explained that there are different factors to consider, such as the access to testing.

Mayor Fritz reported that the Village is using many forms of communication to our residents; our Facebook page and Website, which are both updated daily. We have also sent out an Emergency Newsletter that specifically detailed our COVID-19 plan and other informational resources for residents. Another newsletter will be sent out in a week or two if anyone has information they would like included, they should let him know. Mayor Fritz stated that the Police Department have reactivated the CERT Team and have had additional volunteers to help them reach out to residents who may be in need. We provided them with a list of those residents along with a packet of information/messaging which they used to call them to find out if they had any needs. A list is being made of those that have some needs, such as delivery of groceries or just a phone call to check in on them. He stated how proud he is of the Council members and other residents that stepped up to volunteer to help the CERT Team, as well as the department heads that helped make these things happen. Neighborhood email groups have also been helpful during this time and asked that Council continue to reach out to those groups to help get our messaging across.

Mayor Fritz stated that he would like to give special thanks to Councilman Spencer who asked about helping the businesses and restaurants. We started messaging on Facebook and the website to notify residents who is still open for carryout, etc. Mrs. Arrietta reached out to restaurants again today to see if there was any additional messaging that we can help them with and she provided them with information from the state regarding resources for financial assistance.

Mayor Fritz stated that the Village is not trying to be a source for COVID-19 specific information. We have been making it clear all along to our residents that the professionals at Cuyahoga County Department of Health, Ohio Department of Health, and the CDC are the ones to take guidance from. He urged everyone to direct anyone with questions to those agencies.

Mayor Fritz thanked all staff members for helping him to navigate during this time. He thanked Village Council for reaching out to him and offering their assistance. He also thanked residents for reaching out to help with those residents in need and, in some cases, even offering to pay for groceries out of their own pockets. Mayor Fritz stated that we live in an amazing community and he has never been more proud to call himself a Moreland Hills resident.

Mr. Spencer asked that since there is a concern for the shortage of PPE nationally, is there any concern that when we reach the crest of this curve that we may run into the same problems. Mayor Fritz asked Chief Zupan to speak to that. Fire Chief Frank Zupan stated that he is the regional coordinator for the Chagrin-Southeast Region and in our region, there are 13 fire departments that he is responsible for. As of today, all departments have a 30-day supply of PPE. He stated that they received a new directive today from the medical directors in the area that they want all firefighters/paramedics to be wearing masks while on duty. This will cause a bit of a problem because with the amount of PPE we currently have, it is going to dip into our 30-day supply, so federally we are supposed to be receiving some supply. Chief Zupan stated that he would be talking with Mike Carroll, who is the overall coordinator of all the regions, tomorrow regarding getting more supplies out to our region. It is a very dynamic situation, changing daily and even hourly. He stated that he has never seen anything like this in his life and stated that it is unbelievable, but he stated that he wanted everyone to know that they are prepared and our ready to respond. We have a good bunch of people in the valley who are ready to take care of Moreland Hills, Hunting Valley, Bentleyville, South Russell, Chagrin Falls, and Chagrin Falls Township. Mr. Spencer thanked Chief Zupan for all he and other frontline workers are doing during this stressful time.

Reports from Department Heads

-Finance Department – Prashant Shah

Mr. Shah discussed the Village's financial outlook at this point. He stated that currently tax collection is up by 5% from last year; however, he does not think that will last. While the Village has heavy reserves, we have taken measures to cut some expenses from our budget totaling \$650,000. Attached to the minutes are the documents that specify what items are being cut and the department they are being cut from.

-Law Department – William Hanna

Mr. Hanna explained the changes in Ohio law regarding digital/virtual meetings. House Bill 197 will change the text from now until the end of the year to provide the allowance of a digital attendance and the ability to vote that way.

He also discussed the new federal law *Families First* and the *Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act*, which provides for up to 10 days paid out for a COVID-19 related issue.

Mr. Hanna state that he will continue to monitor developments and update Mayor Fritz.

-Engineering – Jeff Filarski

Mr. Filarski discussed the budget cuts that were made to infrastructure projects, which are outlined in the attached documents totaling \$370,775.

-Service Department – Ted DeWater

Mr. DeWater outlined how his department his currently operating. Three groups of employees are all working at the same time, but from three different locations; Service garage, mechanics bay, and Jackson Valley Pump Station. His Administrative Assistant will work both in the office and at home. He provided the following guidelines for residents to follow regarding the services they provide:

- No Special Pick-Up or Yard Waste Collections
- All rubbish in carts MUST be bagged and tied - NO LOOSE MATERIALS
- All recyclable materials MUST be in carts (Loose – not bagged).
- Any cardboard not in recycle carts, MUST be broken down and flattened, stacked and tied. Cardboard is the ONLY item that will be picked up if placed outside the cart. All other rubbish must be bagged & tied and placed inside the cart.

- Lids on both rubbish and recycling carts MUST be closed.
- Absolutely NO DROP OFF AT THE SERVICE FACILITY of residential solid waste, recyclable materials, or scrap metal, until further notice.

Mr. DeWater also discussed the budget reductions from his department, as outlined in the attached documents totaling approximately \$140,000; \$72,000 in equipment, land and building improvements, and wastewater department and \$70,000 for an infrastructure project (Bentleyville Road and Giles Road wall) which are not included in the Engineer's infrastructure project budget. He stated that they will not hire part-time summer help and he is holding off on making their current permanent part-time worker full-time.

-Police Department – Chief Kevin Wyant

Chief Wyant reported on the operations of the Police Department. He stated that they are still responding to calls as they normally would. The Police Department Administrative Assistant is working from 8:00am to 1:00pm three days a week and is using her sick time the other two days a week.

Chief Wyant also discussed the cuts/reductions made to his budget as shown on the attached document. He stated that before the pandemic, he had already agreed to cut a new vehicle out of his budget so that they can wait until they receive the federal task force money and use that for the vehicle purchase. He has cancelled schooling for himself and the lieutenant, cut the amount of ballistic shields he was to purchase, and is curtailing overtime as much as possible. Some of the training was already paid for and so they will still be attended when they are rescheduled later in the year.

Mr. Richman asked about the sharing of officers if needed. Chief Wyant stated that he has mutual aid agreements with all the departments in VEG (Valley Enforcement Group), and he stated that he has already reached out to the County and the State Highway Patrol should we need additional man-power. Mayor Fritz complimented Chief Wyant on reaching out to those other departments, which he did early on, so that we could have additional contingencies in place.

Mr. Stanard asked if he is having the same issue as the fire departments with having officers working in different departments. Chief Wyant stated that it has not been an issue as of yet. He

stated that one part-time officer is a full time firefighter/paramedic for another city, and there have been no issues there either. Mr. Stanard asked if there is anything Council can do to help regarding fighting the issue of not allowing firefighters to work at two different fire departments at this time. Mayor Fritz thanked him for the offer and stated that he has reached out to a few Chiefs Associations and asked if a letter would help and they said to hold off for now but to keep an eye on it.

-Building Department – Paul Kowalczyk

Mr. Kowalczyk reported on the operations of the Building Department. He stated that they have currently shut down all face-to-face interaction and he is currently mostly working out of his vehicle. Inspectors will only enter unoccupied homes for inspections and at this time, we are waiving the Point of Sale Inspection requirements. Mr. Hanna has created a waiver for the buyer and seller to sign acknowledging that this inspection was not performed. They are currently working on setting up the ability to do remote inspections.

Mr. Kowalczyk stated that for all plan submittal questions, fee determinations, contractor registrations and other requests, they would be using phone and email only. For those with a project that have advanced to the point of submittal and if someone needs to drop off a form or make a payment, they will need to utilize the plastic drop off bin that is located in the vestibule area of the Building Department. The Building Department will then contact that person when the paperwork is processed or if we have any questions.

Mr. Kowalczyk reported that the Building Department had reduced their budget by only using their part-time inspector on an “as needed” basis.

Updates from Council Members

All Council members expressed their appreciation for the great job and efforts put forth by Mayor Fritz, department heads, and staff. Everyone is doing a great job during this difficult time.

Miscellaneous

Mayor Fritz stated that he did not mean to leave out our Law Director, Bill Hanna, for all the help he has given him during this time. He stated that Mr. Hanna has been a huge crutch for him by helping him navigate things. Mayor Fritz stated that Mr. Hanna’s intelligence and application for the law has no doubt been very helpful and he appreciates his service.

Mayor Fritz reminded everyone to vote by mail and to encourage their neighbors to do so as well. Visit the Board of Election website if you need to register to vote by mail.

We will not have a regular Council meeting next week because it is a holiday, but hopefully we will have one in May, whether in person or via Zoom.

Adjournment

Mr. Richman made a motion seconded by Mr. Stanard to adjourn the Emergency Meeting at 9:36pm

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Mr. Emerman, Mrs. Kozminski-VanderHart, Mr. Richman, Mr. Spencer, Mr. Stanard, Ms. Sturgis

NAYS: NONE

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36pm.

Attest:

Sherri Arrietta, Clerk of Council