

MINUTES OF SMITHVILLE VILLAGE COUNCIL

August 8, 2024

The Council of the Village of Smithville met in special session on Thursday August 8, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Village Hall. Mayor Tom Poulson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Members present at roll call were Larry Allen, Nathaniel Duenke, Joseph Reed, Adrienne Karlen, Patrick Finn, and Matt Haas. Additionally, Solicitor Jason Groh, Police Chief Rob Hartman, Fiscal Officer Pam Keener, and Office Administrator Amy Hescht were in attendance.

Visitors in attendance included: Eric Hartzler, Brenda Troyer, John VanLanen, Sonya & Grant Wenger, Todd Saurer & George Hodgdon.

Solicitor Groh proposed rules for the special meeting to include: public comment shall only be allowed by Village Residents; Public comment shall only be permitted for a total of One (1) hour and each speaker may address council for a maximum of 5 minutes. Reed made a motion to adopt the rules for the special public meeting. Haas seconded the motion. Roll call: Allen, yes, Duenke, yes, Reed, yes, Finn, yes, Karlen, yes & Hass, yes. The rules were approved.

The Mayor mentioned the flyer that was mailed to residents, noted there has not been an increase in local tax for 20 years, and the credit reduction had not been changed for over 10 years. He also noted this would only effect residents working in another municipality. The reason for the discussion is to hire another full-time police officer. This will aid in 24/7 coverage as now there are gaps.

John Van Lanen stated we already have 5 full time officers and wants to make sure we are using our current resources fully/appropriately. Does the 5 full-time include the SRO? Are we getting grants to cover costs? What if we cannot find a full-time person?

Mayor Poulson & Chief Hartman responded that the 5 full-time does include the SRO which can only be utilized during the summer months. There are very few grants for hiring full-time officers and the ones that do exist only cover 3 years of a partial salary. The Village would have to cover 100% after the 3 years. Chief Hartman is confident we will be able to find a full-time person to hire.

Sonya Wenger questioned statistically where is the need and are we having issues?

Mayor Poulson explained that we do not currently have 24/7 coverage and cannot rely on the county for these gaps as they are also in need of officers. Without proper coverage there could be a delay in response time. The Mayor also noted the credit reduction only effects 58% of the community. The people that live in Smithville, but work in another municipality. This would not affect those on a fixed income, like elderly.

Todd Saurer has lived in other municipalities that did not offer any credit reduction and some that have -around the Columbus area. He supports the need for the police department.

Eric Hartzler questioned why we are only impacting those that work outside of the village.

The Mayor again stated it would only be on earned income for the people that are still able to work and not those on a fixed income. We are trying to use the minimize the impact on the Village as a whole.

George Hodgdon supports the police department and is grateful for the job they do to keep our village safe.

Duenke motioned to adjourn the meeting. Karlen Seconded. Roll call: Duenke, yes, Reed, yes, Karlen, yes, Allen, yes, Haas, yes, Finn, yes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Approved: 9-3-24

Amy Hest
Clerk

Thomas R. Parker
Mayor