



# MEETING MINUTES

## GRAND RAPIDS COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION



Held: January 23, 2023

Page 1 of 5

The Council of The Village of Grand Rapids convened in regular session from 7:00 P.M. to 7:35 P.M. in the Old Fire Hall. Mayor John Berry called the meeting to order with the following members and visitors present:

Rachel Smith – Present  
Rick Tolles – Present  
Jody Donsbach – Present

Martha Frantz - Present  
Lynn Sylvain – Present  
Alex Glassford - Present

**EMPLOYEES:** Chad Beyer and Kristel Beyer

**VISITORS:** Peggy Seab

**MINUTES:**

Sylvain stated there are significant omissions in the meeting minutes that need addressed. A gentleman brought up a DORA and it was stated we reviewed it several times last year and she found only one reference to it. She stated unless there were other references to it we should make note of that, that it was only brought up once by the council. Sylvain stated her and John Berry had a conversation about his comment that someone was stealing from the Village and he made a statement about it and she would like that in the minutes. Sylvain said when she asked if there was more than one quote received on the sidewalks, she stated Rick said no and she is not aware of John stating anything but if it is on the audio recording it can be mentioned but if not, it is not a correct representation of what happened. Sylvain stated the biggest material omission was that Dave brought a letter that he wanted to read to Council and Sylvain stated the Mayor violated his first amendment rights by not allowing him to read that. Sylvain thinks this needs printed in the minutes and is significant. Sylvain also stated the letter needs to be attached and published with the meeting minutes.

Smith stated the DORA conversation that she spoke of was actually started back in 2020, she was not stating it was just from the last year. She believed when this was referenced last year, she had brought up the council has discussed this a few times especially during covid. Sylvain stated that was a great clarification, Sylvain stated she said we only talked about it once last year so that is what she wants on record. Sylvain said she is also aware Smith had previously stated this was brought up. Donsbach asked the meeting minutes do not have to be word for word correct. Kristel stated correct. Sylvain stated it may not have to be word for word but you cannot have material omissions, referencing a theft that didn't occur and not allowing someone their first amendment right is a material omission and those cannot be omitted from the meeting minutes. Sylvain stated the minutes need revised before they are published.

**BILLS:**

Donsbach made a motion, seconded by Smith to approve the bills from January 6 – January 19, 2023 in the amount of \$24,461.10

Sylvain questioned the \$1052.50 Panning Excavating labor & equipment for water leak repair, she questioned we do not do this ourselves. Chad stated not this time, Panning has

a mini excavator which is easier from them to dig it since he wasn't sure what he was working with. Sylvain asked if this was related to the freeze during the holidays. Chad didn't think so.

Votes were: Glassford – yes      Donsbach – yes      Frantz – yes  
Sylvain – no, not without receipts      Tolles – yes      Smith - yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

Mayor said approval of bills pass.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:**

Mayor told Peggy Seab that we have some information for you and asked her to schedule a meeting with the office.

**SHERIFF'S REPORT:** None

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor stated this past week there was an incident with an individual that was driving down route 6 that was supposedly a convict. Mayor received an email from Angela Miller that she would like to check in on the inspiration logistics app she mentioned because of this. Mayor contacted the Wood County Sheriff and Code Red is the best thing we could offer, people will need to sign up and it will notify you of things such as a gas leak, an incident they may have or even bad weather. Donsbach stated they also have nixel, Mayor stated the Wood County Sheriff stated Code Red would be best. Frantz called and talked to a deputy about code red and they will not put on anything that has to do with suspects or crimes because a person is innocent until proven guilty by a jury.

Mayor attended the Town Hall meeting with Chuck Thomas, Lynne Long and a couple people from the Waterville Play House and they are planning on the Rapids Rally July 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. They will be having a play called "Grease". Mayor received a letter from Suburban Natural Gas it stated rates are going to go up if approved. Mayor received an invitation from Troop 325 to attend the Blue and Gold Ceremony on Sunday February 19<sup>th</sup>. Mayor said the Chamber of Commerce has invited us to attend the Celebrate the Heart of Grand Rapids Banquet on March 6<sup>th</sup> at Heban's Field of Dreams.

Sylvain stated that Angela Miller had made a recommendation mid year last year that we should have an emergency announcement system in Grand Rapids, she was looking for communication to all the residents. Sylvain stated her recommendation cannot be dismissed by John Berry it should go to Council. Sylvain recommended that Jody hold a committee meeting to review the recommendation for an emergency response system.

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

Chad stated we had a water leak for the service line at Otsego Park. Panning Excavating came out Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup> dug it up and we got it fixed. The garage door in the lab got fixed by Precision Door. The Town Hall chair lift was inspected and passed. The sidewalks were back filled and look good. Chad is still working on finding someone to repair the pavilion and the header in the Town Hall. Sylvain asked if the photos of the Town Hall ceiling got posted, Chad said yes. Sylvain asked if the survey at 24308 Front Street is complete. Chad said not yet.

**FISCAL OFFICER'S REPORT:** Fiscal Officer gave Council a copy of the December Bank Reconciliation and everything is reconciled. She also mentioned that the Village pays an annual fee to be included in CodeRed and this is available for the village to use in emergency situations. Donsbach asked if Kristel would like all council members to sign the bank reconciliation, Kristel said yes.

**READING OF COMMUNICATIONS:** None

**COMMITTEES:** Glassford discussed the Utilities, Sewers and Streetlights Committee meeting held just prior to the Council Meeting. We discussed the process on how we get water here in town, how we can compare to other places that get water and came up with a detailed picture on the steps to get the water from Bowling Green. We are still in discussion and will meet again possibly before next meeting.

**ORDINANCES:** None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** Sylvain stated during the Holidays there was a freeze in the community and we had sub zero temperatures. She had asked the Mayor or Council President to post a public service announcement to the Grand Rapids Community to remind people how to keep their pipes from freezing, if they are frozen, how to thaw them, if they can't thaw them shut off water inside their home, contact the village admin to get water shut off at the street until a plumber can inspect, recommended council offer their homes for people to get fresh water. Mayor did send a letter to Tow Path Radio and they said thank you. Smith asked Sylvain to reach out to Council before contacting the media so Council can come up with a plan. Sylvain stated she is going to communicate to the community as much as she can. Smith stated no one is trying to hide anything, Smith feels offering councils residences to the public without first discussing with Council was an overstep. Sylvain stated an example is that we made multiple recommendations to do a needs assessment which was to ask our community what do you want us to work on and this council voted not to do that. Smith stated we voted not to do it because we could not come to a conclusion. It was not that this council does not want a needs assessment, it is that we cannot agree what goes on it. When this council can agree on what is going to be done and move forward that is when we are going to make progress. Sylvain stated she finds routine violations by John Berry and his handling of the council meeting. It is ruled by Roberts Rule and the Sunshine Laws and her recommendation is Council gets trained in both and do it on an annual basis. Smith said she doesn't disagree with that, she feels other council member has violated the sunshine law by publicly disclosing things that have taken place in an executive session. Sylvain asked for an example. There was an executive session that took place and Sylvain emailed it to Kristel and our village solicitor that made it public record. Smith does think there are some violations of Roberts Rules and feels every member here on council should get the training. Mayor said our meeting does not have to follow Roberts Rules 100%. Sylvain stated we have 6 committees and asked if we have anything scheduled for this year. Mayor stated the committee meetings come up as needed. Mayor stated it seems as though someone wants to stir this up. Sylvain stated she asked for a 3 to 5-year strategy which would fall under industrial and commercial development and so far, we have not met on that.

Tolles said the Village owes for some invitations that were sent out from the Town Hall Open House, they stated 1/3 of the cost was approved. Kristel is unaware of that but will contact Chuck or Lynne on it. Frantz stated the word theft came up earlier in our meeting and just for clarification, theft is not always referred to an object that can be seen or carried away. There can be theft of self-confidence by unrelenting innuendo's and aggressive questioning. There can be theft of peace and camaraderie like contentious and challenging attitudes. Frantz stated that it does not have to be an object that is stolen.

Sylvain asked Chad for the address on the wood that was taken because we need to write a police report. Chad asked why do we need to write a police report, Sylvain stated because it is a village asset. Chad does not have the address or the invoice yet. Sylvain



said then she makes a public records request for the invoice. Chad stated whomever took the wood cleaned up the area nicely, they only had to pick up one piece that was too large. Chad stated if Sylvain is going to continue this ever time a tree gets taken down he is going to have the contractor take the wood so this issue doesn't happen again. Chad stated leaving the wood saves the Village money. Monica Thompson spoke up stating Tree Companies have lists people can get on to go pick up wood that gets left. Sylvain stated we made an arrangement with Chad that when trees are getting cut down with tax payer's dollars that the wood be offered to Village residents first. Smith stated for clarification when a tree gets removed and someone else takes the wood, this saves the Village money. Or the Village would be paying the employees to remove it or the tree service would charge the Village for removal. Chad asked Sylvain so you are going to press charges on someone for taking the wood, you do not think this in turn would make people scared to take the wood from now on. Chad stated we did not post that it had to be a village resident to be able to request the wood. Smith asked who would she press charges against if we do not know who took the wood. Sylvain stated we would find out who took it. Smith asked the Mayor if we could move on.

**COMMENTS:** Mayor stated a long-time resident passed away and his name is Bill Bostleman, gives condolences to the family. Mayor stated we received the final audit for the Village everything is in really good shape on it and thanked Kristel. Mayor stated there was some additional procedures that a council person had asked to have looked into. This person started some propaganda some time ago and here are the results from the State Auditor:

We recalculated the January 2022 termination payment of the Village Administrator, Mayor stated which we have heard about this many times that we did wrong to the Village by paying him too much and they found no exceptions.

They confirmed the appointment of the Interim Administrator, they confirmed the interim administrator met the minimum requirements of the position, they found the appointment of interim administrator was just not approved in the minutes, Mayor stated it was an appointment by the Mayor.

We inquired with management and inspected the minutes and payment ledger of any business relationships between the former Village Administrator and the former Village Solicitor, the village had no business relationships.

We inquired of management the existence of a purchasing policy, we inspected the policy in the Village Administrator's job description and the Village Administrator is required to follow the purchasing policy they found no exceptions, they selected 5 disbursements approved by the Village Council they found no exceptions, the disbursements were for a proper public purpose they found no exceptions, the disbursements followed the purchasing policy they found no exceptions.

They inspected the receipt register report and confirmed the Village Solicitor donated his salary for the year ended December 31, 2020 to the Village they found no exceptions, they inspected the receipt register report to determine whether these receipts were allocated to the proper fund and account they found no exceptions, they inspected the receipt register report to determine whether the receipts were recorded in the proper year they found no exceptions.

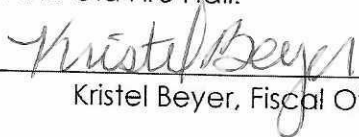
Mayor stated so the propaganda that is getting spread around has stirred up that the Village is doing something wrong. These additional procedures that were requested, there was no exceptions found. Mayor does not know why someone stirs things up like this and

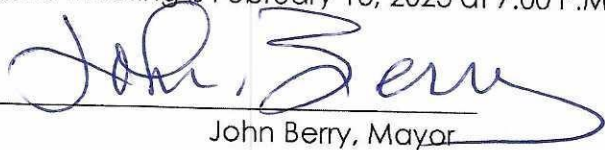
doesn't feel it is a good situation for the Village and it has been going on for a couple years. Sylvain asked if the auditors report is published on the website, Kristel stated it is published on the Auditor's Website.

The Mayor stated the meeting was adjourned and Michelle O'Neill spoke up that she wanted to speak. Michelle O'Neill stated she has lived here since 2019 and found out the Village does not allow chickens. She feels this is something that should be changed. Her suggestion is to limit the amount of chickens, no roosters, chickens confined in a pen or run, chickens should be 25 feet away from any neighbors door or window, no slaughtering outdoors and no permit required. She gave the Mayor a proposed Ordinance and hopes Council will consider.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting is February 13, 2023 at 7:00 P.M. at the Old Fire Hall.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristel Beyer, Fiscal Officer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Berry, Mayor

All formal actions of the Council of The Village of Grand Rapids concerning and relating to the adoption of resolutions and/or motions passed at this meeting were adopted in a meeting open to the public, in compliance with the law, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.