



# MEETING MINUTES

## GRAND RAPIDS COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION



Held: February 13, 2023

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The Council of The Village of Grand Rapids convened in regular session from 7:00 P.M. to 8:07 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:**

Smith made a motion, seconded by Frantz to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 9, 2023. Mayor stated if there are no other corrections they will be accepted as written.

Donsbach made a motion, seconded by Smith to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 23, 2023. Mayor stated if there are no corrections they are accepted as presented.

**BILLS:**

Donsbach made a motion, seconded by Tolles to approve the bills from January 20 – February 9, 2023 in the amount of \$49,214.12.

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

**MOTION APPROVED**

Mayor said approval of bills pass.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:**

Mayor stated he appointed Ryan Rothenbuhler to be the Village's Solicitor. Mayor explained he needs to be approved by Council and he will serve until his successor is duly appointed and approved. Mayor stated his salary is \$7,500/year just like Mr. Marsh's was for many years. Mr. Rothenbuhler stated he plans to attend every meeting. Sylvain asked Mr. Rothenbuhler if he aquired any additional experience in municipal law since they last spoke. Mr. Rothenbuhler said he has worked for a municipal law firm that represented up to 14 towns, he has worked with many village's over the past. Sylvain stated the only experience he mentioned last time was he job shadowed Mr. Marsh in Pemberville. Mr. Rothenbuhler stated that they had done Pemberville and Grand Rapids for 10 years until he took over for the Village. Sylvain stated so that is your experience then. Mr. Rothenbuhler stated yes and many other Village's we did in the past as mentioned. Sylvain stated we also discussed the \$7,500/year and Mr. Marsh actually donated his salary back to the Village. Mr. Rothenbuhler stated he did not get paid at all last year. The Mayor and him talked and he will start coming to all the meefings and will start getting paid this year. Sylvain asked if he will be donating it back, Mr. Rothenbuhler stated he does not plan on donating it back.

Smith made a motion seconded by Donsbach to appoint Ryan Rothenbuhler as our Village Solicitor.

Votes Were: Frantz – yes  
Smith – yes

Sylvain – no  
Glassford – yes

Tolles – yes  
Donsbach – yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

David Fowler wanted to clarify some statements that were made a couple times on his behalf by Sylvain. He did not feel at any time when he was trying to present the letter that his rights were restricted or not allowed. He came to a mutual agreement with the Mayor, that he would not present it. He thinks if he pushed the issue he feels he would have been allowed to present it. He does not want to be another point of contention for people in this room, there is enough of that. David Fowler stated to Sylvain that when she first came on and he watched from afar she brought a lot of great ideas to the council. The employee handbook needs revised, there needs to be a needs assessment, committees need to be meeting more, council needs to be more involved, those things all should happen and he believes that everyone believes that as well. Fowler stated where Sylvain is coming off astray is presentation, everyone is willing to meet on the things you brought to the table. He feels from an outside looking in, no matter what is done or what progress is made none of it appears to be good enough. Fowler stated there seems to be no willingness to cooperate with the council on making the needs assessment happen. He stated maybe everything you want in there doesn't need to go in there. He stated there was an agreement of most that no one was qualified to revise the employee handbook but there has been nothing brought forward, he stated he is not saying she needs to be that person. But there has been a lot of bland statements of we are not comparing ourselves to the right villages but you are not bringing the information on who the right villages are for when we were looking at the water bill. Fowler stated from the outside looking in it seems your putting forth problems and when they are being addressed you are not willing to bend or work with anyone. They are bringing ideas to the table and seems you are fighting them even when it is your idea at the table. Fowler stated this is just his opinion and asked her to take it however she wants but hopes she takes it in the spirit it was given. He feels there has been enough negativity put out by her to everyone in this room. He thinks her heart is in the right place, thinks she wants to see change but thinks she has some kind of vendetta with something that happened or wants something to happen but it is not clear what that is. Fowler stated to Sylvain she has his email and phone number if she wants to talk but he feels she needs to get out of her own way. He hopes she can do that because he thinks she had great ideas.

Mayor told Peggy Seab that he would like to schedule another meeting with her whenever she is available. Peggy stated she is retired so anytime.

**SHERIFF'S REPORT:** Sheriff gave Mayor monthly report. Mayor asked the deputy if there has been anything unusual happening. The deputy stated the usual ever now and then a business gets left unlocked. Sylvain stated a member of the community brought up the idea of implementing DORA (designated outdoor refreshment area) in this community and asked the deputy if he is familiar with DORA and any impacts it has had on other local communities. Deputy apologized he is not aware of DORA.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor stated we have DORA to discuss we should probably put this into a safety committee. Donsbach stated she talked with other council members and we decided it should be a council committee of the whole meeting. Sylvain stated she has paperwork that states what DORA is, what the ORC is, who has it in our local areas, the paperwork we need to file, how

long it is good for and we had a resident state we should ask the sheriff and what is the impact, this was why she asked the sheriff. Sylvain stated according to our population we can have up to three DORA's for our community, she doesn't know if that is needed but that is what is says. Sylvain will leave this information with the president of council. Brian Martin stated as a business owner in Defiance, the City of Defiance does have a DORA, so he would suggest that the downtown visitor's bureau or the Chamber of Commerce be reached out to, to see how they have successfully incorporated the DORA into their downtown events. He has seen them use this successfully and has had patrons enjoy the benefits of it as well. Mayor stated we also need to schedule a sidewalk committee meeting to discuss where we want to continue the work. Mayor said we have some areas that are growing some bushes, shrubs and flowers they need to be maintained yearly and throughout the summer. He thought we could have a parks committee to look at those and have a company possibly take care of them throughout the year and suggest plantings. Tolles stated there is a Grand Growers meeting the end of March and he can bring that up.

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** Chad stated Miss Lily's applied for a liquor license and the Ohio Department of Commerce is asking if we would like to request a hearing on it if the village objects. The sheriff's office raised their rates to \$46.44 an hour, it was \$42.72. The Ohio EPA came in and did a sanitary survey on the public water system and they found no violations on the Ohio Safe Drinking Water Laws or Rules during this inspection. We received another invoice from the Historical Society for \$364 for the Town Hall Open House Invitations. Do you want us to pay it? Mayor asked if this was a third of the total cost? Chad said that is what we were told. Angie Studer spoke and stated she believes it is  $\frac{1}{4}$  since the Historical Society, Chamber, Arts Council and the Village were paying for it. Smith didn't recall this being brought to us in advance. Kristel said she talked to Chuck and he apologized it wasn't presented but was hoping the Village would share the cost of the Village Town Hall building. Chad ordered 20 more tons of salt at \$54.78 a ton. He got unlimited pickup scheduled for April 22, 2023, they stated the cost would be comparable to last year. He would like to recommend a \$1,200 payment to the Historical Society for use of the Old Fire Hall in 2022, this is just like the village has done in the past. Sylvain questioned, we are paying them to use this building? Chad said yes just like we have in the past. Sylvain asked if this is to cover utilities and stuff. Chad said yes. Kleinfelder did finish the survey and told Sylvain the tree's are the Villages. Sylvain asked the status of the clock, Chad said when the weather gets nicer they will look into it. Sylvain asked status of the pavilion, Chad had someone look at it and is waiting to hear back. He also had someone look at the Town Hall header and is waiting to hear from them as well. Sylvain asked if he had anymore tree's cut down. Chad said no. Mayor received a Solid Waste Management Survey and he will get to Chad to complete and send in. Mayor asked if there was anyway to get another dumpster out there, Chad said we do not have anymore room for another one.

**FISCAL OFFICER'S REPORT:** Fiscal Officer gave Council a copy of the January Bank Reconciliation and everything is reconciled. She also mentioned that the CCA will not be sending a representative this year. They will continue the taxpayer assistance forms and gave council a copy. She gave Council a copy of the Village Brochure and Village Notes for the Spring mailing and asked Council if they see any corrections needed to let her know. The Village was contacted by the Bureau of Workers Compensation for an audit. They came last week and performed the audit and there were no findings, which means we are filing everything correctly with them.

**READING OF COMMUNICATIONS:** None

**COMMITTEES:** None.

**ORDINANCES:** None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Sylvain asked if we ever published David Fowler's letter. Kristel stated no. Sylvain asked if we will be doing that. Kristel stated someone else already published it. Sylvain brought information on a process flow chart since Glassford stated he didn't know how to do one. Sylvain stated Angie brought up an emergency response system and we have not done anything with that and asked what the status was. Smith stated we have only received one from Angie and possibly getting other quotes. Mayor stated he doesn't see a need for it, the Village already has CodeRed. Frantz made a call to the sheriff's office and they will not put anything on CodeRed that has anything to do with criminal activity because a person is innocent until proven guilty by a jury, so the incident where that person was heading out of BG wouldn't go on there anyway. Frantz knows that was a big concern but is not something the sheriff will put on CodeRed. Angie stated the alert system she had was more informative for the residents. It started because several residents were out here to attend a meeting but the meeting had been canceled and nobody knew. Angie stated this is also for medical alerts, if someone is setup on life support and there is a power outage it automatically alerts the fire department to go to the home to help that person. Mayor understands what she is saying but someone will have to input that information and man it 24/7. Mayor stated it is so broad on what that covers. Angie stated it would only be Grand Rapids residents that live in 43522 zip code. Smith stated it sounds like it is similar to a honeywell or instant alert system. Smith said we have 911, we have Grand Rapids in the 419 that people use and Tow Path radio to get our messages out. Smith stated since the meeting that was canceled we have been trying to make sure that information gets out there at least on social media. Angie said not everyone is on facebook. Smith stated she understands that but people will have to log on and input their information to be able to get an instant alert. Sylvain's concern on this issue is that we had a resident bring up an issue and didn't address it. Sylvain would like these items to stay on the agenda and get addressed either ruled on or voted on. Sylvain stated she is not on facebook or towpath radio but if there is a catastrophic event here, are we prepared? Sylvain continued that Waterville had a power outage during the deep freeze and they had warming stations and thought they were very organized about it. Smith stated as far as a emergency management plan? Monica Thompson stated one of the things she loves about Grand Rapids is that we are a small community. You cannot walk down the streets without someone waving hi. She can pretty much guarantee that if there was a catastrophe, you go knock on your neighbors door to see if they are alright, people reach out and check. She views this as her responsibility as a citizen whether she lives here or somewhere else. She thinks we need to give credit to our community for the great job that we have done and we should rally around one another in those times of an emergency because you can prepare all you want but it is still going to come down to the people of this community stepping up. Sylvain stated that is a fair comment but she is looking for an emergency response. Chad stated we do have a contingency plan for our water system. Frantz asked what Sylvain is thinking. Sylvain wants to address whatever the issue is she wants to address the chickens that came up last week and the emergency response from months ago. Sylvain stated if a resident brings up an issue, she wants it addressed to conclusion. Frantz stated her question was to Sylvain what is she thinking of for a structured emergency response beyond what we have already. Sylvain stated to David's critique she has not worked on a solution, she knows there is an issue, she knows she wants it addressed but she has not worked on the solution. She continued that she did work on the handbook, council rules and needs assessment but hasn't worked on this. She

feels this is part of our fundamental responsibility to have an emergency response plan. Sylvain asked Smith if we can address this as a council of the whole or as a committee? Donsbach believes we have a county system through EMA and believes all of these items are already in place at the county level. Brian Martin stated as a business owner in Defiance County we work with Defiance County Emergency Management Services he would assume that Wood County would have a similar plan. Frantz stated we do go through the County for emergencies, she is a volunteer and that is how covid and vaccinations were handled, there is a structure in place already. Jeff Gensler spoke and stated if you are not the type of person that is on social media, news and talking to your neighbors. Throwing another layer and spending money on another system which he assumes a resident will need to sign up for and will have to have a smart phone or some device to get the information to him it is a waste of money. Gensler also stated as for the emergencies if someone is on oxygen he would hope family members would know or the fire department. He stated Edison knows, so they will not cut electricity if your behind on your bill. You have to have the basis to why you want this, to be able to start the discussion like we don't have a method for a nuclear reactor exposure, he thinks this is redundant. Sylvain stated Michelle O'Neill recommended allowing chickens to council. Smith stated the ordinance is in place as is, several years ago this was brought up and people complained about chickens, goats and then geese. She stated neighbors were complaining about other neighbors, so then Council started enforcing the ordinance that was in place. Smith stated people were very upset for us enforcing it, however our responsibility to the Village is to look after all of our residents not just a small group that may want to have chickens. Smith stated we can revisit it, she was just giving a background of where it ended up last time. Sylvain wants to make a decision on it and not let it die off. Brian Martin asked if Council has a process for residents to ask to review Ordinances, he wasn't aware of the resident asking for the ordinance to be reviewed, he thought it was just a topic brought up that evening. Mayor stated it was a question and she brought an ordinance from another town. Sylvain stated in the minutes it states Michelle O'Neill gave the Mayor an Ordinance and asked Council to consider. Mayor stated a meeting will need scheduled to discuss. Sylvain brought up the needs assessment and that it was brought up and voted down. Sylvain asked if we can put out an open ended question to ask the community what three things they want us to work on. Smith stated she would like to revisit the needs assessment maybe just call it a general survey. She thinks we can use something like survey monkey to gather the data for us. Frantz stated another format was offered and made by someone that does it for a living. They offered to collect all the data and return the results to the council. Sylvain stated the other item is the dog park that she believes Frantz suggested and she brought information for a guide to creating a dog park. Smith stated it was mentioned at the last meeting that we should all attend sunshine laws and roberts rules training. She had a resident send her some information and she did some research and there are two upcoming webinars on Sunshine Law. The first webinar is Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> at 9 am and one on April 11<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm, they both last for 3 hours. Roberts Rules has training oppurtunites but nothing is scheduled, may just need to login to watch, she is not aware of a cost for the Robert Rules but knows the Sunshine Law Training is free. Smith recommends everyone to take the training. Frantz stated there is a teacher that teaches parliamentary procedures and asked if anyone is interested. Sylvain is not interested in parliamentary laws, she is interested in Sunshine Laws and Roberts Rules. Fowler offered his blowup screen for councils use for these trainings if interested.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Sylvain had a question about business growth, she believes that everyone is


aware that the bike shop moved out, she stated we are struggling downtown. She asked what can the council do to bring more people in town and make the town healthier. Sylvain stated DORA is an emotional topic whether you want alcohol or not want it. Is there something beyond that we can do for the businesses, she doesn't have a bunch of suggestions. Sylvain suggested to the Arts Council that she wants to have a golf cart art cart parade and have cardboard boat races. Mayor stated years ago there were canoe races. Smith thinks they are on the right path with Christmas Open House and Light the Night for the winter months. Sylvain gave many other ideas of events. Brian Martin asked how many times the street gets closed down for events. He stated how do you attract people to that event and how do you get the pull through of people coming back to town. He also suggested a food truck festival for one night. Council has the control of closing the street that is your power. Donsbach is concerned this would possibly hurt the other restaurants. Brian Martin stated he thinks the one night of the food truck event and experiencing Grand Rapids may in turn bring the customers back. The food truck customers may have never heard of Grand Rapids but follow the particular food truck then learn about the restaurants and shops in Grand Rapids.

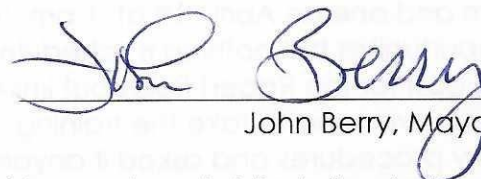
**COMMENTS:** Tolles said he had a resident mention that he knows there has been a lot of negativity but wanted to pass along that the new sidewalks that are already done are wonderful. Tolles stated we have not had a lot of snow this year but feels that Grand Rapids is doing a better job at keeping their walks cleaned. Tolles will be in touch about scheduling a sidewalk meeting. Frantz stated one of the business owners asked about lighting the Christmas tree next to the Old Fire Hall. She thought possibly lighting the tree the same weekend of the open house weekend. This person also asked about lighting up the towpath with lanterns, she stated she would bring it up to Council. Donsbach asked who to thank for the nice valentine and Donsbach thanked Peggy Seab for the kind gesture. Smith asked Chad to get the two Historical Society payments made, one for the Town Hall Invitations for \$364 and one for \$1,200 for the Old Fire Hall use.

Mayor stated we did get an award from the State of Ohio for the Highest Achievement in an Open and Transparent Government, received a four star award for Kristel's work. Mayor thanked Kristel for the great job she has done. Tolles stated we need to discuss Miss Lily's permit. Kristel explained basically what they are asking is if Council objects to the permit they could request a hearing. If council does not object then we mark the box and send it back. Smith asked what we did for Knuckleheads and Wild Side. Kristel is not aware of us objecting and requesting a hearing for those. Smith recommends we not object like we did for the others. Frantz asked if the number of liquor licenses is based on the population. Mayor said yes but the amount of liquor licenses may have changed. Mayor stated Wild Side came from the Department of Agriculture since they brew their own beer and Knuckleheads trexed theirs in from somewhere else.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting is February 27, 2023 at 7:00 P.M. at the Old Fire Hall.

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

  
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 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.