



# MEETING MINUTES

## GRAND RAPIDS COUNCIL

### REGULAR SESSION



Held: November 13, 2023

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The Council of The Village of Grand Rapids convened in regular session from 7:00 P.M. to 8:09 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  
Louise Estep - Present

**EMPLOYEES:** Chad Beyer and Kristel Beyer

**VISITORS:** Joe Pemberton and David Fowler

Mayor thanked Fowler for streaming this meeting, Fowler stated he is recording a video. Mayor wanted to note that anything on the video would not be approved until next meeting.

**MINUTES:**

Sylvain stated she has a point of order on the meeting minutes, according to sunshine law a public body must keep full and accurate minutes of the meetings, these meetings do not need to be an exact transcript of every word but the minutes must be promptly prepared/ filed to be available for public inspection. Sylvain stated the minutes came out this morning and does not feel that is timely, thinks we need a standard for the minutes, she thinks they need to be complete within 24 hours. Sylvain stated she had no time to read these to make sure these minutes are accurate. Sylvain stated the minutes state the village administration notes are part of the official document and would like those published. Sylvain made a motion that the meeting minutes are published within 24 hours of the meeting and made available to the public. Smith does not think 24 hours is feasible considering the Fiscal Officers work load. Estep stated once the meeting minutes are approved, they are made available to the public on our website. Mayor stated motion fails due to lack of a second.

Donsbach made a motion, seconded by Estep to approve the minutes of the meeting held on October 23, 2023.

Mayor asked Sylvain what she meant by getting three extra feet from a property survey. Sylvain stated because she was not using the space and was not mowing it but will do that now.

Votes were: Tolles - yes      Sylvain - cannot has not fully read them      Donsbach - yes  
                  Estep - yes                      Smith - yes                      Frantz - yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

**BILLS:**

Donsbach made a motion, seconded by Tolles to approve the bills from October 20 - November 9, 2023 in the amount of \$39,745.30.

Sylvain questioned Rowe Tree Service bill, did we get three quotes for that, Administrator said no. Estep asked what trees this invoice covered, Administrator stated they trimmed the park next door and blue bell, took a mulberry down and the big sycamore by the ball diamonds. Estep asked if this was all in the village, Administrator said yes and he will be starting Route 65 soon. Sylvain asked about the \$500 Historical Society Christmas lighting

payment and asked if we are paying them and then they are doing it, yes. Votes were:

Sylvain - no, not without receipts      Donsbach - yes  
Estep - yes                                  Smith - yes                                  Frantz - yes                                  Tolles - yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

Frantz asked Sylvain why she wants receipts when these have not been paid so there is no receipts. Sylvain stated we would get an invoice, Frantz asked Sylvain if she wanted an invoice or a receipt. Sylvain stated receipts for goods delivered and invoice for the bill. Frantz said we would have a receipt for the credit card bills the others are invoices, Frantz feels she is asking for the wrong thing. Estep asked Council if they would like her to be here an hour early with the invoices for councils review before passage. Sylvain said yes.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:** Joe Pemberton and Matt Zeigler from Suburban Natural Gas were here to speak about Natural gas safety. If anyone sees blowing dirt coming up from the ground, bubbling, hear hissing, roaring or smell rotten egg to evacuate immediately to a safe distance and call 911. Also wanted to remind people to call 811 before they dig like installing a mail box or even planting a tree and someone will be out within 48 hours to mark the utilities.

David Fowler gave council a copy of the villages records policy. He feels the current policy makes it seem hard to get records and does not follow the tone that the Ohio Attorney General sets for public records requests. One item is charging \$0.15 for pdf or emailed documents, if you go through the sunshine law training it states multiple times that you cannot charge for anything but material costs and labor should not be included. The Ohio Attorney General does not charge for emailed documents at all. The village is currently using section four sentence two "E-mail is to be treated in the same fashion as records in other formats and should follow the same retention schedule. If you read further section four talks about how to file and hold onto these documents. Section 3 is for costs and emails are not listed at all; he would like to suggest making the cost clear for emailed documents. He feels getting rid of the \$0.15 for emailed documents to make it more transparent. Mayor thanked him for the information. David Fowler requested that council stop spending money until the town hall is fixed and stop the parking lot discussions. David said the last couple of meetings seemed like a personal attack on Ms. Sylvain, Mayor stated there have been no attacks on her and does not know why he would even think that. Administrator asked what was wrong with the Town Hall. David Fowler said there are wasps, it needs painted, need the banister raised so we can use the first couple of rows. Administrator said we are working on the painting, the banister passed inspection, if we raised it the people would not be able to see over it. Administrator said we had the town hall inspected. David Fowler requested to cease with the parking lot for now, Smith will honor the request to review it. Smith said what is being missed is that we have had multiple requests for parking, we have great events like the Jazz Fest that bring lots of people into town. Smith said this has been an issue that is why we are discussing expanding the current parking lot and the space next to the Town Hall and by no way a personal attack on one council member.

**SHERIFF'S REPORT:** Deputy gave Mayor monthly report. Mayor stated to keep an eye out for speeders. Mayor thanked the deputy. Sylvain asked if we have had security issues at the admin building. Mayor said we had an irate person at the admin building a month ago, Administrator said we have had a few calls of the alarm just going off. Jennifer Genson thanked the deputy for walking the alley and checking the businesses, they love that.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor thanked everyone for voting at this election, he knows it was an effort to get over to Tontogany. He feels it was a good turnout. The sidewalk project is

looking nice and the dirt will be back filled in. The Village is in pretty good shape financially. It is stable and 99% of the infrastructure is in good shape as well roads, sewers, waterlines. A lot of other small towns around would like to have what Grand Rapids has and what Grand Rapids has to offer. We diligently work for it and want to keep it that way. Mayor stated it seems as though there is some negativity around town and has gotten worse over the last two years. Mayor said sometimes people do not see the good when they are focused on the negativity. Mayor said in twenty years he has never seen it this way but the change happened 2 years ago. Mayor said we are going to be working on it trying to rectify things and hopes that people can realize that. Mayor mentioned Christmas Open House is this weekend and the Sing-a-long & Light the Night are December 8th and 9th. Mayor asked for people to be cautious with the leaves falling, it makes the roads slippery and the deer are out so be careful.

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** Administrator ordered two transducers for the lift station; he ordered a backup transducer. The street lines and stop bars were painted. He received a couple quotes for carpet at the administration building, Kirian is \$6,734.26 and HomeWorks is \$10,426.31. He will contact Kirian to get it started. We are updating the security at the administration building, getting a couple of cameras and a new door locking system, cost is \$4,526. Hopefully this will keep people from placing refrigerators in the recycling bins. Administrator mentioned most of the signs are up, he has the State Champion signs left. Sylvain asked about the lighting, Mayor said he is working on the led lighting and he is doing a comparison on the lumens. Mayor would like them to place a led light to see what the difference will be. Mayor said he has the water/sewer rates these are all for 3000 gallons. McClure's is \$132.08, Bowling Green is \$95.15, Tontogany's is \$100.46, Grand Rapids is \$73.19. Sylvain would like to have a meeting to discuss the rates her initial objective was to see where we could cut costs to lower the rates. Donsbach stated we are the lowest. Sylvain asked if these numbers were audited, Estep stated Fiscal Officer and I audited them. Mayor stated there is also information on water leaks, a 1/32" leak will lose 170 gallons within 24 hours, in 30 days it is 5,100 gallons, a 1/8" leak loses 3600 gallon in 24 hours, in 30 days 108,000 gallons. If you have a dripping faucet or a running toilet these may be the cause of higher usage. He recommended taking hoses off outside. Sylvain asked the status on the pavilion and the Town Hall repair. Administrator has not heard on the pavilion and the town hall repair person backed out; he does have another person giving him a quote but they have not got back to him yet. Estep asked what is wrong with the pavilion, Administrator said the posts are starting to rot at the bottom, it will not fall there is aluminum up through with bolts, it just needs repaired.

**FISCAL OFFICER'S REPORT:** Fiscal Officer gave Council a copy of the October Bank Reconciliation and everything is reconciled. Gave Finance Committee Appropriation Status, Revenue Status and Fund Listing. Donsbach asked if she would like all members to sign the bank rec, Kristel said that would be nice. She was also asked what the previous temporary appropriations amount was it is \$1,234,781.92.

**READING OF COMMUNICATIONS:** Mayor read a letter from a previous Grand Rapids Mayor. Dear Village Council, as a former Mayor of Grand Rapids, I feel it is time for me to address you. I was Mayor for ten years and thankfully before social media. We did have the Sentinel-Tribune and they had a reporter at most of our meetings. Our council worked very hard and tried to do what was feasible for our village. We did not make everyone happy but did our best to do the things for the better for the village and affordable. It wasn't an easy task and not without controversy. We persevered, got things accomplished, and all remain friends throughout the years. Now we have social media and the frenzy is unbelievable. I applaud you for withstanding this onslaught of negativity

and I applaud you for continuing to do a job that you have been sworn to maintain. I support our present council and village employees and ask them to continue to do a great job they are doing. Thank you for your service for the best little village by a dam site.  
Signed Mrs. Judy Keifer.

Mayor received information from a sculptor that would like to donate a sculpture that they made possibly in the bluebell area. It is a tree made of bronze; Mayor passed around a picture of the sculpture. He would like to make this into a water feature, he is willing to take care of most or all the cost to install it. Mayor thinks this would be another item to draw people in.

**COMMITTEES:** Estep scheduled a Finance, Wages and Audit Committee meeting for November 15, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the Town Hall to discuss the wage ordinance. Estep stated the website has been updated with some finance information and the committee meeting minutes are posted as well. Estep said in preparation for the 2024 Appropriations she would like the committees to meet before the end of the year to come up with a project list or goals for 2024. She asks for the amounts to be submitted to her by January 15 so then we can have a committee of a whole so we can figure out what amounts can be used with American Rescue Plan money. Estep will then schedule a Finance Committee meeting to discuss the permanent appropriations and see what projects we would be able to do.

**ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:** Mayor gave second reading to Ordinance 2023-3: Ordinance to Mandate Direct Deposit of Compensation for Village Employees and Elected Officials, Effective January 1, 2024.

Sylvain stated a point of order on Ordinance 2023-3. This is an ordinance to force every elected official and village employee to take direct deposit, according to the ORC 9.37 direct deposit payroll policy can be adopted by the legislative authority but it may also have exemptions from direct deposit requirement. Sylvain stated it is not a requirement for government officials to take direct deposit and asked why we are doing this. Estep stated to make our fiscal office more efficient. Sylvain asked how many are affected by it, Estep stated three. Sylvain asked if an exemption would be considered for anyone that applies for it. Estep stated as we have stated in previous meetings that we have ordinances on the books for all employees with their wages and if not paid we then would be in violation of those ordinances. The current ordinances state how much each person gets paid. Estep stated we had to open a state of Ohio unclaimed money fund because of checks that were not cashed. This is additional work that our fiscal officer had to do and that is time and money as well.

Mayor gave second reading to Resolution 2023-08: Temporary Appropriation for the Village of Grand Rapids, Ohio.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Sylvain has a list of unfinished business and asked Smith if she feels we will work on a vision statement, Smith said yes. Sylvain asked about a three to five year strategy, Smith said potentially. Sylvain asked about the needs assessment, Smith feels the needs assessments needs done by an outside party and the requests on the needs assessment should be attainable. Smith stated when we first started talking about the needs assessment, we were presented with a list of things we were going to take out to the public, there were several things on there that we had requested to come off there. Smith said for example public transportation, the City of Bowling Green struggles with public transportation so we wanted to take it off because it would not be attainable, the person presenting it refused. Smith said this was one of the reasons why the needs assessment was tabled because an agreement could not be met. Smith stated we had asked for a compromise and to do it from an outside objective party like survey monkey but again no

compromise was made and why it was tabled. Sylvain stated that is not her recollection of that, she thought transportation was only for people with disabilities, Smith said no it was not she still has the original document. Smith gave another example, alternative power sources at cheaper rates, let's use the dam as hydro power. How can we present that to residents when we would have to tax everyone for this to happen, this was the sort of things that should come off and she refused to take it off. Sylvain wanted to take a pulse of the people, Jennifer Genson asked why do we need transportation. Sylvain stated the needs assessment started with herself, Diana and Amy from the Arts council and we developed a needs assessment with ideas, brought it to council, we edited the ideas and came up with a list. Sylvain stated then Frantz took it to a third party to have it scrubbed and that is where it lies. Jennifer Genson clarified I asked about the transportation what is that for. Sylvain stated this was not her idea, the question is if the village felt if it is important for us to expand the services for people with disabilities. Smith stated it was not for disabilities, the disabilities and being ADA compliant was a separate topic. Sylvain stated that is how she recalls it. Sylvain stated we already have public transportation for the nursing home and maybe offering people a ride to Walmart if they are going. Donsbach stated they are a private entity; the village has nothing to do with that. Jennifer Genson stated the reason she asked was that her brother Ben, he has transportation through Woodlane and that has nothing to do with Grand Rapids. Donsbach stated that is what we said there are already services in place for this. Sylvain said the great thing about a needs assessment is asking the community and they can tell you they are fine with what is already in place. Smith stated we can revisit it. Sylvain said updating the website and thanked Estep for the updates, Sylvain thinks Chads notes needs published as well. Sylvain stated emergency response was brought up and tabled because we already have code red. Sylvain stated Mayor Berry made a statement that the churches are the known evacuation shelters and addressing something about freezing pipes, Mayor clarified tornado shelter. Sylvain asked if we are going to publish anything on that. Mayor stated it could be published and put on our website. Estep believes the only true tornado shelter is New Life Community Church on Second and Woodburn. Donsbach said this could be added to our yearly village notes. Sylvain stated we have also talked about the village employee handbook and council rules, Smith stated we can review them and then have an outside party complete. Sylvain stated Dora seemed not very popular by the needs assessment which was only a small sample. Smith believed it was 24 people. Smith said we discussed this before and we still plan to move forward with when and if it starts by spring.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Sylvain wants to recommend that we develop a bidding process for the Village of Grand Rapids, she would be willing to write an outline for that. Mayor stated there are a lot of times where we cannot get more than one bid. Sylvain stated in the policy we can place exceptions. Mayor questioned emergencies; Sylvain stated we would create a hierarchy with who can approve the purchases. Tolles stated Chuck Thomas sent out a text today that we just about filled each month with an activity for next year in the Town Hall, the parking would be beneficial for handicap, we also have plenty of activities in the village that this would benefit. Tom Huth stated the parking for the Town Hall is not just for an event, it is for the preparation of the event also. Sylvain stated we purchased computers during the pandemic, she wondered where the computers were and how we could repurpose them. Sylvain's suggestion is to give the computers back and scrub the hard drive and donate them back to the community.

**COMMENTS:** Estep stated there were a couple of letters she received during the election that she perceived as negative. The letters state at the top "News from within the Village of

Grand Rapids Council", this is not something that represents me as a council member, this did not come from this council at least her participation in it. Estep had nothing to do with this negativity and she wants that point made. It is not how you represent your residents by being negative. We are all here to hear their concerns and if we put stuff out like this, they will not come to us with their ideas, suggestions, or complaints. Estep stated this is not how you do it. Estep has lived here all her life, this is not what she wants to see or wants her neighbors to see, this is not who we are. Roger Gluckin stated a heads up on the eclipse that will be happening next year, there is a good probability there we will be overload of the whole infrastructure, things like groceries and gasoline may run out quickly, internet and cell phones may go down temporarily. Mayor stated we have already arranged another emergency squad to be in the area. Jeff Gensler stated he was in southern Illinois a few years ago during one and cars were lining the road. Mayor thanked Roger Gluckin.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Smith made a motion seconded by Donsbach to adjourn the meeting.

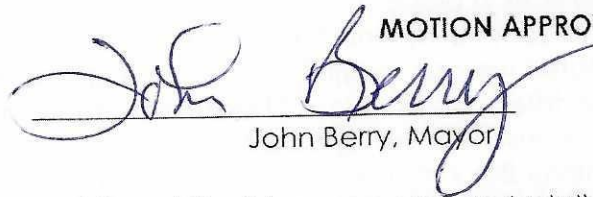
The meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting is November 27, 2023 at 7:00 P.M. at the Old Fire Hall.

Votes were: Donsbach - yes  
Frantz - yes

Estep - yes  
Tolles - yes

Smith - yes  
Sylvain - yes

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

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

**MOTION APPROVED**

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.

## October 20 - November 9, 2023 Bills

October 20 - November 9, 2023 Bills		
Rowe's Tree Service	\$6,105.00	Tree removal & trimming
Suburban	\$203.96	Natural Gas
WC Sheriff	\$10,402.56	Contract Service + Applebutter Fest
UBS Credit Card	\$430.19	Postage, Fiscal Officer Conference, Norton Anti-Virus, google storage, gloves, wood & hardware for swing repair, light bulbs
Historical Society	\$500.00	Downtown Christmas Lighting
Culligan	\$13.75	Water testing supplies
Municipal Utilities	\$17,563.79	Wholesale Water
Frontier	\$334.07	Landline Phone/Fax
Verizon	\$105.09	Cell Phones
Rumpke	\$79.56	Trash Pickup
Toledo Edison	\$3,637.35	Electric
Sherwin Williams	\$30.26	Paint and paint brushes
PUCO	\$35.00	Damage Prevention Dues
USA Bluebook	\$304.72	Caution tape, Water and Sewer Testing Supplies
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$39,745.30</b>	

\*Council Approved 5-1, Sylvain voting no, not without receipts

To: Village Council  
Date: November 13, 2023

RE: Council Meeting –

1. Ordered two transducers for the lift stations at \$1,605 each.
2. The street lines and stop bars were painted quote was \$3,121.80.
3. Quotes for Admin carpet:  
  
Kirian is \$6,734.26  
Homeworks is \$10,426.31
4. We're updating the security at the Admin building, getting a couple camera's and also a new door locking system. Cost \$4,526.
5. Most of the news signs are up.