

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Village of St. Paris

Meeting

February 5, 2018

DAYTON LEGAL BLANK, INC., FORM NO. 10148

Council Meeting

Held

20

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll call was taken by Mayor Reneer with Brenda Cook, Terry Ervin II, Ben Hackley, Niven Jester, Steve Lett, and Susan Prince present. Administrator/Fiscal Officer Dee Meadows and Fiscal Clerk Gina Verlaney were also present.

The minutes from the previous meeting were presented. Councilwoman Cook made a correction on the committee reports. The corrections were noted. **Motion** was made by Councilman Hackley and seconded by Councilwoman Cook, to approve the Council meeting minutes from January 22, 2018 with corrections. Motion passed.

Motion was made by Councilman Lett and seconded by Councilwoman Cook, to approve the Bank Reconciliation as presented. Motion passed.

Motion was made by Councilman Lett and seconded by Councilwoman Cook, to approve the Account Adjustments as presented. Motion passed.

The presentation of bills dated December 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017 totaling \$86,243.33 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilman Hackley and seconded by Councilman Lett, to approve the payment listing as presented. A roll call vote was taken with Council voting unanimously in favor. Motion passed.

Mayor's Notes:

Mayor Reneer introduced the superintendent of Graham Schools who was accompanied by the Board President Ryan Pine and Treasurer, Judy Gears. Superintendent Konnecke spoke of the upcoming ballot initiative and what it means to the future of Graham Local Schools.

Mayor Reneer read a letter from the Pony Wagon Committee requesting to use the old junior high site for the 2018 Pony Wagon Days being held September 6-8. After a brief discussion, **motion** was made by Councilwoman Cook and seconded by Councilwoman Prince, to approve the use of the old junior high for the 2018 Pony Wagon Days. Motion passed.

Committee Reports:

Safety: Councilman Hackley reported that the Police Department responded to 106 calls, made 338 business checks, 14 arrests, 62 traffic stops, 19 citations and responded to 4 car accidents.

Streets: Councilman Jester reported the following Street Department activities:

1. Dug graves
2. Removed tree decorations
3. Christmas tree pick up
4. Gravel in the alleys
5. Trimmed trees hanging in the alley
6. Filled pot holes
7. Water main break

Parks and Buildings: Councilman Lett reported that bids were being taken to repair the sidewalk around the park building.

Trees: Nothing to Report

Planning Commission: Councilman Ervin announced the meeting was held on February 1, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. The committee asked questions about windmills. The next meeting will be April 5, 2018 unless there is a need to meet sooner.

Economic Development: No Report

Administrator: No Report

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Motion was made by Councilman Hackley and seconded by Councilman Ervin, to approve the Committee reports. Motion passed.

Old Business:**Resolution #1288 - Appointing Police Chief:**

Mayor Reneer introduced Resolution #1288. The Resolution appoints Erica Barga as Police Chief of St. Paris. She will be on probation for six (6) months at which time the Mayor will evaluate her performance prior to August 5, 2018. The Mayor explained that he compared her experience with the previous Chief's experience along with comparing Mechanicsburg salaries to calculate her salary. He also stated he believed all the part time Police Officers were in attendance to show their support for Sergeant Barga, to which they confirmed. Mayor Reneer stated their support says a lot about Erica Barga. Councilwoman Cook asked when Sergeant Barga was first hired by the Village. Sergeant Barga answered she was hired in June. Councilwoman Cook asked how much of a raise was this hourly compared to Chief Cosme. The Mayor responded with \$5.00. Councilman Ervin asked if there would be a full time officer hired. Mayor Reneer stated he would leave that decision to Sergeant Barga if she is appointed Chief. **Motion** was made by Councilman Hackley and seconded by Councilwoman Cook, to appoint Erica Barga as Police Chief of St. Paris. Council voted two (2) to four (4) with Councilwoman Prince, Councilman Jester, Councilman Lett and Councilman Ervin voting against. Motion failed.

Councilwoman Prince stated that her vote had nothing against the Police Department. She stated that she has questions. Mayor Reneer replied that time had been given for questions. Councilwoman Prince stated she would have liked to explore the possibility of a part time Chief. She also stated she does not know Sergeant Barga or her background, and would have liked to have done a panel interview.

Mayor Reneer then opened the floor for the public to comment.

Mrs. Lett stated that it was unfair to say that people who have questions about this resolution are not in support of the Police Department.

Ms. Dewese stated that she heard Councilwoman Prince's reason for voting "no" and asked to hear from each council member on their reasons for voting no.

Councilman Jester said he was concerned about Erica Barga's background and that no one knows who she really is. He said a part time Chief was not looked into. He also stated he has "always been pro-Sheriff's Office". With that, Mrs. Hess stated "you shouldn't even have a vote. That is a conflict of interest" to which Mayor Reneer said he has looked into it and it is not a conflict.

Councilman Lett has questions on some reports that he has read on her previous experience. He agrees with Councilwoman Prince, that other routes should have been looked into. He sees, though, that the community wants to hire Ms. Barga and is willing to rethink his vote.

Mr. Wooten spoke about his business being protected by the St. Paris Police Department when he had to leave all of his garage contents outside of his business. He also commented on the previous Police Chief leaving because of his salary.

A lot of discussion took place regarding the Sheriff's Office verses the St. Paris Police Department being in charge of patrolling St. Paris. Mrs. Hess reported on information she found through discussion with the Sheriff's Department and other Villages. Mr. Evans also had spoken to another village about this issue and their experience with having the Sheriff's Department in charge. The general tone of the room was in favor of keeping the St. Paris Police Department.

Councilman Lett stated that since the Mayor is leaving, perhaps the next Mayor should have chosen the Police Chief.

Mayor Reneer chose, at this time, to announce that he has purchased a home outside of St. Paris and would be resigning as Mayor at the end of the month. He stated, "It has been my honor and privilege to serve the people of this town. I love this village."

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After several more comments were made, Mayor Reneer felt it was a good time to stop the discussion and allow Fire Chief Scott Massie present the JSP Joint Fire District Year End Report. Chief Massie reported on the number of fire responses (178) and the number of EMT responses (712).

Mayor Reneer thanked Chief Massie for his report and asked that the public comments continue in a "calm manner". Councilman Ervin gave his reason for voting no was due to being given the resolution five (5) minutes before the meeting and he has questions he cannot ask in an open forum. A few more comments were made and soon Mayor Reneer stopped the public comments.

Superintendent Konnecke asked if he could say something before the Council went into Executive Session. Mr. Konnecke wanted to make three points:

- Everyone has constituents they represent.
- The Mayor's job is to do the vetting of the candidates that apply. "We live in a place where scarce resources for human capital is just a fact of life."
- "You're about to lose a bunch of human capital if you don't listen to your constituents."

He continued by saying "The sign of a healthy community is a community that can get through a town council meeting without this kind of drama. We have work to do."

Motion was made by Councilman Ervin and seconded by Councilman Lett, to go into Executive Session at 8:50 p.m. Motion passed.

Motion was made by Councilman Ervin and seconded by Councilman Hackley, to return to Regular Session at 9:53 p.m. Motion passed. Mayor Reneer stated that, during Executive Session, no votes were taken and no decisions were made. He added that the Administrator left Executive Session on her own and Sergeant Barga was invited into the Session.

Motion was made by Councilman Hackley and seconded by Councilman Ervin, to have a revote for the Police Chief position. A roll call vote was taken and motion passed unanimously. The Mayor congratulated Sergeant Barga on her new appointment as Chief of Police of the Village of St. Paris Police Department.

Joyce Bowlin announced her appreciation for Council's actions and said "we are going in a good direction".

There being no further business, **motion** was made by Councilman Hackley and seconded by Councilman Ervin, to adjourn at 9:55 p.m. Motion passed.



Dee Meadows, Fiscal Officer

2-20-18

Date