

VILLAGE OF COMMERCIAL POINT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

November 17, 2014

Mr. Shelton called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Fiscal Officer Hastings took roll call with the following members present: Ms. Evans, Mr. Wissinger, Mr. Sadler, Mr. Laxton, Mr. Geiger and Mr. Shelton. Mayor Hammond, Solicitor Hess and Chief Jordan were also present. Engineer Grosse was absent.

Mr. Laxton made a motion seconded by Mr. Wissinger to approve the October 20, 2014 COW Minutes. All members were in favor. The motion passed.

Solicitor Hess informed Council that he had been working on the income tax ordinance amendment. He said he was hoping to have it before Council this week for their review so that it can be voted on during the regular Council meeting in December. He said he is waiting to hear back from Engineer Grosse regarding some items that need to be taken care of. He is also trying to set up a meeting with Zoning Inspector Griesenbrock to discuss some zoning issues in the Village. Ms. Evans told Solicitor Hess to let her know if he needed any help with the Verizon issue. Solicitor Hess said he hadn't reached out to them yet, however is planning on doing so this week. Ms. Evans suggested that Solicitor Hess speak to Mr. John Moore, who is an Executive Director in the Hilliard office.

Mayor Hammond said he had attended the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame ceremony where Mr. James Albright was honored. He said Commercial Point was represented well. Mayor Hammond said he had a brief meeting with Chief Jordan. Mayor Hammond informed Council that he has asked Mr. Struckman to plow our Village streets every time the township roads are plowed. He said Mr. Struckman said there are sometimes when only the township roads will need to be plowed due to drifting snow.

Mr. Shelton said Engineer Grosse will not be at our meeting tonight. He has a conflict due to his employer is now holding management meetings every third Monday of the month. Mr. Shelton said Council needs to decide in moving forward, whether they want to change the dates of the COW meetings so Engineer Grosse can attend, or continue without having an Engineer's Report at the COW. Ms. Evans asked if there has been any updates on the drilling of the wells. Mayor Hammond said he has not heard any updates from Engineer Grosse as of the last time he gave Council and update.

At this time there was discussion on the lowering of the income tax. Mr. Sadler read from the original ordinance, the reasons why it was put into place. General operations of the Village, maintenance, new equipment, extension and enlargement of the Village of Commercial Point services and facilities, and capital improvements, were the items he pointed out. He said what stands out to him is the Village is growing and not getting any smaller. He pointed out some areas where he feels a traffic light is needed. He said the cost of any repairs to the roads or installation of traffic lights falls on the Village. He is afraid if Council cuts the income tax, there will be no funds to do this infrastructure that will be needed. Ms. Evans said the budget could be reprioritized depending on what the Village's needs are. She doesn't see Council spending hundreds of thousands of dollars every year on streets. Mr. Sadler feels lowering the income tax rate will result in cutting off of funds for things the Village needs. He said the other issue is

the Police Department. He said if Council cuts the income tax, there is very little capacity to expand the police department. Mr. Sadler said Mayor Hammond came to Council with a proposal for full time police officer positions, not 24/7 coverage, and he doesn't feel Council will be able to fund the positions. Mr. Shelton said he doesn't feel full time officers give you any more coverage than part time officers. Mr. Sadler said the challenge we are having now is the part time officers are having issues with scheduling Village hours around their full time jobs. He said if we had full time officer, the Village then becomes their priority and we wouldn't have to schedule around their other jobs.

Mr. Shelton said Mayor Hammond presented Council with a plan for police protection a few months ago. He said roughly 12 citizens of the Village came and spoke to Council with their comments and concerns. Mr. Shelton said at that point, a decision was made to continue with housing our own department. He said no real plan has been offered on how we are to move forward with this decision. He said it has been months since we have had 90 hours of coverage, except for when we had the Sheriff's help. He said he was not advocating for the Sheriff. Mr. Shelton recommended the following option: move Officer Greathouse from the less than 30 hour position into a 30 hour position; bring on another 30 hour officer, suggesting one like Officer Greathouse, fresh out of the academy. Mr. Shelton recommended to remove the full time positions of Chief and Sergeant from the Employee Guidelines; remove the Sergeant position all together from the guidelines. He feels having the Chief and two patrol officers each at 30 hours is what we need. He also suggested taking a look at the budget and consider raising the pay ranges so that we can keep officers here and not just be a stepping stone. Mr. Shelton said we need to start with getting the 90 hours of coverage. He said once that is complete, Council can then decide if that is enough coverage or if they need to add more. Ms. Evans asked if that wasn't what they had been trying to do. Mr. Shelton asked how hard they had really tried. Mr. Shelton feels we are kicking the can down the sidewalk and not moving forward. There was discussion with regards to what needs to be done in getting these positions filled. Mr. Sadler asked to hear comments from Mayor Hammond or Chief Jordan. Mayor Hammond said he had asked for direction from Council over 7 weeks ago. He said while he was gone, he did hear from Mr. Sadler and had also had a conversation with Mr. Shelton. Mayor Hammond said it was obvious to him that Council has all the information, financial information and the pros and cons. He said while he was away and had some time to think, it has become apparent to him that Council and members of the Village feel that we need our own police department. He said previous to that, he hadn't heard what direction Council was wanting to go. He was afraid to go out and hire officers and then have Council come back and say they wanted to contract with the Sheriff. He said he is fine with the decision that has been made and was never against not having our own department. He recommends moving forward with (3) thirty hour officers, sliding wage scale, and getting a full 90 hours of coverage on the streets. He said if we have someone absent, he would recommend contacting the Sheriff and getting a special duty officer at \$ 26.00 per hour to cover shift. He isn't comfortable with a 16 hour officer. He feels that came about with a lot of arm twisting to get more coverage on the streets. Mayor Hammond said it is factual that we do not have the funds to have (3) full time officers covering 24/7. He said as it stands now, the police department is getting 36% – 38% of our budget. Mayor Hammond said per our contract with the Sheriff department, we have 106.5 hours banked that are available to us. He said Council has two choices on how to move forward. He said we can short pay the invoice by means of not paying for the 106.5 banked hours or we can pay the invoice in full and use the 106.5 hours of coverage at the lower rate to fill in the spaces that we need coverage. Mayor Hammond said he will speak with Officer Greathouse to make sure he will take one of the thirty hour positions. This will leave us with (1) thirty hour position left to fill which Chief Jordan

feels he has a good candidate for this position right now. Mayor Hammond feels having these three positions filled with 90 hours of coverage and filling any vacation time, sick time or any other time off with the Sheriff at a rate of \$ 26.00 per hour, is the best option. He feels if we give these three officers a reason to stay with the Village, we will be OK. He said if we continue down the path that we had been going, we will be just a training ground for better job opportunities in their futures and they will leave the Village and we will be back to square one. Mayor Hammond said he was uncomfortable moving forward since he had no direction from Council. He said he is very capable of getting these positions filled and moving forward now that he knows this is what Council wants. Mr. Geiger said he thought Council was clear in August when they voted to continue with having our own department. He asked what Council needs to do to keep officers working for the Village. Mayor Hammond said most generally, food, clothes and shelter to survive. He said in order to maintain any good employee in any position, good wages and benefits or in some cases self-satisfaction, are what is needed. Mr. Shelton said that is why he recommend looking at the pay ranges for the 2015 budget. He said once we get these officers "confirmed" we need to be looking at a better pay rate for them. He said they probably won't be the same as what a Columbus Officer gets paid, but he would like to see it more than we are offering now. Ms. Evans said she has been at her position for over two years and this conversation keeps reoccurring over and over. She feels Council needs to get to the root of the issue and figure out why we keep having issues concerning the police department. Mr. Sadler asked Chief Jordan a two part question. 1). Why are we having difficulty filling these positions and 2). What will it take to keep officers on staff? Chief Jordan said there are a few reasons it has been difficult to fill the positions. He said the negativity that has been published in the newspapers. He said if you have the option to work for Department A that has been in the paper a lot or Department B that hasn't, more than likely then will go with Department B. He said there was discussion in the paper about doing away with the department which would cause officers to stay away from trying to get a position with our department. He said some of the reasons officers don't want to stay with our department are due to wages and no benefits. He said Officer Kelly left and took a job with OSU Hospital, working as an unarmed security officer because he gets paid time off if he or his child is sick. He said an officer needs to be able to take care of himself and his family before he can come and take care of others. He said a lot of people don't like to talk about offering vacation. He suggested Council do a Google search on the top 10 most stressful positions and they will see that a police officer is within the top 10. Chief Jordan said he understands we are not a department like Detroit or even Columbus has, however they can send out a signal that they need help and it is there almost immediately. He said we could be in a situation where help is needed and no one show up. He said this department does have challenges and that is where benefits play a huge roll. He said wages are a big part as well, however needing paid time off would be great. He said he they can take time off now, however their paychecks are lacking for the hours they didn't get in. He said pay and benefits are the two key factors. Chief Jordan said a plan for expansion needs to be put into place. He said when he started as a reserve officer we had 700+ residents. Now he thinks it is over 2,000 residents and feels we need to grow the department with the growth of the Village. Ms. Evans said for the record, since she has been on Council, there has been more hours of coverage and more money spent for the department than before. Chief Jordan said he wasn't disagreeing with Ms. Evans. He just feels we need to look forward and look at the growth patterns and make sure we maintain and expand the department as needed. Mr. Shelton said since we haven't been at the 90 hours of coverage for quite some time, he would like to get to that point and then go from there. He said he has heard comments from people asking where our officers are. The people said they saw the Sheriff when they were on duty but haven't

seen our officers. Mr. Shelton said the reason that was is because we are short staffed and need to get to where we have the 90 hours of coverage. Mr. Geiger asked if we had candidates ready. Chief Jordan said Officer Greathouse has expressed interest in taking the 30 hour position. He said he has another applicant that he has been working on getting a background check completed on. Chief Jordan said this candidate just got out of the Military and has another job working 16 hours a week. He said when he spoke with this gentleman, he was originally interested in a reserve position however, Chief Jordan feels he will be interested in taking a part time position if one is available. Mr. Shelton stated this was no slam against anyone in the Military and holds a very high respect for anyone in the Military, but posed the question if this gentleman will have the same commitments as Officer Kelly did while he was employed here. Mr. Shelton said there were several times where we thought we had an officer on duty and later found out he was away on Military leave. Again, Mr. Shelton said he was not slamming anything to do with the Military. He said residents wanted police coverage and we didn't have it due to Military commitments. He said nothing against having the Military commitment, which he would applaud Officer Kelly for that, but our residents want and need the coverage as well. Mayor Hammond stepped in and said Officer Kelly was not fulfilling a Military obligation, however that he volunteered to do some type of training classes. Chief Jordan said he was fulfilling his orders. He said he would not comment on Military orders and that this gentleman has finished his Military obligation on October 15, 2014 with Honorable Discharge. Mr. Sadler said we do not discriminate against Military. Mr. Shelton said he was not suggesting that we discriminate for any reason, but what he was saying is Council does need to consider what is best for the Village. He said he wants to make sure that we are getting the amount of coverage that we are expecting to get. Mr. Geiger asked how much more time did Chief Jordan need to be able to hire this candidate and get him trained. Chief Jordan said this gentleman has his Civilian Police Academy certification through the Attorney General's office. He said he was a Military Police Officer in the Air Force including combat and base security. Chief Jordan said he is a very intelligent individual and he feels he will be a quick learner. Mr. Sadler said it sounds like we are very close to having the 90 hours of coverage that Council is wanting. He asked Chief Jordan how long he thinks it will be before we are there. Chief Jordan said what he is hearing from Council is he should bring this gentleman in for an interview and if he does well, send him over for a physical and then offer him a position. He said with Officer Greathouse, once the position is offered to him, he will allow him to give his current employer notice that he is taking on another job. Chief Jordan said within two weeks he feels he can have both positions filled with training to follow. Ms. Evans wanted to clarify that both of these gentlemen were applying for the 30 hour positions at the current rate that is offered. Chief Jordan said that was correct. Mr. Sadler asked if Officer Kelly was interested in coming back. Chief Jordan said Officer Kelly was interested in the less than 30 hour position to be able to fill in as needed. He said that he has called Officer Kelly, who is now considered a reserve officer, and he has come in and helped out when he was needed. Mr. Sadler said we could be at the 106 hours of coverage if Officer Kelly comes on in the under 30 hour position. Mr. Shelton said he wants to get to the 90 hours of coverage and see how that goes.

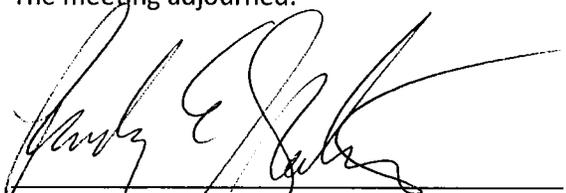
Mr. Sadler asked Mayor Hammond why we have 106.5 hours left on the Sheriff contract. Mayor Hammond said when the reconciliation came in from the Sheriff and it was compared to the contracted hours, there were 106.5 hours left under contract that were not worked. He again said Council had two options with these hours, either short pay the invoice or bank the hours to use at a later date. Mr. Shelton clarified and made sure that everyone understood where the numbers were coming from. Fiscal Officer Hastings said the first contract with the Sheriff had been paid, however the second one in

the amount of \$ 6,600 is still outstanding. Mayor Hammond's recommendation to Council is to use the Sheriff where we are short in coverage hours until the 106.5 is used. Mr. Shelton said we are roughly about 4 weeks away from being staffed at the 90 hours of coverage a week. Again, Mayor Hammond recommended using the Sheriff to fill in until we can get our 90 hours of coverage on the street.

Mr. Laxton said he agreed with Mr. Shelton as far as wage increases for the police department and getting to where we have 90 hours of police coverage per week. Mr. Laxton said he spoke with Officer Kelly who told him he would help us out whenever he could. He asked about Officer Greathouse working on his own. Chief Jordan said that he has been working on his own and is doing a good job. Mr. Laxton asked if we have 60 hours of coverage on the streets now. Chief Jordan said not yet since Officer Greathouse has not been offered the 30 hour position. Mr. Shelton feels we are getting between 50-55 hours of coverage right now. Mr. Laxton asked what it will take at this point to get to where we need to be. Mayor Hammond said that question had been answered tonight. He feels comfortable going to Chief Jordan and telling him the positions are open and available. He didn't want to offer a position and have Officer Greathouse quit his other job and then in a month or so be told by the Village that we no longer had a department. Mayor Hammond said once Chief Jordan gets the schedule put together, they will contact the Sheriff and have him fill in the hours that we need to reach our 90 hours of coverage until we are fully staffed. Once that has happened, we will settle up our bill with the Sheriff and get it paid. Mayor Hammond said in the future if we should need assistance in coverage from the Sheriff due to our officers being sick or other reasons, we can contact them and pay the \$ 26.00 per hour for a deputy. He said this way, we will be able to avoid the gaps in coverage and not have to worry about having four confirmed officers for our department. Mr. Shelton said that is something we can look at for the 2015 budget. He confirmed with Chief Jordan that the two officers that he is planning on offering the 30 hour positions to are coming in at the current pay scale. Chief Jordan said that was correct. Mr. Shelton said his suggestion is to raise the pay level and that it can be discussed during the budget planning for 2015 if that's what Council chooses to do. Chief Jordan suggested that once the new officers get confirmed, they are then given a pay raise. Mr. Shelton said when Council looks at the Employee Guidelines and Pay Schedules, he suggests removing the Sergeant position completely. He said maybe in the future it may be needed, but for now he suggests removing it.

Mr. Laxton asked if the income tax does get reduced, do we have the budget to pay the officers. Mr. Wissinger said we have the numbers. He said the "cushion" will be reduced but it will build back up. He told Mr. Laxton to look at the spreadsheets that were prepared and specifically the trend in the "cushion".

Mr. Laxton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Geiger to adjourn the meeting. All members were in favor. The meeting adjourned.



Randy Shelton, President of Council



Wendy Hastings, Fiscal Officer