

**VILLAGE OF GROSSE POINTE SHORES, A MICHIGAN CITY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.**

VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER - A virtual monthly meeting of the City Council of the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores, a Michigan City was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 by remote video/audio participation. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Kedzierski.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL – Clerk Bruce Nichols

Present: Mayor Thaddeus Kedzierski, Robert H. Barrette, Sandra Cavataio, Danielle Gehlert, Doug Kucyk, John T. Seago and Matthew Seely

Absent: None

Also present: City Clerk Bruce Nichols
Assistant City Manager Thomas Krolczyk
City Manager Stephen Poloni
City Attorney Brian Renaud
Public Works Director Mike Way
Public Safety Director Ken Werenski

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 19, 2021 REGULAR MEETING

On motion by Council Member Seago, seconded by Council Member Kucyk, and carried unanimously, it was resolved that the minutes were approved.

5. RECEIVE AND FILE VARIOUS BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS MINUTES

On motion by Council Member Kucyk, seconded by Council Member Seago, and carried unanimously, it was resolved to receive and file the minutes of the various boards, committees and commissions.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS - None

7. PUBLIC HEARING – Special Land Use 55 Renaud Rd.

Planning Commission Member Pat McCarroll explained the petitioners request for a backyard athletic court. The City Planner report did not report any objections from the neighbors. The petitioner has proposed an arborvitae screen to secure the athletic court. The athletic court will only be used during daylight hours. There is no request for exterior

lighting. There are no lot coverage issues and the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the petition.

On motion of Council Member Seely, with support by Council Member Kucyk, the recommendation of the Planning Commission was accepted, and the grant of the special land use for the athletic court was approved unanimously.

8. REPORTS BY CHAIRPERSONS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

A. Budget and Finance – City Manager Stephen Poloni presented the bills indicating normal and ordinary expenses. Council Member Seely had questions whether any municipal committee had incurred legal fees from the City Attorney. City Manager Poloni and City Attorney Renaud said there was some inquiry into Ethics Committee matters; however, the legal fees associated with that inquiry were covered by the general legal retainer fee charged by the City Attorney. No legal fees have been budgeted toward any Committee.

1. Approval of Bills

On Motion of Council Member Kucyk, seconded by Council Member Seago, the bills were unanimously (7-0) approved for payment.

2. Review of Financial Statements

The financial statements of the municipality were presented by City Manager Poloni for review by Council.

3. Finance Committee Chairman Report

Chair Sandra Cavataio reported on a February 9, 2021 meeting of the Finance Committee wherein staffing issues and the hiring of a Finance/Treasurer were discussed. The next meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for March 9, 2021.

B. Public Safety – Chief Ken Werenski commenced his first meeting with City Council as Director of Public Safety. Chief attended a *Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police* meeting. The Chief was able to share and learn many new ideas from the meetings. The Department of Public Safety, and the entire municipal staff is Covid-free. Vaccinations have been administered to 14 of 16 Public Safety Officers. Two (2) Public Safety Officers opted out of the vaccinations. An offer of employment to one PSO candidate had to be withdrawn. A second candidate for the PSO position should be ready by April 1st. Three of our Public Safety officers were presented with the *Medic Service Life Saving Award* by the Director of Emergency Services of St. John's Hospital for their exemplary emergency lifesaving work with a resident.

C. Public Works – Director Mike Way describe the extensive efforts required of his department with the arrival of 10 inches of snow within 48 hours. The streets have been salted 11 times in the last 30 days. The ice rink is getting regular use. The city has experienced only two water main breaks this winter season. Director Way was

able to save approximately \$10,000 on the purchase of the Cook Road backup pump by going directly to the pump distributor.

- D. Parks Committee** – Council Liaison Matt Seely stated quotations are being obtained for the installation of a pickle ball court. Pool Director Jen Serra has set forth a plan for pool operations this summer. The hiring of summer help at the park is underway. Council Member Seely reported on seeking sponsors for the Fourth of July event at Osius Park.

On motion of Council Member Seely, seconded by Council Member Cavataio, and carried unanimously (7-0), Council authorized Council Member Seely to proceed with arrangements for the Fourth of July event at Osius Park.

- E. Harbor Committee** – Council Liaison John Seago reported that 130 wells are available and 119 residents have rented the wells for the 2021 season.

- F. Infrastructure Report** – Council Liaison Matt Seely reported that Hubble Roth and Clark had provided an update on the meter data. An application for the Michigan Revolving Fund grant had been drafted. The excess sewage flow charge was under review. Construction on sewer upgrades will not start until 2022. Wayne County has not secured any financing for seawall reconstruction. The Osius Park seawall is in the process of being repaired. The sewer mediation agreement has been extended for six months. Charges for excess flow of sewage should be on the decline. Fines for these excess flows had customarily been in the amount of \$150,000 annually. The city has reduced the excess flow charges to approximately \$100,000 annually.

- G. GPSIF** – Council Liaison Danielle Gehlert stated the next meeting of the Foundation is scheduled for March 16th. The ice rink has been highly successful. Sale of raffle tickets by the Foundation will commence soon. The Foundation is getting price quotations for a swimming time/pace clock.

- H. Communications Committee** – Council Liaison Danielle Gehlert reported the next meeting of the committee is scheduled for March 11, 2021 at 4 PM. The intention of the committee is to refine the original draft of the communications plan for 2021 – 2022. Council Member Gehlert stressed the need for a communications professional to assist the committee.

- I. Legal Report** – City Attorney Brian Renaud reported on providing legal services since the last meeting of Council for revisions to the sign ordinance, technical consultation with the city planner regarding the sign ordinance, research concerning executive orders regarding public meetings, attendance at a meeting with Wayne County representatives to discuss the seawall, 611 Lake Shore Rd. Zoning Board of Appeals oral arguments delayed in Wayne County Circuit Court by a flood at the Penobscot Building with a new date to be scheduled, and attention to the Federal District Court sign ordinance litigation.

- J. Manager's Report** – City Manager Steve Poloni described efforts to fill the position of Finance Officer, with five applications for the job already received. The interviewing process for the Finance Officer position will begin soon. A legislative meeting was held

with Congressional Member Brenda Lawrence. She is assisting with attempts to secure federal funding for the Lake Shore Rd. seawall project. A staff meeting was conducted regarding recruiting park personnel for next summer. The safety concerns about anchored watercraft north of the park continue.

9. OLD BUSINESS - None

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. Poverty Exemptions Policies & Guidelines Resolution Pursuant to Act 253 of 2020

On motion by Council Member Gehlert, seconded by Council Member Barrette, and carried unanimously (7-0), it was resolved that the Poverty Exemption Policies and Guidelines were approved.

B. Facility Field Usage Request – Grosse Pointe Woods-Shores Little League

On motion by Council Member Seago, seconded by Council Member Kucyk, and carried unanimously, it was resolved that the Field Usage request by the Grosse Pointe Woods Shores Little League for their 2021 baseball season was approved, contingent upon receiving the certificate of liability insurance listing the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores as insured on the policy.

C. City Administrator Resolution

On motion by Council Member Seely, seconded by Council Member Barrette, and carried unanimously, it was resolved that Stephen Poloni be appointed Police Commissioner for the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Brett Smith had comments regarding retiree health care benefits and municipal savings. He suggested the savings derived from not paying the retiree health care benefits be directed toward the retiree benefits.

12. COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Council Member Gehlert addressed the issue of retiree health benefits. She felt the residents were not getting all the facts concerning how municipal retiree health benefits are paid. She also noted the previous Finance Officer resigned after two months on the job. Her predecessor in the financial position left the accounting system in an incomprehensible state. The change of personnel was not occasioned by a "toxic environment" as alleged by other former municipal personnel.

Council Member Kucyk had questions regarding our auditor's review of the former Financial Officer's system of managing the municipal finances.

Council Member Cavataio said the prior Financial Officer did not utilize the municipal accounting system effectively.

Council Member Seago thanked Public Works Director Mike Way for his actions which saved \$10,000 on a pump purchase.

Council Member Seely described how the city runs on a \$2 million annual budget. Contrary to the impression that the city may give, the city is not “rolling the money”. The existing status of the manual bookkeeping system has created chaos for any new financial officer. Two years ago, the city purchased an accounting system that has not been installed or utilized by the prior financial officer. As to retiree health benefits, 37 retirees are under the retiree “health umbrella”. Nine retirees are exempt and not affected by any change in the benefits. 11 of the retirees are under 65 years of age and are now receiving city funded Health Savings Accounts. The funds in a Health Savings Account are tax deferred. In the last five months, those 11 retirees received \$8,000 comprising two (2) annual contributions to their Health Savings Accounts. 17 retirees are on Medicare because they are over 65 years of age. Those Medicare retirees have been asked to contribute a portion of their benefits. Some residents are being intimidated by retirees who ask to place yard signs on the resident’s property. Council Member Seely explained the city is required to save money in many ways because of budget balancing constraints.

13. MAYOR’S COMMENTS – Mayor Kedzierski observed the Covid vaccine will get us all back to regular meetings and town halls. The mayor is looking forward to again meeting with residents in person.

14. NOTE DATES OF FUTURE CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS (Tues, 3/16/21-7pm & Tues, 4/20/21 -7pm)

15. NOTE DATES OF FUTURE TOWN HALL MEETINGS - TBD

16. ADJOURNMENT - On motion by Council Member Barrette, seconded by Council Member Gehlert, and carried unanimously, it was resolved that the meeting be adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce R. Nichols
City Clerk