

# *The Village of Walton Hills*

## *Committee of the Whole Meeting*

Date: June 13, 2017

Time: 6:00 PM

Location of Meeting: Community Room

Mayor Hurst called the meeting to order. The roll call was taken by Katie Iaconis, Fiscal Officer. Present: Councilpersons Mary Brenner-Miller, Paul Rich, Gloria Terlosky, Don Kolograf, Brian Spitznagel, and Denny Linville. Mayor Hurst also wants the record to reflect that our law solicitor William Mason and Katie Iaconis as our Fiscal Officer and Clerk to Council.

Item C – Persons having business before council. Mayor Hurst states there was a letter passed out by a resident from Sagamore Hills, not Walton Hills. These are all accusations. Mayor Hurst states this meeting tonight is to continue to discuss about property splits, trimming the budget on our prosecutor's contract. This meeting is also about overlay zoning, discussion of that. This is also about the property on Walton Road, the 60 acres we own. Mayor Hurst states we will discuss tonight the multipurpose room at the new building to be opened up to outside residents because we get a lot of interest in that. We also need members for the Board of Tax Review. This is simple where the Council appoints to and Mayor appoints upon. These are the items that will be addressed at tonight's meeting. At this time, we will give everyone an opportunity to have any business before council at this time.

Ken Olesinski from 18383 Orchard Hill Drive for the past 45 years. He also owns a commercial property across the street. He has a quick question. He asks if the Mayor put a sewer at the corner. Mayor Hurst states he did not. He states that it all. Mayor Hurst states we did not put sewer in the right-of-way and got permission to clean up the corner.

Patricia Allen from 6990 Walton Road. She states this is not concerning the letter that was passed out, but this is another pertinent issue. She states a few days ago, since the Board meeting, regarding community day and annual citizen of the year award, our president presented with a copy of a note. This was a yellow post-it stuck on top of a form to be filled out regarding what food we were going to sell and the cost of the items. This unsigned note stated "Dear So and So, I was told to inform you that the Citizens League can no longer present a Citizens League award at community day. If you have any questions, please call Mayor Hurst." The first thing, is this the way that a Mayor should correspond with the president of a Village organization, by ordering a subordinate to tell an organization they cannot present an award on an open forum through the use of a yellow post-it and why? The first thing that struck my mind was that this is being done out of jealousy that our organization is doing good throughout the community, donating to worthy causes, giving Christmas baskets to needy citizens, etc. It was also an ultimate show of power and control that no longer should be able to do with these and give some deserving person their 15 minutes of claim to fame without the Mayor being involved. How pitiful. Do you really believe these persons are not worth their 15 minutes of deserved attention? In other words, the tradition of awards at community day was being unilaterally taken away from our club and all the Village residents. As long as I can remember, there were awards on community day for the Women's Club, for food items submitted that were being tasted, judged, and sold at a bake sale. The winners received acknowledgement and is published for everyone to see. For approximately 17 years, the Citizens League presented citizen of the year awards to outstanding Village residents and sometimes awarded to the families of past residents to contributed gratefully to this Village. This was, and is, a prestigious honor and should be presented in an open form in view of our residents. These award recipients deserve to be acknowledged in a public form and there is nothing to take away from our community day proceedings by not allowing this awards ceremony to continue. I will not lay down and give in to someone applying petty politics who wants to dictate, control,

and micromanage the good deeds of our Citizens League. This is despicable. Mayor Hurst says thank you and asks for any other questions from the audience.

Mary Alice Moran from 7500 Linda Lane in Walton Hills. She states she is here to say she did support the tax levy and our Village deserved for all that has been improved the past few years, I believe our community deserved to have what was needed for operating purposes. She was really upset when she heard a rumor that our police department is going to be cut. She believes our safety forces are the heart of our village and many of the people that I talk to in the community feel the same way. Perhaps the levy did not pass because it was said it was not a police levy where the money went directly into, I guess a separate fund or account and instead the general fund. A lot of people had some real issues with that. She was also concerned when she read in the Journal in the Mayor's section, that the detective services could be subcontracted to the county and she has been the director of German Shepherd Rescue Northern Ohio for 30 years. She deals a lot with the police departments and a lot of police officers have them as their pets and they use them at the house of corrections, etc. The sheriff deputies are overworked. They are grossly overworked and she sees a high level of police and safety care for our community. I would hate to see us try and subcontract that out. It is vitally important. She was the victim of a robbery in Walton Hills and within four days our detective brought pictures over and picked a line-up of pictures and within four days those two people in that building with \$100,000 bond on each one and the police department here brought 10 forms from the Garfield Court running back and forth. She states the labor intensity of this endeavor to nail these people and they went downtown to get an indictment from the Grand Jury and what she heard when we met with the prosecutors, etc. they said Walton Hills does not lose at Grand Jury. She states other communities do, but ours is so highly skilled and I believe so dedicated to us. The Walton Hills Police were there working with the prosecutors and judge and sat right behind me in the courtroom when I got to speak as a witness stating how they should be punished and the judge asked how this could all have happened in four days. They were running to the depths of the west side and drug jungle and these people were on drugs. How they did it, I will never know, but I have such respect more now than I would in the past for our entire police department. She has seen the expertise get higher and higher over the years and it would be a shame with the drug increases to cut the police department. Her idea is to get back on the ballot and reword it. Someone she knows had eye surgery and by the time they came out of surgery, there was a credit card being charged \$8,000 in their name and they called Walton Hills Police Department. Our police are not shy. They had that receptionist at that doctor's office and pressed charges. She has a sergeant at her street that the lady was choking and the police went and saved her life and got back in the car and patrolled the street. She thinks if people saw what we have here, they would open up their wallets a little bit. She states that is what she has to say and she thanks the Mayor.

Councilman Denny Linville states he would like to have a 4-minute rule because they have a long night.

Josephine Wartl, Egbert Road states that she supports the taxes. She did her taxes this year and only paid Walton Hills \$6.88. She supports that we should pay for all the services we get in Walton Hills. She supports the police department. Her husband had Alzheimer for 10 years and 3 times he walked away. Within 20 minutes, the police found him. He was at the metro parks on a hot day and twice a nighttime, and they found him. We really need the police. They know the residents. One night I was in my driveway at night talking to a friend on my cell phone and looking at my mail. Here comes a car behind her that she thought was her neighbor wanting to use her driveway. She was ready to call the police. Here comes a police car that just sat there until she opened her garage door and went into her house because they know she is alone. We need the police. Open up your hearts, talk to your neighbors, and get this back on the ballot for the tax levy.

Karen Reming from 17595 Alexander Road. She states she does not know how many times she has to come up here and say not to mess with the police department. She was unaware that this was put out by a Sagamore resident. I do not know how you know that. However, as of July 2<sup>nd</sup>, this letter reads we are laying off multiple officers. Will something go out saying this is not true? This was on the ground. This

can go into any community and any criminal can drive by and say Walton Hills is open season now because of this. Mayor Hurst says yes. Karen states that she has had kids vandalizing her property. She set up a sting operation and they caught the kids. She supports the detectives. Do not dole it out. Do something else, but leave the police alone.

Chuck Trimble from 17225 Spanghurst. He states his wife and he intend to retire and die here. He has lived here 6 years and they volunteer here at benevolent organizations. He has a couple of questions. Regarding the whole content of this meeting, can he go to the Village website and see anything that documents what we have done here so he can read through it on his own time because they got here about 20 minutes after, so I would not ask to waste time with whatever else you are doing. He is concerned because he found a typed note indicating that this meeting was going to occur. He also got something similar to what Karen spoke about, they found two laying in his lawn. The lawn service just came through and mowed the lawn, they would have mowed it down or picked it up. It was intended for us to find. He has heard some things that the truth contradicts what is on the paper. He is interested to know if when he goes back home if he can get on the web and read. He moved from the west side of Cleveland with the intent of retiring here and not buying another home. Walton Hills comes in at the top. A lot of you have lived here 40 years. There is no question in my mind that he supports the police, councilmen, and the government here. He is concerned about the police leaving. He really wants to learn exactly what this is all about and any handwritten notes that might appear in my mailbox.

John Weseloh from 7139 Deeridge Drive. He states he has been a resident here 20-25 years. He is a retired police officer so he has worked with some of the gentlemen in the back. He would like to implore council that before you cut any police officers at any time, maybe the new building that we bought for \$500,000, cannot even touch the service that those men in the back can buy. He has worked with those guys over 30 years. He is a retired police officer. Before anyone decides they do not want to increase your taxes, take a look at the guys and ladies who work in our police department 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They show up anytime and they are there when you are sick before the ambulance gets there. The police are there to take care of you.

Jennifer Allen from 14533 Alexander Road. She states she is a third-generation resident here. Her grandfather built his first home here with his own hands and his last home that he built here with his own hands. She is a safety girl. She loves the police department. She is a EMS/paramedic. She just came from work. She has relatives who work for the fire department. She does not believe in any way, shape, or form our safety forces should be cut. She does not like people being scared into passing the tax levy because of fiscal irresponsibility that has been going on and we are being threatened with our safety forces being cut instead. At the very first meeting about the tax levy from our department said this is not a police issue. That money does not go to the police department. There are other areas that should be looked at, such as the building that was bought for \$500,000 with \$100,000 renovations and now talking about selling off part of it. There are other things like Mayors' Court every single week of the month all year long. The Village does not need to have more than one or two Mayor's Court a month. I think the Journal should be cut, as editor of the Owl, all of that information could be placed into the Owl as it has been since the inception of the Owl in the 1950s.

Carol Tucker from 7057 Pearl Drive. She has been a resident for 20 years. Both of her parents were residents here. They both passed within the year. Without our fire, EMS, and police, they would not have been able to get to the hospital and have the procedures and processes they needed to do. She thinks we need to look at other things to get rid of. I understand the community center and parks and recs and the lake are all wonderful. If you look at our community here, we are all aging. We need fire, EMS, and police to help. We do not all have the time or ability to go to the park or rec center. That is a wonderful asset to have, but I think having the best fire, police, and service department is more important. Mayor Hurst says thank you and asks for any other questions or comments for the council at this time.

No more comments or questions from the Walton Hills residents.

Item D Mayor Hurst states this is to review the contract for the prosecutor and assistant prosecutor position. We talked about this last week. This is part of personnel so we will go under Executive Session to discuss this. After this meeting, he plans to have an Executive Session to discuss personnel and all the options of trimming the budget and look at the opportunities we have in front of us. Councilman Brian Spitznagel states he has a couple of questions he has a couple of questions that he will save for Executive Session. Mayor Hurst asks the audience if there are any other questions on this item.

Item E Mayor Hurst states there is a proposal to split 14660 Alexander Road for potential sale of the home with a 1-acre partial. The last meeting with council approved this and he did put together a memo to our engineer to have it surveyed and break it out. It still has to go through planning before you have a decision on this and break it out to a 1-acre partial and sell the house to generate revenue. He asks for comments or questions.

Item F – Discussion of Village-Owned Property in the Village of Walton Hills and Proposed Overlay Zoning. Mayor Hurst states we have 16 acres that we talked about that was in the Journal. It is on Walton Road. The Village bought it in 1992 from Bedford School Board and had plans to make it into a rec center or community building and never did come to fruition. They are reviewing that property and look for opportunities for that property. There is overlay zoning that has been talked about and has been very successful. This would offer the opportunity for an approved business to come in and Village of Walton Hills can capture money. The nursing home could go onto this and we are trying to cash out our assets to generate more money. Councilman Linville states that this overlay zoning allows us to not turn it into a commercial business zone, but this is controlled to impact negatively on the neighborhood and the Village. We want something that gives us income but does not infringe on any of the neighbors. Mayor Hurst states that we will have meetings on this in the future. It has been very successful in other communities and this zoning has been around since the 1970s. It is just that Walton Hills has not explored these different avenues.

Josephine Wartl from 17850 Egbert Road states this piece of property, there are so many elderly people in the Village that would like to stay, but cannot maintain the large property. She states that we could make this is a cluster homes group with a home-owner's association to maintain the lawns. The cluster homes would be an asset to the community versus a nursing home. She is concerned about the nursing home because a lot of the employees are minimum wage, her husband spent time in a nursing home for three months, the community would suffer from a nursing home being here.

Mayor Hurst states he will move this on and start the process of trying to get everyone together for planning commission and then you will be advised of the direction that I am going with this and go from there.

Item G – Discussion of Various Other Sites throughout the Village of Walton Hills for Proposed Overlay Zoning. Mayor Hurst states that at the last meeting we made it publicly known and will make it publicly known here today. There is land available on Alexander Road that is owned by First Energy. It is 87 acres and it is zoned country home district. We would like to find a way to make that also overlay zoning and have that developed into either an industrial park or commercial business to benefit our Village. There is a 250-foot buffer of the power lines and easements that go along with the property, there would be no impact to any of the residents on Alexander Road. All of the development would be toward the golf course. The council is aware of this and there is a lot of opportunity here. This is preliminary and draft. The council takes the comments and discussions, listens to the professionals, and we go from there with decisions that benefit the Village.

Jennifer Allen states that on Alexander Road, her property does back up to that. She does not know if Mayor is aware there are some huge ravines back there. Hub Parkway would be better access.

Mayor Hurst states that each council member has been driven personally by him through the area and they know the access. They are very aware of what is going on.

Item H – Raise fees of the multipurpose room for non-residents. Mayor Hurst states right now the ordinance states non-residents cannot use the multipurpose room at the new facility. We have had a lot of interest in parties using the multipurpose room along with a banquet hall. Our proposal is a \$300 fee plus \$150 for cleaning. He needs to make an amendment to that ordinance at the next council meeting. That fee is for non-residents. Our residents pay \$100 plus \$150 for deposit. They do not pay for cleaning.

Item D – Discussion of appointment of members to the Board of Tax Review. Mayor Hurst states he gave the council members the list of the ones on the tax review board and now that the tax season is over, we have not been challenged, but we do need to put people in place. He states he gave a list of the former members. They have all expired, so we need to reappoint and if you know of anybody that you would recommend to have on that list, the council appoints 2 and Mayor appoints 1. We used to have 4, but with the new tax laws, it is only 3 now. He asks the council if there are any questions.

Councilwoman Gloria Terlosky states Lloyd Wareham is still interested if we chose.

Mayor Hurst wants to contact them and then next week at the meeting appoint them and have the board filled. He asks for questions or comments from the audience and there are none.

Other Business. Mayor Hurst states everyone has a memo that is put out every week. There is the recreation report for the month of June. Service department report for the month of June from Dan Stucky and the police department report from the month of June from the Police Chief.

Mayor Hurst states that Trans Star has come out of bankruptcy and has a new CEO. He is coming back to run this operation and this is the gentleman who started this company. It sounds very promising to our village. We are looking at all the options for that visit to expand. There are five acres there for expansion right on the corner of Hannah Park right across from Walton Plastics. We may have some exciting news to mention about that.

Mayor Hurst asks Council if they have any other business.

Councilman Paul Rich states that he overheard from one of the residents. It has to do with the tax and where the police money goes. The police money from the tax that we collect goes into the general fund. Then from there it is distributed to the police department and that is not the way it is being talked about. Some people think we were being deceptive. The money goes directly to the general fund.

Councilwoman Brenner-Miller states if the Village sent something, it would be on a letterhead and it would be signed by the Mayor. She states that she knows a lot of people are here because the letter was in their mailbox, but we did not send it. This is where we get communication that is backwards. If we notify you, it is on letterhead and signed by the Mayor. Unless, it is signed by the Mayor, it is not true. Contact the Village Hall and speak to the Mayor or one of the council people. Do not take what is in your mailbox as true. It is unfair that this is going on to all of you.

Councilwoman Terlosky states she wants to reiterate that she felt bad because she saw the letter and thought all these people are going to show up and then we go into Executive Session. The real part of the discussion is not going to happen right now. We all listen and your comments and opinion are very

important. It was a rouse. They made you all show up and you got to make your comments. Thank you for coming and she is glad to see all of you.

Councilman Spitznagel states he would like to add to the commentary about getting rid of the rest of the budget as opposed to the police and that there was a police issue. Unfortunately, we all collectively decided that was the best course to go because that money has everybody set. If the levy passed, every penny would have gone into the police budget proper. It would not have gone into the general budget. It would have gone to the police. Unfortunately, if you look at our budget as we have looked at it, the police area in the budget is the biggest part by far. We have had a few people come up here. We just had a study done that compared Walton Hills with other communities around us and other like communities in the state. Every department we have, and I can show the report, it would be nice to put that on the website if we could. Every department we have other than the police are some of the lowest paid employees as compared to like communities. Last week, we had a police dispatcher leave because that person got another job dispatching for more money. That is the problem that we are starting to run into here where we are asking our service department to do more and we are cutting them more and more in the meantime. It is a lot easier to go find a job somewhere else at this point. We have to be very careful. Also, a few years ago we had planned on balanced budget. We cut \$350,000 a year out of the budget and we planned on having that balanced. Then we had a business move and it was Arhaus. That was our second biggest business other than Ford that kicked us right in the teeth. Then we had another business move. We keep getting kicked while we are down. We are down about \$600-700,000 a year right now as it stands. Our Journal is paying for itself. We pay a little bit but through the advertisements, cutting that is not going to do anything. We have to watch our pennies and dimes, but Walton Hills is blessed with the police department we have, from the chief on down to the newest guy. We have had issues in my family that we needed at times for the police and they are right there helping, medically and things like that. Our chief grew up here. If it were up to me, I would put a cop on every corner, but we cannot pay people in smiles. We need the money to do it. We are residents too. We hear that you want to be protected. My family wants to be protected too. We are going to do what we can do save as much as we possibly can while meeting revenues that we have coming in. We have to meet the revenues that we have coming in. We cannot let that money dwindle down and then the state is going to take us over and we do not have a decision anymore. That is where we are at today. We are not cutting anybody today. We have a lot of pencil pushing and a lot of conversation to work on these numbers. Thank everyone for their time.

Councilman Denny Linville states he will try to be as brief as possible. Our safety force has grown over the years. He remembers when we had 8 police officers and a chief. Today, I think we have 14 and a chief. Our population has not really grown much. It is about 2,300 and it was about 2,300 when I moved into this village 40 years ago. In terms of what we can do, I heard a lot of people saying, and what is not to like about the police, is what I say as well. I heard no suggestions on where we can get this money from. He states that he heard there was something shadowy going on in the council. Then he heard that because of that letter that went out was the cause of this meeting. This meeting would have happened regardless if this came out or not. Could we do another levy? Of course, we can. Keep in mind that 60% no and 40% yes. He states that on election day he was told this levy was going to pass, but he was not that optimistic. He understands why people voted no. You get sick and tired of taxes. He got a tax return one week and then a tax bill the next week from the town that takes half my tax return. He understands the frustration. To have things and services and the kinds of things you want your Village to have, you have to have money. Things have to be paid for. Hopefully we will come to some resolution that will benefit all the Villagers including the police department and that is really where we are. He thanks everyone for coming and listening.

Mayor Hurst thanks Mr. Linville. He states we are getting ready to conclude the meeting in order to go to Special Council Meeting and then go to Executive Session. The final comments are there is a lot of passion and concerns. We listen to you all and we hear what you have to say. We hear the comments of people that say two different things. Because of pending litigation with ongoing issues in the Village I would care

not to talk on other issues that were spoken about tonight. I would also like to explain that we did talk about this with the Village Council in 2014, 2015, and 2016. We knew these projections were coming. We had to go to court with Arhaus Furniture to keep them here until August 2016. This is not new. We put this on the ballot for everyone to vote. We tried to educate everyone. We had negative comments and false statements. We continue to get those same things going on. These are the consequences and we are being responsible as your elected officials to follow through on your requests. The majority of the people said no new taxes. The majority of the people said balance your books. We brought that forward and said that publicly. We tried to be as honest and upfront as we could. We did power points and spent a lot of man hours. We involved everyone. Mayor states he is in a bad position because he has to make a tough choice. As a Mayor, I cannot be your Mayor in good times only, I have to be your Mayor in tough times and that is what you elected me to do. That is what we have to do here as a governing body, is be adults, weigh out all options and what is best for Village of Walton Hills.

Mayor Hurst asks for a motion for adjournment. Councilman Linville motioned to adjourn the Committee of the Whole meeting of June 13, 2017, seconded by Councilman Paul Rich, and six ayes approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

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Katie Iaconis, Fiscal Officer