

JOINT MEETING OF VILLAGE COUNCIL, YS SCHOOL BOARD
AND MIAMI TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

Training Room, 101 East Herman @7pm

September 29, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:06, Chris Mucher, Miami Township, called the meeting to order. Each entity called its members to order according to their accepted protocol.

Council was called to order. Those present were Council President Brian Housh (virtual for the first 14 minutes), Marianne MacQueen and Kevin Stokes, with Village Manager Josue Salmeron.

Present for Miami Township: President Mucher; Moir and Hollister.

Present for School Board: President Turner, Bieri Rios; Magnus; Hempfling, with Superintendent Holden and Treasurer McGrath

Present for Council: President Housh; Vice President Stokes; MacQueen, with Village Manager Salmeron.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

Stokes introduced the meeting, encouraging each entity to share freely, and stating his hope that this will be the first of several collaborative meetings.

Hempfling pointed out previous and existing collaborative efforts that have been successful.

REPORT OUT FROM EACH ENTITY

YS Schools:

Holden presented information pertinent to YS Schools, providing an overview and basic five-year history and employment and taxation positions.

McGrath listed expiring levies, commenting that effective millage rates decrease as property values increase, effectively decreasing the millage so that it does not increase with inflation.

McGrath provided a timeline for renewing existing levies and putting new levies before voters. These may come before voters as early as March 2024.

Village schools were compared to Beaver Creek schools, with the comment that because the Village has far less industry and commerce than most surrounding school districts, Village schools receive less in taxes.

McGrath provided information as to expenses.

Housh commented that one of the goals of the meeting is to look at “shaping the community to support each of the taxing entities,” expressing appreciation for the content of the presentation, which addressed this aspect of the discussion.

Miami Township:

Mucher described the demographics of the Township, and noted the personnel employed/elected for the Township. He commented that the Township provides five services, those being administration; road maintenance; cemetery maintenance; rural zoning and fire-rescue and EMS services.

Mucher described funding streams, and detailed some of the services provided.

Chief Altman presented regarding Fire-rescue/EMS services and upcoming levy requests. Altman described funding sources. Altman stressed the difficulty of finding volunteers, which have dropped in number significantly over the last 15 years, following a national trend. This has led to the need to create paid positions, which comprises part of the levy ask. He added that the department will also need a replacement ambulance and fire engine in the next few years.

Village Council:

Salmeron presented for Council, noting services provided by the Village and noting revenue streams and noting efforts at economic and housing development. He acknowledged that the schools and the Village “are dipping from the same pot, and we need to expand that pot.”

Participants asked questions related to business development in the Village, and Salmeron shared a potential project involving the Railroad Street lot.

Housh noted ongoing efforts at economic development and market outreach.

Salmeron noted reliance upon income and property taxes and discussed departments and services funded out of those taxes.

Jessica Thomas, Yellow Springs News, asked for comparison with similar communities with regard to taxes and utility costs.

Housh commented that this information should be included in a requested updated to the Cost of Living Study conducted by the McKee Group.

Salmeron presented information regarding revenue opportunities, including an adjustment to the reciprocal income tax, utility fee increases, and possible levies.

Bieri Rios challenged the idea of utility increases, commenting that rates are currently high and considered by many to be burdensome.

McGrath provided information regarding current levy rates, and pointed out that the information passed out by Hollister earlier in the meeting was incorrect. He asked that incorrect information not appear online.

McGrath referenced an available video in which he explains school and property taxes and discusses these with Board members.

Housh stated that only the information provided by the finance representatives for each entity will be made available online.

Housh asked that each body formalize their liaisons to the collaborative so that information is regularly and accurately transmitted.

Hollister suggested more collaboration around shared uses moving forward.

Holden commented that the Village is an aging community, and entities reliant upon income tax will not do well in a setting where there are proportionally fewer people being taxed. She offered this as a challenge requiring creative thinking, because finding a solution is critical.

MacQueen commented on the need for shared facilities, perhaps shared staff, perhaps having fire and police cross train.

Cheryl Durgans, Yellow Springs News, asked why the YSDC is not providing the collaborative conversations.

Housh responded that the focus of YSDC has shifted over the last several years such that it is not serving this need, and that focus needed to be taken up in another way.

Hempfling opined that this type of meeting is a better approach, since all members of each entity can participate and be informed at the same time.

Jessica Thomas asked whether the meetings will be a regular event.

Hollister suggested fifth Mondays as a regular date for a meeting of all three entities.

Magnus commented that the joint meetings provide value over and above that of a YSDC given the level of participation.

Hempfling asked what the School Board can offer Village government and vice versa.

Holden noted a collaboration among schools and the library system in Shaker Heights, and stated that she will follow up with more information.

Beiri Rios stressed that school facilities are paramount, and that at this point “basic safety is being evaluated.” She stressed that this focus has to be the highest priority of the School Board.

Stokes asked that all present work to identify potential for collaboration and areas for potential growth. He suggested the possibility for retired residents to contribute to finances.

Holden commented that the low grant receipt for YS Schools is directly related to the wealth of the community—Yellow Springs qualifies for less in grant funds.

Bieri Rios noted the lack of all types of housing stock in the Village and the inability of service workers to live in the Village.

Housh commented on the Universal Basic Income as a strategy being implemented that could help to avoid community members being priced out, balancing the cost of living increases.

The group generally agreed that setting up another meeting should be done, and generally discussed the need to formalize liaisons from each entity.

Housh stated that he liaison should be empowered to represent the entire body.

Magnus asked that the Library Board be brought into the conversation.

Housh commented that “the finance folks” need to be at the table for discussions.

ADJOURNMENT

Each entity adjourned according to protocol.

Stokes MOVED and Housh SECONDED a MOTION TO ADJOURN at 8:59pm. The MOTION PASSED 3-0 on a voice vote.