

Present: Council President Domzal; Members: Koss, McCleary, Pfeifer and Taylor

Absent: Woodrow and Downey

Also Present: Village Manager, Spallasso
Village Clerk, Marshall

President Domzal called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. in the Village of Beverly Hills municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road. The purpose of the study session is to discuss Village election issues before voting on establishing terms of office at the March 15 Council meeting.

It was reviewed that the Village will no longer be able to hold annual elections in March due to new State of Michigan Election Consolidation Legislation. The Village has two options in terms of scheduling elections. It could hold its own elections in September of odd number years or hold elections in November of even years that would be conducted by the Township of Southfield. Council passed a resolution at its November 16, 2004 meeting to choose the odd-year September election cycle.

The Village could initially opt for the September election date but adopt a resolution after December 31, 2004 to change to a November even-year election with the Township running the election. Once the legislative body adopts a resolution to hold elections in November, it cannot select the September date according to the election law.

Pfeifer commented that the odd-year election schedule provides the Village with the opportunity to piggy-back on a Southfield Township election in August or November of even number years if there is a need for a special election.

The election legislation requires that no term of office may be shortened; terms can only be extended past their original expiration date until the next regularly scheduled election. The next odd-year regularly scheduled election would be in September of 2005. The Village can decide on terms of office either by passing an ordinance or by resolution of Council. There was agreement to stagger Council terms so that the entire Council would not be replaced at one time.

It was suggested previously by a member of Council that four council members be elected at each election with the lowest vote getter serving a two-year term and the others serving a four-year term. Council was advised that this cannot be done without a vote of the people. Council can establish that three people be elected to Council for four-year terms beginning with the September 2005 election when there will be three terms expiring. In September of 2007, there will be four people elected.

Domzal expressed the view that it is the intent of the Legislature that communities avoid multiple elections. He proposed that Beverly Hills ultimately consolidate its biannual election with Southfield Township elections in November of even years in order to minimize overlapping government services. Domzal understands that Council has already

voted on proceeding with a September election in 2005, but that changing to a November election cycle can be revisited at any point in time.

Pfeifer maintained that a segregated Village election process allows the community an opportunity to focus on local issues. She provided figures on March election turnout over the last six years.

Domzal thinks that Council is ready to vote on terms of office for a September 2005 election at its next regular meeting of March 15. It appears to be the sense of Council to proceed with the September 2005 election and establish staggered four year terms. There will be three people up for election in September of 2005 and four people running in September of 2007.

Janet Mooney of 19111 Devonshire stated that the voters elected each Council member for two year terms. She is not comfortable with extending terms of office for 18 months. Mooney suggested that other options be explored such as holding a special Council election. She outlined a couple of scenarios and questioned their feasibility.

Four Council members were elected for terms to expire in March of 2006. Village Clerk Marshall will look into the legalities of whether a special Village election can be held by the Township in February of 2006 to elect four Council members for an 18 month term. The next regular biannual Village election would occur in September of 2007. Domzal suggested that it would be helpful if Council could receive information on the special election option before it considers action on setting Council terms at their March 15 meeting.

Bunker Kelly of 21526 Corsaut Lane expressed the view that the Village should change to November elections after the 2005 September election on the basis that a November election would result in a higher voter turnout and diminish election costs.

Domzal asked Township Clerk Sharon Tischler about the cost of a special election. Tischler responded that Beverly Hills could place a question on the ballot at a miniscule cost if the Township is holding an election. Otherwise, there would be a cost associated with conducting a special election for the Village.

Pam Rijnovean of 32420 Evergreen expressed the view that holding Village elections in November would increase voter turnout.

Bob Walsh of 20655 Smallwood Court supported November elections and did not think Village issues would be overlooked by the voters on a November ballot.

Domzal summarized that the Village Clerk will research whether the Village can legally call a special election that would result in shortening Council terms that have been extended as a result of new state election legislation. Council will vote on terms of office at its March 15 meeting.

Charter Amendments

Pfeifer provided Council members with written material and a suggestion that there be an initiative placed on the September 2005 ballot to increase the spending limit of administration without Council approval from \$1,000 to \$4,000 and provide some type of indexing on the figure.

Council discussed the proposed Charter Amendment. Pfeifer remarked the amount proposed should more closely reflect economic values. There were members of Council who were more comfortable with a \$2,500 or \$3,000 spending limit without Council approval. Council members were amenable to considering a ballot initiative to raise the amount by a number with an index.

The special meeting was recessed at 7:06 before returning to a regular Council session at 7:30 p.m.

Dave Domzal
Council President

Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk

Susan Bernard
Recording Secretary