

Present: President Stearn; Members: Berndt, Briggs, Mooney, Oen and Peddie

Absent: Koss

Also Present: Manager, Wilson
Assistant Manager, Marshall
Director of Public Safety, Woodard
Village Attorney, Ryan

President Stearn called the regular Council meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA/APPROVE AGENDA

Oen proposed that consent agenda item c., “Review and consider funding 2009 Winter Family Fun Day”, be moved to the Business Agenda.

Motion by Mooney, second by Oen, to approve the consent agenda as amended.
Motion passed (6 – 0).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Marcia Gershenson, Oakland County Commissioner, reported on news and services offered by the County. The Women’s Commission for Oakland County will be up for approval for another two years. The organization accomplished a great deal during the last year with work on mental health parity, domestic violence, and leadership and economic autonomy issues for women. The Women’s Commission played a part in connecting Oakland County to the United Way 2-1-1 local resource service.

Gershenson received notice from the Oakland County Planning and Economic Development team that there will be three green building programs starting this month. Anyone interested in these forums should contact her.

Kathleen Berwick of 31381 Kennoway Court mentioned that a Council member’s house was listed on a real estate website. She reminded members that they must live in the Village in order to serve on Council. Berwick stated that she believes in bare bones government. She had questions and comments regarding costs related to the Village providing school liaison officer services.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Oen, second by Mooney, to approve the consent agenda as published:
a. Review/consider approval of regular Council meeting minutes of December 16, 2008.
b. Review and file bills recapped as of Monday, December 22, 2008.

Motion passed (6 – 0).

BUSINESS AGENDA

SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCY ON THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

A second announcement was made regarding a vacancy on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Interested individuals may submit an application to the Village office by Wednesday, January

14, 2009 at 4:30 p.m. Applications are available at the municipal office and on the Village web site: www.villagebeverlyhills.com. A subcommittee consisting of Ron Berndt as chairperson, Rosanne Koss and John Mooney will meet on Tuesday, January 20, 2009 at 7:15 p.m. to review applications and to recommend an appointment to Council.

REVIEW AND CONSIDER EXTENSION OF AUDITING SERVICES

Plante Moran has submitted a proposal to renew its auditing services for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009. The total amount for their proposal is \$35,435 for recurring work plus \$4,690 for compliance with new Statements on Auditing Standards (SAS) 104-11, commonly referred to as risk assessment standards. The total amount represents an increase of \$1,650 over the previous year. Council previously agreed that the cost for SAS compliance was to be spread out over a period of three years. Fiscal Year June 30, 2009 would be the second year of this agreement.

Manager Wilson stated that Council has expressed satisfaction with the services received by Plante Moran, and Administration concurs with this position. He recommended approval of the proposal from Plante Moran for the provision of auditing services. Stearn asked that the function of the auditing firm be explained for the benefit of the audience.

Blake Roe from Plante Moran related that the State mandates that municipalities' financial statements be audited on an annual basis in compliance with the accounting regulations adhered to by the State. Plante Moran comes in as a certified public accounting firm to take a look at the Village's financial statements, perform an audit in compliance with those regulations, and issue an opinion on the financial statements for submission to the State.

Inquiries from Council members were addressed by Roe. It was questioned whether there was a reason for a community or business to change its auditing firm periodically. Roe responded that the most common reason for a client of a CPA firm to switch is when that firm is not proactive in meeting their needs. Plante Moran does its best to be proactive in meeting the needs of the Village and advising the community about pending situations before they arise. In answer to an inquiry as to whether there is a need for a fresh set of eyes preparing the audit report, Roe stated that his firm will periodically rotate the staff member who oversees the review of financial statements.

Briggs remarked that it is a common practice for companies to switch CPA firms approximately every ten years in order to get a different exposure. He expressed concern with imposing a fee increase given the state of the economy.

Roe stated that Plante Moran traditionally adheres to the inflationary factor issued by the state tax commission. The company's internal costs have gone up greater than the inflationary factor over several years, which has reduced their profit margin. Roe added that his firm competes to recruit the best staff and the best level of service. He thinks that the cost indicated in the proposal represents a fair increase.

Motion by Mooney, second by Oen, to approve the proposal from Plante Moran to provide auditing services to the Village of Beverly Hills for the year ending June 30, 2009 in the amount of \$35,435 plus an additional amount of \$4,500 for services required to comply with Statements on Accounting Standards (SAS) 104-111.

Roll Call Vote:
Motion passed (6 – 0).

REVIEW AND CONSIDER FUNDING 2009 WINTER FAMILY FUN DAY

Briggs stated that the Parks and Recreation Board has been actively planning the Annual Winter Family Fun Day scheduled for Sunday, January 25 in Beverly Park. There is money allocated in the budget for the printing and distribution of flyers. Donations include coffee from Starbucks and snow shoes from the Environmental Center. Board members will provide refreshments and sporting equipment for the activities that take place on that day. The request is to approve up to \$1,350 for costs associated with the event; it is likely that less than this amount will be spent this year.

Motion by Briggs, second by Mooney, that the Village Council approve the expenditure of up to \$1,350 for the Winter Family Fun Day event in Beverly Park on Sunday, January 25, 2009.

Peddie commented that the Village does not hold many community events, and the Winter Family Fun Day is a great way to get residents out to the park in the winter. She thought it was money well spent. Oen also commented favorably on this community activity.

County Commissioner Gershenson asked if the Village has sought corporate sponsorships for the event. She offered to contact Cynthia Arvant from the Parks and Recreation Board regarding sponsorship opportunities.

In light of the current budget shortfall, Stearn thought it was worth debating this expenditure. Winter Family Fun Day is a fun event that has won a state-wide award in the past. It brings the community together. Stearn feels forced to vote against this motion because Council has to prioritize expenditures this year. The voters have to understand that certain amenities are going to cease due to the failure of the millage restoration proposal.

Roll Call Vote:
Oen - no
Peddie - yes
Stearn - no
Berndt - yes
Briggs - yes
Mooney - yes

Motion passed (4 – 2).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

REPORTS – MANAGER

Wilson reported that the DPW dealt with a number of winter weather issues over the long holiday period. Staff did well under the snow conditions with four men in trucks plowing in a 10” snow storm, which amounts to 1,000 households per truck. No serious reports of damage were received under conditions of snow and heavy winds.

Wilson brought up the topic of setting a Council budget session. There was agreement to schedule a special Council meeting on Wednesday, January 14 at 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of revisiting the current budget. Stearn asked Council and Administration to bring any ideas and recommendations to that meeting. It was noted that there is a joint meeting between Council and the Parks and Recreation Board scheduled for Thursday, January 15 at 7:30 p.m.

The Village offices will be closed on Monday, January 19 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Administration has developed a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) for an Agent of Record for Health Insurance Services as well as a preliminary list of vendors. Briggs commented that the current provider, IBEX Insurance Company, offers more than health insurance; they are a general agent that provides risk management. Wilson responded that a municipality can have liability insurance with one vendor and health insurance and benefit consulting with another agent. He assumed that the RFP would focus on companies that provide health benefit services and consulting. At Briggs' suggestion, Wilson will add a question to the RFP asking if the company provides other services.

As an agency that utilizes Community Development Block Grant Funds, the Village is required to seek proposals every three years for planning consultant services. Assistant Manager Marshall has drafted an RFP that will be distributed to a list of vendors. Council authorized Wilson to send out the RFP to various planning firms.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Briggs stated that he has been in contact with Congressman Gary Peters over the last month and has set up a meeting with his staff to discuss opportunities related to a stimulus package that would identify dollars for infrastructure projects. It is important that Beverly Hills be considered along with other Oakland County communities. Briggs is working with the Village Manager to identify projects to submit to Congressman Peters as funds are allocated in Washington for Michigan.

The Village of Beverly Hills will be facing retiree health care obligations. Briggs raised this issue with Congressman Peters, who has been talking about national health care reform that could have a significant impact on many local governments.

Briggs attended his first meeting of the Birmingham Area Cable Board in December as Council liaison. The Cable Board will be updating its web site to provide more content. They are in the process of selling their old production truck and equipment. Interested parties should contact Cable Board Executive Director Bob Borgon.

Briggs reminded residents that the Winter Family Fun Day will be held on Sunday, January 25 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in Beverly Park.

Peddie received information from the Baldwin Library indicating that the Village's library circulation has increased by almost 14% over the last six months.

Oen stated that the December Planning Board meeting was cancelled. He thanked Jack Fahlen for his dedicated service on the Zoning Board of Appeals since 1974.

Mooney expressed the view that it was naïve to think that Council could solve its financial problems through budget cuts. He believed that the proposal that would have restored the millage rate to the level approved in 1995 failed because the public was not adequately educated. A municipality is first and foremost about protecting its citizens. Considering the crimes that have occurred in the last several weeks within miles of the Village's borders, Mooney does not believe that any resident would want to reduce the level of public safety in this community. Mooney suggested that the solution to the economic problems that face Beverly Hills is to educate the people on the issues that face the community. He proposed that the Village will have to ask for a 12.5 millage cap in order to protect Beverly Hills for the next 5-10 years, and that is where Council should be focusing its efforts.

Berndt commented on the tough challenges facing the Village and upcoming budget reductions that will effect services. He asked Director Woodard to extend the condolences of Council to the Oak Park Public Safety Department for an officer recently slain in the line of duty.

Berndt responded to a resident's earlier remark by stating that he placed his home on the market for six months three years ago. He listed the home on a realtor website, and it remains on that website to this day.

Stearn announced that there is a coat drive going on at Village Hall sponsored by the Oakland County Sheriff's Department. People can deposit coats in a box located in the municipal building lobby. Stearn commented that the Village's 50th Anniversary Celebration video aired on Municipal Channel 15 is entertaining. It reminds him of how proud he is to be a member of this community.

Stearn referred to a recent newspaper article regarding municipalities charging utility companies for the services police and fire personnel provide during emergencies such as downed wires and natural gas leaks. There are neighboring communities that have adopted ordinances allowing such fees to be charged. Stearn asked that consideration of an emergency response ordinance be placed on an upcoming Council meeting agenda.

Motion by Mooney, second by Oen, to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Motion passed (6 – 0).

Todd Stearn
Council President

Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk

Sue Bernard
Recording Secretary