

VILLAGE OF HICKSVILLE
SPECIAL COUNCIL MINUTES
Monday, January 8th, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Council met in Council Chambers. If not fully vaccinated, please wear a mask.

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor Michael Barth, followed by an invocation. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

This meeting was live-streamed on Hicksville YouTube.

Roll Call was read with the following persons in attendance: Mayor Michael Barth; Council Members Kent Miller, Toni Egly, Eric Bassett, Charlie Martin, and Ron Beverly; Solicitor Rachel Hammersmith and Fiscal Officer Cheryl Smith. Administrator Cory Wann was absent.

Minutes from the Police/Fire/EMS Committee meeting held January 4th, 2024, were included in the packets. AEMT Drew Wort handed out a personal letter to each council member, which will be attached to these minutes.

There was a lot of discussion outlining the recent events - how it happened, why it happened, and how to proceed in the future.

Brian Kemerer from the Farmer Fire Department / Township was on hand to voice his outrage that no one contacted the townships when Hicksville EMS suspended service. He was assured that there was coverage as Hicksville was working with Sherwood and the 911 call center to be sure of that. He wanted to know who was responsible to let people know this was going on. He also wanted to know if the Hicksville Ladder Truck was approved by NFPA standards as required. He said he has contacted Roy Klopfenstein's office. He said there should be trust, communication and respect.

He was assured by the council that they did not know contact was not made - they are not trying to keep anyone in the dark about what is going on. Mr. Kemerer said they were wishy-washy and need to stick with one story.

Bob Fisher said an employee was suspended without council approval - who authorized that? Shouldn't that go through the mayor? Mayor Barth said he did not know anyone was getting suspended. He was under the impression any action would take place after tonight's meeting. Chief Denning's wife said the Chief acted in the best interest of the village and the mayor did know. She heard the conversation they had about the suspension. The new solicitor, Rachel Hammersmith, said she had spoken with Chief Denning and Mayor Barth. but she was not aware that the suspension was already done.

There was a lot more discussion, finger-pointing and statements of "fact" made by various members of the gallery. The attendees were asked to go to the podium to speak so they could be heard and recognized, but they did not. The comments came from their seats in the gallery.

Eric Bassett said he had questions before the meeting about the timeline of events. He put it together and sent an email out to the mayor, fiscal officer, fire chief and each council member. Cheryl Smith answered the questions and he read her answers to everyone tonight. A copy of that email is available upon request.

Someone in the back of the gallery spoke up about having a Chief over Fire and EMS with no EMS experience. He pointed out that there were options when Chief Hart was hired, but council decided to approve his appointment anyway.

NOTE: All committee meeting minutes are available in their entirety in the Fiscal Officer's office at 111 South Main Street, Hicksville or by email request to hixcs@defnet.com. All council meetings are shown on YouTube and minutes are on the website.

At 7:12 pm Charlie Martin made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel discipline, seconded by Kent Miller. All voted yes. John Elwood and Chief Hart were asked to stay.

At 8:20 pm the council returned to regular session. No action was taken at this time.

Charlie Martin made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Eric Bassett. All voted yes. Council adjourned at 8:20 pm.