

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
AMBERLEY VILLAGE COUNCIL
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2010**

The Council of Amberley Village, Ohio met in a regular session at the Amberley Village Hall, 7149 Ridge Road on MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2010, at 7:30 P.M. Mayor Merrie Stillpass called the meeting to order. The following roll call was taken:

PRESENT:

Jon Chaiken
Fran Cohen
Peg Conway
Ed Hattenbach
Louis Katz
Leslie McIntosh
Merrie Stillpass

ALSO PRESENT:

Bernie Boraten, Village Manager
Jack Monahan, Police/Fire Chief
Kevin Frank, Village Solicitor
Nicole Browder, Clerk of Council

ABSENT:

Rick Kay, Village Treasurer

Mayor Merrie Stillpass welcomed everyone to the regularly scheduled meeting of the Amberley Village Council, and led those in attendance through the pledge of allegiance.

MINUTES

Mayor Stillpass presented the minutes of the October 12, 2010, regular meeting and asked if there were any corrections or additions. There being none, Mayor Stillpass stated that the minutes stand approved as distributed.

FINANCE REPORT

Mr. Boraten presented the October, 2010, Finance Report (copy attached). Mayor Stillpass asked if there were any questions or comments. There being none, Mayor Stillpass announced that the finance report would be filed as received.

PRESENTATION

Ms. Kathryn Holm from the Deer Park branch of the Hamilton County Public Library thanked Council for the opportunity to speak at the meeting. Ms. Holm thanked the community for their support of the library's levy. The passage of the levy ensured that no staff members lost their jobs. Ms. Holm shared many statistics related to the users of the library and the type of materials that are being checked out. She announced many initiatives that the library undertaken including a strategic plan as well as a mobile website will be available later this year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

STREETS, PUBLIC UTILITIES & SEWERS COMMITTEE

Mr. Chaiken presented, read and moved to approve ORDINANCE NO. 2010-19 ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE HAMILTON COUNTY STORM WATER DISTRICT. Seconded by Mr. Katz and the roll call showed the following vote:

AYE: Stillpass, Chaiken, Cohen, Conway, Hattenbach, Katz, McIntosh (7)
NAY: (0)
ABSENT: (0)

Mr. Chaiken presented and moved to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2010-14, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EAGLE ENERGY TO BID FOR ELECTRIC ENERGY AGGREGATION RATES AND TO AUTHORIZE THE VILLAGE MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH DOMINION. Seconded by Mr. Katz and the motion carried unanimously. All residents will have the opportunity to “opt-in” which will enroll that resident into the savings program. A communication will be sent to the residents for signing up. The projected savings per household will be \$625 annually.

The Council will continue to work towards making the “opt-out” program available, which will allow for a greater savings. The residents will see the “opt-out” program on the ballot in May as it does require a vote of the residents in order to be implemented.

CITIZENS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL:

Tom Neuman, 5120 Rollman Estates, commented that he attended the recent budget meeting and he felt there was an inequity established regarding the earnest tax increase that he believed could be corrected. He stated that for an example, he pays 2 percent automatically and his wife pays 1.25 percent. His wife pays $\frac{3}{4}$ of a percent on an annualized basis to the Village. If this measure passes, he and his wife would be paying an extra quarter of a percent on his wife’s behalf. He stated that Louis Katz, who works in the City, would pay a full 2 percent to the Village. Mr. Neuman further explained that the inequity is that a person working in the city would pay an additional 1 percent and he would only be paying an additional quarter percent. He felt that every resident should equally share in any such tax increase.

Mr. Neuman commented that he is a real estate agent and had the opportunity to write a contract this week on a house in Amberley. He also had a discussion with somebody that was looking at a house and he had contact with an individual that was considering putting their house on the market. He stated that it became clear to him that the earnest tax issue was something that his clients were not happy with, but everyone was willing to deal with it. His clients, however, were not amenable to additional property taxes. Mr. Neuman began to share real estate statistics; however, his allotted speaking time had ended.

Ray Warren, 6715 W. Farm Acres, thanked everyone on council for their time, effort and commitment that each put toward the best interest of the Village. However, he is concerned about the proposed tax increase. Although he attended one of the open house meetings on the tax proposal, he wanted to know why was there no open hearing in which the Village Manager would share a state of the Village finances and proposals. He stated that the residents deserve a frank, transparent and comprehensive discussion of the issues at stake instead of neutralizing discontent. He asked council to vote “no” to the current proposal and instead propose a “blue ribbon” panel to review and report

options. There is no urgency to vote now. The current proposal would raise taxes for wage earners outside the Village. This would present a burden to families, who have seen their salaries decline, layoffs, reduced home values, and make this Village less competitive by becoming the highest wage tax area in the state.

He continued by stating that one option is to introduce user fees for garbage, leaf, fire protection, and snow removal or re-write the tax code to include interest and dividends. This burden would be shared across all households and businesses. A user fee is already in place for water usage. At a time when municipalities are freezing and reducing wage benefits, the Village Manager, over the directive of this council, awarded wage benefit increases last year. For over two years, the economy has been in a nose-dive, and yet you provide wage benefit increases. There needs to be a thorough review of the wage and benefit structure. While we value employees, how can we contribute 20 percent of a person's wage to pension benefits from the first day on the job? As an employee of a generous company, P&G, this is beyond belief. Similarly, other benefits need to be reviewed and be consistent relative to the better best business practices in our community. He pointed out that he referred to business practices and not irresponsible municipal practices.

Mr. Warren continued by stating that while the council continually refers to the Gibson property, he wanted to know how has it remained in this condition for so long. How could this Village embark on costly new capital projects? And beautification projects? How does the Village embark upon purchasing the Village green without a bond levy? And instead carries a simple loan interest burden of \$200,000 a year. This is fiscal folly. Again, please vote "no" to the current proposal so that we can proceed with a more thorough and creative budget planning process.

Brian Thiel, 7149 Meadowbrook Drive, commented that he had no idea that council meetings were so well attended. He stated that in case anyone is uncertain he is opposed to the tax increase and hopes that the council will vote "no". This entire process has left him with a bitter taste. He stated that he feels like they have caught council red-handed trying to sneak this tax increase past the residents.

He stated that for most of the residents in this room, they probably first learned about this tax increase from an email, not from council. They probably learned in a similar manner that Rumpke trash pick-up was cut from the budget. That is why regardless of the outcome tonight, he hopes that council will give the ordinance and up or down vote tonight. He stated that the residents deserve to know where each council member stands. He stated that the residents deserve to have this issue "put to bed" before the Bengals' game ends. He stated that behind closed doors we have had a spirited debate. He stated that he and Louis Katz should agree to disagree as to whether this tax increase will have a negative impact on home sales. He stated that publicly there has been little debate and less communication.

The open houses that were held did not help. We are a small community and we deserve a forum where our voices can be heard. Several years ago there was a debate

about sidewalks. Residents and council members spoke at community meetings where ideas could be shared. This issue is far more important and we deserve a forum similar to that. He stated that he reviewed the actual expenses for 2010 and the proposed budget for 2011 and has prepared a balanced budget. This budget makes modest cuts that will not reduce services and includes realistic revenue projections. He encouraged council to instruct the Village Manager to make a similar budget and do that tonight. Gibson Greetings left the Village 10 years ago. It is time for us to move on. We need to accept that we cannot continue to spend money like we are Indian Hill, Mason or Blue Ash. Taxes should be a last resort. If we fail to act soon, this Village simply will not exist 10 years from now.

He thanked the people who have worked tirelessly to stop this ordinance and will do so privately. He stated that if he leaves hastily tonight, please do not take offense. He is looking forward to working with council in the weeks and months ahead.

Mr. Katz then asked if Mr. Thiel could give council a copy of the budget before he leaves so that council can review it. Mr. Thiel stated that he could not provide it tonight but could do so in the coming week and meet with council.

Tim Keener, 2590 Section Road, thanked council for the opportunity to speak. He commented that he has a different proposal which will be a good idea for council's study and is part of plan which will not raise property taxes. He stated that he was looking at the 2011 budget and saw that Amberley has expected revenues of about \$1.1 million from property taxes. He stated that he was told that the Village receives about 10 percent of the total property tax, which means that Amberley is generating about \$11 million in property taxes. He stated that we provide Cincinnati Public Schools with two-thirds of those property taxes, which means we are giving CPS approximately \$7.4 million a year.

He stated that in 1994, he served on a volunteer committee to look at alternative education plans for Amberley and he determined, at that point, that we had 55 students in Amberley attending Cincinnati Public Schools. He stated that he is sure that number has changed now and has increased, but, for example, let us say that number is 100. We are paying \$74,000 per student per year in tuition costs, which by anyone's evaluation is excessive. He stated that his plan would be that since we have no public school system in Amberley, that we manage these funds ourselves. And that we allow each K-12 student in Amberley between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per year. He commented that, for example, if we have 500 students of that age in Amberley and provide them \$6,000 per year, that would be \$3 million, which would save \$4.4 million from property taxes. He stated that considering it would cost approximately \$250,000 to administer the program, that is still well over \$4 million in savings.

He commented that this program would have three advantages. (1) It would generate revenue for our youths. (2) Those who send their children to Cincinnati Public Schools would still be able to do so. They could go to Walnut Hills, which is where most of our students go in Cincinnati Public Schools. They would just have to pay tuition.

Cincinnati Public School's tuition ranges from approximately \$5,500 and \$6,500 a year. (3) It would change what is currently a negative in Amberley, the fact that we don't have a school system that people support heavily, into a positive. It would attract young families. He stated that he would like to answer questions, but his allotted speaking time has ended.

David Dahlman yielded his speaking turn to Tom Neuman.

Tom Neuman, 5120 Rollman Estates, commented that he was appreciative of the opportunity to speak again. He stated that he wanted to share real estate statistics for the past three years. He stated that over the past three years, the Village has experienced consistent increasing sales (\$16 million, \$16 million and \$17 million). However, he stated that he did have some bad news. This year sales are projected to be a total of \$12 million. While the past three years the volume of sales has been excellent, this year it is not improving. One of the reasons for this is that as of now there has been 38 homes sold. Of those sold, only three of them are over \$500,000. Usually, there are 12-15 homes that are priced over \$500,000. He stated that he does not know what this will mean for the future, but that this was a real variation from past years.

He stated that the other scenario that he finds very interesting tonight is that he thinks that council is being presented with issues that we have talked about in the past. Communication is a critical issue that we have always talked about for the last four or five years. And he has always been a proponent of communication.

He stated that the other issue is that are there some things being presented tonight, such as Mr. Thiel's balanced budget, are they legitimate? He thought that Mr. Thiel had already met with the Village Manager. Mr. Neuman stated that if these ideas being presented are legitimate that council needs to take a look at them, including the school issue. He stated that if the school idea is legitimate then everyone as a group has not done their homework, including him. He has also been sitting in on these meetings for the last several years. He stated that if these ideas are legitimate, we have an obligation to the community to look into them and if the ideas are "pie in the sky" and that needs to be explained to those individuals, then that is another issue.

Mr. Katz then stated that although things are going very smoothly, he has a question about the school issue. As he understands it, the Village has committed to 7 mills of tax for the Village, so if we dropped, somehow, out of the school we would still have to raise our 7 millage for any more money to come into the Village. That would not put money back into the Village if we did not pay into the school. We would still have to vote a tax increase for the Village. So, while it sounds fiscally a very good way to go, it really doesn't solve any of the problems other than put us in more conflict with the school. Again, it's something, maybe, we should consider, but lopping the school off doesn't put money into the budget. Mr. Katz then stated that council has heard of the idea before.

Mr. Hattenbach then stated that real estate taxes are collected by the County. He stated that assessments are done via levy. The levies for the schools, the zoo, and the museum center are administered by the County and the revenue does not flow directly to Amberley Village. It goes to the County and, in turn, the monies go to the communities for, in our case 7 mills. There is also what is called a "reduction factor" on the real estate tax bill which is a very complicated mathematical device, which evens out the tax revenue based upon the property appreciation or depreciation over a period of time. So that the recipients of the levy receive a static cash flow for the period of time in which the levies exist. There is no way in which Amberley Village can manipulate those numbers.

Mr. Keener began responding to the comments made, however, Mayor Stillpass asked that any continuation of the discussion take place at a committee meeting or privately so that the other slated to speak could do so.

John Neyer, 2930 Belkay Lane, commented that he would like to echo what Mr. Neuman stated and what all the speakers have said with sincerity to thank everybody, both the administration and council, for their efforts. Their time calculates out to under a \$1.00 an hour for your efforts and hopefully you do better than that in your private life and in your public life.

He stated that he has two points, one that Mr. Neuman touched on, being the inequability which is a challenge from where he sits. He stated that there are ten homes on his street, Belkay Lane, and seven of those homes would pay nothing additional under this proposal. He stated that he did some investigating with some of the municipalities in the region and Wyoming has the first 1 percent of your income as non-reciprocal instead of the second half. And what that achieves is everybody is then paying that. He stated that he does not know if the right number is a quarter or half percent, but if additional revenue is needed he believes that would be a more equitable way to approach that issue.

He stated that his second point was how the Village would compare. The average list price as of August for a home in Amberley Village was \$571,000. That places Amberley third in the top ten communities in greater Cincinnati. He then shared a bar graph with the council and stated that right now Amberley is in-line with all of the other communities. He stated that if this measure passes the Village would be at the top of that list. He stated the buying a home is a process about eliminating options. Being the highest taxed municipality is a pretty good reason to eliminate Amberley as a choice.

He then stated that he would encourage council to consider that as they vote and tonight vote against it. He stated that he does realize there are significant economic pressures. He stated that he has only been a resident for 18 months and believes that we have amazing municipal services and that is worth something. He stated that there may need to be some additional revenue and he encouraged council to find an alternate approach as he believe that this is a somewhat inelegant approach and he would encourage council to take time and come up with a more elegant one moving forward.

Aaron Freed, 7605 Elbrook, commented that he works for a bank in downtown Cincinnati and he is against the current tax proposal. He stated that what will happen for most of is that if you work in downtown Cincinnati, we will actually be paying 3.1 percent in income tax, which is quite a bit considering that fact that federal taxes might be going up again in a year. So, it is just another “hit” that we will be taking.

He stated that one of his other concerns besides the bigger bite in our income is that there really does not seem to have been any analysis in terms of budget analysis. That is what he does at his job. He stated that he has not really seen that and we are going to pass another tax increase. That would be something he would like to see in the future. That there is some type of analysis and that there are options. That there is some type of committee that the neighbors and the Village can take part in.

He stated that his other concern is that we are raising taxes and we have raised staff wages and it does not seem to be a reconciliation. Some of the other things that were mentioned that he won't reiterate is that some of the tax proposal is inequitable. He stated that he does not feel that those working in municipalities that already pay 2 percent should have to take another hit. He stated that it will be a bigger impact for families that do not have high income earners.

Michael Gerson, 6700 E. Beechlands, commented that he was not going to get involved in these discussions and meeting because he is personally willing to pay whatever is necessary to keep the Village services that he receives. He stated that last week it was brought to his attention that his name was being linked with Citizens Against Amberley Excess (CAAVE) and that he was supporting cuts to police and fireman's wages and benefits. He stated that was not true. He found out about CAAVE's website just last week and a letter he wrote for “Save Our Village” more than two years ago was severely criticized.

First, he stated that he had just heard of CAAVE last week, not two years ago. Second, he stated that they could have at least spelled his name correctly. Third, he is not involved with CAAVE, never had been involved with CAAVE and, fourth, the letter was written as a conciliatory letter. Not one to provoke or to continue controversy as CAAVE depicts and certainly not to suppress anyone's civil rights or due process as CAAVE suggests. Everyone who was involved in this five year process had the opportunity to be heard at over a dozen meetings. And this long process is the very definition of democracy and for CAAVE to suggest otherwise is groundless, baseless and ridiculous. Everyone who wanted to be heard was heard.

CAAVE also states that this democratic process was based on bad information. Once again, this is not true. What is true is that if Amberley Green had been developed in what has turned out to be one of worst recessions in history, it would have been a disaster for the developer as well as the Village. He suggested that the property be viewed as an asset and not a long-term liability, but a long-term asset for the financial benefit of the Village. He served on the citizens committee to explore possible uses for

this property. It became apparent that the economy was not conducive to any kind of development, at least not now. But someday this will change and if there is financial gain to be had from the development of this property, he believes the Village should profit and not someone else. He recommends long-term financing of the property with bonds and that the property never be sold, but leased. And that the income from this property serves to support the council and this Village for as many years as possible. Short-term, he suggested that the following be considered: (1) he heard people were against real estate taxes (2) a surcharge, an additional 10 percent on top of the amount that goes to the Village would help a lot; (2) tax on unearned income; budget cuts through attrition, retirement, etc.; and (4) better return on the cash investments that we have.

He then commented that he cautions everyone not to cut the police or fire benefits or wages. Public safety is paramount for us and they respond in seconds not minutes. He stated that this service is priceless and he is willing to pay for it. Mr. Gerson would have continued, but his allotted speaking time had ended.

Dianna Thiel, 7149 Meadowbrook, thanked council for the opportunity to speak. She stated that she is strongly opposed to the tax increase. The proposed ordinance would place an unequal income tax burden on a select group of Amberley residents. Precisely the residents we are trying to attract and retain. Passing an income tax without the vote of taxpayers would also be a slap in the face. Taxation should be a last resort. Revenue should be generated by attracting new businesses to our community rather than creating barriers to keep development away.

She suggested that the Village market its neglected properties and bring them back to their once scenic splendor. She stated that we can reduce expenses in this Village without reducing services. Think of the Village as a business. In times of stress, businesses make difficult decisions to cut in order to keep the business open. Validating our current expenditures by comparing our budget to other affluent or stable communities doesn't seem appropriate. She urged council and staff to communicate with our residents, not offer marketing materials to sell something the residents do not want. She stated that we are a community of well-educated professionals. Billing the residents for Rumpke services in January by hiding it in the water bill would send the wrong message to residents.

She stated that this Village has a \$4 million cushion and the Ohio inheritance tax has not yet been repealed; we have time. And, lastly, she asked that the Village not hire a consultant to solve our problems. Over the past few years, the Village has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on community planning. The Village consists of professionals in every field, many of whom have offered concrete plans of action to solve our budgetary problems. She stated that the Village should create a budget task force, which includes council, administration and citizens. The people of this community feel a sense of urgency that a hired consultant would not feel. She urged council to take a vote on this ordinance tonight and not table it. And respectfully asked that they vote no.

Alex Ramirez, 6500 Ridge Road, commented that there has been a lot said here that was stated much better than what he could come up with. He stated that he is not smart enough to come up with the solutions like some of the prior people. He stated that he wanted provide the prospective from somebody who is just a “regular Joe” because that is how he feels and he is not a numbers guy.

He stated that he has been a resident since July and he grew up in Wyoming. He did not pay taxes there, but his parents did and he knows that they paid a lot of taxes. He stated that his friend in the audience, John Neyer, who he went to high school with, created the bar graph that was shared earlier in the evening. He thought that was really good. He then passed that handout to the audience.

He stated that when he was looking in the spring to purchase a house that he visited 25 properties. He settled on 6500 Ridge and one of the big factors that weighed into everything was that the taxes were not as high as Wyoming, but Wyoming had the good schools so he was willing to spend the extra. However, Amberley had the lower tax, so it was possible to take the money that he would have spent in taxes in Wyoming to send his children to private school.

He stated that if taxes go up, any person looking at homes is going to then make this comparison and, as Mr. Neyer said, it is a process of elimination. He stated that if Mr. Neyer’s graph is correct, an increase in taxes would place Amberley higher than Wyoming, which has the fantastic school system. And he believes that it would discourage buyers from buying property here; buyers will go elsewhere and housing value in Amberley will go down.

He stated he would hate for that to happen. So far he loves Amberley; he has known it his whole life. Not until he moved in here did he really care because he lived elsewhere. He then stated that he wanted to endorse the idea of a “blue ribbon” panel as a great idea. He stated that would be a group of people who know what they are talking about, because clearly he is not the numbers guy. He stated that a committee that could point out what hasn’t been tried yet would be good because he feels that not all options have been exhausted yet.

Katie Whelan, 7400 Willowbrook Lane, commented that she has been a resident of Amberley for 13 years. She said she would take the opportunity to quote from a letter that she and her husband sent to the council members last week to emphasize a few points.

She stated that we understand that Amberley faces a difficult budget outlook like many other government entities and that council and its finance committee is responsively and actively engaged in seeking solutions to the problem. There is no doubt in our mind that the services that Amberley Village offers are excellent and superior to most other communities in this area. However, we believe that the proposed decrease in reciprocity unfairly places the burden of continuing to fund those services on a certain

group of residents. Those with earned income from municipalities that tax work performed in their jurisdictions with the highest increase experienced by Amberley residents who work in the City of Cincinnati.

Further, enacting this proposal would immediately position Amberley Village as one of the highest income tax localities in our region. It will inevitably make our community a less desirable one. There will be a decrease in property values and it will discourage the very demographic that we should be seeking to attract in order to maintain the economic vitality of this Village (working professionals and their families).

The services that Amberley Village provides are enjoyed by all residents, but this proposal asks for a small group of us to shoulder the majority share of Amberley's projected deficit burden. If in the end there proves to be no alternative and there must be some form of tax increase, the pain should be shared equally by all Amberley Village residents.

She stated that her letter goes on to layout specific examples of how this decrease would affect residents. Some of the residents will experience a 50 percent increase in the local taxes we pay and some of us will experience no increase. It is hard to imagine how that is any kind of a fair or equitable solution to the budget problems that we face.

There are very few local jurisdictions in our area that do not provide full reciprocity. If Amberley chooses to join the elite club, it will make the Village a less desirable choice for current and potential residents. Local taxes are currently a relatively neutral factor when people make the decision to move to our community because we are on par with other communities. The proposed ordinance vaults Amberley to the forefront of high local taxing environments, at least for those people who work and is that really the reputation that we want to have?

Raising the income tax rate should be the last resort, not the first. She urged council to go back to the drawing board and if they do vote tonight, vote no.

Curt Brunswick, 3166 N. Farmcrest, commented that he had sent council emails and spoke to a few of them at the open houses. He stated that his points have already been made. He stated that similar to Alex, he is a new resident and has only been here a few months. He stated that the very first thing, as he was looking at houses; he looked around Grand Vista, Amberley and other areas close to the city. The primary thing that kept him here was proximity to the city. He stated that he knew Amberley had great services and he does not want to discount that, but as a young growing family, they wanted to live close to the city, in a nice house, but he would have been just as happy in the City of Cincinnati in Hyde Park.

He stated that the first thing he asked was for the tax rate in Amberley. He stated that he went to the website and learned that it was 2 percent, but no big deal because there was reciprocity and not like Wyoming. He stated that he rented an apartment for

amount 9 months in Wyoming when he was young and single until he realized he was paying for everyone else's kids to go to private school.

He stated that essentially his point is that if he was looking at his home again and the income tax increase was in place, he would be paying a 1 percent penalty against all of the other competition. Everything being equal, looking at the property values you have today, think about a young family of wage earners; if they earn \$150,000 in the City of Cincinnati, that is the equivalent of \$25,000 principal payment on a 30-year mortgage. So all things being equal, moderate wage earners would be instantly punished. If they earn \$300,000 a year then it would be \$50,000 and it goes up from there. If you think about \$500,000 homes and on up, you would take \$25-50,000, etc. off that asking price when you are comparing to Hyde Park, Mt. Lookout, Blue Ash or anywhere that does not have this tax.

He stated that he felt the tax was not fair. He found out about this through email, which was disappointing. He pointed out that as he looked through the responses regarding the deficit causes in the notes council sent, it is interesting that the effects of the housing crisis were cited, stating revenue is lower on the incoming side. He stated that it seems obvious to him that people like him that you want to move in and buy homes that are on the market are, as John mentioned, going to eliminate Amberley.

He stated that he has heard more alternatives from people speaking at tonight's meeting than he had heard in a long time and just that sheer fact, to him, means the council is not ready to vote anything but no on this issue.

Peg Halpin, 7301 Willowbrook, commented that she has lived in Amberley for 20 years. She stated that she loves Amberley and is happy to be here. She is concerned that there has never been, in her estimation, we do not have a town center or a square; there is not a strong sense of community. And the one thing that we can do to change that is through communication. She stated that she is encouraged by all of the people in the audience because when you speak about things that people care about and are passionate about, they show up. She stated that she is happy that she is in a community, now that she is hearing all of these voices, that she believes it is important for the people that are on council to communicate all of the things that she's been hearing when she stops to get her mail or that she is getting from email.

She stated that maybe council can take a more proactive vision in how to communicate with all of the residents because it is frustrating when you hear it another way. She stated that she urged council to vote no because it is unfair. She stated that she loves the services and she is constantly bragging about the police force and everything else that the Village has here. She stated that she does not have a problem with paying more in taxes if that is what we need to do, but she believes that everyone should be held to the same standard.

Louise Wolf, 2626 Section Road, commented that she has lived in the Village for 30 years. She stated that she has learned a lot tonight. She learned about Rumpke; she

did not know she was going to be paying for those services. She stated that she learned a couple of weeks ago when she came to the open meeting and received a handout that there is talk of eliminating the police dispatchers and that is what she would like to talk about. She stated that everyone has talked about the wonderful services here and appreciate all of the services. She noticed that was one of the proposals that was made to help balance the budget.

She continued by stating what makes Amberley Village a special place to live. At the top of her list is the fire and police, therefore, she was dismayed to learn that budget cut proposals included dismissing dispatchers. She stated that she has been told that if the Village goes to a County system, using Hamilton County 911 dispatchers, instead of the Amberley 911 dispatchers, we will not be able to change back to the current system. JV alarms will no longer ring directly into the police station. JV would have to charge a monthly fee to monitor our systems. Currently, JV pays Amberley approximately \$70,000 for this exclusive service. If this proposal passes, Amberley will lose the revenue from JV, pay additional fees to the County for 911 service, several shifts of dispatchers who know us, and who know our Village will be fired.

She stated that this proposal is of great concern for medical, fire and personal safety. It will affect our homes values. It will raise our homeowners insurance rates. It may not even save money for the Village. Why is this being proposed? This is perceived as a threat as to whether or not increased taxes are passed. This budget cut does not make sense in any way; not with respect to livability, safety or fiscally. This Village is a desirable place to live because of the fire and police. Let's keep Amberley safe first.

Ms. Wolf stated that Amberley will be green even if we don't spend countless dollars on the Crest Hills property. We have French Park and all the beautiful homes and trees in the Village. Spend the money wisely. Public safety should be a top priority. She asked Council to drop this proposal to fire the dispatchers. Please drop this proposal immediately.

Mrs. Conway asked for a clarification of the facts on Ms. Wolf's comments. Mrs. Conway stated that she is not aware of a proposal to fire dispatchers. Chief Monahan commented that it was a study that was done last year when the department was asked to look at every aspect of the operations. He stated that he determined the cost for utilizing Hamilton County Communications Center would increase our current costs by over \$100,000. Under the County plan, if the department gives up the Public Safety Answering Service (PSAP 911), the Village will never be able to have its own Public Safety Answering Service again.

Chief Monahan continued by stating that the goal of Hamilton County is to have two PSAP's, one in Hamilton County and one in Cincinnati. In 1988, there were six PSAP's. We are down to four PSAP's now. Springfield Township gave up their PSAP and went to the County and now they would like to have their PSAP back, but cannot because the County plan does not allow it. Once we give up the PSAP you cannot get it back.

This year, every dispatched call from Hamilton County Communications would cost \$15.80. That does not sound like a whole lot, but if they dispatch the fire department, they dispatch the police department and they also dispatch EMS, so you would be charged for three dispatched calls. Those costs add up. Based on last year's costs, it would cost over \$100,000 more than our current operations to go to Hamilton County dispatch. That cost is going up next year by \$1.25 per dispatched call. The Village had over 15,000 details last year and if you calculate the cost, it is more than our current operations.

Mrs. Cohen then asked Chief Monahan if it was ever proposed as a budget cut. Chief Monahan stated that the department did not propose to do that, but he was asked to investigate what it would cost to give up dispatch and go to the County. He stated that he was also asked to look into an alternative for fire service.

Mr. Boraten then stated that he believes that there is a lot of information that is floating around and some of it is out of context. The Chief's report was part of diligent budget studies a year ago trying to look at alternatives. That was simply a study to review alternatives. Council did not propose nor did they adopt any measure to take action toward eliminating dispatchers. Another thing, the type of information that is floating around, I know we cannot go into explaining everything, but there is an explanation for many things. For example, the Ohio legislature establishes the contribution to the pension system. There have been a lot of statements made recently that we are giving too much to our employees' pension. Talk to your legislature. That is state law; that is not done at Amberley.

Richard Lerner, 7300 Aracoma Forest, stated that he regrets that he does not have anything brilliant to offer in the way of a solution. He stated that he is very troubled by the process here. There have been several references made to the forms of communication that have taken place. He stated that he apologized for not keeping up with the affairs of the Village as much as he should; he would like to think he is a responsible citizen.

Council has heard some very thoughtful suggestions here tonight. He stated that he would echo the general sentiment that has been expressed. He has a very hard time understanding the urgency of this matter. On the website, it says specifically that the Council believes that the change in the income tax credit alone is not sufficient. Council will examine a broad array of other strategies, reducing or eliminating some municipal services, implementing fees, and/or the addition of new property taxes to pay for specific services.

He stated that he has not heard a case made for this proposal; it may be a good one. He stated that he believes Council may have spent a lot of time hashing this out. But as a citizen and one who would be significantly impacted by this proposal, he would like to see a carefully laid out statement of how it is going to work, who will be affected, how the equity of the plan was conceived.

He stated that the Village Manager referred to misinformation, and he believes that there is a ton of it out there right now with a great deal of confusion. He believes that it is incumbent upon the council to put off any decision on this; unless council votes it down. He stated that if Council is seriously considering approving it, he would appeal to Council to take some time out; give people a chance to gather some reliable information and he believes that information should be coming from the Village Manager. The Council should not be expected to be on top of all of the details that are required here.

He stated that Council needs a strategy to present to the residents. A comprehensive plan for how we are going to address this problem, and he has not heard it. In the absence of it, he thinks that it would be in everybody's best in interest to hold off on a final decision.

Esther Korner, 8575 Kentland Court, commented that there are two things that she really detests; death and taxes. She stated that unfortunately she cannot dodge either one. She wanted Council to know that her and her husband chose to move to Amberley 15 years ago because it is a beautiful community with great services. She is very proud to say that she lives in Amberley Village.

She stated that she would like to address the police, fire and maintenance. Maintenance: leaf pick-up, brush pick-up; always busy and nobody standing around that she has seen. If she did, she would stop and comment to them that they are on her time. Police: Right after she moved in someone broke into her husband's work truck and her car, which resulted in \$3,000 worth of stolen tools. It took the police department's detective three days to bust the thief; that is service. She asked Council not to do away with police; they earn everything they get.

She stated that the Village's streets are so clean in the winter. You look outside and see all of the snow, but the streets are clean. When you travel over to Reading, the roads are not clean.

She stated that a lot of the department's police officers went to school with her daughters. She stated that she watched them grow up and now she sees what fine young men they are and she knows a lot of the other police officers too. The Village hires the best.

She stated that she does not know what to do about the tax issue. She stated that she thought it had been 25 years since there was a levy for police and fire. She stated that she is retired, but she is willing if that is what it takes. She stated that the police are always there; just call them and you get an immediate answer from the dispatchers. She then stated that Chief Monahan is right about never going to the County. She stated that she was on a life squad for 15 years and had experience with the County; it is a mess. She asked Council to think about what they are doing.

Mitzi Miller, 7475 Ridge Road, commented that she can see that most people are never in favor of or appreciate any kind of tax increases. But she also acknowledges that some people can see the need for municipalities to utilize this option. We have the finest police, fire and maintenance staff of any government in this County. Residents have also enjoyed the best services from them and the administrative staff as well. We are lucky to have recruited such outstanding men and women who serve us in so many ways.

Being only one of two combined departments in the state, Amberley Village has consistently achieved highest honors from accreditation for their performance. Whether battling natural disasters or crime, our department can always be counted on to provide preventative measures and assistance. We currently have minimal staffing, as is, including on the administrative side. And the police side performs dual roles.

We need to be competitive in order to retain these folks and instituting pay cuts is not the way to do that. Additionally, layoffs will not only deplete the workforce, but they will also serve to drive down morale for those remaining. In addition, and most importantly, job eliminations also put residents' lives at risk. If you want proof of that you can look to the recent news about that fire in Northside where the "brown out" left residents in critical condition.

One of the stand-out selling points of Amberley is the quality and level of public services we enjoy. We are the gold standard for the County and possibly the state as well. She dares anyone to criticize the snow removal for which we are well-known. It's actually deceiving driving around the Village in the wintertime on the clean streets. It is a false sense of security because once you hit the corporation line and you see the pitiful condition of a Cincinnati plowed street, you can appreciate Amberley that much more.

She stated that she realizes Amberley has to increase revenue to fund these essential services. And until we can replace the tax base of Gibson again, we need to find new pathways. If this means an additional one percent earnings tax, she believes that this is an acceptable, although difficult, alternative. She is not willing to blame the victim and spread this hardship on the backs of the employees. Cutting salaries or eliminating jobs will not only penalize hard-working individuals, but it will also have a ripple-effect on the community as a whole.

Some here tonight have mentioned that real estate sales will go down because of an increase in taxes. She stated that she maintains that it will also go down if we do not provide services that everybody wants. Maintaining streets, keeping green areas in check and public safety and health are all critical areas that residents demand and deserve. She urged Council to weigh the costs and benefits of this decision. We should not put employees on the chopping block nor should we sacrifice our current standard of living. Ms. Miller tried to continue her comments; however, her allotted speaking time had ended.

Elinor Ziv, 2955 Belkay Lane, commented that she has been a resident of the Village since 1962. She stated that she has lived in three houses in the Village; she is very committed to the Village. She has also been a real estate agent for the past 40 years. She stated that there is talk about sending some of the services, like Rumpke, to being billed separately. She stated that she is very much against this. She owns apartment buildings in Golf Manor and they do that. When she had a problem she called Golf Manor who told her to call the water works, who told her to call Golf Manor, and she went in circles for a long time. In Amberley Village, what we have here are services and we are very lucky to have the services. You need something, you call the Village and it is taken care of. Please do not take that away.

She stated that there is nothing equal to our police and fire services. If the police and fire go down, your homeowners insurance is going to go up. In all of the years that she has been selling houses, a lot in Amberley, nobody has ever said to her, what is the earnings tax? They look at the services, the ambiance, and the location. We are close to everything. We have something special and please do not let us lose any of that.

She stated that she had a dead deer in her yard and so did her daughter in Baltimore. It was three days before her daughter got it removed. She stated that she called the police and maintenance took care of it—it was gone.

She commented that as far as the tax being unequal, she agreed that it was unequal. She stated that she pays 2 percent while others pay nothing. And if it is raised a little, some residents will be paying something towards services. She stated that when Council is talking about taking away the reciprocity, it means that some people will be paying towards services who pay nothing now. She stated that if Council has to implement this, it could be done as a temporary measure until things were in order.

She stated that she heard Wyoming talked about this evening and she clarified that Wyoming has a passive income tax and Amberley does not. She stated that she cannot express enough how much the police and fire, ambiance and location mean to people moving in here.

Susan Sanderson, 7404 Willowbrook Lane, thanked council for the opportunity to speak and thanked them for their service to the Village. Although everyone here was expressing their opinions, it does not mean that we do not appreciate your efforts and we have respect for all of you as community leaders and business folks in Amberley.

She has two things to talk about. The first is that she was very disappointed about how this particular tax levy was discussed, in terms of how it was brought to residents' attention. Having some residents find out about it through an email is just simply not appropriate. Overall, it would be a lot more productive if you were to actually bring the community together to help solve this problem. She is not here to say that she has the answer. She stated that she absolutely does not have the answer. She does know that there are a lot of smart people in Amberley from multi-discipline backgrounds and together we can solve this.

The second point she wanted to make is that she is a new resident to Ohio and Cincinnati area. She went through the exercise with a realtor and relocation company to look at all communities before she decided to come to Amberley. All were relatively equal. She was looking at Terrace Park, Hyde Park and Wyoming. But at the end of the day if this were to be enacted in terms of the tax, it would have changed her decision entirely. New people are moving into the area who have no family ties to the Amberley community and they are making decisions based on cold, hard facts on a spreadsheet. And while it sounds nice in terms of the ambiance that Amberley has, at the end of the day, many families with young children are making decisions based on what they are able to afford and public schooling is a huge challenge for us. She has a four-year old daughter and that was part of her decision-making. It certainly weighs on her heart in terms of how she is going to get there.

In closing, she stated that she just wanted to say that this should be the measure of last resort and while she knows that Council has had many discussions as a Council, she does not feel that there have been enough discussions as a community, partnering to try to solve the problem. Council doing work on their own and the residents doing work on their own is not productive. Coming together productively we can probably get to a much better place and one where we all feel good about it. If we have to make sacrifices we can decide that together. She encouraged Council to make a decision to vote no or table it and bring everyone together to figure out how to solve the problem.

Tom Brown, 7707 Creekwood, commented that he has lived in Amberley for 25 years. He stated that has heard comments tonight and he received some emails concerning the reduction of the police force and the fire department. He stated that he thinks it would be ludicrous to take a step in that direction. One of the reasons that he and his wife, Pat, built in Amberley is because they really liked it. They like the services, the people and the environment. If you start subtracting from that people will not be attracted to Amberley and we need people to pay taxes, so we can continue to enjoy this lifestyle. He then endorsed the previous comments made about not tampering with the fire or police department.

He commented that he would also like to add a few comments about the state of the three pieces of property that remain idle in Amberley, which are the North Site, the golf course, and Gibson. Gibson has been there for a long time; before the current recession. He had clients from New York come to Amberley and sit down with the Village Manager and then Mayor. He stated that they received less than an open arms reception about what they wanted to do versus what the Village said you cannot do.

That attitude does not help development. We should be taking a full-court press on the North Site. Why we are not in discussions with Reading, he does not know. The site is a great site and an even better site combined with the Reading site. It doesn't have access stand-alone (highway access), but together with Reading you could have a great development; a development that could generate a lot of income. Gibson should not be empty. Somebody from the Village should be with the current owners and I don't know

the current owners; it changed. Why isn't somebody from the Village constantly working with the owners trying to get some development over there? And, finally, the coyote and deer compound that sits on the corner of Ridge and Galbraith; we really need to do something about that; he spoke with Jon Chaiken the other day. That is a wonderful opportunity, not residentially, but a money making opportunity. Mr. Brown would have continued commenting, however, his allotted speaking time had ended.

Mr. Boraten stated that he wanted to make sure they everybody was aware that three-quarters of the Gibson plant is filled by Saturday Knight Ltd., the largest tax payer in Amberley Village.

Greg Bell, 7033 Beechhollow, commented that he has been a happy Amberley resident for 20 years. He reiterated appreciation to council for everything that they do. He stated that it is a very difficult task and he really appreciates that. He stated that obviously, from the conversation, everyone understands that we have a problem. Everyone wants to find a solution. Ideas about what the problems are and what the possible solutions are vary a lot. That has to do with the residents' level of understanding and information that they have about both what the problem is and what the potential solutions are.

He stated that he thinks that the gaps in the information and understanding certainly apply to the residents in Amberley Village. Probably insights and understandings vary even among the council. He stated that as we have gone through these meetings and presentations tonight, certainly we have heard lots of other ideas. Some of those ideas might be bad or impractical, but others might be good. And, because of those things he asked that council table or vote down this particular vote just because the information and the understanding about both the nature of all of our problems and definitely the nature of what our possible solutions are; it does seem as though at this moment that those things are all over the map.

The reading and the discussion of this ordinance, to him, has pushed the Council and the Village to choose between two very narrow options. Either we raise taxes, this was the choice presented basically in our town hall meetings, or we cut services. And, we have heard tonight that there are other options. The process, in his mind, really did take a short cut around at least two really important questions: (1) Are there other options to reduce expenses? (2) Are there other options to increase revenues? At the end of the day it is going to need to be a mixture of those things and we have heard lots of possibilities and he asked council to consider those. He then thanked everyone for being good stewards of Amberley Village.

Roz Richards, 7425 Laurel Oak, was called to speak, but was unable to be present. Mitzi Miller stated that Ms. Richards asked her to comment that she agreed with and supported Mitzi's statements.

Lisa Murtha, 2471 Brookwood, commented that she has lived next to Jon Chaiken on Brookwood, for 2.5 years. She stated that she is opposed to the current tax ordinance.

She stated that she saw something interesting here tonight which is that a lot of people that are opposed this ordinance have recently been in the real estate market and she believes that it is important to acknowledge that.

She stated that she has been reading the Amberley history book that residents receive when they move here. She stated that since she did not grow up here it would be a good place to look to figure out what Amberley is all about and what its values have been over time. She stated that she found many interesting things in the book, but the interesting thing to her was the reason that Amberley Village came into existence in the first place. It was because Justin and Josephine Rollman, one of the original families here, were held up at gunpoint in their own driveway. And, there was a huge fire nearby and the Cincinnati Fire Department refused to put it out. Because of those two incidents, Justin Rollman, Herbert French and several other residents, at the time, worked to form a Village with its own police and fire department.

She quoted Justin Rollman from the history book, "I thought it was important to form a Village for our protection." He said nothing more, nothing less. He did not form the Village so he could have unlimited brush pick-up. He didn't form it so Amberley would pay for his trash removal either. He didn't form it so police could come and bail out basements when homes flooded. He did it so that he and his family would be safe. And, today, we are safe here in Amberley and we are grateful for the people who keep us safe. But, she stated that she would be lying if she didn't tell you that some questions came up in her mind after she read this book. Has Amberley become a community of excess compared to what Justin Rollman and Herbert French intended?

She stated to Council that she understands that they are all basically volunteers. She stated that she doesn't think there here is a person in this room who bargained to lose their job or have their pay cut or frozen. This recession has forced most people that she knows to make difficult decisions and painful cutbacks. But everyone on Council did ask to be elected. You all freely chose to be sitting where you are today.

She continued by stating, we didn't elect you to council because we think you know what's best for us. We elected you to council because we thought you would represent our voices accurately. Passing this tax ordinance would be the easiest solution to our current budget problems, but she has found that the easiest solution is rarely the right one. We all know that good leaders when faced with challenges do not take the easy way out. Good leaders consider all of their options. I challenge you all tonight to be good leaders; not to do what is easiest, but to investigate fully all of your options and consider how your actions will affect the people who brought you here in the first place.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Chaiken moved to table the third reading of the proposed Ordinance Amending Section 93.14 Reducing the Income Tax Credit for Tax Paid to Another Municipality. Seconded by Mr. Katz and the roll call showed the following vote:

AYE: Stillpass, Chaiken, Cohen, Conway, Hattenbach, Katz, McIntosh (7)
NAY: (0)
ABSENT: (0)

Mr. Hattenbach, Chair of the Finance Committee, announced that his committee has set a meeting for November 17 at 4 p.m. to continue budget discussions.

Mr. Hattenbach then read and moved to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2010-15, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE VILLAGE MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH PRIME/VFIS AND MCGOWN/AMERICAN ALTERNATIVE FOR PROPERTY AND CASUALTY INSURANCE. Seconded by Mr. Katz and the motion carried unanimously. It was noted that this year the Village will save 4.63% on its insurance.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Chaiken presented the third reading of the proposed ordinance to enact alternative energy regulations. Mr. Chaiken moved to approve ORDINANCE NO. 2010-20, ORDINANCE ENACTING REGULATIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SYSTEMS. Seconded by Mr. Hattenbach and the roll call showed the following vote:

AYE: Stillpass, Chaiken, Cohen, Conway, Hattenbach, Katz, McIntosh (7)
NAY: (0)
ABSENT: (0)

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Ms. McIntosh reported that at the recent Green Clearing event, the volunteers removed brush from under white pines and there was much improvement in the appearance of the focus areas.

HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE COMMITTEE

Ms. McIntosh reminded everyone that the Safety Lecture would be held November 9 at 7 p.m. Detective Norton from the Amberley Village Public Safety Department will present information regarding personal safety, identity theft and fraud.

LAW COMMITTEE

Mr. Katz reported that the committee met and discussed the leash laws in response to a resident complaint. The leash law relies on the definition of reasonable control. The committee has not decided whether or not a new law is needed. The committee would like additional resident input.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Stillpass announced that the Village will host the World Town Planning Day on November 10. This all day event invites local planners, architects, economic development experts, realtors, and local college students to come together for a day to work with and offer professional advice to a local city, village or neighborhood in hope that the ideas generated from the charette will be used for future planning and

community improvement endeavors. The focus areas for this event will be the Village's North Site, Amberley Green, Losantiville and connectivity.

MANAGER'S REPORT

No additional items to report at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Mayor Stillpass stated that there being no other business the meeting was adjourned.

Nicole Browder, Clerk of Council

Mayor Merrie Stillpass