

**Village of Higginsport
Village Council Meeting
July 14, 2025**

The Council of the Village of Higginsport met in regular session at the Village Municipal Building on Monday, July 14, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. with all members present.

Also, present were: Fire Chief Rob Starrett, Police Chief Shawn Elliott, Dona Starrett, Eddie Crawford, Sandy Bear, Dean Miracle, Linda Fester, Peggy Wood, Tricia Wood, and Leslie Hasenstab.

Mayor Bear called the meeting to order and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Bear reported the village had received the school bell, the scoreboard, the flag pole and the archway sign from the old Higginsport school. Mr. Null reported that some of the bricks from the old school would be utilized to fill the hole in the municipal building caused by the removal of the bank's ATM machine.

Mayor Bear expressed that the flag pole still needed to be picked up. Chief Elliott offered to install the flag pole at the intersection of State Route 221 & US 52.

Ms. Wills inquired as to what happened to the fire escape stairs. Mayor Bear confirmed that the stairs had been scrapped by the contractor demolishing the old school building.

Mr. Null informed Council that the scissor lift that had been donated to the village needed more repairs than initially determined and the demolition contractor had agreed to dispose of it for the village.

Police Department Report

Chief Elliott reported on the following:

- 218 cases have been closed for the village in addition to some cases referred to the Brown County court system. Evidence related to those closed cases will need to be disposed of. (A brief discussion ensued regarding the disposal of records and evidence with Mr. Null recommending that a licensed firearms dealer purchase all firearms that are need of disposal.)
- Brown County Communication Center invoice has been received

Chief Elliott recommended Council consider some amendments to the proposed golf cart ordinance. He suggested adding the requirement that unlicensed four-wheelers and/or side-by-sides obtain a village sticker. Council agreed to the recommended change.

Chief Elliott notified Council that mayor's court magistrate, Nick Ring, had agreed to reduce his monthly bill to \$350.00 per month for the remainder of 2025.

Public Participation

Mrs. Dona Starrett addressed Council regarding a sewer account overcharge for property at 207 Washington Street. Mrs. Starrett requested Mrs. Dufau explain to Council the overcharge by Brown Co. Rural Water as well as requested a refund. Mrs. Dufau explained that the

overcharge had occurred when the property was sold and requested Council's approval to refund \$52.50 to Mrs. Starrett.

Motion by: Ms. Wills, seconded by: Mr. Null to approve issuing a refund to Dona Starrett in the amount of \$52.50 for a sewer account overcharge for property located at 207 Washington Street. **Vote: Mrs. Adams, Abstain, Mr. Adams, Yes; Mr. Fester, Yes; Mr. Null, Yes; Mr. Smith, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes**

Ms. Peggy Wood expressed appreciation on behalf of her sister, Tricia Wood to all who have helped and supported her after the recent loss of her home to a fire.

Old/New Business

Mr. Fester provide the following grant updates:

Ballfield Project

- Permit approval has been completed
- Contractor is advertising for bids for the project
- Project tentatively set to begin in 4 - 6 weeks
- Modifications have been made to the plans due to the wetlands

Sewer Project

- Still working on additional grant funding for the project

Mr. Null inquired if Council will be able to provide input for the IT/Capacity grant received. Mrs. Linda Fester informed Council that it has already been decided how the IT/Capacity grant funds will be utilized. She explained that it would be used for a presentation system and a new website.

Mr. Null expressed that he would like the new website to have the capability for online payments or options for campsite or community center rentals.

Mrs. Fester expressed that the new quote for the proposed audio/visual equipment was \$38,000.00 and further explained the equipment that is projected to be purchased with the grant funds.

Mr. Null reported that he had spoke to Mr. Wilson regarding the pump station however he was still awaiting the information he had requested.

Mayor Beair reported that the municipal building had a roof leak and that he had requested Mrs. Dufau contact the village's insurance company regarding the possibility of submitting an insurance claim for the repairs. Mrs. Dufau reported that to submit a claim the insurance company had requested the date and the event that caused the leak. Mayor Beair reported he had obtained an estimate from SCC Commercial Roofing in the amount of \$4,985.00 for the needed roof repairs.

Fiscal Officer's Report

Mrs. Dufau presented the 2026 Tax Budget and a Re-appropriation Resolution for Council's approval.

Resolution 25-15

Motion by: Ms. Wills

Seconded by: Mr. Adams

Whereas, the Village Fiscal Officer, Sheila Dufau, has presented the proposed 2026 Tax Budget to the Village Council, and

Whereas, the Council of the Village of Higginsport has reviewed the proposed budget,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the proposed 2026 Tax Budget be approved and submitted to the Brown County Auditor's Office.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Adams, Yes; Mr. Fester, Yes; Mr. Null, Yes; Mr. Smith, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes

Resolution 25-16

Motion by: Mr. Adams

Seconded by: Ms. Wills

To approve the following re-appropriations for additional expenditures:

General Fund (1000)

From: 1000-930-930	Contingencies	\$ 435.00
To: 1000-790-391	Dues & Fees	\$ 335.00
1000-790-690	Other	\$ 100.00

Sewer Fund (5201)

From: 5201-930-930	Contingencies	\$ 3,083.00
To: 5201-800-540	Equipment/Machinery	\$ 3,083.00

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Adams, Yes; Mr. Fester, Yes; Mr. Null, Yes; Mr. Smith, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes

Mrs. Dufau presented the third reading of proposed Ordinance# 2025-03.

Ordinance# 2025-03

Motion by: Ms. Wills

Seconded by: Mr. Null

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF A VILLAGE PETTY CASH POLICY

WHEREAS, Higginsport Village Council desires to adopt a Petty Cash Policy for operations of the Village.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGGINSPORT, THAT:

Section 1. Higginsport Village Council shall adopt a Petty Cash Policy as defined below and shall add a Petty Cash Policy to the operations of the Village as follows:

Petty Cash Policy

- This policy establishes procedures and guidelines for petty cash reimbursement as well as the use of petty cash and change accounts.
- Cash control is necessary and must ensure that the Village of Higginsport is fulfilling its fiduciary responsibility.
- The use of cash rather than other means of payment does not change whether an expenditure is acceptable, or not.

A. Definitions

1. **Petty cash account:** A set amount of money (\$100.00) held by the village mayor and used to make small, incidental purchases (for emergencies and purchases requiring cash) of not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) from a local vendor where the normal route of payment is not cost effective or appropriate.
2. **Fiduciary:** The Village Fiscal Officer is the fiduciary for the petty cash account. The fiduciary (Fiscal Officer) shall periodically audit the petty cash. The fiduciary (Fiscal Officer) is, in addition to the custodian, responsible for insuring that the account is physically secure, may conduct periodic unannounced cash counts, and ultimately has the oversight responsibility for the account and will oversee resolution of any unexplained discrepancies.
3. **Custodian:** The village mayor is appointed to operate and maintain the petty cash account, is responsible for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of the account, ensures deposits or replenishments are prepared timely, and should report any unusual activity to the Fiscal Officer.

B. General guidelines

1. It is the responsibility of all authorized purchasers for the village to inform vendors of the Village's sales tax-exempt status. An "Ohio Sales Tax Blanket Exemption Certificate" may be used for this purpose. Any purchases made with petty cash funds that include sales tax paid will result in the purchaser being required to reimburse the village for the sales tax paid on the transaction.
2. Purchasing through established vendor accounts is the preferred alternative to utilizing petty cash for purchases.

C. Operation of petty cash account

1. The petty cash account may be used to make small incidental purchases (for emergencies and purchases requiring cash) of not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) from a local vendor where the normal route of payment is not cost effective or appropriate.
2. The total of cash and original itemized receipts for purchases paid from the petty cash fund should always remain at the established amount (\$100.00).
3. The account should be balanced at least monthly, and records kept. Balancing the petty cash account shall include:
 - Count the cash
 - Calculate total amount of vendor receipts that have been reimbursed and/or vendor receipts that have been reimbursed.
 - The total of the cash, vendor receipts that have been reimbursed and/or vendor receipts that have been reimbursed should equal the total fund balance (\$100.00).

4. Petty cash account should only be used for making purchases. It should never be used to collect money or making change for sales, paying for services, cashing checks, giving loans or for travel advances.
5. Petty cash account can be replenished by submitting the original itemized receipts to the Fiscal Officer. The Fiscal Officer will issue a check to replenish the petty cash fund.

Section 2: The above policy replaces any previous version of this policy and supersedes any current policy which may conflict with this policy.

Section 3: This ordinance shall be in full force and effect at the earliest date provided by law.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Adams, Yes; Mr. Fester, Yes; Mr. Null, Yes; Mr. Smith, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes

Motion by: Ms. Wills, **seconded by:** Mr. Null to approve the estimate received from SCC Commercial Roofing and to proceed with the roof repairs on the village's municipal building.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Adams, Yes; Mr. Fester, Yes; Mr. Null, Yes; Mr. Smith, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes

Motion by: Ms. Wills, **seconded by:** Mrs. Adams to approve and pay the bills. **Motion passed unanimously**

Motion by: Ms. Wills, **seconded by:** Mrs. Adams to approve the regular meeting minutes from June 9, 2025. **Motion passed unanimously**

Additional Business

Mrs. Adams reported that she had spoken to an attorney regarding the rope blocking Olive Street as the previous Council already voted to have the rope removed. She explained the attorney had advised that it was the village police chief's responsibility to remove the rope and if he would not do so, it would then be the village mayor's responsibility to do so. If neither removed the rope, Council could have the county sheriff remove it. Mrs. Adams was asked if she had the information from the attorney in writing. She confirmed she did not but state she would have the attorney attend a meeting if Council would like him to do so.

Mrs. Adams presented a picture of a park bench that had been donated and recommended it be installed at the park with the dedication to Alex King as discussed at a previous council meeting. Chief Starrett expressed they would like to set the bench in concrete and that the bench would be power coated to last. The bench would include the dedication plaque. He requested Council's approval to set the bench in concrete. Council members were in agreement with his request. Mayor Bear expressed that there were funds available in the Park Fund that could be utilized for the project.

Fire Department Report

Chief Starrett reported on the following:

- Estimate received to repair the fire dept/municipal building roof in the amount of \$15,000.00. The roof began leaking in the Spring. An insurance adjuster is scheduled to come and view the roof.

- New radios have been ordered. A ninety-day extension has been granted for the grant funding for the radios.
- The floor repairs have been completed.

Chief Starrett reported that the fire department has been receiving several requests for boat wrecker service on the river. He expressed that although he did not have a problem with it, he had concerns as it takes the fire department services away from the residents. He suggested if the fire department provides “boat wrecker service “there be a tipping fee possibly \$100.00 for doing so. A brief discussion ensued regarding the matter with Mr. Null expressing that most boat wrecker services charge more than \$100.00 for such services. Mr. Smith inquired as to how the fee would be collected. Chief Starrett responded through “soft billing.” After discussion, Council agreed with charging a fee for the discussed services.

Motion by: Ms. Wills, seconded by: Mrs. Adams to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Lester Beair, Mayor

Sheila G. Dufau, Fiscal Officer

Kathy Adams, Council Member

Matt Adams, Council Member

Linda Wills, Council Member

Scott Null, Council Member

Mark Fester, Council Member

Drew Smith, Council Member