

**Village of Higginsport
Village Council Meeting
January 13, 2025**

The Council of the Village of Higginsport met in regular session at the Village Municipal Building on Monday, January 13, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. with all members present except Drew Smith and Linda Wills.

Also, present were: Fire Chief Rob Starrett, Police Chief Shawn Elliott, Linda Fester, Sandy Bear, Dean Miracle, Raegan Moon, Leslee Hasenstab, Dustin Faul, Doug McDonald, Peggy Wood, and Tricia Wood.

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

Special Presentation

Mr. Doug McDonald, ILCAO presented the final renderings for the Slim Salee Riverfront Redevelopment Project. Mr. McDonald also presented an update for the status of the project and expressed that based upon project costs some items in the original project plans may be deleted from the project. The project manager, Prus Construction would be making that determination.

Mr. McDonald presented a resolution for Council's approval to move forward with the next step of the project.

Resolution 25-01

Motion by: Mr. Fester

Seconded by: Mr. Null

WHEREAS, the Village of Higginsport is a Partner and Grant Awardee in collaboration with the Ironton-Lawrence Community Action Organization (ILCAO), the Lead Applicant and Grant Recipient as established in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which governs the administration of this Eligible Development Project ("Project");

WHEREAS, this Project represents a critical opportunity to enhance Higginsport's public spaces, advancing community goals and fostering long-term growth through planned improvements;

WHEREAS, MKSK Studios has been engaged as the design lead for the Project, and recent meetings and presentations have served to finalize the design intent and materiality for proposed improvements, encompassing all elements identified in the original grant wish list;

WHEREAS, technical details were not included in the current presentation deck and will instead be addressed in the forthcoming Schematic Design Document Set to be distributed within the next few weeks, with outstanding technical questions needed for pricing purposes being resolved collaboratively with the design teams;

WHEREAS, the Village acknowledges potential challenges ahead, including addressing river restrictions, construction constraints, and costing for construction, and affirm its confidence in the collaborative efforts of Higginsport, MKSK Studios, Prus Construction, and ILCAO to overcome these challenges;

WHEREAS, the Village, ILCAO and project stakeholders are committed to ensuring the successful implementation of this Project and express enthusiasm for the significant progress made;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village of Higginsport, in accordance with the terms of the MOU, hereby move forward with transitioning the Project from Schematic Design (SD) to Design Development (DD) under the guidance of MSKS Studios and with administration by ILCAO.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Village reaffirms its collaborative partnership with ILCAO, MSKS Studios, and Prus Construction, and all other stakeholders to address technical questions and ensure the Project remains on track to achieve the vision and objectives outlined in the grant.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Village expresses its gratitude to ILCAO for its leadership and administrative oversight, and to all involved parties for their dedication to creating an exceptional public space that will benefit the future of Higginsport.

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

Mr. Null inquired if any construction would begin in 2025. Mr. McDonald expressed that it would depend upon the project manager's determination of the most cost-effective method to proceed with the project. He further stated that the project must be completed by October 2026.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Bear expressed his appreciation to Mr. Dustin Faul for allowing the village to use his truck and snow plow during the recent weather event.

Mr. Faul inquired if the village would consider hiring him for snow removal and treating the streets. He stated that he would plow the village streets for \$250.00 and would spread road salt on them for an additional \$250.00. He explained the village could purchase the road salt through the county engineer. A brief discussion ensued regarding Mr. Faul's proposal with Mr. Null requesting a written quote from him.

Public Participation

Mrs. Linda Fester reported that she was finalizing the Nature Works grant reimbursement report for submittal.

Mr. Dean Miracle expressed his appreciation to all those that assisted with the Village Christmas event. He also thanked all those that had assisted with removing the fire-proof cabinets from the municipal (bank) building.

Ms. Tricia Wood expressed her appreciation to all those that cleared the village streets during the recent weather event.

New/Old Business

Mr. Null reported that the golf cart permit stickers had been received but that Council was still awaiting the golf cart ordinance from the Village Solicitor.

Police Department Report

Chief Elliott expressed his appreciation to all those that assisted with the Village Christmas event. He reported that \$1,600.00 had been donated for the event. The unused funds were used to assist a needy family within the Village and the remaining toys would be donated for use at the Village Fire Department Easter event.

Chief Elliott also provided the December department statistics as well as a vehicle maintenance update.

Fire Department Report

Mayor Bear expressed his appreciation to Chief Starrett for his assistance with snow removal in the Village during the recent weather event.

Chief Starrett reported on the following:

- 2024 Fire Department Statistics
- Current fire levy expires in December 2025 - a levy renewal will need to be placed on the November general election ballot.

VILLAGE OF HIGGINSPO BROWN COUNTY, OHIO RESOLUTION NO. 25-02

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE NECESSITY FOR A RENEWAL OF A TAX LEVY IN EXCESS OF THE TEN-MILL LIMITATION FOR FIRE PROTECTION AND REQUESTING THE COUNTY AUDITOR TO CERTIFY MATTERS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

The Council for the Village of Higginsport, Ohio, met in regular session on January 13, 2025 at the Village Municipal Building with the following members present:

Kathy Adams	-	Present
Matt Adams	-	Present
Mark Fester	-	Present
Scott Null	-	Present
Andrew Smith	-	Absent
Linda Wills	-	Absent

Mr. Fester moved the adoption of the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, The Higginsport Council anticipates levying a tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation as described herein; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Section 5705.03 of the Ohio Revised Code, this Council is required to certify to the county auditor a resolution requesting the county auditor to certify certain matters in connection with such a tax levy;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Village of Higginsport, Brown County, Ohio, that:

SECTION I That pursuant to the provisions of 5705.19(I) of the Ohio Revised Code, it is necessary to levy a five (5.0) mill renewal levy for the purpose of providing adequate fire protection of the Village at a rate not exceeding five (5.0) mills for each dollar (\$1.00) of valuation, which amounts to (\$0.50) for each one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of valuation, for a period of five (5) years. The levy shall be a renewal levy.

SECTION II That the tax levy shall be imposed upon the entire territory of the Village of Higginsport, all of which is located in Brown County, Ohio.

SECTION III That the question of the passage of said tax levy shall be submitted to the electors of the entire territory of the Village at the election to be held on November 4, 2025, and if approved by the electors, shall first be placed upon the 2026 tax list and duplicate, first collection shall take place in calendar year 2027.

SECTION IV That pursuant to the provisions of Section 5705.03 of the Ohio Revised Code, the county auditor is hereby requested to certify to the Village of Higginsport Council the total current tax valuation of the Village and the dollar amount of revenue that would be generated by the number of mills specified in Section I hereof, and the Fiscal Officer of this council be and is hereby directed to certify forthwith a copy of this resolution to the county auditor at the earliest possible time so that said county auditor may certify such matters in accordance with such Section 5705.03.

SECTION V That it is found and determined that all formal actions of this Village Council concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Council; and that all deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action, were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code, and the rules of said Council adopted in accordance therewith.

Mrs. Adams seconded the motion and the roll was called on its adoption with the following results:

Kathy Adams	-	Yes
Matt Adams	-	Yes
Mark Fester	-	Yes
Scott Null	-	Yes
Andrew Smith	-	Absent
Linda Wills	-	Absent

Chief Starrett addressed Council regarding an email he had sent to council members requesting Council approve the designation of fire lanes on Olive and John Streets from the Ohio River to Washington Street to ensure water access for the fire department from the river if needed. Chief Starrett explained the consequences of a radiant fire and the necessity for water access. A discussion ensued with Chief Elliott expressing that Brown and Main Streets also have access to the river and should be designated as fire lanes as well and that barricades should be installed at the end of each street. Chief Elliott expressed that he would move the dock that is currently blocking Olive Street but he had not had time to do so and would never deny the fire department access to the river. Mrs. Adams recommended installing guardrails at the end of each street. Mr. Null expressed that he did not see the need to designate fire lanes as the streets in question were public streets that are not permitted to be blocked. Mr. Fester recommended putting together a committee to resolve the matter.

Mayor Bear stated that Council still needed to establish committees and recommended establishing individual committees as in previous years instead of grouping them all together as was done in 2024. He also inquired if Council would like to table appointing the 2025 council president until the full council was present. After a brief discussion it was consensus to establish committees and appoint the council president at the February 2025 meeting.

Mayor Bear requested Council approve the adoption of the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Basic Code for 2025 as well as retaining Nick Ring as the village's mayor's court magistrate.

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Mrs. Adams to adopt the Ohio Revised Code for 2025. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Mr. Fester to adopt the Ohio Basic Code for 2025. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by: Mr. Fester, seconded by: Mr. Null to approve retaining Nick Ring as the village's mayor's court magistrate for 2025. Mr. Ring's compensation to remain the same as in 2024. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by: Mr. Fester, seconded by: Ms. Adams to approve and pay the bills. Motion passed unanimously

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Mr. Adams to approve the regular meeting minutes from December 9, 2024. Motion passed unanimously

Chief Starrett requested an executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

Motion by: Mr. Adams, seconded by: Mrs. Adams to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes, Mr. Adams, Yes; Mr. Fester, Yes; Mr. Null, Yes; Mr. Smith, Absent, Ms. Wills, Absent Time Out: 7:15 p.m.

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Mr. Fester to return to regular session. Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes, Mr. Adams, Yes; Mr. Fester, Yes; Mr. Null, Yes; Mr. Smith, Absent, Ms. Wills, Absent Time In: 7:28 p.m.

Motion by: Mr. Null, 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