

**Village of Higginsport
Village Council Meeting
May 12, 2025**

The Council of the Village of Higginsport met in regular session at the Village Municipal Building on Monday, May 12, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. with all members present except Mayor, Lester Bear.

Also, present were: Fire Chief Rob Starrett, Police Chief Shawn Elliott, Linda Fester, Dean Miracle, Scott Wilburn, and Tricia Wood.

Council President, Mark Fester called the meeting to order and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Old Business

Mr. Fester reported on the following:

- Weekly meetings are still being held for the ballpark project. The project is currently in the permitting phase.
- The village will not qualify for an Ohio Water Development Authority loan for the sewer plant project unless Council approves a sewer rate increase. Additional grant funding for the project is currently being investigated.
- The ARC Capacity grant will be awarded at the end of May 2025.

Mr. Null reported the culvert project on Gaines Street has been completed.

Mr. Null recommended Council pursue finding a replacement for the village's current mayor's court clerk. A brief discussion ensued regarding his recommendation.

Mr. Null recommended Council consider the village doing their own billing for sewer services. A discussion ensued regarding his recommendation that included the current billing process as well as the logistics and feasibility of doing the billing in-house versus continuing to utilize Brown County Rural Water.

Ms. Wills inquired if the mayor's court magistrate's salary had been reduced as previously discussed. Other council members confirmed that they were not aware if Mayor Bear had addressed the matter with Mr. Ring.

Ms. Wills inquired the status of the replacement American flags as previously discussed. Chief Elliott expressed that he would be purchasing the flags and flag poles and that he would install them the following week. Mr. Smith volunteered to assist Chief Elliott with the installation.

Ms. Wills inquired about the piles of wood on the edge of streets after some trees were recently trimmed. Mr. Fester reported that the telephone company had had the trees trimmed and that they do not remove the wood.

Mr. Miracle reported on the following:

- Two of the three buildings in the village scheduled to be demolished have been completed. Demolition of the third building is almost complete.
- Clean-up has started on the property at 502 Main Street. The property is in foreclosure.

Police Department Report

Chief Elliott reported that a semi-truck had taken out the guardrail at U.S. 505 & U.S. 52. The trucking company will be paying for the costs of the repairs.

Fire Department Report

Chief Starrett presented an estimate from Tyler Fisher for repairing the concrete floor on the fire department side of the municipal building. He recommended that Council approve repairing both sides of the floor. After a brief discussion, Mr. Null requested Chief Starrett obtain another estimate for the repairs for cost comparison.

Chief Starrett reported on the following:

- The grant for the demolition of the property at 606 Columbia included approval to remove the trees on the property as well.
- Motorola is completing the radio flashing and reprogramming of department radios.
- New radios will be purchased utilizing the MARCS radio grant.

Chief Starrett reported there had been an issue the last couple months with a roof leak on the municipal (old council side) side of the fire department/municipal building. The roof is no longer under warranty and that he would be contacting the village's insurance agent regarding the possibility of the needed repair being covered by village's insurance policy.

Fiscal Officer's Report

Mrs. Dufau reported that the Board of Elections had requested a revision in the verbiage of the previous ordinance (Ordinance# 2025-01) approved for the renewal of the fire levy to be on the general election ballot in November 2025. She requested Council rescind the previous ordinance and approve the corrected ordinance.

Motion by: Ms. Wills, seconded by: Mr. Adams to rescind Ordinance 2025-01.

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

VILLAGE OF HIGGINSPO BROWN COUNTY, OHIO ORDINANCE NO. 2025-02

AN ORDINANCE FOR THE RENEWAL OF AN EXISTING FIVE (5.0) MILL TAX LEVY FOR FIRE PROTECTION IN EXCESS OF THE TEN-MILL LIMITATION AND TO PLACE THE ISSUE ON THE NOVEMBER 2025 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

The Council for the Village of Higginsport, Ohio, met in regular session on May 12, 2025 at the Village Municipal Building with the following members present:

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

Ms. Wills moved the adoption of the following Ordinance:

WHEREAS, this Village Council of the Village of Higginsport, Brown County, Ohio has declared the necessity of levying a renewal tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation within the Village for the benefit of this Village pursuant to the provisions of Section 5705.19(I) of the Ohio Revised Code for providing adequate funds for fire protection; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 5705.03 of the Ohio Revised Code, this Council has heretofore certified to the County Auditor a Resolution requesting the County Auditor to certify to this Council the total current tax valuation of the Village and the dollar amount of revenue that would be generated by five (5.0) mills per year as specified in such Resolution, and this Council has received the certification of the County Auditor that such total current tax valuation is \$4,258,450.00 and that such dollar amount of revenue is \$13,000.00 per year (a copy of such certification is attached hereto as Exhibit A);

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

SECTION I That it is hereby declared that the amount of taxes which may be raised in this Village within the ten-mill limitation by levies on the current tax duplicate will be insufficient to provide an adequate amount for the necessary requirements of this Village.

SECTION II That pursuant to the provisions of Section 5705.19(I) of the Ohio Revised Code, it is necessary to proceed with levying a renewal tax of five (5.0) mill in excess of such ten-mill limitation for the entire territory within the Village for fire protection, at the rate not exceeding five (5.0) mills for each one dollar (\$1.00) of valuation, which amounts to one hundred eight dollars (\$108.00) for each one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) of valuation, for a five-year period of time.

SECTION III

That the question of the passage of said renewal 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 the form of the ballot to be used at said election shall be substantially as follows:

**PROPOSED TAX LEVY (RENEWAL)
VILLAGE OF HIGGINSPOORT**

A majority affirmative vote is
necessary for passage

A renewal of five (5.0) mill levy to constitute a tax for the benefit of the Village of Higginsport, County of Brown, Ohio, for the purpose of fire protection, that the county auditor estimates will collect \$13,000.00, at a rate not exceeding five (5.0) mills for each one-dollar (\$1.00) of valuation, which amounts to one hundred eight dollars (\$108.00) for each one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) of the county auditor's appraised value, for a five (5) year period of time, commencing in 2026, first due in 2027.

	FOR THE TAX LEVY	
	AGAINST THE TAX LEVY	

SECTION V

That the Clerk of this Council be and is hereby directed to certify a copy of this ordinance to the board of elections, not later than four o'clock (4:00) p.m. of the ninetieth (90th) day before the date of said election and to notify said board of elections to cause notice of the election on the question of levying said tax to be given as required by law.

SECTION VI

That it is found and determined that all formal actions of this Village Council concerning and relating to the adoption of this ordinance 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.

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
Drew Smith	-	Abstain
Linda Wills	-	Yes

Mrs. Dufau presented Ordinance# 2025-03 an ordinance to establish a village petty cash as discussed at a previous council meeting.

First Reading of Ordinance# 2025-03

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.

Mrs. Dufau reported that a correspondence had been received from the Department of Commerce regarding the elevator in the municipal building. She expressed that she would provide a copy of the letter to the mayor and all council members.

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

Motion by: Ms. Wills, seconded by: Mr. Adams to approve the regular meeting minutes from April 14, 2025. Motion passed unanimously

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Ms. Wills 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