

**Village of Higginsport
Village Council Meeting
February 13, 2023**

The Council of the Village of Higginsport met in regular session at the Village Municipal Building on Monday February 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. with all members present except Anthony Moon.

Also, present were: Fire Chief Rob Starrett, Police Chief Shawn Elliott, Captain Brian Perry, Solicitor DJ Osborne (via telephone), Sandy Beair, Chris Bishop, Scott Wilburn, Linda Fester, Mark Fester, Deb Collier, Peggy Wood and Tricia Wood.

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

Public Participation

Mr. Scott Wilburn announced the Village Community Center would be hosting Family Night on February 17, 2023 and Senior Day would be held in March.

Ms. Deb Collier addressed Council regarding the proposed no parking on U.S. 52 ordinance. A discussion ensued among council members, police officers and members of the public. Mr. Null recommended allowing parking on the north side of U.S. 52 and prohibit parking on the south side as he felt it was a safety issue for the village's police officers. Chief Starrett expressed that if parking was only permitted on the north side it could pose issues should there be a fire emergency on the north side as there would be nowhere to park the fire equipment other than blocking U.S. 52. Mrs. Adams expressed should Council decide to proceed with the no parking ordinance her vote would be no.

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Mr. Elliott to have the village solicitor prepare an ordinance for no parking on the north side of U.S. 52 within the village limits.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, No; Mr. Beair, No; Mr. Elliott, Yes; Mr. Moon, Absent; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, No

Old Business

Ms. Wills inquired if all properties in the village have sewer grinder pumps. It was confirmed that not all properties had grinder pumps. Ms. Wills recommended sending letters to property owners with grinder pumps notifying them that they are responsible for the costs of pump repairs that are not related to normal maintenance.

Ms. Wills inquired if the church had obtained insurance for the building they have leased from the Village. Mr. Wilburn confirmed they had not yet obtained the insurance however they have had the utilities for the building put in their name.

Mr. Null inquired about the status of the guardrail repair at U.S. 505 at U.S. 52. Chief Elliott reported ODOT will be replacing it in March or April.

Mr. Elliott inquired about the status of the sewer service at 511 Columbia Street. Mayor Crawford reported he had spoken to the property owner and they have requested the village allow him to wait until spring to tap into the sewer. He reported the property owner also had informed him that he had paid a \$500.00 tap-in fee to Brown County Rural Water. A discussion ensued regarding the matter with general consensus of Council that the property owner have the sewer tap connection completed by April 1, 2023,

Fire Department Report

Chief Starrett reported that there had been an issue that prevented the closure of one of the bay doors on the firehouse on a Sunday. He reported Chris Owen had assisted with the work

on the door in order to secure the building. He informed Council that the bay doors will most likely need replace. He requested Council approve compensating Mr. Owen for his time. A brief discussion ensued regarding his request.

Resolution 23-06

Motion by: Mr. Null

Seconded by: Mrs. Adams

To approve paying \$100.00 to Chris Owen for garage door repairs.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Bear, Yes; Mr. Elliott, No; Mr. Moon, Absent; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, Abstain

New Business

Mr. Null recommended moving the recycling dumpster next the doublewide modular with cameras monitoring it. A discussion ensued about the location, monitoring it with suggestions of getting a smaller one, placing it at the park with cameras and posting with signage stating no household garbage and that it will be photo enforced.

Resolution 23-07

Motion by: Mr. Bear

Seconded by: Mr. Elliott

To obtain a smaller recycling dumpster and to place at the village park with monitoring cameras.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, No; Mr. Bear, Yes; Mr. Elliott, Yes; Mr. Moon, Absent; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, No

Mr. Elliott reported there was a drainage issue at Jackson Street and Cherry Alley due to a clogged storm drain. The ditch line needed dug out and a plastic pipe and catch basin needed to be installed. He recommended the street committee address the issue.

Mr. Bear reported that Council had previously approved the repairs on Gaines Street however a backhoe or excavator would be needed to complete the work. He also reported that there were drainage issues on Columbia Street in front of Karen's Hi-Port Bar. A discussion ensued regarding the needed repairs.

Mayor Crawford expressed he would like to install gravel in the small area in front of his home. He stated that he would personally pay for the gravel but wanted to be sure council did not oppose him doing so. It was general consensus of Council that he be permitted to do so.

Fiscal Officer's Report

Mrs. Dufau presented the 2023 permanent appropriation budget for Council's approval.

Resolution 23-08

Motion by: Ms. Wills

Seconded by: Mr. Null

To approve the 2023 permanent appropriation budget.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Bear, Yes; Mr. Elliott, Yes; Mr. Moon, Absent; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes

Mayor Crawford inquired if council members had received and reviewed Mrs. Dufau's request for a salary increase. Council members confirmed that they had. Mr. Elliott inquired as to the fiscal officer's salary allocation. Mrs. Dufau explained that her present salary was allocated 67% from the general fund and 33% from the sewer fund. She expressed that the village is permitted to allocate her salary utilizing the general, police, fire and sewer fund however she would not recommend utilizing any of the police or fire fund as those funds were needed for important services for the village residents. Should Council approve a pay increase she recommended reallocating the fiscal officer salary 73% from the general fund and 27% from the sewer fund.

Police Department Report

Chief Elliott presented information regarding blighted properties that have been cited as well as updates on actions that have been taken to address the matter.

He presented a quote for new tasers and a proposed five-year purchase contract for the new equipment. He reported the police/fire committee had met and discussed the proposed new taser purchase.

Chief Elliott also reported he would like to get a new police recruit from the police academy each year as the Village would be a great training and entry level position for a new police officer.

Resolution 23-09

Motion by: Mr. Beair

Seconded by: Mr. Null

To approve a five-year purchase contract with Axon Enterprises, Inc. for the purchase of three tasers.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Beair, Yes; Mr. Elliott, Yes; Mr. Moon, Absent; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes

Chief Elliott reported the lidar camera has been in the park since it was first utilized and that revenues from it have drastically decreased. He hopes that revenues will increase between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Captain Perry presented the January 2023 department statistics.

Chief Elliott reported that currently if the village police department needs to house an offender at the Brown County Jail the Village would be charged \$90.00 per day incarceration fee however the village solicitor has found a way to contract with Brown County with the offender being responsible for the incarceration fee not the Village. He recommended Council request the village solicitor to prepare the contract.

Resolution 23-10

Motion by: Mr. Null

Seconded by: Ms. Wills

To approve the village solicitor, prepare a contract with Brown County Sheriff's Office regarding offenders incarcerated be responsible for all incarceration fees.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Beair, Yes; Mr. Elliott, Yes; Mr. Moon, Absent; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes

Captain Perry reported the K-9 has started training and should be certified in two months.

Chief Elliott expressed that it had been discussed previously about the possibility of a village administrator but found there was a conflict but also found that Council could appoint a chairman.

Mr. Elliott recommended posting for a village administrator position. A discussion ensued regarding possible responsibilities of a village administrator.

Motion by: Mr. Elliott, seconded by: Mr. Beair to advertise for a village administrator position for a term of one year. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Crawford requested nominations for 2023 President of Council.

Motion by: Mr. Elliott, seconded by: Mr. Null to retain Mr. Beair as President of Council. Motion passed unanimously with Mr. Beair abstaining from the vote.

Motion by: Mr. Elliott, seconded by: Ms. Wills to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 9, 2023. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Mr. Elliott to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Motion passed unanimously. Time Out: 7:45 p.m.

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Ms. Wills to return to regular session. Motion passed unanimously. Time Returned: 7:56 p.m.

Resolution 23-11

Motion by: Mr. Null Seconded by: Mr. Beair

To approve appointing Shawn Elliott as permanent Village Police Chief.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Beair, Yes; Mr. Elliott, Abstain; Mr. Moon, Absent; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes

Resolution 23-12

Motion by: Mr. Null Seconded by: Mr. Beair

To approve the following pay rates effective February 19, 2023:

Police Chief, Shawn Elliott	\$22.00 per hour
Police Captain, Brian Perry	\$19.50 per hour

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Beair, Yes; Mr. Elliott, Abstain; Mr. Moon, Absent; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes

Resolution 23-13

Motion by: Ms. Wills Seconded by: Mr. Null

To approve a \$200.00 per month pay increase for Fiscal Officer, Sheila Dufau effective February 2023.

Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Beair, Yes; Mr. Elliott, Yes; Mr. Moon, Absent; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Ms. Wills, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Eddie Crawford Jr., Mayor

Sheila G. Dufau, Fiscal Officer

Kathy Adams, Council Member

Patrick Elliott, Council Member

Linda Wills, Council Member

Scott Null, Council Member

Lester Beair, Council Member

Anthony Moon, Council Member