

**Village of Higginsport
Village Council Meeting
June 10, 2024**

The Council of the Village of Higginsport met in regular session at the Village Municipal Building on Monday, June 10, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. with all members present except Drew Smith.

Also, present were: Police Chief Shawn Elliott, Fire Chief Rob Starrett, Patrick Elliott, Dustin Faul, Anthony Moon, Dylan Branham, Scott Wilburn, Linda Fester, Peggy Wood, Tricia Wood, Michelle Wilburn, Sandy Bear, Dean Miracle and David Osborne, Jr.

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

Public Participation

Mrs. Sandy Bear requested Council consider doing something for recognition of Aurora Bishop for contribution to the village park improvements. Mrs. Bear suggested naming the playground area of the park “Aurora’s Playground” and designating the area with a plaque. After a brief discussion it was general consensus of Council to proceed with Mrs. Bear’s recommendation.

Mrs. Linda Fester reported the Ohio Nature Works grant agreement had been received and that the grant work could begin at the village park.

Mrs. Fester reported the Brown County Comprehensive Steering Committee will hold its first public meeting on June 13, 2024 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Southern State College campus in Mt. Orab.

Mrs. Fester expressed her appreciation to all those that recently participated with the Ohio River Way Paddlers.

Mrs. Fester reported that Scott and Michelle Wilburn had been watering the village flower pots between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. each evening when needed and would appreciate any additional volunteers to assist with the task.

Mrs. Fester reported that a representative from the Brown County Commissioners office would be making a visit to the village to view the work that has been completed with the grant funds provided to the village by the county.

Police Department Report

Chief Elliott reported on the following:

- Department statistics for May 2024
- Old evidence room in the cleared out.
- Point of contact has been changed on the department Verizon account and unneeded services have been canceled.
- Work continues with the village administrator to clean up several properties in the village.

Mr. Dean Miracle addressed Council regarding the dumpster located on Washington Street. He reported he had spoken to the property owner regarding the removal of the dumpster and requested that Council approve him contacting Rumpke and having it removed if the property owner did not do so. It was general consensus of Council to authorize the village administrator to have the dumpster removed.

Mr. Scott Wilburn inquired as to what actions could be taken regarding the infestation of groundhogs in the village. Mr. Miracle reported that he had done some research and requested Council's approval to set live-catch traps to catch them and dispose of them. A discussion ensued with Council being in agreement to the proposed removal/disposal process.

Mr. Dustin Faul informed Council that he had spoken to the mayor regarding possibly holding a BBQ Festival in the village on August 9 and 10, 2024. He explained that he had already arranged insurance for the event and suggested possibly combining a park dedication with the event. A discussion ensued regarding the matter with Council in agreement with moving forward with plans for the event.

Mr. Patrick Elliott informed Council that he had a credit with Georgetown Marble & Granite and that the village was welcome to utilize it for the purchase of the plaque for the park that was previously discussed.

Fire Department Report

Chief Starrett reported on the following:

- Pump testing has been completed. Unit 315 has an issue with the alternator that will be checked when the preventative maintenance is completed. The other two engines were tested and have no issues.
- Met with the village administrator to review all of the paperwork that had been requested regarding equipment maintenance.

Mayor Bear inquired if the roof leak had been repaired. Chief Starrett confirmed there was still a small leak to be fixed.

Solicitor Report

Mr. Osborne provided Council with a correspondence from the State Ethics Committee regarding compensation of volunteer firefighters that also serve as village council members.

Old/New Business

Mayor Bear reported that he had been approached by Anthony Moon and Dylan Branham regarding purchasing paint to interior and exterior of the firehouse/municipal building. Mr. Moon reported that the approximate cost for the paint would be \$600.00 and he and Mr. Branham would volunteer to complete the painting.

Mr. Matt Adams reported that he had been contacted by a neighbor regarding them being ran off a property at Brown Street. He inquired if that area was village or private property. A discussion ensued regarding village property and public right-of-way.

Mr. Mark Fester reported that DLZ firm rated the highest for the sewer quote. They are also the engineering firm for the ballpark project. A discussion ensued regarding funding the sewer engineering study with the American Rescue Plan funds. Mr. Fester expressed the sewer grant application would be due in early August 2024.

Mr. Fester inquired if Mr. Osborne had reviewed the Nature Works grant contract and requested that he prepare a resolution to enter into the contract.

Mr. Scott Null inquired if the sewer contractor (Greg Wilson) had declined. Mayor Bear confirmed that they had not.

Mr. Null inquired the status of the campground at the west end of the village tapping into the village sewer system. Mayor Bear confirmed that they had not and a discussion ensued regarding the matter. Mr. Osborne stated that there would be a process for moving forward to proceed with requiring the property owner to tap into the village sewer.

Mr. Miracle reported he had been contacted by a village property owner regarding a new shed and a port-o-let. He inquired if the village had any ordinances regarding each. He reported he did find an ordinance prohibiting port-o-lets but inquired if Council would consider exceptions for short periods of time in summer. A discussion ensued regarding the matter with possible options including implementing a permit process. Mr. Null recommended setting a high fee to discourage long term use.

Mr. Osborne reported he had reviewed the village's financial audit. He expressed the audit addressed the training requirements for elected officials and offered to set up dates and times at his office for the required training.

Mr. Osborne highlighted the recommendation from the state auditor regarding the village's need for a public records policy and central location of public records. A discussion ensued regarding centralization of village records and the feasibility of doing so. Council also established a finance committee consisting of the following members: Kathy Adams, Mark Fester, Scott Null and Sheila Dufau.

Mr. Miracle reported that the municipal building had excess file cabinets and requested Council's approval to sell the unneeded file cabinets. It was general consensus of Council to permit him to do so.

Mr. Miracle reported that eight new fire extinguishers and new LED exit signs had been received.

Mayor Bear distributed a letter from Mr. Patrick Elliott's attorney requesting the village agree to lease the village's portion Olive Street to Mr. Elliott. A discussion ensued regarding the request. Mr. Osborne expressed the matter needed to be addressed as it is a safety issue. Mr. Miracle expressed that he was not in favor of selling village property however leasing the property was a good solution to an ongoing issue. Mrs. Adams expressed the term of the proposed lease was way too long and she would want the street surveyed before considering leasing it. Mr. Elliott expressed that it would be financially beneficial for the village to agree to leasing it to him. Mr. Osborne recommended Council vote to enter into negotiations with Mr. Elliott. Mr. Null expressed that if Council entertains leasing to Mr. Elliott that all property owners with river access should be made the same offer. Mr. Miracle expressed that Mr. Null's suggestion might be possible but the village should retain one river access point preferably the one by Mr. Null's property.

Mayor Bear recommended tabling the matter until the next meeting in order for Council to have more time to consider the proposed lease. Mayor Bear inquired if that would be acceptable to Mr. Elliott. Mr. Elliott expressed that he wanted a decision at the current meeting.

Resolution 24-15

Motion by: Mr. Fester

Seconded by: None

To approve the property lease proposal from Patrick & Jennifer Elliott for the village's portion Olive Street.

Motion died for lack of second.

Chief Elliott informed Council that due to possible litigation between the Village and his father, Patrick Elliott that he would not continue with his employment with village and that he would be resigning as village police chief effective in thirty (30) days.

Fiscal Officer's Report

Mrs. Dufau presented budgetary resolutions for Council's approval.

Resolution 24-16

Motion by: Mr. Fester

Seconded by: Mr. Null

WHEREAS, the Council of the Village of Higginsport previously approved Resolution 23-22 allocating \$25,000.00 American Rescue Funds for park improvements, and

WHEREAS, the Village has since been awarded an Ohio Nature Work grant for some of the planned park improvements, and

WHEREAS, the full amount of allocated funds will no longer be needed to complete the park improvements,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Resolution 23-22 be amended to reflect that funds allocated reflect \$6,516.68 for park improvements, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the remaining American Rescue Plan funds be allocated for other village projects.

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

Resolution 24-17

Motion by: Ms. Wills

Seconded by: Mr. Null

WHEREAS, an amended revenue certificate has been received from the Brown County Auditor's office reflecting changes in the village's current revenue budget, and

WHEREAS, the village's revenue budget must be amended to reflect these approved changes, and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the following changes be approved to the 2024 revenue budget:

1000 General Fund

	Original Revenue Budget	Amended Revenue Budget	Net Change
General Property Taxes	\$1,800.00	\$19,000.00	\$17,200.00
Cigarette Tax	\$37.50	\$38.00	\$0.50
Liquor Permits	\$820.50	\$1,632.00	\$811.50
State - Pass thru Grant	\$0.00	\$12,438.00	\$12,438.00
Fines and Forfeitures	\$0.00	\$63,000.00	\$63,000.00

Cable Franchise Fees	\$4,700.00	\$4,700.00	\$0.00
Interest	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$0.00
Miscellaneous - Non/Operating	\$0.00	\$1,015.00	\$1,015.00
Transfers-In	\$47,642.00	\$34,000.00	-\$13,642.00
Totals	\$67,000.00	\$147,823.00	\$80,823.00

**2153 Brown County ARPA
Subgrant**

	Original Revenue Budget	Amended Revenue Budget	Net Change
Miscellaneous - Non/Operating	\$0.00	\$426.15	\$426.15
Total	\$0.00	\$426.15	\$426.15

5201 Sewer Operating

	Original Revenue Budget	Amended Revenue Budget	Net Change
Charges for Services	\$80,000.00	\$95,000.00	\$15,000.00
Special Assessment	\$0.00	\$5,825.00	\$5,825.00
Total	\$80,000.00	\$100,825.00	\$20,825.00

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

Resolution 24-18

Motion by: Ms. Willis

Seconded by: Mrs. Adams

WHEREAS, the Village has received an amended revenue certificate reflecting additional projected revenue to be received, and

WHEREAS, additional supplemental appropriations are needed to appropriate the additional revenue,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the following supplemental appropriations be approved:

General Fund

1000-320-690	Other	\$ 11,550.00
1000-930-930	Contingencies	\$ 69,273.00

Brown Co. ARPA Grant

2152-790-690	Other	\$ 426.15
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Sewer Fund
5201-930-930

Contingencies \$ 20,825.00

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

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

Motion by: Mr. Fester, seconded by: Mr. Null to approve the April 19, 2024 special meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by: Mrs. Adams, seconded by: Ms. Wills to approve the May 13, 2024 meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by: Mr. Fester, 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