

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

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

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, Peggy Wood and Wanda Crawford.

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

Public Participation

Mr. Chris Bishop reported that the donated playground equipment from the City of Montgomery has been secured and will be available in August. Mr. Beair would be meeting with the city administrator later in the week. Mr. Bishop expressed there would be some preparation work needed at the park in order to accommodate the equipment. A brief discussion ensued regarding the needed preparations and possible fundraisers to facilitate the cost for installation of the equipment.

Mr. Bishop requested permission to have a dumpster placed behind the municipal building for his business. He expressed that he would be fully responsible for the cost of the dumpster as well as the housekeeping around it however the village would be permitted to utilize it at no costs. Council briefly discussed his request.

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Ms. Wills, to permit Chris Bishop to have a dumpster placed at the rear of the municipal building at no cost to the village with the understanding that if it is not maintained the village retains the right to order it removed. Motion passed unanimously.

Fire Department Report

Chief Starrett reported on the following:

- Presented the approved Lewis Township fire contract
- Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday, April 8, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. Donations of plastic eggs, prizes or hard-boiled eggs are being accepted.
- Township Dumpster Days will be April 14th & 15th. Mr. Beair has agreed to assist in the village. Dumpsters will be removed by 3:00 p.m. on the 15th.
- Cables on one of the bay doors were recently repaired by Overhead Door Co.
- County Board of Health meeting will be held March 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at Southern Hills Career Center.
- Adams-Brown Recycling has a program which pays \$500.00 for cleaning up township roadways or cemeteries. In the past, a group from the village had provided clean-up at a township cemetery in order to receive the \$500.00 for village Christmas lights. Participation has been offered to a group in the township however if they do not accept it may be possible for a group from the village participating as a fundraising option for the park.
- Adams-Brown Recycling has delivered a smaller recycling dumpster at the village park.

Police Department Report

Chief Elliott provided monthly statics for the police department. Chief Elliott expressed that there had been negativity regarding the officer's traffic stops in the village. He stated that

as well. Mayor Crawford expressed his support for all the police officers and stated he felt they were short-handed but was willing to let Chief Elliott manage his department.

Additional Public Participation

Mrs. Linda Fester thanked Council for addressing and fixing the drainage issue near their property. Mrs. Fester also provided information regarding the upcoming webinar for the Ohio Riverway on March 23, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. The village community center will be hosting the Zoom meeting for any and all that are interested.

A discussion ensued regarding the Ohio Nature Works Park grant. Mrs. Fester volunteered to apply for the grant on behalf of the Village. Mrs. Sandy Beair inquired if anyone had a problem with Mrs. Fester helping with grant. Mr. Null expressed that the committee members should be applying for the grant. A discussion ensued regarding the grant application as well as possible projects to submit for funding.

Chief Elliott reported the several upstairs windows in the municipal building were in need of repair. He also reported the Ohio Department of Commerce had been to the Village regarding the required inspection of the elevator in the municipal building. An inspection will be required even if it is not in use or it will need removed.

Mr. Scott Wilburn reported the church's insurance does cover its use of the modular building they are renting from the Village. Solicitor Osborne expressed that the church needs to provide the Village with a certificate of insurance.

Mr. Null reported part of the old school building has blown off. A discussion ensued regarding the old building and the possibility of a grant to have it demolished. **Motion by: Mr. Beair, Seconded by: Mr. Null**, to direct the Village Solicitor to do additional research on the old school building property. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Old Business

Mr. Null inquired the status of the removal of the rope blocking Olive Street. Solicitor Osborne reported that there are several other matters that have taken priority. Mr. Null inquired if there was a projected timeline as to when it would be addressed. Solicitor Osborne stated hopefully by the end of summer.

Mr. Beair reported on the following:

- All sewer electrical boxes have been locked and tagged.
- Property owner at 511 Columbia Street is working on being in compliance
- Sewer pump not working at 9 Columbia Street. The property owner has installed a sump pump in the pit and is pumping sewage onto the ground.

Mayor Crawford stated he would contact the Board of Health regarding 9 Columbia Street. Mr. Elliott inquired why deal with the Board of Health with Mayor Crawford responding why doesn't the sewer committee handle it. Mr. Beair expressed he would take a copy of the sewer ordinance to the property owners and notify them of the ordinance violation.

Mr. Elliott presented the Ohio Revised Code section regarding a village administrator and outlined information therein. He recommended Council appoint a village administrator. A discussion ensued regarding his recommendation.

Motion by: Mr. Elliott, Seconded by: Mrs. Adams, to appoint Lester Beair as Committee Chairman. **Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Beair, Abstain, Mr. Elliott, Yes; Mr. Moon, Yes; Mr. Null, Yes, Ms. Wills, Yes**

Mr. Elliott inquired if the Village Solicitor's contract needed renewed. Mayor Crawford confirmed it would need to be renewed in April. After a brief discussion, it was general consensus of Council to renew the contract.

Resolution 23-14

Motion by: Mr. Null

Seconded by: Ms. Wills

To renew the Village Solicitor, DJ Osborne's contract for a period of one year with the same terms and conditions as his previous contract.

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

New Business

Mr. Null inquired about the mayor's court clerk's hours and who sets her schedule? Solicitor Osborne stated it is the mayor's discretion unless council passes something otherwise. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the matter.

Mr. Bear reported all the village street lights are working and that six of them had been repaired. He recommended drop boxes be placed on every other pole. A discussion ensued with Mrs. Wanda Crawford express that Duke Energy has been supposed to install additional drop boxes for the last three years.

Mayor Crawford inquired what Council would like to do regarding the cemetery mowing. The matter was briefly discussed with general consensus of council to see if last year's contractor would like to perform mowing services again for the 2023 season.

Motion by: Ms. Wills, seconded by: Ms. Adams to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 13, 2023. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Motion by: Mr. Elliott, seconded by: Mrs. Adams, 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 Bear, Council Member

Anthony Moon, Council Member