

**Village of Higginsport
Village Council Meeting
October 9, 2023**

The Council of the Village of Higginsport met in regular session at the Village Municipal Building on Monday, October 9, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. with all members present except Linda Wills.

Also, present were: Police Chief Shawn Elliott, Fire Chief Rob Starrett, Solicitor DJ Osborne, Annie Osborne, Dean Miracle, Tricia Wood, Sandy Bear, Mark Fester, Linda Fester, Chris Bishop, Scott Wilburn, Dustin Faul and Peggy Wood.

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

Public Participation

Mrs. Sandy Bear reported that she had contacted the Daughters of the American Revolution and Georgetown Marble & Granite in regards to the possibility of replacing Colonel Higgins' grave monument. Mr. Kelly Hesler and his wife, owners of Georgetown Marble & Granite had graciously offered to donate a new monument. Colonel Higgins' original monument would be kept and preserved for historical purposes.

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by Mrs. Adams to accept the donation of new grave monument for Colonel Higgins from Georgetown Marble & Granite. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Scott Wilburn inquired if the Village Solicitor had obtained the name of the individual that filed a complaint with the EPA regarding the flooring in the municipal building (bank building). Solicitor Osborne responded that he did not have that information but would be making a public records request for the complete file on the matter.

Mr. Wilburn also inquired if it was known who had been dumping unauthorized materials at the village ballfield. General consensus of all present was that the identity of the violator was unknown.

Mr. Wilburn expressed that Linda & Mark Fester had spent several hours working on grant applications for the Village and inquired if all of Council was supportive of their efforts. Mr. Bear expressed there were multiple entities involved in the ballfield development. Mr. Elliott expressed that he was 150% supportive of the work the Fester's were doing.

Mr. Wilburn announced that a Meet & Greet would be held at the village park on November 4, 2023 for the candidates running for offices on the November ballot.

Mr. Wilburn inquired as to the ramifications if the proposed operating tax levy fails. Mayor Crawford expressed that it would have a negative impact on the village's finances. Mr. Elliott expressed that the police department was self-sufficient.

Police Department Report

Chief Shawn Elliott reported that he is currently the only officer in the village and the Captain Brian Perry was working minimal part-time hours. Chief Elliott expressed that there was a possibility to get auxiliary officer however they would not be free. He requested Council approve the police department received 100% of the revenue generated through mayor's court. A discussion ensued regarding his request with Mrs. Dufau expressing that the mayor's court expenses need to be paid from the mayor's court revenue.

Resolution 23-32

Motion by: Mr. Beair

Seconded by: Mr. Moon

To approve allocating 100% of the mayor's court net revenue after all applicable state fees and mayor's court expenses have been paid effective October 1, 2023.

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

Fire Department Report

Chief Rob Starrett inquired as to when Council would like to hold Trunk-or-Treat. A brief discussion ensued with general consensus of Council to hold the event on October 31, 2023 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Chief Starrett recommended consideration of including in the ballfield renovations grant application the installation of concrete piers in the river for emergency and recreational access. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding his recommendation as well as the use of the ballfield for an emergency landing zone, the method of securing the ballfield (cable versus gate) and the continued supportive participation and involvement from Council and the community.

Additional Public Participation

Mrs. Linda Fester reported on the following:

- The Village has been awarded the Brown County ARPA Subgrant. She and Mark had attended the County Commissioner's meeting to express their appreciation on behalf of the village. The county commissioner's have agreed to provide a letter of support for the village's application for the Appalachian Grant.
- Ohio River Way is currently trying to secure a sponsor for the village's grant application. The application has not yet been written.
- The Ohio NatureWorks Grant will be awarded sometime in the near future.
- The next meeting for the America 250 committee will be October 25, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Old Business

Solicitor Osborne reported that the Brown County Land Bank has funds available for the demolition of dilapidated buildings. He requested direction from Council as to how they would like him to proceed regarding the old school building and gas station properties in the village. A discussion ensued with Council providing additional properties in the village that also need to be addressed.

Mr. Scott Null requested an update on the status of Olive Street being blocked with a rope. Solicitor Osborne expressed that the matter was not a high priority and the village had many things that needed worked on but have limited resources. He recommended Council prioritize the matters they would like addressed. A discussion ensued with Mrs. Adams expressing that it is a violation of the law and should not need litigated. Mr. Mark Fester expressed that he would like to block off the street by his property as people dump stuff at the end of the street. The discussion continued with Mr. Elliott expressing that he had spent \$100's to \$1,000's cleaning up the property for twenty-two years and if Council wanted to pursue the removal of the rope, he would see them in court. After a very heated discussion, Mayor Crawford inquired as to how Council would like to proceed on the matter. Mr. Null expressed that it appeared that the village can't afford to pursue it further.

Mr. Beair reported the street repair at Pleasant Ally had been completed and he expressed his appreciation to all those that helped on the project.

Resolution 23-33**Motion by: Mr. Beair****Seconded by: Mr. Elliott**

To approve the village solicitor to work with the property owners of the following properties to obtain grant funding for demolition of the delapidated buildings on said properties:

- School Building (located on Jackson Street)
- Gas Station (Corner of Columbia & Jackson Streets)
- 511 Columbia Street
- 212 Washington Street
- 606 Washington Street

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

New Business

Mayor Crawford inquired about the ditch line repairs on Gaines Street. Mr. Beair reported his dump truck was currently broke down and he had been unable to address the repairs.

Mayor Crawford expressed that a sign-out sheet had been established for village street tools and equipment however no one had signed out the tools and equipment for the recent clean-up at the ball field. Mr. Beair stated he would update the sign-out sheet for the tools and equipment currently being used.

Fiscal Officer's Report

Mrs. Dufau presented the following for Council's approval:

- Resolution for budgeting the ARPA grant monies to be received.
- Minutes and Bills

Resolution 23-34**Motion by: Mrs. Adams****Seconded by: Mr. Moon**

WHEREAS, the Village of Higginsport has been awarded an ARPA Subrecipient Grant from Brown County Commissioners in the amount of \$39,277.74 for village and park improvements, and

WHEREAS, the Village has received an amended revenue certificate from the Brown County Auditor's office reflecting the award of these grant funds,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that a new fund (Fund# 2153) be established for the receipt and expenditures of the grant funds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the following revenue budget and appropriation budget be approved:

Revenue

2153-440-0000 Grants (Non-Federal/Non-State) \$39,277.74

Appropriation

2153-790-690-0000 Other \$39,277.74

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

Motion by: Mrs. Adams, seconded by: Mr. Beair to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 11, 2023. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Motion by: Mrs. Adams, seconded by: Mr. Null, 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