

**Village of Higginsport
Village Council Meeting
September 11, 2023**

The Council of the Village of Higginsport met in regular session at the Village Municipal Building on Monday, September 11, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. with all members present.

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

Mayor Crawford called the meeting to order, led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance and requested a moment of silence in memory of the September 11, 2001.

Public Participation

Ms. Auora Bishop presented a donation of \$674.00 from recent fundraisers for the village park improvements.

Mrs. Sandy Beair expressed appreciation for the recent work done at the village cemetery by Scott Wilburn, Duanne Germann and Lester Beair.

Mr. Mark Fester expressed appreciation and recognition for all of the village' first responders.

Mrs. Linda Fester reported about the recent meeting with the Ohio River Way and the planners. The finalized plans for the ballfield have been completed however she had received revised plans and copies were available. Mayor Crawford inquired if a public/townwide meeting should be scheduled to discuss the future plans for the ballfield. Mrs. Fester confirmed that they were not quite ready yet to schedule a public meeting.

Mrs. Fester reported that she, Wanda Crawford, Amy Ring, Lester and Sandy Beair had attended the America 250th Anniversary planning meeting in Georgetown. She invited anyone wishing to participate to do so.

Old Business

Mr. Beair reported that three (3) yards of concrete would be needed to complete the street repair at Pleasant Alley and requested council approval for purchasing.

Motion by: Mr. Elliott, seconded by: Mr. Moon, to approve the purchase of three (3) yards of concrete for street repairs at Pleasant Alley. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Beair inquired if Mrs. Adams had obtained an estimate for the elevator inspection. Mrs. Adams confirmed that she had not. Mr. Beair expressed that Council needed to move forward with the elevator inspection and any repairs that are needed.

Mr. Elliott reported there was an issue with the sewer grinder pump at 111 Columbia Street. He reported that the property owner had contacted him stating the pump light was on and that raw sewage was coming out of the hole. Mr. Elliott inquired if any records had been maintained for previous sewer repairs. A brief discussion ensued regarding the matter with Mr. Elliott informing Council that the property owner had reported the issue to the Brown County Board of Health.

Mr. Elliott inquired if the groundhog hole had been filled on Gaines Street. Mr. Beair confirmed that it had and requested he be permitted to purchase grates.

Police Department Report

Chief Shawn Elliott reported on the following:

- Village K-9 officer has been out of commission due to a groin injury however he has recovered and is back in service.
- Lidar camera system will be updated to a radar system that will be mounted to a pole.
- Continuing to maintain the department with the funding and resources currently available.

Fire Department Report

Chief Rob Starrett presented information regarding the possible creation of a fire/EMS district as proposed by Hamersville Fire/EMS Interim Chief, Ronnie Schneider at the August 2023 council meeting. Chief Starrett explained the proposed districting and the actual costs and logistics required to establish a district. He informed Council that the private EMS association had voted against joining a fire/EMS district.

Mr. Bear inquired about the operations of the EMS association. Chief Starrett explained that the association is a 501.3c private entity governed by its members. The members determine how the association is ran and how their monies are spent.

Mr. Elliott expressed that he was not at the August meeting and inquired that if a district was formed would they not be able to provide services to the village. Chief Starrett stated that if might would be possible if they received enough funding however most likely they would not be able to get the funding needed to operate a district.

Additional Business

Mr. Starrett informed Council that the property he had acquired at 606 Columbia Street had been surveyed twice as someone had moved the survey pins from the first survey. He expressed that he would like to get the property cleaned up and get the sewer assessment settled. He stated at the August meeting Council had approved reducing the sewer assessment to \$2,000.00 but had directed him to get with the village fiscal officer regarding the sewer assessment amount on file with the Brown County Auditor. He requested Council consider an additional reduction to the amount previously agreed upon.

Mrs. Dufau reported that she had reviewed the limited village records that were available regarding the sewer assessments for the property at 606 Columbia but could only verify information for two of the assessments that had been placed on the property. Mrs. Dufau further stated that the property had been vacant since July 2012 and that she had found no record of the previous village fiscal officers invoicing the “dead” tap fee for the property that was implemented in June 2014 nor had she ever invoiced for it. A discussion ensued with Mr. Elliott stating that an audit had been done of the sewer system and apparently someone was not doing their job. Ms. Wills recommended staying with the assessment amount Council approved and voted on at the August meeting.

Ms. Wills inquired as to the status of the old school building property. Solicitor Osborne provided an update as to the actions that had been taken to date.

Mayor Crawford inquired about the proposed livestock ordinance. Mrs. Dufau stated the first reading was done at the July 2023 meeting however no second reading had taken place. A brief discussion ensued with Solicitor Osborne suggesting it be published on the village’s social media page.

Mayor Crawford requested an executive session to discussing a building maintenance matter.

Motion by: Mr. Null, seconded by: Mr. Moon, to go into executive session to discuss a building maintenance issue. Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Beair, Yes; Mr. Elliott, Yes; Mr. Moon, Yes; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes
Time Out: 7:20 p.m.

Motion by: Mr. Beair, seconded by: Ms. Wills, to return to regular session. Vote: Mrs. Adams, Yes; Mr. Beair, Yes; Mr. Elliott, Yes; Mr. Moon, Yes; Mr. Null, Yes; Ms. Wills, Yes
Time In: 7:37p.m.

Fiscal Officer's Report

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

- 2024 Acceptance or Rates

Resolution 23-31

Motion by: Mr. Elliot

Seconded by: Mr. Moon

To approve the 2024 Acceptance of Amounts and Rates as provided by the Brown County Auditor.

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

Motion by: Ms. Wills, seconded by: Mr. Null to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 10, 2023. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by: Ms. Wills, seconded by: Mr. Null to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 14, 2023. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Motion by: Mr. Elliott, seconded by: Mr. Moon, 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