

**Village of Higginsport
Village Council Meeting
October 14, 2024**

The Council of the Village of Higginsport met in regular session at the Village Municipal Building on Monday, October 14, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. with all members present.

Also, present were: Police Chief Shawn Elliott, Fire Chief Rob Starrett, Scott Wilburn, Michelle Wilburn, Peggy Wood, Sandy Bear, Dylan Branham, Anthony Moon, Raegan Moon, Dean Miracle, LesLee Hasenstab and Greg Wilson.

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

Sewer Department Report

Mr. Greg Wilson provided a verbal report regarding the status of the village's sewer plant. He also reported that there had been operational issues with the generator at the sewer lift station during the recent power outage due to inclement weather. He reported a temporary generator had been obtained for use until the generator repairs could be completed.

Chief Elliott reported that the lift station needed a vent installed to the outdoors to provide for proper ventilation of the generator exhaust. Mr. Null volunteered to help Chief Elliott install the ventilation system.

Police Department Report

Chief Elliott reported on the following:

- The generator at the municipal building (bank building) was working properly during the power outage.
- There has been no communication regarding the cleanup of the property on the corner of Columbia Street and U.S. 505.
- Citations have been issued to village property owners regarding non-compliance of the village's property maintenance ordinance.
- Traffic patterns through the village have recently changed due to illegal drives passing through the village.
- Vehicle maintenance update

Administrator's Report

Mr. Miracle reported on the following:

- Storm damage cleanup has been completed.
- Park benches have been installed at the village park.

Mr. Miracle reported that citations could continue to be written to property owners regarding cleaning up their property however nothing will be done if there are no consequences for non-compliance.

Old Business

Mr. Null reported the municipal building mold inspection has been completed and a report was received with the testing results. He expressed the inspector had recommended the old furniture and carpet in the upstairs of the building be removed, the duct work needs to be cleaned and the HVAC filters need to be changed on a regular basis. He inquired if Council would like to meet with the inspector to get his recommendations to remediate the mold. Mr. Null also recommended Council close off the upstairs of the building as it was not in use.

A discussion ensued with the general consensus of Council to set-up a meeting with the building inspector.

Mr. Null reported that a scissor-lift had been dropped off by the old school building several years ago and he recommended the village take possession of it as it could be used by the village. A brief discussion ensued regarding the matter.

Mr. Fester reported he had met with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and Strand Engineering regarding the ballfield project. He reported that some surveying has been completed and they are awaiting permits for borings. The project is scheduled to breakdown in March/April 2025. He also reported the project will part of a documentary that will be completed by OVRDC.

Ms. Wills inquired if the mayor had spoken to the village solicitor regarding the proposed golf cart ordinance. Mayor Bear reported the village solicitor would have it for the November 2024 meeting.

Mr. Smith inquired about the status of the sewer engineering study. Mr. Fester confirmed that it had been started and the village had received the first invoice from Strand Engineering. Mr. Smith expressed that there were more immediate village needs that the ARPA funds should have been used for. Mrs. Adams inquired if the village would have to pay for another sewer engineering study if they do not receive a grant or the village does not have the matching funds for a grant. A discussion ensued regarding the matter with Mr. Wilson and Mayor Bear expressing the things that were needed for the village sewer system to be in compliance with EPA regulations. Mayor Bear expressed he would provide all council members with a copy of the village's last EPA report.

Mr. Smith recommended Council address hooking the fire department building to the municipal building generator as when the power is out it makes it difficult to access the fire apparatus and securing the building. Mayor Bear reported that Council had already approved doing so.

Mrs. Adams inquired as to where the village recycling dumpster had been moved to. Mayor Bear confirmed that it had been relocated to the municipal building parking lot.

Public Participation

Mr. Scott Wilburn requested copies of village ordinances. Mrs. Dufau reported she was currently digitizing the information in hopes of making it available to anyone that desired a copy. Mrs. Dufau also informed Council that she had researched as to what had happen to the village's old records. She expressed that Council had adopted a records retention schedule in 2013 and at that time they had requested approval from the State for disposal of the village's old records which was approved by the State at that time.

Mrs. Linda Fester provided an update on the Nature Works grant project. The final work that still needed completed was painting the park shelters.

Mrs. Fester reported the Brown County Subgrant has remaining funds of \$4,559.26. A discussion ensued regarding possibly utilizing the remaining funds for mold remediation at the municipal building or possibly exterior painting of the municipal building.

Mrs. Fester reported the Brown County Commissioners were presently dedicating a lot of time on the ten-year plan for the county. They would like community input and have requested residents complete a survey. Mrs. Fester provided those in attendance with the link for accessing the survey online.

Ms. Peggy Wood expressed her appreciation to all those that volunteer for the village. She thanked Kathy Adams for piling all the brush at the park for removal.

Ms. Wood also provided an update on the activities of the America 250 committee including her and Tricia Wood's participation in the veteran's reception held during the Brown County Fair.

Fire Department Report

Chief Starrett reported on the following:

- Meetings with the consultant for Lewis Township as well as a Lewis Township Trustee - it appears that they will be continuing to contract with multiple departments for fire and EMS coverage of the township.
- SCBA's have been hydrotested - four have been taken out of service and three are leaking and the invoice will not be paid until they are corrected.
- Application for the fire marshal equipment grant to facilitate the purchase of new SCBA's.

Chief Starrett inquired as to when Council would like to have Trunk-or-Treat. After a brief discussion it was general consensus to hold the event on October 31, 2024 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Chief Starrett reported he had spoken to someone regarding connecting the fire department building to the generator which would require a transfer switch to be installed. The approximate cost in doing so would be \$3,000.00 to \$3,500.00. A discussion ensued regarding the feasibility of doing and the need for possibly using the facility as an emergency shelter for residents if needed.

Mr. Fester inquired who determines shelter designation. Chief Starrett confirmed it is handled thru the Brown County Commissioners, the county communication center and the Fire Chief Association.

Fiscal Officer Report

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

- Meeting minutes for September 9, 2024.
- Property & Liability Insurance Renewal
- Re-appropriation resolution
- Paid Bills

Resolution 24-24

Motion by: Mr. Fester

Seconded by: Mr. Null

To approve the 2024-2025 liability and property insurance renewal with U.S. Specialty Insurance Company at an annual cost of \$17,540.00. (20% of premium due upon renewal with the balance financed through NCMIC Finance Corporation with nine (9) equal installments of \$1,638.10 per month. Finance costs of \$710.90).

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

Resolution 24-25**Motion by: Ms. Wills****Seconded by: Mrs. Adams**

To approve the following re-appropriations:

General Fund**From:**

1000-930-930	Contingencies	\$18,125.00
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To:	1000-110-349	Professional Fees	\$12,000.00
	1000-110-321	Telephone	\$ 400.00
	1000-790-319	Other Utilities - Trash	\$ 100.00
	1000-790-321	Telephone	\$ 200.00
	1000-790-349	Professional Fees	\$ 125.00
	1000-790-341	Repairs/Maintenance	\$ 5,000.00

Police Fund**From:**

2902-930-930	Contingencies	\$ 300.00
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To:	2902-110-349	Professional Fees	\$ 300.00
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Fire Fund**From:**

2903-930-930	Contingencies	\$ 5,950.00
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To:	2903-120-313	Propane	\$ 800.00
	2903-120-321	Telephone	\$ 150.00
	2903-120-432	Repairs/Maintenance	\$ 5,000.00

Sewer Fund**From:**

5201-930-930	Contingencies	\$ 4,150.00
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To:	5201-549-312	Water	\$ 600.00
	5201-549-319	Other Utilities - Trash	\$ 50.00
	5201-549-349	Contracted Services	\$ 3,500.00

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

Motion by: Mr. Fester, seconded by: Ms. Wills to approve the regular meeting minutes from September 9, 2024. Motion passed unanimously

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

Additional Business

Ms. Wills inquired as to the status of the elevator repair or removal in the municipal building. Mayor Bear confirmed that the village was not going to be forced to do anything with it.

Motion by: Mr. Smith, seconded by: Mrs. Adams, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Lester Bear, 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