

Village of Chauncey Council

May 8, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Tamara Hawk call the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG: The pledge was observed by all in attendance.

ROLL CALL: Taken by Tamara Hawk

Seat 1 – Connaught Cullen, Present

Seat 2 – Debbie Gibson, Present

Seat 3 – Karla Dellinger, Present

Seat 4 – Evelyn Nagy, Present

Seat 5 – Mike Kraus, Present

Seat 6 – Dylan Skees, Present

Mayor – Tamara Hawk, President Pro Tem, Present

Village Administrator – Present

Village Solicitor – Present

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Approval of the April 10, 2025 was made by Debbie Gibson and seconded by Connaught Cullen. All were in favor of the motion.

APPROVAL OF BILLS/FISCAL OFFICER:

A motion to approve the bills was brought forward by Connaught Cullen and seconded by Dylan Skees. All were in favor of the motion.

Approve April Financial Reports, motion to approve presented by Debbie Gibson, seconded by Michael Kraus. All were in favor.

NEW BUSINESS:

Roxanna, the Village Clerk, has prepared the first notice of liens to be placed on properties with long outstanding balances owed to the water/sewer departments. This is part of the policy that is in place currently. The letters will go out on June 13 as certified letters. Property owners will receive a second notice in July and will have until August 29th to pay for these charges in the office. On September 1 the clerk will have outstanding amounts certified as special assessments (liens) against the parcel and property owners will have to make payment to the Athens County Auditor's office.

Mayor Hawk reported that she had not had a chance to go to the bank and get her name on the signatory sheet. She will rectify this before the next meeting.

An update on the railroad elimination feasibility study was given by Mayor Hawk. She stated that the prior study did not support the elimination grant guidelines. The Mayor went on to say that she had a meeting with Steve Bergman, Gabe Hays and Randy Van Tilburg to discuss safety concerns at the railroad crossing for pedestrians and cyclists to access Chauncey Park.

Mr. Hays proposed an at-grade crossing at High Street as a logical solution, supported by Tammy's suggestion for a bike or walking path. The conversation also addressed land ownership issues and potential cost savings.

A new study will be conducted and the results will be presented to council.

Edward easement – Solicitor Robe needs the paperwork to be forwarded to the County Commissioners and the Township Trustees in order to move forward. Jessie Powers, ORCA, needs the property surveyed and the exact contours mapped with stakes and flags.

The possibility of changing the flood route to Spring Street and annexing the area. This would allow development and open funding opportunities outside the traditional avenues. Mr. Edwards would benefit from this possibility as his property would no longer be land locked. He would be able to benefit by getting inside sewer and water rates; allow him to develop his property and raise the tax base. As things stand, he would be able to purchase water but not connect to village sewer as the policy does not allow for service outside village limits. This would affect Mr. Von Bargan also but perhaps in a more negative way as the road would no longer dead end at his property and would run through a portion. This is in the very infant stages of discussion and the effects of such a change on property owners will be considered seriously.

Discussion began about the old mine buildings and who had ownership of them. Jim Edwards has ownership of them, but Connaught was under the impression that a trade had been indicated in the easement talks. The state historical organization was not interested in funding at this time. A Brownfield Assessment was completed but the companies involved were not interested in taking the project further.

Mayor Hawk reported that plans for ORCA to build a Welcome Center has run into funding issues. ORCA is exploring ways to generate revenue and not rely solely on grants and dues. They are planning a conference on outdoor recreation.

CONDEMNATION APPEAL HEARING – 28 HIGH ST AND 30 HIGH ST

This hearing was recorded by Karla Dellinger.

Council was asked by the Mayor if they had had a chance to review Karla's letter and Drew's report. All replied they were able to review them.

Debbie Gibson: Do you plan to eventually turn these properties into rentals? Karla: Yes

Evelyn Nagy: I have no issue with the condemnation because rehabilitation can still be done.

Solicitor Robe: Once the condemnation is finalized and recorded the property cannot be used until the issues are remedied.

28 High Street:

Property owner stated that she believed the property at 28 High Street is usable. She stated there had been no fire damage as Drew reported but there was no hand rail on the upper floor.

Council asked property owner several questions:

How long will it take to get the offenses corrected? Owner: I put in a work order as soon as I got the letter. I was waiting to see if my daughter needed to move in due to hardship.

Can you complete the work in 30 days? Owner: No.

Will there be additional cost to the owner if property is condemned? Solicitor: It is a whole process so there would be recording fees. He was not sure of the actual amounts.

What is the hardship of condemnation? Owner: I am not sure of the process and cost. I was not aware that someone had tripped on the rail and not sure where this occurred. Why were they walking on my property anyway?

Debbie Gibson: I feel there are too many questions unanswered and I do not feel council should be making this decision.

Connaught Cullen: The ordinance needs to be revised and I would be more comfortable if the Code Enforcement Officer were here. Isn't this a Board of Zoning Appeals issue?

Solicitor Robe: Condemnation is not a BZA issue.

Michael Kraus: Is the 30 days arbitrary?

Evelyn Nagy: What about an extension and the owner put up caution tape. I feel this would cure the safety issue.

30 High Street:

Property owner admits the foundation is bad. A contractor was scheduled but a shortage of funds stopped the project. The work has been rescheduled.

All the work will be started this summer? Owner: Yes

Are you sure you can get it done? Owner: I will take care of it all (referring to both properties); I have submitted a work order already.

What are the options for council? Solicitor Robe: You may vote to overrule the condemnation order, extend the order, or go forward with the order.

Evenly Nagy: This is a good example of the ordinance working as the owner was motivated to get the work completed in a timely manner. Owner: Disagrees and stated this is work that was already being planned. It was scheduled for a contractor las year but due to funding, the work had to be cancelled and rescheduled for this year. If the condemnation order would have been given last year, it would have ben condemned because they did not have the money. The owner felt it had nothing to dot with the ordinance.

A motion was made by Evelyn Nagy to overrule the condemnation with the stipulation that work needed show significant progress before September 15, 2025. Dylan Skees seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Connaught Cullen - Yeah
Debbie Gibson - Yeah
Karla Dellinger - Abstained
Evelyn Nagy - Yeah
Mike Kraus - Yeah
Dylan Skees – Yeah

All were in favor; motion passed.

An update was given for 44 Converse Street. Purchase of property is moving forward but due to HUD issues the tenants will have an extended time to vacate the property.

ARPA funds: ARPA funds of approximately \$88, 000 need to be used very soon. A question about re-allocating the funds from building a storage building to purchasing a new dump truck was raised and will be investigated.

Karla Dellinger: Can the funds be used to repair the Texas Eastern building? The village administrator stated that improvements have been made to the building and property. These include; water installed at the building; the building was power washed; and some windows had been replaced.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2025-08 *Special Election in November for the Mayor* (3nd Reading). Evelyn Nagy presented the motion to adopt this resolution, seconded by Dylan Skees. All were in favor.

REPORT FROM MAYOR:

Mayor Hawk stated that she had gone over her comments through council discussion earlier.

REPORT FROM VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR:

Chris Russell reported that Phase I project is finishing up. They will need to repave some intersections and part of May Avenue.

The paint for the Rainbow Bridge has been purchased and at Village Hall along with painting supplies.

Connaught Cullen: Muralist will be starting the mural on Village Hall and is in need of a ladder. Ladder will be stored at Connaught's home.

Karla Dellinger: Did we get just one bid on the dump truck? If so, should we get additional ones?

Chris Russell: It was bid at state minimum pricing and all bids would be the same regardless of where they come from. No additional ones are necessary.

REPORT FROM SOLICITOR:

Solicitor Robe left the meeting earlier as per his contract. Reported during earlier discussions on relevant topics.

REPORT FROM COUNCIL:

Dylan Skees: Nothing

Connaught Cullen reported that she, Drew, and Commissioner Chmeil have a meeting about the dog warden scheduled. Loose dogs are an issue and the warden did not handle a recent situation at the park to her satisfaction. There were other circumstances that precipitated a call for this meeting.

Comment was made whether or not there was a sign at the park stating pets must be on a leash and if the village had a leash ordinance. Village clerk said that she would try to locate one. Chris stated that there had been a meeting with ORCA about unleashed animals in the park and felt that a sign was placed at the park.

Debbie Gibson: I am thrown off about the condemnation hearing. I did not expect to have to make a zoning decision.

Karla Dellinger: I need to get signs up for the Community Yard Sale set for weekend of June 7, 2025.

Evelyn Nagy: The Clean-up went very well and expressed thanks to all involved. She encouraged attendance at the Community Trail Celebration and has concerns about the community disdain for council. Evelyn feels community events may improve the public opinion of council.

Mayor Hawk reminded council about the open seat on the Planning Commission. This is a non-paying position and would require attending meetings 3 or 4 times a year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Transportation & Utilities – Dylan Skees, chair: Nothing to report as no meeting was held.

Park & Recreation – Connaught Cullen, chair: I need volunteers for the Community Trail Celebration. There will be a band, a foam party, the bookmobile and other activities. Connaught asked about Wi-Fi at the park. Nelsonville Cable used to supply it free for the village and she couldn't connect the last time she was at the park. Chris will check on it as it should be available still.

Additional lighting was discussed for the park. Chris had met with AEP to discuss possibilities and cost. Some were conflicted because the park closes at dark and people should not be there after dark. It was decided to skip the light for the pump track as the brightness would affect some of the houses across from the park. Council did decide to add an additional light in the back lot of the highest wattage.

Evelyn Nagy stated there would be no new library at this time due to loss of funding.

Finance and Personnel – Michael Kraus, chair: His committee would like to update the employee handbook.

RESIDENT COMMENTS: No residents were in attendance.

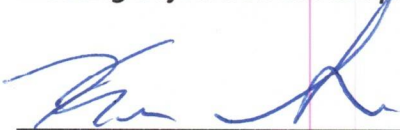
Next Meeting is scheduled for June 12 @ 5:30 pm

Planning & Development Committee Meeting is scheduled for May 15 @ 5 pm – Village Hall.

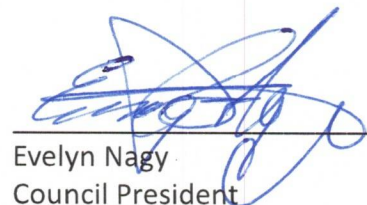
ADJOURN MEETING:

Karla Dellinger made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Debbie Gibson. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.



Kevin Simons
Fiscal Officer



Evelyn Nagy
Council President