

**Village of Whitehouse
Village Council Meeting As A
Committee of the Whole
Village Hall, Whitehouse, OH
6:30pm July 11th, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm by President of Council Rebecca Conklin Kleiboemer.

Council Members Present: Bob Keogh, Steve Connelly (online attendance, no vote), Mindy Curry, Louann Artiaga, Richard Bingham, and President of Council Rebecca Conklin Kleiboemer

Council Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Administrator Jordan Daugherty, Deputy Administrator Joshua Hartbarger, Director of Public Services Steve Pilcher, Fire Chief Jason Francis, Clerk Nicole Hartbarger, Mayor Don Atkinson (online)

Guests Present: Wendy Gehring, Jennifer Bingham

Motion by Councilwoman Louann Artiaga, seconded by Councilman Richard Bingham to approve the minutes of the June 13th, 2023 meeting. 5 ayes

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AGENDA ITEMS

Council President Conklin Kleiboemer asked if there were any citizen comments to be made regarding the agenda items. There were none.

FINANCE

Proposed Amendment to the Pay Scale

Village Administrator Daugherty began the discussion on the general reason for the ask of the adjustment to the current pay scale for Whitehouse Village employees – it is being driven by the current organizational shift along with a recent employee departure. The departure of the Planning Administrator caused a vacancy with the need to administer some staffing changes. He handed the discussion of details over to Deputy Administrator Hartbarger.

Hartbarger commented again on the continuous work on the organizational change that has driven some evaluation of workflow, workloads, and work needs. With the review of these items, the administrative staff has opened the position of Accounting Specialist. Hartbarger mentioned that the initial goal is to always fill positions from internal candidates. With the Accounting Specialist role, there is a perfect internal fit with current staff member Jill Gundy, a Whitehouse staff member for over 15 years. Daugherty commented that Jill has the required skill set and competence to fit right into this new position; she is already doing a lot of the tasks and doing a great job. Both Hartbarger and Daugherty commented that the rationale behind the new Accounting Specialist role is to create a value-added position within the department, not backfill a management position. The goal is to adjust the pay scale to include a step in between the current B and C steps, proposed as B.1.

Committee members shared the following comments and questions during their discussion:

- It was asked for a quick refresh on the pay scale. Daugherty explained that the pay scale is a 6 step process that has been in place for the Village for 25 years. New hires do not need to be hired at the first step as we are always trying to hire employees with good experience.
- Can it be confirmed why we are not back filling a management position? Daugherty confirmed that the Deputy Administrator role has taken over the management role of the vacated position and the need is for a position that is more task based.
- Will this require a change to the current organizational chart? Hartbarger commented that it does not require a change, the position falls in line with the current structure.
- Will there be a need to backfill the current position that Jill fulfills? Hartbarger commented that they are working on a new hire for a clerical role, this will help pick up some tasks, there will not be a need to do a direct backfill of Jill's current role.
- Daugherty confirmed that this pay scale change would go into effect as soon as it is passed through Council vote.
- Several Council members commented that Jill is extremely deserving of this promotion and role change. She is a great fit and always goes above and beyond for the Village.

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilman Bingham to recommend to Council the proposed adjustment to the pay scale, now including a B.1 step. 5 ayes

GENERAL

Discussion on Events Approval Process

Village Administrator Daugherty began the discussion by doing a quick review of the memo that was provided to the Committee of the Whole prior to the meeting. The additional information included on this topic is for Council understanding of what the process entails, but the main focus of conversation is on the memo. Daugherty asked that the expectations of the Mayor and Council be discussed when it comes to scheduling events. It is a general understanding that Whitehouse has the desire to continue to be an attractive and hospitable location to host events. What the Administration needs to focus on is the fact that having too many events is very taxing to our current staff levels. The events add pressure to staffing.

Daugherty told Council that the details provided in the memo, the process of approving events, has nothing to do with financial strain or rates. Overtime of employees who staff these events has not been a problem to this current point. The issue is the amount of time that staff needs to have available to make sure these events are handled properly. The strain on staffing is typically Safety Services, Police and Fire, but it has lately extended into the needs of the Public Works department as well. While Whitehouse would love to host as many events as possible, we have to make sure our core responsibilities and needs as a Village are being met as well.

Daugherty commented that from the memo provided there are three points that need to be discussed to ensure that Village Administrative staff and Council are on the same page. First, the idea of capping the number of events that occur within the Village to the currently scheduled number of nine. He mentioned that these events, even recurring events, should be at a first come, first serve basis. Second, enforcing a required 60 day prior to event window for requesting events. He knows there are always exceptions, but the 60 days should be the rule. Third, the idea that Council is open to the Administrative staff rejecting requests of events if they are not possible due to staffing, too many events in a row or any other reason that the Administrators deem necessary. The Administrative staff would be looking to Council to support and uphold the reasons that the event is rejected, with the ability to discuss exceptions.

Committee members shared the following comments and questions during their discussion:

- Council approves the use of the public space within the Village but relies on the Administrative staff to focus on operational coverage. The operational coverage should be worked out prior to the approval of Council.
- Council supports the idea of the Administrative staff rejecting an event request for any reason. They looked for confirmation that the community members requesting the event would be given the reason for the rejection along with the opportunity to appeal this decision before Council. Daugherty commented that absolutely people could still come before Council asking for the event to occur. He would make sure both Council and the event requester understand the reason for rejection.
- It was commented that this could be handled similarly to BZA appeals; but it was also commented that currently the BZA appeals are spelled out in policy form.
- Some concern that Whitehouse residents may not get to host events due to the capping of the number of events, that these events could all go to groups outside of Whitehouse. Hartbarger and Daugherty commented that the Village could notify those Whitehouse residents who hold recurring events in town of the updated Event Approval Process requirements to make sure they can get their events scheduled.
- Hartbarger commented that there are Monday meetings scheduled with both the person requesting the event and Village staff to go over needs of the event along with suggestion of anything to make staffing less taxing, i.e. update the requested route for a 5k race to not cross as many streets where staff has to block the road.
- What is the current number of days groups or people are giving for their event requests? Hartbarger commented that some of the recurring events go as low as 30 days or slightly less before their event to make requests and get approval.
- Confirmed that exceptions can be reviewed on a case by case basis and made for events that fit with time lines and are not over taxing to staff.
- It was mentioned that some event locations require only 30 days notice, but this is for locations that only host events, that is what their staff and employees are fully dedicated to. Whitehouse staff has many other responsibilities so it would make sense to require more days notice.
- Confirmed that the 60 days event request notice is for the event application to be turned in. The actual approval from Administrative staff and Council can happen within that 60 days and less time frame.
- Main concern is the staffing levels of Safety Services. We do not want to over tax these employees and departments as we do not have extra Police and Fire/EMTs currently.

- What does the capping of events mean? A certain number per month or year? Daugherty commented that they would like to cap the number of events at the current nine that are scheduled for 2023. These are nine events that are outside of Whitehouse affiliated events such as Cherry Fest, Summer Concert Series, Holiday Parade, etc. We are not asking to cut any of the nine standard events that have been recurring for some time but looking to cap it at this number.
- It was commented that the capping of the number of events sounds like a very hard and fast rule. Could this be discretionary? Maybe enforce some 'black out' periods or weekends? Daugherty commented that the hope is comment three within the memo covers any impracticality that may occur with event requests. Administrative staff has no judgement on what type of event is being held, just on the ability for the Village to be able to successfully host it.
- Confirmed that the cap on the number of events is for events that burden Village staff and require staffing during the event itself. This does not take into consideration the smaller events that continue to happen throughout the year i.e. Dancing in the Park or other events that require only public space.
- Do we need to adjust event fees to cover more staffing due to rising costs of employees? Not comfortable with all of the employee overtime that occurs with these staffed events. Should we be charging different rates to Whitehouse residents and Non-Residents as we do for the Shelter House rental? It was commented that this would be cumbersome to track. Daugherty did comment that the current event fee is not meant to fully cover costs, and we are trying to stay competitive. It was suggested to review the event rates at the end of the year with more data from 2023 events. The comment was also made that Council and Administrative staff need to hold firm on not waiving the event fees unless it is for true non-profit organizations.
- Mayor Atkinson commented that he likes the idea of leaving some room for discretion on additional events and supports giving preference to Whitehouse residents if it comes to that.
- Several comments were made that Council does fully support the decisions of Administrative staff and the event approval process laid out in the memo.

President Conklin Kleiboemer asked if all Council members were in good understanding and support of the event approval process as discussed. All Council members said yes. No motion or vote necessary to take to Council.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Council President Conklin Kleiboemer asked if there were any general citizen comments to be made. There were none.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council President Conklin Kleiboemer for comments on other business from all Committee of the Whole members.

Councilwoman Curry gave kudos to Clerk Nicole Hartbarger on the updates made to the minutes for Committee of the Whole and Council meetings. She commented that they were easy to follow and good detail. Councilwoman Artiaga mentioned that she previously gave Clerk Hartbarger kudos and agrees.

No comments on other business were made.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Bob Keogh, seconded by Councilman Bingham to adjourn the meeting at 7:27pm.

Respectfully submitted by Nicole Hartbarger, Clerk of Council