

**Village of Whitehouse
Village Council Meeting As A
Committee of the Whole
Village Hall, Whitehouse, OH
6:30pm August 8th, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

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

Council Members Present: Steve Connelly, Mindy Curry, Louann Artiaga, Richard Bingham, and President of Council Rebecca Conklin Kleiboemer

Council Members Absent: Bob Keogh (excused by President Conklin Kleiboemer)

Staff Present: Administrator Jordan Daugherty, Deputy Administrator Joshua Hartbarger, Director of Public Services Steve Pilcher, Clerk Nicole Hartbarger

Guests Present: Dave Riegenbach, Jennifer Bingham, Karen Gerhardinger

Motion by Councilwoman Mindy Curry, seconded by Councilman Steve Connelly to approve the minutes of the July 11th, 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.

PUBLIC SERVICES-WATER

Recommendation of New Water Telemetry System (Budgeted Item)

Public Works Director Steve Pilcher let Council know they are asking for the approval to purchase an already approved, 2023 budgeted item. The item is a new Telemetry System for the Village water distribution system. This system communicates the valve station and water tower/master unit; turns on and off according to water pressure in system. Pilcher mentioned that a few years ago a thunderstorm took the current system down and parts for this current system are hard to find, they were even hard to find 7-10 years ago. Recently there have been communication failures, tower overflowing, alarms go off because of no communication. This item has been in the budget for the past few years. The Village is looking at proprietary equipment that is carried by one vendor. Pilcher said the plan is to replace the master unit and two radio transmitting units. Total is around \$50,000. After the explanation Village Administrator Daugherty said the request is for Council to authorize Administration to make this purchase.

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

- It was asked if the new Telemetry System that is being purchased will be compatible with the new water tower to be built. Pilcher said yes it will.
- The question of how long the Telemetry System will last was asked. Pilcher mentioned around 20 years. He also said that the current Telemetry system is at least that old along with being old technology when we started using it.

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilman Bingham to recommend to Council to direct Administration to draft legislation to allow entering into a contract with the Telemetry System vendor. 5 ayes

Recommendation on Changes to the Village Municipal Code

Public Works Director Pilcher explained to Council that they are looking to update one of the rules that govern the water department, regarding the materials that are used for the water service line from water main to curb stop then to the house itself. Currently the Village and Ohio is under orders from EPA to inspect all lines for lead, and Pilcher says we do not have any. He said we are also testing for copper in the lines at the same time. The Village is reporting these results back to EPA. Within the last 15-20 years new materials have come forward that are just as effective for water transportation yet much more cost effective. These materials have an approved AWW rating. Pilcher is asking for the committee to recommend to council for allowing use of the new materials with AWW ratings; the municipal code will need to be updated to include these.

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

- It was asked to confirm that these materials would be an additional option to the current materials being used. Pilcher confirmed that yes, the code would be updated to reflect these as another, more affordable option for homeowners. These options are cheaper than the standard copper.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Curry, seconded by Councilman Connelly to recommend to Council to authorize the Solicitor to draft legislation amending the current Municipal Code to include the new materials, as an emergency. 5 ayes

GENERAL

Summary of Mini Round-Abouts within the State Route 64 Corridor

President Conklin Kleibomer began the discussion explaining what the displayed photos are for; they are renderings of possible future areas of growth and change within the State Route 64 Corridor in Whitehouse.

Village Administrator Daugherty mentioned he brought the photos to refresh all memories of what Council has previously approved from a possible project perspective. He also mentioned that there is a new type of zoning that focuses on what properties look like. This zoning is much more flexible. The current project ideas that may happen are mainly focused on the State Route 64 Corridor. The vision is set for once you reach municipal boundary from the east, you will see a much different environment and landscape. A lot of renderings are spirited and inspired by the Dublin, OH area with brick structures and old stone. This is what we would like to see through the main section. Daugherty said we can control the zoning and it is flexible, other than the right of way. The plan is looking to make a “natural hallway” with mature landscape, where vehicles can safely and slowly travel through, and pedestrians and bicyclists will have access to paths not sidewalks. Daugherty mentioned that this will take time – a whole series of plans and ideas to unveil within the larger project plan. These include mounding of dirt for depth, landscaping, and more flowers.

Daugherty said the focus for tonight's discussion as planners include up to three ideas, some with full vehicular roundabouts. He asked council to think ahead to future needs for these roundabouts; the Cemetery Road and St Rt 64 corner will need. He said that no ideas are guaranteed but when we go for funding, these agencies want to know that you have been planning this for a decent amount of time, that it is not just a spur of the moment ask or thought. Daugherty said it could take 10 years but we want to be ready so we have plans for safe thoroughfares, safe areas for pedestrians, etc. Some of the areas in discussion for updating and beautification include as well the intersection of Whitehouse Square Blvd, extending North to the Ardaugh plant. Another area potentially to the East of the fire station.

It was mentioned that the series of roundabouts will slow down and hopefully have calming effect for drivers/traffic through Whitehouse. While working on traffic specific solutions, there has also been thought given for bicyclists and pedestrians. Daugherty said there is currently no shade along this corridor for pedestrians or bicyclists. What if we created small sitting stations for the purpose of giving these citizens a rest area and shade. He mentioned that roundabouts can be made beautiful and functional – for pedestrians and bicyclists to rest and others to benefit.

Daugherty reminded Council that this larger project is something that has been reviewed for 15 years or so. Daugherty went on to say that the Village is looking to update the corridor with mini roundabouts utilizing Village employee talent from the Public Works Department. A lot of the build would be with limestone supplies that the Village already has. As Council and the group in attendance were reviewing handouts, Daugherty told them that the first renderings got a feel for the project, but overall it messes up line of sight for first location in question, including blocking their existing sign. This initial location is the Hope Church area. Hope Church is interested in doing a joint project. Daugherty told the group that the last option in the renderings is the idea that is liked the most; but it starts to bend into the Hope Church property. Utilizing this rendering will bring a sitting area to existing trees for shade. Daugherty mentioned that what has been proposed to Hope Church includes the fact that the Village has most of the materials already, and staff on hand that has the ability, expertise, and equipment to complete the project. Daugherty said the agreement with Hope Church would include that the Village would build it if they grant the permanent easement. Some preliminary discussions with Hope Church have occurred. Hope Church has mentioned they would want it tucked in even closer to the church if possible. Daugherty told Council that so far there has been a lot of excitement, and that the Village will only be doing these projects if the property owners really want to do it. He said it is a way for the Village to interact with the public, augment their current areas for free, along with bringing value to the Village as a whole. Daugherty made it very clear that this will not be an eminent domain situation. Daugherty really wanted Council and other to understand that this corridor is going to be stunning, it will be something we will be known for, but it will take time.

Daugherty finished up his presentation mentioning that last year capital project budget was cut way back. He commented that cutting projects does tend to cut the spirit of municipal growth; he feels we still have to do visible, public projects to encourage citizens. He reiterated that we are lucky these projects can be done in house, not to be cheap, but because we have such talent and ability within our own staff. He said we should still be trying to improve our community with visible things and that this is just a little piece of a future enormous plan for the corridor. Daugherty said that at this time there is no need for Council

to approve anything. He also mentioned that if anyone on Council hears from anyone at Hope Church, they are now aware of the situation.

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

- It was asked what the time frame for this first project looks like. Daugherty told Council that once the project plan is agreed to and accepted by Hope Church, we then would have Solicitor Heban update the easement language; hopefully approval sometime this year.
- The comment was shared that Hope Church has even looked into connecting into the trail that runs behind their building and the fire station. It was also said that it would be useful if there were multiple ways to access this new State Route 64 Corridor area. Council member was also asking to confirm that the same limestone treatment that is currently at Indianapolis Street will be used for this project. Daugherty said yes that is correct. He also confirmed that yes, it is being looked into to have a network of access behind several of the buildings including Hope Church and the Fire Station.
- Several council members commented that they were concerned with the timing of this project; especially with the Village Tax Levy and School District Levies both on the ballot in November. They feel it could draw some complaints from citizens who are concerned with the spending of funds on these beautification projects. It was mentioned that there have already been some minor complaints about the amount spent on just flowers within the Village. Daugherty confirms to council that this will be a very small project in the grand scheme; a \$150,000 project that will be able to be completed for \$25,000 because of doing it in house and cutting out all unnecessary aspects. Daugherty also reminded council that if this is not approved this year, this will be the 5th year of no noticeable beautification projects, other than the Downtown Social park and updates to the Shelter House.
- There was some conversation back and forth between Council focused on the timing of the project versus the fact that it is a smaller project where we already have materials and staff to complete. One member stated that even if complaints arise, it can be shared with the public that the project is considered small and inexpensive with how it is being completed. The question was asked by a Council Member if it makes more sense to move this project to spring, after the Tax Levy voting in November.
- It was asked, what if the Tax Levy fails, will this project still be completed. It was tentatively confirmed that even if the Tax Levy fails, the project would still be able to be completed through the capital planning budgets. Several comments regarding the concern about the lack of visible community projects were made. It was said that it is difficult as Council Members see both sides of needing to beautify but also needing to do it at the right time. There were several members who at this point commented that they were advocating to go forward with this project. There were also several Council Members who at this time confirmed that they felt that it was better to wait until spring because of how it looks fiscally to citizens.
- The question was asked that after this discussion does Administration need Council's approval to move forward. Daugherty answered that no, Administration does not technically need Council's approval. They are keeping Council in the loop on these projects for guidance and opinion. He did state that he would like all of the Council Members to be comfortable with moving forward with the project as it should be

viewed as a very positive thing for the community. Daugherty told Council that if currently three out of five members present prefer to delay than he is comfortable with doing that. He did also say that if this project does not go forward this year, there will be more pressure on it to go forward next year.

- Several Council Members agreed that next year could look very different with possibly several different people as Council Members, including different opinions. It was also mentioned one last time that in the past there have been some minor complaints with other beautification projects that in the end became very praised projects.
- There were a few comments of kudos given to the Administration team for their vision and ability to continue to plan for the future.

At this time President Conklin Kleiboemer asked all members if they were any conceptual issues of the drawings or plans themselves. All Council Members agreed that the plans are great and there are no issues there.

Daugherty told Council that we will pause on this project for now and will revisit very early next year. It will take time to staff the project and get it planned for spring, so it will need to be discussed early in the year. He asked that Council and Administration move forward together on these projects and embrace them like was done with the recent streetscape project.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Council President Conklin Kleiboemer asked if there were any general citizen comments to be made. This portion of time started out with Dave Riggensch of the Tax Levy Committee giving a brief report.

Dave Riggensch – Tax Committee Update

Dave shared that the committee met earlier this evening. He told Council that they did not meet in July while working through design and content feedback. The team is currently finishing the commercial for Whitehouse to tug at the heartstrings of its citizens; this is very close to ready for public viewing. He said that this is the emotional side. Dave commented that tremendous strides have been made with feedback on the technical side of the levy. These technical pieces include what mandates are coming down that need financial support, where the funds will go and help to explain why. Dave said the team plans to launch public info in the next two weeks, there will be a Facebook page posting approved content. He said they may be looking to post approved content or an approved link to the approved content on the Village website. The first scheduled public meeting is at the Fire Station on August 29th at 6:30pm. Chief Francis will host and educate the public on needs from the Fire Department perspective. The Police Department will be hosting in September.

Jennifer Bingham – 9715 Belmont Circle

Jennifer directed a question to Administrator Daugherty regarding the mini roundabouts project that was discussed. She asked if the updated area will remain as Hope Church property? She also asked along with that, will their property value increase? Jennifer asked that if this is the case, why wouldn't the Village ask Hope Church, in this case, to kick in some funds on the project? Daugherty confirmed that yes, the property will remain as Hope Church. He commented that for the church it could gain some slight property value increase.

Jennifer commented that it would seem that Hope Church will be gaining property value on taxpayer dollars. Daugherty commented that it is not a specific project to benefit just the church. He also said that they have something of value we want from them, the easement, and we would get to use it without buying it; he does not see this as offering a direct value to the church.

Jennifer lastly asked if there is a way to make this a “win-win” project for the church and the Village. She also commented that it may help to explain to citizens the difference between the capital versus operating budgets within the Village if there are questions regarding beautification spending. Daugherty commented that this is a public project, publicly owned area with an ancillary benefit. He said there could have been the same concern with the completed streetscaping project that may have increased value to property owners around those areas. He stated that this is not a transfer of taxpayer’s money directly to the property owners.

Dave Riggenbach – 6313 Sydney Drive

Dave made some general comments about the mini roundabout presentation and approach. He said that he does not think that the Tax Levy and roundabout projects should be viewed together. He stated that “if we aren’t growing, we’re dying”. He said that he believes everyone should be able to benefit as this will hopefully bring more people to Whitehouse. He lastly commented that the Village is so good at making the areas look beautiful while doing it fiscally.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

Councilwoman Artiaga asked Public Works Director Pilcher if someone could look into the trees blocking traffic visibility at the corner of 64 and Oakbrook. She had a citizen bring this up to her. Pilcher said they will take a look at the area.

Councilman Connelly shared that he had a friend that drove through town and complemented the flowers and maintenance of the area. He said his friend also commented on a barn that is falling down and in disrepair in the same general area. Administrator Daugherty commented that they are aware of this and it is being dealt with through zoning.

Councilwoman Curry also had a comment about trees blocking traffic visibility and going completely over the roadway. She shared that this is when turning from Waterville Street to Westwyck. She said that they cover the roadway so much a camper runs through them. She also commented that when on a bicycle the trees hang down that far. She asked Pilcher if this is property owner responsibility or can the Village help. Pilcher said they will look into it. Curry also gave thanks to Dave Riggenbach for comments on the roundabout project; she agrees that it will be a huge value to all residents. She mentioned that she loves to see people using the spaces that have been created already. Lastly, she said thank you to the Tax Levy team; can’t wait to see the first presentation.

At this time Councilwoman Artiaga made a motion, seconded by Councilwoman Curry to move into an Executive Session regarding a personnel issue including all committee of the whole members and Administrator Daugherty at 7:25pm. 5 ayes

A motion was made by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer, seconded by Councilwoman Artiaga to reconvene the committee of the whole meeting at 8:59pm. 5 ayes

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Connelly, seconded by Councilman Bingham to adjourn the meeting at 8:59pm. 5 ayes

Respectfully submitted by Nicole Hartbarger, Clerk of Council