

CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL – PRAYER – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM by Acting Mayor Bob Keogh.

Council Members Present: Acting Mayor Bob Keogh, Steve Connelly, Mindy Curry, Louann Artiaga, Richard Bingham, and Rebecca Conklin Kleiboemer

Council Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Deputy Administrator Joshua Hartbarger, Solicitor Kevin Heban, Director of Public Services Steve Pilcher, Police Chief Allan Baer, Fire Chief Jason Francis, Council Clerk Nicole Hartbarger

Guests Present: Wendy Gehring, Tim & Carrie Tuohy, James Cairl, Jill Gundy, Larry Yunker, Rita Yunker, Mike Hill, Rob Casaletta, Stephen Bond, Mona Snyder, Dave Riggenschach

Council Prayer was given by Pastor Steve Bond of Community of Christ Lutheran Church

Acting Mayor Keogh mentioned to those in attendance that Village Administrator Daugherty is out for medical reasons, and we look forward to having him back in the office next week.

Motion by Councilman Rich Bingham, seconded by Councilman Steve Connelly to approve the minutes of the November 7th, 2023 council meeting. 6 ayes

Motion by Councilwoman Mindy Curry, seconded by Councilman Bingham to approve the bills totaling \$17,082.32 dated November 16th, 2023 and the Addendum bills totaling \$165,009.23 dated November 21, 2023, along with the October 2023 Financial Statements. 6 ayes

PERSONS TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL

Acting Mayor Keogh asked if there were any persons to appear before council. There were none.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Acting Mayor Keogh asked if there were any committee reports to share.

Report on the November 14, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting

There were several discussions during the Committee of the Whole meeting that are now requiring action to be taken by Council members.

1. Take Action on the Merit Service Payment Recommendation

Merit Service Payment recommendations were discussed during the Committee of the Whole meeting and Solicitor Kevin Heban was asked to prepare an ordinance to approve. This will include a \$75 per service year payment to full-time employees with more than five year of service and a \$100 to full-time employees between one and five years of service as decided upon several years ago.

Motion by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer, seconded by Councilwoman Curry to approve the recommended Merit Service Payment. 6 ayes

2. Take Action on the C.O.L.A. Increase for Personnel Wages

Discussion during the Committee of the Whole meeting was around the suggested 2.7% COLA increase based on the Midwest CPI. It was commented that this is by motion only, it does not require legislation.

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilman Connelly to approve the recommended 2.7% Cost of Living Increase for personnel wages. 6 ayes

3. Take Action to Authorize Legislation for the 2024 Rate & Fee Schedule (as an emergency)

During the Committee of the Whole meeting all utility costs were reviewed and understood. Total of all utility costs changes is less than 2%.

Motion by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer, seconded by Councilwoman Curry to take action to authorize legislation for the 2024 Rate & Fee Schedule, as an emergency. 6 ayes

4. Take Action to Authorize Legislation Authorizing an Employment Agreement with the Village Administrator, Jordan Daugherty (as an emergency)

During this time, Councilman Bingham shared some thoughts based on social media posts that had been put out prior to this council meeting. Councilman Bingham stated he had a few questions for all in attendance. He asked: who has worked for an employer for seven years and never received a pay raise? There was no response. He stated that our administrator has not received a pay raise for eight years and he has 24% less buying potential than he did eight years ago, with no raises. Councilman Bingham stated that Village Administrator Daugherty's Doctorate was paid for by the Village but that is an incentive offered to all full-time employees. A few final comments from Councilman Bingham included that Administrator Daugherty has two jobs as he took over Finance Director as well as Village Administrator – this means \$120k for two jobs this could cost us easily \$200k.

Motion by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer, seconded by Councilman Connelly to take action to authorize legislation authorizing an employment agreement with Village Administrator Jordan Daugherty, as an emergency. 6 ayes

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Acting Mayor Keogh reminded all in attendance of the upcoming Christmas in Whitehouse celebration on December 2nd. He asked Wendy Gehring for a quick update. She shared that kids will have passports to pick up at the park or at any of the locations including the Whitehouse Inn, Julie's Fitness and Triotech. Gehring stated that if four of the eight spots are checked off the passport they will be put in a drawing to win a bike from CycleWerks. She also shared that there are still spots open for the parade and to get in contact with her if interested in joining – the parade goes from Whitehouse Primary to the park. Lastly, she shared that Santa will be at the park shelter house for pictures.

Acting Mayor Keogh shared that our neighbors out at Bittersweet Farms are having a pop up holiday shopping event on December 9th from 9am-3pm

He shared that several Tree Commission members will be graduating from Tree Commission Academy on December 7th – this is great for our Village.

Lastly, Acting Mayor Keogh shared that himself, and several others had the opportunity to review plans for Adventure Spirits Distillery that is soon to be occupying the old PNC Bank.

REPORT OF THE CLERK OF COUNCIL

Acting Mayor Keogh asked for any items to report from Clerk Nicole Hartbarger. There were none.

REPORT OF THE VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

Acting Mayor Keogh asked for any items to report from Deputy Administrator Josh Hartbarger. There were none.

REPORT OF THE VILLAGE SOLICITOR

Acting Mayor Keogh asked Solicitor Kevin Heban for any items to be reported. Heban shared a quick reminder on tabled topics from earlier this year. He stated that the chicken ordinance discussion was tabled and will be appearing on the agenda again the first meeting in December 2023. He also stated that the garbage can location topic was tabled and set to appear on the agenda for the first meeting of January 2024.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Acting Mayor Keogh asked for Citizen Comments pertaining to Agenda items.

Carrie Tuohy – 11154 Temperance Ave: Tuohy stated that she does not fault anyone for wanting a fair wage and compensation, regarding the discussed employment contract for Village Administrator Daugherty. She commented that the question or concern is coming up from the recent Committee of the Whole meeting where it was discussed that things were being taken away from residents as they could not be afforded. She stated that she is bringing these comments up as a current Councilwoman elect who will be coming in and having to possibly ask for a tax increase. Lastly, Tuohy stated that Administrator Daugherty’s current contract is not up until August 2025 – why is it coming up now and not after the new council members are seated.

ORDINANCES

Acting Mayor Keogh asked Solicitor Kevin Heban for any ordinances to be reviewed or voted on. Previously discussed Ordinance 18-2023 to be voted on.

Motion by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer, seconded by Councilwoman Curry to approve **Ordinance 18-2023: Amending and Updating the Village of Whitehouse Schedule of Rates and Fees Pursuant to Various Building, Zoning, Registration, and Ancillary Other Matters**, as an emergency. 6 Ayes

Motion by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer, seconded by Councilwoman Curry to approve to suspend the rules and have the second and third reading of **Ordinance 18-2023** by title only and declaring an emergency. 6 Ayes

Motion by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer, seconded by Councilwoman Curry to accept **Ordinance 18-2023** and to pass said Ordinance and declaring an emergency. Third reading vote by name. 6 Ayes

RESOLUTIONS

Acting Mayor Keogh asked Heban for any resolutions to be reviewed or voted on. Resolution 18-2023 to be voted on.

Motion by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer, seconded by Councilwoman Curry to accept **Resolution 18-2023: Authorizing an Employment Agreement with the Village Administrator, Jordan Daugherty**, as an emergency. 6 Ayes

Before the second and third reading council members paused to allow for some discussion and answering of questions that came up during the Citizen Comments.

Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer stated that many of the people currently on council have served for over eight years with Administrator Daugherty and others on staff. She shared that these contract negotiations started actively back in August. Some were aware of a request to renegotiate some time ago, after some internal issues. Conklin Kleiboemer stated that once it was known what needed to be done regarding the Administrator’s contract this council needed to do it. She did share that there have been some optics challenges this year so the questions being asked are understood. In regard to the current contract going through August 2025, Conklin Kleiboemer stated that this is a renegotiation and it can happen at any time. She shared that Administrator Daugherty has been making compensation sacrifices not just with Covid but with COLA, etc, he’s been going without. Conklin Kleiboemer stated that we benefit from the education our employees receive, degrees, certifications, etc. She also stated that she is glad to hear forward thinking of continuing to find revenue for the Village, that we need that. She stated that one of her concerns is if the a new tax increase doesn’t pass – the person we need the most needs to still be here and not somewhere else because he has a better offer.

Councilman Connelly shared thoughts on the contract discussions that occurred. He said all of council was in there for quite some time, and these same concerns were raised – facts were presented and decided upon. Connelly stated that it is a lot of money but Administrator Daugherty has earned it and it is consistent with his contribution and his role.

Conklin Kleiboemer stated that this current council would like to be a model for how these decisions are come to and decided upon. She clarified that employment contract discussions are done in an executive session because it is confidential in nature – it is not meant to be done that way to keep it from anyone, it is just confidential comments.

Councilman Keogh stated that this new contract is auto renewing but can be terminated at any time, and it now includes an annual review that wasn't there before.

Councilwoman Curry added to the discussion stating that the amount of work that Administrator Daugherty has put in is above and beyond for his job. Going without an increase for eight years including COLA. She stated that it was time for his contract to be reviewed. She also said she feels he is still not being paid what he should – but knows he wants to help this village progress into the future. Curry commented that a \$12k increase for over 8 years is minimal but council agreed something needed to be done. She also shared that the amount of money that his earned degree has brought into village is a huge amount, the water tower grant alone is \$1.84M. Curry finished her comments by saying Administrator Daugherty has always been on top of working to get things done and takes council direction.

Connelly stated his concern in Administrator Daugherty not being with the Village any longer. He said if he leaves tomorrow –how will we hire someone back with that role and that experience at the rate we are currently paying. Connelly shared that council reviewed neighboring communities for reference – and he can sleep easy knowing its reasonable – it would be very difficult to replace him.

Conklin Kleiboemer finished up the discussion portion by sharing the actual figures of the new contract. She stated that it is \$120k for annual salary, retroactive to Oct 1st, with a one-time lump sum payment of \$5k to make up for some lack of compensation increase, and upon performance review a discretionary, additional compensation not more than 6%.

Conklin Kleiboemer commented that Administrator Daugherty would be the first to push back if this was not something that could be afforded by the Village.

Motion by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer, seconded by Councilwoman Curry to approve to suspend the rules and have the second and third reading of **Resolution 18-2023** by title only and declaring an emergency. 6 Ayes

Motion by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer, seconded by Councilwoman Curry to accept **Resolution 18-2023** and to pass said Resolution and declaring an emergency. Third reading vote by name. 6 Ayes

OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

Department Heads

Public Services Director Steve Pilcher shared that his team is finishing up leaf collection with the pick up schedule concluding in mid-December. He stated that there will probably be one spot check done in January to pick up any stragglers. He lastly shared that the team is working on getting the Christmas décor around and some equipment winter ready.

Police Chief Allan Baer shared that the Christmas Village 5k will be happening directly before the tree lighting on December 2nd. Asking residents to please pay attention to road traffic during this time along with just after this as people are getting in place for the parade. He shared that this year's Toys for Tots collection has started – the police department would love to meet last years donation efforts of over 4k toys. Lastly he shared that their recent event with KOGS – Keeping our Girls Safe – went really well with a great turn out.

Council Comments

Councilman Keogh shared that there is an upcoming vacancy for the Whitehouse representation on the Fallen Timbers Union Cemetery District – if anyone is interested please be sure to let him know as there will be a nomination at the December 5th meeting.

Councilman Connelly shared that this upcoming Saturday is ‘Small Business Saturday’ and be sure to shop local and have a safe Thanksgiving holiday.

Councilwoman Curry asked Chief Baer if the officers were doing push ups again this year for all of the toy donations. Chief Baer stated that Officer White did over 1k push ups last year. Curry also commented on the reducing of costs within the Village budget. She stated that during the Committee of the Whole meeting it was recognized that the bulk pick up was being paid for out of the general fund – it will now be handled like other utilities and paid for by the residents. This will help the general fund avoid the \$35k cost – while costing residents \$0.54 per month.

Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer shared that the joint meeting of the Fallen Timbers Union Cemetery District will be on December 11th at 5:30pm in Waterville City chambers. She commented that each district needs a quorum of attendees. She shared that she will be finishing up her FTUCD term as of January 1st, 2024 and Whitehouse will need to make this replacement. She lastly shared that the FTUCD Sexton sends his thanks to Whitehouse Village public services department in their support during some recent cement work.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Acting Mayor Keogh asked if there were any Citizen comments to be heard. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Keogh, seconded by Councilman Connelly to adjourn the meeting at 7:16pm. 6 ayes

Duly Appointed Clerk of Council

Mayor