

**Village of Whitehouse  
Village Council Meeting As A  
Committee of the Whole  
Village Hall, Whitehouse, OH  
5:30pm November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

---

**CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL**

Meeting called to order at 5:31pm by President of Council Bob Keogh.

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

Council Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Administrator Jordan Daugherty, Deputy Administrator Joshua Hartbarger, Director of Public Services Steve Pilcher, Police Chief Allan Baer, Fire Chief Jason Francis and Clerk Nicole Hartbarger

Guests Present: Larry Yunker, Dave Riegenbach, Carrie Tuohy, Wendy Gehring, Sue Fandrey, Scott Duncan, Jill Gundy, Jennifer Herman and Karen Gerhardinger

Motion by Councilman Rich Bingham, seconded by Councilman Steve Connelly to approve the minutes of the August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting. 6 ayes

**CITIZEN COMMENTS ON COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AGENDA ITEMS**

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

Council President Keogh shared his congrats with the citizens in the audience on their elections to the upcoming open Council seats during this time.

**FINANCE**

Village Administrator Jordan Daugherty started off the finance review stating that there are three budgetary topics to be reviewed during this time. This review and discussion will help with completing the draft budget for 2024. He shared that all details have been provided to Council in their weekly packet before tonight.

**Review of the Whitehouse Merit Service Payment Information**

Administrator Daugherty shared some backstory to begin this review. He stated that around 25 years ago Whitehouse was a revolving door of hiring people and training them, and then them leaving shortly thereafter. He said that the Village has tried to bolster and be creative to be more competitive with wages and full package – healthcare was increased, longevity pay was created for 5+ years of employment. This has held true for last 25 years. Daugherty shared that the ordinance that is still in governance for this longevity pay states \$60-80 per year for each employee who has 5+ years of employment. For the last 12 years Council has awarded \$75 which has been approved each year for the budget, but then Council has to approve the actual distribution of that approved amount. Administrator Daugherty reminded Council that this has been \$75 per year per full time employee, we no longer have any

permanent part time employees. He did finish up the history by sharing that in the past, council has awarded a flat \$100 for all employees – to include part time employees.

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

- It was asked to confirm what the \$100 was for – people under 5 years of service? Administrator Daugherty confirmed that yes the \$100 payment shared in the past went to all employees, regardless of full time status or not. Another committee member shared from last year's notes that yes it was a unanimous vote last year to approve merit payment as recommended including \$100 for all employees under 5 years of service.
- Committee member would like to recommend including the \$100 for employees under 5 years of service – it was stated that this could be 45-50 employees subject to the additional \$100. It was confirmed by Village Accounting Staff that this should be around 9 employees if we handle the same way as previous years. It would be full time employees who fall in the 1-5 year service range. Administrator Daugherty confirmed that it could be up to 15 if full-time employees who have less than 1 year of service are included.
- Comment was made to please keep in mind the monetary situation we are in this time around.
- It was asked if the supporting information with the Merit Service Payment details includes this additional \$100 for full-time employees with less than 5 years of service is included. Administrator Daugherty confirmed that it is not, the back up information includes Merit Service Payment details on those employees with 5+ years of service as it is in line with what the current ordinance reads.
- Several committee members agreed that the \$100 for employees with less than 5 years of service is a small price to pay for keeping great employees around. Especially when it is 9-15 people in question.
- Administrator Daugherty did a final confirmation that 9 employees would be subject to last years action - \$100 to employees with 1-5 years of service. The additional 6 employees of the 15 in question do not yet have a full year of service. Several committee members commented that they should be consistent with last year.
- Administrator Daugherty posed the question on if the current ordinance should be amended. This will stop the additional discussions and going outside of the ordinance every year if this \$100 for full-time employees with 1-5 years of service is included in the legislation.

Motion by Councilwoman Curry to recommend merit service payment be approved as proposed along with adding full-time employees with 1-5 years of service receive a \$100 Merit Service Payment, Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer seconded. 6 ayes

A final comment was shared to nominate the change to the ordinance to be voted on during the next council meeting.

### **Review and Discuss the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Effect on Personnel Wages**

Administrator Daugherty began by sharing what the provided back up information included. He stated that CPI is being used to track inflation over the years – impact in the Midwest

only is our focus - this is not the national inflation but specific to Midwest. He shared that these rates are not to be looked at as strictly pay raises, but as the time value of money. Daugherty stated that employees are grateful for Council considering these changes. He finished up by sharing that it seems as though, from this current report, inflation has slightly slowed down through September 2023.

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

- A committee member commented that sometimes discussion is to try and include inflation catch up from previous year(s). Administrator Daugherty responded that we are not in that position this year.
- It was asked what does that CPI inflation adjustment translate into dollars for the year on payroll. Administrator Daugherty stated that with some quick math it is around \$78-80k total on a payroll that ebbs and it around \$2.8-3MM gross.
- Administrator Daugherty commented that leadership staff continues to fight the workforce – they wear two hats, managing the finances along with doing the hiring/firing. They are working hard to stay competitive with wages. He said with this CPI inflation adjustment they tried not to go too high, but to recommend matching the current inflation rate for the Midwest - no more/no less.
- It was asked by a committee member that isn't inflation over 8%? Administrator Daugherty confirmed that this analysis is specific to Midwest and CPI calculations, if 8% has been seen/heard it could be a rolling rate for a much larger view – not Midwest.
- Several comments from committee members stated that we have to maintain and stay competitive with wages or the Village will start to lose good employees. Looking at the Merit Service Payment information you can see the great longevity of employees with a lot of experience.
- Administrator Daugherty stated that there are a lot of discussion on projections and finances, and we always assume 3% CPI – this year the amount is below that.

Motion made by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer to recommend to council to support the 2.7% increase for cost of living, seconded by Councilman Connelly. 6 ayes

### **Review the Proposed 2024 Rate & Fee Schedule**

Administrator Daugherty started this discussion by sharing that there are a lot of lines of change and recommendations within the Rate & Fee Schedule that was included in the meeting information. Along with this updated schedule are a few analyses on more specific items within the Rate & Fee Schedule.

Daugherty began by reviewing the water analysis first. He shared that this only addresses the usage rates, not capital improvement charges/rates – capital is a separate charge on the bill – operating rate does not cover any future capital expenditures. Daugherty said that it will be released soon what that capital rate will be used for going forward and that the Village will not have to increase water rates due to the new water tower going in. He said that the Village charges an assumed, necessary 1% rate to cover the budgeted costs to customers at a flat rate. He also shared that even since we joined Toledo Area Water Authority (TAWA), our rates are considerably lower and continue to stay low compared to other municipalities – pleased that it is 1% and not more. He shared that historically, in 2007-2008 our water/sewer funds were in jeopardy of going under financial review by the auditor. Then,

about 15 years ago, Council adopted the philosophy of what supplying water to our residents costs the Village is what we will charge them.

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

- It was asked what if we do nothing – do not pass along any rate adjustments for water. Administrator Daugherty commented that funds will start to deplete and we would not be consistent as promised in years past.

Next, Administrator Daugherty began the review of the sewer analysis that was completed. He commented that this was completed with the same approach. He shared that based on the analysis the 2023 vs 2024 revenue/rates, are predicted to be about the same based on preliminary budget estimates for sewer. Daugherty said that right now, following philosophy of passing on what we are charged, there is no need this year to pass on any additional rates.

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

- Committee member asked if this analysis includes the \$90k in chemicals for this year. Both Administrator Daugherty and Public Services Director Pilcher confirmed that yes that amount is included. It was commented that last year was a bit harder year because of chemicals – but nothing required this year based on estimate.

Administrator Daugherty stated that last is sanitation analysis. He shared that sanitation is not recognized by the auditor as utility fund, but it is treated the same so the review is done in the same way. He called attention to the fact that the 2023 beginning number is negative. He said because this is under the general fund, it is somewhat absorbed in that fund – this is pulled out separately for analysis to track revenue vs cost. Daugherty shared that the Village pays extra for unlimited pick-up days after changing to ARS for sanitation services. He stated that we do not charge the residents for these unlimited pick-up days. Daugherty stated that in order to keep the operating surplus about the same, there would have to be a 5.5% rate for sanitation services.

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

- Committee member commented that the ARS contract itself builds in some increase because of rising costs.
- It was asked shouldn't sanitation be treated as a true utility fund so it is handled the same way with residents as water and sewer and not come out of the general fund. Another committee member agreed that it should be treated like an enterprise fund and pass all charges across to residents as we do for water and sewer.
- Committee member asked the group if we need to think about charging for the curbside unlimited pick-up or possibly changing from curbside pick up to all drop off. It was asked how many residents are using this unlimited service? Public Services Director Pilcher commented that quite a few use it, we could work to get a specific number.
- Committee member commented that when we had Village trash it was basically unlimited every week – then we went to ARS and built in the four curbside unlimited

pick-ups – the Village reviewed tonnage being picked up then changed the fourth scheduled pick-up to a drop off. Public Services Director Pilcher commented that the drop off is substantially cheaper.

- It was suggested to keep one curbside collection when we think people have a lot of bigger things that might not fit in car or hard to haul. It was commented that ARS can pick those things up at any time for a fee.
- Several committee members agreed that a lot of costs can be cut by doing unlimited drop off instead of curbside pick-up - if we have to look at budget cuts this is one thing that could be looked at. It was discussed by committee members that there is use of Village staff in the unlimited drop off collections. Administrator Daugherty stated that the total value is approximately \$50k.
- Public Services Director Pilcher shared that the Village normally would get two roll offs per unlimited drop off weekend and both get filled, back to back weekends – he said that it is hard to gauge since never done a drop off in the summer but estimates a minimum of two roll offs. It was asked if he still recommends a curb-side pick-up. He stated yes maybe after summer garage sale weekend for a curbside pick-up – if no curbside make a unlimited drop off that weekend after. Public Services Director Pilcher shared that he thinks it can be managed any way is decided, if all roll off drop off he would not do back to back weekends to allow for some time off for Village Employees.
- It was suggested that before the Village reduces the number of unlimited collections, to start by changing the type of collection. Other committee members agreed and stated we should do all as drop off now to not confuse things.
- Months of March, June, and September were suggested – then asked if Public Services Director Pilcher would recommend the two weekends in January still? He responded that people are currently used to that January drop off and we could do two weekends in that month to keep consistent. He also suggested that we could possibly extend to Friday and Saturday to give more days.
- Committee member asked for confirmation on what kind of increase would we do for sanitation services - normal trash weekly collection. Administrator Daugherty responded that is the 5.5% rate – the unlimited drop off vs curbside pick-up being discussed is covered by the general fund. If Council proceeds with eliminating the unlimited curbside pick-up – that will have no bearing on rates normally charged because it is something that the general fund is funding outside of the rates. RCK: the rate and fee schedule can be amended at any time.
- Administrator Daugherty confirmed if we do unlimited drop off instead of pick-up we will break even from here on out if the rate is updated to include the minimal drop off charges.
- Committee member commented that instead of \$0.78 increase it would be \$1.20 per month. Commented that less than \$2 per month increase on all water/sewer/trash if all covered.

Lastly, the Rate and Fee Schedule draft changes were gone through page by page.

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

- Rate and Fee Schedule draft pages one through four were approved with no questions.

- On page five it was asked if the \$17.32 minimum charge shown is what we are charged from TAWA. Administrator Daugherty confirmed that this is the structure we've had for several years – it is not TAWA as they are the provider but it is our minimum expense that we have over and above TAWA.
- On page six clarification on water shut off fees was asked. Public Services Director Pilcher confirmed that the \$20 shut off fee is inclusive of the turning back on so it was suggested to remove the additional line item of a turn on fee. He stated that it is a quick process to turn water back on – no extra salary costs when it is during the work day.
- On page seven it was confirmed that the shown refuse charge would be slightly different based on all discussions tonight – it will not include the slight additional costs of unlimited drop off.
- On page eight it was asked about the Shelter House fee for non-residents. It was shared that this looks to be a clerical error – the \$100 deposit and \$100 fee for non-residents will be there for the total of \$200.
- Page nine was approved with no questions.

Motion by Councilman Keogh, seconded by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer to recommend to council to approve all suggested changes and updates to the Rate and Fee Schedule including the suggested updates based on Committee of the Whole discussions tonight. 6 ayes

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Council President Keogh asked if there were any Citizen Comments to be heard.

Larry Yunker – 6950 Queensmark Lane – Question regarding the unlimited pick up and drop off scenarios. He suggested that there is a lot of metal that goes out during these times and could that possibly be picked up by local scrapping companies to help keep the tonnage down. Public Services Director Pilcher confirmed that this is already being separated out and picked up by metal companies during drop-offs, does not go toward the tonnage. He also suggested that if there are concerns with residents not being able to get larger items to the drop off location local non-profit organizations could possibly help as a service project – such as Boy Scouts. He also suggested that the Village could offer to schedule pick ups for items that fall in this category during that time for a fee as long as it does not violate our current ARS contract.

Dave Riggensbach – 6313 Sydney Drive – shared congrats to Councilman Bingham on his victory for Mayor. He brought up the vacant council spot that Councilman Bingham will leave behind as he takes over as Mayor. He suggested that we start getting the word out and looking for people interested in being appointed to that spot – collecting letters of interest and resumes. Councilwoman Artiaga shared that there is a deadline of December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 for turning in letters of interest and resumes in order to give council plenty of time to review. Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer stated that this council has set a very good precedence of keeping interviews open.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

President of Council Keogh stated that there is a lot of conversation around town of possible closing of Ardaugh facility. Administration, Council President Keogh, Councilman

Bingham, and economic development people are working to put together package to discourage the company in leaving town – thinks there may be a window of opportunity to keep them in town. Administrator Daugherty confirmed he has reached out multiple times with not any current response. This group is also working on compiling a list of local places hiring to help the workers if it comes down to that. Citizen Wendy Gehring stated that it sounds like there may be two plants up for closing, so it may not end up being Whitehouse. Council President Keogh mainly wants all to know that things are being discussed and worked on as much as possible.

Council President Keogh asked for comments on other business from all Committee of the Whole members.

Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer shared her congrats to all three new council elects in attendance. She suggested that they all schedule their required Sunshine Laws training as soon as possible. She also suggested that they all find a way to keep really good notes. She stated that she looks forward to seeing how decisions are tackled going forward.

Councilman Bingham also shared his congrats and sentiments of looking forward to working with all the new council members. He stated there is a lot of work to be done but looks forward to making positive things happen. He also shared that he will be reaching out to understand interest in committee assignments.

Councilwoman Artiaga echoed the congrats to the new council elects in attendance; looking forward to working together.

Councilwoman Curry shared congrats to all new council elect as well. She wished them good luck in their journey and encouraged them to attend the remaining council meetings for the rest of the year and to share input on budgets and financials.

Councilman Connelly shared his congrats to all new council elect. He stated that it is not only the great council members who sit up front that he enjoys working with but also the Village staff in attendance.

At this time Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer made a motion, seconded by Councilman Bingham to move into an Executive Session regarding a personnel issue including all committee of the whole members at 6:55pm. 6 ayes

A motion was made by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer to reconvene the committee of the whole meeting at 8:03pm. 6 ayes

Motion by Councilman Keogh, seconded by Councilwoman Conklin Kleiboemer to approve the discussed changes to the Village Administrator employment contract. 6 ayes

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilman Bingham, seconded by Councilwoman Curry to adjourn the meeting at 8:04pm. 6 ayes

*Respectfully submitted by Nicole Hartbarger, Clerk of Council*