

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

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM by Mayor Rich Bingham.

Council Members Present: Dave Riggerbach, Carrie Tuohy, Steve Fine, Steve Connelly and Larry Yunker

Council Members Absent: Louann Artiaga – excused by Mayor Bingham

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

Guests Present: Tim Tuohy, Bruce Robertson, Rob Casaletta, Karen Gerhardinger

Council Prayer was given by Mayor Bingham.

Motion by Councilman Riggerbach, seconded by Councilman Connelly to approve the minutes of the January 16th, 2024 council meeting. 5 ayes

Motion by Councilwoman Tuohy, seconded by Councilman Yunker to approve the bills totaling \$104,773.35 dated February 1st, 2024 and the Addendum bills totaling \$244,644.72 dated February 6th, 2024 along with the December 31st, 2023 Financial Statements. 5 ayes

PERSONS TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Bingham asked if there were any committee reports to share.

Report on the January 25, 2024 Tree Commission Meeting

- i. Meeting began at 7:30pm and Commission Officers were elected for the year.
- ii. The group reviewed the tree planting design – there was some slight disappointment from ODNR representative with the disc golf course being incorporated as the discs can cause tree damage. Looking into a relatively simple fix of installing fencing around trees.
- iii. Woody warehouse for future tree purposes and purchases.
- iv. There have been some recent tree removals and trimmings along with a memorial tree planted.

Mayor Bingham stated there was nothing said previously about disc golf being an issue. He stated there is a disc golf review meeting next Tuesday evening, and we do want to make sure ODNR is happy as they do give us grants, etc. It was stated that ODNR is happy with the disc golf plan, as long as trees are protected.

Report on the February 1, 2024 Spencer Township JEDZ Meeting

- i. Meeting called to order at 6pm.
- ii. Administrator Daugherty was asked to research liability insurance; he will get quotes and get back to look into options.
- iii. January notes reviewed and approved.
- iv. Designetics presentation next meeting to apply for grant.
- v. Budget needs to be addressed, the standard is \$40k budget but it does get amended - tabled to discuss next meeting.
- vi. Jacob Barnes to discuss options for flag design and options on how to hang.
- vii. Motion to accept official letterhead.

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Mayor Bingham began his report stating that the Charter Review Commission February 22nd, 2024, 3pm meeting is scheduled; looking to get reviews done and prep for the November ballot.

Mayor Bingham shared that the Village Easter Egg Hunt will be back this year. Easter Bunny will be in attendance at 10:30, 3k eggs to hand out with prizes and candy. If anyone wishes to donate please do so. Boy Scout Pack 384, American Legion, Pythian Sisters, WHFD Fire Company and Fire Auxiliary, Whitehouse Chamber all currently set to donate. Event will be at the legion, fields in back.

Mayor Bingham is suggesting that the Mayor and Council host a Cherry Fest booth or area – especially for that Saturday after the parade. Looking for banners to share who we are, and where to meet us to chat. Looking for specific location where people can find council. Suggested that near the Cherry Fest building would work well – can set up near where safety services are sitting. Looking to decorate float a few days ahead of the parade. For Cherry Fest and going forward, Mayor Bingham suggested having Village of Whitehouse shirts made for Mayor and Council – “Team Whitehouse” to suggest that all are on the same team, just with different jobs and responsibilities.

Mayor Bingham mentioned that he has made contact with Ardagh on February 2nd, and provided the 211 number as discussed by Rob Casaletta during the last council meeting. He shared that he is also meeting with Whitehouse Primary on Thursday at 3pm – Principal Rhodes and 3rd Grade Teacher Ivy Thornton, talking about ‘mayor for a day’ opportunities for 3rd graders.

Next discussed was possible assistance for elderly and disabled for newly updated bulk drop off/roll off events - is there a way to get help for those residents. This would not be for residents who do not have a truck but for those who are truly unable to physically get items there. Administrator Daugherty stated it would then be similar to pick up program; if you need assistance please call, that will put the responsibility on the person calling to ask for the help to explain why help is needed. Councilman Riegenbach suggested we should make sure there are guidelines to not enter the houses, garages, etc. Councilman Fine commented that if people call but the reason is no truck, can we give advice that ARS can come pick up with request directly to them. Councilwoman Tuohy commented that there should be a stipulation that if we do pick up for elderly or disabled it will have to be set outside as bulk pick up was. Public Services Director Pilcher commented that we could be opening ourselves up to more than we expect, but not necessarily – make sure we are very clear up front – use the same stipulations as current roll off. Councilman Fine suggested that maybe we advertise this pick up for elderly as a trial, see how many use this service – not all pickups. Mayor Bingham agreed maybe make it once a year instead of every single time – let’s start the process to be able to offer this for the June drop off event and see how many need it.

Mayor Bingham began discussing door to door canvassing with Council. He is looking for help from council, and would like to start mid-May, prior to Cherry Fest so people can see Mayor and Council and know who they are. Pass out flyer as to the three ways that people can get information regarding what is going on in the village – Facebook, website, X/Twitter, along with new program of Gogov. It was stated that the Village cannot pay for any information or flyer regarding the tax levy or any sort of increase that would go on the upcoming ballot. Councilman Riegenbach stated there is a few hundred dollars left from the previous levy campaign. Mayor Bingham stated he would like to get some of the slides from the levy campaign regarding village budget/finances - some of the easy-to-understand graphics.

Mayor Bingham shared that he called Solicitor Kevin Heban about purchasing emails for all in the 43571 zip code. Heban confirmed it is legal and an available option and can initiate the contact to look into that. The goal is to make sure we try all we can to keep our citizens

informed. Councilman Connelly suggested that Council could include a QR code on any flyers being handed out as well – problem of purchasing emails is they could be fake/dummy emails that were put in by people – there should be some discussion about this especially when the cost comes into play – QR code where people can sign up/enter own email could have more success. Councilman Riegenbach suggested that when handing out flyers door to door, a QR code that leads to survey where we can get feedback directly could be an option as well. Councilman Fine agreed - likes the idea of electronic survey, can do it soon in order to prepare for ballot decision – what are the concerns/what don't they trust/etc. Council and Mayor continued with discussion back and forth regarding survey, how to do it, what to include i.e. figures and information versus just questions. It was decided that all council members submit 3-5 questions each that they feel should be included in a Village-wide survey; submit before Committee of the Whole meeting next Tuesday to Administrator Daugherty. Daugherty will remove duplicates and clean up; he will also refresh all data that was previously used for levy and budget discussions.

Lastly, Mayor Bingham brought up the previously discussed issue with the retaining pond and community areas within the Whitehouse Valley subdivision. He knows this is an ongoing issue - Whitehouse is not going spend money on the problem – the Village can try to help solve, but cannot spend. A quick refresh of the issue shared that the HOA was disintegrated previously, there is now no help with the pond, not being taken care of, algae three feet thick and has a strong odor. Mayor Bingham has suggested they – residents in Whitehouse Valley - send out information to all in the subdivision saying they need \$55 per year for an HOA to maintain and solve the problem, or it will be a lot more on a tax assessment if the Village has to fix the problem and collect payment for it. Councilman Riegenbach lives in this subdivision and shared his understanding on how the issue got here is timing – original developer passed away, next developer bought up after crash of 2008 and reopened – Plat 1 has a set of rules, Plat 2 technically has no rules, Plat 3 & 4 have their own separate rules because of a third builder. He stated there has to be some respect before marching in with ultimatums from the Village or within the subdivision itself. He shared that when requests have been made for money to maintain all common areas there has been some resistance – pond is biggest issue, but there are other issues where all common areas are not being maintained, and they need solution for all. Mayor Bingham shared that the county has been contacted, and they said it is a neighborhood problem. Rob Casaletta suggested that someone from the Village or Whitehouse go to Toledo Botanical Garden to make contact with Ohio State extension service – this group made some suggestions to his neighborhood that helped with their issues.

REPORT OF THE CLERK OF COUNCIL

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

REPORT OF THE VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

Mayor Bingham asked for any items to report from Administrator Jordan Daugherty.

A. Update on Tax Review Board Decision

Administrator Daugherty shared that there has been the first appeal to the board in 30-40 years. Council was provided a public document on this to review. The taxpayer lived outside of the Village but had a Village mailing address – tax filer wrongly advised the payer to have Whitehouse taxes withheld. The taxpayer is asking for a refund of monies – but past statute of limitations. The board assembled, decided there was a split of one-third responsibility between payer/filer/collector, one third of refund being requested was awarded to payer.

Next, Administrator Daugherty provided an update on the requirements for lead water lines within the Village (there are none to current knowledge) – hypersensitivity to this as the EPA of all states are reviewing this. There is now an added responsibility to municipalities to ensure there are no lead lines in the water systems. Whitehouse has no record of any lead lines – Ohio EPA now requires a lead line survey, requiring municipalities to take the extra

step to determine there are no lead lines. Deputy Administrator Hartbarger shares that staff has prepared a campaign with details on this – trying to be informative but not intrusive – with the survey idea coming from Public Works Director Pilcher. This information includes videos on the how and why of the survey, then data will come into the Village office to collect and finish from their view. Late last year the local boy scout group approached for any community service projects – this was explained to the group on the process, Hartbarger has been in communication with the pack, and they will hopefully be able to help pass out flyers with QR code and details. Administrator Daugherty stated this is an Ohio requirement, if we can help circulate that would be great – this is an enormous undertaking this year. Councilman Fine asked worst case if someone does have a lead line, what does that mean. Pilcher stated there is responsibility of the homeowner to replace the line if there is one – but there is no anticipation of that – Village was very proactive in establishing ordinances for copper lines – lots of expansions, etc. happened after lead was already made illegal for use. He shared that Council made action to use less costly material to replace any service lines – Council could choose to adopt a program to assist in costs of replacing any lines as required. Pilcher commented that Whitehouse probably would not qualify for lead line replacement grants that are available from the US Government – those tend to go to lower income areas. He also shared that lead lines were made illegal during the 1960's so this helps us narrow down based on when houses were built.

Administrator Daugherty went on to share that during next Tuesday's February Committee of the Whole meeting there will be two main topics: 1) ALS proposed contract and 2) Revenue discussion with updated numbers – want all on same page with this topic. He also shared that March Committee of the Whole will focus on electric aggregation and proposal for new revenue streams.

B. Review of February Operations Report

Deputy Administrator Hartbarger shared that there is one item to report on for the Operations side – the newly acquired GoGov application for the Village.

Hartbarger shared that in the November/December 2023 time frame it was finalized to go with this option - GoGov. It will be called 'Access Whitehouse' and will help the Village streamline how residents will utilize resources. Currently, zoning/permitting is mostly paper based, this will streamline the process to electronically request and store – there will also be notifications for zoning issues – will batch/send out notices. Hartbarger shared that most importantly is the communication ability with this application – we can create/customize exactly how we want things to look. There is push notification ability, it also seamlessly ties in with Facebook and social media accounts. He feels this will be a very big step to be able to share information for the residents. Councilman Connelly commented that this is very awesome and asked is there a way to quantify any cost savings we will receive by digitizing some of this information. Hartbarger shared that yes we will be able to do that, especially in zoning department updates. Councilman Fine asked about a go live date – Hartbarger shared it will be as quickly as possible, targeting April 1st – would love to be sooner. Councilman Riegenbach asked after zoning what is next goal. Hartbarger commented that communication is next biggest goal, then permitting, and can lastly look into payments. Administrator Daugherty commented that if we can get this the way we want it and get people to download, it can be the most powerful communication tool the village would have.

REPORT OF THE VILLAGE SOLICITOR

Mayor Bingham asked Solicitor Kevin Heban for any items to be reported. There were none.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Bingham asked for Citizen Comments pertaining to Agenda items. There were none.

ORDINANCES

Mayor Bingham asked Solicitor Kevin Heban for any ordinances to be reviewed or voted on. There is a second reading for Ordinance 5-2023.

Councilman Riggensbach shared that he had an opportunity to speak with some neighborhoods, specifically, their HOA's. He commented that the Village ordinance matches their HOA ordinance, and now they feel they have no teeth to keep their homeowners following their own ordinance. Councilman Riggensbach shared with the HOA that the Village concern was we are reviewing this as we need the best way to utilize our resources, not use up valuable time looking for trash can offenders. He said he asked HOA to document/narrow down repeat offenders to provide to Village, as this puts the onus of responsibility back on the HOA. Riggensbach shared the HOA feedback was they were not in favor of reducing, as they had nothing to fall back on at that point. Councilman Connelly asked Solicitor Heban – does the HOA have the ability to enforce; Heban shared the HOA would probably have to sue the homeowner for non-compliance. Councilman Connelly also commented if the ordinance is left as is, we have to enforce for all of the Village, and could be quite a cost for homeowners if they have to put up a structure, etc.

Motion by Councilman Connelly, seconded by Councilman Fine to approve **Ordinance 5-2023: Amending Whitehouse Municipal Code Section 955.03(b)(4), Residential Waste Collection Regulations**, Second Reading. 5 Ayes

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Bingham asked Heban for any resolutions to be reviewed or voted on. There were none.

OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

Department Heads

Public Works Director Pilcher shared that the water tower project is proceeding; it is with the EPA right now for approval. He said next step will be to set a timeline for bidding of the project and will have Council approve that. Pilcher shared that the team is working on clearing the Wabash trail, cutting back brush, maintaining vegetation growing there. He confirmed that for the previously discussed lead line survey – the EPA started regulating in 1986, and Whitehouse started regulating prior to that.

Police Chief Baer mentioned that Council should have received a digital copy of the January police department statistical report – please review. He commented that if there is more info wanted, please let him know. He finished up by sharing that the 2023 Police Dept annual report is ready to be published, and they plan to do that tomorrow – will be sharing digital copies with Council as it is 80+ pages long.

Fire Chief Francis updated Council that the Fire Department has been selected for the CMS audit – Center for Medicare/Medicaid. The audit goes over facility, vehicle, and consumables costs. The audit is due May 31 of this year, and it is an extremely long audit to fill out.

Council Comments

Councilman Riggensbach commented that there has been a lot of great conversation, and he is looking forward to figuring out revenue and using a lot of the work that was already done.

Councilwoman Tuohy asked for confirmation on how far past statute the Tax Review Board situation previously discussed was; Administrator Daugherty confirmed that it was three years.

Councilman Fine shared a question on Charter Review Committee - should we have check ins with the Charter committee at certain times so not a lot of text or revisions are written and then having to be re-written. Mayor Bingham confirmed that Rob Casaletta will bring recommendations to Council through Solicitor Heban as they come up. Rob Casaletta commented that he believes it truly depends on discussions during the Charter Review meetings on if there will be the need for updates and unsure of how many meetings this will take to come up with recommendations. Solicitor Heban commented that it is a public meeting and all are welcome to attend.

Councilman Connelly seconded Councilman Riegenbach’s sentiment - one of the best conversations tonight that we’ve had since he’s been on council. He commented that in thinking about roadmap of digitizing, saving money, etc., would be great to quantify this – so we can highlight these savings during the Administrator report.

Councilman Yunker shared that with the HOA comments brought up during the ordinance discussion he wants to put the HOA topic into perspective. He stated that the organization is set up to state private rules on how the subdivision wants to police themselves – emphasis on private. Often these are set up by the developer. Very important for communities like ours as a lot of new neighborhoods being built with retention ponds, etc. and common areas – without functioning HOA this maintenance does not happen. Important for the community to understand that HOA’s are self-policing – Councilman Yunker wants to make sure we are all on same page – the Village does not enforce HOA rules.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Acting Mayor Keogh asked if there were any Citizen comments to be heard.

Bruce Robertson - 6508 Field Ave – asking for confirmation on what exactly is Ordinance 5-2023. Solicitor Heban commented that it deals with garbage cans, they cannot be visible from street in today’s rule and this ordinance will eliminate that specific requirement, it can now just be just behind the front line of the house. Robertson also asked about the new water tower and if it will increase the water pressure in Whitehouse. Public Services Director Pilcher commented that it will not increase pressure, but will increase supply for sustained back up.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Riegenbach, seconded by Councilman Connelly to adjourn the meeting at 8:32pm. 5 ayes

Duly Appointed Clerk of Council

Mayor