

**Village of Whitehouse
Village Council Meeting As A
Committee of the Whole
Village Hall, Whitehouse, OH
6:30pm June 11th, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm by President of Council Louann Artiaga.

Council Members Present: Dave Riggenschach, Carrie Tuohy, Steve Fine, Steve Connelly, Larry Yunker and President of Council Louann Artiaga

Council Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Administrator Jordan Daugherty, Deputy Administrator Joshua Hartbarger, Clerk Nicole Hartbarger, Mayor Rich Bingham, Fire Chief Jason Francis

Guests Present: Karen Gerhardinger

Motion by Councilman Dave Riggenschach, seconded by Councilman Steve Fine to approve the minutes of the June 4th, 2024 Committee of the Whole meetings. 6 ayes

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AGENDA ITEMS

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

GENERAL

Continued Review of Charter Commission Proposed Changes to Whitehouse Charter

Councilwoman Artiaga comments that there are three topics that will be proposed for changes on the upcoming ballot. These three topics need to be finalized in order to be drafted and sent to the Board of Election in time to be put on the ballot. The three topics were discussed individually.

A. Board of Elections/Primaries

- Councilman Riggenschach asks for clarification on when a primary is required, three times the number of seats available +1, he believes the +1 might be missing. Administrator Daugherty believes the wording ‘full term in excess of three’ includes plus one. Councilman Fine confirms current charter says ‘in excess’, all agree this is fine.
- Fine asks for confirmation on readings, are they emergencies or three readings. Artiaga confirms three readings. Fine asks do we need to update ballot title language because right now the two proposed updates read the same – should they be different so voters know they are voting on two different topics. Artiaga not sure if it can be changed but it does list the specific section of the charter. Fine comments that it is currently titled “Village charter amendment”. Riggenschach asks can we include some layman’s terms in title. Administrator Daugherty agrees we do need to have some clarity on that.
- Fine comments there are two sections, depending on date chosen, that may require minor modifications. Sections referring to Council vacancies and Mayor vacancy need to be synched up. Riggenschach asks confirming with those comments, that we need to nail down a primary date. Yunker comments we would probably want to try and piggy back any primary on any other communities who may be having one – other Council members in agreement. Fine confirms Solicitor Heban left a placeholder for the date so Council can make that decision. He mentions they should ask Heban to set the date to be the same as Oregon’s date which is the latest option. All of Council in agreement. Riggenschach says then we do the backwards math to get the turn in date for the petitions and the vacancy date.

B. Mayor Vacancy

- Artiaga says our intent and the way the proposed change is laid out doesn’t seem to coincide.
- Riggenschach shares he interpreted if current Mayor becomes vacant, President of Council becomes Mayor then that person has 30 days to decide if they want to maintain her President of Council seat but does stay interim Mayor until the next available election. He does not feel this was the intention if that was a correct interpretation, as they do not want a vacant Council seat for almost two years worst case.
- Fine comments if Mayor office vacated and President took over, he feels there would be an election next year.

- Riegenbach says do we want to have a situation where we have only 5 Council members for a possibility of 2 years, thought we were trying to avoid that. Tuohy agrees and thought we decided that President would have time to decide. Artiaga agrees language does feel very muddy.
- Fine comments that he feels like we provided Ohio Revised Code, and Heban did follow that with this language, but it might not follow exactly what we were trying to get to.
- Yunker asks if President says they do not want to stay labeled as President of Council and take back their Council seat what are we understanding, do we expect that another Council member would take over Interim Mayor and then it would open a Council seat that way.
- Administrator Daugherty confirms language as he interprets, helps Council with some clearing up.
- Mayor Bingham shares that one of the questions that happened last year during election, if someone is Interim Mayor as President of Council is then beat in the general election when running for Mayor could we possibly have that person still as Interim Mayor after they were technically voted out of Council – we do need to review that situation.
- Artiaga questions, we said three readings for ballot but can we continue to work and adjust language through those readings or does it have to be read same all three readings.
- Daugherty comments that other charters he has reviewed are not as complex as ours, others put more municipal authority in the President of Council position. He says if someone is accepting nomination for Mayor they are giving up their Council seat, if torn on taking the risk, then don't accept the nomination. Tuohy agrees, if you are accepting a Mayor nomination you are accepting that other responsibility.
- Artiaga asks for Daugherty to work with Heban on updating the language to reflect that understanding. Daugherty summarizes – want provision to identify that President of Council in Mayors absence becomes by default Mayor in next general election which would be less than 2 years as that is every two years; when that happens that creates a vacancy to be filled by normal nominating process that we currently have. Only difference from previous is that President of Council does not have the choice to pick and choose, they can accept or not at time of election. Daugherty says the next draft will be before the next Council meeting, he will work with Heban.

C. Council meetings

- Artiaga asks are we still moving forward with other three issues, how often to meet, where to meet and where notices are posted. Tuohy comments she feels like Heban said those were already handled and taken care of.
- Daugherty will ask for those five pieces in resolution form to be adopted.

Yunker shares one more comment on mayor topic, he says we probably want something to address issue if Mayor vacancy occurs after deadlines for vacancies, we would possibly have a gap; do we say we make an exception on the deadlines for vacancies. Riegenbach comments this is part of the responsibilities of accepting President of Council, if it is past deadline President of Council is done. All in agreement.

FINANCE

Discuss Potential of Selling Property Currently Leased by Brian S. Carroll LLC (aka General's Ice Cream)

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilman Connelly at 7:02pm to enter into executive session to discuss topic of property. 6 ayes

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilwoman Tuohy at 7:24pm to reconvene the Committee of the Whole meeting. 6 ayes

Discuss Staff's Plan and Other Potential Ideas Regarding Use of Remaining COVID Funds

Daugherty states he and Councilwoman Artiaga had some discussion last week. He shares that Council already aware of remaining covid funds, around \$164k now. Daugherty shares that he will provide ideas to get conversation started on what to spend remaining funds on.

Daugherty shares that three years ago, when funds were made available, the village was in financial difficulty. The big concern then was how to stretch funds out to the point in the future where these funds will be useful. Plan was to not get all new items, but to look more long term at capital projects, etc. to relieve the general fund. Daugherty says that this is what has been done for the last three years they went after items that were part of the capital plan that would help with the future budgeting process.

Daugherty's recommendation is to operate the same going forward with focusing on alleviating any struggle in the capital plan; he understands that Council may have different ideas for the funds

but this gets the conversation started. In the spreadsheet that was shared with Council, Daugherty states they are starting with the beginning balance after completion of purchase of previously approved backhoe. Daugherty discusses the expense ideas in the spreadsheet starting with updating computers and systems for staff. He shares that he understands that Windows10 is wreaking havoc on computers in the building and struggling, need updates here. Looking at tough books, special for EMS, do have to purchase these, do need this update in the emergency response vehicles. Shopped out through Triotech – 4 units plus the docking stations. He comments that several municipal computers need to be updated as well, 38 total items between laptops, desktops, docks, rugged laptops, etc. – this expense would have to come out of the general fund but idea would be to use the covid funds to help cover. Daugherty shares the four toughbooks are around \$27k, the municipal items total \$24k.

Next idea to make taxpayer dollars go further is to purchase a police cruiser. Daugherty says we are in the 6th year of purchasing a new cruiser every other year, where we used to buy them every year. Instead of buying newer vehicles for administrative staff, meetings, etc., we have been recycling the old cruisers into the Village fleet. Daugherty says that if we buy new cruiser then we will not buy one for two years; we will put the one coming off fleet into the service department as one general use vehicle is currently about done.

Lastly, Daugherty shares they are looking to do a public project, idea of previously discussed State Route 64 beautification projects. Fine asks for more detail on this. Daugherty says part of next month's meeting will give all a catalog of projects that are on the list. One of those is a large stone-built flower box, around 6-8 feet wide and 3 feet tall and start to line State Route 64 with this – stones are fairly expensive. Daugherty shares he does want to present these ideas to Council with the renderings for better visualization.

Council comments and discussion:

- Yunker says he is good with all suggestions, but would like to hear more about beautification projects. Still on the fence of the idea of mini roundabouts to avoid slower/more congestion to get into town. Daugherty says these are pedestrian roundabouts, Yunker says ok, would like to understand the ideas.
- Connelly comments that he likes them all, only thought is on the net of State Route 64 dollars. On survey, roughly 100 responses so far, #3 item out of 16 items is improvement to walkability and connectivity, sidewalks around town. He asks can we use some of this feedback to help make some funds decisions. He feels these are tough decisions because we do get compliments on how beautiful the Village is and would like to keep that up.
- Fine comments that staff has picked some good projects. One direction wondering about is back to vote on the levy, strong preference to managing our costs. Is there any way to invest this money to manage the costs. Replacing streetlights with LED for example, repay ourselves in 5 years, cost savings topics that could set us up better to manage costs in the future.
- Tuohy agrees computers are very important, fully behind that idea. Recommendations are appreciated. Mini roundabouts are not high on list of updates but open to hearing more.
- Riggerbach comments he is not sure what funds can be used for, since they were Covid funds. He asks can we use some from the grant perspective and to work with some downtown owners to finish updating and refacing buildings downtown. Daugherty shares we would suggest to find equivalent value in other things that we know are fully approved for covid money and then earmark that value. Riggerbach asks about State or Federal grants out there to tie in and support that as well. Artiaga shares those grants would be attached to a timeline that goes years into the future where covid money has to be spent sooner. Riggerbach shares he agrees with State Route 64 beautification efforts, but does not feel like the downtown beautification efforts are entirely done.
- Mayor Bingham asks question to Daugherty regarding the \$7,657 that left – Daugherty says that would be what is left over after the presented budget is approved. Bingham brings up topic of ramp going down dock to pond in the park. Daugherty explains 7-8 years ago engineering estimates were obtained for new dock and ADA accessible, which was around \$250k estimate. He comments even if done in house with treated lumber, etc. could still be tens of thousands of dollars. Four years ago the estimate updated, was still around \$200k. Riggerbach asks about possibility of an observation deck that doesn't go down further but feeling of over the water. Daugherty agrees this is a good idea; could get rid of current dock entirely.
- Bingham comments he has no problem with any items suggested.
- Daugherty confirms he is hearing top three items not having any issues with, and staff can hold off on fourth item.
- Artiaga shares the only other item for wish list is replacing sign at the front of Village park. Yunker shares he spoke with Mark Foster who built the original sign for the park back in

the 80's. Recommends to at least have conversation with this same person. Artiaga asks what happened to funding for signage around the Village; Daugherty says still there and using it slowly especially for main entrances into the Village.

- Bingham comments on topic regarding downtown area, Council and the Village did offer grants to help businesses improve; First Federal Delta used it, and entrance into business park did as well.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Council President Artiaga asked for comments on other business from all Committee of the Whole members. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Riegenbach, seconded by Councilman Fine to adjourn the meeting at 7:54pm. 6 ayes

Respectfully submitted by Nicole Hartbarger, Clerk of Council