

**Village of Whitehouse
Village Council Meeting As A
Committee of the Whole
Village Hall, Whitehouse, OH
6:30 January 14th, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm by President of Council Dave Riggenschach.

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

Council Members Absent: Steve Fine – excused for illness, joined via online Teams meeting

Staff Present: Administrator Jordan Daugherty, Deputy Administrator Joshua Hartbarger, Clerk of Council Nicole Hartbarger

Guests Present: Greg Talecki, Jamie Beier-Grant, Buck (online), Karen Gerhardinger (online)

Motion by Councilwoman Tuohy, seconded by Councilman Connelly to approve the minutes of the December 10th, 2024 Committee of the Whole meetings. 5 ayes

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AGENDA ITEMS

Council President Riggenschach asked if there were any citizens present to comment on the Committee of the Whole agenda items. There were none.

GENERAL

Economic Development/Target Project Planning Workshop

Greg Talecki and Jamie Beier-Grant from Kleinfelder are present for the planning workshop and review.

Talecki discusses the idea of targeted and strategically planned projects; these are the types of projects that tend to get a lot more funding and successfully receive that funding. Looking to start understanding what the targets should be and where grant funding requests should start being focused. Beier-Grant comments looking for these sessions to be interactive and making sure input is put in by Council people; understands that survey was open and now complete, looking for input from this as well so the residents are being heard. Kleinfelder here to help guide the conversation but really looking forward to the comments and input from Council. Talecki is asking Council and Administration to focus on the why; ultimately whatever the targets are there needs to be reasoning behind them. First to plan targets and priorities, then plan out funding options and how to go after those options.

PowerPoint review includes the process of targets, funding, application of funding, etc. The target phase includes work sessions and attainable goals for those sessions. This phase also includes defining the ‘why’; giving details as to why targets are selected and why they make the most sense. Several sample planning elements were reviewed; these are here to spark some conversation. Daugherty comments on the idea of different or targeted revenues outside of the standard governmental funding. Thinking of non-standard projects where other funding options were found included Veterans Memorial Park, Finzel project, etc. Commenting that this targeted funding has been successful in the past and will continue to be. Beier-Grant comments when thinking about the top five projects, it is not set in stone where you focus on these projects only, then move on to others after the five are done – there can be others going on as well while funding options come

up. Having a good list of projects will help keep things nimble and have knowledge of what the village is looking to do.

Riggenbach comments that Connelly sent out the survey results with the question pertinent to what residents are looking for. The focus is on restaurants, retail businesses, improvements in walkability, etc. Tuohy comments on continuing to invest into the beautification of the downtown area – this has been successful in the past and continues to work well. Ideas of putting projects into topic buckets to be able to decide on them and review them easier. Talecki asks about the current restaurant owners and how they would feel about more coming to town – Riggenbach agrees, great question would like to hear input from those owners. Connelly comments on survey answers and talks about from a higher level, if there is one big project to help support several of the answers, where do you start. Beier-Grant comments on the idea of connecting areas to downtown and whether this would help with any safety concerns as well. Asking to push back a little bit and have Council think about any revenue producing projects and ideas as well. Talecki comments on there being good funding options through the State of Ohio for downtown redevelopment. Artiaga shares some concern with revenue producing businesses, need to take inventory into what Whitehouse has to actually offer these businesses regarding land and other options. Daugherty comments on some past development projects that have been discussed over the years. Fine brings up the topic of a senior center as it has been discussed in the recent past. Fine asks if there is any value or incentive in looking into another industrial park type area like the one Whitehouse already has – Talecki and Beier-Grant agree that there definitely is room and option for this. Artiaga asks for any options to expand the current industrial park; Daugherty says there is a small amount of land for this option. Artiaga asks of any funding out there to renovate existing buildings – Beier-Grant comments that there are some funding options for façade updates and improvements; also grants for updating historic buildings. Artiaga asks about specifically updating areas and rooms in the current Village Administration building; Beier-Grant comments on needing to understand a bit more about what the needs are for employee trainings and possible senior center areas, she shares this would possibly be a capital request situation.

As discussion goes on, a tentative list of topics and projects is being created. The list contains the following: 1) Downtown Revitalization Plan (64 Corridor) – Sidewalks/walkability, handicapped accessibility, roundabout; 2) Industrial/Business Park – potentially expand existing industrial park; 3) Community Center; 4) Foundational infrastructure in targeted areas – empty lot on Finzel.

Discussion goes to properties and ability to purchase for economic development, Daugherty shares there are conversations that have been occurring and there is positive response and feedback to these discussions.

Beier-Grant comments that this has been a great start to the discussion; details that can be starting points to dive in deeper. Daugherty reviews quickly a few more topics including a food and entertainment district, redevelopment that was already touched on, expansion of the Waterville Twp JEDD and public projects like roundabouts. Talecki and Beier-Grant comment that they will review their notes together, then sit down with Daugherty to review topics and continue review with /Council on more details.

Continued Discussion on Approach to Award Community Funds (Donations)

Council President Riggenbach brings up the previous topic of donation committee. He asks if there are a few Council people that would want to be a part of this to bring donation ideas to Council or Committee of the Whole for approval.

Artiaga and Tuohy comment on the fact that it should include residents or people from the community, not all Council people. Tuohy asks about making sure to push out the idea of open Committee spots so that all residents can join as they would like.

Fine comments that it feels like we are jumping to a solution for these charitable funds, feels it could be approached differently – should work on the big picture first, what is important and what do we want out of these funds. Fine shares his concern with having a committee is that this is a very small amount of funds that are being discussed, 1/10th of 1% of the general fund; secondly, this is a small village, would have concerns on others making decisions on individual requests; another committee would mean there would have to be open meetings; waiting for people to come with requests might not be what Council thinks is most important. It could be decided that supporting students, veterans, etc. are more important than smaller requests. Artiaga comments that the committee could be instrumental in helping make these higher-level decisions, not just approve or disapprove applications. The committee could look at the types of charities instead of the very specific of who to give money to. Fine comments that instead of forming a formalized committee there could be higher level discussions among Council to make decisions on what types of charity to support. Fine suggests putting the topic on next Committee of the Whole meeting, everyone come in with a few charitable ideas and understand the amount of in-kind donations from last year.

Artiaga asks for the amounts of waived fees from events last year. Daugherty suggests that he likes the idea as Council to set priorities on what they want to focus on for charitable donations whether it changes each year or is similar – could lead to being proactive in the donations instead of just waiting for requests to come in. Riggensbach suggests Council brings ideas in for donations for the March Committee of the Whole meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Council President Riggensbach asks if there are any citizen comments to be heard. There were none.

OTHER BUSINESS

Artiaga comments on the four-way stop, asking what the options are for reducing headaches and complaints; people run the stop sign, near misses often. Would like all to keep this topic in mind.

Connelly asks about a meeting that was had with Triotech regarding ransomware issues. Hartbarger says things are in the works and will share soon.

Yunker brings up the topic of term limits and charter review starting their review again soon. Asking if this is something that can be talked about at the next meeting – ideas could require multiple readings once decisions are made. Fine thinks timing is around July for turning in any charter amendments to get them on a ballot if necessary. Riggensbach is looking toward February or March committee of the whole for these topics to make sure they are done timely. Artiaga also comments on the Council rules that are in place, these could be updated as well.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Connelly, seconded by Councilwoman Artiaga to adjourn the meeting at 8:21pm. 5 ayes

Respectfully submitted by Nicole Hartbarger, Clerk of Council