

**Village of Whitehouse
Village Council Meeting As A
Committee of the Whole
Village Hall, Whitehouse, OH
6:30 February 11th, 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: N/A

Staff Present: Deputy Administrator Joshua Hartbarger, Fire Chief Jason Francis, Clerk of Council Nicole Hartbarger

Guests Present: Joe Miller, Mike , Karen Gerhardinger, Rob Casaletta

Motion by Councilwoman Tuohy, seconded by Councilwoman Artiaga to approve the minutes of the January 21st, 2025 Committee of the Whole meetings. 6 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

New Pedestrian Bridge Dedication

Riggenschach shares that in the packet there was a letter from Administrator Daugherty regarding a meeting with Tiffany Eckert. Staff is looking at May 8th around 6:30pm for the pedestrian bridge dedication. The suggestion has been to go with “Sgt Andy Eckert Memorial Bridge”. There will be a cost of around \$1k for the additional memorial signage. Riggenschach asks Council for comments and thoughts. Fine comments that having a sign for the pedestrians is good but asking if one or two is the better route to go. He comments that they could look into including a small biography on Eckert for pedestrians to know who he is on a second sign. Artiaga suggests could include QR code that could link to even more detail; knows this could be a bit extra but might be worth it. Riggenschach asks about adding a secondary sign to include details, Deputy Administrator Hartbarger says this wouldn’t be too hard to do. Artiaga comments Destination Whitehouse pledged to put a dollar amount toward this signage, it will not all be out of Whitehouse funds. Tuohy asking for Tiffany Eckert to be included in crafting the story and additional details.

Motion by Councilman Connelly, seconded by Councilwoman Artiaga to present to Council for approve the date, time and approximate funds to be spent on the memorial bridge dedication. 6 ayes

Council Requested Charter Review Items Discussion

Riggenschach shares this is an opportunity for Council to talk about the items that they would like to have brought back to be revisited with charter representatives here. The first item is term limits. Connelly comments there was a recommendation from Heban sent last year, the area that was not covered was with respect to the Mayor position. The proposal was allowing to serve two terms of four years each, then wait four years, then can serve two more four years each terms. Asking if there should be an end date. Riggenschach doesn’t feel there should be an end to their community service but does support the respite term of four years off. Riggenschach asks thoughts on Mayor

and Council being in same verbiage, all agree that makes sense. Riggensbach comments on appointments of seats, even if just a one year term, this should count towards the full term of the allowed two terms. Fine asks if this might discourage someone from looking to be appointed. Riggensbach comments it mainly comes back to simplicity. Casaletta shares the review committee has looked at term limits and it was decided to hold off because there was not a lot of people running in past years; he is questioning the idea of calling an appointment a full term, thinks people should be able to fill the unexpired term and then be allowed to run for the full term, with the full term counts toward their two terms. Fine suggests putting a time limit on the appointed partial term such as two years or less, it would not count as a full term toward the two year term limit if it is less than a two year appointment. Casaletta suggests Heban review other municipalities charters for their verbiage on time limits; he suggests Dublin, OH. Riggensbach states no problem looking at precedence with the plan of less than two years appointment, can run two more terms, if more than two years appointment can only run one more term. Riggensbach agrees with the due diligence in reviewing other municipalities but does support the path they have discussed so far. Casaletta asks about time frame for term limit language; Riggensbach comments we just need in time for board of elections requirements. Connelly suggests not over complicating things, looking to keep changes simple and direct. Ultimate point is that change can be a good thing.

Riggensbach asks if there were any other charter topics that they need to get on the ballot. Fine comments that the charter gives the Mayor the ability to hire or fire any Village employees that they would like, barring department heads that need to be approved by Council; section 4.08C. Mayor comments there is a check and balance system as anyone can appeal their firing by Mayor to Council. Fine says he does not see that verbiage in charter, but it may be in the Village Code of Conduct; suggesting to add this verbiage right into the charter. Riggensbach confirms not a full charter change, but an update to the language to reflect the current practice that is being done. Casaletta comments that what needs to be done is when charter commission meets again they need a list of items that were voted on back in November to make sure the charter that is posted is current. Artiaga comments an item not on the charter but was addressed previously is who the Administrator reports to; some discussion on if it should be either Mayor or Council or both, feels this was tabled and not finalized. Tuohy comments that it was tabled because there was a lot of language around this throughout the whole charter, would be a lot more than one small change.

Casaletta shares that he has a list of items that can be reviewed. Several items regarding deletion of sentences in some areas, paragraphs and updating language in others. He shares the list with the Clerk who will email out to all of Council. It was asked if any of the items affect current operations of the Village; Casaletta comments that there is nothing that critical. Yunker comments one of the ways to present is all or nothing with the updates; or can go the path as we did last year with breaking out sections with old vs new and does the voter agree with the change. Suggests being cognizant of how many of these updates and changes that voters would be willing to read through.

2024 Village Survey - Mayor and Council Commentary Discussion

Riggensbach suggests replacing the link that is currently on the Village website to take the survey with the survey results. Asking if there is additional commentary to add to these results for residents to review. Connelly suggests where there was a detailed question asked, Council should provide some commentary regarding what will be done in regard to those questions and results. Handful of questions where people were asked to prioritize items; questions 3, 6 and 8. Focusing on these three questions, feedback and action taken on these questions would be good. Riggensbach suggests providing updates on action items throughout the year. Fine comments, curbside pick-ups could be mentioned as an update and improvement to services. Tuohy mentions there was the forming of the Finance Committee to help with transparency. Fine states there has been more transparency around finances, including putting more budget details online for residents to review; looking to get this information out there. Fine comments a newsletter was mentioned in survey results and feels this should be a priority this year. Artiaga asks about project reports that are currently being shared, can this be detailed out a bit more and shared online for residents to access.

Riggenbach suggests keeping the list concise especially with what we are committing to for updates based on the survey. Council updates wording on some feedback items. Artiaga thanks Fine and Connelly for all the time and effort put into the survey and organizing results.

Results and Recommendation on Recent Fire Equipment Bids

SCBA Equipment

Chief Francis shares that a large grant was received thanks to hard work and effort by Platoon Chief Miller. Total of \$294k received with 5% match; \$14k will be Village funds. With the grant, received bids from three vendors.

Recommendation is going with MSA Manufacturing. Yunker asks about the new bottles: do they have quick connectors similar to current bottles. Yes; with new SCBA masks per Francis. Yunker asks about rit packs. Francis says yes will be getting two new rit packs with this purchase. Yunker asks about Waterville and what they use commenting they currently have Scott Packs, will no longer be compatible with their equipment; Francis confirms this is the case, Waterville is working toward air packs in the future, looking for all local municipalities to streamline through MSA. The goal is to get the Anthony Wayne area in line.

Motion by Councilwoman Tuohy, seconded by Councilman Fine to recommend to Council the approval of the bid with MSA Manufacturing for new SCBA Equipment, as an emergency. 6 ayes

Marc's Radios

Chief Francis shares that the Fire Department received another grant for \$49k to purchase more portable radios and batteries. He says the department is looking at \$7k in batteries alone. There is a plan for replacing batteries. Platoon Chief Miller wrote this grant as well. Francis shares that with this grant you can not focus on just batteries, so there will be purchase of radios as well. This will help to integrate into additional counties such as Fulton and Wood. The purchase will include 10 portable radios, chargers and batteries. Riggenbach confirms this is 100% funded. Fine asks what we are currently paying for Marc's radios subscriptions, Francis will find this info and share. Will go from 4 to 14 Marc's radios.

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilman Connelly to approve the grant funded purchase of the Marc's portable radios including chargers and batteries. 6 ayes

Artiaga asks about the Reo Fire truck at the fire department and what repairs and refurbishments are required. Francis says there is currently one person who can start the vehicle, Retired Chief McNutt. It is older, does need some tires but the rims are made from wood, so tires are hard to replace. Still currently owned by the family of Lenore Brown. Chief Francis comments they are trying to figure out logistics and if possession is taken where to store. He states this is the very first engine that the Village purchased and used the pump to run off the engine from horse drawn carriages. It was asked what it would cost to bring it out for Cherry Fest for others to see. Francis will get with McNutt and see what it would take.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Council President Riggenbach asks if there are any citizen comments to be heard.

Resident and Charter Review Committee member Rob Casaletta reiterates to Council to please look at other cities and municipalities regarding the term limits to see how it is done elsewhere.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council President Riggenbach asks if there is any other business to discuss from Council members. There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Connelly, seconded by Councilman Fine to adjourn the meeting at 7:34pm.
6 ayes

Respectfully submitted by Nicole Hartbarger, Clerk of Council