

**Village of Whitehouse
Village Council Meeting As A
Committee of the Whole
Village Hall, Whitehouse, OH
6:30 August 12th, 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 Fine, Larry Yunker and President of Council Dave Riggenschach

Council Members Absent: Steve Connelly – excused absence

Staff Present: Administrator Jordan Daugherty, Deputy Administrator Joshua Hartbarger, Public Works Director Mike Hill, Clerk of Council Nicole Hartbarger

Guests Present: Greg Telecky, Paulette Mills, Jamie Beier Grant, Nate Hudeck

Motion by Councilwoman Tuohy, seconded by Councilman Fine to approve the minutes of the June 10th, 2025 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

Presentation by and Discussion with Kleinfelder on Financing/Revenue Strategy

Administrator Daugherty introduces those in attendance from Kleinfelder. He states that staff met with the Kleinfelder folks a few months ago and they have a great plan for the Village to follow.

Greg Telecky introduces Paulette Mills and Nate Hudeck. He comments that there were four buckets talked about in the initial meeting with Council several months ago. Mills is joining Jamie Beier Grant and himself on implementing plans. Hudeck supports all internally in the Kleinfelder office in a project management role.

Beier Grant comments that the first couple of slides being presented are a recap from previous discussions. These topics were identified through Council and Administration conversations and meetings to pull out high level targets and priorities for the Village. Four key buckets were identified where all targets and priorities were covered. Today Kleinfelder is coming back for next to discuss steps such as planning and programming. The four buckets in question include downtown development, S4-64 corridor development, community identity and multi-use paths/connectivity/walkability.

Beier Grant discusses the community branding topic. She comments this is an over-arching element to the overall design of the projects going on in the Village, it is not one standalone project. This will identify how to integrate the brand into all the projects as they are being completed including architecture, signage, etc. She says they want to retain the character per comments in the community survey. Details include gateway signage and downtown streetscape, discuss the idea of a Wayfinding Master Plan. Beier Grant sees this as aligning with all the other buckets/priorities; feels the Village already has a very solid foundation to this topic.

Next, Beier Grant reviews the downtown development bucket. This is a standalone bucket regarding how to create a vibrant downtown for businesses, residents and visitors. Looking to support reinvestment and revitalization efforts of the downtown area including job creation and tax revenue generation. Beier Grant views this topic from a business and commerce perspective. She feels one important idea is to formally establish the downtown district, even a historic downtown district; this can be done through Village legislation. The historic designation helps to define the geographic area of what is considered historic downtown, establishes philosophy that as growth occurs downtown it protects this area with requirements that would be laid out as historically appropriate with design standards. This designation does not cost the Village any money. This will help to boost the Village's ability to establish other districts in the downtown area. Other ideas for downtown development include creating a DORA like other Villages and Cities near Whitehouse. A DORA would require an application to Ohio Liquor Control, would set the geographic area along with businesses in this area. Tuohy expresses some concern with DORA idea as it was brought up before to the Council and concerns were raised. Beier Grant comments this could be a tool used for revitalization efforts and to increase activities and vibrancy, if it felt like the time was right. Telecky comments that ultimately Council will be the deciding body; there will not be any ideas that go through that are not approved by Council. Beier Grant mentions a Downtown Redevelopment District, a specific downtown area that already has a historic district defined. If an investor or property owner comes in and does a significant renovation to a building, the Village can divert 70% of the updated property tax amount from this incremental increase in real property tax value into a DRD fund for 10 years. This money can then be reinvested specifically into the downtown development district for beautification updates, business owner grants, marketing efforts, etc. This has been used in both large and small communities, Waterville has used along with Defiance. Beier Grant suggests waiting a bit with this idea to see what the Ohio Legislature will be doing with property taxes soon. Beier Grant mentions the CDBG Flexible Grant Fund Program; federal funding that is allocated to the states and then the states are responsible for spreading out to the local communities. This could be used for downtown areas; up to \$250k in grant money for three private properties in the downtown area. Lucas County would be the applicant for this grant and hold the money until it is ready to be disbursed. Mills comments that this is not a fast program or to be used for emergencies, it works best for planned projects including roof replacements, HVAC, etc. Beier Grant comments one more idea for downtown is to establish a Special Improvement District. This would be a special assessment charged to participating property owners and funds can be used for upkeep of downtown areas, safety, physical improvements, etc. There are several different programs that can cover this idea. There could be some tax savings for business owners with these programs. Additional downtown development ideas include Community Economic Development Initiative Funding with the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority, Ohio Main Street Program and ODOT Transportation Alternatives Programs.

Greg talks about the SR-64 Corridor bucket of projects. He says the goal is to develop and execute funding and development strategies to finance improvements in the designated SR-64 Corridor area. Proposing a collaborative effort. The vision plan includes roadway, roundabouts and walkway improvements; confirming water and sanitary sewer infrastructure – need to make sure the current infrastructure can handle any improvements that will be made going forward. Collaboration will include dialogue with property owners, real estate community, developers and state officials for the vision of the properties affected. Telecky comments they will coordinate with Lucas County Economic Development in seeking private sector end-users and developers who have interest in the Whitehouse community. Another conversation to be had would be initiating dialogue on expansion of the Waterville Township JEDD. Telecky says he envisions coming back with a developed list of specific projects for SR-64 corridor with project costs; this will include identifying funding sources and teaming partners for each project.

Next, Mills discusses ideas on connectivity and multi-modal infrastructure. Goal is to ensure that as new environments and expansion are being developed that the connectivity within the Village

grows with these updates, building these environments to be inclusive of safety for the walkers, bikers, etc. Mills references a few studies that support the goals of communities being walkable and very connected. She comments that businesses will reap the benefits of a walkable community. Mills shares that there are several ways to begin down the path of improving walkability and connectivity. She shares they can conduct audit walks and develop Safe Routes to School Travel Plan and Active Transportation Plans; there are grants and funds that directly support these plans. Mills comments on the Weckerly Road Multiuse Trail; the recent emergency legislation was requested to be able to put in applications for funding that supports this project.

Fine asks about the historical designation and how that affects private property owners. Beier Grant comments that the Village needs to review if they want any typical homes within the designation, the focus should really be on the business.

Discussion on Electric Aggregation Topics

Riggenbach turns the meeting over to Fine for his discussion. Fine comments there have been some discussions made with Administrator Daugherty and want all of Council to be aware and comfortable with what is going on.

Fine shares that SOPEC is designed so there can be a “community good” program. A little bit of funding from each bill, 1/10th of a cent per KWH would go to this fund – this is optional but has to be decided before rates are decided on and locked. Riggenbach suggests focusing on the community good that it can be used for. Fine comments SOPEC estimates this would be \$7,500 per year for the Village. He comments that the Village can use the funds for anything within the community. Fine shares that his thought is to skip this at this time; he mentions that it was stated that the Village would not get any money from this change to SOPEC and would like to keep that true. Riggenbach asks if it can be opted in later, Fine confirms yes. All agree to keep the rate as low as possible, without this additional amount added in.

Fine comments the next topic is how important is it to lock a rate and start the program. At some point, the Village must tell SOPEC to lock the rate. Fine comments that this is a commodity market, prices are always changing, the Village needs to be able to make a decision to lock the rate sometimes within a 24-hour period. SOPEC has said their ability to predict pricing in this area is harder than others. Currently rates are a bit high, summertime contributes to this. Concern is if the Village locks now the price could drop as we go toward fall. Fine says that the SOPEC recommendation is to wait for now. He says that once we lock there is about two months before residents will start to receive the new rates. Fine confirming that no one feels a rush to lock the rate, all agree to wait. Fine also confirms that all are ok with Daugherty making the final lock decision based on SOPEC expertise advice, all agree.

Fine shares that it has come up with SOPEC the other communities and their time frame; some go June to June, others go August to August. SOPEC has not recommended yet which timeframe the Village should use, and Fine recommends that we be open to following a recommendation when it is made. All agree that this makes sense.

Fine shares a suggestion to put out a Village communication to residents to give an update on the status of the aggregation process. He is willing to work with staff on drafting this. Daugherty and Hartbarger confirm they will support this.

Discussion on Tree Commission Planting Plan at Village Park

Riggenbach asks to table this discussion for the next Committee of the Whole Meeting as Councilman Connelly should be involved.

Discussion on Sensory Garden

Riggenbach asks to table this discussion for the next Committee of the Whole Meeting as Councilman Connelly should be involved.

Review Consulting/Design Services Proposals for OPWC Capital Projects

Daugherty shares that this is a nice example of the standard proposal process. He comments that this current proposal/project is above his established spending limits and needs Council approval. Daugherty reminds all that the statutory requirement as a municipality in accepting bids is to choose the lowest and most responsive – both criteria need to be met. There are two different grant assisted/funded projects to be approved.

2026 OPWC Cemetery Road Resurfacing Project

Public Works Director Hill comments that all four bids are present in the Council packet. He states that OHM is the lowest priced bid, and all services can be covered by them. His recommendation is this company. Riggensbach confirms they are lowest and qualified, Hill confirms they are. Tuohy comments she has worked with them before and heard good things. Council agrees this is the company to go with.

2026 Finzel Road Resurfacing Project

Hill shares that funding will be through ODOT. He comments that firms need to be pre-qualified through ODOT as a non-complex roadway design. Currently Proudfoot is not qualified as a non-complex roadway design crew, but they are actively working on meeting that qualification. Daugherty comments that the challenge is that at the time a decision is made to accept a proposal, the company must already be qualified. With that, the next two bids are from DGL and Kleinfelder. Kleinfelder offers more services as far as funding and provides help with that funding. Hill's recommendation is Kleinfelder over DGL. Bid is the same price from both companies.

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilwoman Tuohy to approve the OHM proposal for the 2026 OPWC Cemetery Road Resurfacing Project. 5 ayes

Motion by Councilman Fine, seconded by Councilwoman Tuohy to approve the Kleinfelder proposal for the 2026 Finzel Road Resurfacing Project. 5 ayes

Daugherty asks Council if they want this legislation as three readings or as an emergency. Riggensbach asks if anyone would prefer three full readings, no one would. He confirms that emergency is fine.

Review of Estimated Costs for Previously Discussed 2025 Capital Projects

Daugherty comments that back in June it was discussed what Council's preference was in spending the remaining funds. Four targeted capital projects were discussed. Those included: 1) park sign in front of Village park, 2) updates to trail around small quarry, 3) caboose updates and 4) shelter house updates. Daugherty shares that estimates were obtained for these projects; there has not been any engineering done yet, a lot of the work will be done in house to save on costs. With some contingency estimates, the total of projects could be around \$170,000 which would leave around \$65,000 remaining.

Hill reviews the trail project around the small quarry. For years the road that runs through there has been talked about being removed for both aesthetic and safety purposes. Plans would be to remove the vehicle access road and connect the two trail ends, then the whole trail would be grinded and resurfaced. He comments that the cost estimate amount could change, this estimate was created two months ago. Artiaga asks about the gravel parking area for pickle ball courts, Daugherty comments there is not any priority on this area right now. Riggensbach asks about opinions, all Council members agree it is a great project, especially for safety purposes.

Daugherty reviews the Village Park sign project. It will be tiered with flower planters. The final name on the sign has not yet been determined. He comments that a few other sheets are included in the packet that show some future planning that would be done after this sign approval. Most of

this project will be done in house. Branding consistency will be followed as discussed with Kleinfelder. All of Council agree that this is a project to move on. Yunker confirms this does not include any hard scaping with sidewalks, etc. Daugherty confirms this is just the sign.

Hill reviews the Whitehouse Caboose project. Hartbarger comments that staff met with Lucas County Building Department representative Dave Golis regarding the feasibility of both the caboose project and the shelter house. Artiaga asks about what the potential inside of the caboose would look like. Tuohy asks what the plan is for the caboose after updates/renovations. Artiaga comments that her initial thought was to turn it into a small museum. Tuohy asks if any of the items could go into the new library, Artiaga is not sure there is any plan to include items there. Hill comments that this project includes some heating and cooling of the caboose, adding some windows if it is a meeting space, if a museum might not need the windows. Tuohy asks what it was used for in the past. Hill comments nothing has ever been done with the inside since the Village has owned. Riegenbach comments that he would like to know what it is exactly going to be used for before approving any money to spend. He supports more of the museum type space. Fine comments he is skeptical to do a historical space, managing temperature control in the summer will be hard; concerned with no supervision of historical artifacts; curious if other options to use the caboose. Artiaga agrees, do not need to be in a rush to make any updates, unsure of \$40,000 going into the caboose without knowing exactly what to use it for. Yunker asks if it is leaking in any way, Hill confirms yes there are holes that will need to be welded; even if nothing is done inside these holes on the outside will have to be maintained. Riegenbach asking if some of the funds should be assigned to fix just the outside issues; this should be around \$5,000. Riegenbach confirms Council is in support of the exterior repairs and painting, will revisit the interior updates later.

Hill reviews the shelter house project. Pricing was obtained for heating and air conditioning, tongue and groove ceiling that will need to be insulated - will not see rafters anymore. Air conditioner will have to sit outside near the BBQ pit, will need to build enclosure for that. Electric will mostly be able to be done in house. Hill comments the one thing to think about in the winter is that there is no bathroom in the building – the only bathroom available from Halloween to spring is the depot building across Providence Street. Riegenbach asks if funds could be directed to this project to add a bathroom. Hill comments he is not sure if there is enough space for a bathroom in the building. Ongoing costs would be heating and extra electricity costs; water will be on year-round, and the building will have to be heated to prevent any freezing issues. Fine asks about the windows, will they hold in the heat; Hill comments it was not designed to be utilized in the winter, but windows are very new. Fine asks about cost to operate furnace for next 20 years, does it make sense to get a bid on a high efficiency furnace instead to save more on monthly cost. Yunker asks about timing goal; Hill confirms timing would not be for this winter, but for some time after.

Hill confirms with Council that the caboose is a priority for the outside updates. He feels the trail could still be done this year and the Village park sign could at least get started.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Council President Riegenbach asks if there is any other business to discuss from Council members.

Artiaga asks Daugherty about street lights in the parking lot, one at each end. Staff will review and get an answer on costs by next Council meeting. Artiaga comments on the Whitehouse Primary School gaga ball pit and asks what it would take to put one in Village park. She shares that she did some research and sees costs around \$2,000. Staff will review.

Riggenbach asks about funds still not allocated. Daugherty comments he would extend the hard scape projects down the road, work on irrigation system with what is left over from the projects discussed. He also would suggest buying the stone that has been used around the Village to have on hand for future projects. Artiaga asks about timeline for any additional of the big stone flower pots, Hill says plans for one more this year; one on Flybar property, another down where the corn field sits. Fine asks about lighting on SR-64 multi use path; he comments more than \$60,000 but is there something incremental that can be done. Daugherty comments this would be a 2026 priority project. Fine suggests that it may be better to hold the remaining funds for now and Riggenbach said that we would discuss the use of those funds later.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilwoman Tuohy to adjourn the meeting at 8:49pm. 5 ayes

Respectfully submitted by Nicole Hartbarger, Clerk of Council