

**Village of Whitehouse  
Village Council Meeting As A  
Committee of the Whole  
Village Hall, Whitehouse, OH  
6:30 October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

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**CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL**

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

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

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: N/A

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilman Yunker to approve the minutes of the September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Committee of the Whole meetings. 5 ayes

**CITIZEN COMMENTS ON COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AGENDA ITEMS**

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

**GENERAL**

**Sidewalk Code Discussion**

Riggenbach states that this topic was brought up originally by Yunker; there is no supporting document for this general discussion. Yunker comments that Council has discussed the idea of having a walkable and connected community, and they have made this a priority. He comments grants have been approved to receive and will work to receive more grant funds to support the connectivity through the Village. Yunker is asking to consider, if this is truly a goal, should the Village allow future subdivisions to be built without sidewalks and/or a trail. He feels Council would have to continue to look for funds to fill these gaps going forward if there is no requirement; he is looking to fix the problem before it happens. Artiaga agrees, saying if we continue to expand the number of homes in the area, with more kids in the schools, she feels it should be mandatory for new construction to put in sidewalks. Tuohy agrees with all, not enforcing sidewalks now will just mean asking to put sidewalks in later. Fine comments he generally agrees, if we pursue this they may have to investigate making some accommodations – sidewalks might not fit in certain neighborhoods, Councils of the past have approved subdivisions being built with no sidewalks; they may need to review certain situations with zoning. Riggenbach in general agrees with all comments – remembers sidewalks required being fixed, very much in favor of the default being sidewalks need to be part of new subdivisions and then allowing the request of exceptions – applied for by the builder.

Riggenbach suggests having Council ask Solicitor Heban to begin drafting codified language to review.

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilman Yunker to request proposed legislation for sidewalks to be a default requirement in the Village. 5 ayes

The Committee also asks for a draft/review of potential needs of sidewalk improvements to gain insight on the scope of work; Administrator Daugherty and Public Works Director Hill will review and prepare for the January 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting.

### **Discussion on Council Rules**

Riggenbach asks if all have had a chance to review the updated rules since last discussion. Fine comments that all topics that were discussed were incorporated; this does include a final binding vote, voting 'present' and when to abstain with guidance from Solicitor Heban. Yunker agrees all items were captured.

Artiaga agrees with all, except voting and being able to vote present. She comments that if Council feels the topic is something that shouldn't be voted on, that should be decided before the topic is brought to the vote. Artiaga comments Council members were voted in to make decisions, do not want to see a precedent set for the future where it could be abused down the road – feels there should be three options, yes, no or abstain.

Tuohy agrees people could use it to avoid making a vote when they should really have an opinion and make a yes or no vote on all topics. Riggenbach agrees and is concerned with the indifferent opinion, would expect all to have a yay or nay vote. Artiaga comments on the topic of using named votes for the final vote on any issue – shares that the current process is good for minutes approval, feels do not need a named vote. Riggenbach in favor of striking the idea of using a named vote on everything as not everything requires it and could strike the idea of voting present as well. Asking if someone abstains do we want to have them state the conflict of interest – should there be verbiage included regarding that. Artiaga comments she trusts all sitting here, if someone states there is a conflict they should not have to give details. Fine comments that current rules state that those can be stated in consultation with the solicitor, not necessarily publicly. New proposal does not require the consultation nor public statement of conflict. Riggenbach comments can leave language as is, stating conflict but not requiring details of the conflict. Strike of the present vote and strike final vote on every issue by name.

Fine confirms with all to strike the named voting requirement along with striking the present voting and will pass to Heban for final review.

### **Blue Bag Ordinance**

Committee members suggest tabling this topic until January.

Motion by Artiaga, seconded by Riggenbach to table the blue bag ordinance discussion until January 2026. 4 ayes, 1 nay (Fine)

### **Review Rate & Fee Schedule**

Administrator Daugherty comments that in front of everyone there are several documents; the master rate and fee schedule with some strike throughs and some ancillary fees that can be covered. He states that all recommendations are covered in the master rate and fee schedule; will cover the big ones first and go from there.

Daugherty comments that the utility rate analysis can be a challenge. Daugherty comments in 2007, water and sewer enterprise funds were in bad shape – tiered rate systems, danger of being in trouble with the state auditor. There has been a lot of hard work from Councils in past years to rectify these issues – result was to adopt a policy of whatever the cost is to the Village that is what is passed on. The goal is to not have rate shock, so the work is on rate smoothing. Year over year,

may not fully ask for the full rate in one year knowing it can be caught up with the next year. Council needs to consider that if two rates are seeking increase, do you give the third rate a break.

Daugherty reviews the water analysis; commenting that the top half is what is being proposed from a rate perspective. For 2025, the actual beginning fund balance is being used, with actuals up through first three full quarters and actual of 2024 fourth quarter for estimate. Providing fund balance along with the operating impact. Have not looked at changing capital improvement funds, may look at this next year. Proposed rate is 1.97%, which is exactly what the City of Toledo is charging Whitehouse. Daugherty comments they are trying not to increase too much this year, slight increase next year will smooth out. Riggensbach asks what is happening in 2026 but not 2027. Daugherty comments some debt costs will be coming off/relieved in 2026. Being somewhat conservative on inflation for 2027. Riggensbach comments that charging what we are being charged is an easy thing to explain. Yunker comments that all makes sense due to expected inflation rates. All comfortable with the rate recommendation on the water.

Sewer is the next analysis. Daugherty comments we are seeing a lot more debt services. Whitehouse pays a proportionate share of everything including operations and all debt. The County system has undergone a lot of capital improvements to reduce pollution going into the Maumee river, which leads to significant increase in debt services. More water consumption means a higher sewer cost and vice versa, lower consumption means lower cost. Daugherty explains they are trying to eliminate some rate shock and trying to spread the required increase over two years; he can model differently if needed. Riggensbach asks about 2027 – Daugherty confirms 10% for 2026 and 10% for 2027. Yunker comments this would be a 39% increase over several years. Daugherty comments percentage increases are big but from a dollar value Whitehouse is still low in the area. Fine confirms the budget of \$80k for maintenance materials; previously we have talked about a way to invest for better rates or avoid annual costs. Daugherty and Hill are looking at options – chemical using now actually does work, things in past did not work as well. Daugherty comments from the County three years ago, the construction project to fix things would be enormous, looking for innovative ways to maintain. Riggensbach computes that the water and sewer percentage increases would have an average increase in residents bill of just over \$4 per month. Fine asks about last year, the projected deficit was around \$90k, and this year the actual deficit is \$163k; is there a reason for the big difference. Tuohy comments it would be helpful to see what was projected for the year compared to the actuals that are being presented. Fine asks how well we understand what Lucas County will be charging us in future years, Daugherty says they make those determinations around this time of year for budgets. Fine asks if they can give more information for future years, not just one year in future. Daugherty agrees it would be nice, especially for sewer and the debt expectations, but it is hard to get exact estimated details from the County. Artiaga asks if any places in the village where we anticipate any updates to the sewer system; Hill comments Centerville, Lenderson, Shepler and Weckerly Drive – will be applying for grants for those updates this year. Daugherty comments that financing is approved, will be in front of Council soon. Fine asks Mayor if he able to ask Lucas County what future sewer rates might be, Mayor comments he will ask the question but knows it can be somewhat hard to predict. All are in agreement on accepting the recommended increase for sewer rates.

Daugherty comments he has set up the same analysis for sanitation as the others. Difference here, refuse is not an actual fund but treating it as such to help understand things better. Daugherty comments on the operating deficit, asked why not just make it zero, with the other two rates going up, trying not to make this rate increase by double digits. To make the deficit zero it would be around 12% increase instead of the 9% recommendation. Tuohy confirms this includes the two curbside pickups, Daugherty says yes. Daugherty comments refuse is volatile with the fuel rates, etc. Fine asks about increase from ARS; Daugherty confirms the 6% ARS increase is included in the analysis. Fine asks about the surplus of the general fund, Daugherty confirms yes there is a

surplus – Fine would be supportive of the 6% that ARS is charging us and is ok with not asking residents to pay more when there is a surplus. Riggenbach comments to be careful using the surplus terminology when it could be at the cost of capital projects; if 6% only this year, next year might be a harder sell of passing even more if necessary if the deficit is not chipped away at. Fine comments last year estimated deficit for 2025 was \$38k, actual deficit is \$13k. Yunker asks how long the ARS contract is, Daugherty will confirm, but feels it is two five-year periods – believes we are early on into the second period.

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilwoman Tuohy to accept the Committee recommended sanitation rate increase of 6% for 2026. 5 ayes

Motion by Councilman Yunker, seconded by Councilman Fine to accept the recommendations for the water and sewer rates for 2026. 5 ayes

Daugherty shares there are just a few fee updates being recommended for 2026. First is for water shut off and turn on. Another updated rate is to shelter house rental – non-resident usage increase of rental and clean up fees if necessary; update is on fee to non-residents only. No other changes.

Motion by Councilman Fine, seconded by Councilwoman Tuohy to approve the Committee updated rate and fee schedule for 2026. 5 ayes

Daugherty presents the Council and Committee schedule for rest of the calendar year. Finance committee meeting will be next week before the scheduled Council meeting.

### **Personnel Policy Update**

Hartbarger comments that these changes will give the employees the chance to have a compensation time bank that staff does not currently have. There is some past practice that has been around for 25 years and that has been cleaned up with the proposed policy. Hartbarger comments that legal is currently reviewing the presented policy. Riggenbach asks how this level sets the departments, is it creating more consistency across departments. Hartbarger says there is rounds credit for public service, discretionary for fire, personal day for all departments – this does introduce the new ability to have comp time and bank comp time for all departments that are listed. Time allocations were reviewed as a department head group – want a benefit for employees knowing that operations need to still occur. Riggenbach asks about cost implications – guestimate during the appropriations if possible – Daugherty comments should be very small. Having a competitive standpoint with other municipalities, Daugherty comments that all other municipalities are offering this benefit. Tuohy agrees, makes it much more competitive with other municipalities and agencies. Hartbarger comments that this was discussed early on, employee benefit is important, need the fine balance of benefit versus operations continuing with little cost implications. Riggenbach asks about roll over accrual for each calendar year into the following year – question is can you accrue 40 on top of 40 year over year. Hartbarger confirms per the payout policy, max accrual is 40 hours, anything above 40 hours is paid out at year end. Mayor comments that this was a high priority from the employee survey. Yunker asks about pay out, standard rate of pay at the time of December 31, will not get paid at time and a half – Hartbarger confirms. Yunker comments on Class A qualifiers, supervisor level, are they exempt from overtime, Hartbarger confirms yes – Yunker comments the policy reads that Class A gets paid out at time and a half. Suggests adding comment that discerns between salary and hourly accrual.

Riggenbach asks about when Council needs to approve. Hartbarger says the final draft will be sent out to be reviewed, hoping to have set up and active for January 2026.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

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

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilwoman Artiaga, seconded by Councilwoman Tuohy to adjourn the meeting at 7:43pm. 5 ayes

*Respectfully submitted by Nicole Hartbarger, Clerk of Council*