

**Village of Whitehouse  
Village Council Meeting As A  
Committee of the Whole  
Village Hall, Whitehouse, OH  
6:30 May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

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**CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL**

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm by President of Council Steve Fine.

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

Council Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Administrator Jordan Daugherty, Deputy Administrator Joshua Hartbarger, Public Works Director Mike Hill, Fire Chief Jason Francis, Police Chief Allan Baer and Clerk of Council Nicole Hartbarger

Guests Present: Jill Gundy, Kelsea Blaskis, Mark Schreifer

Motion by Councilman Bublick, seconded by Councilman Riggengbach to approve the minutes of the April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Committee of the Whole meetings. 6 ayes

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

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

**GENERAL**

**Relining Sewer**

Daugherty comments this topic was shared first over a year ago. Staff is reviewing on how this will be financed, not asking for any action this evening. Hill shares that Whitehouse has been approved for a 20-year low interest loan, currently around 3.2% interest rate and typically runs between 2-4% but this changes monthly. Staff has sent applications in for federal grant appropriation money through Congressman Moreno and Congresswoman Kaptur's offices. Not sure if there will end up being any federal funds available. This capital project was appropriated out of General Fund and Income Tax A budget. Hill and staff will keep Council updated on direction that will be taken.

Daugherty shares that previous discussion talked about March or April moving forward with the project – but in March found out about the possible federal ear-marking of money and do want to see if this can be fully funded by a grant prior to going forward. Project is not urgent so taking some time to research the funding possibilities. Mid-summer should have a final plan on grant funding or the route of low interest loan. Riggengbach asks if there is a time limit on the low interest loan, Daugherty confirms they may have to reapply but not a big risk to not get this loan at all – approval is relatively easy. Riggengbach asks about the value of the grant that is being investigated – project itself is \$1.2MM and staff has asked for full grant funding with the federal money. Tuohy comments to keep this project on the table, it does need to be taken care of this year – agree to wait and see how federal funding goes in the next bit of time but then move forward when possible. Bublick asks if there should be an internal deadline set – goal is this summer. Daugherty will check in during the July Council meeting and give a status update. Fine asks for confirmation if we do not get a grant, will the loan be used – Daugherty confirms yes.

## **Traffic Study**

Daugherty comments on the speed/traffic study discussion that has been brought up a few times recently. Would like the discussion on the scope that Council wants to complete for a study. Daugherty shares there is a difference between speed study and traffic study. Hill shares that a speed study on Oak Brook can be done, traffic counts can be done, both are relatively easy – speed could possibly be accomplished with the automatic speed sign that the Village has. A traffic study i.e. the number of turns onto Temperance, turns onto West, expected travel routes with new subdivision, pedestrian travel, etc. is more involved. Bublick asks what will be done with the results of any study. Hill comments on the idea of safety changes or updates based on the recent resident feedback. Hill confirms they will be moving the speed limit automatic sign from Heller to Oak Brook to start to track the speed. Daugherty shares that Heban commented that the Village can require that the developer of the new subdivision can be required to pay for a traffic/speed study in that area as part of the submission. Artiaga asks about a best guess estimate on the amount of time to build the 80+ homes – staff says this could be years depending on the housing market. Fine asks about cost of the studies – Daugherty feels it will be around \$10-12k. Fine asks if there would be a disadvantage to requiring the traffic study as part of the development process with the developer – Daugherty confirms no disadvantage and shares this could be rolled up in a TIF coverage as well in the future, either option would not be tax payer money. Fine confirms with all if speed is the current focus do not need a full traffic study just yet – all agree.

## **Employee Benefits Discussion**

Mayor Bingham shares that he has had employee meetings with representatives for each department over the last few months. There are several topics that he is asking for updates/changes to better the employee experience.

Bingham asks to adjust the personal time that employees receive to 24 hours instead of the current 8 hours. Currently with 8 hours Police do not get a full day off work 12-hour shifts; Fire does not get a whole day because of 24-hour shifts. Asking for this update so Fire can get a whole day, and Police 2 days.

Bingham is asking Council to review and update the vacation schedule. There are multiple tiers, currently employees have to wait 6 years to get the third week of vacation. Asking to update the years and tiered schedule – looking to be more consistent with other local governments.

Bingham shares that currently public works employees with additional licenses and certifications receive an extra \$0.25 cents an hour extra; local governments around Whitehouse get \$1+ an hour more for these additional licensures. Bingham is asking Council to consider this increase.

Final topic Bingham is asking to be reviewed is the merit service payment; looking to extend to volunteers. Currently volunteers are not receiving any merit pay for the longevity or years of service that have been given to the Village.

Fine asks to go through the topics one by one for Council feedback. He asks if there is any issue giving 24 hours of personal time. Riggensbach comments he does not agree with the word choice. If goal is for all to have a personal day and program is changed, suggesting that Fire gets 24 hours, Police 12 and Admin 8 so all have the one full personal day. Fine comments can think about this as hours instead of days. Riggensbach does not disagree with the proposal but feels it is the same math problem. Feels there could be an issue in the future where Fire is getting one personal day and Administration gets three days. Fine comments it does not have to be a full day if thinking in hours – if all employees get 24 hours of personal time, they can use those hours in any amount i.e. 2 hours at a time and not a whole day. Fine asks about surrounding municipalities and number of

personal days, Yunker comments surrounding municipalities are majority cities and obligated to collective bargaining which is different than the Village. Whatever is fixed today might be undone in the future when Whitehouse becomes a city. Riggensbach asks to just decide on how much personal time is given, or increased, instead of fixing a problem. Artiaga asks if they can just be given an additional day off, Riggensbach confirms yes just would need to define what a day is for each type of employee.

Fine next asks for feedback on the adjustment of the vacation tiered schedule. Yunker comments when talking about vacation time for Fire and EMS you do have to start bringing in more part-time help and must pay for this as well. Wants to point out this is different than Administration having increased vacation time. All agree with this recommendation of adjusting the tiers; it will be more in line with the private sector. Yunker comments it is different how Village does this than private sector – private sector accrues the vacation over time through the year, while the Village gives all weeks of vacation up front. Yunker asks about vacation for Class E employees, i.e. paramedics, what is a full week of vacation – Gundy confirms it is 56 hours and not in days.

Fine asks for feedback on the updated merit pay proposal. Riggensbach asks to clarify if the ask is for all to be on the same schedule, full time, part time, volunteer; Daugherty confirms yes this is the basic ask. Daugherty comments there are some employees who may work only five hours a year; do you err on the side of a program that is just generous and includes all, or do you need to review some employees who have very low active hours. Yunker comments there are several especially on the Fire Department where there are individuals who are volunteers but not active at all – not faulting them for this, but do they get included in this incentive. Artiaga asks Francis about part time they do have a requirement of shifts per quarter – Francis agrees with Yunker that there are a handful of volunteers who are down to very few hours, but confirms part-time employees are required a certain number of shifts per quarter. Daugherty comments he is supportive of the idea of keeping it simple and including all employees even if volunteers are only involved a few hours a year. Fine confirms all are in support of this approach, all agree.

Fine asks for input on the last topic of increased pay for Public Works employees who hold additional licenses; they currently receive \$0.25 per hour extra. Artiaga likes the increase – more than justified. Yunker asks how many employees this affects, Hill confirms two currently. No other concerns, all agree to the increase.

**Motion by Councilman Bublick, seconded by Councilwoman Artiaga to make a recommendation to Council to approve the presented employee update proposal from Mayor Bingham. 6 ayes**

### **Discuss Planning Commission Sidewalk Letter**

Daugherty thanks all for the input on the letter than has been drafted to send to the Planning Commission; Riggensbach had some suggested edits, and the letter has been updated with those. Daugherty is hoping to get this to the Planning Commission for their June meeting. Asking for final approval. Riggensbach likes how it is worded, as it is not applying fault, just addressing the application of the ordinance. Fine asks about the idea of multi-use trails, sentence that says it is practical, should this be updated to “warranted” instead of “practical”. Allow them to suggest or require multi-use paths. Riggensbach is not too concerned with exact wording, the letter is not an ordinance or official legislation but no argument with changing the word if wanted. Council supports change from practical to warranted. Fine suggests including if Planning Commission feels strongly about not requiring sidewalks in a certain development or situation to please confer with Council prior to decisions. All comfortable with Daugherty sending the letter to the Planning Commission. Riggensbach asks as part of the welcome packet going forward for Planning Commission and Council that this letter is included to keep it in the forefront.

### **Presentation on Potential of Reinstating the Design Review Board**

Daugherty would like to introduce this idea. The Design Review Board (DRB) is a municipal board that is created to govern certain standards in the downtown area. Many municipalities have these boards, though some have different names. The board has some authority to ensure standards are adhered to downtown – aesthetics especially. If grants/money are awarded for downtown development almost always there needs to be some sort of Design Review Board. Daugherty shares that previously when this board was around, it was slightly contentious – not within the board, but with the downtown business owners not wanting to be directed and being held to a standard. Tuohy asks how business owners are made to comply – Daugherty comments the board does have some compliance oversight, Yunker confirms this is like a fine. Artiaga comments that if there is grant money then compliance with the DRB would be part of the requirements for receiving this grant money. Bublick asks if this opens the door for more grants – Daugherty confirms that it can because state grant funding will see that there are standards already being set. Fine confirms can there be two scopes, apply standards for grants but if others want to make their own improvements the standards might not have to be followed – Daugherty confirms this is true. Riegenbach asks if there are standards already in place, Daugherty confirms yes there are some; he also confirms grants at state level typically a matching grant. It is asked if the DRB standards will work better than already in place. Daugherty confirms yes, the current codes do not get into actual aesthetic i.e. stone, color palette, etc. DRB would get much more specific in how the downtown should look. Riegenbach asks how this increases the adoption rate of business owners to update to the standards being set – Daugherty says it will not change instantly, but overtime it can help with consistency in updates being done. Daugherty feels that previously Council wasn't in full support of the DRB concept – 20 years ago. Feels that without full Council support it can fall apart easily. Riegenbach asks how the DRB committee is assigned; it is by mayoral appointment and Council confirmation – do need to have three members as a minimum. Artiaga remembers previously it was five members. Yunker asks about bounding the area that is controlled by the DRB how this is done – Daugherty says like the process of defining boundaries with the previously discussed DORA – Council defines the boundaries. It is asked whether this would apply to any residential, Daugherty confirms it will not.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

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

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilwoman Tuohy, seconded by Councilman Bublick to adjourn the meeting at 7:33pm. 6 ayes

*Respectfully submitted by Nicole Hartbarger, Clerk of Council*