

10/28/2021

Regular Council Meeting

7:00 PM

Meeting in Council chambers and streamed live on the Village of Blanchester Facebook page

Don Gephart, Chad Hollon, Reilly Hopkins, and Richard Simpson were present. Mayor John Carman presided over the meeting.

HOPKINS/GEPHART: Motion to excuse Gary Bauer and Harry Brumbaugh from the meeting. All voted yea.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda was presented to Council.

GEPHART/SIMPSON: Motion to accept agenda as presented. All voted yea.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from 10/14/2021 were presented to Council.

HOPKINS/SIMPSON: Motion to approve minutes as presented. All voted yea.

APPROVAL OF BILLS/ADJUSTMENTS/SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Bills, adjustments and supplemental appropriations were presented to Council.

HOLLON/GEPHART: Motion to approve bills, adjustments and supplemental appropriations as presented. All voted yea.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee: The Fiscal Officer requested to move the Thanksgiving week payroll date forward one day (a day earlier than originally scheduled). Also, the Payroll Schedule for 2022 was submitted for approval.

HOLLON/GEPHART: Motion to move Thanksgiving week pay date to 11/24/2021 (formerly 11/25/2020) and to approve the 2022 Payroll Schedule. All voted yea.

Safety & Service: Mr. Hopkins requested Council and residents congratulate and thank Chief Reinbolt for 15 years of service to the village.

GUEST SPEAKERS

The Clinton County Commissioners were present to share information.

- Commissioner Mike McCarty shared information regarding utility scale solar projects. Last summer, a bill in the state legislature passed which gave control to local county government to determine the path forward. The commissioners have hired outside counsel to guide them through the process. The commissioners recently passed a resolution placing a hold on large solar projects until a better understanding has been reached.
- Commissioner Brenda Woods discussed the acquisition of the former Southern State Community College location in Wilmington on Davids Drive. All of the offices currently located in the courthouse which are not court related, as well as those located on Sugartree Street will relocate to the newly acquired facility. Renovations will begin soon with a projected move in date sometime next summer or fall.
- Commissioner Kerry Steed presented information regarding broadband around the county. The county has entered into an agreement with a consulting firm to assess the current availability and offerings of internet to residents. With the results, it will be determined what upgrades will occur. There is funding available for rural communities for upgrades.

- Representing the Mental Health Recovery Board were Tracy Hopkins and Reija Huculak. They discussed the levy that is on the ballot in the upcoming election and the importance of the funding while explaining how that funding is spent.
- Zack McDaniels from Talbert House was present to share information about binge drinking.
- Phil Blankenship, agent of record for the Village's healthcare plan, reviewed and explained the annual summary report as well as the report for the month of September.
- Charlie Vance, IOOF member and Barry Reich (via phone), attorney representing the Grand Lodge of Ohio, discussed the IOOF Cemetery in Blanchester. Due to no longer being able to care for the cemetery, the Lodge is seeking to transfer the assets of the cemetery association, lodge building, equipment and approximately \$11,000.00 to the village for its continued care and maintenance. Mr. Reich and Ms. Wilkin have had discussions regarding the transfer. Ms. Wilkin stated that the cemetery would become part of the village. Ms. Wilkin also noted that there are several steps to follow for the transfer including a possible survey, working with the tax map office, and the Ohio Department of Commerce. There are many decisions to be made regarding the oversight, operation and funding of the cemetery once it becomes the responsibility of the village. Mr. Reich and Ms. Wilkin wanted to initiate a discussion with Council to make them aware of the situation and to provide an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Vance stated there are very few lots still available. Questions and answers followed regarding costs, labor, equipment and liability insurance. Mr. Reich said the cemetery would continue to be insured for liability purposes until the transfer occurs. Mrs. May inquired as to the annual cost to maintain the cemetery. Mr. Vance indicated \$23,264.00 was spent for wages in 2021. Mr. Vance stated he and his brother would continue to assist with funerals and to help as much as they can.

HOLLON/SIMPSON: Motion to approve legal counsel to move forward in coordinating the initial steps for the transfer, including surveying, and also working toward resolutions to create the necessary means to complete the assumption of the care and operation of the Blanchester IOOF Cemetery by the village. All voted yea.

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinance 2021.033 - Indiana Municipal Power Agency Contract Extension (Third Reading)

HOPKINS/HOLLON: Motion to put on 3rd and final reading. Roll call was made. All voted yea.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- General Fund – The Fiscal Officer expressed concerns regarding the health of the fund with additional expenses including the care of the cemetery, a new maintenance position, increases for police salaries and increases for council as new terms begin for the upcoming fiscal year. Mrs. May encouraged council to network with other villages and look for new revenue streams. She also noted a 20-year analysis done by the previous fiscal officer that was sent out earlier in the year.
- Municipal Playground Fence – Mr. Gephart said he had talked to the fence builder and was going to meet with the Fiscal Officer to see if it could be budgeted for next year.
- Safe Routes to School Sidewalk Project (SRTS) – Mayor Carman reviewed Council's previous decision to not move forward with the project as designed. He contacted ODOT and the engineering firm for a solution to move forward with the project and to reduce the village's liability to proceed. It was suggested to eliminate the sidewalks on the south side and continue with the north side with a new total cost estimate of \$96,000, leaving \$203,000.00 available for construction. Mayor shared an email from ODOT with acceptance of the change in scope and that the village would be responsible for the cost associated for the change to rebid the project. Mayor contacted Choice One to obtain the cost estimate of \$4200.00 to revise the plan. Ms. Wilkin is working on documents to retrieve the right of way acquisition money paid out by the village which could be utilized for the cost of the revision. Mr. Hopkins thanked the Mayor for seeking a less costly solution.

HOPKINS/HOLLON: Motion to authorize Mayor Carman to sign the agreement with Choice One for the revision of plans for SRTS. Roll call was made. All voted yea.

- Tree Ordinance – Ordinance #285 from 1956 was discussed regarding planting trees between the sidewalk and the street requiring approval from Council. Discussion followed regarding a new updated version of the ordinance.

GEPHART/HOPKINS: Motion to approve Ms. Wilkin to create a new ordinance regarding tree planting within the village. All voted yea.

REPORTS

- **SOLICITOR**
None.
- **FISCAL OFFICE**
Mrs. May reported that she is preparing temporary appropriations for the first quarter of 2022 and would have them ready soon.
- **MAYOR**
The Mayor reported that Cherry Street would be closed for milling and resurfacing next week.
- Tom Lee reported that paving at the Veteran’s Park is scheduled for next week. Also, the Parks Department would be interested in assisting with the cemetery.

PUBLIC COMMENT

James Constable, 716 Cherry Street, spoke about Ordinance 2021.033.

Richard Wise, 502 E. Center Street, asked about putting a pay freeze on Council.

Motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Approved: November 11, 2021

Mayor: John M. Carman

Attest: Drew A. May

