

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
MINUTES OF VILLAGE OF BLANCHESTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
October 09, 2025

The Village of Blanchester Council met in regular session on October 09, 2025, at 6:30 P.M. with the honorable John Carman, Mayor, presiding.

Mrs. Marie Brooker	Present
Mr. William Garner	Present
Mr. John Hill	Present
Mr. Reilly Hopkins	Present
Mrs. Lynn Lewis	Present
Mr. Josh Parks	Present

Agenda

It was moved by Mrs. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Hill to approve the agenda.

Vote: Yea – Mrs. Brooker, Mr. Garner, Mr. Hill, Mr. Hopkins, Mrs. Lewis, Mr. Parks
 Nay – None

Motion Passed

Guest Speaker

Phil Blankenship is the agent of record for our health insurance carrier.

Mr. Blankenship announced that we are only in the first month of the report, so there isn't much to report on. However, the transition to the new contract from the old contract went well. Currently, we have 9 single and 20 families insured on our plan. We're up 2 families and 2 singles from last year, making it a little higher.

Public Comment

Kaity Duncan - 111 Ash Lane, Blanchester, OH-

I'm here to address the BPA administration issue that has been recently discussed.

I've been a homeowner and resident here for 21 years, I believe that the citizens should have a say in the issue, and it should be voted on by the residents and not just a handful of people.

Living here, I have nothing but good things Helpful, courteous, and treat you like family. I think it would be a huge mistake not to let the taxpayers of Blanchester have a say.

Janelle Fatheree - 304 E. Main Street, Blanchester, OH

Ms. Fatheree expressed her belief that when it comes to debt, it is the individual's responsibility, not the landlord's. The family should help, if they have debt, and lastly, the church. It is not BPA's responsibility to pay their bills. She suggested that the BPA and the village council invite the pastors and their wives of the local churches in the area to fund a mission to provide money for people who can't pay their bills. This should only be for people who have never taken advantage of the community. Ms. Fatheree would like to see the dollar amount that we are in debt due to this.

Grant Coffman- 305 N. Broadway, Blanchester, OH,

Mr. Coffman addressed the council about his previous comment about hiring a village administrator and apologized if anyone interpreted the comment as grandstanding. He stated he deeply cares about the village. Even though he has only lived in the village for two years, his roots go back to 1864 from when his grandparents were born and raised in Blanchester. He shared data from 2017 and the bundle referendum with an income tax income increase that was rejected by 65% and 2019 rejected by 58% which is a 7% shift in two years. The trend suggests growing support.

Mr. Hill asked Mr. Coffman if he had gone back and researched how Mr. Reddy had saved the village with grant money. Mr. Coffman replied that he had not.

Yvonne Dillion - 417 Bourbon Street, Blanchester, OH

She expressed her opinion that people should be able to vote for the administrator and not be decided by the council. The town people are the ones who will pay for it.

Don Gephart – 140 Leonard Drive, Blanchester, OH

Mr. Gephart shared that he has always supported the BPA, and Ram Reddy earns every penny that he makes. He has brought in so many projects to the village. Mr. Gephart stated he doesn't think hiring an administrator is a good idea. Mr. Gephart also spoke against the decision to collect from the landlords if tenants fall behind on their utility bills, and if you put that burden on landlords, they will quit rehabbing houses, and then rundown houses will pile up and cause a problem, suggesting using collections agencies.

Marie Brooker -103 Ash Lane, Blanchester, OH

I've been a resident here for over 20 years. Mrs. Brooker spoke on behalf of the BPA, and she doesn't think a village administrator is needed. There are 3 elected officials that this community elected, and in 2019 people voted against hiring a village administrator, which tells me that the village does not want a village administrator. She shared her findings as she had the opportunity to meet with other villages and towns that are comparable to us, suggesting that the departments need to come together and work together.

James Bowling-Chairman of the Board and a resident, here are some facts, not opinions, for your consideration. In 1902, the BPA was created and has served the village for over 120 years since 1903. With currently just over 20 employees, a budget of 12.3 million, and 10 active improvement projects. We have given ample capacity for growth and are working on a new substation for further growth. Downtown has all-new water and sewer lines, brand new lighting, and underground utilities on Broadway, and plans on working on Main Street in the next 3 years. We have digital meters in place for water and sewer. We have upgraded our electric system and upgraded our billing software, and implemented online bill pay since I've been on the board. Our 3 board members are paid the same as council members, 3.6k a year or 10.8k total for their term. Council has suggested an administrator salary ranging from 65k-125k. This instantly puts the taxpayers and utility customers in the red by over 114k. Ram is under contract and has renegotiated that twice in the best interest of the taxpayers. Hence, if we have a utilities director and a village administrator, we are going to have to pay them both. On top of that, the administrator is not going to support the utility department, so funding that administrator will have to come from the general fund, so now you know you have hit yourself twice and put yourself further in the red. Thanks to our personal and professional relationships, Blanchester is

the first non-Indiana member of IMPA. In fact, in 2017, the Indiana state legislator voted to allow Blanchester to become a full voting member, and Ram is on the executive board. Every decision IMPA makes that could impact Blanchester Ram has a seat at the table and votes. Three times since 2005, the council has tried to eliminate the BPA, but thanks to the common sense of the public, citizens have voted to keep the BPA by an overall average of 65%. Since 2006, we have provided nearly 6 million to the general fund, which is a benefit of having a public utility in Blanchester. These tax credits used to flow back to the BPA to support improvement projects and upgrades, that doesn't include all the other services provided to the village. The mayor told Mr. Bowling his time was up. Council approves additional time by motion Mrs. Lewis and Seconded Mr. Parks All approve.

Mr. Bowling continues that we could lose all local control and local employees there's no guarantees, please postpone this or vote no so that we can discuss this further.

Minutes

It was moved by Mrs. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Hill to approve the minutes from September 25, 2025.

Vote: Yea – Mrs. Brooker, Mr. Garner, Mr. Hill, Mr. Hopkins, Mrs. Lewis, Mr. Parks
Nay –

Motion Passed

Approval of Bills

It was moved by Mrs. Lewis and seconded by Mrs. Brooker to approve the Bills from October 09, 2025.

Vote: Yea – Mrs. Brooker, Mr. Garner, Mr. Hill, Mr. Hopkins, Mrs. Lewis,
Nay – Mr. Parks

Motion Passed

Committee Reports

Finance Committee –Mr. Hopkins stated that the budget was discussed at tonight's meeting, and the budget meetings are pushed two weeks out.

Safety & Service – Nothing to report except that the next meeting is on October 16, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

Cemetery –Mr. Daniels reported on the cemetery clean-up week. Lindsey oversaw the project and worked with the Clinton County Municipal Court community service. Cleaned up items that the cemetery rules say are not allowed, such as rocks, decorations, and landscaping items that are causing us to pay so much for mowing and maintenance.

D&B contract – Their first contract was \$1,650; that contract has then been replaced with a new contract that is \$2,300, which is a 2-year contract that's per mow. He broke it down in the contract that he's paying his employees *32 hours at \$15.50 and \$14*. I don't think we've had any

complaints since they have taken over. It's been well-maintained. Not only does he mow, but helps with other issues, such as limbs and headstones, and doesn't ask for more money than I know of. We received quotes for \$7000, \$4,000, and you sent a quote from M.A.W. that was less per mow; however, anything beyond mowing would be an additional \$65.00 per man-hour. When we questioned Mr. Williams, a lot of the things we currently get from D&B would be an additional cost. If we were to hire and pay our own employees, on top of the hourly rates, we would have to pay workers' comp and OPERS. Those would cost us way more than what we are paying D&B. We inherited the cemetery, and we are held responsible for its upkeep.

Old Business- TAP Grant for new sidewalks around the municipal building. We received a letter from ODOT stating we were not awarded that grant, but we could reapply. I talked to an engineer who is working on South Broadway and the municipal building. We would like to get a census from the council. The engineer feels like the tap grant would be a better fit for the municipal building, and the CBG grant would be a better option for South Broadway. He's got some time to apply, but he would like some feedback from the council on which direction to go. Mr. Hopkins motioned to stay the course with the municipal building, and Mrs. Lewis seconded. Discussion- Deadline for reapplying is November 30th. Mr. Parks is questioning whether we are talking about sidewalks or pavement. All voted yea.

Motion Passed

Ordinance No. 2025.022 An ordinance establishing the position of Village Administrator for the Village of Blanchester, Clinton County, Ohio, pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code 735.271 and abolishing the Board of Trustees for the Public Affairs pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 735.272. The Solicitor drafted this, and he has some comments that he needs the council to give him further instructions.

Solicitor, this is similar to the one drafted in 2019. It is pretty basic that gives the powers outline in the Ohio R.C, but that does not limit what the Council can decide to add additional powers granted in the Ohio R.C. It makes sense to go in order.

- 1 The Village Administrator shall have those powers provided by section Ohio R.C. 735.273

Mr. Hopkins asks if there's nothing in the Ohio R.C that mentions grant administrations.

Solicitor advised that it does not. Mr. Hopkins thinks it should be added in.

Solicitor, this is just for utilities and street. This serves at the pleasure of the Mayor's office and legislative authority.

Mr. Hill asks if we could add later as well. Solicitor says that first and second reading, you can change provisions, but it is highly unorthodox to change whole sections. As it changes the purpose of 1st 2nd 3rd readings. We can change things later.

Mrs. Brooker, there are a lot of people who don't understand this. Why don't we table this for now and have a Village meeting with the residents to talk and answer questions? Mrs. Brooker motioned to table. Mr. Hill said that we all worked together to get the police levy passed, and he would like to see this happen, as this is not against the BPA, but to have someone be able to help the Mayor with applying for grants. Mrs. Brooker said that we don't need an administrator to do this. I just recently saw that Josh has a sidewalk committee with James Constable and Becky Campbell not seen anything done about that. Let's get a grant committee together. I would serve on this committee and not throw it under the rug like Josh did. Mrs. Lewis seconded tabling.

Roll Call- Mrs. Brooker, yes, Mr. Garner no, Mr. Hill no, Mr. Hopkins no, Mrs. Lewis yes, Mr. Parks no.

Motioned Failed.

Mr. Parks wishes that this position supervise every department except the Police department.

6 The Village Administrator shall receive a yearly salary of up to \$ ____ . payable biweekly. The Solicitor says we could tie the Administrator's salary with the ordinance or a contract. If we go the Ordinance, we would have to redo the Ordinance every time salary or anything is changed, if we do a contract with a pay scale, we would not have to do that. It's also something to consider to make sure that it's financially feasible to hire a village administrator. All would like to see it in a contract with scale.

Mr. Brooker shares information on other villages comparable to size with administrator salaries and benefits she has found in her research she's done.

7 The salary of the Village administrator shall be paid for the following funds- The Solicitor says that the auditor requires them to apportion their time for their pay per their time spent in each department. Mr. Parks requests that the majority of the pay come from the electric funds as they have the most money. All agree to reference the appropriations prior to deciding the pay scale and percentages.

2 The Village Administrator shall be appointed by the Mayor, but shall not take office unless appointment has been approved by a majority vote of the members elected to the legislative authority of the Village.

3 The Village Administrator need not be an elector or reside in the Village of Blanchester- Mayor advised that is correct as there is an Ordinance stating that employees need not live in the Village.

4 The Village Administrator's appointed by the Mayor and confirmation by the legislative authority of the Village Of Blanchester, Clinton County, Ohio, shall be abolished, and the term of office of members of such Board shall terminate.

5 Upon abolishment of the Board of Trustees of Public Affair all contracts entered into by said Board and rules and regulations and other action taken by such Board shall continue in effect until they have terminated of their own accord or until they shall have been modified, changed, revised, amended or repealed in the manner provided by law.

Solicitor, whatever contracts are in place at the moment will remain in place until the end of said contract. Then the Village Administrator will be responsible for renegotiating the contracts.

8 that the question of Hiring a Village Administrator be submitted by the electors of said Village of Blanchester at the Election to be held at the usual voting places within said Village of Blanchester the 5th day of May, 2026

Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Brooker feel that the people should have a vote.

Mr. Parks requests that we strike Section 8 from the Ordinance. Solicitor says this is how it was in the 2019 draft, but it's totally up to Council. Mr. Parks requests that we enact this. Mr. Hopkins said, as the most experienced person here, I would urge the council to leave Section 8 in the Ordinance, sending this to the ballot. Because there will be a referendum to send it to the ballot at the end of this anyway.

The solicitor would like to know what the majority of the council prefers regarding whether to remove or keep Section 8 in the ordinance. The Mayor asked the council, by a show of hands, who wanted to keep Section 8 in the ordinance. Ms. Brooker, Mr. Hill, Ms. Lewis, and Mr. Hopkins voted to keep Section 8 in the ordinance; Mr. Parks and Mr. Garner did not vote to keep Section 8.

It was moved by Mr. Hill and seconded by Mr. Parks to put Ordinance 2025.022 on its first Reading.

Vote: Yea – Mr. Garner, Mr. Hill, Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Parks,
Nay – Mrs. Brooker, Mrs. Lewis.

Motion Passed

New Business - none

Discussion Item - none

Department Reports

Solicitor – Nothing to report.

Parks – Mr. Jackson - our Blue Grass festival had an excellent turnout. We have our Boo Bash on October 30th, and the maze is almost complete, with all the decorations. If any Council members would like to help pass out candy, we have plenty of stations and can use you to hand out candy. I have one thing to say about this Village Administrator: you're going to have problems with the Park Board. We are appointed by the council and the School Board. The taxpayers voted for us to have funding to do Parks and to have someone come in and tell us what events to put on and how to spend that money. I think you're committing political suicide.

Police – Chief - We had a meeting the other day about Shop with a Cop. All the agencies in the county are getting together and trying to get as much money raised for Shop with a cop. There is a QR code on our website that you can donate to. We are trying to sponsor at least 5 kids from each elementary school in the county. Our monthly council report, we had 176 call records that we responded to of those 12 are incident reports, 3 crashes, 56 traffic stops, 1 parking citations which remains low as we are still trying to work though the enforcement of those., 47 assists with Fire/EMS or other Law Enforcement, 9 arrests made, 1,417 security checks. We had grand jury that just took place so look for updates with press releases with indictments that came from investigations. All officers did legal training the Misdemeanor Prosecutor put on the training for us with the other agencies in the county. We had a OHLEG (Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway our reporting software) compliance audit. Firearms training, a Box 14 event that myself and Det. Sgt. Jeffers attended it was the patriot's day event held in Wilmington on Main St. Officer Smith went FTO (field Training Officer) training.

Some of the calls that we respond to are 911 hangups, alarm drops, menacing, animal complaints, assaults, assist for EMS/Fire Department/Other agencies, civil problems, complaints, criminal damaging, deliver messages, disabled vehicles, disorderly subjects, disputes, domestics complaints, domestic disputes, a death, drugs, drunk, extra patrols, felony warrants, found property, fraud, information, follow ups, lock outs of vehicles, investigate complaints, juvenile complaints, loud noise music, mental health, parking citation, thefts, misdemeanor warrants, missing person, open doors, theft, harassment, unruly juvenile, shots fired, susp vehicle or person, that's some of the things that the officers are reponing to its never just a typical day.

We had a felony fleeing and eluding. I want to mention our flock indicated on a vehicle that had a subject associated with several indictments out of several counties, some with nationwide pick up, which resulted in working with other agencies. This person is in the Blanchester area. Our Officers were able to get an alert off the Flockcams. We were able to locate, as soon as he saw the Officers turn on him, he took off, leading into a pursuit that went out of town, reaching speeds of almost 100 mph, which is very dangerous. The subject lost control and flipped over into a bean field. He was arrested; fortunately, he and his passenger were okay with no injuries.

The Officer was put into danger doing this, but they were able to locate 186 grams of suspected methamphetamines out of the vehicle. That is a sizable amount that was coming through and in our Village. That was a little praise for our Officers, but also to point out that the FlockCams are doing some things for us.

Street – Mr. Daniels - leaf season is upon us. You can go online to see the rules and regulations of pickup; brush pick up will go on as scheduled. We got our RRFBs started at the High School and BP, and another one at Family Dollar and CVS. Crosswalks have been stripped, and the street department poured sidewalk on Friday for the crosswalk area at the High School and BP. Capital Electric will be in tomorrow or Monday to get started on the foundations.

BPA – Mr. Bowling - Next BPA meeting is October 16th at 4:30 p.m. to allow all 3 members to attend, our meetings are open to the public. With regards to delinquent accounts, we will bring more information to our next meeting and the next council meeting. Just a FYI when we tasked Donna with being more diligent out 90 day past due was around \$180,000, right now our 90 day accounts are at \$12,000 we are trying to be a little more frugal and diligent we did have a special meeting last week for a tax lean, Donna and our solicitor have been working with the auditor and they identified a couple closed past due accounts with huge balances that were up for sheriff sale, we voted to put leans on those properties that the first time we have done something like that and keep showing we trying to be more fiscally responsible for current and future customers. Just a few more things to consider for your second reading for the Village Administrator. We do have a contract with Ram. There is exposure there, any attempt to fire him would increase that exposure. We also have an existing contract that in 2021 Council unanimously passed to extend our contract with IMPA, who is our wholesale electric provider, to 2050 further exposure. Furthermore, I talked to a former Clerk Treasure that is in favor of Blanchester who said that we can't just spend BPA funds however we wish, that could put our Village and customers at risk for a state of emergency. You can't just spend the money however you wish you must follow the Ohio R.C and general accounting principles.

Zoning/Maintenance – Nothing to report.

Fiscal Officer – Mrs. Flannery – I am working with Regina, who's trying to come back into the office part-time and work from home. She would like to move in-person budget meetings out by 2 weeks. We're going to try and work on that as the weeks go by and Regin's recovery.

Mayor – Working with the Engineer on sidewalks, also working with ODOT on the drainage issue on Bourbon St. it's looking favorable but still some challenges that were working though those, when they do their bridge project we're hoping that they can do some additional drainage and things to help the Village in that area, talked to County Engineer about project on Main St. and how to improve scoring so we can get the funds, in close in 2019 I did work a full time job, and I did work part time in the office. However, I've since retired. So that's no longer the case. I'm here for the challenge to do what we need to do to continue to improve Blanchester.

It was moved by Ms. Lewis and seconded by Mrs. Lewis that the meeting be adjourned at 7:56 PM. All agreed to adjourn.

Approved: October 23, 2025

Mayor: John M. Cannon

Attest: Regina Johnson