

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**  
**MINUTES OF VILLAGE OF BLANCHESTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
**January 25, 2024**

The Village of Blanchester Council met in regular session on January 25, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. with the honorable Mayor John Carman, presiding.

All Present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance and had Opening Prayer

<b>Roll Call</b>	Mr. William Garner	Present
	Mr. Don Gephart	Present
	Mr. John Hill	Present
	Mr. Reilly Hopkins	Present
	Mrs. Lynn Lewis	Present
	Mr. Josh Parks	Present

**Agenda**

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

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

**Motion Passed**

**Guest Speaker**

Brenda Woods is running for reelection for County Commissioner. She is approaching her 8<sup>th</sup> year in office as County Commissioner. She worked 24 years as a Clerk. She has Twp. Fiscal Office experience and many years of budgeting experience. She is working right now on bringing County wide Broadband to Clinton County. She is very proud that the Commissioner's office has decided to take their meetings on the road, as now they will visit each Twp. Once a year.

Brian Shidaker is running for County Prosecutor. He is a 42-year-old, born and raised in Clinton County Republican. He has a law degree and worked 10 years for the County Prosecutors Office where he prosecuted over 3000 felony cases. In 2011 he was the Law Director for the City of Wilmington where he was the Chief Legal Counsel. In 2016 he became the Director of Public Service & Safety for the City of Wilmington where he was able to cultivate his leadership skills. This has served him well as he has learned how to build and work as a team. His top 3 items that he would like everyone to remember is that 1. He has been voting as a Republican since he was able to vote and votes at all elections. 2. He is and will remain a residence of Clinton County. And 3., Being a County Prosecutor will be his full-time job. He has many organizations that he is affiliated with a few being he has served on the Public Library Board, the Wilmington School Board, and the United Way to name a few.

### **Public Comment**

**James Constable** – 135 N. Orchard View Lane, Blanchester, OH. Mr. Constable commented that our official Certificate of Estimated Resources was due at the first of the month and is not done yet. He suggests that the Finance Committee and Council review the report prior to submitting as it had to be amended several times last year. He also stated that our 2024 temporary appropriations exceeded our 2023 appropriations. We had a carryover of \$655,000 and it went down to \$275,000 this year in the general fund. Per Mr. Constable we spent \$380,000 more than we took in last year, and we want to cut our Police Department by 40%. Why cannot the rest of the village help absorb this cost. The Fund Summary Report shows \$8.3 million in carryover from last year. Why cannot that help. Mr. Parks commented on his statement and said he was bringing ideas to counsel tonight.

### **Minutes**

It was moved by Mrs. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Gebhart to approve minutes from the January 25, 2024.

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

### **Bills and Reallocations**

Mr. Parks had questions about a few of the bills. Wanting to know if multiple bids were received. Mr. Parks let Mr. Daniels from the street department know that he will continue to ask these questions because it is what the tax payers want. The mayor told Mr. Parks that with all due respect that he does not want to pay \$4.05 of tax payers' money and Mr. Parks interrupted the mayor letting him know that his comments were tyrannical and he was being a dictator.

It was moved by Mr. Gebhart and seconded by Mr. Hopkins to approve the current Bills.

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

It was moved by Mr. Parks and seconded by Mrs. Lewis to approve the current Reallocations.

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

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Finance Committee**

Don Gephart reported that the finance committee had nothing to report.

**Safety & Service** – John Hill discussed the handicap spots along the 100 block of South Broadway and informed council that he checked with ODOT and we are required to have 1 handicap spot for every 25 regular spots, right now we have 3. He would like to remove those and just have 1 at the end of each street, 1 in front of Maks, and one in front of H&R Block, thus eliminating the one in the middle of the street.

Mr. Hopkins put for a motion that John Hill work with the Solicitor to put together paperwork for the next meeting, there was a seconded by Mr. Gebhart. Motion carried. All were in favor.

**Cemetery Board** – Tom Lee stated nothing to report

**Update on Logo Contest** - Lynn Lewis gave update on Logo contest for the Village. All donations were received except one, and the mayor asked if you committed to donate that you would. All entries to be received by February 7, 2024 and voting will happen prior to the meeting February 22, 2024 where the winner will be announced. The cash rewards will be \$50 for third place, \$150 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place and \$300 for first place.

### **Department Reports**

**Solicitor** – Nothing to report.

**Parks Dept** – Paul Jackson reported that the gym floor as arrived, so it is imperative that the gym area be cleaned out so that the remodel can proceed.

**Police** – Chief Houghton wanted to bring up that when you circulate things about the cost of police equipment on social media about things and you do not entirely know the cost of, which brand is best for us, and what are the problems with the brands are you need to be cautious because then the public will automatically think this is what they are receiving without knowing all the details that go along with it. So please do not post on social media what the cost of body cams are without doing all the research. Secondly, if we are going to talk about the word tyrannical, let us talk about a Counselman responding to the police records clerk that you are not playing games because he is not getting his way. She was very professional with our Counselman and he needs to be professional with her.

Josh Parks asked the question if it is professional to charge a Counselman for copies that is needed to do his job. Chief Houghton informed Mr. Parks that the police department has ran fine without his input for the past 2 years, and they do not need it now, and informed him, yes, it is professional for counsel to pay for their copies.

**Street Dept.** – Paul Daniels had nothing to report.

**Zoning** – Jeff Hurst stated he will be out of his office by January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and that the new Zoning Office will now be located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. All lines for Spectrum have now been installed. We did get a \$1,000 donation from the food pantry to install a new TV in the new zoning office. We still need to have the new LED lights installed. BPA will help with the installation.

**Fiscal Officer** – Regina Johnson asked to move the pay day of July 4<sup>th</sup> to July 3<sup>rd</sup> due to the holiday.

Motion was set forth by Mr. Gebhart to move this date and Mr. Hill second the motion. – motion passed.

**Old Business**

Mr. Parks asked to rescind ordinance 2021.045 sewer rate increase that was passed by council 3 years ago. He questioned the validity of the ordinance at first, and the solicitor stated the ordinance was adopted correctly. He states the sewer fund has carry over money from last year, so why do we need to raise rates this year. He would like to rescind the current increase and give back the last 2 years of increase to the customer. Mr. Parks put forth a motion to rescind Ordinance 2021.045 and to have the solicitor investigate reimbursing all customers for the last two sewer rate increases, there was no second – motion failed.

Mr. Bowling, Chairman of the Board of the BPA spoke in regards to rescinding this Ordinance and informed everyone that if you have questions regarding the BPA, please come to their board meetings on the first Thursday of every month. The BPA has contributed \$3.77 million into the general fund from the kilowatt tax credit we get each month. They also contribute to a large portion on the Admin, and Fiscal Officers salary. Which brings the total to over \$5 million to the general fund. If we had that \$5 million back, we would have the funds necessary for the new substation without going out for a grant or loan.

Mr. Parks asked to discuss the transferring of funds from the sewer and electric funds to the Police fund. It is Mr. Parks opinion that this is how we could fund the Police Department for the rest of this year. The mayor believes we should not be robbing one source to fund another. This is not the answer. Mr. Parks put for a motion to draft a resolution to transfer this money, there was no second – motion failed.

Mr. Parks asked to discuss the possibility of bringing back a mayors' court. He states we could generate over \$100,000 if we did this. The solicitor stated that this is not in the scope of his contract, so he would have to charge us an hourly charge just to review this whole process. Mr. Parks put forth a motion to get the solicitor to research this and give us a quote to bring Mayors court to the village, there was no second – motion failed.

**New Business**

Mayor - nothing

It was moved by Mr. Gebhart and seconded by Mrs. Lewis that the meeting be adjourned at 8:13 pm.

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

Motion Passed

Approved: 2-8-24

Mayor: John M Cannon

Attest: Regina Johnson

