

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
MINUTES OF VILLAGE OF BLANCHESTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
February 8, 2024

The Village of Blanchester Council met in regular session on February 8, 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

Roll Call	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 motioned by Mr. Hopkins to remove the discussion items #12 on the agenda, all except the mayors' court, and to remove #13 the executive session. It was seconded by Mr. Gebhart.

It was moved by Mr. Hopkins and seconded by Mr. Gebhart to approve the revised agenda.

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

Motion Passed

Guest Speaker

None

Public Comment

James Constable – 135 N. Orchard View Lane, Blanchester, OH. Mr. Constable questioned if the income tax that was put on the ballot, ordinance 2023.022 and resolution 2023.023 were passed legally as they were passed as emergencies and it stated on there you only needed 4 votes to pass an emergency when several ordinances' prior it stated you needed $\frac{3}{4}$, or 5 votes to pass an emergency vote. His question is which is correct.

Mayor John Carman stated that a few of those documents were in error; but he has conferred with our Solicitor and he has ensured us that the correct answer is if you suspend the rules and it is not an emergency that you need 5 votes, but if it states as an emergency (which the income tax levy was) then you only need 4 votes, which is what we had.

Minutes

It was moved by Mr. Hill and seconded by Mr. Hopkins to approve minutes from the January 25, 2024.

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

Motion Passed

Bills and Reallocations

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

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

Motion Passed

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Don Gephart reported that the finance committee had a meeting prior to this meeting. He asked Fiscal Officer Regina Johnson to share what she shared at the Finance Meeting. Regina contacted Wanda Armstrong the Fiscal Officer for Clarksville and a former State Auditor and she is coming in on 2/12/24 to see if she can help in any way. We did complete and submit to the county our Certificate of Estimated Resources. We had our BWC audit and it went well, we just had a few classifications we needed to fix.

It was also discussed and brought up that we need to start looking into social media archiving and what we need to do with that.

Capital Electric is fixing lights on intersection of Wright and Main St.

3 quotes for the purchase of an Electric Eel from Equipsupply. Was in the budget so approval was given to purchase.

Safety & Service – John Hill nothing to report

Cemetery Board – Tom Lee stated nothing to report

Old Business

Last meeting it was discussed on increasing the amount for Public Records request from \$.05 to \$.10. Mr. Parks asked if the solicitor checked into if it is legal to charge for this, and the solicitor assured it was as long as we were not charging for time. The mayor made it clear that if you are an elected official and ask for documents to perform your job you will not be charged. However, if you are an elected official and make a Public Records request you will be charged.

It was moved by Mr. Hopkins and seconded by Mrs. Lewis to approve the increase.

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

Motion Passed

Update on Logo Contest_- Lynn Lewis gave an update on the Logo contest for the Village. We had over 30 entries from our local school. Students who receive 1st, 2nd and 3rd will be invited to next meeting to be recognized. A committee was set up to judge the entries and the committee will consist of Don Gebhart moderator, Jeff Hurst, Police Dept., Marie Brooker, Donna Johnson, Paul Jackson, Paul Burns and Lynn Lewis. They will meet 2/15/24 at 3:30 to decide on a winner.

New Business

None

Department Reports

Solicitor – Nothing to report.

Parks Dept – Paul Jackson reported that construction has begun on the gym. One issue is the power may need to be shut down at one point. It will be shut down on a Saturday. Flooring should start by mid-March.

Police – Chief Houghton showed and reviewed the month of January activities for the Police Department. Officers are staying busy and doing their best to keep us safe. The chief stressed the importance if you are looking at other departments and comparing them to what we are doing, to consider what all they are putting on their report log. He stressed the department is and will continue to write citations to educate the public, not to write citations for funding. The police department will be participating at “A Night to Shine” at Elevation Church this weekend. The department was recertified with the Ohio Collaborative on a provisional certification until the final comes through. The chief wanted to clarify the Records Request earlier and make it known that Council does not run his department he does. And if you are requesting records for your job,

their needs to be validity to the request. He feels Mr. Parks is requesting things not pertaining to his job as a councilman.

Mr. Gebhart gave an update for the Friends of the Police to support the Police Levy. They will start phone canvassing on 2/28/24 to get the support of the Levy. Marie Brooker also stated that there are several people that will be going door to door to get the support.

BPA – James Bowling gave a follow up from last meeting regarding the rates. They did have 3 years of decreases in rates since 2017, in 2018 the customers received over a 5% decrease in rates. Currently we have 15 loans currently in place for over \$600,000 for different projects that we have done. We currently have 11 projects in process or just completed. Those projects alone are over 8 million in cost. We have attached Addendum A for reference.

Street Dept. – Paul Daniels group has been trimming trees that are in lines this week.

Zoning – Jeff Hurst had nothing to report.

Fiscal Officer – Regina Johnson had nothing to report.

Mayor – The Mayor discussed respecting each other and showed social media pics that Mr. Parks has posted and discussed the half truths or fake news that he is posting. The mayor did not think it was appropriate for Mr. Parks to call him a dictator on social media, especially when he is not able to make any decision by himself. The mayor issued Resolution 2024.002 censuring councilman Josh Parks.

It was moved by Mr. Gebhart and seconded by Mr. Hopkins that Resolution 2024.002 censuring council Parks move forward.

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

Motion Passed

The discussion of the mayor's court was brought up again, and it was decided based on the number of citations that the Police Department issues that they would table the idea for now. We do need to start citing under the village traffic codes instead of the ORC traffic code so that we can get more of the monies back from Clinton County.

It was moved by Mr. Hopkins and seconded by Mr. Parks that the meeting be adjourned at 8:18 pm.

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

Motion Passed

Approved: February 22, 2024

Mayor: John M. Cannon

Attest: Regina Johnson

