

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
MINUTES OF VILLAGE OF BLANCHESTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
May 9, 2024

The Village of Blanchester Council met in regular session on May 9, 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	Absent
	Mrs. Lynn Lewis	Present
	Mr. Josh Parks	Present

It was moved by Mr. Parks and seconded by Mr. Gephart to approve the absence of Reilly Hopkins.

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

Motion Passed

Agenda

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

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

Motion Passed

Guest Speaker - Susan Jacobs for the American Legion Auxiliary was given the Poppy Seed Proclamation and it was declared that the 18th day of May 2024 all citizens should pay tribute to all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice by wearing a poppy flower on this day. The Auxiliary will be out selling Poppy flowers on this day at various local businesses.

The mayor also had a Proclamation for National Police Week which he presented to Chief Houghton. May 15th is National Police Officer Day, so with that we are declaring the week of May 12-18, 2024 as National Police Week. The Chief wanted to thank everyone and let everyone know that they will be dedicating the upstairs training room to Officer Bud Lee, who was killed in the line of duty in 1949 and to also recognize Sergeant Daniel Houser who in 1969 had a fatal heart attack in his cruiser while on duty. The ceremony for this dedication will be on May 10, 2024 at 4:00 pm.

Public Comment

James Constable, 135 Orchard View Lane, Blanchester. Wanted to discuss the potential sewer rate increase that is to be voted on tonight. He reviewed numbers he thought was important for all to take into consideration. It is his believe we do not need the sewer rate increase. He then discussed that during our last meeting we discussed the cost of Orchard View/Orchard Circle Phase I and Phase II project and if your read the minutes from the BPA meeting on March 1, 2024 he states that there is no need for additional monies per those minutes in his opinion. He also then discussed people starting rumors about dissolving the Village. He states he is not a part of it, nor does he feel it is a good idea at the time. He also stated he is still waiting on an answer for the zoning of particular parcels he inquired about.

Richard Weis, 502 E. Center St., Blanchester wanted to make a comment and congratulate Lt. Browder on his retirement. He also wanted to state that there are several people making comments that they do not see police patrolling, and he wanted it to be on record he has seen them a lot, and he was pleased to see this.

Minutes

It was moved by Mrs. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Gephart to approve minutes the April 25, 2024.

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

Motion Passed

Bills and Reallocations

It was moved by Mr. Parks and seconded by Mrs. Lewis to approve the bills as submitted. There were no reallocations.

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

Motion Passed

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Don Gephart reported that during their meeting they were given an update of CD's we have at the bank, a review of the budget and that we are still waiting to hear back from Perry & Assoc. regarding the audit that they were doing for us. He also stated that they went into executive session to discuss the proposition of a new pay scale for the Police Department. They are requesting that this new pay scale be adopted.

Safety & Service – John Hill had nothing to report this week.

Cemetery Board – Tom Lee stated he has contacted 3 different companies to come and give a proposal to seal coat the driveways at the Cemetery. He will pass the quotes on when he receives them.

Old Business

Ordinance 2024.008 – An ordinance regulating mobile food truck service operation in the Village of Blanchester. This ordinance was given the first reading with the following corrections. Section 1, item c, to be edited to state this is for stationary vehicles. Also, in Section 3, item c, to make that permits will cost \$100 quarterly, and that item d, in Section 3 that all permits are effective on a quarterly basis.

There was a motion made by Mr. Gephart for the first reading of Ordinance 2024.008 and a second made by Mr. Parks.

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

Motion Passed

Mr. Gephart also asked that the police wage scale be accepted as per his recommendation from the finance committee. There was also a motion made by Mrs. Lewis and a second by Mr. Hill to approve the police new pay scale as proposed by Chief Houghton. This will take effect at Chief Houghton discretion and there will be no backpay for this wage increase.

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

Motion Passed

Ordinance 2024.007 was brought forth. This ordinance is requesting a sewer rate increase as per the BPA Board of Trustee recommendation.

Mr. James Bowling, Board Director for the BPA spoke on the importance of a new sewer rate. He thanked councilman Hill, Hopkins, and Lewis for taking their time to come to the BPA Board meeting to get a better understanding of why the increase is necessary. He also reviewed some of the projects the sewer department was doing, (Note: Mr. Bowling did make an error during this time and said it would cost \$900K to rent a cab to haul sludge. The correct number is \$900.00 a week) and gave some preliminary cost as to what some of the projects they are doing this year and what they are going to cost. Mrs. Lewis stated how impressed she was with the work the BPA was doing, and Mr. Hill questioned some of the numbers he was given. The rate increases they are recommending is 4% June 1, 2024 on and 4% on June 1, 2025.

It was moved by Mr. Gephart and seconded by Mrs. Lewis to accept the sewer rate increase as per the recommendation provided by the BPA.

Vote: Yea – Mr. Gephart, Mrs. Lewis
No - Mr. Garner, Mr. Hill, Mr. Parks

Motion Did Not Passed

New Business

Department Reports

Solicitor – The solicitor spoke on the issue with the culverts and when it might be the responsibility of the homeowner vs. the responsibility of the Village. The Village must give the homeowner 30 day notice to fix a culvert if it is not working properly. After that notice is given to the homeowner, if they choose not to fix it, then the Village can have it fixed and charge it back to the homeowner.

BPA – Donna Johnson, the Business Manager gave an update of what the BPA has been doing over the past couple of weeks.

PARKS – Gymnasium is all complete except the doors, which should be in any time now, the next event will be the party in the park which will be 5/24/24 @ 5:00. Band will play from 6-10.

Police – Chief Houghton discussed what the officers have been doing. The town did have some minor damage during the storms the other night. All departments came together to make cleanup quick. They did an active aggressor training, attended the Chief Conference in Columbus, continued active aggressor meetings (which will be at the Blanchester High School this year). They did the Ticket it for coney's this year which was a success. Again, he reminded everyone of the room dedication on May 10th for Officer Bud Lee. Touch a Truck on 5/18 and cones with copes on 5/23/24.

Street Dept. – Paul Daniels reported that they got the Veteran banners up. If you have brush that is out, we only pick up every other week. The next week will be 5/13/24.

Zoning – Jeff Hurst had nothing to report.

Fiscal Officer – Regina Johnson had nothing to report.

Mayor – The mayor discussed the Tornado Sirens that are not working. As of this date we have 3 that need replaced. The mayor did suggest to always have a backup plan in lieu of the sirens. Sirens are meant to be heard outside, not everyone will hear them inside even if they were all working. Per Mr. Gephart, who is on the Fire Board, The Fire Board is looking into cost of replacing the sirens.

Executive Session

1. Per ORC 121.22 (G) (1): To consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee.
2. Per ORC 121.22 (G)(3): To conferences with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action;

It was moved by Mr. Hill and seconded by Mrs. Lewis to move into Executive Session at 8:20 pm: All Council members, Mayor, and Solicitor were present for Matter 1. Councilman Parks was excused prior to discussion for Matter 2.

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

Motion Passed

It was moved by Mrs. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Hill that the meeting be called back into session at 8:57.

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

Motion Passed

No action taken at this time.

It was moved by Mr. Hill and seconded by Mrs. Lewis that the meeting be adjourned at 8:30 pm.

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

Motion Passed

Approved: 5-24-24

Mayor: John M. Cannon

Attest: Keena Johnson

