

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
MINUTES OF VILLAGE OF BLANCHESTER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
November 13, 2025

The Village of Blanchester Council met in regular session on November 13, 2025, at 6:30 P.M. with the honorable John Carman, Mayor, presiding.

Special Ceremony: K-9 Vito swearing in

Chief Houghton- Tonight we welcome several guests and begin this council meeting with the swearing-in of K-9 Officer Vido. We also want to recognize and thank our donors and supporters whose generosity made this possible. After tonight, Vido will officially join the Blanchester Police Department and begin his first patrol tomorrow. Public safety is our top priority, and adding a K-9 unit marks a milestone for our department. It has been 21 years since Officer Tim Rector last served with a K-9 in Blanchester.

To make this program a reality, we created a budget, sold property, accepted donations, and developed policies. In the end, we paired an exceptional officer with an exceptional dog.

We extend our deepest gratitude to:

- The Matt Haverkamp Foundation (Nancy and Bruce, in memory of their son Matt)
- Matt and Carla Fetty and family
- Brian and Gina Convers of Convers Labs
- The Wedig family, who gave the first \$1,000 donation
- The Blanchester Chamber of Commerce
- Drs. Jody and Kris Gundler, Brook and Karrie
- Blanchester Seven Hills Pet Clinic (Dr. Ashley, Kelsey, and Faith)
- The Blanchester Eagles, who funded half the cost of the K-9 car

Your support brought the K-9 program back to Blanchester, and we are profoundly grateful.

Sgt. Jon Petrey, who joined us in May 2022 after serving with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, has shown sound judgment and leadership. His promotion to Sergeant reflects his dedication to duty. With the support of his wife Melany and children Logan and Brayden, Jon has welcomed Vido into their home.

Sgt. Jon Petrey and Vido trained at Southern Ohio Police K-9, where Dave Johnson identified Vido as a perfect fit—capable of switching between work and play with ease. Together, they will patrol, respond to calls, and return home safely at the end of each shift.

Judge Henry, please join Sgt. Petrey and his family to administer the oath.

Roll Call:

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

Question by Mr. Parks- item number 17 Kiley Trees \$9,450 was that presented to council before we spent this, was there multiple quotes have we seen them.

Mayor- money that was appropriated that's why it was spent. These are dangerous trees that had to come down. Mr. Parks- did we get multiple quotes on this have we seen them.

Mr. Daniels- we did get multiple quotes, they have not been paid for yet, they are going to be taking down the trees, we just had a Cemetery meeting last week and that's why we're here tonight. Mrs. Flannery- states that this was put on the bills list as they are taking down the trees in the next few weeks, and this this is monies earned from GovDeals where Lindsey sold the tractor and back hoe from the cemetery that we no longer use. Mr. Daniels, we have 3 quotes, \$9,450, \$11,000 and \$23,500, Kiley came recommended from the Electric Department, PMB was recommended from Lakeside, and the other high one was out of Goshen that we've never used and they were too high. Mr. Parks- next question item number 1, is this the drone Chief has a grant on that were getting the money back on that right. Mr. Johnson- If I'm correct this is the second payment on the drone where we now have to apply for the second half of the grant. Weve already made the first payment and received the first grant portion. Mayor any other questions. Mr. Hopkins- I think we need to pay attention to something on the bills list is a special recognition to Mr. Donny from the Parks Department who spend his own money to get more candy during the Boo Bash so that they didn't run out candy. This shows the caliber and character all of our employee, I think it deserves a special recognition to Donny and the parks Department.

It was moved by Mr. Hopkins and seconded by Mrs. Lewis to approve the Bills from November 13, 2025.

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

Motion Passed

Committee Reports

Finance Committee –Mr. Hopkins- The Finance Committee recommends authorizing the Mayor to continue with the TAP grant. The grant will fund new sidewalks around the municipal building and along Main Street, ending just before Wright Street and the asphalt at VRC. With the 80/20 local cost share, we ask council to give the Mayor approval to move forward, while final details and exceptions are still being negotiated. We also discussed the recent levy failure and upcoming budget meetings. I've assigned council members to sit in on each session to ensure full participation. With that, I formally recommend council authorize the Mayor to proceed with the TAP grant.

It was moved by Mr. Hopkins and seconded by Mr. Hill.

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

Motion Passed

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

Motion Passed as an emergency per section 5.

Department Reports

Solicitor – Nothing to report.

Parks – Mr. Jackson- Boo Bash was a huge success, it was amazing the amount of people who came and went through it and who gave compliments on how great the maze was and everything else. Like Mr. Hopkins said we almost ran out of candy twice and Donny didn't hesitate to go pick up candy to finish the night out. Our next event is breakfast with Santa December 6th, we'll have breakfast that morning from 8 a.m.-12 p.m., 5:30 pm. there will be a Christmas parade like last year, and at 6:30 p.m. there will be the annual tree lighting. If you have noticed we have had a tree planted that will be permanent in that park that way we won't have to set it up every time the wind blows hard.

Police – Mayor- Chief is still out of the room, Chief has provided their monthly report, if you have any questions, I'm sure if you reach out, he will be happy to explain or go over it with you.

Street – Mr. Daniels- we are picking up leaves, yesterday and then this morning we got all the Veteran banners down for the winter

BPA – Mr. Bowling- Our next meeting has been moved to December 4th at 6:30 P.M. We'll provide updates on the substation project. We moved the meeting forward so we can work together on the budget and calendar, and still have time for a special meeting if needed.

I also want to compare electric bills, rates, and costs as promised. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, national electric rates have risen **19% since 2021—about 4.5% annually**. In Ohio, rates in some cases have increased over **30%**.

- **Highest rates nationally:** Hawaii, California, Massachusetts
- **Lowest rates:** Nebraska, Nevada, Idaho
- **Neighboring states:** Indiana (16¢), Kentucky (13¢), West Virginia (15¢)

Ohio is the **8th largest electricity producer** but the **4th largest consumer**. Because of this deficit, we buy electricity on the open market, which keeps Ohio's residential rates slightly above the national average. Ohio's current rate is **17¢**, while Blanchester is at **13¢**.

For comparison:

- Duke Energy (Warren County): **19¢ in September**
- BPA bill: **14.8¢ in September** (including all fees)

So, while we're not the cheapest, we're below both the Ohio and national averages.

This is why we're moving forward with the substation project. Many of our transformers are **40–50 years old**, near the end of their life cycle. We're selectively replacing them and consolidating from **three substations to one**. Transmitting at higher voltage will lower current, making the system more efficient.

In 2025, BPA paid over **\$58,000 in surcharges**—another reason for this upgrade. The new substation could pay for itself in **15–20 years** through efficiency gains, while also leaving room for future growth.

To address the public comments, negativity fuels more negativity, residents that say they haven't seen anything but expensive cross walks. If people would get out of your house and drive around, they'd see all the streets, and water main projects that has been done around the village. I don't understand how you don't see it unless you're just sitting at home complaining, listening to the Facebook negativity.

To touch on the question \$797,423 adjustment. I have explained this many times, if you go back and look at every report since they started UAN, every report you are going to see a different number on very report, you're going to see that the number changes up and down \$797,423, you're also going to see that number at \$7,000, to \$797,423. We have asked the auditors and we hired Perry & Associates a CPA firm to help us figure out why this number is a moving target. Perry & Associates to help us with our cash reconciliation, you know what happened, they were supposed to complete the review in a few months. drag their feet for 12 months after we negotiated a fee and at the end of it, they said just pay us half and they didn't give us what we asked for. The Auditor of State is aware of the situation, and they understand our concern. Something in the reports is causing this to fluctuates. One month its \$700,000 the next month its \$200,000. It's a moving number we haven't been able to figure out ourselves. It's not that we don't want to talk about it, or are trying to cover it up. We know it's there we hired a CPA and we can't figure out why its keep's changing. Mrs. Johnson- Carla and I have talked to the State Auditors several times who are auditing our FY 2023 and 2024. If they could tell us why it happened in 2023 or 2024, we could figure it out for 2025. So that is what we are hoping for. Mayor- it's not something we are ignoring or not trying to figure out the CPA or state auditors haven't been able to figure it out or help us.

It was moved by Mrs. Lewis and seconded by Mr. Garner that the meeting be adjourned at 7:39 PM. All agreed to adjourn.

Approved: 12/11/2025

Mayor: John M. Carman

Attest: Regina Johnson