On Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 6:00 PM, Mayor Fries-Seip opened the Council meeting with a word of prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited by those present.

The regular meeting for the Council of the Village of Monroeville was then called to order.

Present at roll call:

Chris Raftery and: Melissa Fries-Seip, Mayor

Craig Franklin Tom Gray, Village Administrator

Joe Galea Heather Alicea, Administrative Specialist

Sue Rogers Jim Barney, Village Solicitor

Bob Whitacre Gary Lyons, Chief of Police

Sam Wiley

Also attending: Ann Beck, Troy Kimball, Gabriella Tuscano, and Andy Betschman.

The February 2023 financial reports, bank statements, balance sheets, check reports, and bank reconciliations were previously distributed to Council via e-mail.

**APPROVAL OF AMENDED AGENDA**

Mayor Fries-Seip asked for Council’s approval to amend the agenda, to include Resolution 2023-06. Sam Wiley made a motion, seconded by Sue Rogers, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried with no discussion.

**DISPOSITION OF MINUTES**

Chris Raftery made a motion, seconded by Sam Wiley, to approve the minutes as presented from the February 14, 2023, regular Council meeting. Motion carried with no discussion.

**APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Joe Galea made a motion, seconded by Chris Raftery, to approve the February 2023 financial reports as presented. Motion carried with no discussion.

**APPROVAL OF THE MONTHLY CREDIT CARD REPORT**

Sam Wiley made a motion, seconded by Sue Rogers, to approve the February 2023 credit card report. Motion carried with no discussion.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL**

Andy Betschman spoke in regards to partnering with the Village of Monroeville for the Vintage Village Christmas on 12/9/23. The Mayor advised it’s on the agenda for later in the meeting.

Jim Barney introduced Gabrielle Tuscano (Gabby), an attorney who has been with Kocher & Barney for about a year now. He is taking her around to the different municipalities they represent. When Jim is unavailable for the Village, Gabby can be contacted. Gabby has been representing the Village in regards to the GATSO hearings as of late.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**Administrator** - Tom presented his report that was previously submitted to Council. Tom asked Council to approve the action items listed in his report. The first is a $2 per hour pay increase effective 3/15/23, for Electric Department employee Colton Ott, who has successfully completed his probationary period as an entry level Apprentice Line Worker. Next is to ask Council to authorize the hiring of Chad Cheek as Street Department Superintendent, at $22 per hour, upon satisfactory results from his pre-employment drug screen and physical, which was scheduled for today, 3/14/23. Next, in water and wastewater, there are two agreements. One requires Council’s approval for the harmful algal bloom testing and evaluation report that requires a consultant to work through all of the EPA regulations that have changed since this was performed four years ago. The other one has to do with the wastewater treatment plant permit renewal, which is the annual discharge permit that needs to be renewed, and this also requires a consultant’s opinion to satisfy the EPA requirements. The final item up for discussion is Adam Gerber’s request to share a portion of the costs associated with painting the dug outs and painting the concession stand, using Monroeville Eagle colors. Tom included Adam’s total cost estimate, and the cost of the paint is $2,829.30. Bob asked if it’s in need of paint. Tom said 3-4 summers ago, under Ben Paul’s guidance, the kids applied a block sealer to the dug outs and it looks like it was finger painted. It hasn’t weathered well and looks terrible. The Monroeville Alumni Baseball Association wants to provide the funding to fix the inside and outside of the dug out as well as the concession stand. During games, the pitcher is distracted by the light-colored block behind the backstop, and distracted by the different shades on the building. They were going to try hanging a tarp, but that blinds the line of sight for those looking out and is against regulation. Sam asked what the Village cost would be and Tom advised it’s the cost of the paint, $2,829.30, out of the total cost estimate, which is $7,429.30. John Courtney would like to present his utility review on 3/28/23, which would be the day of the work session and then at the same time, a short Council meeting could be held prior, in order to approve the budget.

**Fiscal Officer** - Heather presented Bonnie’s report that was previously submitted to Council. Heather asked for Council’s approval for the following items: A motion to retroactively approve a blanket purchase order for Solar advocate for $210,000, and Main Lite for $6,000, for N Ridge St emergency repair work, **and** regular purchase orders for Powerline for $6127.52, for 8 anchor foundations for the Electric Department as part of the downtown revitalization project, Powerline for $5,118.75, for a GOAB switch, Anixter for $6,518.79, for manual to mechanical operations materials, and Holiday Outdoor Décor for $11,627, for garland replacement and more LED bulbs. Heather spoke in regards to the 0 Hamilton Street property case and asked for a motion authorizing Jim Barney to sign the court order on behalf of the Village, and the Village will also be paying the Clerk of Courts $2,170.09 for our portion of the court costs, sheriff’s fees, and delinquent taxes and penalties. Heather asked for a motion in regards to Don Clark’s vacation time payout. His anniversary date is 4/4/23 and the two options are to pay Don his 80 hours of vacation or he could try and get in 5 weeks of vacation, with a 40-hour payout of vacation. Don previously said he is open to whatever Council wants to do. Heather asked Council to approve sending her to her third year at the OMCA conference for $450.00 and the OAPT Finance Officer’s training for $549, plus travel costs for both. Last, Heather asked Council for two, separate motions, to accept proposals from John Hower at Rinehart insurance. The first is the Ohio Plan renewal for casualty and liability insurance, which is up $179.00 from last year. The second is the Ohio Plan cyber renewal, which had two quotes provided, one from Hiscox for $3,020 and one from Lloyds for $2,433.10. Bonnie would like to go with Lloyd’s, as the prices are comparable to last year’s.

**Police** – Chief presented his report that was previously submitted to Council. The monthly activity report is dismal due to lack of officers. The court report shows we are ahead of other areas. Jordan Eggleston’s last day was 3/12/23. Chief asked for Council to approve Jordan Eggleston’s resignation letter, as well as authorization to advertise for his replacement. Chief said when clearance is received for Jonah Mersereau from his drug test and physical, he can move into a full-time position with the pay bump. Heather advised Bonnie completed all of his forms that needed her signature, and we gave Jonah a form that he needs to sign, which then has to be sent in to OP&F. We also gave him health insurance forms that need to be completed, so our side of things are done, save for sending his forms in. Chief said he will get with Jonah after tonight’s meeting. In regards to 2024, they are preparing for the solar eclipse. Sam said perhaps camping areas or what not could be pulled together before then. Tom said there will be an undue challenge associated with the transportation, not only with parking, and Route 20, but bikers from Rails to Trails as well. We have to protect our infrastructure, reservoir, WTP, and sub-stations. Restroom facilities may need to be looked at as well, and with that, expenses and Health Department regulations, so a lot of planning needs done. The Mayor said Tom has been involved in the county meetings, so he is abreast of the situation. The Chief said he talked to MLS Athletic Director Ben Paul, who is considering cancelling the sporting events for that day. The Mayor said she talked to the superintendent as well, who is keeping an eye on it before she decides to cancel anything. Tom said he has had conversations with Berry Global in regards to the employee shift change during the solar event.

**Solicitor** – Jim had hoped to have Chief’s amended contract prepared to have Council to look at, but he made some miscalculations in terms of the number. Jim wasn’t sure if the Mayor wanted to ask for Council’s approval, contingent on the right dollar per hour number being listed in the amended contract.

**Mayor** - The Mayor is hosting an employee appreciation luncheon for Village employees and Council, in Council Chambers, on Monday, 3/20/23. The Mayor invited Jim and Gabby to attend as well. The Mayor asked Council for a motion in regards to accepting Jordan Eggleston’s resignation. Sam Wiley made that motion, seconded by Craig Franklin. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to approve advertisement to fill the job position that Jordan Eggleston is vacating. Sam Wiley made that motion, seconded by Craig Franklin. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor advised that per Chief’s contract, he was inadvertently left off of the recent wage increase, because of the language in his contract. It has now been corrected and will need to be retroactive to 1/1/2023. The Mayor asked Jim for the correct verbiage so that the motion can be passed at tonight’s meeting. Jim advised that two changes were made in Chief’s contract, and he is going to get the 8.7% COLA increase effective 1/1/23, and the language in that contract which said this is going to be Chief’s last increase of the contract was removed. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to echo that. Sam Wiley made that motion, seconded by Craig Franklin. Motion carried with no discussion. Back in August, the Mayor had reached out to Franklin Monument in Norwalk, Ohio, about getting a dedication plaque for inside the MMC. She went over two quotes that she received. One is a more robust, sturdier, bronze rendition for $2,300 and there is a cheaper variety, that cannot be placed outside, for just over $2,200. She would like to move forward with having that done and Tom had previously suggested pulling that money from the community fund. Tom spoke and verified the same. The Mayor said we need a better, more graphically enhanced Village seal, and asked if Vince ever came up with anything. Heather said Vince had come up with a couple of ideas, brought them in and looked them over with the Administrative Office personnel. Bonnie had asked him to make a couple of changes and we are still waiting to see what he came up with. Heather said she would reach out to him and ask. The Mayor said none of this is final, but this was just an idea she came up with. The first option is bronze letters, molded with our logo, precision tooled with good artwork, a size of 20-24 inches wide and the length would be 24-30 inches, with a quote of $2,800. Option two is the same size range done in aluminum with a flash bronzed look on the letters, with a logo in the background, for $2,301, inside use only. Once approved, it would take around 40 days to produce and Franklin would install it at no cost. The Mayor asked Chief to verify if the money that goes into that fund is that all through donations or is that general things as well. Chief asked if she is talking about the Community Outreach Fund. The Mayor confirmed. Chief advised that comes from private donations. Originally, it was scheduled for law enforcement events, especially targeting events with kids, and they’ve expanded it over the years. He will leave it up to Council. Chris asked how much is in that fund. Heather advised the Administrative Office can email Council that information later. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to approve the retroactive blanket purchase orders and regular purchase orders listed in the Fiscal Officer’s report. Sam Wiley made that motion, seconded by Sue Rogers. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor asked Council for approval regarding Jim Barney to sign for the 0 Hamilton Street property, on behalf of the Village of Monroeville. Bob asked if that meant the Village is buying the property. Jim advised the Village will be joint tenants with the school, so the Village will own half and MLS will own the other half. In the end, the Village wanted it to be green space, and it’s going to be green space. The Village doesn’t agree for it to be made into a parking lot and the school doesn’t agree for it to be made into anything else. As soon as Jim signs it, he is going to contact the school’s attorney about cutting the grass, and things like that. Bob wondered who was going to maintain it. Jim said it’s going to be a nightmare, because the Village’s rules to sell it are different than the school board’s rules, so we’re going to have to go by two different set of rules if it’s ever sold. Bob asked why we are buying it then. Jim said the Village wanted it and the school wanted it and the Mayor said it was a closed bid, not knowing that anyone else was doing it. Jim said our choice was to either give it to the school or do this. Heather asked whatever happened to the discussion regarding the Village purchasing the property and then selling it to the gentleman that had previously invested money for future purchase of the property. Jim said the school said no to that. Bob questioned them saying no. Jim confirmed again, they said no. Bob said he doesn’t understand that. Jim said the school board’s attorney said he's never seen anything like this. Heather asked if the gentleman that invested money previously could come back and ask for reimbursement. Tom said it was Jim Schafer and Jim had a handshake agreement with Mr. Burkett, of Highway Composites. Jim of course wants to buy the property and now he is still holding for it. Tom said our original intent was to purchase it and sell it back to him. Now, we are going to be mowing and pulling weeds. Bob said that makes absolutely no sense to him, and Tom agreed. Tom said we tried, we had multiple conversations with the school and personalities got in the way. The Mayor asked if we have a motion on the floor. Chris said not yet. Chris Raftery made that motion, seconded by Joe Galea. Bob asked what is the motion exactly for. The Mayor said Council received the email that had the contract or the decree, and asked Jim if that was correct. Jim advised it was a judgement. The Mayor said the property is the Village’s regardless, the motion is to authorize Jim to sign the court order. Heather advised that per Bonnie’s report, we will also be paying the Clerk of Courts $2,170.09 for the Village’s portion of court costs, sheriff’s fees and delinquent taxes and penalties. Jim said that was an odd number, but the school graciously agreed to pay the other penny. The Mayor advised a motion and a second is on the floor. Bob said he doesn’t know if any common sense was ever used in regards to this, as Mr. Schafer is the one who should own the property and how do we make that happen. Jim said Bob would need to talk to the superintendent and tell her what his version of common sense is and get her to agree. Joe said everyone needs to keep in mind that the school is run by an elected body, not unlike this elected body, and we’re all residents and we vote for them as much as they vote for us, and maybe we all need to go to one of their meetings as a group and say something. The Mayor said this is just the position we are in right now, it’s going to be jointly owned by the Village and the school, and moving forward, maybe we can figure out a way to come together and make that sale happen, but both sides have to agree to it. Tom said he would like to include something in that conversation, which is the transfer of Marsh Field to the school, which is everything inside the fence, to help with the narrative of moving the property off joint ownership and into Jim Schafer’s hands. Bob said he feels like he’s missing something and he isn’t sure what the benefits are of owning that property with the school. The Mayor said we already do though, we put in a blind bid when it went up and didn’t have any idea that anyone else was doing it, it became ours to figure out and it didn’t go anywhere besides co-ownership. Jim said that statute that controls this doesn’t give any guidance whatsoever for two or more people who own the property. It’s up to the judge and the judge on this said he wasn’t getting in the middle of it. Jim said it wasn’t like we were fighting with the school; we just couldn’t agree. It doesn’t make a lot of sense, and now it’s just going to be green space. Heather asked what will happen when the Village Flea wants to use it for parking, will there need to be a written agreement between the Flea, the Village and MLS. Bob said that is right, how do we give permission if we are 50-50 owners. Tom said the legal side of the house will have to assume the duty of overseeing that. Joe said it would need to be written permission from both the Village and MLS. The Mayor said she doesn’t see it being an issue or being denied. The motion is for Jim to sign on our behalf and it is what it is. Joe said we may have to convince the school board that a parking lot is not happening. The Mayor said we have a motion and a second. Motion carried with no further discussion. The Mayor advised the next item is Don Clark’s vacation time. He has up to 80 hours of vacation and is open to whatever Council decides, whether it’s taking vacation and a partial pay-out or a full pay-out. Tom said the underlying problem is that Don or Wes has to be in the plant x amount of hours per week, and because we’re short staffed, those hours are also extended between two different work cycles or pay periods. Because of that overlap, Don and Wes have to do both water and wastewater and only one can be in one location at a time. Don won’t be able to get his additional two weeks of vacation in this year. If he tries to squeeze time in, it would short us on operator hours. The Mayor advised a payout would be fair then and Council agreed. The Mayor asked Council for a motion. Sam Wiley made a motion that Don Clark be paid his 80 hours of vacation time, seconded by Chris Raftery. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor asked Council for a motion regarding Heather Alicea to attend the annual OAPT Finance Officer’s training and OMCA Annual Conference for 2023. Sam Wiley made that motion, seconded by Chris Raftery. Motion carried with no discussion. Heather thanked Council for their approval. The Mayor reminded everyone that before the next work session on 3/28/23, there will be a special meeting to pass the budget, and then during the work session, John Courtney will present his utility review. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to approve an increase of $2.00 per hour for Colton Ott, effective 3/15/23, for successfully completing his probationary period. Sue Rogers made that motion, seconded by Chris Raftery. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to hire Chad Cheek, as Street Department Superintendent, at $22.00 per hour, upon satisfactory results of his pre-employment drug screen and physical. Joe Galea made that motion, seconded by Sam Wiley. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to allow the Village Administrator to enter into an agreement with Kleinfelder (PDG), to provide professional engineering services for the preparation and submission of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPEDS) for the renewal of the Waste Water Treatment Operating License, at a cost of $6,000. Sam Wiley made that motion, seconded by Sue Rogers. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to approve Adam Gerber’s request for Council to contribute a monetary donation for the dugout improvements at Clark Park, for the cost of the paint, in the amount of $2,829.30. Chris Raftery made that motion, seconded by Sue Rogers. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor shared a thank you letter from Pastor Dan Pennington at TLC for Christmas in the Park. The Mayor asked Council for approval to accept R.A. Bores bid for the Waterline Improvement Project. Sam Wiley made that motion, seconded by Craig Franklin. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to approve the Ohio Plan renewal for casualty and liability insurance, which is up $179.00 from last year, from Rinehart Insurance. Sue Rogers made that motion, seconded by Chris Raftery. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to approve the Ohio Plan cyber renewal, per a quote from Lloyds in the amount of $2,433.10, from Rinehart Insurance. Sue Rogers made that motion, seconded by Chris Raftery. Motion carried with no discussion.

**BOARD AND COMMISSION REPORTS**

Bob Whitacre reported that the H.R.J.F.D. met on 3/1/23. There were 7 calls in February, 2 which were in the Village. The encoder will be installed soon, and that cost is being split between the HRJFD and the Village. Tom confirmed he spoke with Fire Chief Curt Stang last week and it should be installed soon.

The Mayor advised that Records Commission meeting was held last month. Approval was given for the RC-3 form for records destruction for the Administrative Office and the form was sent to the Ohio Historical Society on 2/15/23.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS FOR PASSAGE**

The Mayor asked for a motion to suspend the rules for the following legislation. Sue Rogers made that motion, seconded by Sam Wiley. Motion carried with no discussion.

**Resolution 2023-02** *A Resolution authorizing the Fiscal Officer to advance monies from the General Fund to the Water System Improvement Project Fund and declaring an emergency* was presented for adoption. Chris Raftery made a motion, seconded by Sam Wiley, to adopt Resolution 2023-02 by title only. Motion carried with no discussion.

**Resolution 2023-03** *A Resolution authorizing the Village Administrator to enter into an agreement with Kleinfelder, Inc. for the HAB Treatment Optimization Plan and declaring an emergency* was presented for adoption. Sam Wiley made a motion, seconded by Sue Rogers, to adopt Resolution 2023-03 by title only. Motion carried with no discussion.

**Resolution 2023-04** *A Resolution authorizing the Village Administrator to enter into an agreement with Spectrum for professional services regarding the Monroeville Electric 69 Kv Asset Valuation, and declaring an emergency* was presented for adoption. Chris Raftery made a motion, seconded by Sam Wiley, to adopt Resolution 2023-04 by title only. Motion carried with no discussion.

**Resolution 2023-05** *A Resolution retroactively authorizing the Village Administrator to enter into an agreement with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for the generator grant, and declaring an emergency* was presented for adoption. Sam Wiley made a motion, seconded by Sue Rogers, to adopt Resolution 2023-05 by title only. Motion carried with no discussion.

**Resolution 2023-06** *A Resolution authorizing the Village Administrator to enter into a contract with R.A. Bores Excavating Inc. of Monroeville, Ohio, for the Waterline Improvements Project, including the resurfacing of W. Brooklyn Heights and a portion of S. Main Street, and declaring an emergency* was presented for adoption. Sam Wiley made a motion, seconded by Chris Raftery, to adopt Resolution 2023-06 by title only. Motion carried with no discussion.

**APPROVAL OF BILL SUMMARY**

Sue Rogers made a motion, seconded by Joe Galea, to approve the bill summary as presented, which included memo expenses and checks # 044833 to # 044906, for a total of $645,160.23. Motion carried with no discussion.

**COUNCIL BUSINESS**

The Mayor asked for discussion regarding Christmas in the Village, with a date of 12/9/23 proposed by the Monroeville Model Railroad Group (MMRG) and the Village Flea. The Mayor reached out to TLC and they are interested in doing the live nativity again this year. The 2nd weekend of December works well for them, but it’s usually held on Sunday in order not to interfere with St. Joe’s 5pm mass on Saturday. 12/9/23 is a Saturday and 12/10/23 is a Sunday. The Mayor and Council discussed continuing Christmas in the Park with TLC’s live nativity on 12/10, as to not interfere with St. Joe’s 5pm mass on 12/09. The Mayor asked Andy Betschman if 12/10 could work instead. Andy said as far as the MMRG goes, he thinks 12/10 would be fine. The businesses downtown want to see it done 12/9, as it’s better for their sales. A lot of the businesses want to see everything happen on one day and not split up over two days. The Mayor said Santa being in the park is the big draw, and Andy agreed. The Mayor said the library and other businesses have also had Santa, and she feels that is a little confusing. The Mayor asked if we could advertise it as a Christmas weekend and Andy said it’s what he was going to propose as well, and make it like Plymouth’s Christmas extravaganza. Chris said she likes that idea as well, as it avoids interfering with Saturday’s mass. The Mayor said then the businesses can do it on Saturday, 12/9, and Christmas in the Park will happen on Sunday afternoon, 12/10, with the live nativity later, times to be determined.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business to come before them, Sue Rogers made a motion, seconded by Craig Franklin to adjourn. Motion carried with no discussion. The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.

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Heather Alicea, Administrative Specialist

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Melissa M. Fries-Seip, Mayor

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