

On Tuesday, January 9th, 2024, at 6:05 PM, Mayor Joseph Galea 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: Joseph Galea, Mayor
Mark Miller	Tom Gray, Village Administrator
Sue Rogers	Bonnie Beck, Fiscal Officer
Bob Whitacre	Heather Alicea, Administrative Specialist
	Jim Barney, Solicitor
	Gary Lyons, Chief of Police

Also attending: Lt. Troy Kimball, Gabby Toscano & Sammy Nash from Kocher & Barney, Tammy Schlachter, Melissa Woodruff, Ken Bischoff, David Beck and Ziyah Piltz from the Attica Hub.

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

APPOINTMENT OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBER & OATH OF OFFICE

Sue Rogers made a motion to appoint Tammy Schlachter as the newest member of Council, seconded by Chris Raftery. Motion carried with no discussion. Mayor Joseph Galea administered the Oath of Office to Tammy Schlachter, to begin her term 1/9/24. Tammy then joined the other members at the Council table.

EXCUSAL OF COUNCIL MEMBER

Sam Wiley previously notified Bonnie Beck that he would be unable to attend tonight's meeting. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to excuse Sam Wiley from the meeting. Chris Raftery made that motion, seconded by Sue Rogers. Motion carried with no discussion.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Mayor asked for Council's approval of the agenda as presented. Sue Rogers made a motion, seconded by Bob Whitacre, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried with no discussion.

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES

Chris Raftery made a motion, seconded by Sue Rogers, to approve the minutes as presented from the 12/12/23 regular Council meeting and the special Council meeting 1/3/24. Motion carried with no discussion.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS

Chris Raftery made a motion, seconded by Mark Miller, to approve the December 2023 financial reports as presented. Motion carried with no discussion.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

David Beck spoke about his concerns regarding the conditions of the streets in the Village, including street repair and repaving. David realizes that the 2024 budget is probably committed to sidewalks, tech stuff and other projects, but he would like to see if it's possible to plan ahead and start a budget plan for street repair and/or repaving. Perhaps one to two streets per year can be worked on, every two to three years. This way, the Village can prioritize what streets need to be worked on first and what streets can wait. Examples of the streets that need repair or that have been neglected are: Fulton Street, Chapel Street, Horseshoe Drive, Prospect Street, Herrick Alley and Hamilton Street. The cost of asphalt is going up every year. There is an ongoing shortage of work crews and CDL drivers. Therefore, looking ahead to 2025/2026 is beneficial in regards to planning. There's financial assistance through the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC). There are funds and grants available, including for Villages that have a population of under 5000. There are sealants available to patch up some of the streets that aren't that bad, but the asphalt on other streets is crumbling and breaking away, which means the base underneath has failed. The longer Council waits to fix those, the bigger the cost is going to be. David asked Council if there is a short-term or long-term plan to address these issues. The Mayor asked David what street he lives on and David stated Horseshoe Drive. The Mayor asked if Council has any questions and asked Tom if he has any thoughts. Tom said that everything David mentioned is subject to further discussion and review. Everyone is aware that OPWC money is site designated. The Village has access to those funds and that is how Milan Avenue and River Road were repaired. There are some small grants that are available but it's a hit or miss process, and all of it's on the Village's agenda to address. Joe asked if the Village keeps an inventory of the streets, in regards to repairs that are needed and/or repairs that have been done. Tom said he doesn't currently have an up-to-date street inventory. Three or four years ago, there was discussion in regards to bringing

our civil engineering team in to do a streets inventory, in order to determine surface consistency and sub-structure. That would be a starting point to prioritize repair and upgrades to the areas in question. The Mayor asked if the 2024 budget contains any street repairs and/or general maintenance. Tom advised the 2024 budget is not complete yet. After Bonnie determines fund availability, the Village can answer as to whether or not there is any money available for street repair. Mark asked Tom if the Village can apply now for grants available in years 2025 & 2026. Tom confirmed that's possible, and that's where the Village is at right now with the grant cycle. There could be additional grants that become available, and the Village would need to respond quickly. The Mayor asked if some of those grants require engineering and Tom confirmed, and added that projects in queue and ready for construction would require engineering. A cost structure would also need to be determined if a grant is awarded.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Administrator - Tom presented his report that was previously submitted to Council. Tom spoke with the Huron County Public Health District yesterday, 1/8/24. 7-Eleven submitted their plans to begin the permitting process for food services, vending and operations at the Monroeville location. A phone call between the Health District and 7-Eleven will occur next week as to moving forward on the permits. Tom will continue to monitor the situation. Tom hasn't found any liquor permits in queue for 7-Eleven. Tom said that grants that need matches for this calendar year will have legislation brought forth to support those matches in the proper timeframe. Bob asked Tom about the grant that was submitted for the downtown parking lot. Tom said the capital budget should allow us to have information from State Rep. Swearingen's office, probably in the March to May timeframe, and money has been appropriated. Tom confirmed a soil test was already done. If the Village is successful in securing funding and if we can come up with the matching funds, we can move forward. Tom said he and the Mayor have spoken about this, and we have an opportunity to pull in some local resources to soften the impact of the costs.

Fiscal Officer – Bonnie presented her report that was previously submitted to Council. The Chief had indicated in his report that he would like to keep the City of Norwalk's prosecutor as the prosecutor for the Village of Monroeville. If Council would like to make a motion in regards to that, we can contact Steve Palmer to let him know the Village will not be utilizing his prosecution services. Bob Whitacre made a motion to continue utilizing the City of Norwalk's prosecutor as the prosecutor for the Village of Monroeville, for year 2024, seconded by Chris Raftery. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor said that he can write a letter to Steve Palmer to advise. Bonnie said that in her report, she mentioned closing one of the CD's that was opened several years ago and has a lower interest rate. Bonnie spoke with Croghan bank today. She determined that we can take two of our CD's that were set to expire in 2025 and currently have low interest rates, and combine them together as one CD for the same term of 36-months, at 3.75%. Croghan agreed to waive \$4,649 of penalties for closing out the CDs prematurely. Bonnie locked that deal in today, as the interest rates are going down daily.

Chief – Chief presented his report that was previously submitted to Council. As noted, activity is significantly down due to seasonal traffic and possibly because 7-Eleven has been temporarily closed. The new officers are still being trained, as some of them haven't made traffic stops before. Officer Reinhart had his first DUI arrest and did a good job. Chief has his department's schedule mapped out for the solar eclipse in April and he should be able to put 3-4 officers on the road, Friday through Monday. Weather is going to be the big wild card. Chief feels that parking will be a major issue. Chief spoke with a vendor in regards to securing no parking signs, 12x18 in size, fluorescent in color, and they contain punch holes that allow the sign to be tied in place. Having no parking signs in place will allow the police department to write parking tickets. Chief priced 500 signs at \$1000. Chief said Council would need to decide if the signs can be passed out to residents for use or if we should take a Village approach to posting them. The Mayor said areas would need to be identified in regards to where parking should or shouldn't take place, and then it can be determined as to where the signs should be placed. Chief said the biggest exposure will be at the reservoir as it's a wide-open space. The Mayor asked if Chief has had any communications with Norwalk or Bellevue in regards to how they are preparing and Chief said nothing yet, but it's on his agenda to make contact.

Solicitor – Jim brought Gabby Toscano and Sammy Nash, from Kocher & Barney, to the meeting. Jim introduced Sammy Nash, as she is one of his counterparts that is available, along with Gabby, if Jim isn't available. The Mayor asked how many GATSO traffic camera hearings are we averaging now. Sammy said it's around 10-15 hearings a month. Sammy has been able to get a lot of claimants to settle, which cuts down on the hearings.

Mayor – Joseph Galea thanked everyone for their support during the Mayoral transition. The Mayor encouraged Council to pay attention to what other communities/governments are doing. The City of Norwalk recently discussed giving their Council a wage increase, and the Village of Monroeville may want to consider doing the same. If an increase is given today, it wouldn't come into effect until 2026. With inflation, an increase is something to consider. For the month of January, there will not be a work session or a finance meeting. There is a great opportunity for a grant through the Ohio commission in regards to the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026. The grants are for capital improvements, with a smaller tier for programming and signage. The Mayor thinks that given the historical

nature of our Village, we would be a good candidate to apply. The Mayor said that perhaps an ad-hoc committee could be set up for this. The application is due towards the middle-end of March 2024. Further information can be found on the OML website.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Bob Whitacre reported that the H.R.J.F.D. met on 1/3/24. There were five calls in December 2023. More bids are being sought to assist with the grant they received for breathing apparatuses. The Mayor asked if there was discussion regarding recent zoning changes that are being considered. Bob said a lot of good points were brought up in regards to people living upstairs in the downtown buildings business district, but there's some work yet to do on that.

Chris Raftery spoke in regards to the Planning Commission meeting that was held 1/8/24. The meeting was opened with a public hearing for the conditional use request for 5, 7 and 9 S Main Street. Members of the HRJFD attended the meeting and made their recommendations. The Planning Commission reviewed a letter they received from an engineering firm regarding residential inspections. All of this information will help the Planning Commission proceed with allowing the residents of 5, 7 and 9 S Main Street to live on the 2nd and 3rd floors of the building. There was also a presentation regarding a property on Sandusky Street. The site plan wasn't "technically" provided, but with the presentation, the request was accepted. The Planning Commission granted permission, but they will require engineering to go forward and everything be in place before ground is broken. There was an introduction to cannabis operations. The Planning Commission is in the very beginning stages of reviewing this, whether they would permit this, where they would permit this, etc. If permitted, they would lean towards the Industrial Parkway.

APPROVAL OF BILL SUMMARY

Sue Rogers made a motion, seconded by Chris Raftery, to approve the bill summary as presented, which included memo expenses and check # 045673 to check # 045741, for a total of \$771,524.35. Motion carried with no discussion.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

The Mayor asked if the Council members who are currently listed on a committee wish to remain on those committees. Council confirmed. The Mayor appointed these Council members to serve on the following committees: Chris Raftery, Bob Whitacre and Sam Wiley to serve on the Finance/Audit Committee; Chris Raftery, Sue Rogers and Tammy Schlachter to serve on the Service/Utilities Committee; Mark Miller, Sue Rogers and Sam Wiley to serve on the Employee Relations/Grievance Committee; and Mark Miller, Sue Rogers and Bob Whitacre to serve on the Safety Committee. The Legislative Committee was eliminated. The Mayor re-appointed Jim Morrow to the Planning Commission. The Mayor appointed Tammy Schlachter as the Council Rep. for the Shade Tree Commission. The Mayor advised Bob Whitacre will remain as the Council Rep. for the HRJFD. The Mayor asked for a motion for the appointments/re-appointments for the 2024 standing Council Committees. Chris Raftery made that motion, seconded by Sue Rogers. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor asked for a motion for the re-appointment of Jim Morrow to the 2024 Planning Commission. Chris Raftery made that motion, seconded by Sue Rogers. Motion carried with no discussion. Mark Miller made a motion for Chris Raftery to remain as Council president pro-tem, seconded by Tammy Schlachter. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor advised ad-hoc committees will be discussed in the future and asked Ken Bischoff and Melissa Woodruff to consider joining per the ideas they had for the downtown area. Ken and Melissa both confirmed interest in joining. The Mayor advised he edited the public participation policy in the rules of Council in order to streamline the process and he sent those changes to the Council members via email. There was a duplication in regards to the time allotted to a speaker at a Council meeting and he corrected it to be clear that speakers have a five-minute timeframe in which to speak. The Mayor said there was a rule about behavior and language that he removed, as he believes he would have a hard time enforcing that because it's too vague. The Mayor said he obviously doesn't want speakers to refer to people by name or use vulgar/profane language and behavior. The Mayor said he desires to make easy and clear rules to follow for those coming in to speak, and asked Council for their thoughts. Council members agreed they are fine with his changes. Chris Raftery made a motion to accept the 2024 Rules of Council, including the amendments from the Mayor, seconded by Mark Miller. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor asked Council for a motion to approve the requisition list previously provided by Bonnie Beck via e-mail. Sue Rogers made that motion, seconded by Chris Raftery. Motion carried with no discussion.

(David Beck left the meeting at 6:58 PM. Kenneth Bischoff left the meeting at 7:00 PM).

Chris stated that in one of Tom's prior reports, he mentioned that Council is welcome to visit the Village Administrative Department, as well as the Water/Wastewater/Street/Electric departments. Chris would

like to bring that forward now since there are new Council members. The Mayor expressed an interest as well. Tom confirmed the Mayor and Council can contact him and he can set up dates/times for visits. It takes about 4-hours and he prefers to have one person at a time. Chris asked if Tom can provide a map of the locations, including sub-stations, etc. Tom confirmed a map can be prepared. Bonnie advised Council members are welcome to stop in the Village Administrative Office at any time.

Sue asked for a status regarding the blighted property on Horseshoe Drive. Bonnie said she spoke with the deceased owner's son in December 2023, in regards to questions about property taxes and she referred him to the Huron County Auditor's office. He didn't indicate any new developments about the property to Bonnie. Tom said we are still dealing with a similar issue on the west end of town.

The Mayor said because the Village is joint owners with Monroeville Local Schools regarding the Hamilton Street lot, one thing that was expressed to the Mayor today is that the Village has been doing the majority of the lawn mowing of the lot. The Mayor asked Tom to confirm if this is correct. The Mayor also asked if the Village has paid property taxes on the lot. Bonnie said nothing has been paid yet, that won't be done until the 2nd half of the year. Bonnie asked Jim why the Village is listed as the only owner of the parcel. Jim said it's most likely because they can't fit two names in the computer system. Jim said per the ORC, the Village and the school shouldn't have to pay property taxes. Jim said the Village should be able to apply for tax exemption. Jim said he thinks it will need to be a joint application between the Village and the school. He will reach out to the attorney for the school board to move forward with applying for exemption. The Mayor asked Tom, Bonnie and Jim if a maintenance agreement between the Village and the school can be prepared. Tom said that issue has been addressed and the individual responsible for the maintenance of the facilities has been given the ok to participate. Tom said he can discuss this further in a non-public session. The Mayor asked if there has been any discussion with the school board in regards to what we are going to do with the lot. Jim said he hasn't heard from anyone since the Village and the school purchased the lot. Bonnie mentioned the lot may be an area to consider for parking during the solar event. Tom said there's been casual conversation between the Village and the school regarding what to do with the lot, as well as Marsh Field, and that there are issues with both locations.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Sue Rogers made a motion, seconded by Chris Raftery, to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing impending litigation. (Melissa Woodruff exited the meeting at 7:08 PM). The meeting adjourned to executive session at 7:09 PM and reconvened at 7:34 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to come before them, Mark Miller made a motion, seconded by Sue Rogers, to adjourn. Motion carried with no discussion. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Heather Alicea, Administrative Specialist

Joseph Galea, Mayor

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