

Village of St. Paris
April 17, 2023
Council Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The invocation prayer was led by Pastor Scott Barger of the St. Paris Church of God.

Roll call was taken by Mayor Brenda Cook. Joe Curran, Terry Ervin II, Lynn Miller, Susan Prince, Sam Ronicker and Randy Smith were present. Village Administrator Spencer Mitchell, Fiscal Officer Marc McGuire and Chief of Police Eric Smith were also present.

Motion was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Ervin to approve the Council agenda, as amended. Motion passed.

Public Comments on Agenda Items:

-Joyce Bowlin, 274 W. Poplar Street, stated that money should be used to pay off loans before investing into Certificate of Deposits. She was also concerned about the long-term implications to the community if the municipal building is sold, more specifically about the implications to the food pantry and food truck.

-Frank Blair, 203 Dugan Street, noted that he has flags for the cemetery for Memorial Day and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts will help put the flags at veteran's grave sites. Mr. Blair also gave Council a petition signed by residents with most opposing the sale of the municipal building. He questioned the dollar amount that is currently in Fund 4092 (Capital Projects 370 E. Main Fund) and that there is not enough money in the fund to build a new municipal building.

-Tom Jess, 332 E. Main Street, thinks the selling the municipal building is a good idea stating that sometimes change is needed to help a community grow.

-Lisa Taylor, 3903 Kiser Lake Road and owner of downtown building, would rather see Council address the needs of the crumbling downtown buildings on Springfield Street and stated that if Council would invest in these buildings, then it would encourage small businesses to open.

-Jim Taylor, 3903 Kiser Lake Road and owner of downtown building, stated he does not understand why Council would want to sell the municipal building that is currently being utilized, there are other buildings not being utilized that could be sold.

-Clay Ruffner, 3710 Kiser Lake Road and downtown business owner, stated that Council needs to consider the current asking price of the municipal building as it is too low for a commercial property. Mr. Ruffner is also concerned about the new business, if the municipal building is sold, directly competing with a current coffee shop on Springfield Street.

-Paul Hershberger, 138 E. Plum Street, does not think that the municipal offices should relocate to the water plant, if the municipal building is sold. He stated that the offices should be in the center of town and that Council should work on incentives to bring businesses to St. Paris.

-Frank Blair again spoke by saying that Council would be handing the building, that is paid for, away after putting upgrades into the building.

-Gaye Carafa, owner of St. Paris Pharmacy & Wellness located at 122 S. Springfield Street, asked what the vision was for 370 E. Main Street, the old junior high site, and suggested that Council have a capital campaign to raise money to put into Fund 4092 (Capital Projects 370 E. Main Fund). Mrs. Carafa also expressed that it is encouraging to see the interest the public has had in attending recent council meetings.

Motion was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Smith to approve the Council meeting minutes dated April 3, 2023. Motion passed.

The presentation of financials dated March 31, 2023 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Ervin to approve the financial reports as presented. A roll call vote was taken and Council voted in favor 6-0. Motion passed.

The presentation of the Bank Reconciliation dated March 31, 2023 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Miller to approve the Bank Reconciliation. A roll call vote was taken and Council voted in favor 6-0. Motion passed.

The presentation of Water/Sewer Account Adjustments dated March 31, 2023 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Ervin to approve the Water/Sewer Account Adjustments. A roll call vote was taken and Council voted in favor 6-0. Motion passed.

Mayor's Notes:

- The St. Paris Police Department was named the recipient of the "High Five for Heroes" Award for the week of April 3, 2023. The department was nominated for their sacrificial and selfless service to St. Paris.
- The Culpepper & Merriweather Circus is coming to St. Paris on Monday, May 22, 2023 and performing a show at 5:00 PM and another at 7:30 PM. This is being brought to the village by the Pony Wagon Days Committee.
- The St. Paris Library is having a Masquerade Murder Mystery Theater on May 5, 2023 at 6:00 PM at the library. Enjoy dancing, hors d'oeuvres and mocktails while sinister deeds happen throughout the library. Contact the library for tickets and all proceeds benefit the Friends of the Library.
- Spring clean-up week is April 24th – April 28th. All burnable yard items (branches, leaves, etc.) can be set out by the curb by residents for pickup during the week.
- Memorial Day Ceremony will be held at Evergreen Cemetery on May, 29, 2023 beginning at 9:00 AM. The ceremony is sponsored by the Our Town St. Paris Association.
- Champaign County YMCA is conducting yoga classes at Harmon Park every Thursday starting at 12:30 PM.
- The Champaign Health District received Mosquito Control Grant funding for 2023. The health district will reimburse the village for a portion of the cost to mosquito spray.
- St. Paris will experience a total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. The Champaign County Visitor's Bureau is organizing a committee for tourism during the eclipse. Anyone wanting to join the committee needs to contact Polly Trenor at the visitor's bureau.
- Graham High School is having a Baccalaureate Program on May 17, 2023 at 4:30 PM with the graduation ceremony being held on May 19, 2023 at 7:00 PM.

Police Department:

- For the month of March, there were 26 recordable calls for service, 2 arrests and 0 traffic citations issued.
- Annual Chief training and conference in Columbus from April 23rd thru April 25th. Hold the Line K9 training in Pittsburg, PA from May 2nd thru May 4th. Crimes Against Women training and conference in Dallas, TX from May 22nd – May 25th.
- Mayor Cook administered the Oath of Office to Andrew Diener, a new part-time police officer.

Administrator:

- Work continues on W. Lynn Street project. Curbs, gutters and driveway approaches is work to begin during the week of April 17, 2023.
- An estimate was received regarding the repair of the west wall at the police building. To gain access to the building, the Chief of Police will need to schedule the repair work.
- The sewer plant is in the process of updating the SCADA system.

Committee Appointments and Discussion:

- **Budget:**
 - The committee will meet in May to discuss the 2024 revenue budget.
- **JSP Fire Board:**
 - The next meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the firehouse.
- **Land & Buildings:**
 - The next meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2023 at 10:00 AM in the council room.
- **Park & Trees:**
 - The next meeting is scheduled for May 2, 2023 at 10:00 AM in the council room.
- **Planning Commission:**
 - The next meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2023 at 7:30 PM in the council room.
- **Safety:**
 - Councilor Ronicker encourage Chief Smith to be a part of the solar eclipse committee being organized by the Champaign County Visitor's Bureau.

Old Business:

- Mayor Cook and Fiscal Officer McGuire met with Karen Hart, President and CEO of First Central National Bank, and discussed certificate of deposit rates. Council received the letter from Mrs. Hart outlining a certificate deposit interest rate of 2.10% for a 12-month term with the deposit ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000. The letter states that if rates would decline before the end of April 2023, the quoted rate would be honored. If rates would rise, Mrs. Hart offer a revised deposit rate. The letter also outlined an increase from .6% to 1.05% interest rate for the village’s current checking account.
- Beth McCain, Office Manager for the Champaign Economic Partnership, stated that Jeff Jordan has rescinded the offer for the purchase of municipal building. **Motion** was made by Councilor Smith and seconded by Councilor Prince to bring an Ordinance to Council to take the municipal building off the market to be sold. Motion passed with Councilor Curran opposing.

New Business:

- Mayor Cook and Village Administrator Mitchell explained that the zoning ordinance for St. Paris downtown storefront living is conflicting, according to the Logan-Union-Champaign Planning Commission (LUC). Mayor Cook suggested that the Planning Commission discuss this matter at their next meeting on May 4th and possibly invite a member of the LUC to join the meeting.
- 2-hour parking restriction enforcement. A few businesses have security cameras, showing the street, that can be reviewed by the police for enforcement of the 2-hour parking. Tenants of the downtown businesses are parking in the restricted zone. It was suggested that owners of the downtown business, who have tenants living on the premise, should convey the message that parking is not allowed on S. Springfield Street. Also discussed was the viability of having angle parking and not parallel parking along S. Springfield Street. Administrator Mitchell explained that this was looked into and the street is not wide enough to allow angle parking and have enough space for 2 lane traffic.
- Mayor Cook asked Council if they would like to schedule a special meeting, per the request of Attorney Dinkler, to hold an executive session to discuss pending litigation. **Motion** was made by Councilor Curran and seconded by Councilor Smith to schedule a council special meeting on April 19, 2023 at 7:00 PM. Motion passed with Councilor Ronicker opposing.

Public Comments:

- Joyce Bowlin, 274 W. Poplar Street, thanked Council for not selling the municipal building. Ms. Bowlin also stated that back when her husband was on Council, downtown store front living was prohibited.
- Frank Blair, 203 Dugan Street, asked council to put the council meetings back on Zoom. Mr. Blair is angry about the flag pole at the police station not being fixed and a flag not hanging on the pole. He also was concerned about the mold in the police station and how it is a health hazard.
- Clay Ruffner, 3710 Kiser Lake Road and downtown business owner, stated that the low certificate of deposit rate at First Central National Bank was laughable and better rates could be found online.

There being no further business, **motion** was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Smith to adjourn at 8:32 PM. Motion passed.

Marc McGuire, Fiscal Officer

Brenda Cook, Mayor

Date