

Village of St. Paris
October 16, 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 Jeremy Spence of the First Baptist Church St. Paris.

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 Mark 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. Motion passed.

Public Comments on Agenda Items: none

Motion was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Smith to approve the Council meeting minutes dated October 2, 2023. Motion passed.

The presentation of financials dated September 30, 2023 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Curran 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 September 30, 2023 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Ervin 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 September 30, 2023 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Smith 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:

- JSP Fire Chief Vance McCulla was not in attendance and discussed the upcoming JSP Fire Levy that is on the ballot for the November election. The levy is a renewal plus an additional 2.65 mill. As explained, the fire district is currently working with and operating on year 2009 funding.
- Beggar's Night will be held on October 31, 2023 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.
- Mayor Cook shared a thank you from Joyce Bowlin for the get-well card that was signed by Council at the last meeting.
- Connie Cupps, President of Our Town-St. Paris Association, discussed Christmas in the Village that planned for December 2, 2023. The event begins at 1:00 PM and will end with the lighted parade that starts at 6:00 PM. Activities include carriage rides, a hot chocolate bar, children's games, a live Santa for which kids can have their pictures taken with, a collection box for His Hands Sanctuary, a decorated sleigh at the bank parking lot, food vendors, a Christmas store opened by Tony Brecount, a Christmas Cookie contest held at Longbow's, wreath making at the St. Paris Pharmacy, ornament making at the library, and various vendors at the municipal building. A Christmas tree will be placed in front of the municipal building and the Graham High School choir will sing Christmas carols during the lighting of the tree at 5:30 PM.

Police Department:

- For the month of September, there were 44 recordable calls for service, 5 arrests for 8 criminal charges.
- Both K9's have been recertified for the year.
- Officer's are working on getting their 24 hours of Continuous Professional Training completed.
- Chief Smith distributed paperwork regarding the possible purchase of 2 2023 Ford Explorers completely outfitted for K9's. The estimated cost is \$129,926.88. Mayor Cook asked if the discussion of the cruiser purchase should be taken to the Safety Committee for review. Councilor Curran wants to see if purchasing cruisers would fit into the budget for 2024 and the possibility of not having K9's. Councilor Prince stated that the K9, Thor, is property of the Village and not his handler, Officer Pennington, and Councilor Prince noted that it is a Council decision on whether to have a K9. Councilor Ronicker asked how often the K9's get recertified. The K9's got their recertifications in September and it is done annually. Councilor Smith mentioned that Chief Smith needs an answer soon when it comes to the purchase of new cruisers. Councilor Ervin noted that Council needs to be good stewards of the Village's money and how it is spent. Councilor Ronicker suggested that the Safety Committee needs to meet and have a more in-depth study of purchasing cruisers and whether or not the Village needs new cruisers and if so, then make the cruiser fit the Village needs. Councilor Ronicker will meet with the Fiscal Officer to review the current police budget and have that information available at the next Safety Committee meeting.
- Jeff Wooten, from Wooten Automotive, donated \$150 to the Police Department for the purchase of Halloween items for Beggar's Night.
- Officer Ashton Morgan resigned his part-time position as a Police Officer effective October 3, 2023.

Administrator:

- The exterior renovations at Harmon Park is underway. Completed is the pouring of all the concrete surrounding the building, a new ramp to the parking lot, concrete around the monuments and flag pole, and concrete in other needed areas. Administrator Mitchell presented pictures to Council of the work in progress.

- Progress is being made on the replacement playground equipment at Harmon Park. The language/project will be out to bid prior to the November Council meeting. The project will be bid in 2023 with construction in 2024.
- 3 Conditional Use Permits applications will be heard by the St. Paris Board of Zoning Appeals on Thursday, November 2, 2023. The meeting will be held in the council room at 6:00 PM.
- Construction on the West Lynn Street mailboxes will begin October 18th. All property owners that were impacted have received letters with this information.
- Fall Clean-Up will be October 16th thru October 20th. Leaf collection will start in the coming weeks.
- Councilor Smith asked if the Village had a building for road salt storage. Administrator Mitchell explained that there is not a building exclusively for salt storage, but discussion has revolved around constructing a building that could store both stone and salt. However, building materials are expensive and the project has not been a priority. Administrator Mitchell noted that when it comes to winter and snow plowing, the street department will be prepared in advance for whatever the weather situation is.

Committee Discussion:

Budget: none

JSP Fire Board:

- The JSP Fire District is having a fish fry on October 21, 2023 from 4:00 – 7:00 PM at the firehouse.
- The next meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the firehouse.

Land & Buildings:

- The next meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2023 at 10:00 AM in the council room. Discussion will involve potential 370 E. Main Street development ideas.

Park & Trees: none

Planning Commission:

- The next meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2023 at 7:30 PM in the council room.

Safety:

- At the last Safety Committee Meeting, a business owner inquired about doing alarm testing. The details of this testing are being worked on between the business owner and the police department. It was asked by the business owner if the police could do more “door pulls” on businesses after they are closed to ensure doors are locked. The business owners are meeting to discuss a downtown business neighborhood security watch plan.

Old Business: none

New Business:

- Ordinance 2023-7 Zoning Amendment. The amendment to the zoning ordinance was distributed to Council and revolves around adding the rural residential district, specifically section 570 (Agriculture) and section 571 (roadside produce stands). Councilor Ervin noted the language changes, as requested by Council, to the amendment. Councilor Ronicker noted that Ordinance 355 already does not allow animals within the village corporation limits and if Ordinance 2023-7 supersedes the Ordinance 355. It was explained that Ordinance 2023-7 pertains only to the new rural residential district zoning and not specifically to the residential zoning of the village. **Motion** was made by Councilor Ervin and seconded by Councilor Prince to conduct the first reading of Ordinance 2023-7. Motion passed and the first reading of Ordinance 2023-7 is complete. The second reading of Ordinance 2023-7 will be held at the next regularly scheduled council meeting on November 6, 2023.
- A draft of Resolution 1315-5, Establish Salaries and Wage Ranges was discussed by Council. Councilor Ervin noted that he was not in favor of having wage ranges for exempt, salaried employees and Council agreed. Mayor Cook reviewed the hourly wage ranges as recommended by the Chief of Police and Village Administrator. Councilor Prince suggested that the Police Sargent classification should not be a salaried position and Council agreed. Resolution 1315-5 will be revised for the noted changes and returned to Council for a vote a future council meeting. Councilor Smith inquired about health insurance and if there is any new information on the employees being “shopped around” for better premiums. Fiscal Officer McGuire noted that he has spoken with the health insurance representative and they are working on getting better rates.

Public Comments:

- Frank Blair, 203 Dugan Street, asked if the Evilsizor Trust money given to the Village for capital improvements was being used for the current renovations at the park. Fiscal Officer McGuire noted that the trust money is being used for the renovations at Harmon Park. Mr. Blair also inquired to why the lights at Lafayette Park are not working. The lights use electric from a neighboring business owner and there is no agreement between the owner and the Village as to the providing of the electric. Administrator Mitchell stated that he could work with Miami Valley Lighting (who provides maintenance on street lighting within the Village) to have new light poles installed at Lafayette Park. This project could be put into the 2024 appropriations.

There being no further business, **motion** was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Ronicker to adjourn at 9:07 PM. Motion passed.