

Village of St. Paris
December 4, 2023
Council Meeting

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

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

Roll call was taken by Mayor Brenda Cook. Terry Ervin II, Lynn Miller, Susan Prince, Sam Ronicker and Randy Smith were present. Joe Curran was absent but arrived at the meeting at 7:23 PM. Village Administrator Spencer Mitchell, Fiscal Officer Marc McGuire and Chief of Police Eric Smith were also present.

Motion was made by Councilor Ervin and seconded by Councilor Smith to approve the Council agenda. Motion passed.

Public Comments on Agenda Items: none

Motion was made by Councilor Smith and seconded by Councilor Ervin to approve the Council meeting minutes dated November 20, 2023. Motion passed.

Mayor's Notes:

- Lifewise Academy is having a Graham Open House on Monday, December 11, 2023 from 5:00 – 8:00 PM. The open house is at the Evans-Purk Building located at 103 S. Church Street in St. Paris.
- Mayor Cook re-appointed Alan Bollinger to the Village of St. Paris Planning Commission. Mayor Cook asked for Council approval. **Motion** was made by Councilor Ervin and seconded by Councilor Prince to approve Mayor Cook's re-appointment of Alan Bollinger to the Planning Commission. Motion passed. Mr. Bollinger's term is a six-year term per Ohio Revised Code and runs from January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2029.
- Mayor Cook informed Council of an Ohio Municipal League (OML) video training. The topics covered in the training include Structure of Local and State Government, Constituent Relations, Government Finance, Ethics, Public Records and Civility.

Old Business:

- Ordinance 2023-8 – Amending the Municipal Income Tax Ordinance. Due to Ohio House Bill 33, the state's biennium budget bill, changes were made to the Ohio municipal income tax law and these amendments need to be adopted by municipalities to existing income tax ordinances. The Regional Income Tax Agency, (RITA) asks that these amendments be adopted and in effect prior to January 1, 2024. Ordinance 2023-8 does not repeal the existing St. Paris income tax ordinance, it only makes amendments as outlined by RITA. Mayor Cook conducted the second reading of Ordinance 2023-8. The third and final reading will be held at the next regularly scheduled council meeting on December 18, 2023.
- Resolution 1313-5 – Establish Salaries and Wage Ranges. Council discussed the varying hourly pay range scales. Councilor Ervin noted that there is no downside to lowering the starting minimum hourly pay ranges. Councilor Prince stated that giving pay raises affects more than just the salary line items in the budget. It affects how much is paid by the village in retirement for the employees as well as the increase in the amount of payroll taxes. Mayor Cook noted that it is a Council decision to set the wage ranges, but it is the Administrator and Chief of Police's decision as to where to place the pay rate for employees within the wage range. Council reviewed Resolution 1315-5 and a **motion** was made by Councilor Smith and seconded by Councilor Prince to change the Police Sargent hourly rate range to \$20.00/hour - \$23.00/hour. A roll call vote was taken and Council voted in favor 4-2 with Councilor Miller and Councilor Ronicker voting against. Motion passed. Council also made corrections to the resolution regarding lowering the starting minimum hourly pay ranges. Mayor Cook read Resolution 1313-5, as amended. **Motion** was made by Councilor Prince and seconded by Councilor Smith to approve Resolution 1313-5. A roll call vote was taken and Council voted in favor 6-0. Motion passed.

- Resolution 1373 – 2024 Temporary Appropriations. Councilor Smith and Councilor Ronicker questioned the \$100,000 temporarily appropriated to the Pony Wagon Trail Fund. Councilor Curran explained how state capital projects work and the state has allotted \$100,000 to the Village of St. Paris for the Pony Wagon Trail project. The Village fronts the original expenditures (up to \$100,000) and is then reimbursed by the state, making it a net \$0 expenditure to the Village. The Village would work with a 501(c) organization named “Friends of the Pony Wagon Trail” to determine how best to use the state awarded money. The \$100,000 would pay for easements for the trail as well as an engineering study. Councilor Ronicker inquired to who the land owners are that the Village would need to get easements. Mayor Cook noted that the land owners were Mark Runkle, Terry Howell, JSP Fire District, David Uhl and Debbie Hill. **Motion** was made by Councilor Ronicker and seconded by Councilor Smith to remove the \$100,000 from the Pony Wagon Trail Fund 2024 temporary appropriations. A roll call vote was taken and Council voted to a 3-3 tie with Councilor Prince, Councilor Curran and Councilor Ervin voting against. With the tied vote, Mayor Cook voted against the motion. Motion failed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Ervin and seconded by Councilor Prince to approve Resolution 1373 as presented. A roll call vote was taken and Council voted to a 3-3 tie with Councilor Ronicker, Councilor Smith and Councilor Miller voting against. With the tied vote, Mayor Cook voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed.
- Councilor Ervin expressed his opinion, in a letter he drafted, in addressing the complaints filed against a current council member. Mayor Cook noted that the complaints were forwarded to the Village Solicitor and Drew Esposito (Human Resource attorney) for review.

New Business:

- Resolution 1374 – Indigent Defendants. Mayor Cook read Resolution 1374. **Motion** was made by Councilor Smith and seconded by Councilor Miller to approve Resolution 1374. A roll call vote was taken and Council voted in favor 6-0. Motion passed.

Public Comments:

- Charlene Hess, 240 W. Troy Street, stated, in regards to the Ohio Municipal League training as referred in the Mayor’s Notes, that each council member should be responsible to be educated as to how village government operates and that ignorance to the rules is no excuse. Ms. Hess also noted that you get what you pay for when setting salary and hourly pay ranges. The village needs people who know how to do the job. Ms. Hess also stated that “stinky” is the word for the \$100,000 being temporarily appropriated to the Pony Wagon Trail Fund.
- Frank Blair, 203 Dugan Street, stated that it seems that the Pony Wagon Trail is a back-door deal and has no plan.
- Councilor Prince thanked Janie Douglas, of Family Country Cuts, for raising \$2,188 in the cut-a-thon to raise money for a local family who lost their house to fire.

There being no further business, **motion** was made by Councilor Smith and seconded by Councilor Miller to adjourn at 8:47 PM. Motion passed.

Marc McGuire, Fiscal Officer

Brenda Cook, Mayor

Date