

**Village of St. Paris
November 18, 2024
Council Meeting**

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

Roll call was taken by Mayor Susan Prince. Frank Blair, Joe Curran, Terry Ervin II, Tony Hoyt, Linda Julien and Steve Lett were present. Village Administrator Spencer Mitchell and Fiscal Officer Marc McGuire were also present.

Motion was made by Councilor Lett and seconded by Councilor Hoyt to approve the council agenda. Motion passed.

Public Comments on Agenda Items:

- Betty Smith, 127 S. High Street, asked about the numbers for how much the Sheriff department would cost next year. Ms. Smith stated that the village residents should be heard and not disband the police department.
- Charlene Hess, 240 W. Troy Street, asked that the titles for the ordinances and resolutions be listed on the agenda. Ms. Hess questioned that there was no second motion at a previous council meeting to bring Ordinance 2024-10 to council to be read. It was noted that an ordinance does not need a motion and vote to be brought to the table.
- John DiPietro, President of Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Ohio Lodge 117, asked to table Ordinance 2024-10 and suggested a study be done on the need for a local police department.
- Tony Whitman, 340 E. Main Street and downtown business owner, said Councilor Curran's math is wrong when it comes to having the Sheriff patrol St. Paris and questioned the Fiscal Officer on whether he agreed with Councilor Curran's numbers.
- Doug Baugher, 221 N. Springfield, asked when the police will be coming back to the village.
- Shelley Valdez, 217 W. Plum Street, stated that council should think about the consequences to the village if there is no police department and she has a petition circulating to keep the police department.
- Jeff Wooten, downtown business owner, asked what the real agenda is in trying to get rid of the police.
- Theresa Ronicker, 210 W. Plum Street, stated that council is trying to destroy St. Paris.

Motion was made by Councilor Ervin and seconded by Councilor Lett to approve the public hearing meeting minutes dated November 4, 2024. Motion passed.

Motion was made by Councilor Lett and seconded by Councilor Blair to approve the council meeting minutes dated November 4, 2024. Motion passed.

Mayor's Notes:

- Christmas in the Village is December 7, 2024.
- The community pancake breakfast is November 23, 2024 from 8:00 – 10:00 AM in the municipal garage.

The presentation of financials dated October 31, 2024 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Ervin and seconded by Councilor Lett 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 October 31, 2024 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Lett 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 October 31, 2024 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Lett and seconded by Councilor Hoyt to approve the Water/Sewer Account Adjustments. A roll call vote was taken and council voted in favor 6-0. Motion passed.

The presentation of the Appropriation Supplemental dated October 31, 2024 was reviewed. **Motion** was made by Councilor Hoyt and seconded by Councilor Julien to approve the Appropriation Supplemental. A roll call vote was taken and council voted in favor 6-0. Motion passed.

Administrator: no report

Committee Reports:

Finance:

- The committee met on November 18, 2024 and reviewed Ordinance 2024-4 regarding water/wastewater rate increases. The committee agreed to recommend passage of Ordinance 2024-4 to council.

JSP Fire Board:

- The next meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2024 at 7:00 PM at the firehouse.

Park, Land & Buildings: none

Planning Commission:

- The next meeting is scheduled for December 5, 2024 at 7:30 PM in the council room.

Safety:

- The committee met on November 14, 2024 and discussed safety concerns regarding bus stops and vehicle speeding.

Street: none

Zoning Enforcement:

- The committee met as an introduction into what their responsibilities would be as a committee.

Old Business:

- Ordinance 2024-9 Amending Ordinance 420 to rezone 604 E Main Street from M-2 to B-3. Mayor Prince conducted the third and final reading of Ordinance 2024-9. **Motion** was made by Councilor Lett and seconded Councilor Ervin to approve Ordinance 2024-9. A roll call vote was taken and council voted in favor 6-0.
- Ordinance 2024-4 Water/Wastewater Rate Increase. **Motion** was made by Councilor Lett and seconded by Councilor Ervin to untable Ordinance 2024-4. The Ordinance was tabled by council on August 12, 2024. Mayor Prince conducted the second reading of Ordinance 2024-4. Councilor Ervin discussed the possibility of removing the annual 4% increase to the water/wastewater rates that would begin in January 2026. Councilor Hoyt noted that there has been no rate increase since 2017 and other municipalities do have an annual percentage rate increase as part of the rate increase structure. **Motion** was made by Councilor Lett and seconded by Councilor Hoyt to keep the annual 4% rate increase as read in Ordinance 2024-4. A roll call vote was taken and council voted to a 3-3 tie, with Councilor Curran, Councilor Ervin and Councilor Blair voting against. Mayor Prince voted against to break the tie. Motion failed. The annual 4% rate increase language will be removed from Ordinance 2024-4. With a material change to Ordinance 2024-4, conducting a second reading is required and will be held at the next regularly scheduled council meeting on December 2, 2024.

New Business:

- Resolution 1383 – Vacation Buy Back, Village Administrator. Mayor Prince read Resolution 1383. Councilor Ervin asked if there was enough money appropriated for the payment of unused vacation. Fiscal Officer McGuire confirmed that there was. **Motion** was made by Councilor Lett and seconded by Councilor Blair to approve Resolution 1383. A roll call vote was taken and Council voted in favor 6-0. Motion passed. Payment will be made with the first payroll date in December.
- Resolution 1384 – Vacation Buy Back, Chief of Police. Mayor Prince read Resolution 1384. **Motion** was made by Councilor Lett and seconded by Councilor Blair to approve Resolution 1384. A roll call vote was taken and Council voted in favor 6-0. Motion passed. Payment will be made with the first payroll date in December.
- Ordinance 2024-10 – Dissolve Village of St. Paris Police Department. Mayor Prince read Ordinance 2024-10 as an emergency reading. Councilor Curran outlined that the ordinance is not about removing police protection, but having a different form of law enforcement. Councilor Curran noted that local policing is expensive and, on average, the St. Paris police provided 94 hours of coverage per week since January 2023, and that the Sheriff can offer professional policing for the village. Councilor Curran stated current Mayor has an excellent relationship with the Sheriff department and he remarked that our current policing model is not working for the village. Councilor Ervin questioned if the ordinance should not be read as an emergency because nothing would immediately change if the ordinance was passed now or later. Councilor Ervin stated he wants what is best for the village and wants to see how the current short-term contract with the Sheriff is working for the village. Councilor Ervin expressed concern on trying to make a good decision on village policing without knowing what a Sheriff contract would be in 2025. Councilor Lett noted that he has spoke with other village residents and the consensus was that it did not matter if it was the police or the sheriff providing law enforcement for the village. **Motion** was made by Councilor Lett and seconded by Councilor Curran for Ordinance 2024-10 be kept as an emergency ordinance. A roll call vote was taken and council voted against 4-2, with Councilor Ervin, Councilor Hoyt, Councilor Julien and Council Blair voting against. Motion failed. The language in Section 9, Declaring Emergency, will be removed from the ordinance. The second reading of Ordinance 2024-10 will be held at the next regularly scheduled council meeting on December 2, 2024.

Public Comments:

- Betty Smith, 127 S. High Street, agreed that it is premature to do away with the police without a contract from the Sheriff.
- Tony Whitman, 340 E. Main Street and downtown business owner, stated the numbers don't work and that Councilor Curran needs removed from council.
- Charlene Hess, 240 W. Troy Street, thanked Councilor Ervin for caring about the community and she noted that the Sheriff department is short staffed and would not be able to take care of the village. Ms. Hess stated that council works for the residents of the village.
- Jim Dail, business owner located on Plum Street, stated that there is no data to look at and an analysis needs to be done on multiple alternatives to policing. Mr. Dail noted that it is hard to trust what is happening and the motives behind it.

- Ron McKamy, 132 W. Poplar Street, stated that his granddaughter is now carrying mace and wants to learn how to handle a weapon because she is scared of who is watching her. Mr. McKamy noted this village is a traffic for drugs and he voiced concern on the vehicle speeding.
- Shelley Valdez, 217 W. Plum Street, stated that a police levy needs to be on the ballot and that she has signatures to get rid of the members of council.
- Terri Henson, 237 W. Walnut Street, stated her support for the police department and that a levy needs to be on the ballot and give the choice to the residents.
- John DiPietro, President of Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Ohio Lodge 117, spoke about Erica Barga's validation in wrongful termination and Eric Smith's case being dismissed.
- Jeff Wooten, downtown business owner, questioned why a police levy has not been on the ballot since 2017.
- Tracy Faulkner thanked certain council members for staying after the last council meeting to discuss the police department, questioned the \$50,000 appropriated to the Pony Wagon Trail and asked when the Chief would be back on duty.

There being no further business, **motion** was made by Councilor Curran and seconded by Councilor Lett to adjourn at 8:29 PM. Motion passed.

Marc McGuire, Fiscal Officer

Susan Prince, Mayor

Date