

Village of Harveysburg

Village Council

October 23, 2023 – 7:00 PM

Present:

- Mayor Richard Verga
- Jim Nelson – Councilman
- Pat Bennett – Councilman
- Kim Herberth – Councilwoman
- Randy Carruthers – Councilman
- Charles Juniel – Councilman
- Mark Tipton – President of Council

Absent:

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Village Staff Present:

- Chase Kirby – Village Solicitor
- Mary Wilkie – Fiscal Officer
- Heather Matuszak – Clerk of Council

Visitors / Guests:

- Kevin Brewer – Harveysburg Resident
- Christian Foster – Harveysburg Resident
- Jonathan Funk – Harveysburg Resident

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*This is a summary of the meeting of the Harveysburg Village Council held October 23, 2023, at 7:00 PM.
Upon request, a recording of the meeting is available for review.*
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Mayor Verga calls the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call: Nelson, Bennett, Herberth, Carruthers, Tipton, Juniel

Disposition of Previous Minutes:

Motion made by Mr. Bennett to approve the October 9th minutes as written. Second by Mr. Juniel. Vote – Nelson, Bennett, Herberth, Carruthers, Tipton, Juniel – Aye/ Nay – None. Motion passed.

Motion made by Mr. Nelson to approve the June 13th emergency meeting minutes. Second by Mr. Juniel. Vote – Nelson, Bennett, Herberth, Carruthers, Tipton, Juniel – Aye / Nay – None. Motion passed.

Mayors Report:

Mayor Verga mentions a call he received asking for donations for veterans. He believes it was a scam and wants people to be aware.

Mayor Verga reminds all that the election is nearing. From speaking to those throughout the Village, he has gathered that the levies will likely fail. He has also been told that the Council has not handled the issue with the Renaissance Festival well. It is his opinion that it will also be likely the people vote to dissolve the Village. He asks the council members what their opinions are of what the people are thinking.

Mr. Carruthers asks if the mayor informed the people he spoke to what the Village would lose by dissolving the Village. Mayor Verga states he generally argued in favor of keeping the Village.

Mr. Juniel states he is in the town more than any other council member and he talks to many of the people in town. He states he has heard from someone that is close to the mayor and himself, that Mayor Verga was in favor of dissolving the Village. Mayor Verga says that is untrue and that he would not run for council or pay for election signs if he was sure there wasn't going to be a Village.

Mr. Bennett states that at no point in time has he ever felt that Mayor Verga has not defended the Village.

Mr. Kirby makes a suggestion that Mayor Verga make his position known, during this open council meeting and on recording, on the surrendering of corporate powers and why it is his position. Mayor Verga states that he will vote to keep the Village. He states people don't realize the number of things we can do as a village that the township cannot do, such as grants to assist in repairs/maintenance.

Mr. Kirby asks for any comments from council members or guests.

Christian Foster believes we should keep the Village because there is always something we can do to get the Village back on track. He states that some reasons why people are angry are they walk out their front doors and see the physical state of the Village, such as roads, state of some houses, and condemned buildings. He states there are yearly events that could happen and no initiative to clean up the streets. He suggests regularly scheduled town hall meetings for the public to attend to spread the word about the big things happening in the Village.

Kevin Brewer states that a lot of his family lives in the Village and they don't have social media. His family asks him what is going on when they see him because they aren't getting information anywhere else.

Jonathan Funk states it is the Mayors responsibility to spread the word. He believes that he or Mr. Foster would be able to find a great way to do this when one of them is elected. He adds that the Village is asking a 3% admissions tax and that Renaissance Festival charges \$32/ticket so that would only be \$0.96/ticket for the Village. He disagrees that Mr. Ashcraft wants to fight the Village on the tax because we lose our EMS because Chester Twp. covers us, our police, our fire, our cellphone service, and we deal with traffic. He provides his view of what he would do as a businessman when dealing with the Renaissance Festival.

Mr. Nelson states he follows the Facebook pages and there has been misinformation being spread such as, the Village has \$600k to spend. When we really only have about \$200k to spend because the other money is allocated already. He states about half of that general fund is going into the PD and people want to know why they are passing levies for the PD when the general fund is supporting it. Also, why pass a levy for a police department that we never see. Why aren't we fixing streets when we have two people in the road department.

Mr. Tipton states he believes there is a ton of misinformation being spread on Facebook pages. He thinks people are purposely spreading the wrong information. He believes dissolving the Village is the worst thing that could happen. The money from the county and state becomes much harder to get. We run on a very tight budget here and the employees only work part-time for little money compared to the other municipalities. He states since he has been on Council, they have raised police pay from \$9/hour to \$17/hour and likewise for the road crew. We saved money by getting rid of a Village Administrator that was paid \$20k to spend \$60k a year. He states Mary, Joe, and Phil do a wonderful job running the Village. He adds that Bill, road crew employee, likes to work alone and that when he has been offered assistance, he declines it. He states the township does not want to take us in. They will have to raise taxes and they will need to hire a full-time finance employee and supervisor for the Village. Everyone currently upset over the building department will now see the higher permit fees from the county and will deal with the Massie Twp. building inspector. He states the only income stream we have right now are the levies and he is hoping the admissions tax can add to that. He reiterates that just 1% of the admissions tax could bring in \$50-60k and at the 3% agreed upon by the Council could produce \$150-180k to our budget each year.

Ms. Herberth states she wants the Village to stay together. The public thinks that we do nothing, but we are all volunteers. She personally puts in hours every week on things here and others put in even more time. She states she reads the newspaper articles that have been written and that Mayor Verga has been quoted multiple times speaking ill of the Council and it's hurtful.

President of Council Report:

Mr. Tipton reports that the storm sewer work has been completed and they plan to start paving the streets on October 26th. The work is expected to take two days depending on weather.

Mr. Tipton states an open records request was received from Kevin Brewer. That was completed and the data was given to him. He reports that after a data analysis of the permit fees, we would've saved residents \$1,650 if the new fee schedule had been adopted sooner.

Fiscal Officer:

Mrs. Wilkie reports that ticket revenue is way down. The officers are only averaging 2-4 tickets per week and usually written by Ofc. Collins. Ticket revenue in 2022 was \$105k and ticket revenue in 2023 year-to-date is \$53k. Contingency funds will deplete quickly without money from levies or the Ren Fest contract payments.

Mr. Kirby reads Resolution 2023-17: Supplemental Appropriations.

Motion made by Mr. Bennett to declare Resolution 2023-17 an emergency and waive the three readings. Second by Mr. Carruthers. Vote – Nelson, Bennett, Herberth, Carruthers, Tipton, Juniel – Aye / Nay – None. Motion passed.

Motion made by Mr. Nelson to adopt Resolution 2023-17. Second by Mr. Juniel. Vote – Nelson, Bennett, Herberth, Carruthers, Tipton, Juniel – Aye / Nay – None. Motion passed.

Mrs. Wilkie states that during the Finance Committee meeting it was recommended that we set aside \$300 for leaf disposal at Swartz Mulch. They charge \$25/load. It was also recommended that we set aside \$500 for a dumpster rental.

Motion made by Mr. Tipton to approve spending up to \$300 for leaf disposal and \$500 for dumpster rental. Second by Mr. Juniel. Vote – Nelson, Bennett, Herberth, Carruthers, Tipton, Juniel – Aye / Nay – None. Motion passed.

Mrs. Wilkie reports that we received a disbursement for \$208,189.21 for the second bill for the storm sewer project. That will be paid directly by the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC).

Mrs. Wilkie reports that the Village Solicitor was able to negotiate more money for the wrecked cruiser. We received another \$4k and the original check was \$24k for a total of \$28k for the cruiser.

Motion made by Mr. Nelson to pay bills and accept bank reconciliations. Second by Mr. Juniel. Vote – Nelson, Bennett, Herberth, Carruthers, Tipton, Juniel – Aye / Nay – None. Motion passed.

Mrs. Wilkie states the Finance Committee recommended reimbursing the expenditures for the Halloween party.

Motion made by Mr. Bennett that the Village reimburse funds associated with the Halloween party. Second by Mr. Juniel. Vote – Nelson, Bennett, Herberth, Carruthers, Tipton, Juniel – Aye / Nay – None. Motion passed.

Village Attorney Report:

Mr. Kirby states that regardless of if the Village votes to dissolve or not, he would like to have an open meeting on November 13th.

Mr. Kirby reports that he will be responding to the motion for summary judgement filed in the Brimstone and Fire LLC litigation. A copy can be sent to the Council, and it will also be filed with the clerk.

Mr. Kirby completes the second reading in title only of Ordinance 2023-05: Admissions Tax.

Guests:

Christian Foster states that he is favor of taxing businesses within the Village. He states he would be in favor of implementing a 1% residential income tax and 3% commercial income tax. Combining these

with the admissions tax would not be a bad idea. He states it would help fund police and other services the Village provides.

Jonathan Funk would like to second what Mr. Foster has said and adds that new businesses should get a tax break.

Kevin Brewer asks if there are tax abatements in the Village. Mr. Tipton responds that there are not because they expired, but they can be re-initiated.

Old Business:

Mr. Tipton reports that we still have a light outage at South/Stewart and we are still awaiting the installation of a light at North/Lorraine.

Mr. Tipton states the Village has received additional complaints of tree debris piled up at 244 South. The owner had been spoken to previously, but no action has been taken yet. There are additional tree limbs piled on other properties he owns and it looks like a mess on South Street.

Mr. Tipton reports that the Village is working on gaining access to the old high school for an official inspection.

Mr. Tipton reports that the building inspector is working with Mr. Burton, the owner of the old hotel. He thinks the old hotel will eventually come down because the cost of repair is too high for what it's worth.

Mr. Tipton addresses misinformation that has been posted recently on Facebook. He states that the building official prepared the fee schedule, and the building official has never worked for the City of Lebanon. The building official was never given instructions to look at structures around Harveysburg or the Renaissance Festival. He states people were talking about putting a business on the property for sale on Old 73 and a dollar store has interest of going in there. When Tim Hill put a poll on Facebook, the majority of people did not want a dollar store there.

Mr. Nelson asks if the dumpster rental will be placed in front of the government building. Mr. Tipton states they plan on doing that to prevent illegal dumping, but we have to wait until it is colder, so the dumpster doesn't damage the asphalt.

Mr. Tipton states there have only been 13 hours worked within the Village in the past 2 weeks from our officers. Ofc. Collins and Ofc. Roat are normally the ones working and this has been the pattern since Labor Day weekend. Mr. Nelson states there were more hours worked this weekend by two officers than that and they had cruisers out. Mr. Tipton states that is correct and people notice when they aren't seeing officers during the week and only on the weekends.

New Business:

NONE

Police:

NONE

Community Relations:

Ms. Herberth states she has been in contact with the people that run Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). She is trying to work out a time for them to come to Harveysburg, but in the meantime they are setup at the Mary L. Cook library in Waynesville.

Committees:

Community Relations – None
Finance - 11/27 at 6:30pm
Grants - None
Planning and Zoning – 10/24 at 6:30pm
Records - None
Trees - None

Motion made by Mr. Juniel to adjourn at 8:38pm. Second by Mr. Nelson. Passed unanimously.

Attest:

Heather Matuszak, Clerk of Council

Mayor Richard Verga

Mark Tipton, President of Council

Kim Herberth

Randy Carruthers

Pat Bennett

Charles Juniel

Jim Nelson