VILLAGE OF COLUMBUS GROVE

January 9, 2023

The Village of Columbus Grove met in regular session on Monday, January 9, 2023, at 7:30 pm at Columbus Grove Council Chambers with Council President Skyler Mayberry presiding. Council members in attendance were Skyler Mayberry, Gretchen Staley, Aaron Siefker, Todd Wolfe and Brian Schroeder. Also attended: Village Administrator Jeff Vance. Pete Langhals absent

Mrs. Staley made a motion to approve the December 12, 2022, minutes. Mr. Mayberry seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 yeas, 0 Nay

Visitors: Chris Halker and Bob Brubaker

Mrs. Staley nominated Mr. Mayberry to be the 2023 Council President. Mr. Siefker seconded the motion. Motion carried 4 yeas, 1 abstained (Mayberry)

Mayor Wright read the State of the Village :

**When assessing what the state of the Village is, I feel we must look back to 2022, before we speak of 2023. It was a relatively quiet year, both for the civil government and the private sector. We saw the opening of SOHI Cycle Shop, in the former BP station. It is always a good thing to see a vacant building put into productive use. On the negative side, we saw the closing of The Chow Hall in the VFW. The Union Bank moved out of the downtown to their new location, north of the Village. I must admit I was sorry to see that move, but it does make for an excellent opportunity for something new in our square.**

**From the Village government side of things, it was a year of planning for 2023. The seeds of progress were planted, and we should see a flurry of activity by the third 3rd quarter of the New Year. We have several projects slated to begin at least by fall.**

1. **The County will be replacing the West Sycamore bridge in conjunction with the Village. Our portion will be widening the approaches and exits off the new bridge. This is being done in preparation of major intersection by ODOT in 2024**
2. **With a Federal Grant we will be reconstructing the deteriorating wheelchair ramp at the City Building, we will make it more ADA compliant. Along with this project, we will be adding a drive-up drop box for payments, and a digital sign to further improve communication with Village residents.**
3. **The largest project will be the reconstruction and repairs to East Sycamore Street and its curbs and sidewalks.**

**With the approval in November, for the formation of the Joint Fire District between the Village and Pleasant Twp, and the accompanying levy passage. We will see the construction of a new fire station. The Fire department now being in control of a District Board, takes it out of the Villages control but remains a huge asset to our residents. With that being said, the Fire Department was granted over $38,000 in grants this year for new radios, $10,000 for equipment, and an additional $17,000 for 2023, for mobile unit radios.**

**While we continue to have a bare spot in our square, I am please to report that the new owner has informed us that a couple of key hurdles were crossed late in 2022. This will open the potential for the development of the property. No timelines are even close to being announced, but the future looks positive.**

**Just as inflation has affected all our homes and businesses, the Village has not been exempted from this scourge. Our expenses across the board are climbing rapidly. Thankfully income has risen as well, but I assume much of that is payroll inflation.**

**We begin 2023 with the same capable staff and Village Council, which bodes well in meeting the challenges of 2023.**

**I thank you for the privilege to serve this community and wish our residents all the best in the coming year.**

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Mayor Wright announced the Committees for 2023 would stay the same as last year.

Chief Brubaker updated Council on the air station that was previously approved, it will be installed this week. Chief also announced that the Fire Dept was just granted another $17,000 grant to cover mobile unit radios.

Mr. Halker came to speak to council regarding his building and announced to Council that he will be putting it up for sale. This all started in 2018 and he feels has become a problem with getting someone to rent or buy the building from him. Mr. Halker feels this is all due to the bad publicity that the Village is giving him in the newspaper. No one will work with him, as far as a contractor or engineer due to these issues as well. Mr. Halker expressed his concerns, as Mr. Schroeder responded with the time that Council has given him to see any progression. Its ongoing and there is always an excuse. As Mr. Mayberry explained to Mr. Halker that he was never rushed, and he still doesn’t have approved plans from an engineer before a contractor will ever work with him. Tensions grew and Mayor Wright asked Mr. Halker to stop talking as he continued to argue and blame the Council for his inability to complete any progression with the building.

Mrs. Staley made a motion to approve the bills. Mr. Mayberry seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 yeas, 0 nay

All end of the month, quarter and yearly reports were given to Council.

Mrs. Kerns requested a finance comm meeting for Monday Jan 23rd at 6:45 to discuss permanent appropriations and the water fund.

Chief Hiler reported that there were 4 properties with junk violations, that were served papers to get their junk cleaned up. There are a few properties that Mr. Vance will have to clean up and bill the owners for.

Mr. Vance asked Council about the Dark Fiber Contract with TSC and PerryProTech. Mrs. kerns announced that she has an IT audit with PEP on the 19th, and asked to wait till after her meeting to speak of al the IT issues they will have with the Village.

Mr. Vance asked Council to purchase a 2010 F-250 Pick up for $11,000. Mr. Schroeder made such motion. Mr. Wolfe seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 yeas, 0 nay

Anyone wanting to see the Safe Routes to School, the grafts are hanging in the main entrance of the City Building.

Mr. Vance asked again about the electronic sign, he asked if it should be put in front of the city building or wait and put it in front of the new fire station. After some discussion, the sign will be placed in front of the city building.

Mr. Vance brought plans for the housing development from ChoiceOne. They viewed these after the meeting.

Mr. Vance also brought an estimate from Technicon for Mr. Halkers building. To hire them to inspect the building to repair is $4850.00, an estimate did not include to demolish. Mr. Schroeder made a motion to have the estimate for repair or demolish, not to exceed $10,000 to sign the contract. Mr. Siefker seconded the motion. Motion carries. 5 yeas, 0 nay

Mr. Mayberry made a motion for the 1st reading of Ordinance 2023-01 An Ordinance prohibiting trucks from turning right from East Sycamore onto South Elm St. Mr. Schroeder seconded the motion. Motion carried 4 yeas, 1 nay (Wolfe)

Mr. Wolfe would like to see the intersection redesigned to allow the trucks to turn at the intersection. He feels that Council should do something different than to make it a NO TURN. Mr. Vance is going to go to the Engineers to see if there is a resolution to this issue.

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Mr. Vance is to check on the security cameras at the dump, to find out when those will be installed.

Mr. Siefker received many compliments on how great the Village Parks looked.

Mayor Wright read a letter from the Putnam Co CIC, thanking the Village for their 2022 Donation.

Mayor Wright also asked Council about their annual reviews for Chief Hiler and Mr. Vance. Eval sheets will be in the next packets for Council to review and conduct at the next meeting.

Mr. Schroeder made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Siefker seconded the motion. Motion carried 5 yeas, 0 nay @ 8:35 pm.

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Clerk Mayor