

**EP COUNCIL 4/24/23 85 N. MARKET ST. 6:00 PM**

Mayor Conaway called the meeting to order. Present was Ms. May, Mr. Povenski, Dr. Rocco, and Mr. Walker. Mr. Runnion was not present, Mr. Simpson was absent due to a family emergency. Mr. Povenski made a motion to excuse Mr. Runnion & Simpson, the motion was seconded by Dr. Rocco and passed. Also present was Interim Manager/Finance Director Traci Spratt, W/WW Superintendent Scott Wolfe, Law Director Dave Powers, Police Chief Jim Brown, Clerk Misti Martin. The minutes of the 4/10 regular meeting and 4/18 special meeting were approved on a motion by Dr. Rocco, seconded by Ms. May. There were no department reports, clerks', Law Directors, utility or safety committee reports.

**AGENDA:** Carol Harvey of the East Palestine Eagles presented donations of \$2500.00 each to the Police Department, Fire Department and Mayor Conaway. **Andrea Schwartz- Clip-n-Claws Owner-** Ms. Schwartz stated she has been having trouble for several years with the street fair being on Market St. as that is where her business is located, she said it causes accessibility issues for her senior clients and animals. She said she gave council a list of several other business owners who have concerns and problems during the fair. Mr. Walker stated this is an issue that would have to be discussed with the Chamber as they are in charge of the fair (however the village does issue the street closure permit for the fair). **Jon Varley-Welcome to EP Sign at RT 14.** Mr. Varley said he and his wife own Nene's Collectables on Market St. He said there has been talk of a digital sign replacing the welcome sign at Rt. 14 and he feels that doesn't fit the village. He thinks there should be something showing the businesses in the Village. He said the maintenance and upkeep of a digital sign could become costly long term. **Erin Stauffer-Concerns & Questions** Ms. Stauffer asked what are the priorities/ goals of the Village in relation to the derailment & what action is being taken to reach those goals. Mayor Conaway stated first is clean up, second is making the Village whole financially (businesses & residents), and beautification of the community after the health concerns are taken care of, and trying to bring people back into town. He said there are some plans for the park, once those are finalized, they will be brought before Council as they must have approval. Ms. Stauffer asked if the Village was waiting for clean up to be complete before moving forward on other things and Mayor Conaway said no, there are a lot of things being worked on at the same time. He said the time frame as far as revitalization of the downtown would be a year or so, the park projects will hopefully get started in the fall. Ms. Stauffer asked if anyone has reached out to other communities who have experienced similar events, Mayor Conaway stated he connected with a community in New Jersey shortly after the derailment but they didn't have any specific suggestions aside from just offering support. Ms. Stauffer stated that the biggest concern she hears is people don't know what is going on and that when people don't know they make it up. She asked how council can combat that. Mayor Conaway said we are in the process of teaming with a PR firm, not so much for public relations but more to help disseminate information, specifically on social media. He said the Village did drop the ball on this but it was a process to find the right fit for the community and that the legislation to hire them was on for a first reading tonight. Ms. Stauffer asked what is being done to hire a manager and what is the time frame. Interim Manager Spratt stated we have just begun working with an executive recruiting firm and this will be discussed in executive session later and that there would hopefully be more specifics available after that. Mayor Conaway added he was hoping no later than fall to have someone hired. Mayor Conaway said he knows there are concerns about not moving fast enough, the hunt was put on hold after the derailment because this is the prime time for the wrong person to come in who just wants glory. Lastly Ms. Stauffer asked what the community can do to help, Mayor Conaway stated there is already a committee of citizens who has been meeting to brain storm. Resident Aaron Allison who is a member of the committee Mayor Conaway mentioned stated that the committee has met 4 times and that they basically brainstorm as to what things can be done on a small scale as well as long term and try to come up with ideas that can be presented to Council and to the people who can put them in place. Dr. Rocco asked Ms. Stauffer what Council can do to serve the residents better. Ms. Stauffer said information is vital and when people do not have it, they get afraid and leave. Dr. Rocco mentioned possibly a newsletter from Council. Mr. Povenski added there are a lot of moving parts to this entire situation, the situation is fluid. Ms. May mentioned the EP Information FB page which is run by the Village is a good tool for information, Ms. Stauffer agreed but stated there are a lot of elderly that do not have social media and feels that a news letter would

be a better option. Resident Jon Varley stated his committee is working on a newsletter. Ms. Stauffer also stated she feels a way for residents to give suggestions would be a good idea, she said it should be much easier for the community to participate in the recovery of the community and get information.

**MAYOR:** Mayor Conaway stated we are still hiring summer help for the concession stand as well as maintenance crews.

**MANAGER:** Interim Manager Spratt stated the park pool is open from 12-8 and pool parties are from 8-10pm. She said they are looking at changing the hours to 12-7, she said she is being told that from 7 to 8 pm there is hardly anyone there. Dr. Rocco stated that anytime she has been there at 7:00 pm it's been busy. She asked Council to think about it and she would ask Superintendent Baird to be at the next meeting for discussion. Spratt said the Street Fair permit was approved in January and will be May 24-27 this year. She said she also approved the EP Road2Recovery Run/Walk on June 10. She said the bid openings for the waterline replacement project will be April 28. W/WW Superintendent Wolfe stated residents who will be directly affected by the project will receive notification in the mail. Spratt also stated the bid opening for the Park Drive Bridge project will be Thursday April 27.

**STREET:** Mr. Walker had no report but asked when the carbon filtration system for the water will be online. W/WW Superintendent Scott Wolfe said filters will be on site mid-May but there is a lot more to it than that, he hoped the project would be complete by the end of summer.

**PARK/REC/CEM:** Dr. Rocco stated the Park Board met last week, they will be holding a bike parade and pet parade at the park for July 4<sup>th</sup>, she they will be having a cornhole tournament/chili cookoff in September. In October they will be having a Craft Show/disc golf tournament as well as the usual Snowflake Festival Events on December 2

**DEV/FINANCE:** Ms. May stated she recently attended a round table meeting on health/safety issues with Senator Sherrod Brown, the information he received would be relayed to Senators Vance, Casey and Fetterman. She stated she visited the Assistance Center last week and things seem to be going well there, she stated she and Councilman Povenski spent time visiting the CeramFab properties to get an idea what it is like in the businesses and what those in and around the derailment site are dealing with. She then called a Dev/Fin Committee meeting for May 11 at 6:00 pm to meet with RCAP to discuss where we can go and what we can do in terms of community development.

**VISITORS:** Rich Spratt, Ron & Peggy Caratelli, Jerry Coblenz, Rick & Karen Gorby, DJ Yokley, Jim Crawford, Jeff Justison, Andrea Schwartz, Jeremy Gold, Jon Varley, Ken & Darlene Chapman, Erin & Brian Stauffer, Ann Weigle, Rev. Dr. Barry Walker, Dave Biggins, CH McCutcheon, Lonnie Miller, Connor Conaway, Randy DeHaven, Karen King, Steph Eldred, John Davis, Bill & Janie Strohecker, Carol Harvey, Aaron Allison, Kat Smith.

**LEGISLATION:** Legislation on the agenda listed as an emergency would only go for a first reading tonight due to having only four members of Council present. In reference to Ord. 13-2023 resident Ron Caratelli asked if the food truck host license could be put back on the table. Mr. Walker agreed saying the legislation in its current form penalizes one of the bigger businesses here. Mr. Povenski stated he didn't feel legislation should be changed for an individual business. Mr. Walker made a motion to amend the ordinance to allow for a vendor host fee for food trucks. Several residents in attendance asked why the fees could not be waived for the time being, that this should not be a priority right now, and that these trucks are already licensed under the County Health Department, that we should be trying to bring business into town not drive them away. Dr. Rocco stated this is about accountable and that yes, they do apply for those licenses at the County but we as the Village still need to moderate those things; she said that \$50 yearly fee comes out to \$4.17 per month. Mr. Povenski added that fee goes towards the cost/time for paperwork in order to put a face to a name so to speak. Resident Jon Varley added that these fees for food trucks/vendors are to protect the brick-and-mortar businesses. Mr. Walker's motion failed due to lack of a second. Mr. Walker introduced Ord. 10-2023 for a first reading and made a motion that it be read by title only, seconded by Mr. Povenski. **An ordinance authorizing the Municipal Manager to advertise for**

**public bids for the construction/paving, to be known as the 2023 street paving resurfacing project, and to further award and enter into a contract with the lowest and best bidder as relates to the contract, pursuant to the specifications and bidding requirements as determined by the Municipal Manager and in compliance with Law.** Mr. Walker introduced Ord. 11-2023 for a first reading and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Dr. Rocco. **An ordinance Authorizing the payment of a wage bonus to temporary summer employees.** Mr. Walker introduced Ord. 12-2023 for a first reading and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Mr. Povenski. **An ordinance authorizing Village Manager to engage the services of professional service firms (a public relations firm, outside counsel and other support services as needed) and to expend additional funds for administrative expenses related to recovery from the train derailment.** Mr. Walker introduced Ord. 13-2023 for a first reading and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Dr. Rocco. **An ordinance amending Chapter 832 of the Codified Ordinances of East Palestine, Ohio related to licensing of solicitors, peddlers, and door to door sales persons.** Mr. Walker introduced Res. 3-2023 and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Mr. Povenski. **A resolution authorizing the Village Manager to retain the services of outside council, for matters related to the train derailment of February 3, 2023 and the aftermath thereof, including, but not limited to representation before administrative and other agencies of the State of Ohio and the United States of America.** Mr. Walker called for a vote on Res. 3-2023 seconded by Ms. May. Ms. May-y, Mr. Povenski-y, Dr. Rocco-y, Mr. Walker-y. 4 yes to pass. Mr. Walker made a motion to into executive session per ORC Section 121.22 G4 inviting in Manager Spratt, Law Director Dave Powers, and Mr. Jeremy Gold seconded by seconded by Mr. Povenski. Ms. May. Ms. May-y, Mr. Povenski-y, Dr. Rocco-y, Mr. Walker-y. There would be no further business conducted afterwards. At approximately 9:00 pm Mr. Walker made a motion to return to regular session and adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Dr. Rocco. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

---

MISTI J. MARTIN CLERK

---

MAYOR TRENT CONAWAY