

**EP COUNCIL 10/28/24 7:00 PM 85 N. MARKET ST.**

Mayor Conaway called the meeting to order. Present was Mr. Blythe, Mr. Glavan, Ms. May, Mr. Povenski, and Dr. Rocco. Also present was Police Chief Jim Brown, Fire Chief Keith Drabick, W/WW Superintendent Scott Wolfe, Street Superintendent Steve Baird, Law Director David Powers, Finance Director Melissa Hiner and Clerk Misti Martin. The minutes from the 10/14/24 meeting was approved on a motion by Dr. Rocco seconded by Mr. Glavan. There were no departments reports, clerk's or manager's reports. At this time Mr. Simpson read the following statement **"The manager resigned due to contempt expressed by the mayor, council members and some employees. This is unacceptable behavior from people who are meant to serve the public of East Palestine. Some were elected to represent the citizens and failed badly. I grew up in this town and worked for this town and represented the residents of this town. My only agenda was the betterment and improvement of East Palestine unlike the personal agenda of the mayor and some others. It is a sad day when a few can destroy what should be a rebuilding time from a disaster inflicted on the village. The ones who want to see the village progress are not the ones sitting in charge. All I've heard is how bad a job Chad did, well I'm calling you all out for the hypocrisy. This town will never see any forward progress as long as the infighting continues. I cannot condone what has transpired to a professional manager and if you think replacing Chad will be easy, I'm remind you of how long it took to find him. You will face pushback from the citizens of town for what you've done and rightly so. So, with that I tender my resignation in protest of actions"** and then left the meeting. Next Mayor Conaway stated that Chad Edwards resigned and a motion was needed to accept his resignation. Mr. Glavan made the motion, Dr. Rocco seconded the motion. Mr. Glavan, Dr. Rocco and Mr. Blythe voted in favor of accepting the resignation, Ms. May voted against accepting the resignation and Mr. Povenski did not abstain however he did not answer for or against the motion. At this time Dr. Rocco made a motion to go into executive session per ORC 121.22 G1 to discuss the appointment of an interim village manager, the motion was seconded by Mr. Glavan. Passed unanimously. Approximately 10 minutes later Dr. Rocco motioned to return to regular session seconded by Mr. Glavan. Dr. Rocco motioned to appoint council clerk/administrative assistant Misti Martin as interim Village Manager until the next council meeting on November 11, the motion was seconded by Ms. May and passed unanimously.

**AGENDA: BARB KLINER-EPGO UPDATE** Ms. Kliner stated in the two months since she spoke to council, she stated they are now working to become a nonprofit, have had two meetings with one having Police Chief Jim Brown speak to approximately 30 residents about home safety, identity theft and other scams to be aware of; she added he did a very nice job. They met with the Habitat for Humanity director about a home repair program for lower income qualifying older residents. They also met with AmeriCorps Seniors and RSVP to learn about multiple programs they have in place but have not been in Columbiana County because of not having a contact here; she added they will be working on partnerships with those organizations in the future. They are also working on a newsletter that will be posted on social media but will also be hand delivered to anyone who isn't mobile. She added they are open to suggestions and that they have an EPGO Facebook page and an email at [epgogroup@gmail.com](mailto:epgogroup@gmail.com).

**MAYOR:** Mayor Conaway thanked Ms. Kliner and her dancers for their witch's dance at the fall festival as well as EPFD for organizing the event. Letters of interest for the open council seat will be accepted until Friday November 8, 2024 at noon. Finally, he thanked Chiefs Brown and Drabick, Finance Director Melissa Hiner, and former finance director/manager Traci Spratt for all their work on the fifteen plus million dollars grant to build a new safety service complex (police/fire/administration) on top of Market Street hill. This will keep our safety services away from the train tracks and out of the one-mile evacuation zone should any similar disasters ever occur in the future.

**LAW DIRECTOR:** Atty. Powers stated that part of the requirements of the USDA grant will be additional consulting/engineering studies; this will require a change to the original contract with MS Consulting as soon as possible. The additional work will be approximately \$56,000.00 which will require a resolution for approval. Also, he has been discussing with Chief Jim Brown discussing updates to the junk/unlicensed vehicle ordinance; with councils blessing he stated he would work

on legislation as such. Dr. Rocco made a motion for Atty. Powers to draw up legislation in reference to the above, the motion was seconded by Mr. Glavan, passed unanimously.

**STREET:** Mr. Glavan stated they are reviewing candidates for engineering for the SS4A grant and that the Street Levy renewal is on the ballot next week as we need those funds to operate. Mayor Conaway added that the Street Levy is strictly a renewal not a new tax and that is how we pave the streets every year and we would appreciate a yes vote on that.

**PARK/REC/CEM:** Dr. Rocco stated the chapel and the garage at the cemetery will be receiving new roofs and that the mausoleum roof repair is complete. Park Board met to discuss the park project and that based on info from Michael Baker they do not have an opening date for the new pool and it will not be Memorial Day. The plan is to open the current pool open however this is a fluid situation and we hope to have more direction soon. The board also helped with the fall fest donating hot chocolate and chips and also volunteered their time. Mayor Conaway asked Street Superintendent Baird to see if a new heater for the existing pool could then be used in the new pool; he said it has already been a year without the Water Walkers and he didn't want to see two years. Dr. Rocco noted the Park Board was going to look into fundraising opportunities for a heater and said stated it had previously been stated that because of the technology that may not be possible. Finally, she asked Baird to get prices for replacing the heater at the existing pool.

**DEV/FIN:** Ms. May stated Habitat for Humanity has reached out about the possibility of building one or two new homes in town, this would be in addition to the rehab projects that are available. The RCAP group met and she noted they are working with high school on various ideas and how to retain our young people in EP and that the next meeting date will be in November. She added various entities are meeting with the Port Authority to discuss upcoming projects.

**UTILITY:** Mr. Blythe stated hydrant flushing has been completed and otherwise things are business as usual in the water/wastewater departments.

**SAFETY:** Mr. Povenski thanked the Police and Fire Departments for another great fall festival. In September PD responded to 453 self-initiated calls for service, PD assisted Fire/Ems on ten occasions for mutual aid. To date officers have written 1373 reports. The FD received a total of 121 calls with 93 being Ems only, 11 fire and 17 combined. Two false alarms were responded to as well and one call was dropped.

#### **THERE WERE NO VISITORS COMMENTS ON CURRENT LEGISLATION**

**VISITORS:** Nicole Drabick, Barb Kliner, Janie & Bill Strohecker, Vicki Hoffman, Joesph Della Volle, Mike Dugan, Jerry Coblenz, Dave Biggins, John Davis, Rick & Karen Gorby, Kent Chapman, Greg McCormick, Karen Conaway, Karen King, Missy Smith, David & Lisa Mahoney, Dan McKinsty, Bennet Bruno, Stephanie Elverd, David Peters, Tami & Bob Harris, Robbie Hill, Jamie Wallace and Christina Sicheloff.

**LEGISLATION:** Dr. Rocco introduced Res. 20-2024 and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Mr. Blythe. **A resolution authorizing the Finance Director to accept a one-million-dollar (\$1,000,000.00) grant from the State of Ohio One Time Strategic Community Investments Grant Program.** Dr. Rocco called for a vote on Res. 20-2024 seconded by Mr. Povenski. Passed unanimously. At this time Dr. Rocco made a motion to go into executive session under ORC 121.22G1 inviting in Atty. Powers, Melissa Hiner and Misti Martin with no business to take place after. The motion was seconded by Mr. Blythe, passed unanimously.

**ADJOURN:** Dr. Rocco made motions to return to regular session as well as adjourn the meeting. The motions were seconded by Mr. Glavan. All in favor, meeting adjourned.