

## **EP COUNCIL 9/8/25 85 N. MARKET ST. 7:00 PM**

Mayor Conaway called the meeting to order. Present was Mr. Blythe, Mr. Glavan, Ms. Herriott, Mr. Povenski, Mr. Simon and Ms. Stauffer. Also, present was Village Manager Antonio Diaz-Guy, Finance Director Melissa Hiner, Law Director David Powers, Police Chief Jim Brown, Officer Chris Weingart BZ Officer Rube Ginder and Clerk Misti Martin. The minutes of the 8/25/25 meeting were approved on a motion by Mr. Glavan seconded by Mr. Blythe. The August 2025 department reports were approved on a motion by Mr. Povenski seconded by Mr. Glavan. The August 2025 department reports were approved on a motion by Mr. Povenski seconded by Mr. Glavan.

**AGENDA: BARB KLINER/EPGO:** Ms. Kliner stated EPGO started 9 months ago and they have achieved their goals of monthly newsletters and a phone buddy program; she will also be on a Dept. of Aging advisory committee called Direction Home. In reference to the community, she noted there is a large gap in available information about the history of EP; the last book published was by Baird Stewart in 2000. The EPGO board members decided they want to leave a legacy for future generations so they will be creating a book that shares memories from everyone in EP. They will be collecting memories from residents (current or past) for the book for example your first job, how you navigated covid, or your favorite experience in town or what you would like future generations to know. Memories should be on one subject at a time and 150 to 200 words each. The book will be self-published by Amazon and the goal is to have it out by this time next year. Participants must complete a release form. The name of the book will be "East Palestine Remembers". In reference to the Phone Buddy program, they have volunteers who will be the "caller" and are looking for a list of people who may be homebound, live alone, are sick or just lonely. Those participants will then receive a check in phone call on a daily basis at a pre-determined time; the program is being headed up by Nancy Wolfe. **JULIE NEEDS/JIM**

**MURRAY-ELEVATE BUILDING SOLUTIONS:** Ms. Needs stated she is the executive director of the SOD Center in Salem; 2 ½ years ago they established Elevate Building Solutions. They are a third-party provider of building department services to jurisdictions in Columbiana County and work with Salem, Columbiana and Leetonia. The State of Ohio mandates you must use a commercial building department or the state themselves; Salem was losing large expansion projects because of the time frames through the state. Additional challenges included issues with historic buildings that state officials/plans examiners/inspectors didn't understand the structure or the market. Turn around times for state permitting were upwards of 6 months which was causing a loss in opportunities; they are down to a 6-day turnaround time with Elevate. They are basically a shared service between communities, for a municipality have their own commercial building department it would cost at minimum half a million dollars a year. Elevate allows shared services across jurisdictions at a very nominal fee; they are a provider of service. The Village will be the certified building department and they would contract services with us. Ms. Needs added per current guidelines any commercial project that is being renovated or newly built must acquire a permit from the State of Ohio, this can only be done online, you can't even ask any questions or speak to a person; with Elevate they will walk the customer through the entire process. Jim Murray stated that the building process is all about safety and that is the owner's responsibility to conform to the guidelines; it is his job to do the administration of the rules and educate the property owners. Carol Harvey of EP Eagles stated she has done a lot of renovation and everything they are saying is true; it took them 4 ½ months to hear

back from the state after submitting an online application and you cannot ask any questions. They wanted the business to pay the fees, submit the app, build the structure and then they would tell her if it was acceptable or not. Village owned properties would also have to follow all state guidelines and the engineer of record for the Village can do any plan submittals for upcoming projects. Once Elevate takes on a specific jurisdiction all plans would be submitted through them and not directly to the state. In reference to the fees Elevate will provide a recommendation to the Village which is the same as the other jurisdictions in Columbiana County. These recommendations were compared to the state themselves as well as many other commercial building departments across the state and most fees are based on size/square footage/type of work of the project not dollar amount. Fees could range from several hundred to several thousand dollars; the fees are within 10% of what the state charges. This will cost the Village \$25,000 per year for three years and the fees will be split 95% to Elevate 5% to the Village (previously the jurisdiction did not receive anything from the permit fees as the full amount went to the state). An independent commercial building department cannot be run for \$25,000.00 per year. Manager Diaz-Guy stated his goal is to create the clearest most well-defined easy process for someone to bring their business here or for existing businesses to make improvements. At this time Mr. Povenski made a motion to go into executive session per ORC 121.22 G 2 to consider the purchase of properties for public purpose, sale of properties, or the sale of other unneeded/obsolete property inviting in Manager Diaz-Guy, Law Director David Powers, Finance Direct Melissa Hiner and Clerk Misti Martin. The motion was seconded by Mr. Glavan. There would be business to follow. Approximately 25 minutes later Mr. Glavan made a motion to return to regular session seconded by Ms. Herriott. Passed unanimously.

**CLERK:** Clerk Misti Martin reminded everyone the Fall Fest is Sat Sept 13 downtown. And that should council wish to add Res. 16-2025 EPCIC Loan back to the agenda a motion would be needed to unable as well add it to the agenda.

**MAYOR:** Mayor Conaway stated the EP Band Parent are painting Bulldog Paws again this year for a fundraiser.

**MANAGER:** Manager Diaz-Guy stated Elite Pharmacy will be opening 10/1 as well as multiple micro-preneur businesses opening up in town which shows the start of a resurging economy. All proposals have been received for the marketing proposals; there is a plan to bring them before council soon for recommendation/approval. Before council was an application for a new liquor license for Ianazones by Coulters, the police see no issues with it. Should council choose to move forward a motion was needed to direct the clerk to sign/return the documentation stating a hearing is not needed. Mr. Glavan made the aforementioned motion seconded by Mr. Blythe passed unanimously. In reference to Glenview Cemetery Manager Diaz-Guy requested a motion to formally approve him to sign a contact for mausoleum repair as it is slightly over his permitted \$50,000.00 threshold at \$50,170.00. The chapel update project will also begin soon. Mr. Povenski made the aforementioned motion seconded by Mr. Simon. Passed unanimously.

**LAW DIRECTOR:** Atty. Powers stated council was given an email from outside counsel at Bricker Graydon in reference to the Purdue Pharma bankruptcy matter; the matter has been to the supreme court and is back now for a second try to achieve a settlement out of bankruptcy court. All funds from the settlement will go through the One Ohio Recovery Foundation; 55% would go to One Ohio Recovery Foundation, 30% to local government and 15% to the State of Ohio (approximately \$198,000,000). Bricker suggests we accept the

plan as a village of our size cannot try to fight it, Atty. Powers stated he as well recommends we accept it. Mr. Simon made a motion to accept the Purdue Pharma settlement as recommended by Bricker Graydon, seconded by Mr. Glavan. Passed unanimously.

**STREET:** Mr. Simon stated the Street Dept. painted bulldog crosswalks and hung the Bulldog Pride Banners, the 2025 paving project has begun, working on a plan to address stormwater issues at Clark St. fire station, 13 work orders were received in the month of August with 9 being completed. Various other projects included cleaning the recycling bin area, ditch line work completed on walking trail and multiple catch basins were cleaned. Prep work was started for a large project on Marion Ave replacing over 150 ft of 36-inch drain pipe.

**PARK/REC/CEM:** Ms. Stauffer stated the Park crew has prepped for cross country meets, disc golf course reno with holes 7, 8, 9, & 16 being moved to accommodate for park renovations, repairs made to lighting in Brick Pavilion. Upcoming projects include continued work on the Duck Pond and prepping Rainbow Dreamland for demo. Pool excavation continues. Plans include meeting with ODNR to discuss stocking the pond. There is a disc golf tournament 10/25. The sandstone sign for the cemetery entrance is in process, quotes are being sought for work on the chapel and quotes for mausoleum repair have been received and are being reviewed.

**DEVELOPMENT/FINANCE:** Ms. Herriott stated the month of August saw 28 miscellaneous building/zoning permits issued, \$1,150.00 in contractor registrations were received, \$400.00 in vacant structure fees and one food truck registration. The next Learn to Teach, Teach to Learn activity will be 9/23 where they will be making sewn bookmarks, a different class will be held each month through January; these classes are at no cost to the students. The EPCIC met on August 26 and held a special meeting on September 5 to finalize full design with Strollo Architects for the Train Depot; they have also requested a proposal for full design from Strollo for the EPCIC Plaza expansion. There are letters of intent for both properties but they are holding off on announcements until they are further along in the process. The EPCIC has also launched the Brighten Our Future Campaign for 2025, funds will benefit the plaza. She does not yet have a start date for the student member of council.

**WATER/WASTEWATER:** Mr. Blythe stated August showed normal operations for water and wastewater, 14 accounts were shut off for non-payment (the highest number in 2025), lead line potholing was performed by RCAP, the Water Dept. had \$4100.00 worth of repairs.

**SAFETY:** Mr. Povenski stated the FD received 136 calls in August, 97 in Villages limits, 12 in Unity and 27 mutual aids. EMS had 97 patient contacts resulting in 65 transports. PD continue foot patrol downtown and security for school functions, officers completed eight hours of active aggressor training. Officers Johnson & Monteleone continue to work with the County Mobile Response Unity. PD received 507 calls resulting in 143 reports

**VISITORS:** Austin Cope, Kyler Bourne, Janice Cartwright, Jerry Coblentz, John Davis, Dot Herbert, Barb Kliner, Dave Biggins, John Cozza, Kent Chapman, Nick Hamilton, Malia Brown of 21 News, Travis Smith, Carol Harvey, Ben Ratner, Stephanie Elverd, Rick & Karen Gorby, Laurie Harmon and Chad Lewis.

**LEGISLATION:** Mr. Glavan made a motion to un-table amended Res. 16-2025, A loan to EPCIC and it to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Herriott. Passed unanimously. Mr. Glavan introduced Ord. 19-2025 for a second reading and made a motion

that it be read by title only seconded by Mr. Simon. **An ordinance requesting certification to enforce the Ohio State Building Codes within the Village of East Palestine, Ohio and declaring an emergency.** Mr. Glavan made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency seconded by Ms. Stauffer. Passed unanimously. Mr. Glavan called for a vote on Ord. 19-2025 seconded by Mr. Simon. Passed unanimously. Mr. Glavan introduced Ord. 20-2025 for a second reading and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Mr. Simon. **An ordinance to establish the East Palestine Building Department and declaring an emergency.** Mr. Glavan made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency seconded by Mr. Povenski. Passed unanimously. Mr. Glavan called for a vote on Ord. 20-2025 seconded by Mr. Simon. Passed unanimously. Mr. Glavan introduced Ord. 21-2025 for a second reading and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Ms. Stauffer. **An ordinance authorizing the Village Manager on behalf of the Village of East Palestine, Ohio to enter into a contract with Elevate Building Solutions, LLC, and execute all required documents required by the State of Ohio to establish and implement the Village of East Palestine, Ohio Commercial Building Department and declaring an emergency.** Mr. Glavan made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency seconded by Ms. Herriott. Passed unanimously. Mr. Glavan called for a vote on Ord. 21-2025 seconded by Mr. Blythe. Passed unanimously. Mr. Glavan introduced Res.16-2025 and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Mr. Povenski. **A resolution authorizing an unsecured interest free loan to the East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation, in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$500,000.00 for the purpose of funding improvements to two downtown structures, and other economic development projects as they may occur.** Mr. Glavan called for a vote on Res.16-2025 seconded by Mr. Simon. Passed unanimously. Mr. Glavan introduced Res.19-2025 and made a motion that it be read by title only seconded by Mr. Povenski. Passed unanimously. **A resolution authorizing the Village Manager to enter into an agreement for the continuing provision of economic development services, in accordance with the agreement/memorandum of understanding attached hereto, with Argus Growth Consultants LLC, A division of Bricker Graydon.** Mr. Glavan called for a vote on Res. 19-2025 seconded by Mr. Simon. Passed unanimously.

**ADJOURN:** Mr. Glavan made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Mr. Blythe. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

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MISTI J. MARTIN CLERK

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MAYOR TRENT CONAWAY