

LOUDONVILLE VILLAGE COUNCIL

January 21, 2020

Loudonville Village Council met for a regular meeting on Monday, January 21, 2020 at 6 p.m. at the Loudonville Village Hall council chambers. Mayor Stricklen called the meeting to order. Answering roll call were Mr. Bill Welsh, Mr. Tom Young, Mr. Jason Van Sickle, Mr. Tom Gallagher, Mrs. Cathy Lance, and Mr. Matt Young. Also in attendance at the meeting were Village Administrator Curt Young, Fiscal Officer Elaine Van Horn, Village Solicitor Thom Gilman, Police Captain Brian McCauley, Fire Chief Mike Carey, Fire Assistant Chief Joe Kiefer, Fire Department members Dan Robinson, Robert Stewart, Bob Stewart, Brad Dilgard, and Jed Cronebach, residents Brandon Biddinger, Cheryl Young, Morgan Young, Austin Young, Kayla Robinson, and Levi Robinson, American Legion representatives Don Riffel & Jim Danner, area residents Tamerra Carey and Grant Cowell, and Loudonville Times Reporter Jim Brewer.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Stricklen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MAYOR'S STATE OF THE VILLAGE ADDRESS:

The Mayor presented his State of the Village address as chronicled verbatim below:

As Mayor of the Village of Loudonville, it is again my privilege to present the annual State of the Village Address. We have enjoyed another great year in 2019, and I wish to thank you all who have shown confidence in me by re-electing me as your Mayor for another term of office. Our expectations are that 2020 will be another busy and productive year in the Village.

Financial Overview: *The annual budget is prepared with a focus on maintaining a high level of service and adequate resources to provide those services. The General Fund year-end balance remains consistent year-to-year, with an unassigned balance of \$608,500 at the end of 2019. At the current 1.75% income tax rate, the Village of Loudonville tax rate remains comparatively lower than surrounding communities and state-wide. We have not asked our voters to increase our current property tax levies since their inception. Controlling growth in operating expenditures while operating under stale revenue sources is critical to continuing our financial success. The Fiscal Officer, Village Administrator and Department Heads are to be commended for their commitment to the budget process and to the outstanding oversight of Village finances in the day-to-day operations of the Village. In this new decade, I want to encourage this Village Council to join me as we closely monitor the regional and local economy for opportunities to further improve Loudonville's financial position. By focusing on economic development, working with and in support of the Mohican Area Growth Foundation, this governing body must be more proactive in development efforts to implement strategies that will help us increase our economic development opportunities. We must work together to strengthen the Village's future financial position by exploring methods to increase the tax base while maintaining our distinctive rural character so that we can continue to provide the outstanding services our residents enjoy. Although we have made major upgrades to infrastructure in recent years, we must also continue to monitor our utility operations and associated rates closely, as new Environmental Protection Agency regulations mandate asset management and improvements on a more stringent schedule.*

Police, Fire and Safety: *In 2019 the Police Department provided for the safety of the residents and guests of the Village of Loudonville with 6 full-time officers, 1 full time School Resource officer, 1 part-time investigator, and a part time clerk. The Department is also supported by 8 auxiliary police officers. In 2019 the Police responded to 2,208 calls for service. The Village remains in contract with the Holmes County Sheriff's Office for dispatching duties, and is very pleased with their excellent service. The LPD is looking forward in 2020 to the addition of a narcotics detection canine, which will be almost entirely funded by private donations.*

The Fire and EMS Department responded to more than 800 calls for service in 2019. 163 of those calls were non-EMS or fire responses to which a fire apparatus responded. We are thankful to announce that in 2019, as in the previous year, there were no major structure fires resulting in a low fire loss, and no civilian casualties. However, swift water rescues or river related incidents rose to 6 last year, due to heavy rainfall in the spring and summer. June, July and August continue to be our busiest months, and the hours between 8 AM and 6 PM our busiest time of day. About 2,300 service hours were logged on calls/incidents by the Fire and EMS department last year. The Department currently has a roster of 27 personnel, and completed 1,335 hours of training in 2019, not including the hours of those members who completed the Firefighter Level 2 course, and enrollment of a Paramedic course last August. Projects completed included the FEMA exhaust System Project, and the Department was also able to purchase a Polaris Ranger Crew off-road vehicle through donations. The Ranger will be used at special events, and for search/rescue in the response area. The equipment fleet is in good shape, and Self Contained Breathing Apparatus and the Breathing Air Compressor were tested per NFPA standards, with minor discrepancies repaired. 10,000 feet of fire hose was tested per NFPA standards, and 2 sections removed from service due to leaks. The Department plans to seek grants to replace fire hose that has been in service since 1987, as there is a State Law that now requires removal of all outdated hose. The Department also plans to seek grant funding to replace the 30 year old Breathing Air Compressor with an improved model in 2020.

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Village Operation and Improvement Projects: Several improvement projects completed in 2019 included the completion of the new Village Maintenance Garage, significant improvements to the Village Swimming Pool, asphalt resurfacing and utility improvements on East and West Butler Street and the demolition of the former Haskell building on North Water Street.

It was exciting to dedicate the new Maintenance garage on Wally Road in March. The total cost of the 7,000 square foot building was about \$445,000, and made possible in large part by the generous donations of the Loudonville American Legion Post #257. With the continuing assistance of the Legion, the Village is well on track to make the final loan payment for the building by the end of my term as Mayor in 2023. The need for this new building had been discussed for many years, and I would personally like to express my thanks to Post #257 for their great service to the community in completing this facility for the benefit of the citizens of the Village of Loudonville.

Other infrastructure improvements completed in 2019 includes sanitary sewer, water, storm water and asphalt replacement on Butler Street, from North Spring to North Union Streets. The roadway on Butler between North Water and Market, as well as from North Wood to North Union required additional repair to the asphalt base. A new sanitary sewer and manhole was installed from North Water to North Brentwood Drive, and the water service lines were upgraded at each residence in the project area. The total cost of the project was \$374,795.45. \$180,000 was received in the form of a grant from the Ohio Public Works Commission, while the remainder of the project cost was funded by Village Street, Storm Water, and Water and Wastewater funds.

The Village Swimming Pool saw major improvements and the replacement of the main pool concrete deck, ladders, lifeguard chairs, diving boards, starting block anchors and deck drains. Improvements to the building include a number of new doors and windows and the repair of the concrete floor in the Lifeguard office. An equipotential bonding grid, required to eliminate electrical shock hazards, was installed under the deck surface at a cost of nearly \$30,000. The project was funded through a \$75,000 Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Additional funding was provided by the Hugo and Mabel Young Foundation, the Milton and Beulah Young Foundation (which donated funds for the purchase of ADA stairs) and Loudonville tax payers. The Loudonville Swim Team purchased the starting block anchors for the new deck. The total project cost was \$181,945.85. Maintenance items related to the project will be completed prior to the Pool opening this spring. The Loudonville American Legion Post #257 was also instrumental again this year in funding needed equipment repair and replacement, and once again funded a very successful Free Youth Swim on Tuesdays last summer. We appreciate the assistance of Post #257 in providing for summertime recreation for the young people of the Loudonville area.

There are many exciting things happening at The Ohio Theatre. It continues to grow and the staff is continually working to expand the programming and events offered. Beginning in 2019, we have shown movies every weekend, even during weekends when live events are also scheduled. We were also able to have a special summer movie series in 2019 - made possible by First-Knox National Bank. The Arts Alive program is growing and not only offered the traditional Drama Camp, but also improved to add an Art Camp for kids. In 2020, Arts Alive will expand again and begin offering Drama Classes, and the newly formed "Ohio Theatre Children's Chorus" will be another avenue for kid's to be able to learn and perform.

The Loudonville Theatre & Arts Committee (aka LTAC) continues to be a huge support to The Ohio Theatre, and in 2019 made it possible for special programming with Muppet's Artist, Guy Gilchrist, the Ashland Symphony Orchestra and all of the Mohican Community Theatre shows. LTAC is also working to raise money for a much needed new motorized movie screen which will be installed in 2020.

Infrastructure improvements set to take place this year include the resurfacing of North Market Street at an estimated cost of more than \$ 500,000. A replacement of the water mains between Loudon and Burwell Avenue will be included in the project. Approximately 60%, or a \$303,000, is expected to be funded by a grant from the Ohio Public Works Commission. Additional paving of other Village Streets will be prioritized in the spring of this year.

In addition to the American Legion Post 257, I would also like to thank the Hugo & Mabel Young Foundation, the Milton & Beulah Young Foundation, the Loudonville Theatre & Arts Committee, the Loudonville Fire Department Incorporated, Growing Mohican Families, and other private donors for their continued support of Village projects. We also appreciate those donors who have contributed to the Ashland County Community Foundation naming the Village of Loudonville as the beneficiary

Closing Remarks: I would like to close with a few comments about our Village employees, and the staff of every department within our Village. Our safety forces, Village Maintenance and Utilities, Business Office and employees of the Theatre, Swimming Pool and Cemetery have again done an exceptional job in providing quality services to our community. I believe I can speak for Council and myself in saying that we appreciate the tremendous jobs you are doing, and look forward to working with you in 2020 and beyond.

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CONSENT ITEMS:

Council Minutes – January 6, 2020 Regular Meeting: Councilman Welsh moved the minutes be approved as presented. Second by Councilman Gallagher. A roll call upon said motion resulted as follows:

Bill Welsh, yes; Tom Gallagher, yes; Tom Young, yes;
Jason Van Sickle, yes; Cathy Lance, yes; Matt Young, yes. Motion carried.

GUESTS:

American Legion Post 257: Legion representatives Jim Danner and Don Riffel presented the Village with a donation of \$19,401.08 for the maintenance building bond retirement. Mayor Stricklen thanked the Legion for their continuous support of the new maintenance building.

Grant Cowell – Food Truck Approval: Mr. Grant Cowell, owner of Grants Quac and Roll food truck, asked Council for permission to set up his food truck in Central Park in the near future. Because he did not have exact dates, he asked if it would be possible to call the Village Administrator on a Monday to request permission during the week. Councilman Gallagher noted Solicitor Gilman was working on legislation for Council consideration that would regulate the operation of food trucks within the Village to include a permit process. Council agreed to allow Mr. Cowell to make arrangements through the Village Administrator until the regulations are adopted. Administrator Young asked Mr. Cowell to contact the Chamber of Commerce as well to be sure his requested dates do not conflict with scheduled Chamber events.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Norfolk Southern Railroad Crossings: Administrator Young reported that he has been in contact with a representative of Norfolk Southern regarding needed repairs to crossings on North Jefferson, North Spring, and North Market Streets. He noted that the representative assured him that Norfolk Southern is working on a plan to repair the crossings, and will complete the work as soon as the weather permits.

State Audit: Fiscal Officer Van Horn reported that the Auditor of State has awarded the Village's upcoming audit for the 2018-2019 cycle to IPA Charles E. Harris & Associates. She noted that the Village qualified for the shortened, less costly audits during the previous two audit cycles, noting two consecutive cycles of the shortened audit are permitted before the more expensive full audit is required. She further noted that the contract award is for the next three audit cycles, 2018-2019, 2020-2021 and 2022-2023. Councilman Tom Young authorized the Fiscal Officer to sign the Memorandum of Agreement between Charles E. Harris & Associates, the Village, and the Auditor of State. Second by Councilman Gallagher. A roll call upon said motion resulted as follows:

Tom Young, yes; Tom Gallagher, yes; Bill Welsh, yes;
Jason Van Sickle, yes; Cathy Lance, yes; Matt Young, yes. Motion carried.

LEGISLATION:

ORDINANCE 2-2020

AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES AND ORDINARY EXPENDITURES OF THE VILLAGE OF LOUDONVILLE, STATE OF OHIO, DURING THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2020 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

VOTE TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Councilman Welsh moved to suspend the rules of the law, which require an ordinance to be read on three different days, for Ordinance 2-2020. Councilman Van Sickle seconded the motion. A roll call upon said motion resulted as follows:

Bill Welsh, yes; Jason Van Sickle, yes; Tom Young, yes;
Tom Gallagher, yes; Cathy Lance, yes; Matt Young, yes. Motion carried.

ADOPTION VOTE

Councilman Welsh moved that Ordinance No. 2-2020 be passed as read. Second by Councilman Van Sickle. A roll call upon said motion resulted as follows:

Bill Welsh, yes; Jason Van Sickle, yes; Tom Young, yes;
Tom Gallagher, yes; Cathy Lance, yes; Matt Young, yes. Motion carried.

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OLD BUSINESS:

Village Streets: Councilman Tom Young asked Council to consider a new street levy to fund a street-paving program, stating that he felt the Village streets were “terrible” in many areas. Councilman Welsh stated he felt residents would be open to a new street levy if presented properly. Mayor Stricklen asked Administrator Young if increased revenue for streets from a tax levy would impact the Village’s successful grant acquisitions. Administrator Young replied that paving improvements are generally tied to utility infrastructure grant projects. Councilman Van Sickle suggested the Street Committee meet to discuss options for funding a street improvement program.

New Stop Sign at Loudon & Water: Councilman Matt Young expressed thanks to the Loudonville Police Department for quickly authorizing a new 4-way stop sign that was installed at the intersection of Loudon and Water Streets. Councilman Tom Young asked Councilman Matt Young why the request for the new stop sign was not presented to Council for discussion before being erected. Upon question by Councilman Welsh as to why Councilman Matt Young felt the stop sign was necessary, Councilman Matt Young stated that he lives near the intersection and felt the intersection was confusing to drivers, noting a number of near misses. He said he presented the request to Chief Taylor and Administrator Young and further stated he left it up to their expertise. He stated that the next thing he knew, there was a 4-way stop. Solicitor Gilman stated that the Chief of Police has the authority to place stop signs at his discretion. Councilman Tom Young stated he felt as a safety measure, there should be signs to warn people of the change. Mayor Stricklen stated that he has never been in favor of installing new 4-way stop signs and said he felt changing stop sign configurations creates an unsafe intersection for a period of time. Councilman Matt Young stated he felt the intersection needed changed to a 4-way stop.

NEW BUSINESS:

Committee Meetings: Councilman Tom Young asked that committee meeting notices be emailed to non-committee council members, stating he does not often check his mailbox in the Village Office.

Downtown Revitalization Plan: Councilman Matt Young distributed to Council his ideas for a downtown revitalization plan, stating it was one of the topics he keyed on during his campaign for council. He stated he would like to do something to energize the downtown and get people back downtown to support local businesses. Councilman Tom Young stated he would like to eliminate parking meters. Mayor Stricklen noted that the removal of parking meters has been discussed in the past. Solicitor Gilman shared that past discussions regarding the parking meter identified that the concerns were not related to revenue or expenses but rather a concern with tenants taking up parking spaces downtown that might otherwise be used by customers. Mayor Stricklen asked Councilman Matt Young to present his ideas to the Council Parks & Buildings Committee for discussion and presentation to Council. Councilwoman Lance noted that Ashley Thurber of Loko Bean has already initiated some revitalization ideas that Councilman Matt Young presented.

Ashland Soil & Water Conservation District Banner Permit: Councilwoman Lance moved to approve the banner permit request from the Ashland SWCD to be hung the month of April. Second by Councilman Van Sickle. A roll call upon said motion resulted as follows:

Cathy Lance, yes; Jason Van Sickle, yes; Bill Welsh, yes;
Tom Young, yes; Tom Gallagher, yes; Matt Young, yes. Motion carried.

CLAIMS ORDINANCE 2020-02:

Claims Ordinance 2020-02 was presented for approval. Councilman Welsh moved to approve Claims Ordinance 2020-02. Second by Councilwoman Lance. A roll call upon said motion resulted as follows:

Bill Welsh, yes; Cathy Lance, yes; Tom Young, yes;
Jason Van Sickle, yes; Tom Gallagher, yes; Matt Young, yes. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Councilman Van Sickle moved to enter into an Executive Session at 6:38 PM to consider the investigation of complaints against a public employee. Second by Councilman Gallagher. A roll call upon said motion resulted as follows:

Jason Van Sickle, yes; Tom Gallagher, yes; Bill Welsh, yes;
Tom Young, yes; Cathy Lance, yes; Matt Young, yes. Motion carried.

Mayor Stricklen invited Chief Mike Carey, Assistant Chief Joe Kiefer, and Captain Dan Robinson to join Council in the Executive Session.

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RECONVENE:

At 7:24 PM, Councilman Van Sickle moved to end the Executive Session and reconvene the regular meeting. Second by Councilman Gallagher. A roll call upon said motion resulted as follows:

Jason Van Sickle, yes; Tom Gallagher, yes; Bill Welsh, yes;
Tom Young, yes; Cathy Lance, yes; Matt Young, yes. Motion carried.

ADJOURN: With no further business to be brought before Council, Councilman Van Sickle moved the meeting be adjourned at 7:24 PM. Second by Councilman Young. A roll call upon said motion resulted as follows:

Jason Van Sickle, yes; Tom Young, yes; Bill Welsh, yes;
Tom Gallagher, yes; Cathy Lance, yes; Matt Young, yes. Motion carried.

Fiscal Officer

Mayor