



Village of Ripley Regular Council Meeting April 11, 2023 at 6:30 pm

The Village of Ripley's Council met on April 11, 2023, at the Community Building for a regular council meeting. Present were Council Members Howard McClain, Scott Eagan, Alvin Wallace, Tiffany Regenstein and Nicole Hedges. Council President Charles Poole served as acting mayor in the absence of Mayor Nowana Bingaman. Village Administrator Wayne Gates and Fiscal Officer Amber Ackley and Solicitor Nick Owens were also in attendance.

Acting Mayor Poole opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and Mrs. Regenstein offered prayer.

During Public Participation, Carol Stivers asked that Acting Mayor Poole read a proclamation noting that April 28, 2023 be recognized in Ripley as Arbor Day. Acting Mayor Poole did so. Mrs. Stivers also noted that April 15 to May 15 would be referred to by the Ripley Tree Committee as "Dogwood Days" to note the presence of Dogwood Trees near Maplewood Cemetery. She also announced that a dog festival would be held May 6 at Parker Park which will feature various activities.

Stephen Strunk then spoke about an alley off Main Street that had been previously discussed as possibly being closed. Mr. Strunk opposed such a closure, stating that he uses it for access and maintains it voluntarily. He also opposed an idea being discussed informally in the village of making 4th Street between Main and Market Streets a one-way street from south to north. He brought a petition signed by local residents that stated "We the undersigned property owners or tenants formally request that traffic flow on 4th street in Ripley remain as is. We do not want to see it changed to one way or allow alterations to parking."

Mr. Strunk asked who asked Village Administrator Gates and Councilman Wallace to push the idea. Mr. Gates responded that he was not asked to "push" the idea, but was asked to assess the opinions of people in the area. Mr. Gates also said the reason for discussing the issue tonight was to get a sense of council and the public toward the idea. Following a lengthy discussion, council declined to move forward with the idea.

Doug McDonald came forward to report to council on the progress of the Freedom Landing Boat Dock project. He noted that Ms. Ackley said that all outstanding invoices from K4 Architecture regarding the Freedom Landing Boat Dock project would be submitted by her to the state for reimbursement today.

Mr. McDonald also said he would prepare a memo for council to make a resolution that would create a process for grant funding reimbursement from the state. The process would entail having the village remove sufficient funds from its Star Ohio account to create a rotating fund for incoming reimbursements from the state and outgoing invoices. He noted that Ms. Ackley had the wire transfer procedure set up for this purpose.

Mr. Eagan questioned how much initial money should be placed in the fund to begin the process. Following a lengthy discussion, Mr. McDonald said that he would proceed with the information needed for a formal resolution for council regarding the reimbursement procedure.

Mr. McDonald said that geomorphological testing would begin at the dock site on April 18 and that he and Mr. Gates were having bi-weekly meetings with K4 Architecture and the Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission about the project. He noted that other required state and federal permits were in the process of being procured.

Mr. McDonald then told council that a \$500,000 grant for an access road to the dock project had been approved by the Ohio Department of Transportation but that K4 Architecture would not be able to design the road because they are not an approved ODOT designer. Mr. McDonald noted that OHM Advisors, the state procured planner for the village for the Appalachian Community Grant Program, is an ODOT approved designer.

Mr. McDonald then noted that Mr. Gates procured \$50,000 in additional funding for the Rankin Hill Road and Main Street Slip projects and that he and Mr. Gates would keep everyone involved as the ACGP process moves forward.

Mr. Gates pointed out that state approved planners had the authority to reject new clients, but that OHM has enthusiastically embraced the Ripley project because of its potential.

Greg Wilson then presented a report on the repair work at the water plant, noting that all required materials were on hand and that work would begin on April 12. He also noted that hydrant flushing was continuing in the village and asked that residents call the village to report any brown water. Mr. Wilson also noted that the parking lot around the water plant and administration would be sealed. Mr. Gates noted that Ripley Metalworks would allow village employees and customers to park on their property during the sealing process.

Council then held a discussion on the Historic Preservation District. Mr. Gates noted that council had documentation about the Historic Preservation District and the Historic Preservation Ordinance already in place. He noted that an oversight board named in the ordinance needs to be appointed. Mr. Gates then discussed the creation of the Historic Preservation District and asked that the Historic Preservation Committee to be appointed. Mr. Gates suggested that anyone interested in serving on the committee to apply with the village to serve. Mr. Gates pointed out that adhering to the historic preservation ordinance was important as future growth could be coming the village. Mr. Eagan asked about the status of buildings currently inside the historic district. Mr. Gates answered that the ordinance says that the Historic Preservation Committee has authority to regulate buildings within the zone. Mr. Eagan expressed concern that the process would stifle growth. Acting Mayor Poole responded that the process might encourage building owners to comply with current ordinances. Mr. Gates will take applications from persons interested in serving on the board.

A question from the audience over recent HVAC work at the village that was performed by an outside firm resulted in a statement from Acting Mayor Poole that every effort should be made to find a local contractor for any subsequent work needed by the village.

Fire Chief Tony Pfeffer asked if the new fire contract with Union Township had been signed by the village yet. After discussion, it was determined that the contract was approved and would be taken to Union Township for approval.

Mr. Gates noted that the OVRDC would be having a planning meeting for the ACGP program on April 14. He added that the requirements and process for the grant was changing almost weekly and that he was keeping track of the changes. He also noted that the \$50,000 dollar grant would be used for testing on the Main Street Slip and Rankin Hill Road.

Mr. Gates also called attention the fact that the new village website was now live and that online payments would be available to the public on April 18.

Mr. Gates noted that he would be meeting with wholesale electricity vendor AEP tomorrow to begin discussions on a new wholesale electricity contract.

Mr. Gates noted that State Representative Adam Bird had told him that he would look out for the villages interests while a state representative has not yet been appointed to our house district.

Mr. Gates also told council that he had recently attended Flood Plain Manager training in Cincinnati.

Acting Mayor Poole noted that Eatery 52 was a new business in town and he was honored to help cut the ribbon. He also thanked Greg Wilson and other village employees for their work on mowing. Acting Mayor Poole also led a discussion about the new electronic work order system being used by the village.

Mrs. Regenstein asked about a payment to former police chief Josh Miller. Ms. Ackley responded that it was an overpayment to the state Police and Fire fund that was due to Mr. Miller. Mrs. Regenstein also mentioned that the scaffolding on property at 40 North Second Street needed to come down. After a discussion, Mr. Gates said he would contact the property owner about having the scaffolding removed.

Mr. McClain set a meeting for the council permitting committee for April 18 at 5:30.

Mr. Wallace asked about veteran's banners. Mr. Gates responded that the template was being built for approval by council.

Mr. Wallace asked about the progress of the transfer of the village water system to Brown County Rural Water. Mr. Gates and Mr. Owens responded that there was still an issue within the Ohio EPA that was holding up the release of funds for the project.

Mr. Wallace said that extra garbage cans and police presence would be needed in the DORA district during the summer. Mr. Gates said he would put the DORA rules on the village website and follow up with Police Chief Corey Herren about public education and DORA enforcement.

Mr. Wallace said that the swing sets need to be replaced at the village park. Mr. Gates said he would order new swing sets.

Mr. Wallace discussed a damaged pole at the Lion's Club pavilion. Mike Staley said the pole would be replaced the pole within the week.

Mr. Wallace made a motion to transfer \$500 to the Park Fund from the General Fund to pay for park equipment. Seconded by Mr. Eagan. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Eagan reported that the finance committee met at 5:30 and that fund balances are within normal ranges for this time of year. Mr. Eagan reported that Mr. Wilson informed the committee that the village does not track electric costs for electricity given to other departments. Those charges will be expensed off by department next year.

Mr. Eagan asked Mr. Gates about bids to mow the cemetery. Mr. Gates responded that he had a bid to mow,

weed eat, clean up around the gravestones and maintain the ditch line at \$1150 per mow with mowing at the discretion of the village administrator. Mr. Wallace moved that the village enter a contract with Four Kings Lawn care to mow the cemetery. Seconded by Mr. McClain. Passed 4-2 with Mrs. Hedges and Mr. Eagan voting no.

Mr. Eagan moved for an executive session, seconded by Mrs. Regenstein. Motion carried unanimously.

Entered Executive Session at 7:50 pm.

Exited Executive Session at 8:20 pm.

Mr. Wallace moved for adjournment. Seconded by Mrs. Hedges. Motion carried unanimously.

Charles Poole, Acting Mayor

Date

Wayne Gates, Village Administrator

Date

Nick Owens, Solicitor

Date