

VILLAGE OF NEW LEXINGTON COUNCIL MEETING
January 16, 2024
5:30 PM
MUNICIPAL BUILDING

The Village of New Lexington met in regular session with Mayor Thompson presiding and the meeting being called to order at 5:30 PM. Council Members present were Jim Welsh, Dan Bethel, Janie DePinto, Jeff Danison, Ty Danison, Bob Spencer and Debra Hooper. Also present were Administrator Emmert, Police Chief Gill, Finance Director Lewis, and Fire Chief Fain.

Councilperson Welsh made a motion to approve the minutes for the January 2, 2024 meeting as read. Seconded by Councilperson Jeff Danison. All Council voted "yes" except for Councilperson Debra Hooper who abstained due to being absent from the January 2, 2024 meeting. Motion carried.

Dan Kinsel introduced himself to Council as the newly appointed Perry County Commissioner. Kinsel informed Council he wants to help the Village whenever possible. Kinsel stated the Commissioners are working on reducing the property taxes from 35% to 30%. Mayor Thompson stated the Village along with other municipalities in the southern part of the county need help at the county level. Administrator Emmert stated the Village has been trying to work with the County on the dispatch center and has received nothing but push back from them. Emmert reported he is not getting any answers from the Perry County Sheriff's Office or the Perry County Commissioners. Emmert stated the residents of the Village of New Lexington pay the same taxes as the rest of the County municipalities and we want the same dispatching services that they receive. Councilperson DePinto asked how much money the Village would save if we did not pay for our own dispatching of officers. Emmert stated \$360, 000 a year which could be utilized for other services. The Village previously paid \$100,000 to the County for dispatching services before bringing it back in house. Police Chief Gill stated the County wide 911 levy shows the Village should not have to pay for services. Gill stated there is \$1.2 million currently in the County levy fund. Kinsel thanked them for the information. Councilperson Bethel asked for Kinsel's phone number, and he stated he would get it for all Council members.

Bryan Ruff introduced himself to Council as a candidate for Perry County Sheriff. Ruff stated he is originally from Crooksville, Ohio but currently lives in Thornville. Ruff stated he has been an officer since 2009 and has been a police detective in Zanesville, Ohio since 2018. Ruff stated he would like to bring the County together. Ruff stated the goal is to protect the communities. Councilperson DePinto asked how many Perry County Deputies are on duty at night. Ruff stated currently he does not know that information. Ruff stated during his 2 1/2 years of employment with Somerset, Ohio he had to be used as a county deputy because they only had one deputy on duty. Councilperson Welsh asked if he was getting his name out in the communities. Ruff stated that he has been campaigning throughout the County.

Mayor Thompson stated he took a tour of the renovations at the Perry County Court House, and it looks great. Thompson reported he viewed the new shelter house at the reservoir. Thompson informed Council he attended the school funding meeting. Councilperson DePinto asked where we stand with the funding. Thompson stated Administrator Emmert will know on Friday. Emmert stated if we do not receive the grant money, we will not be able to do the upgrades at the park. Emmert informed Council Representative Troy Balderson will be visiting on Tuesday.

Finance Director Lewis presented Council with a resolution for amending EMS pay rates. Lewis stated we received the check from Saltlick Township in the amount of \$5,346 for EMS services. Lewis informed Council she received a check from the Opioid settlement for \$50.50. Lewis stated she emailed the December monthly reports to Council. Lewis stated she passed around an account code cheat sheet to help Council read the monthly reports better.

Administrator Emmert presented Council with a resolution for Mayor Thompson or himself to apply for a grant for streetscape on Broadway Street. Emmert stated he sent all Council members information on training through the office of Ohio Attorney General Yost if they are interested. Emmert reported they held a safety training last week for the Public Service Department and Wastewater Treatment Plant. Emmert stated he is going to do performance evaluations for employees and has completed three. Emmert stated the flood plain is currently done by the administrator of the Village. Emmert stated he is not certified to do this. Jessica Dodson was appointed to be the Perry County Flood Plain manager. The Village is waiting for a Resolution to move forward with the County being responsible for flood plain management. Emmert stated the legal notice for bids for the Water Treatment Plant project have been publicized. Emmert reported he applied for the water and wastewater infrastructure grant. Emmert reported the income from late fees on water and sewer bills in 2023 was \$50,589.38 and the disconnect fees were \$12,307.77. Emmert informed Council the Safe Routes to School project will begin in the spring and the project bid was awarded to Brennstuhl Construction Inc. The cost of the project is \$340,000 which is being paid by Ohio Department of Transportation. Emmert reported on the proposal to replace windows and door frames at the LEMPCO building. Emmert stated he and Public Service Director Ross review each year what equipment needs replaced. Emmert stated they have a truck they would like to replace with a Chevy one-ton utility truck. The public service department needs a one-ton truck to haul the track hoe. The cost was \$71,639 and they were able to get it down to \$65,403. Emmert stated it needs to have a bed liner and strobe light attached to the top. This takes the cost of the truck to \$67,768. Council asked Finance Director Lewis if the money was in their budget. Lewis stated "yes". Councilperson Bethel asked if they would like to add hook ups for snowplows.

Councilperson Bethel made a motion for the Public Service Department to purchase a one-ton truck with equipment. Seconded by Councilperson Welsh. All Council voted "yes". Motion carried.

Administrator Emmert stated he received a quote from Hannah Brothers for \$22,402.15 to replace the carpet in the meeting room, administration offices and four police department offices. This is \$2,402.15 more than previously approved by Council.

Councilperson Welsh made a motion to rescind the previous motion to allow \$20,000 to be used for carpet replacement. Seconded by Councilperson DePinto. All Council voted "yes". Motion carried.

Councilperson Welsh made a motion to accept the quote of \$22,402.15 from Hannah Brothers to replace carpet in the meeting room, administration offices and two police offices. Seconded by Councilperson DePinto. All Council voted "yes" except for Councilperson Hooper who voted "no". Motion carried.

Police Chief Gill stated the department has been fully staffed on patrol the last two weeks. Gill stated they hired two dispatchers and interviewed one other applicant. Gill reported Chad Wilkins is going to meet with Administrator Emmert and himself to discuss starting as the Village Code Enforcement Officer in February. Gill reported Commander Biggers will be attending Car Seat Technician training in February. Gill stated they are working with the Perry County Health Department and the Child Injury Prevention Coalition to create familiarization training for officers and a meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2024. Gill informed Council they are planning a CPR/AFD/First Aid training on January 29, 2024 for all New Lexington Police Department officers and this is open to other Village police departments. The fire departments are welcome to attend also. Gill stated the monthly K-9 training is complete. Gill reported Commander Biggers and one dispatcher completed swatting training. The Second session will be held on January 31, 2024 for other officers and will be attended by School Resource Officers and himself. Gill informed Council they are waiting for the judge's signature on destruction and disposal orders for evidence. Gill stated the department participated in the County Night Out on January 11, 2024. This resulted in 19 traffic stops, one felony warrants arrest and two traffic stops involving six people that involved drugs and paraphernalia in New Lexington. Gill reported he attended the

LEPC meeting on January 9, 2024. Gill stated the department organized a dodge ball team comprised of officers, dispatchers and family members which they named NLPD Throwback Cops to participate in the charity dodgeball tournament in Zanesville to support the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board. Gill informed Council cruiser number one (K-9) is currently getting new decals applied. Cars will continue to rotate to have the decals applied. Gill presented Council with a year-end report which included a breakdown of the 10,031 calls for service they received in calendar year 2023. Councilperson DePinto asked if the cruiser has been equipped for the K-9. Gill stated it should be ready in a couple of weeks. Councilperson Bethel stated a resident asked if there is a drug task force. Gill stated he just signed a letter of support for the CODETF for \$2,500 a year which gives them access to the lab and other resources in Licking County. This is not the same as when Perry County had a drug task force unit. Mayor Thompson thanked Gill for covering open shifts in their department while they were training new officers. Gill stated he has changed the scheduled work hours in the department. Councilperson DePinto asked if the Village would lose employees when dispatch is done through the County. Gill stated "yes". Gill stated they are all trained, and the Commissioners stated they would offer them employment in the 911 center.

Fire Chief Fain reported he attended the Drug Coalition meeting today. Fain stated the coalition is hosting a Homelessness event at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on Brown Street on January 24, 2024. They will be providing a free meal and other assistance to anyone in need. Fain reported in 2023 they had 1,885 EMS runs and 422 Fire runs. Fain stated one member participated in 269 of the 422 runs in 2023. Fain stated there is training that they have three years to complete and some of the firemen have completed the training in one year. Councilperson Welsh asked if the department was planning on offering CPR classes to the public again. Fain stated "yes". Fain told Welsh he could attend the CPR training that the police department was hosting on the 29th if he wants to get certified again. Councilperson Bethel asked Commissioner Kinsel if he could possibly help with the issue of how many EMS runs the Village takes in the southern communities. Mayor Thompson updated Kinsel on the situation and stated the county needs to do more to help. Mayor Thompson stated those communities deserve better.

Councilperson DePinto stated Council had been supplied with the list of new committees. DePinto asked if everyone was satisfied with the committees they are on. DePinto presented Council with a Resolution to abolish the Public Safety Committee. DePinto stated it was not required in the Charter and they had not held a meeting in over a year. DePinto stated in the Charter, it says it is up to Council if they have an Income Tax Board of Review, but it is required by the State of Ohio. DePinto will work on filling this committee. Mayor Thompson approved the 2024 committees as presented.

Councilperson Welsh made a motion to suspend the rules and read by title only Resolution No. 24-3 as a first reading. Seconded by Councilperson Bethel. All Council voted "yes". Motion carried. Resolution No. 24-3: **AUTHORIZATION TO WRITE OFF NEW LEXINGTON, OHIO WATER UTILITY DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLES.**

Councilperson Bethel made a motion to suspend the rules and read by title only Resolution No. 24-4 and declaring an emergency. Seconded by Councilperson Ty Danison. All Council voted "yes". Motion carried. Resolution No. 24-4: **A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND/OR VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR TO SUBMIT TO THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM GRANT AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE FOR THE BROADWAY STREETScape PROJECT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.** Councilperson Jeff Danison made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 24-4 as read. Seconded by Councilperson Hooper. All Council voted "yes". Motion carried.

Councilperson Welsh made a motion to suspend the rules and read by title only Resolution No. 24-5 and declaring an emergency. Seconded by Councilperson DePinto. All Council voted "yes" except for

Councilperson Ty Danison who abstained. Motion carried. Resolution No. 24-5: **A RESOLUTION AMENDING WAGES FOR FULL TIME EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.** Councilperson Jeff Danison made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 24-4 as read. Seconded by Councilperson Welsh. All Council voted “yes” except for Councilperson Ty Danison who abstained. Motion carried.

Councilperson Welsh made a motion to suspend the rules and read by title only Resolution No. 24-6 and declaring an emergency. Seconded by Councilperson Jeff Danison. All Council voted “yes” except for Councilperson Spencer who abstained. Motion carried. Resolution No. 24-6: **A RESOLUTION ABOLISHING THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.** Councilperson Jeff Danison made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 24-6 as read. Seconded by Councilperson Welsh. All Council voted “yes” except for Councilperson Spencer who abstained. Motion carried.

Councilperson Bethel made a motion to appoint Police Chief Doug Gill to the Regional 12 Opioid Settlement Board. Seconded by Councilperson Welsh. All Council voted “yes”. Motion carried.

Mayor Thompson entertained a motion to adjourn.

Councilperson Jeff Danison made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Councilperson Ty Daison. All Council voted “yes”. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.


Mayor


Council Clerk