THE VILLAGE OF PHILLIPSBURG

COUNCIL MEETING

OCTOBER 21, 2025

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Simpson.

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of silence for police, fire, and military personnel

Fiscal Officer Hartman took council roll call:
Heather – here; Hope – here; Jill – here; Chris – here; Jacob – absent; John – here;
Josh – here.

Hope Hoard motioned to approve Jacob Groh's absence due to illness. Heather seconded. All approved. Motion passed.

Mayor Simpson called for the approval of previous council meeting minutes from 9/16/25 and 9/23/25.

Hope Hoard motioned to approve the minutes from the regular council meeting on September 16, 2025. Jill seconded. Heather – abstained, Hope – yes, Jill – yes, John – abstain. Motion passed.

Hope motioned to approve the special council meeting minutes from September 23, 2025. John seconded. Heather – abstained, Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chris – abstained, John – yes. Motion passed.

Fiscal Officer Hartman stated that the next order of business is to address ordinances and resolutions. Ordinance 2025-0001 Abolishing the Administrator position: second reading. Councilman John Ritter moved that the council table that for further discussion. Hope seconded. Heather -yes, Hope – yes, Jill – yes, John – yes.

Fiscal Officer Hartman stated that the next order of business is Resolution No. 2025-0066 Workload Tracking and Accountability and making it an emergency resolution.

Councilman John Ritter stated that the Village has several urgent and ongoing issues of perception and/or lack of Village police presence. There have been comments about concerns with the police department. There have been comments and concerns about the nothing being done about the empty elementary school, issues with replacing aging playground equipment, updating and enforcing zoning, land sale, and water PFAS remediation. Also, the Village needs

to implement cyber security and compliance measures under House Bill 96. These are measures and issues that have been identified by council and by residents, and they are also required by the State. Many of these are quite major projects that the Village, residents, and Council have seen little or no action on. Councilman Ritter stated he is trying to establish a formal process for presenting these and all future projects at open public meetings, assigning council members to be picking up the project, and have ownership of it. Council members can be a project lead on that and form committees or whatever is necessary to get things done, hold meetings under Sunshine Laws, and then we would be tracking progress transparently so that not only does Council have transparency on what's been happening, but the Village residents can see as well. The status will be updated on the monthly Council meeting minutes, so everyone will now know what Council is working on and not working on and have an idea where we are, so we stop getting people asking questions about what's going on and see that you haven't done anything, and everyone worries about it. It just creates transparency about what government is doing. It helps to build public trust and open government.

Whereas we recognize a need for an organized approach to address ongoing and future projects for the benefit of the community;

Whereas, the Council desires a fair and transparent method for Council members to volunteer and lead specific projects, ensuring accountability, progress, and public involvement in accordance with Ohio Sunshine Laws; Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Council of the Village of Phillipsburg, State of Ohio, that:

Section 1: The Council shall receive a written list of current and proposed village projects at each regular council meeting, accompanied by a project brief outlining objectives, scope, and expected timelines. [Mr. Ritter has put together a list of things in process. More can be added. Council needs to decide what needs worked on.]

Section 2: Council members may openly volunteer at the council meeting to serve a project leads ("Project Champions") for one or more listed projects, with assignments confirmed and documented in the official meeting minutes.

Section 3: Progress on each project shall be reported by the assigned council members at every regular council meeting, included in published agendas, and summarized in public minutes available for public inspection.

Section 4: The Fiscal Officer or designated record keeper shall maintain a simple project tracking document – updated regularly – with project status, assigned members, and expected completion timeframes, posted on the Village website or attached to the council meeting minutes, for public transparency. (Sample attached)

Section 5: All project deliberations, volunteer assignments, and status updates shall occur strictly in accordance with Ohio's Open Meetings Act (O.R.C. 121.22) and Sunshine Laws, and public records shall be made available in accordance with village and state policies.

Section 6: This Resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, and welfare of the Village of Phillipsburg. Therefore, this Resolution shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage.

Councilman Ritter asked if this is a policy the Council wants to vote on and adopt and then discuss the work that needs to get done.

Councilwoman Heather Craft commented that the council is aware of the work that needs to be done, but one of the problems is communication. Councilman Ritter stated that this is what can be solved by the Resolution. Councilwoman Craft stated her concern with communication and resolution of issues at the council meetings, and problems with the zoning code and enforcement. There was a discussion about how the resolution will solve the problems.

Mayor Simpson stated that the Council doesn't have a process that works thoroughly to where council members lack in some skills regarding updating the zoning code. He stated that the Council needs to prioritize who the liaisons are and what everyone is best suited to tackle. Mayor Simpson spoke with Mr. Wysong, who has agreed to step down from zoning duties. Council will choose a new zoning officer to update the zoning code. Council members will head committees that are in line with their skill sets. Council member Chris Steiner asked about rewriting the zoning code, as it was discussed at a previous meeting. The Mayor stated that each project needs a chain of command and a plan set to correct any problems. The Council cannot continue to address things in the manner it has in the past because things aren't getting accomplished. Not that no one is trying, but the process needs to improve. There was a continued discussion about zoning and the number of hours needed to do the job. There was also a discussion about what is happening with the elementary school property. There was also a discussion about the spreadsheet regarding each project.

Hope Hoard (?) motioned to waive the three-reading rule, declaring this resolution 2025-0066 as an emergency. Jill Ritter (?) seconded. The Fiscal Officer took a vote. Heather – yes, Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chris – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Heather Craft motioned to approve the Workload Tracking and Accountability Resolution No. 2025-0066. Hope Hoard seconded. The Fiscal Officer took a vote. Heather – yes, Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chris – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Fiscal Officer Hartman stated that the next item is Resolution 2025-0068, A Resolution Establishing a Standard Code of Conduct for Elected Members of Council and Employees of the Village of Phillipsburg.

Whereas: The Village Council of Phillipsburg recognizes the importance of maintaining public trust through ethical behavior. integrity, and professionalism; and

Elected officials and employees are entrusted with responsibilities that require transparency, accountability, and appropriate use of village resources; and

The Council wishes to adopt a comprehensive Code of Conduct that reflects standards of behavior, conflicts of interest practices, professional use of communications, and public engagement, including email and social media.

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved by the Council of the Village of Phillipsburg, State of Ohio, that:

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide clear standards of ethical and professional behavior for the performance of public duties, thereby protecting the interests of the community and promoting good governance.

Section 2. Applicability

This Code applies to:

All elected officials, including the Mayor and Council Members.

All village employees, regardless of status (full-time, part-time, seasonal, or temporary).

Appointed officials, administrators, and members serving on boards or commissions authorized by Council.

Section 3 Standards of Conduct

All covered individuals shall:

Uphold the Law: Act in compliance with the Ohio Revised Code, village ordinances, and all applicable state and federal laws.

Integrity and Conflicts: Avoid financial or personal conflicts of interest and disclose potential conflicts in writing.

Conduct with Respect: Treat all citizens, colleagues, and the general public fairly, courteously, and without discrimination or harassment.

Use of Resources: Use village property, funds, equipment, technology, and time only for official purposes, with incidental minimal personal use permitted only if it does not interfere with official duties.

Confidentiality: Protect confidential information obtained in the course of duty and refrain from using it for personal gain.

Transparency: Ensure official actions and decisions are conducted openly and in the best interest of the public.

Accountability: Accept personal responsibility for one's actions and the ethical performance of the Village government.

Harassment-Free Environment: Avoid discrimination, intimidation, threats, or harassment of any kind.

Email and Electronic Communications: Use Village email accounts and communication systems exclusively for professional and authorized purposes. All communications must remain professional, respectful, and related to official duties. Use of personal accounts to conduct official village business is prohibited.

Social Media Conduct: When using social media, either officially or for personal use, officials and employees must: Not present personal opinions as positions of the Village unless authorized. Avoid sharing, posting, or endorsing content that is defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, or damaging to the reputation of the Village. Protect confidential and privileged village information. Ensure office village-related social media use is pre-approved and authorized by the Council or the Mayor.

Section 4. Enforcement

Alleged violations by elected officials shall be reviewed by Council in accordance with Ohio law and may result in censure, removal from committees, or other remedies permitted by statute.

Violations by employees shall be addressed through the Village's personnel policies and disciplinary procedures.

Section 5. Training and Acknowledgement.

All elected officials and employees shall receive training on this Code of Conduct upon assuming their duties.

Each individual covered by the Code of Conduct shall sign an acknowledgement confirming receipt, understanding, and agreement to comply with the Code, including the provisions on email and social media.

Section 6. Review

The Council shall review the Code of Conduct at least once every four (4) years to ensure compliance with current law and best practices.

Section 7. Emergency Declaration and Adoption

This Resolution is hereby declared an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety and welfare of the Village of Phillipsburg, and shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage.

Hope Hoard motioned to waive the three-reading rule, declaring the Standard Code of Conduct and Acknowledgment form Resolution 2025-0068 as an emergency. Jill Ritter (?) seconded. The Fiscal Officer took a vote. Heather – yes, Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chris – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Hope Hoard motioned to approve the resolution establishing a Code of Conduct and Acknowledgement Form Resolution No. 2025-0068. Chris Steiner (?) seconded. The Fiscal Officer took a vote. Heather – yes, Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chris – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Special guest Mr. Danny Potter spoke. He owns and operates the airport. He wanted to comment on the Code of Conduct Resolution. He mentioned the meeting that took place at the airport, and stated it is private property. Mr. Potter wanted to make it clear that the airport is not situated within the Village. He stated that his wife was threatened for expressing an opinion on social media by people who appear to be from the Village Council. Someone online accused the airport owner of being involved in shady conduct. Someone mentioned that the airport would have more to worry about than just taxes. Mr. Potter wanted this statement to be on public record. He is of the opinion that the person making threats is a Village of Phillipsburg Council member. He feels that the Village Council has not done anything for the airport.

The Mayor asked if there was any old business. The Fiscal Officer stated that the Village received the final statement from the repairs made on State Route 49, and it was barely over $9,000, and was a blessing in disguise. A comment was made that State Route 49 looks a lot better. It is hoped that the patches will last until the 2028-2029 resurfacing.

Heather Craft (?) asked about the prospect of getting a new ambulance billing system. Chief Aldrich mentioned that he sent out a memo regarding the new billing system.

Reports:

Fiscal Officer Hartman proceeded with the fiscal officer report. Unfortunately, everything has not been able to be updated. This Fiscal Officer has been in contact with representatives from the State of Ohio trying to get OPERS taken care of. Issues were brought up that we were not paying OPERS to people who should have been because the Village had incorrect information. The Village is now caught up with payments. Lori Hartman stated that she took part in a seminar with the Auditor of State. Issues from earlier this year were addressed about employment positions that weren't created properly and voted on properly. The auditor recommended to do a little each day to rectify the situation.

Fiscal Officer Hartman is working on up-to-date financial reports but cannot access everything needed to perform that task. She asked that a council member come to the office to go over financial records, so there will be more people involved other than the fiscal officer and mayor. Soon the council will be able to speak publicly about some of the information from January, February, and March. There will need to be another meeting besides the regular monthly meeting to go through the steps of what happened, the laws that were violated, and what has been done to

follow up, so that everyone knows where everything stands. A council member asked when this would all be completed, and the fiscal officer stated that it is hoped to be completed by the end of the month. Direct deposits from the County are being made, but the fiscal officer doesn't have access to the system that she needs to know where the funds belong. The mayor stated that the Village has changed banks, and the fiscal officer is required to attend 4.5 hours of training. The reports will be presented as soon as possible.

Fire Chief Aldrich is back from medical leave, but he is on light duty.
Equipment Maintenance: Tanker 80 is at the factory in Kentucky, getting repairs done on the water valves, the fuel tank, and roll up doors. The work should be completed in three to four weeks. Medic 80 has undergone extensive repairs to the suspension and braking system and has a new radiator.

No new equipment purchased out of the fire department budget.

Medical Director: Current doctor from KHN is charging $3,500/yr. Chief Aldrich has spoken with a doctor from MVHN, who has agreed to be our Medical Director for $1,500/yr.

Funding Ambulance Billing: The billing company works on a percentage basis. The ability to bill Medicare has lapsed, but that issue is being rectified. The Chief discussed billing for the past two years and monies received and bills that were written off.

General Health of the organization: The Fire Department is covering more shifts and adhering to our contract with the Clay Township Trustees. There is not adequate money to cover payroll, and the department is not getting adequate funds from Clay Township. Operating expenses are solely funded by Ambulance billing. The Fire Chief asked if there were any questions on the funding. Councilman Steiner asked that with the department being better staffed, does that help with the funding? Chief Aldrich explained that here is an operating grant, but if the department applies for that grant, it must be continued to be used. The grant money must all be used for operating and staffing costs. There is no funding available for operating revenue. The funding is used for capital purchases, equipment purchases, etc. The money from Clay Township is based on the contract that was entered into between the Village and Clay Township at the beginning of the year. The Chief further explained how the department makes money. There was a long discussion about fire department funding and grants. The fiscal officer discussed funding. There was a discussion about how the government shut down affects the funding. There was a lengthy discussion about the grant application that was approved last year.

Hope Hoard motioned to accept the Ohio First Responder Grant in addition to the 5% matching for the grant writers. Chris Steiner seconded. Fiscal Officer Hartman took a vote: Heather – abstain, Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chris – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Fiscal Officer Hartman stated that Chief Wysong was not present at the meeting. As for zoning, FO Hartman has answered several zoning questions by residents calling the office and asking about garage sales. There have also been three calls regarding the zoning for the doctor's office. People have mentioned a daycare and a recording studio.

Nate Davis spoke on street and other issues. He gave an update on the basketball court, the property on E. Main Street that is under construction, water business issues, Mr. Davis is learning about the water system and equipment. He also is requesting some new equipment for use on the Village green spaces. The mayor noted that some of the current equipment is not designed for commercial use. Mr. Davis spoke about the approximate costs, which would be split among various funds (street, park, water).

Hope Hoard motioned to approve the purchase of the multisystem power head and the trimmer attachment. Chris Steiner seconded. FO Hartman took a vote: Heather – yes, Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chris – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Simpson reiterated that it was mentioned at the last meeting that Wendell Harleman had retired and there was an immediate need for someone to fill that position. The job duties have been split between two part-time positions. Nate Davis and Dave Spraulding.

Mayor Simpson then addressed the issues brought up by Danny Potter earlier in the meeting. The mayor stated that he reached out to Mr. Potter and introduced himself. The mayor also stated that the comment on social media was not placed by Councilmember Heather Craft. There was a brief discussion about that was put on social media. Mr. Potter stated that he felt he was being threatened for holding a meeting on his private property. Mr. Potter stated his point of view is that he felt somewhat threatened by social media posts and comments from Village residents. There was a discussion about zoning and other issues pertaining to the airport.

Fiscal Officer Hartman would like to schedule a special meeting for next week to address other issues: Resolutions for credit card policy, workload tracking and accountability. The meeting was scheduled for the following Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 7 pm. Department heads are not required to attend.

Mayor Simpson spoke on liaison updates. Jill Ritter - water department; John Ritter – zoning; Hope Hoard – parks; Jacob Groh – police department; Heather Craft – fire department; Chris Steiner – streets department.

Council member Heather Craft(?) stated that residents have told her they are being charged for P.O. boxes at the post office. Residents are supposed to get P.O. boxes free of charge. The mayor stated that there is an initial charge, then renewal is free, but paperwork needs to be filled out.

Council member Craft also asked about who is handling the rentals for the Hunters Club and Community Center. It was stated that the Village office handles that. The Village has hired a cleaning person to inspect and clean the facilities after each use. The rental price was discussed.

The prices will be update soon. It was also asked about showing ID to rent a facility. The Mayor stated that a cleaning person has been hired to clean and inspect the facilities before and after rentals.

The mayor introduced Todd Smith, who is running for state representative.

Mr. Smith, a pastor in Farmersville, stated that he is a former state representative. He is running again for an open seat. He took time off from politics to get his doctorate degree in chaplaincy and serve in the National Guard. He spoke about his campaign.

Hope Hoard spoke about the Harvest Party that will take place on October 25, 2025, at the Hunters Club. She stated she has three quotes: one from Beyond Your Ordinary, and two from the Playground Boss for equipment. The mayor and councilmember had a meeting with James Bradshaw with Playground Boss. He presented information for items can be added or removed as needed. The proposal will be put into a grant request that will be filed in December. The mayor explained the grant process and amounts. The equipment comes with a good warranty.

Mayor Simpson spoke about the NABL baseball park on Phillipsburg-Union Road. The person who runs the baseball/softball program is getting out of the business. The mayor looked into available equipment to use on the Village's refurbished baseball/softball diamonds. He stated that there were many useful and reasonably priced items. The mayor asked Council to approve the purchase of baseball/softball equipment for a price of $1,500. This includes bases with studs, pitcher's mounds, home plates, stand-up coolers, outdoor trashcans, and a golf cart. Also chalk, baseballs and softballs, and pizza ovens which are free. Hope Hoard motioned to purchase the used equipment for $1,500. Heather Craft seconded. FO Hartman took a vote. Heather – yes, Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chris – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Simpson then stated that the Hunters Club and Community Center were both painted. He asked if Council wanted to have the interior and Village offices to be painted. He has a quote of $4,500 for painting and updates. The monies will come from the general fund, the water fund, and the park fund. There was discussion among council members about the painting. Hope Hoard motioned to approve painting the Council office, Village offices, and lobby. Heather seconded. FO Hartman took a vote. Heather – yes, Hope – yes, Chris – yes, Jill – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Fiscal Officer Hartman recognized John Ritter for all of his work on updating our internet system and Village webpage. The Village is saving $400 per month on internet service. Council member Ritter stated that there were other savings by eliminating unused phone lines. He also talked about the new routers and how the Village is now working toward compliance with cyber security laws. Mr. Ritter mentioned that the computer systems and software currently in use are antiquated and need upgraded. FO Lori Hartman stated that the water billing computer system needs upgraded and that needs to be addressed quickly and immediately. She stated we do have the funds to cover the costs.

Hope Hoard motioned to adjourn. Heather Craft seconded. All in favor – aye. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.

Mayor: _____

Fiscal Officer: _____