VILLAGE OF PHILLIPSBURG

COUNCIL MEETING

JANUARY 20, 2026

Mayor Simpson called the meeting to order at 7 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of silence for lost loves ones, police, fire, military, first responders.

Mayor Simpson congratulated Councilman Jacob Groh, who is expecting another child and a marriage coming up this year.

Fiscal Officer Lori Hartman took roll call: John – yes, Jacob – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jill – yes, Hope – yes, Heather – absent due to illness. Hope motioned to approve Heather Craft's absence. All in favor – aye. Opposed – none. Motion carried.

Mayor Simpson stated that the Council needs to vote to amend/accept 2026 Council Rules. Hope motioned to approve the Village of Phillipsburg, Ohio, 2026 Council Rules. John seconded. All in favor -aye. Opposed – none. Motion carried.

FO Hartman stated that the pro-tempore position is voted on each year in January. Mayor Simpson explained that the pro-tempore is a council person who is second in command and would be in charge if the mayor is not available or has vacated the position. Jill motioned to appoint Hope Hoard as pro tempore for 2026. Jacob seconded. Vote taken: Hope – abstain, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion carried.

Mayor Simpson suggested that the meeting go out of order to swear in the new Fire Lieutenant/Paramedic, Ryan Trottier. Mayor Simpson swore in Ryan Trottier. Chief Aldrich mentioned that Lieutenant Trottier has extensive experience with other departments and is well qualified. With the hiring of Lieutenant Trottier, the department now has 7 paramedics and 2 EMTs, so there are 9 advanced life support providers on the department, which is the most it has ever had. Chief Aldrich reported that the department has filled as many spots as possible.

Mayor Simpson announced the special guests. First is Angela Howell from Clay Township. Ms. Howell introduced herself as a Clay Township Trustee and Chairperson. She asked if anyone had any questions for her and added that she has some information to share. Ms. Howell and the police chief, Mr. Birk, spoke with former mayor, Shawna Newsom, some time ago. They discussed police statistics regarding assists. Chief Birk has all of the information he supplied to Ms. Newsom at that meeting, which is the past three years of dispatch records. The Council can see Clay Township's involvement in policing. The Council was directed to reach out to Chief Birk with any questions.

Ms. Howell asked if anyone had any questions for her. No one spoke up. She asked if anyone needed information on the North West Initiative (NWI) plan to split Clay Township. There will be a special meeting on January 22. At the last meeting, The Board of Trustees discussed with the public the concerns the Trustees have for that. Mainly, there is no real plan being presented on how this new township is going to operate and survive. Apparently, Steve (Woolf) has had 10 years to work on this, including his time as a Clay Township Trustee. The current Trustees have only known about this plan for about 90 days. Clay Township will be presenting an opposition letter stating that residents are opposed to the NWI plan. John Ritter mentioned Ohio law and Derek Shell mentioned House Bill 331. Ms. Howell spoke about how the state of Ohio continuously talks about consolidation of municipalities, but no formal action has been taken. She discussed various ORC rules regarding how council will or may vote on township issues. She spoke on what it takes to change school districts. Derek Shell spoke about proposed House Bill 592, which would allow townships to incorporate. Derek believes that will give the township the ability to generate an income tax. If property taxes are abolished, they will be offset with an income tax. Derek Shell and Chief Aldrich also discussed the village services requirements.

Fiscal Officer Lori Hartman explained the beginnings of Clay Township. It was established on June 8, 1825, when Montgomery County Commissioners organized the territory. It was previously part of Randolph Township. Lori pointed out that a split has happened before in this area, but that was in 1825. Part of the reason was to keep a rural transition from the cities.

Approval of Minutes:

Mayor Simpson called for the approval of minutes from the December meetings.

Hope Hoard motioned to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2025, regular council meeting. Jill Ritter seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal -yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Hope Hoard motioned to approve the minutes of the December 29, 2025, special council meeting. Jill Ritter seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal -yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Ordinances and Resolutions:

Mayor Simpson read the title of Ordinance 2026-0002 Approving the Village Administrator to live outside the Village limits. This is not an emergency, but if the three reading rule is waived, it will go into effect in 30 days. Hope Hoard motioned to waive the three reading rule for Ordinance number 2026-002. John Ritter seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed. Hope Hoard motioned to approve Ordinance number 2026-0002. Jill Ritter seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed. Ordinance approved.

Mayor Simpson read Resolution 2025-0076 Water and Sewer Rates and Fees (Second Reading). Hope Hoard motioned to approve the second reading of Resolution 2025-0076. Jacob seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Simpson read Resolution 2026-0006 Appointment of Village Solicitor (Emergency) Authorizing the Village of Phillipsburg to enter into a contract for legal services with Kirsten Knight, Attorney at Law, as Law Director for the Village of Phillipsburg. Jill Ritter has spoken with Attorney Knight and stated that Ms. Knight is also the solicitor for Farmersville. Hope Hoard motioned to declare Resolution 2026-0006 as an emergency authorizing the contract with Attorney Kirsten Knight and waiving the three reading rule. John Ritter seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed. Hope Hoard motioned to approve Resolution 2026-0006 authorizing the contract with Attorney Kirsten Knight. Jacob seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Simpson announced Resolution 2026-0002 Cybersecurity. John Ritter read Resolution 2026-0002 Adopting the Village of Phillipsburg IT Administration Manual as the Village's Cybersecurity Program pursuant to O.R.C. Section 9.64 establishing incident reporting procedures, authorizing mandatory employee training, declaring an emergency, and otherwise providing for immediate compliance with House Bill 96 Cybersecurity Requirements. The reason it is an emergency is that this requirement is already in place. Council Members were provided a copy of the manual, which is about 30 pages long. It is quite long, but Mr. Ritter wanted to go into detail with step-by-step instructions on how the computers need to be set up, how the network has to be set up, and how the security has to be set up. Included in the Resolution is a checklist to show the State that we are adopting the cybersecurity guidelines.

Hope Hoard motioned to waive the three reading rule for Resolution 2026-0002 Adopting the Village's IT Cybersecurity Program, declaring it an emergency. Jacob Groh seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Hope Hoard motioned to approve Resolution 2026-0002 Adopting the Village's IT Cybersecurity Program. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Simpson announced Resolution 2026-0001 Adopting Park and Recreation Facility Rental Fees, Rules, and Updated Rental Agreement. This is a non-emergency. The Council can vote to waive the three reading rule, so the Resolution goes into effect in 30 days. Hope Hoard commented that this new Agreement is very similar to the existing one, however, this is eliminating a deposit but will charge the renter for any damages that occur due to their rental. The rental fee will be increased to $100 for Phillipsburg residents and $150 for non-residents. John Ritter suggested some changes to the rental process and agreement.

Hope Hoard motioned to waive the three reading rule for Resolution 2026-001 Adopting Park and Recreation Facility Rental Fees, Rules, and Updated Rental Agreement. Jill Ritter seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Hope Hoard motioned to approve Resolution 2026-001 Adopting Park and Recreation Facility Rental Fees, Rules, and Updated Rental Agreement. John Ritter seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Mayor Simpson asked if there was any old business. None was announced.

Reports:

Fiscal Officer Hartman is still working on closing out year 2025 and getting year 2026 together and budgeted. This should be done by the next meeting. FO Hartman distributed paperwork showing the fund status as of December 31, 2025, and the December 2025 Fund Summary. These reports show how much was encumbered and how much was spent. She also supplied a revenue summary and an appropriation summary. Mayor Simpson asked if there were any questions. No one spoke up. FO Hartman reiterated that there will be more information at the next meeting. There were some issues while doing the end of the year paperwork. There were discrepancies in the bank reconciliations. FO Hartman had to contact the traveling UAN and the Auditor's Office to verify how to correct some of those issues. There were ACH payments in the UAN, but those payments had never cleared the bank, so there are fines and fees as a result of that. All records should be up to date in the next couple of weeks. FO Hartman doesn't know why those errors from early 2025 weren't caught by previous fiscal officers. There was another issue with property assessments being paid.

Mayor Simpson asked FO Hartman to talk about the STAR Ohio account. FO Hartman stated that $100,000 was deposited into the STAR Ohio account as of the date of this meeting. Once everything is paid out of the Chase account, the remainder of the funds will be taken out of Chase Bank. Mayor Simpson asked about the interest percentage earned from the STAR Ohio account. FO Hartman stated that as of the date of this meeting, it is 3.98 percent. Mayor Simpson explained that STAR Ohio is a government specific account that the Village can transfer money into and earn more interest than what is paid by Huntington Bank. Interest earned on the STAR Ohio account will be transferred to the general fund.

John Ritter asked if he could put the Fund Summary on the website. The Mayor and FO stated that basic information can be posted on the website because it is a public record.

Fire Chief Aldrich presented information regarding personnel, equipment/maintenance, ambulance purchase, grants/outside funding, and Clay Township. He also presented the amended pay scale for 2026. It includes covering holiday pay for 11 holidays recognized by the Village and the pay rate will now be 1.5 of hourly rate for 24 hour coverage. If approved, it would be effective immediately.

Hope Hoard motioned to approve the 2026 updated pay scale for the Village Fire Department. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Chief Aldrich discussed the hiring of Ryan Trottier. The next applicant is Nathaniel Scolastico who is a Firefighter/EMT. Rate of pay being requested by the Chief is $14/hr., which is $1 more per hour than the approved scale. An extra dollar is requested because he will also be responsible for the station and equipment maintenance while on duty. Hope Hoard motioned to approve the pay for Ryan Trottier as Lieutenant/Paramedic at the rate of $17/hour. Jill seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

Hope Hoard motioned to approve the hiring of Nathaniel Scolastico as a firefighter/EMT at a rate of $14/hr. Jill seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chief Aldrich announced that Tanker 80 has returned after extensive repairs that began in September of 2025. It failed on a fire last year and was unable to pump water. It is now fully operational. Maintenance wise, the department is caught up. Chief provided an update on grants/outside funding. The remaining BWC grant is the remote-control brush truck nozzle. The parts are in and scheduled to be installed in January. The FEMA Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) is in process with quotes and demos.

The Clay Township Trustees have been briefed on the financial status of our organization. They are consumed with the possible split of the National Road North area.

Ambulance Purchase: Chief Alrich has provided a proposal to purchase a newer Medic unit for the fleet. The department has an opportunity to purchase a 2011 vehicle from the City of Union. The current unit is a light duty chassis. The 2011 model is a medium duty chassis. It is being offered to the Phillipsburg Fire Department for $20,000, which is less than half of its fair market value. There was a discussion regarding financing the purchase.

Hope Hoard motioned to approve the purchase of the City of Union Medic unit for $20,000 pending a letter of intent and a possible loan to purchase the Medic unit as well as the sale of the current Medic unit if sold to be put toward the loan payment. Jill Ritter seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Crystal - yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion passed.

Police Chief Wysong gave his report. He had some computer issues, so he is still working on the 2025 report. Moving forward, Chief Wysong will prepare a monthly report. 2025 continuing professional online training has been completed. The paperwork was submitted to the State and verified. 2026 CPT has been published, with a completion due by 12/31/2026. There was a discussion about computers and uniforms. Chief Wysong is still searching for a patrol vehicle.

Zoning Officer Nathanial Davis gave his report. He has made some contacts regarding zoning issues. He has given residents some time to fix issues. He is working on updating and modernizing the zoning code with the assistance of John Ritter.

Derek Shell reported on water and streets. He did some research on property that the Village wants to sell. He feels the Village should move forward with the sale of the property, and deposit the proceeds in the STAR Ohio account. Mr. Shell reported that the plow truck has had some issues and repairs. Mr. Spradlin indicated to Mr. Shell that the muffler has now separated from the truck, so there will need to be another repair. Mr. Shell talked about the predicted upcoming storm and that Mr. Spradlin is prepared to deal with that. He also stated that Mr. Spradlin has been doing a great job. He has been doing the water meter reads and has been able to identify problems when they arise. Mr. Shell stated that things are going well with the water. He signed the paperwork for the water tower cleaning and inspection. The work should be completed in the early spring.

Derek Shell stated that the Union water project design had a cost of $932,000. The good news is there is about $72,000 left over. He asked RCAP and the EPA if that money could still be used for the general water plans. Mr. Shell spoke with Michael at Artesian and a pilot study is in the works. Things are moving along and he appreciates the second reading on the water rate hikes. This is a much better solution than what was originally planned, because that cost would have been around $10 million. The new plan is estimated to cost $1.5 million to $2 million; some of which will be covered by a grant. There was a brief discussion about the plans.

The mayor asked about the status of the ordinance stating the land that the Village wants to sell is excess property and that a minimum bid number needs to be established in order vote on the ordinance. The ordinance and some amounts were discussed. The ordinance had been presented at a prior meeting, but it was tabled. The ordinance will be voted on at the next meeting.

Mayor Simpson announced liaison appointments.

Jill Ritter – Water and Sewer
John Ritter – Zoning
Jacob Groh – Police Department
Heather Craft – Fire Department
Hope Hoard – Parks
Chrystal Beavers – Finance

The mayor reiterated what Mr. Shell said about Dave Spradlin. Mr. Spradlin started off as a volunteer after Wendell Harleman retired. When making a decision about replacing Wendell, Mayor Simpson offered Mr. Spradlin a paid position. The mayor complimented Dave Spradlin on all the work he has done, including leaf collection, mowing the grass, plowing and salting the streets, various other jobs around the Village. The mayor asked for a motion to raise Mr. Spradlin's pay to $15/hr. Hope Hoard motioned to increase the wages for David Spradlin to $15/hr. for his work performing general maintenance service. Jill Ritter seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Mayor Simpson stated that the Village is moving in the right direction, and he thanked everyone for their part in that.

Someone asked if zoning applied to The Dollar General? Mayor Simpson stated that John Ritter can address some of those concerns because he is updating the Village zoning code. Mr. Ritter and Mr. Davis are working on getting compliance.

Public Comments:

Kevin Fidler spoke to the Council. He stated that he is not a resident of Phillipsburg, but he lives on Brookville-Phillipsburg Road. He wanted to attend this meeting for a couple of reasons. One, to introduce himself, and two, because he and his wife started attending Township meetings in November because they were unaware of what was happening in the community. They moved to this area in 2021. They recently began to engage and be active in the community. He spoke about his feelings on the NWI. He encouraged people to attend the Special Clay Township meeting. Fiscal Officer Hartman had previously spoken to Mr. Fidler and told him she would ask Council if he could use the Community Center for informational meetings.

John Ritter said he would speak more at the next meeting. He said he did want to thank Fiscal Officer Lori Hartman and Records Clerk Joyce George for getting him all of the Resolutions, Ordinances, and Council Meeting Minutes for him to put on the website.

The Mayor thanked everyone for their hard work. He asked for a motion to adjourn.

Hope Hoard motioned the adjourn. Jill seconded. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 PM.

Mayor: _____

Fiscal Officer: _____