VILLAGE OF PHILLIPSBURG

COUNCIL MEETING

FEBRUARY 17, 2026

Meeting called to order at 7 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Heather (absent), Hope – here, Jill – here, Chrystal – here, Jacob – here, John – here. Mayor Simpson stated that he received a call from Heather Craft stating she is unable to attend this meeting. Hope motioned to excuse Heather's absence. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion carried.

Mayor Simpson called for the approval of the regular meeting minutes from January 20, 2026. Hope motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes from January 20, 2026. John seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion carried.

Ordinances and Resolutions:

Ordinance 2026-0001 Water and Sewer Rates and Fees (D. Shell)
This was previously presented as a Resolution, but should have been an Ordinance, It has been read already, so Hope motioned to waive the three reading rule to approve the Ordinance to raise water and sewer rates and fees. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved. Hope motioned to approve Ordinance 2026-0001 Water and Sewer Rates and Fees. Jacob seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved.

Ordinance 2026-0004 Sale of Excess Real Property (22.98 AC) (J. Simpson) This is being declared an emergency to avoid paying fees and taxes on the land. There was a brief discussion regarding the amount of the minimum bid. Hope motioned to waive the three reading rule regarding the sale of 22.98 acres of excess property. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved. Hope motioned to approve the sale of 22.98 acres of excess property. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved.

Ordinance 2026-0005 Zoning Code Update (John Ritter) John Ritter stated that this is a major rewrite of the zoning code. He spent several months working on the revisions. Mr. Ritter wanted to condense the code and make it more legible. This revision cleans up the procedures. He spoke of how property is to be maintained. The revised text must be published in the paper and posted on the website after being approved by the mayor and council. This is not an emergency. Mr. Ritter did the first reading. Ordinance 2026-0005. An ordinance adopting the "comprehensive zoning code of the Village of Phillipsburg, Ohio, 2026 edition," and repealing the prior inconsistent zoning regulations. Hope motioned to approve Ordinance 2026-0005 adopting the zoning code ordinance. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved. John stated that this requires creating a board of zoning appeals, and it explains processes to appeal for permits, etc. The council will need to update some forms.

Mayor Simpson asked how many should be on the zoning board of appeals. John answered that we need more people than have volunteered. The number of people on the board must be ordained by the council.

Ordinance 2026-0006 Property Maintenance Ordinance Adoption. (John Ritter) John Ritter did the first reading of the ordinance title. An Ordinance adopting the "property maintenance ordinance, 2026 edition – harmonized with zoning code," and establishing minimum exterior property and structure maintenance standards in the Village of Phillipsburg, Ohio. This covers vehicles, junk trash, fences, building maintenance, mowing of grass. It defines those procedures. This is not an emergency, so it can be discussed and small changes may be made. Hope motioned to approve Ordinance 2026-0006 Property Maintenance Code Ordinance Adoption. Jacob seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved. A meeting needs to be set for the planning commission. Mayor Simpson asked if a special date needs to be set before the next council meeting or if it can be discussed at the next council meeting. John Ritter stated that he believes there needs to be 20 – 30 days advanced notice to the public.

Resolution 2026-0003 Standard Employment Agreement for the Chief of Police. (John Ritter) A Resolution approving and adopting a standard employment agreement for the position of chief of police, supplementing prior job descriptions and standards, and declaring an emergency. John explained House Bill 331 requirements. He stated that the Employment Agreement clarifies and supplements the duties of the Chief of Police as described in the Police Chief's job description adopted in Resolution 1038. An updated employment contract was provided to the council members. Chief Wysong stated that he was not made privy to this new contract. John answered that the next resolution to be presented at this meeting will cover that issue. There was some discussion about the contract among the council members. Mayor Simpson asked for a motion to waive the three reading rule. Hope motioned to declare an emergency and waive the three reading rule for Resolution 2026-0003. Jacob seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved. Hope motioned to approve and adopt the Standard Employment Agreement for the position of Chief of Police Resolution No. 2026-0003. Jacob seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved.

Resolution 2026-0004 Presentation of the Contract to the Chief of Police, Mark Wysong. (John Ritter) Resolution directing the execution and presentation of the standard police chief employment Agreement to the current Chief of Police, establishing a deadline for execution, and declaring an emergency. John discussed the parameters of the contract. Hope motioned to waive the three reading rule and declaring an emergency of Resolution 2026-0004 to present the contract to the Chief of Police. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved. Hope motioned to approve Resolution 2026-0004 Presentation of the Contract to the Chief of Police, Mark Wysong. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved.

Chief Wysong asked about the completion of the Contract and when it could be signed. He mentioned that he might want it to be reviewed by legal counsel.

Resolution 2026-0005 Resolution Adopting a Village Holiday and Office Closure Policy and declaring it an emergency. (John Ritter) Mayor Simpson stated that there have been questions about when the offices will be closed and what holidays are observed, so a definitive list has been compiled that mirrors those observed by the State of Ohio. It also sets forth pay rates for the fire department personnel who work on those holidays. Hope motioned to waive the three reading rule and declaring an emergency for Resolution 2026-0005 adopting a definitive village holiday schedule. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved. Hope motioned to approve Resolution 2026-0005 adopting a definitive village holiday schedule. Jacob seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved.

There are no guest speakers scheduled for this meeting.

Old Business: Hope and Josh explained the park grant procedure and status. Josh stated that there is grant money available from the State, the representatives are in control of the capital money. Originally, Josh spoke with state rep. Rodney Creech and asked if we could get some money to assist with updating our park. The deadline to apply is usually January 1, but this was extended due to the government shutdown. Rep Creech is very interested in helping our area. He instructed Josh to get updated quotes for up to $200,000 for improvements. Hope has been getting playground equipment quotes. The Village will get quotes for up to $200,000 and possibly less than that. This money is not guaranteed. It is an application process. But Rep. Creech feels confident that the Village could get the grant because they most likely haven't applied for one in the past. Hope stated that the Village plans to change the current tennis courts into pickleball courts, which will require repaving and new nets. Another plan is to move the park and playground equipment closer to the Community Center. Hope is working with Playground Boss to get quotes for new playground equipment. The estimated timeline for this is mid-May for the playground and sometime after that for the pickleball courts. This depends on if and when the Village gets the grant money. Someone asked about bathroom facilities. Hope said there hasn't yet been much discussion on that, but it will be looked into along with concessions.

Reports:

Fiscal Officer Lori Hartman

She is still working on 2025 year-end accounting. It is almost closed. She is waiting on information from the County and one contact from the State regarding an unaccounted for deposit, for which there is no record. When that information is received, 2025 can be closed and 2024 and 2025 can be sent to the auditor. She mentioned the money made from the STAR Ohio account, and how helpful that is. FO Lori Hartman reported that the STRIPE system that is used to process online water payments had an odd amount of $.50 charges. Lori investigated this issue and found that scammers of stolen credit cards will make a small charge to see if the card is active. Steps were taken to rectify this situation, but it kept happening with a different small amount. The fraudulent payments were refunded. There are ways to block these fraudulent payments, but it will cost extra. In the meantime, Lori is monitoring the situation daily. To avoid this problem, the website company can add a Captcha page. Approximately 28 actual customers are regularly using the online payment option. There was some discussion among the Council regarding the processing of online payments and how to avoid scammers. John Ritter suggested that the Village not use the Captcha.

Fire Chief Pat Aldrich

Josh Smith has applied to be a trainee for the fire department. He lives in Union. He will not have a pay scale. He will be on the POC scale, which is $11 per call when needed. This is pending a favorable background check. He does not currently have a driver's license. Hope motioned to hire Josh Smith as a trainee on the POC scale of $11 per call. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved.

Chief Aldrich stated that all equipment has been repaired and is back in service. The department has two sets of extrication equipment, and they are both back in service.

The new medic unit has had repairs, new tires have been installed, and the unit is now at the decal shop in Eldorado, Ohio. It should be placed in service within a few days.

Trainees: There are two trainees, Pamela Stephenson and Gage Hartman, who will be starting fire class next month in New Madison. Pamela is currently in EMT class at Sinclair CC. Both trainees need to be certified to fight fires and need to be at level 1 to be paid. Gage Hartman is getting scheduled for the class. The cost for training is about $700 per student. The department will ask for a reimbursement grant. If the trainees do not pass the training, they will be responsible for reimbursing the cost.

Grants/Outside Funding: The SCBA Grant is in process. The department will decide on which vendor in the coming weeks. Several other grants have been applied for. These are capital improvement grants.

Clay Township: The Village has asked the Clay Township Trustees for a levy. They passed a resolution to place a 2.5 mill levy increase on the May 5th ballot. This will provide funds for the three fire departments in Clay Township.

Police Chief Mark Wysong

The Police Chief stated that calls have come in to the Village Officer regarding a couple of locations of concern. The information from the residents has been received and is being reviewed. Chief Wysong met with one of the residents prior to this evening's meeting to get some additional information. An outside agency is involved in one of those complaints.

Village Administrator Derek Shell

The Village will need to look into updating some equipment for maintenance. A new salt truck is needed, because there is no back up. If the truck goes down, there is no other option. Derek thanked David Spradlin for his hard work. There have been some expensive repairs due to broken waterlines. The Mayor thanked Derek for his work on those issues. Derek and Dave met with Montgomery County Water and Soil. The Village has an MS4 improvement, so they were given some direction and guidelines on containment of any oil and substances from the service garage. The City of Clayton reached out. They have helped the Village in the past. Clayton has offered the use of a street sweeper. Derek received an email from the Montgomery County EMA. He has filed for potential reimbursement due to the storm event in January. There could be some reimbursement for costs, equipment, and salary for Dave. There is an upcoming meeting with the EPA regarding the water project. Mote Engineering has declined to update the general plan, so the Village has moved on to Access Engineering to update the general plan which is just adding an addendum to the general plan. There is money remaining from the grant in the amount of $72,000, and that money can be used for updating the current general plan.

Derek also noted that it's still important to get the water tower cleaned and inspected. The plan is to put the treatment plant just to the west of wellhouse 3. He explained the disinfecting/filtering of the water. Eventually, a new tower could be built near the filtering system. The Village will be in better financial shape with the new water plan. Derek asked for permission to buy some repair items for the Village. The Mayor also talked about Village equipment upgrades because current equipment is not up to standards for the jobs that need to be done.

Zoning Officer Nathaniel Davis

Nathaniel mentioned that there have been quite a few complaints about zoning issues from residents. He has addressed everything that he has been made aware of. Some of the situations have law enforcement issues to be dealt with that the Police Chief is aware of and dealing with. Most of the nuisance complaints are a combination of zoning and law enforcement issues. The main issues on West Walnut and East Main are being dealt with. Nathaniel has been told these issues will be taken care of. He will monitor.

Mayor Josh Simpson

Josh spoke about hiring Digital Cowboy Computers for IT and Cybersecurity Management. There is no contract required. He will get more info and rates to be voted on at the next meeting. The computer situation needs to be taken care of within the next few months in order to be compliant with ORC.

New Business: none

Public Comment: A resident spoke about the issues on West Walnut. The people there make noise all day and night and have three uncontrolled pit bull dogs. It is believed that someone is running an unlicensed business there. The resident stated that whoever owns the property does not live there because there is no house, just a garage. Nathaniel Davis stated that he has since made contact with someone at that address. They were given a timeline to clean it up and make progress on the issues. Mr. Davis agreed that there are law enforcement issues related to the property. The resident has spoken with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. The County doesn't feel like it's within their jurisdiction to deal with this problem. The resident continued to describe the situation. It was stated that several residents have sold their houses and moved out because of this nuisance and the unrestrained dogs. Mayor Simpson replied that the Council listens to the residents and the issues are being addressed. Police Chief also stated that the situation is being looked into, but the resident needs to continue to report any issues.

Another resident thanked the Village for the quick response to the water main breaks.

Shirley Rammel of the Phillipsburg Fire Department spoke on the overwhelming support from the community of the Fire Association. She mentioned how thankful the association is for the donations from the community and the mayor specifically noted the help from Duane Heuker.

Hope reminded everyone that the Community Easter Party and Egg Hunt will take place on March 28, 2026.

Mayor Simpson stated that there will be an executive session to discuss the appointment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official in accordance with O.R.C. 121.22(G)(1).

Hope motioned to go into executive session. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved.

Mayor Simpson stated that the council returned from executive session at 8:58 p.m.

Hope motioned to enter into regular session. Jill seconded. All in favor – aye. Opposed – no one. Motion carried.

Council Reports/Comments

Hope motioned to approve a formal letter of reprimand. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved.

Hope motioned to adjourn. Jill seconded. Vote taken: Hope – yes, Jill – yes, Chrystal – yes, Jacob – yes, John – yes. Motion approved. All in favor – aye. Opposed – no one. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned.

Mayor _____

Fiscal Officer _____