

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

DAYTON LEGAL BLANK, INC. FORM NO. 10148

Held

May 7

20 24

**The Village of Weston
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes**

May 7, 2024

The Committee of the Whole Meeting was called to order by Mayor Jeremy Schroeder at 6:00PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and presentation of the agenda to discuss, review, and edit council rules. A roll call was taken: Ms. Brittney Klockowski, Mr. Dean Babcock, Mr. Craig Warner, Ms. Jessica Susor, Mr. Rob Myerholtz, and Mr. Rick Easterwood.

Citizens & Visitors in Attendance:

Samantha Wick, Ron Dallas, Howard Lashuay, Ashley Patel, Jigar Patel, Doug Marion, Josh Tschappat

Council Rules

Rule 8 - Standing and Special Committees

Mr. Myerholtz highlighted that for the past two years, he hasn't been assigned to two standing committees, emphasizing that each council member should serve on a minimum of two committees and rotate annually. Mr. Warner questioned whether rotating committees would disrupt project continuity, to which Mr. Myerholtz replied "no". Mr. Myerholtz mentioned that in other villages, council approves committee appointments. The Mayor expressed concern that altering this process would diminish his role, as he takes pride in and dedicates effort to aligning committee assignments with members' strengths and weaknesses. He mentioned that all members had the chance to request committees and offered Mr. Myerholtz a one-on-one discussion, which was declined. Ms. Klockowski asked if Mr. Myerholtz felt excluded due to the lack of direct input, to which he responded feeling discriminated against and unfairness towards council members with more than two committee assignments. Ms. Susor emphasized the understanding of Sunshine Law and attending committee meetings, adding that there is more opportunity to share with one another. She disagreed with forced rotation. Mr. Myerholtz proposed that the chair would remain while two other members "float," adding the comment of "that is how it is supposed to be". Mr. Warner questioned the authority behind this proposal, arguing that rotation would only slow down processes. Mr. Babcock acknowledged a learning curve for each committee. Mr. Warner advocated for assigning members based on suitability for specific committees. The Mayor mentioned having to relinquish the ability to change committee types. Ms. Klockowski expressed frustration at not being assigned to her requested committees. Sentence one currently reads "There shall be such standing committees, as determined by the Mayor, appointed of three members each, the chairperson of each committee shall be selected by the President Pro Tempore." Ms. Susor made a motion to add "and all council members will be assigned a minimum of two committees," seconded by Mr. Warner; Approved - 4, Opposed - 2 (Mr. Myerholtz & Mr. Easterwood).

In the same paragraph after the sentence that reads "Appointments of standing and special committee chairperson shall be subject to the approval of Council"; a motion to add "During committee, assignments, the chairperson must set the regularly scheduled meetings" was made by Ms. Klockowski, seconded by Mr. Babcock; Approved unanimously.

Rule 9 - Committee Responsibilities

The Mayor revisited a prior suggestion regarding expediting the release of meeting notes to the public, acknowledging the significant workload involved in writing minutes. He proposed implementing a rolling committee agenda as a compromise solution, emphasizing the importance of preparing for the next meeting before concluding the current committee session. Chatter from Jigar Patel and Doug Marion disrupted council business, prompting the Mayor to highlight yet another reason for reviewing council rules. Mr. Easterwood expressed satisfaction with the current Public Works agenda, as a useful rolling agenda. The Mayor provided further examples, including actionable items for the council agenda, and outlined a seven-day timeframe for setting up the committee agenda for the subsequent meeting from one committee session to the next. Concerns were raised about the perception of decision-making when posting meeting notes, prompting the Mayor to suggest the necessity of a disclaimer clarifying the nature of committee proceedings. Ms. Susor mentioned her diligence in taking notes to ensure follow-through, underscoring the importance of communication and utilizing the agenda to convey discussion topics. She highlighted confusion regarding the term "discussing" and stressed the need for a disclaimer to clarify that discussions are ongoing processes without guaranteed outcomes or specific timelines. Mr. Myerholtz queried the rationale behind the rolling agenda and why the committee isn't responsible for its setup. Two new bullet points were introduced. Mr. Easterwood made a motion to add "In the event of a committee meeting cancellation, proper notification procedures are crucial. The committee chairperson holds the responsibility for all notification processes, including the posting of a notice on the front door of the meeting location to inform attendees of the cancellation. Regular attendees such as employees or officers must also be notified by the chairperson. Additionally, the chairperson must promptly notify the Fiscal Officer/Clerk via email about the cancellation. This ensures that all relevant parties are informed and helps prevent any confusion or inconvenience arising from the cancellation of the meeting", seconded by Mr. Babcock; Approved unanimously. Mr. Easterwood made a motion to add "The Village Council Committee operates with a rolling agenda system, necessitating updates within 7 days of each committee meeting. The committee chairperson holds the responsibility of coordinating with the Fiscal Officer/Clerk to ensure accurate agenda updates. Additionally, any actionable items emerging during the meeting must be promptly relayed to the Fiscal Officer/Clerk to allow sufficient time for preparation. This collaborative effort ensures the agenda's currency and facilitates the efficient handling of agenda items. Furthermore, public comment during committee sessions is reserved until after all committee business has been addressed, providing community members with the opportunity to express their views following the completion of official proceedings", seconded by Ms. Susor; Approved unanimously.

The second to last two bullet points were consolidated and reworded to avoid redundancy. Additionally, there was clarification regarding the definition of a minority report, which is intended to enable the inclusion of items not mentioned in the minutes. A motion to strike bullet "Its members at the next committee meeting shall approve minutes of committee meetings." and bullet "The reports of all committees shall be in writing turned into Fiscal Officer/Clerk, shall be agreed to in committee assembled, and shall not be presented unless signed by a majority of the committee, and the papers referred shall be returned with the report. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the introduction of minority reports." and replace with "At the subsequent committee meeting, the members are required to approve minutes of previous committee meetings. Additionally, all committee reports must be submitted in writing to the Fiscal Officer/Clerk, agreed upon during the committee gathering, and cannot be presented unless signed by a majority of the committee members; any papers referenced must be returned with the report.

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Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the introduction of minority reports." was made by Mr. Easterwood, seconded by Mr. Babcock; Approved unanimously.

The Mayor examined all the points listed under Rule 9, with particular emphasis on bullet point 3, highlighting the significance of a multi-year plan for envisioning the future. Mr. Myerholtz suggested that topics should be raised to the council prior to their occurrence to prevent any potential loopholes. There was an accusation that three committee members may already reach an agreement on items before the meeting concludes. Mr. Myerholtz recommended observing meetings from Grand Rapids or Rossford, where the Mayor presides without speaking. In contrast, Mr. Warner disagreed, citing his attendance at multiple meetings where the Grand Rapids Mayor spoke throughout. The Mayor also referenced bullet point 4, citing a recent tree-related incident. Mr. Easterwood referred to the Public Works description, which encompasses tree planting and maintenance. The Mayor affirmed that the council establishes budgets, and the departments operate within those budgets and adhere to purchasing policies. Mr. Easterwood clarified his understanding that the Administrator's spending authority is limited to emergencies. Mr. Warner questioned whether this meeting is intended to focus on council rules or delve into discussions about trees.

Rule 10 - Council Meetings

In paragraph 7, Mr. Warner made a motion to limit speaking time from 5 minutes to 3 minutes, seconded by Mr. Babcock; Approved unanimously.

Stephanie provided details regarding the recording of council meetings. She explained that the setup of the meeting system would remain unchanged, except for the addition of hitting the record button and disabling the camera feed. Instead of displaying the camera feed, relevant agenda documents will be shared on the screen during their discussion. Subsequently, all recordings will be uploaded to the Village's official YouTube channel. *Ms. Klockowski made a motion to add the following sentence to paragraph 8: "Council meetings will be recorded and deemed the official recording of the meeting, subsequently uploaded to the official YouTube Channel @VillageofWestonOH", seconded by Mr. Easterwood; Approved unanimously. Only council meetings will be recorded.*

Paragraph 10 needed rephrased and details on when the council agenda will be published. *A motion to strike paragraph 10 and replace with "The Fiscal Officer/Clerk shall prepare an agenda for every council meeting, ensuring its publication on the Village website by 5 PM the Friday before a Regular Council meeting. They will also handle all correspondence arising from Council meetings and fulfill any additional responsibilities as directed by a majority vote of Council or as mandated by law." was made by Mr. Babcock, seconded by Mr. Easterwood; Approved unanimously.*

Rule 12 - Order of Business

The miscellaneous business bullet needed to be rephrased and included a proposal for petition procedure. There was deliberation and discord regarding the suggested petition procedure, which entailed submitting petitions to the Fiscal Officer before a meeting and ensuring they include signatures from a specified number of eligible voters within the Village. *A motion was made by Mr. Easterwood that "Petitions must be recorded and a copy on file with the Fiscal Officer/Clerk", seconded by Ms. Susor; Approved unanimously.*

Rule 14 - Order and Decorum

The rule title was revised to exclude "At council meetings," as it was deemed necessary for order and decorum to extend to all meetings, not exclusively council meetings. Additionally, the term "Mayor" was substituted with "Presiding Officer."

Rule 15 - Discipline of Council Members

Ms. Susor noted that the current rule presents a stark contrast, offering only two extremes: 0 or 100, with no room for intermediary steps. It was proposed to amend this by introducing graduated measures. Mr. Myerholtz favored the ORC 2917.11 version, which Ms. Susor pointed out that it does not have intermediary steps. Additionally, Mr. Myerholtz expressed concerns regarding council members' conduct on social media. In response, Ms. Susor emphasized that council members are elected representatives and expulsion should be a measure of last resort, rather than the sole option. She suggested alternative approaches, such as forming a special committee to address significant issues or conducting discussions in executive sessions. Ron Dallas inquired about the criteria for assessing severity. Ms. Susor clarified that severity is determined when situations become uncomfortable or unsafe, noting that individuals may have varying levels of tolerance, with the lower tolerance serving as the baseline. The proposed update reads as follows: "The Council may take action against any member for disorderly conduct or violation of its rules. Before any punishment or expulsion can occur, the member in question shall be notified of the allegations against them and provided with an opportunity to be heard. No expulsion shall take place without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members elected. Additionally, the Council may declare a council seat vacant if a member is absent without a valid excuse from eight (8) regular or special council meetings between January 1st and December 31st. However, before such action is taken, the absent member shall be notified of their absences and given an opportunity to provide a valid excuse." *Ms. Susor made a motion to include a provision stating that if discipline should be considered that the matter be brought to council or president pro tempore and referred to executive session, seconded by Ms. Klockowski; Approved unanimously.*

Rule 20 - Hearings before Council

The time limit under this rule is currently set at 10 minutes. *Mr. Easterwood made a motion to change the time limit to three (3) minutes, seconded by Ms. Klockowski; Approved unanimously.*

Rule 21 - Referral to Committee

The proposed rephrasing for the second paragraph was as follows: "If any issues that the Council has delegated to a committee or officer need to be addressed as old business at the subsequent regular meeting, the Fiscal Officer/Clerk will ensure they are brought to the Council's attention by including them in the agenda for the upcoming meeting." *A motion to approve the revised wording was made by Mr. Easterwood, seconded by Ms. Klockowski; Approved unanimously.*

Rule 26 - Emergency Ordinances or Resolution Rule

This rule had been mistakenly numbered previously and required correction to align with the appropriate numerical

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sequence. Mr. Warner made a motion to adjust the rule number to Rule 26, seconded by Mr. Babcock; Approved unanimously.

Rule 28 - Limitations on debate

Ms. Susor emphasized the importance of reading this rule out loud since it's unfamiliar to the community but known to the council: "No member of the Council, while Council is in session, shall engage in debate or discussion with anyone save another member of the Council or the Mayor or a person who has either been granted by the Mayor or presiding officer the privilege to address the Council or is present at a Council meeting on invitation of the Council. Every member, when about to speak on a question or make a motion, shall respectfully address the Mayor or presiding officer, who shall pronounce the name of the member entitled to the floor. The member shall confine himself to the question under debate and shall avoid personalities." She further mentioned that council is expected to restrain from debate, with the Mayor having the initial opportunity to respond, and it's at his discretion to permit interruptions for comments. Mr. Myerholtz emphasized that speakers should have an uninterrupted three-minute slot.

Rule 36 - Training

Currently, this rule stipulates all elected or appointed Village officials shall complete all training as required by Ohio Law. The suggestion is to add: "While not mandated by Ohio Law, Village Officials are strongly encouraged to undergo training in Ethics Law and Cybersecurity. Additionally, team building is recommended at least once a year for all employees, public officials, officers, and volunteers. Team building fosters effective communication, enhances collaboration, promotes unity, and maximizes productivity within the Village Council." Mr. Easterwood mentioned that he receives extensive training through his employment. Ms. Susor clarified that the focus of ethics training for the council is primarily on managing conflicts of interest. The Clerk noted that during a prior Fiscal Officer training session, there was discussion about the state considering mandatory ethics training for elected officials, although this obligation has not been implemented yet. The Mayor highlighted the advantages of participating in TMACOG and Wood County Economic Development dinners and meetings, underscoring their value as opportunities for team building. A motion to approve the suggested addition was made by Mr. Easterwood, seconded by Mr. Babcock; Approved unanimously.

Rule 37 - Organizational Chart

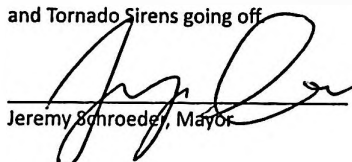
This is a new section proposed to be added that includes a proper organizational chart of the Village and outlines effective communication protocol between officials and employees. It was suggested to steer clear of phone calls unless absolutely necessary, since information conveyed through them can be misconstrued. The proposed communication protocol is as follows: "Effective communication within the Village Council relies on clear guidelines for communication channels and expectations. Email stands as the primary mode of interaction between Village Officials and Employees, facilitating written records and efficient information dissemination. All official correspondences, encompassing inquiries, requests, updates, and reports, are to be conducted through email whenever feasible. In instances where urgency demands, phone calls may be utilized, necessitating a structured approach: employees must diligently take notes during the call, summarize key points in subsequent emails, and respond within a reasonable timeframe. Village Officials are expected to maintain clarity, timeliness, and a respectful tone in their communications, ensuring relevance to recipients' responsibilities. Conversely, Employees are tasked with attentively documenting details from phone calls and providing timely responses to official correspondence, contributing to a productive and harmonious working environment within the Village Council." A motion to accept the new Rule 37 which includes the organizational chart and communication protocol, was made by Mr. Easterwood, seconded by Ms. Susor; Approved unanimously.

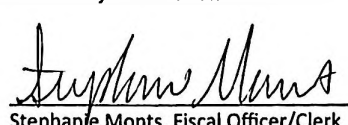
Social Media

The topic of social media was discussed, the last section of the Village of Weston Community Awareness Protocol pertaining to Social Media was reviewed. The mayor highlighted the presence of several Facebook groups with heated discussions, cautioning against getting drawn into them easily. Instead, it was recommended to refrain from directly engaging in such discussions on posts and to rather formulate a more comprehensive response through official channels, such as one's personal page or professional page. An example was cited when Ms. Klockowski made a post about stormwater on her professional page. Mr. Warner expressed his belief that nothing controversial had been shared thus far. On the other hand, Mr. Easterwood voiced his concern about council members using the term "council" in a way that refers to the entire council. He admitted to finding entertainment in the discussions and appreciating the expression of concerns. Mr. Myerholtz added that the council might not be able to resolve every issue raised in a Facebook post. Samantha Wick inquired about whether the social media policy applies to volunteer boards. The response indicated that the boards should follow a similar rule regarding debates and responses, with the addition that individuals can make personal posts to share their opinions.

Ashley Patel conveyed to council that the public elected them and thus there should be censorship. She further suggested that council members should refrain from participating in Facebook groups or similar platforms. Ashley also emphasized the council's authority to exercise censorship. It was proposed to incorporate social media guidelines into disciplinary measures. Mr. Warner believed Ms. Klockowski had represented herself very well on social media, and shared there was only one instance where there was some debate. He also highlighted instances where citizens engaged in body shaming towards Ms. Klockowski and the Mayor's wife.

Social media will need further discussion as the meeting had to be adjourned at 8:34PM due to a Tornado Warning and Tornado Sirens going off


Jeremy Schroeder, Mayor


Stephanie Monts, Fiscal Officer/Clerk