

VILLAGE OF CRIDERSVILLE COUNCIL MINUTES
Special Council Meeting – December 3, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call

Present: Mayor Rick Walls, Council Members: Eric West, Dorance Thompson, Steve Numbers, Stacey Cook, Dylan Lauck were present. Also present: Fiscal Officer Taylor West, Village Administrator Jarid Kohlrieser, and Police Chief Nathan Fried. Council Member Joe Bailey was not present at the time of the roll call but arrived at 6:28 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

Fiscal Officer West stated that the renewal amount that the village would pay to WAEDC would be \$5,000 for the year 2025. This is the same amount that the village paid to WAEDC in 2024. Motion to allow the payment was made by Numbers and seconded by Thompson. Motion passed 5-0, Bailey was not present at the time of vote.

Fiscal Officer West also stated that if ARPA funds are not spent out by the end of the year to a vendor, then the village must have a written agreement on file with the vendor that the village plans to purchase from in 2025.

Mayor Walls added that Solicitor James Hearn Sr could not be present at the meeting due to having a prior work commitment scheduled. Mayor Walls stated Solicitor Hearn may be out of town at the next regular council meeting and asked if council was okay having the meeting without him. All council members present were okay with still having the regular meeting on Monday December 9, 2024. Council member Bailey was not present at this time. Mayor Walls also stated Solicitor Hearn is working on a lateral transfer section to add to the current pay package, which can be amended at any time.

Chief Fried mentioned that he would like council to consider the Flock Camera System for the use of ARPA funds. Chief Fried explained that the cameras can read license plates and take a picture of the car. The cameras are helpful when looking for people with warrants, protection orders, stolen vehicles, missing people, collecting evidence, drug trafficking, and many other things. Chief Fried explained that during the trial period the village had with them helped locate a missing person, look at drug movement, and even protection orders. With the Flock Camera System, the officers can download an app on their phones or on the computers in the cruisers to allow them to have alerts on different cars in town within seconds, allowing the department to be proactive instead of reactive. Chief Fried explained that while this is a very effective tool and worth the investment, the cameras come at a yearly cost of \$3,000 per camera. Currently during the trial period, the village has had 4 cameras installed and that is what the Chief would like to keep. The deadline for the trial period ends on December 12, 2024. If the village decides to go with the Flock cameras, there would be a \$2,600 installation fee for the first year only with \$12,000 yearly cost for a total of \$14,600 for the first year. Council member Lauck asked if the cameras would be owned by the Village or if they would be more like a lease. Chief Fried explained that if a camera were to go down, Flock would replace it with a new camera at no charge to the village, so it would be more like a yearly lease agreement/contract for the camera services. Chief Fried explained if the village after a year did not want to pay for the cameras anymore, then Flock would come by and pick up all the cameras and there would be nothing the village would have to do. Lauck asked if the current location of the cameras is where they planned on keeping them. Chief Fried stated that he does like the current location of the cameras and all the cameras operate off mobile towers. Chief Fried stated that Apollo has these cameras at all their entrances to the parking lots and he has reached out to Wapakoneta City Schools to see if they would be interested in it, but he has not heard back. Chief Fried stated that a lot of other local places have installed these cameras including Lima Police Department. The Flock cameras were able to help catch the two missing inmates from Lima in Kentucky.

Chief Fried added that he is trying to apply for a grant that could possibly help cover the costs of the Flock cameras, however, the deadline for the grant is approaching mid-December. Chief has been trying to work with Stacey, the grant

writer the police department works with to try and get all of the paperwork in on time for the grant. Chief also stated Stacey informed him that the grant company would be getting rid of law enforcement grant writing due to it being a lot of work, deadlines, and how difficult receiving police grants are. Council stated that they were very pleased that Chief Fried is trying to apply for grants.

Council Member Lauck stated that he feels the Flock cameras would be more useful than just having regular cameras that are live streamed to look at. This would allow the officers to continue to patrol and get alerts instead of watching cameras on a screen. Chief Fried explained that with the Flock cameras they can search when they get an alert within the matter of seconds. Mayor Walls asked if these cameras could be shared with other agencies to help assist people or vehicles we may be trying to locate. Chief Fried explained that this is a national company and agencies with Flock cameras in the area would be able to get notifications. Angela Knotts, resident of 313 W Main Street and representative present for Bayliff & Son Funeral Home, asked if this meant the cameras that were a demo at the funeral home were not the ones the village was going with. Council member West stated that while the process may have been slow for those who wanted to move on the camera project, through research it seems that the village has found a more effective camera system to use going forward than we originally thought. He explained council does not have a problem purchasing cameras for the community, but they wanted to make sure proper research was done so the funding was spent on the best camera system.

Beverly Woods, resident of 100 W Sugar Street, stated that she had contacted the Auglaize County Sheriff's Office regarding how much they have to cover the village when we do not have anyone on duty. The Sheriff's Office told her that they must cover on average 3 to 4 times a week covering different situations within town. She stated she spoke to the Sheriff regarding the area that they must cover within the county. The Sheriff stated the farthest place they cover is Egypt which is roughly 35 minutes or 34 miles away. Ms. Woods also stated that according to dispatch the Village of Cridersville has the highest calls in the county and she realizes that other departments may not have as high of a call volume, but they are able to cover their calls with a full-time department without the help of the Sheriff's Office. Woods also stated that the Sheriff's Office feels the high call volume is due to being off Interstate 75, domestic violence, and drug overflow from larger cities such as Lima. Woods explained that when council goes to make the 2025 budget to please consider not taking away from the police department, but instead add to their budget. She also stated that she is thankful for the good personnel that the police department currently has. Council Member West asked Woods what she meant by taking away from the police department budget. Woods explained that she was concerned that the lack of uncovered shifts was due to a lack of funding as residents can see when the offices are dark, and no one is on duty due to the cars being behind the village. She also explained that her grandson had an issue with a loose dog and there was no one on, so the county had to come and help with the situation. West explained that the shifts are not uncovered due to lack of funding, but instead we had a fully staffed department, and officers have gone to other places, so the lack of staffing for the time was to help bring the department back up to full speed again as we have hired a full-time officer back to the department. Council Member Lauck added that the goal of the village is to not lose personnel but instead try to keep them, therefore, it is important to continue paying officers well. Lauck added that he has asked area agencies what their budgets, wages, full-time and part-time officers are, and he feels that the village is one of the higher pay agencies with similar revenue and population sizes. Lauck also explained that uncovered shifts may have been due to training officers or individuals having to take off because they are sick, but the department is currently staffed with 4 full-time officers and one part-time officer. Chief Fried disagreed with the findings that Lauck presented regarding being one of the higher paying full-time agencies as he has contacted agencies as well. Chief stated that some of the agencies are not all 24/7 departments. Lauck stated that he did not ask for schedules but rather how many full-time and part-time officers other places had. Lauck also stated that because some of the municipalities are not 24/7 it would make more sense why the police budget for Cridersville is more than double the budgets of other municipalities. Lauck also explained that the current police budget for 2024 was more than the 2023 budget. Chief Fried stated that he has talked to other agencies, and he was wondering if not an officer having on from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. would be more beneficial for the village. Council and the Mayor agreed that it is very important to always have an officer scheduled for duty during all hours of the night due to Interstate 75 being on the Cridersville exit along with gas stations and the drug overflow from larger cities. Chief Fried expressed that he is trying to work together with other agencies to see if they would be willing to allow individuals who work full-time in their departments to come work for the Village of Cridersville as part-time officers. Council and Chief Fried both agreed that it is not people fighting for agencies, agencies are fighting for people. Chief Fried also explained that starting January 6th the police department will be going to a new schedule where officers

will work three 12-hour shifts and one 4 hour shift a week. He stated he has made the schedule that way officers will work 7 days straight and then have 7 days off. Chief also stated that all of his officers were on board for the new schedule. Lt. Miles Truex stated that he is honored to work for the Cridersville Police Department as he grew up here and plans to work until he is ready to retire from Cridersville Police Department. Lt. Truex stated that there are many other activities such as going to court, the prosecutor's office, and paperwork in the office that go beyond the scheduled hours. Council members West and Lauck explained that the village has never turned down a police officer, instead when the Chief talks about hiring an officer, council wants to get them as soon as they can. Lauck explained that if the Chief could find people who want to work part-time the village would be very grateful. Angela Knotts asked if the police department could make a recruiting video like Lima Police Department did to try and recruit officers possibly. Council explained that they would be open to hiring more part-time offices and that would be up to the police department if they wanted to do a video for recruitment. Beverly Woods stated that she thinks council is working hard, and she wants them to keep working hard to think out of the box to attract officers to Cridersville.

Chief Fried asked if council saw him as a primary officer with also being the Chief of Police. Council unanimously agreed that they did see Chief Fried as a primary officer working the street and doing administrative duties. Chief Fried stated that to do both roles that it requires him to work beyond scheduled hours that he is not compensated for due to being salary. Chief Fried explained that he would like to move to an hourly instead of salary as he is pulled in and out of the office and does not feel compensated for the time he has to work over. Council Member West explained that the Chief is paid a salary therefore he is being paid and that is part of a salary position. Council Member Lauck stated that there are many people in the Sherriff's Office who probably make more than the Sherriff due to the Sherriff being salary, however, the Sheriff works over 40 hours a week. Lauck also explained that being a salary employee comes with possibly having to work more than just 40 hours a week and while it is not fair that is part of being a salaried employee. Council Member Lauck also explained that the village is working hard to make sure officers are compensated well and within the last five years wages have been doubled to try and prevent officers from leaving and going to other departments due to pay. Lauck explained that part-time officers have gone away due to departments not having enough officers in general. He also stated that when looking at wages it is important to look at the revenue that is being brought in to make sure that we are not putting the general fund in a bad spot.

Rick Allen, resident of 304 W Main, wanted to know what the police budget was before the additional .5% income tax was put on for the Police Department. Lauck stated it was somewhere close to \$450,000. Allen explained that he thought the half percent increase was to be given to the Police Department on top of what the general fund was already giving the police department. Council Member West explained the .5% was put on to help alleviate the stress from all the other subaccounts in the general fund that must also operate. Council Member Cook stated the .5% is to be used for police matters but other departments also have to run through the general fund. Cook expressed thanks to Ms. Woods for coming to the council meeting to fact check and ask questions about what is going on because people complain and they do not have accurate information, therefore, misinformation gets spread. Ms. Woods stated that the council is a good council.

West made a motion to go into executive session with no action to be taken at 7:25 p.m. Motion was seconded by Thompson. Motion passed 6-0.

Council took a small break before entering into executive session. Executive session started around 7:35 p.m.

Motion to leave executive session was made by Thompson and seconded by Numbers at 9:10 p.m. Motion passed 6-0.

Motion to adjourn was made by Lauck and seconded by Cook. Motion passed 6-0.

Taylor West, Village Fiscal Officer

Rick Walls, Mayor