On Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at 6:00 PM, Mayor Fries-Seip opened the Council meeting with a word of prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited by those present.

The regular meeting for the Council of the Village of Monroeville was then called to order.

Present at roll call: and: Mayor Melissa Fries-Seip

Chris Raftery Bonnie Beck, Fiscal Officer

Craig Franklin Tom Gray, Village Administrator

Joe Galea – present at 6:02 Jim Barney

Sue Rogers Gary Lyons, Police Chief

Bob Whitacre

Sam Wiley

Also attending: Lt. Troy Kimball, Robb Smithson, Lance Franke from Firelands Rails to Trails, and the 2022 Monroeville High School volleyball team and coaches.

The January 2023 financial reports and bank reconciliations were previously distributed to Council via e-mail. The reports consisted of December bank statements, month-end balancing out the report, and December revenue and expense reports.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Fries-Seip asked for Council’s approval to amend the agenda to pass Resolutions 2022-32 as an emergency measure. Sam Wiley made a motion, seconded by Sue Rogers, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried with no discussion.

**PROCLAMATION**

Mayor Fries-Seip read a proclamation for the 2022 Monroeville High School girls’ volleyball team for their achievement in being ranked State Championship runner-up. The ladies and their coaches received applause at the end of the proclamation’s reading, and pictures were taken with the Mayor. The team then left the meeting.

**DISPOSITION OF MINUTES**

Sue Rogers made a motion, seconded by Craig Franklin, to approve the minutes as presented from the December 20, 2022, regular meeting. Motion carried with no discussion.

**APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Chris Raftery made a motion, seconded by Sue Rogers, to approve the December 2022 financial reports as presented. Motion carried with no discussion.

**APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER AND 4TH QUARTER CREDIT CARD REPORT**

Sam Wiley made a motion, seconded by Chris Raftery, to approve the December 2022 and 4th quarter 2022 credit card reports. Motion carried with no discussion.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS COUNCIL**

Lance Franke, a Board member of FRTT, asked Council a few questions before leading up to an invitation to their 1863 restored depot. He asked how many people here have been on the trail. After a show of hands, he then asked if anyone had been on any other sections of the North Coast Inland Trail. His final question was how important the trail is to Monroeville. Tonight, he wants to talk about how increasingly important the trail is to our community. If we talk to our neighbors in Wakeman, we’ll learn how important the trail is to them, as they are seeing a resurgence in their restaurant businesses. They are regularly getting traffic from Elyria and Lorain, which is having a huge impact on the community. He and Robb have determined that there are in excess of 100,000 users on the trail per year. That reduces down to about 72,000 considering regular users. Mr. Franke described the boundaries of the trail and the political district under Marcy Kaptur. He asked if anyone knew what the Buckeye Trail was, noting that it’s an official Ohio trail that circumnavigates the whole state – it goes all the way around the perimeter encompassing 1440 miles in length. Monroeville is nicely placed in the middle of the entire trail, and we’re also now part of US Bike Rt 30. Our trail is actually on the transcontinental railroad. They want Council to come to their shop sometime to discuss the Trail Town concept, which is part of the Buckeye Trail. There is a process by which villages and towns can become official Ohio Trail Towns. Wakeman has already done that. One of the things that the Buckeye Trail Association tries to do is to get camping about every 10-20 miles. They have heard a rumor that there is some consideration to try to put camping on the north end of Clark Park. That could ramp up to the trail, and they could put up a sign. We are in a unique position that is just perfect for the Buckeye Trail. And with the trail comes tourist dollars. They have a record in the depot that people from 24 states and 11 countries that they know of have

passed through here in the last couple of years. The average motor tourist spends about $100 a day, while the average bike tourist spends about $138 a day because they can’t carry much on a bike. Mr. Franke stated that what they would like to see is facilitating the depot, which is the headquarters and could become the “capital” of the trail. The Trail Town concept can put Monroeville on the map in several recreational areas. Mr. Smithson then spoke about wanting to welcome all of our tourists to

visit our community, and possibly create grand entrances for our trail. He noted that Wakeman has created signage for their community and Norwalk’s to designate points of interest, and suggested looking into the same signage. He said that scheduling a joint meeting sometime between now and the middle of

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February would be good. They love showing off the improvements to the depot. The gentlemen were thanked for their presentation with the promise to contact them soon to schedule a joint meeting.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

Administrator - Tom reminded Council that a couple of years ago we applied for a $100,000+ State Capital Grant to create a connector link at Clark Park. We were turned down and our money went to Norwalk to support their park system. We’ll do this again, but we need to have the political appointees/elected officials aligned in the proper manner to work on our behalf. We almost might revisit the Jack Trushel connections to see if there’s any softening there. He noted that his report is in Council’s packet that outlines the projects for this year, and he’ll take any comments or questions relative to that. Craig asked Tom if there were any infrastructure issues with the weather, we had over Christmas. Tom replied that they had the flooding at the Jason Alexander field house at Marsh Field. The waterline broke (on 12-28-2022) and he noted that Bonnie has further details. The water loss kept showing up in our system, and the loss of 137 thousand gallons contributed to that loss. Fiscal Officer – Bonnie picked up where Tom left off regarding the water leak. She stated that Don was on vacation when this happened, but Wes was all over it. He called her the first day they found that they were pumping more water than usual, and the next day when he called to say the issue was still existing, it was determined that Leak Seekers needed to be called to find where the leak was located. Leak Seekers was to be scheduled this year for a village-wide system sweep to see if there were any leaks, but in their search last month they found the one at Marsh Field. Jeremy Loose was contacted right away and was down there in minutes. Pictures were taken, which showed quite a bit of water damage. The school will be filing an insurance claim, and they have allowed her to submit the $2000 invoice from Leak Seekers to see if any of that can be recouped on our behalf, as the leak might not have been discovered so soon without the services of Leak Seekers. Bonnie said our guys acted very promptly and assisted with whatever they could to get the leak stopped.

Bonnie then asked if Council would excuse $1479.84 of sewer charges for account #1\*66\*1. Sam made that motion, seconded by Craig Franklin. Motion carried with no discussion. Bonnie stated that she incorporated the previously discussed section of Council Rules regarding public participation into the remaining text of the Rules, and asked Council if they were ok with the amendment, or if they had any other amendments they wanted to see. Generally, the RoC is approved each January, although she couldn’t find where this was done last year. She asked that they be approved if there were no further amendments recommended. Chris Raftery, made a motion, seconded by Sue Rogers, to approve the RoC as presented. Motion carried with no discussion. Bonnie said that the 2022 financials were balanced out yesterday and are now officially in 2023. Ann will be out for surgery and Heather has been sick the past couple of days, so getting year-end reports done has been (and will be) challenging. They’ve also been going nuts with Gatso, like the PD, as the phones are ringing and people are coming into the office to pay or complain about their citations. Bonnie said this can be discussed at some other time. Bonnie informed Council that the state minimum wage went up to $10.10/hr. for 2023, and we have two employees who will now be paid this amount. Bonnie said she put the word out for anyone who might have phishing policies or procedures but hasn’t had one bite yet. She will be looking into this more as time permits. She may even contact our insurance company to see if they have anything. The Mayor said they received an email about Croghan, and asked if this should be discussed. Bonnie said she has that on her list for the Finance Committee meeting unless Council wants to discuss it now. The Mayor said it was ok to discuss this in the Finance Committee meeting. Bob asked about the audit and the discrepancies they found. Bonnie asked if he meant the findings, and noted that those were explained at the last meeting. Sam reminded Bob that they were already fixed before she even reported them, and Joe noted that this was included in the minutes. After some gentle teasing, Bob said to carry on. Police - The Chief asked if anyone had any questions regarding his report. Officer Gerald Broeckel completed his probationary period as a part-time officer. They want to get started with Jonah Merceraue, who has completed his pre-employment physical and drug screening. He did not have a vest that fit him, so they were able to borrow one from the Sherriff’s Office. He’s trying to talk them into maybe letting us buy it at a discount, but that’s yet to be determined. Jonah qualified on Monday and will be coming in tonight on his own time to ride with Eggleston. He hopes to bring him on board pretty soon. Bonnie stated that she received a phone call today that his pre-screen was negative, but she hasn’t heard anything yet about his physical. Solicitor - Jim Barney said he didn’t have anything for Council tonight. Mayor - Mayor Fries-Seip extended her appreciation to the rest of the administration for their help with the State of the Village report. She then proceeded to give the SOV report, touching on the special events our Village had in 2022. She thanked everyone for all they have done for our Village. She stated that she wanted to let everybody know that after a lot of prayer and contemplation, at the end of this year, she will not be seeking to run for office again. There are just too many health issues and other personal things going on with her family. She said she loves doing this, but it’s been weighing on her, so at this point, she’s not planning on running again. She also wanted to let everyone know that she plans on inviting the Flea Committee to get together with us again. It was postponed after a couple of failed attempts to meet, so she wants to try again. Our next meeting is February 14th, and she asked about a 5:00 pm special meeting before that. Sam said he might still be in Texas, and Craig said that was his grandson’s birthday. The Mayor asked Craig if he would be at the regular meeting that night, and he said he would be. The Mayor asked Council to let someone know as early as possible if they would be unable to attend the February Council meeting. Discussion. Joe asked if it was possible to have this meeting as a work session that might offer more flexibility, and it’s a little less formal than a regular meeting. The Mayor said that it could as long as it’s being advertised for what the meeting is for. Dates were tossed around, and Bonnie interjected that February is a crunch

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time for her with state reports, etc., so it’s harder for her to prepare for meetings. More discussion. It was determined to ask for a meeting on February 28th at 6:00 pm and it would be a work session to discuss the Flea issues only. The Mayor then asked if anyone had a recommendation for the Planning Commission vacancy. Chris said she was working on that. Scheduling a meeting with the Rails to Trails people was then discussed. It was determined to try for January 31st at 6:00 pm at the depot for a work session. The Mayor said she would reach out to them and let Bonnie know so a meeting notice could be done. Sam asked the Chief how the number of travelers on our trail affects the crime rate. The Chief replied that it’s not been an issue so far.

**BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Bob Whitacre reported that the HRJFD met on January 4th. There were 7 calls in December, including the turnpike accident call. The department had just procured battery-operated jaws of life, which was a lifesaver at the accident scene. A handful of the guys installed new flashing lights on a couple of the trucks on their own time, which was about 90 hours.

The Mayor asked for a motion to suspend the rules for the following legislation. Sam Wiley made the motion, seconded by Craig Franklin. Motion carried with no discussion.

**ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS FOR SECOND READING**

Due to the grant application already being approved, Resolution 2022-32 is being presented for second reading as an emergency.

RESOLUTION 2022-32 *A Resolution authorizing the Village Administrator to make application for an Ohio BWC Safety Intervention Grant to purchase trash bin lifters for Monroeville, Ohio, and declaring an emergency, as amended* was presented for adoption. Sue Rogers made a motion, seconded by Joe Galea, to adopt Resolution 2022-32 by title only. Motion carried with no discussion.

**ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS FOR PASSAGE**

ORDINANCE 2023-01 *An Ordinance repealing Section 933.07 of Chapter 933 of the Codified Ordinances of Monroeville, Ohio, and re-creating Section 933-07 establishing a schedule of fees and charges for the operation of Monroeville’s Electric Department and declaring an emergency* was presented for passage. Joe stated that the deposit fees don’t quite match what was discussed. Bonnie asked for clarification, and Joe said he suggested adding $50 to each deposit amount. Bonnie stated that she, Heather, and Ann were in attendance at the Utilities Committee meeting, and because no consensus was offered, it was a little confusing to determine whose suggestions were accepted as several were offered. Bonnie said those deposit amounts can be amended into the ordinance. Joe then made a motion, seconded by Sam Wiley, to pass Ordinance 2023-01 as amended. Motion carried with no further discussion.

**APPROVAL OF BILL SUMMARY**

Sue Rogers made a motion, seconded by Bob Whitacre, to approve the bill summary as presented, which includes memo expenses and checks #044698 to #044774 for a total of $761,720.45. Motion carried with no discussion.

**COUNCIL BUSINESS**

The Mayor asked if anyone wanted to change their committee status, especially Joe since he was placed into the committees that former Council Member Rupp had. Joe said he was fine with them, and no one else objected to the current list. Sam Wiley made a motion, seconded by Joe Galea, to approve the Council standing committees as presented. The Mayor asked Chris if she wanted to continue as President pro-tem. With no objection voiced, Sam Wiley made a motion, seconded by Craig Franklin, to appoint Chris Raftery as Council President pro-tem for 2023. Motion carried with no discussion. The Mayor then asked if anyone had any comments on the amendment to the Electric Rules & Regulations. None were voiced. Craig Franklin made a motion, seconded by Chris Raftery, to approve the amendment as presented. Motion carried with no discussion. Joe asked about the HRJFD being called out to the I80 accident, and Bob said that was mutual aid, and 9 guys responded. Joe asked if some recognition could be offered in the way of a proclamation or letter, as the guys went above and beyond. Discussion. It was determined that it would be more recognizable if the Mayor attended their first meeting of the month to extend recognition and commendations. The meeting will be on February 6th at 7:00 pm.

**ADJOURNMENT**

 There being no further business to discuss, Craig franklin made a motion, seconded by Sam Wiley, to adjourn. Motion carried with no discussion. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

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 Bonnie Beck, MMC, Fiscal Officer

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Melissa M. Fries-Seip, Mayor

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