

**VILLAGE OF JEFFERSON  
COUNCIL MEETING**

March 17, 2025

Meeting called to order by Mayor Chiacchiero.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Moment of Silence:

Opening Prayer: **Pastor Laing Bethel Bible**

**Roll call of Council** Dreier, Febel, Martuccio, Roderick, Sekanina, Orvos

**Corrections or Additions to the Agenda:**

Councilperson Martuccio asked to have Added to the Council Meeting Agenda

**Additions to the Agenda – Council Meeting, March 17, 2025**

**Dear Mayor, Council, Clerk-Treasurer, and Solicitor,**

I Councilperson Martuccio would like to place the following **Motion to Amend** on tonight's agenda **immediately before the first reading** of Ordinance 2025-O-3374.

**Motion to Amend Ordinance No. 2025-O-3374:**

*"This ordinance shall only take effect upon approval by the voters of the Village of Jefferson at the next municipal election. A certified copy of this ordinance shall be filed with the Ashtabula County Board of Elections at least 120 days before the November 2025 election to ensure it is placed on the ballot for public approval."*

**Motion:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Second:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Discussion:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Roll:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Dear Council Members,

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I Councilperson Martuccio would like to lay out a path forward on this issue that we can all agree to.

We can all agree that, since the position of Clerk-Treasurer was established in our village, it has always been an elected office, with the people given the opportunity to choose their representative every four years. We can all agree that elected officials—whether council members, the mayor, or the Clerk-Treasurer—are chosen by the people to serve. And we can all agree that, as council members, we are accountable to our residents and voters.

If all of this is true, then why wouldn't we allow the people to decide on this important change?

If we approve this ordinance as written tonight, not only will we be taking away the people's right to vote for their Clerk-Treasurer, but we will also be taking away their right to determine whether this change is in the best interest of the village. We trust the electorate to choose a mayor, a council, and other officials—why should we not trust them with this decision as well?

And let's be honest—if we reject this amendment, we are essentially saying, “**We don't trust the voters to make this decision.**” That is a tough stance to defend, especially when we were all elected by these very same voters. If we had enough faith in the people of Jefferson to elect us to office, why would we now turn around and take away their ability to vote on such a fundamental change?

We have **plenty of time** to put this issue on the ballot. In less than eight months, our voters will already be casting their ballots, making it the **perfect opportunity** to let them weigh in on this decision. There is no reason to rush this tonight when we can allow the voters to have their say at the next municipal election.

If we **truly believe** this is the best path forward, then **let's allow the voters to affirm it**. If we are right, they will approve it. If not, then we should respect their decision.

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Again, **not approving this amendment sends a strong message to our residents**—that their opinion on this issue does not matter. I believe we owe it to them to give them a voice in this decision.

Sincerely,

Pasquale Martuccio

**Minutes: Approval/Addition/Correction**

Motion by Councilperson Febel to approve the Council Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2025.

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Motion by Councilperson Febel to approve the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2025.

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Motion by Councilperson Febel to approve the Hiring Committee Meeting Minutes for February 26, 2025.

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: Drier Yea, Febel Yea, Martuccio Abstain, Rederick Yea, Sekanina Yea, Orvos Yea. five yea's and one abstain motion carried.

Motion by Councilperson Febel to approve the Hiring Committee Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2025.

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: Drier Yea, Febel Yea, Martuccio Abstain, Rederick Yea, Sekanina Yea, Orvos Yea. five yea's and one abstain motion carried.

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Motion by Councilperson Febel to accept the Jefferson Emergency Rescue Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2025.

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: All yea, motion carried

### **Visitor's Comments (five-minute limit per council rule #13)**

Citizen Hendrick Wolfert of 35 North Elm Street addressed the Council expressing concerns over the proposal to combine the elected positions of village clerk and treasurer into a single appointed fiscal officer. While acknowledging that Ohio law permits such a change, Wolfert argued that it undermines residents' right to vote on these crucial roles, reducing accountability and transparency. He emphasized that the people of Jefferson deserve the ability to choose those responsible for managing their finances. Despite concerns about unqualified candidates, Wolfert stated that the solution is to ensure voters have the necessary information, not to remove their right to choose. He also warned of potential conflicts of interest and reduced oversight, suggesting that the council, already divided, should avoid consolidating power. Wolfert stressed that making this change without a public vote disregards the will of the people and urged the council to place the issue on the ballot for residents to decide.

Citizen Frank Snyder of 116 West Jefferson Street, a former councilperson, expressed concerns about changing the Clerk-Treasurer position to an appointed role. He emphasized that the current elected position, with a four-year term, ensures the person is committed to the community, while an appointed position might lack that dedication. Snyder also noted the committee's worry that an appointed individual may not be adequately trained or experienced, despite the fact that the current Clerk-Treasurer has completed various state training programs. He suggested leaving the position as is and, if it becomes vacant after the term ends, allowing an appointment at that time. Snyder also questioned the urgency of the proposed change, given that the current Clerk-Treasurer has three years remaining in her term.

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He said, currently, the mayor and the clerk are independent of each other, and they currently report to the residents of the Village.

Snyder also told the Council he understands that some members of council are concerned that an unqualified person could win the next election.

“However, that risk exists with any elected office. The voters are the ones that we should trust to make to make decisions.

Mayor Chiacciero told the council the new Fiscal Officer would have to be an accountant to apply for the position.

Chairman Sekanina of the Finance Committee informed the Council that the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) allows a village to either elect a Clerk Treasurer or appoint a Fiscal Officer, with council approval. This issue was raised years ago, and the current Clerk Treasurer has stated she will not seek reelection and may not finish her term, expressing a desire for a qualified replacement. Concerns were raised that an unqualified person could be elected, with no recourse until the next election, as ORC does not require financial qualifications for the position. In contrast, the Fiscal Officer process would involve a hiring committee, with interviews and recommendations based on financial qualifications. The mayor would appoint the

individual, and the council would approve the appointment, with the possibility to waive residency requirements. The council can also change back to an elected position in the future, with a two-thirds vote. The mayor cannot remove the appointed Fiscal Officer without council approval, but the council can remove them with a three-quarters vote.

The hiring committee would be appointed by the mayor and would have to discuss what qualifications and experience they were looking for in this position, including salary. It is expected that it would be someone with experience in accounting or other financial background.

Chairman Sekanina of the Finance Committee, told Council right now in the State of Ohio out of six hundred and sixty Villages eight nine still have elected Clerk Treasurers and the rest are appointed.

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## **Also present:**

Stephanie Wessell of the Gazette, Frank Snyder Jr, Pat Bradek, Judy Maloney, Hendrick Wolfert and Pastor Laing Bethel Bible

## **DEPARTMENTS**

### **Administrator Mackensen**

Village Administrator's report for the period ending March 14th, 2025.

Projects update:

Project		Status	Vendor	Grant/Loan		Total Cost
<b>ACTIVE PROJECTS</b>	<b>Project #</b>					
WWTP EQ Basin	OPWC – R37	Submitted to DOD/EPA Resubmitting to OPWC – R37	CT Consulting	Engineering grant \$90,000		\$1,250,000
WWTP Clarifier Improvement Phase 1	OPWC – R38	Bid Opening March 10 <sup>th</sup>	CT Consulting	\$207,500 Grant \$50,000 Loan		\$315,000

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WWTP Clarifier Improvement Phase 2	OPWC-R39	Submitted to DOD/EPA Resubmitting to OPWC – R39	CT Consulting			\$315,000

### In the Village

The Village Spring Cleanup Day will be held on May 10th, coinciding with the County Tire Take-Back Day. As you collect your items, please remember that any furniture made of fabric or leather must be wrapped in plastic to be picked up. Items should not be placed out before Wednesday, May 7th, and must be out no later than Friday night. Please note that collection crews will make only one pass, and any missed items will not be picked up.

Additionally, **batteries, oil, and paint that have not dried up will not be accepted.** As we get closer to the date, we will post a full list of prohibited items.

### Street Dept.

The Street Department is addressing multiple sinkholes throughout the village, with the most severe located on Elm Street between Satin and Erie Ave. Additionally, we are working with the Jefferson school to resolve a water issue on Elliott Ave. Adjustments have been made to the retention pond to help alleviate backflow into the development

### Recreation Department:

Parks are being cleaned up for the 2025 season. The Giddings Park playground is complete, and work continues on the basketball and pickleball courts. There has been significant interest from pickleball leagues, and we are working to have the courts finished soon. Additionally, the new basketball equipment and swings supplied by the SOCC Committee will be installed soon.

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Just a reminder: T-ball will run from May 27th through June 27th at \$45 per child, and soccer will take place from July 8th through August 7th, also at \$45 per child. We are looking for volunteer coaches and team partners for both sports.

## **Wastewater Treatment Plant:**

Bid openings for the Clarifier Improvement Phase 1 project were conducted at Town Hall on March 10th. Only one bid was received, which came in nearly 20% over the base bid amount. We are now working with CT, now known as Verdantas, to determine the next steps.

## **Police:**

Still accepting applications

## **Other notes:**

The Village is working with the postmaster to begin the process of relocating the mailboxes on East Jefferson Street, between Sycamore Street and Cucumber Street, to the north side. This move will help ensure uninterrupted mail service and provide greater convenience for north side residents as the park playground project progresses. South side residents will not be affected.

## **Clerk /Treasurer Fisher**

Payroll Report/Special Pay Report

January Month End

End of Month Summary	January	
Total Cash on Hand	\$1,000.00	
Andover Bank CD	\$50,000.00	
Huntington Bank 2257	\$45,976.70	



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Star Ohio 26065	\$1,082,081.01	
Payroll Checking	-\$255.75	
Andover/ First Common Bank Checking	\$3,338,521.09	
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$4,517,323.05</b>	Up 14.5. %
YTD Revenue	\$588,328.20	
YTD Expenses	\$478,030.66	
Outstanding Encumbrance	\$182,903.89	
Recreation Revenue YTD	\$14,273.00	Up 15.9 %
Senior Revenue YTD	\$1,211.97	Down 162.1 %
Income Tax Revenue YTD	\$238,912.19	Down 38.8 %
Sewer Fee Collections YTD	\$143,524.98	Up 9.2 %

Motion by Councilperson Sekanina to accept the **List of Checks paid for January 2025** January 1, 2025 – January 31, 2025

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Motion by Councilperson Febel to approve the attendance of Clerk-Treasurer Fisher to attend the Ohio Association of Public Treasurers Hot Topic Seminar April 25, 2025, I will not have to pay for the training because I am part of the Ohio Association of Public Treasurers Board. The cost to the Village will be mileage.

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: All yea, motion carried

**Chief Mackensen**

Chief Mackensen told the Council that the Police Department had 292 calls for service for the month of February 2025.

**Chief Lachey**

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## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Building and Lands**

**Committee Report:** None

**Ordinance/Resolution to Read:**

### **Ordinance No. 25-O- 3376**

An Ordinance Amending the “District Map” of the Village of Jefferson, Ashtabula County, Ohio as incorporated into the code of Ordinances of the Village of Jefferson, Ohio at section 1242.02 in order to rezone one parcel of property currently designated as I-industrial to R-3-multifamily-residential and designate same on the “district map”

### **Motion by Councilperson Dreier for the First Reading of Ordinance No. 25-O- 3376**

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: Drier Yea, Febel Yea, Martuccio Abstained, Rederick Yea, Sekanina Yea, motion carried.

### **Forestry**

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**Committee Report:** None

**Finance**

**Committee Report:** No report

**Ordinance/Resolution to Read:**

**Resolution No. 25-R-3371**

A Resolution enacting and adopting amended and updated code of Ordinances of the Village of Jefferson, Ohio, published by American Legal Publishing Corporation, and copyrighted 2024.

**Motion by Councilperson Sekanina for the Second Reading of Resolution  
No. 25-R- 3371**

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: All yea, motion carried

**Ordinance/Resolution to Read:**

**Resolution No. 25-R-3372**

A Resolution opposing proposed legislation (Senate Bill 43) to eliminate a lodging tax within Ashtabula County

**Motion by Councilperson Sekanina for the Second Reading of Resolution  
No. 25-R- 3372**

2<sup>nd</sup>

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Roll: All yea, motion carried

**Ordinance/Resolution to Read:**

**Ordinance No. 25-O-3373**

An Ordinance Amending Chapter 254.05 of the Code of Ordinances of the Village of Jefferson, Ohio pertaining to overtime.

**Motion by Councilperson Sekanina for the First reading of Ordinance  
No. 25-O- 3373**

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: All yea, motion carried

**Motion to Amend Ordinance No. 2025-O-3374:**

"This ordinance shall only take effect upon approval by the voters of the Village of Jefferson at the next municipal election. A certified copy of this ordinance shall be filed with the Ashtabula County Board of Elections at least 120 days before the November 2025 election to ensure it is placed on the ballot for public approval."

Councilperson Sekanina asked the Solicitor how Councilperson Martuccio could say where he wants to put the amendment to Ordinance 3374. Especially with the request not even being voted on and it not being a twenty-four-hour notice.

Mayor Chiacchiero told the Council in his mind he feels the amendment should go after the first reading of Ordinance 3374

Councilperson Roderick asked the Clerk Treasurer about the memo she sent out to Council about putting information on the agenda. Asking Council to have it to her the Wednesday before the Council.

Clerk Treasurer Fisher stated that she did send a memo out to help in preparation for the Council meetings. Because of last minute addition. Fisher also stated that Council can add information to the agenda the night of the Council meeting under

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corrections or additions to the agenda.

Councilperson Martuccio asked Councilperson Sekanina why he is against having the residents of the Village having the opportunity to vote on whether the Clerk Treasurer position be appointed or elected.

Councilperson Sekanina told Martuccio he feels the Ohio General Assembly has given Council a path to move forward with the Fiscal Officers position.

After a discussion with Council and the Solicitor it was agreed to put the motion that Councilperson Martuccio where he wanted it placed before which was before the first reading of Ordinance 3374. The council with legal councils' guidance moved the motion councilperson Martuccio requested to after the first reading of making the Clerk Treasurer position appointed.

## **Ordinance/Resolution to Read:**

### **Ordinance No. 25-O-3374**

An Ordinance combining the duties of the Elected Village Clerk and the Elected Village Treasurer into one appointed office, to be known as Village Fiscal Officer

### **Motion by Councilperson Sekanina for the First reading of Ordinance No. 25-O- 3374**

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: Drier Yea, Febel Yea, Martuccio Nay, Roderick Yea, Sekanina Yea, Orvos Nay. four yea's and two nay's motion carried.

### **Motion by Councilperson Martuccio to Amend Ordinance No. 2025-O-3374:**

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"This ordinance shall only take effect upon approval by the voters of the Village of Jefferson at the next municipal election. A certified copy of this ordinance shall be filed with the Ashtabula County Board of Elections at least 120 days before the November 2025 election to ensure it is placed on the ballot for public approval."

Councilperson Martuccio asked if we truly believe this is the best path forward, then let's allow the voters to affirm it. If we are right, they will approve of it. If not, then we should respect their decision. Not approving this amendment sends a strong message to our residents—that their opinion on this issue does not matter. I believe we owe it to them to give them a voice in this decision. We as Council were all elected by the same people that voted us in office. And we are saying we do not trust the residents who vote for the Council and the Mayor in to decide whether it will be a elected position or a appointed position. There is plenty of time to put these issues on the ballot and let the resident's vote.

Councilperson Sekanina again told Council the Ohio Revised Code gave Council a path to go forward with the position.

### **Motion by Councilperson Martuccio to Amend Ordinance No. 2025-O-3374**

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: Drier Nay, Febel Nay, Martuccio Yea, Rederick Ney, Sekanina Ney, Orvos Yea. four nay's and two yea's motion carried.

### **Ordinance/Resolution to Read:**

#### **Ordinance No. 25-O-3375**

An Ordinance waiving the residency requirements for the Village Fiscal Officer

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**Motion by Councilperson Sekanina for the First reading of Ordinance  
No. 25-O- 3375**

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: Drier Yea, Febel Yea, Martuccio Nay, Roderick Yea, Sekanina Yea, Orvos  
Nay. four yea's and two nay's motion carried.

**Recreation**

**Committee Report:**

FYI: Breakfast with the Easter Bunny April 12, 2025

FYI: Easter Egg Hunt April 12, 2025

Motion by Councilperson Roderick to accept the 2025 Civic use Groups at the  
Jefferson Recreation Center

2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: All yea, motion carried

**2025 Civic use Groups at the Jefferson Recreation Center**

Ashtabula Regional Medical Center

American Cancer Society Relay for Life

Ashtabula County Auditor

Ashtabula County Bar Association

Ashtabula County Beekeepers Association

Ashtabula County Realtors

Ashtabula County Covered Bridge Festival

Ashtabula County Recorder Barb Schaab

FOP Lodge 114

Girl Scout Service Unit 803

Helping Hands Farm Animal Rescue

Jefferson Area Chamber of Commerce

Jefferson Historical Society

Jefferson Youth Football League

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Leadership Ashtabula County  
OSU Extension Office  
Rotary Club of Jefferson Ohio  
St. Joseph Calasanctius Church  
Cross Point Fellowship Church of God

## **Safety**

**Committee Report:** No Report

## **Utilities/Wastewater Treatment/ Service**

**Committee Report:** No Report

## **Mayor**

Mayor Chiacchiero told the Council the next Council Meeting will be April 7, 2025

## **OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**

None

## **Visitor's Comments (five-minute limit per council rule #13)**

Citizen Frank Snyder of 72 East Jefferson Street, a former councilperson, spoke again saying he has some concerns about changing to a hired position. And Council should let it be up to the Village residents to vote on it.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

None



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**MEETINGS**

None

**ADJOURN**

Motion by Councilperson Sekanina to adjourn the Council Meeting.  
2<sup>nd</sup>

Roll: All yea, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Submitted by,

Patricia A Fisher, Clerk of Council