

**Village of Milan  
Council Meeting  
July 24, 2024**

July 24, 2024, Council Meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance by Mayor Pam Crosby at 6:30 P.M.

Mayor Crosby read the following letter from Auditor Keith Faber which was published in the Sandusky Register and Norwalk Reflector.

“I take exception to the articles published by The Norwalk Reflector and Sandusky Register for ongoing allegations repeated by the editor/reporters at that newspapers and local citizens that the Auditor of State’s Office is involved in some sort of concerted effort to hide wrongdoing by public officials in the Village of Milan.

These articles are, essentially, a recitation of an email sent to my office by Mary Bruno, a former Milan fiscal officer involved in a long-running dispute with Village officials.

While the reporter did use part of an initial statement we provided in response to that email, the newspaper conveniently left out the portion in which we stated the allegations were inaccurate and/or misguided.

We stand by our work and do not hide the wrongdoing of public officials. Since I took office in 2019, my Special Investigations Unit (SIU) has secured more than 120 criminal convictions against public officials who lie, steal, and cheat, resulting in findings for recovery of more than \$20.6 million.

Do you suspect fraud among public officials? Call our hotline (866-FRAUD-OH, or 866-372-8364). Sometimes, tips we receive result in findings for recovery and/or criminal prosecutions.

For example, in early 2017, nearly two years before I took office, SIU launched an investigation of Bruno after we received complaints about alleged improprieties during her time as fiscal officer.

That investigation determined that Bruno improperly received \$2,979 in pay for hours she did not work – during three consecutive pay periods during fiscal year 2016, she claimed paid time off while also working regular hours, resulting in comp time earned at time and a half.

The Village’s policies at the time did not allow Bruno to claim sick or vacation time while still working regular hours and earning overtime as a result. We issued a finding for recovery for \$2,979, which Bruno has not repaid and still owes to the taxpayers of the Village of Milan.

We found no other wrongdoing on her part and pursued no criminal charges.

Since we issued our finding for recovery, Bruno and others have vocally disputed our work in a cycle that has repeated itself for five years running. Public records are requested and obtained, Bruno and others allege those records prove whatever points they're trying to make, and no explanation can convince them otherwise.

The Norwalk Reflector and The Sandusky Register then repeats falsehoods as fact, with its reporters giving credence to any allegations handed to them, in an attempt at watchdog journalism that does not stand up to scrutiny.

The current point of contention involves the most recent biennial audit of the village, which included several findings for recovery that were either repaid or resolved under audit. As our audits make clear, Milan has had long standing issues regarding fiscal management and loose fiscal management.

We aren't hiding anything – you can read the report for yourself (<https://ohioauditor.gov/auditsearch/search.aspx>) or request other related records from my office.

We reviewed the allegations made by Bruno and others. While we issued several findings regarding poor controls and weak fiscal management, including some that lead to findings for recovery, as in Bruno's case, we did not find any conduct that the audit team or SIU would recommend criminal prosecution.

If your paper or concerned citizens groups disagree, you can always submit your complaints to local law enforcement for their review as well. As reflected in our audit, we didn't believe that the conduct cited rose to that level.

If the citizens of Milan are unhappy with how the Village is being run, they should take up that issue at the ballot box or other political means and not disparage the work of my office.

We repeat it here, since The Norwalk Reflector reporter didn't believe it pertinent to the story: The allegations made by Bruno and others and parroted as fact by the newspaper are inaccurate and misguided.

The Norwalk Reflector and The Sandusky Register have taken sides on these issues, and the July 10 article gives full credence to unfounded allegations.

We're big supporters of the First Amendment and a free press, but your editor and reporter are doing readers a disservice.

Do better."

Roll call: Rospert – yes, Taylor – yes, Shafer – arrived at 6:50 PM, McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes, Naufel – yes.

Also, present – Mayor Pam Crosby, Village Administrator Rospert, Fiscal Officer Joanne Clapp, and Solicitor James Barney.

Motion by McIlrath, seconded by Naufel, to approve the Minutes of the June 26<sup>th</sup> Regular Council Meeting. Roll Call: Taylor – yes, Shafer – absent, Naufel-yes, McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes, Rospert – yes.

### **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Sue Daugherty presented and discussed with the Council Serving our Seniors and the need for affordable rental housing for retirees. She invited the Council to come to the Public Forum that is scheduled for August 15<sup>th</sup> (3:00-5:00 P.M.) to show their support and leadership.

Sue Mills discussed with the Council the no parking limitations on Center Street near the Edison Memorial Methodist Church. The Village Administrator explained to the Council that the Safety Committee met last year to review the safety issue and brought the Safety Committee recommendations to the Council with an Ordinance for Council approval. Sue Mills recommends changes to the No Parking between the hours of 7:00-9:00 A.M. and 2:00-4:00 P.M. Village Administrator recommended to the Council that they could amend the Ordinance to, there shall be No Parking on Center Street at the southeast intersection of Church Street within 60' of the corner.

Casey Dellisanti presented his request about installing awnings at the Invention Restaurant.

Motion by Taylor, seconded by McIlrath, to approve to allow the awning over public right away at the Invention Restaurant.

Roll Call: McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes, Rospert – yes, Taylor – yes, Naufel – yes, Shafer – absent.

Motion by McIlrath, seconded by Rospert, to approve allowing 10' height awnings at the Invention Restaurant.

Roll Call: McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes, Rospert – yes, Taylor – yes, Naufel – yes, Shafer – absent.

### **OLD COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewers** –RMH Concrete completed the west side of the Village Square Sidewalk/Curb Project. This project was made possible through a CDBG Grant.

A.J. Riley completed the North Main Street Paving Project on July 17<sup>th</sup>.

**OLD COMMITTEE BUSINESS – cont.**

Administrator Rospert informed the Council that ODOT advised that the radar speed limit feedback signs should be installed on South Main Street sometime between Labor Day and Halloween. Made possible by an ODOT safety Grant

**Safety** – None

**Finance** – None

**Regional Planning, Building Codes & Inspection** – None

**Utilities** – Administrator Rospert provided the Council with an update on the Water Tower Rehabilitation Project, the Design and Construction Loan Application was submitted to the Ohio EPA. The Village was awarded the Design Loan from the EPA and is still waiting on the Construction Loan Application. The Village is in the process of applying for the Ohio Public Work Commission Grant this fall.

Frontier Communications continues installing fiberoptics within the Village this week. There have been a few issues with the installation and Tyson Metz has been the main point of contact.

**Civic Contracts and Historical Preservation** – None

**Parks and Trees** – None

**Records Commission** – None

**Citizen Property Maintenance** – Village Solicitor provided the Council with an update on the property owner of 1 East Front Street property maintenance violations. Pursuant to Council request, he wrote criminal complaint and sent a letter to the property owner regarding the property maintenance violations.

**NEW COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**Streets, Sidewalks and Storm Sewers** – The Street Department completed the following tasks: Continued mowing parks and roadsides, worked on the sidewalk and street projects, sprayed weeds, performed maintenance work on the paint machine, painted some yellow curbs, and will begin painting the white parking spots, crosswalks and stop bars in the next month. Finished the installation of concrete bins at the Street Department along with creating a bin for our cold patch.

**NEW COMMITTEE BUSINESS – cont.**

**Safety** – Mayor Crosby and Village employees attended AMP Safety Training; the topic was Personnel Protective Equipment.

Employees of the Electric, Water and Street departments attended an AMP annual requirement Safety Training; the topic was Bucket Rescue.

**Finance** – Fiscal Officer Clapp stated the Village received \$23,093.16 in interest for June.

Fiscal Officer Clapp informed the Council the Utility Department is in the process of switching from Verizon Wireless to AT&T First Net for approximately \$325.00 per year.

Village Solicitor provided the Council with an update in reference to Mary Bruno Bankruptcy that the Village received an Order of Discharged as of July 18, 2024, and that she does not have to repay the Village for her State Auditor Findings for Recovery of \$2,979.00.

Motion by McIlrath, seconded by Naufel, to approve the Council Bills for the period of June 27<sup>th</sup> – July 24<sup>th</sup>. Roll Call: Shafer – yes, McManus – yes, Naufel – yes, McIlrath – yes, Rospert – yes, Taylor –yes.

Motion by Rospert, seconded by Taylor, to approve the Utility Bills for the period of June 27<sup>th</sup> – July 24<sup>th</sup>. Roll Call: McIlrath – yes, Taylor – yes, Shafer – yes, McManus – yes, Naufel – yes, Rospert – yes.

Motion by Naufel, seconded by McManus, to approve the June Financial Reports as presented. Roll Call: Naufel – yes, Rospert – yes, Taylor – yes, Shafer – yes, McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes.

**Regional Planning, Building Code, and Inspection** – The Design Review Board held a meeting to review an awning for the Invention Restaurant and to install cultured stone veneer on the west side of the Little Village Hair Shop foundation wall. The Design Review Board recommends to Council to allow the awning and they approved of the cultured stone veneer for the Little Village Hair Shop foundation.

The Planning Commission met for an application to change the Zoning Code from an R-2 to C-1 for the property of 22 W. Church Street. The Planning Commission denied this request.

Issued a Fence Permit to 2060 Winkle Road and 317 S. Main Street and issued a Zoning Permit for a new front porch entryway at 58 Lockwood Road.

**Utilities** – Water/Wastewater performed the following tasks: Along with their normal maintenance duties and testing requirements for the EPA they changed out a residential meter, continued with their water valve turning program, sprayed for weeds, updated their backflow

preventer documentation, and worked on clearing a “clog” in the grit chamber at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Worked with the property owner at 13615 Riley Road to hook up to our water system.

**NEW COMMITTEE BUSINESS – cont.**

Found a high-water usage at 9 Fair Oaks Drive in the amount of 68,000 gallons. They shut their water off until they were able to contact the owner. It was determined that they had a broken water line in their basement.

The Electric Department performed the following tasks: Along with their normal duties read meters, assisted other departments, continued with the Electrical Upgrade Project by installing a new transformer for the Milan Township Town Hall and switched them over to the new system. They installed three new poles on Center Street in anticipation of beginning to put Center Street on the new system. Replaced 9 hours meters that were between 30-40 years old. Joe Hamilton attended the AMP Line workers training the week of July 15<sup>th</sup> in Columbus.

**Civic Contacts and Historical Preservation – None.**

**Parks and Trees –** Hired Ohio Tree to trim trees on Chippewa Drive.

Motion by Taylor, seconded McIlrath, to allow the Activities Committee the use of the Village Square on tentative Monday August 12<sup>th</sup> (5:30PM – 8:30PM) for their third Small Town Summer Night’s event, along with the closure of Park Street on the Square.

Roll Call: Rospert – yes, Taylor – yes, Shafer – yes, McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes, Naufel – yes.

**Records Commission –** Records Coordinator Mesenburg submitted a report that there was one public record request this past month.

**Citizens Property Maintenance Commission – None**

**Communications – None**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None**

**LEGISLATION**

Ordinance – Next Number will be 890-7-24

Resolution – Next Number will be 647-7-24

**AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE EDITING AND INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ORDINANCES AS PARTS OF THE VARIOUS COMPONENT CODES OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF MILAN, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

Motion by McIlrath, seconded by Rospert, to suspend the rules.

Roll Call: Shafer – yes, McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes, Rospert – yes, Taylor – yes, Naufel – yes.

Motion by McManus, seconded by Naufel, to adopt by title only as an emergency.

**AN ORDINANCE TO LEVY A PERMISSIVE MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE TAX PURSUANT TO OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 4504.173 FOR THE VILLAGE OF MILAN, OHIO**

Motion by McManus, seconded by McIlrath, to bring this Ordinance to the second reading by title only.

Roll Call: Taylor – yes, Naufel – yes, Shafer – yes, McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes, Rospert – yes.

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE FISCAL OFFICER TO EXPEND NOT MORE THAN \$30,698.00 FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND TO PAY FOR THE MELANIE LANE PAVING PROJECT AND REPAIRING THE WILLIAMS STREET GUARDRAIL FOR THE VILLAGE OF MILAN AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

Motion by Naufel, seconded by Rospert, to suspend the rules.

Roll Call: Naufel – yes, Shafer – yes, McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes, Rospert – yes, Taylor – yes.

Motion by McManus, seconded by McIlrath, to adopt by title only as an emergency.

Roll Call: McManus – yes, Naufel – yes, McIlrath – yes, Rospert – yes, Taylor – yes, Shafer – yes.

**AN ORDINANCE PLACING A MORATORIUM ON THE OPERATION OF ANY SHORT TERM RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE RENTALS IN THE VILLAGE OF MILAN**

Motion by McManus, seconded by McIlrath, to bring this Ordinance to the first reading by title only.

Roll Call: Rospert – yes, Taylor – yes, Shafer – yes, McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes, Naufel – yes.

The Council recommends for the Planning Commission to establish rules and regulations pertaining to Bed & Breakfast and AirBNB's.

**Questions for Next Meeting**

**Adjournment**

Motion by Rospert, seconded by McIlrath, to adjourn tonight's meeting at 7:45 P.M.

Roll Call: Taylor – yes, Shafer – yes, McManus – yes, McIlrath – yes, Rospert – yes, Naufel – yes.

  
Carla Rospert, Council President

  
Joanne Clapp, Fiscal Officer