

PLEASANT HILL VILLAGE
Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 13, 2026
7:00 PM Mayor

Brenda called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendees: Council; Penny Fessler, Paul King, Terri Stivers, Crystal Stoner Absent; Tony Midlan, one council seat vacant

Citizens; John Carroll, Andrew Davis, Nathan Knosterman, Brian Miller, Russell Landwehr, Kim Landwehr, Wade Westfall, Ted Mercer, Greg Simmons, Wade Westfall, Phil Plummer, Dave Duchak, Lenny Wirz, Anthony Hampton

Miami County Jail Project Presentation

Brenda introduced representatives from Miami County to present on the county jail system. Wade Westfall, a County Commissioner, introduced Miami County Sheriff Dave Duchek Sheriff Duchak to lead the presentation.

Sheriff Duchak provided an overview of the county's jail situation. The county operates two facilities: a minimum-security jail on State Route 25-A, opened in 2000 for low-level offenders, and a full-service, maximum-security jail downtown, opened in 1972. The downtown jail, which houses all violent and felony offenders, is failing. It was built with 1960s technology, many of its controls no longer work, and it has never passed a state jail inspection. Due to modern standards for inmate space, its effective capacity has been reduced from 121 to 42, though it currently averages 50-70 inmates, creating a liability for the county. Renovating the downtown jail would cost over \$30 million and would still not provide adequate space for current or future needs.

Sheriff Duchak noted that Miami County has one of the lowest incarceration rates in the region due to alternative programs like drug court, mental health court, and a forthcoming veterans court. However, the state has shifted the burden of housing low-level felony offenders (F4s and F5s) to counties. A significant challenge is the dramatic increase in inmates with severe mental health and substance abuse issues, a problem exacerbated by the closure of state mental health facilities in the 1980s. A state-funded jail needs assessment study recommended a new 200-bed, full-service facility to be built adjacent to the 25-A jail. This new facility would include a dedicated 32-bed unit for mental health, detox, and medical needs, as the current jails have zero infirmary beds. The project would also co-locate the Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and the county's backup 911 center into the new sheriff's office complex. The total project cost is estimated at approximately \$100 million, a figure that increases by an estimated \$2.5 million for each year of delay.

Wade Westfall discussed the funding proposal. The county commissioners are proposing a 0.5% sales tax increase, which would raise the county's rate from 7.0% to 7.5%. This was presented as

the option with the least impact on citizens, costing fifty cents on a \$100 taxable purchase. It was noted that a significant portion of sales tax revenue, potentially up to 38%, comes from noncounty residents. The funding plan also includes using \$10 million from the county's general fund reserve and pursuing an anticipated \$15 million in state jail funding grants. The sales tax would have a sunset clause, meaning it would be repealed once the construction bond is paid off, which is estimated to be within ten years. The operating budget is not expected to increase, as consolidating the two jails into one location will create staffing efficiencies.

During the question-and-answer period, Russell Landwehr questioned the need, noting no recent escapes or instances of turning inmates away. Sheriff Duchak responded that while they are not turning people away, the downtown jail is over its state-mandated capacity, opening the county to litigation. Russell Landwehr also calculated the cost per household at approximately \$1,784. Phil Plummer, a State Representative and former Montgomery County Sheriff, spoke in support of the project, calling it a "necessary evil" to ensure public safety and manage the increasing number of inmates with mental health and drug abuse issues.

Council Reorganization Appointment of Vacant Council Seat

Four individuals expressed interest in the open council position. Each candidate introduced themselves and answered questions from a standard questionnaire.

- **Tony Hampton:** A resident since 2007, EMT, and former Village Council member. His vision includes slow growth for the village while maintaining its small-town feel, which would require a new water treatment facility. He stated he did not run for the seat in the election because he was unaware of the opening until it was too late to get on the ballot.
- **Brian Miller:** A lifelong resident and Newton graduate. He expressed a desire to see the village maintain its small-town feel but believes business growth can be done tastefully. He was motivated to seek the position after a recent petition issue and wishes to be a "vehicle of healing" to resolve community divisions.
- **Lenny Wirz:** A former council member, council president, and mayor. His vision is for the village to progress and change. He is currently on the Board of Public Affairs (BPA) and stated he would resign from that position if appointed to the council.
- **Russell Landwehr:** A long-time resident. He views the village as a desirable place for families and takes pride in its "Mayberry" feel. He believes in managed residential growth over business growth and emphasized the importance of listening to the underlying concerns behind criticism.

A citizen, Andrew Davis, suggested that the council table the decision to allow for more public awareness of the vacancy. Crystal Stoner agreed that the public may not have been sufficiently informed. After discussion, it was decided to hold a special meeting for the vote.

Motion: Made by Crystal Stoner, seconded by Paul King, to **hold a special meeting on January 22nd to vote on the appointment of a new council member.** The motion passed.

Council directed the mayor to publicize the vacancy on the town's LED board, Facebook page, and via flyers.

Election of President of Council

Teri nominated Penny to continue serving as President of Council.

Motion: Made by Crystal Stoner, seconded by Paul King, to **elect Penny Fessler as President of Council**. The motion passed with Penny abstaining.

Council Meeting Schedule and Calendar of Events

Council confirmed that regular meetings will continue to be held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM, and workshops will be on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM.

The following event dates were confirmed:

- Spring Garage Sale: April 25th
- Fall Garage Sale: September 19th

A discussion was held regarding whether to rent porta-potties for the garage sales at a cost of \$600 or to direct visitors to the public park restrooms. Crystal Stoner argued for keeping the porta-potties for convenience. Council agreed to continue renting the facilities.

Committee Appointments

The following committee appointments and representatives were confirmed:

- **Personnel Committee:** President of BPA and President of Council.
- **Planning Commission:** Matt Gray, Steve Hutcherson, Ted Richardson, and Dave Stockler will continue to serve.
- **Record Retention:** Margaret Weaver.
- **Income Tax Review Board:** Joe Bledsoe.
- **Joint Fire District (JFD) Representative:** Crystal Stoner.
- **Recreational Board Representative:** Denis.
- **Tree Advisory Board:** Mike Wahler and Jeff Derksen.
- **Comprehensive Planning Committee:** Tony Midlam, Tony Hampton, Russell Landwehr
- **Ordinance Committee:** Tony Hampton, Russell

Consent Agenda Motion: Made by Teri, seconded by Penny, to **approve the consent agenda, which included the minutes from December 9th and various financial summaries from December 26th**. The motion passed.

Citizens' Comments

Russell Landwehr raised two points. First, he expressed concern that a new water treatment plant could negatively alter the taste of the village's water. Second, he commented on the transition to the new refuse provider, noting a communication gap as some residents and businesses did not

seem to get the message. Denis Aslinger stated the specific issue at the laundromat had been addressed.

Brenda0 asked if the council could inquire about the cost of providing weekly recycling pickup for all residents.

Mayor's Report

Brenda presented rate survey comparing water and sewer costs across area communities, noting that Pleasant Hill's rates are competitive. Brenda also announced upcoming seminars for council members and encouraged attendance.

Administrator's/Fiscal Officer's Report

Denis Aslinger requested that the council suspend the rules to pass a resolution hiring a new utility clerk as an emergency measure. An ordinance regarding appropriations was removed from the agenda and will be brought back in February.

Committee Reports

Crystal reported on the JFD special meeting. The JFD's regular meetings will now be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM at Fire Station 65. The board reported 417 calls for service in the previous year.

Ordinances and Resolutions Resolution 2026-01: Employing a Utility Clerk

Motion: Made by Teri seconded by Crystal, to **suspend the three-reading rule for Resolution 2026-01 and pass it as an emergency.** The motion passed with Penny abstaining.

Motion: Made by Teri, seconded by Crystal, to **employ Kira Cullars as Utility Clerk.** The motion passed with Penny abstaining.

A vote was then taken to adopt the resolution as an emergency. The motion passed with Penny abstaining.

Resolution 2026-02: Authorizing a Contract for Website Services

A resolution was presented to enter into a contract for website design services at a cost of \$6,200 for the first year and \$900 annually thereafter. Concerns were raised about ensuring the village owns the intellectual property created. A motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution as an emergency failed due to a lack of votes. Council decided to table the resolution until the special meeting on January 22nd, pending a review of the formal contract by legal counsel.

Resolution 2026-03: Establishing Employee Compensation

Motion: Made by Penny, seconded by Teri, to **approve the first reading of Resolution 2026-03.** The motion passed.

Ordinance 1169: Establishing Policy for Utilities The

ordinance was brought for its third reading.

Motion: Made by Teri, seconded by Penny, to **approve the third reading of Ordinance 1169.** Penny-yes, Paul-no, Crystal-abstain, Terri-yes. The motion failed due to a lack of votes. The chair stated the ordinance will not be brought up again unless reintroduced by the council.

New Business

Paul asked about the process for implementing a mechanism to recall elected officials. Andrew Wannamacher explained that the relevant state code applies to municipalities with a charter, and for the village to adopt a charter is a lengthy, multi-election process.

Executive Session

Motion: Made by Teri, seconded by Crystal, to **enter into executive session to discuss the potential purchase of real estate.** Crystal yes, Terri-yes, Paul-abstain, Penny-yes, the motion passed.

Motion: Made by Teri, seconded by Crystal, to **adjourn the executive session and resume the regular meeting.** Teri-yea, Crystal-yea, Penny-yea, Paul was not present, had to leave the meeting. The motion passed.

Adjournment

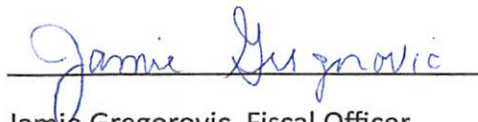
Motion: Made by Crystal, seconded by Teri, to **adjourn the meeting.** The motion passed. The meeting concluded.

9:29 Adjourned

The next meeting will be a special meeting held on January 22nd, 7pm in the Fieldhouse.



Brenda Carroll, Mayor



Jamie Gregorovic, Fiscal Officer