

**Minutes**  
**Special Council Meeting**  
**3 South Main Street**  
**Thornville, OH**  
**May 16, 2022**

**Council Members:**

Lynne Snider  
Erica O'Neill  
Sterling Krout  
Kim Billman  
Jill Anderson  
Gina Kaetzel

**Other Village Officials:**

Mayor Dan Harmon  
Traci Sturgill, Village Administrator  
Dan Williams, Chief of Police

**Guests Present:** Paul Krumlauf, Jim Royer, Dale Brussee, Don Leavitt, Terry Lynn Sr., Willis McNabb

**Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance:**

Mayor Dan Harmon called the Village of Thornville Regular Council Meeting to order on May 16, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. by saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:**

Roll Call was taken with Council President Gina Kaetzel, Councilmember Sterling Krout, Councilmember Jill Anderson, Councilmember Erica O'Neill, Councilmember Kim Billman and Councilmember Lynne Snider present.

Mayor Harmon asked for a motion to amend the business agenda to change the comments and announcements order and place this item prior to New Business. **Motion** made by Councilmember Lynne Snider and seconded by Council President Gina Kaetzel. A roll call vote was taken with all councilmembers voting aye.

Gina Kaetzel- aye  
Lynne Snider- aye  
Sterling Krout- aye  
Erica O'Neill- aye  
Jill Anderson- aye  
Kim Billman- aye  
**Motion passed 6-0**

**Motion to Approve the Business Agenda for the Special Council Meeting on May 16, 2022:**  
Mayor Dan Harmon requested a Motion to approve the Business Agenda for the Special Council Meeting on May 16, 2022. A Motion was made by Councilmember Erica O'Neill and was seconded by Councilmember Jill Anderson. A roll call vote was taken with all councilmembers voting aye.

Jill Anderson – aye  
Kim Anderson- aye  
Erica O'Neill- aye  
Lynne Snider- aye  
Sterling Krout- aye  
Gina Kaetzel- aye  
**Motion passed 6-0**

Mayor Dan Harmon asked for a motion to adjourn into Executive Session- pursuant to R.C. 121.22 (G) (1) to consider the dismissal of a public employee at 7:05 p.m. **Motion** made by Councilmember Jill Anderson and seconded by Councilmember Erica O'Neill. A roll call vote was taken with all councilmembers voting aye.

Gina Kaetzel- aye  
Jill Anderson- aye  
Erica O'Neill- aye  
Lynne Snider- aye  
Kim Billman- aye  
Sterling Krout- aye  
**Motion passed 6-0**

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Council President Gina Kaetzel made a motion to invite into executive session, Chief Williams, Mayor Harmon and Administrator Traci Sturgill. Councilmember Lynne Snider said she isn't against the Chief being in executive session but why would we invite the Chief in there when we are talking about another employee and he is an employee. Gina stated Administrator Traci Sturgill is also an employee. Lynne stated she would like an answer as to why we need Chief Williams in there also? Councilmember Erica O'Neill stated "why not? Councilmember Gina Kaetzel advised Chief Williams has been a part of every council meeting, every committee meeting and he may have information he would like to provide as input on the matter being discussed as well, she feels that is important. Lynne stated okay. Motion seconded by Councilmember Erica O'Neill. A roll call vote was taken with 5 councilmembers voting aye and 1 councilmember voting no.

Sterling Krout- aye  
Kim Billman- aye  
Jill Anderson- aye  
Gina Kaetzel- aye  
Erica O'Neill- aye  
Lynne Snider- no  
Motion passed 5-1

Mayor Dan Harmon asked for a motion to adjourn out of Executive Session at 7:59 pm. Motion made by Councilmember Kim Billman and seconded by councilmember Erica O'Neill. A roll call vote was taken with all councilmembers voting aye.

Jill Anderson- aye  
Lynne Snider- aye  
Kim Billman- aye  
Erica O'Neill- aye  
Sterling Krout- aye  
Gina Kaetzel- aye  
Motion passed 6-0

**Comments & Announcements:**

Dale Brussee stated he is assuming the dismissal of a public employee is Melissa and wanted to know if that was Council's discussion in executive session? Administrator Traci Sturgill advised executive session isn't to be discussed but the agenda states "Fiscal Officer's employment status". Dale said he is assuming she has done something wrong to warrant a discussion of executive session to discuss her dismissal. Mayor advised this isn't a question and answer; it is a time for public comment. Mayor Harmon stated he would not be answering questions that risk disclosing the discussions that took place in executive session. Dale asked if she was given all the proper warnings that the handbook indicates. Village Administrator Traci Sturgill advised they followed the direction of the Village attorney and an at-will employee. Mayor Harmon added yes, she is an at-will employee however he has had many conversations with Melissa along with all of his employees about their performance. Dale asked if it involved anything illegal then. Mayor Harmon stated no, he wouldn't answer that if it was or wasn't. Dale asked if it was a personal preference of not having her employed. Mayor Harmon stated no, and he wouldn't share the details in this forum. Dale stated so after nearly 20 years of employment with the Village it has been just of recent that something was brought to the attention that she is no longer needed. Can you answer that? Mayor Harmon stated he would not say she is no longer needed. We do need a Fiscal Officer. Councilmember Jill Anderson asked to interject. She stated public comments are not questions and answer time. They should be comments only. The Mayor can answer the questions he wants too but this isn't what this time here is for. Mayor Harmon told Dale he is trying to go along with him but this is not a cross-examination. Dale stated it involves us citizens because we have elected you all to do our work and they are questioning the difference between how I'm thinking and what is being done and he is trying to understand in his mind the reasoning behind it so he can either continue to disagree with them or to agree with them. Mayor Harmon stated he appreciates that but if you (Dale) wanted to be inside the conversation and the decision you needed to stay at this council table. Dale said you are still accountable for your actions. Mayor Harmon completely agrees but bare in mind we are also talking about someone whose privacy we need to respect as well.

Jim Royer- Stated he & Lynne were on council in 2004 together and other then the groups sitting here with him are the only ones who know why Melissa was brought on in the first place. He explained prior to Melissa the Village had an elected fiscal officer and she was let go because the Village was one step away from being taken over by the state for financial mismanagement. The state recommended we hire Melissa. We had 7 funds

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in the red and with Melissa's help we were able to correct that. She was very instrumental in telling us what we could and could not legally do with state funds. His fear is if council lets a competent financial officer go. He doesn't know our reasons and doesn't really care. You have a mini audit coming up next week and if you let Melissa go, who's going to represent the Village at that because you have no one that's capable of presenting the Village's finances to the state. Village Administrator Traci Sturgill advised Melissa doesn't come in for the audits. He still fears council may make the same mistakes as happened prior with the finances and put the Village back in the position it was in the early 2000's.

Terry Lynn Sr advised he doesn't know many on Council other than Lynne and Sterling introduced himself when he came in tonight. He asked Council and the administration to go around the table and introduce themselves and answer a little bit of brief history, which they did. Mr. Lynne then talked about how long he has been a part of this Village since 1968, which is when he moved here but he was also raised in the Thorrville community. He was also on Council in 1971 and completed around 20 years total and 4 years of that was as Mayor so he is familiar with what is going on. He was also on the fire department for 38 years and a postal worker for 33 years. He also owned a business in the area for 50 years. He is now retired. He asked if anyone knew the beginning history or back history of Melissa. Councilmember Erica O'Neill stated yes, she has advised us several times, Councilmember Jill Anderson & Kim Billman agreed. He stated how she gets called out from the state to go out and handle issues etc. He wanted council to know he has known and worked with her since 2004 and she is a firm lady, she is positive and has no negativity but she will tell you right from wrong and what you can and what you can't do. The lady knows how to handle finances. He and his council never had a problem with her or anything from the state saying there was something wrong she had done. There have been many audits and no problems. The only problems were when somebody didn't get purchase orders, didn't get approval then it was an issue. Melissa was very firm. He asked so we've had no problems then with Melissa up to this point? Mayor Harmon advised no, we have had prior problems. This is not just in the last month it has been a long-term problem. Terry asked if it was a problem back when Mayor Harmon was a councilmember and he advised yes it definitely was.

Dick Krumlauf introduced himself to everyone. He has lived here since 1970 and has been on the other side of the table just like all of council is now. He was here when they had all the problems back in the early 2000's when Melissa was hired on. She has gone through many Mayors, Village Administrators, Council Presidents and many members of Council. She is a very firm lady but kept us out of numerous problems when people on council thought they knew more then she did. He just wanted to say that he isn't going to ask any questions, he doesn't care, he just thinks that letting her go is going to be a huge mistake for the Village and for the councilmembers in general and he hopes they take this wisely and that we did address it through the lawyers.

Willis McNabb introduced himself to everyone and said he wanted to first, and he means this, to thank each one of council for stepping up to the plate and serving. Having said that it doesn't mean that the citizens here can't disagree with them and he hopes that anything they would have said would discourage this council to no longer want to serve. He advised this is not the purpose here tonight. He was just going to say the same thing about her qualifications. His biggest concern, and he wants them to really think about this, not that he thinks they are going to change too many minds, everyone comes and goes. There is one person who the taxpayer and the residents really depend upon. For council, they depend upon water, sewer, parks and everything else and he thinks they have been doing an excellent job of it. But there is one thing that we need, without accusing you of nothing, is a watchdog financially. We need somebody that is independent of your most common discussions outside of finances. You need this person and you're going to have to search very hard to find somebody that is as good as she is financially. Now for her personality. It sucks. He has gone to battle with Melissa but he can't remember one he won. He added we need somebody who will say yes you can do this and no you can't do that. Don't fire this person because of communication skills or you don't like the way she handles things. Have the guts to overrule her. It's one thing to disagree with somebody and no that she can't really force you to do something. And you know that you can go over her head and do it anyway. This is the easy way of handling differences of personalities. The point he is trying to make is you may be getting rid of somebody who may disagree with you, be a pain in the lower extremity but he doesn't think you want to fire her. He hopes Council will take what they've all said, what Melissa has done, what you presently doing and what you are capable of doing and say this is not the right way to handle this. The people of this community need her and we need you and we need each and every one of you to do the job that you are doing right now.

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Don Leavitt introduced himself and stated he had been around Thorntville for a long time. He also got to know Melissa back in 2004. He has never been on council. He feels council needs to all come together in the same mindset about what's right and what's wrong. His mindset is he got to know Melissa when this town was a mess. He ended up on a steering committee and helped the town work through the problems and there were a lot of them. Lynne Snider has known him too long. He saw Melissa come into the Village and reorganize everything and got things back in order. The state auditors came in and looked at everything and it was a mess. What she did for this community and this town was amazing. Whatever took place, he knows there is personal information we are not allowed to share. His comment is if it's a personal deal where you're not getting along with somebody you need to find a way to get along with her. If she is doing her job and keeping Council in line and this Village in line, which I know she did back then and he doesn't have doubts that she's still doing it even though he hasn't seen our books or what's going on at this table. He highly recommends you really think about it hard. It's all going around the town of what's going on; they just aren't here to give their comments. I'm not speaking for anyone outside that door but people don't like what's going on with her and maybe take a second look at this don't let that lady go.

Jim Royer wanted to add with the large sum of monies that wind fold into this Village from a company that's been here for years then any of us has been around, he thinks that careful consideration where this money is being spent, how it's being spent, and to be spent with the best interest of the community (Council agreed) and the person to handle that can't be any better than Melissa Tremblay. Also, remember this... one domino falls others may fall also.

Mayor Harmon thanked the citizens for their comments and questions. He liked that we had these conversations and that we need more input and it shouldn't just be when people strongly disagree with something Council is doing that folks show up but at the same time he has also learned that his time here, not to challenge any of you, because you have served and spent your time serving. He knows they are all here for the interest of the Village and he definitely appreciates that.

Don Leavitt thanked everyone for serving.

Mayor Harmon asked Council if they had any comments. Council President Gina Kaetzel stated she appreciates all the citizens coming tonight and their comments. She knows that everyone on Council heard them and appreciates it also.

**New Business: Fiscal Officer's employment status.**

Council President Gina Kaetzel advised after our executive session and the discussions held and with the presentation of facts that were presented, I make a motion for the dismissal of the Fiscal Officer, Melissa Tremblay due to ongoing issues related to her employment here at the Village. **Motion seconded by Councilmember Erica O'Neill.** A roll call vote was taken with 4 councilmembers voting aye and 2 councilmembers voting no.

Jill Anderson- aye  
Lynne Snider- no  
Erica O'Neill- aye  
Kim Billman- aye  
Sterling Krout- no  
Gina Kaetzel – aye  
**Motion passed- 4-2**

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**Adjournment:**

Mayor Dan Harmon asked for a Motion to adjourn. A Motion was made by Councilmember Jill Anderson and was seconded by Council President Gina Kaetzel. A roll call vote was taken with all councilmembers voting aye.

Sterling Krout- aye  
Kim Billman – aye  
Jill Anderson- aye  
Erica O'Neill- aye  
Lynne Snider- aye  
Gina Kaetzel- aye  
**Motion passed 6-0**

Meeting concluded at 8:35 p.m.



Mayor Dan Harmon



Traci Sturgill, Council Clerk