

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council

Held on October 21st, 2024



VILLAGE OF WEST JEFFERSON COUNCIL

MINUTES

October 21st, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

President Jen Warner called the Village of West Jefferson Council Meeting to Order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call.

Council Members in attendance: Erica Bogner, Samantha Cahill, Linda Hall, Jimmy Little, Jeff Patterson, Howard Wade and Jen Warner. **Quorum Declared: 7 present, 0 absent.**

PRAYER & PLEDGE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Motion to Adopt the October 21st Agenda Moved by Samantha Cahill and seconded by Jimmy Little. All in Favor.

Motion to Approve the Minutes of the October 7th, 2024, Regular Meeting of Council. Moved by Erica Bogner and seconded by Howard Wade. All in Favor.

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

At this time, President Warner called Kristine Murphy to the podium. Mrs. Murphy stated that she was there on behalf of the Fairfield Township residents who are opposing the biodigester that is trying to go through on Sparling Rd and Wilson Rd. We are all concerned of the odor, increase in traffic among other things. We have been getting letters of opposition from the County Commissioners and Township Trustees and we are very happy to hear that the West Jefferson Village Council is willing to submit one as well. There is a petition that is going around and there are flyers available that she can leave. They have signs, a Facebook page and trying to get as many supporters as possible aware of the biodigester. They have found that there are still many people in West Jefferson that are unaware of the biodigester. At some point they would like to talk about doing a possible town hall meeting to make everyone aware. Council President Jen Warner let Mrs. Murphy know that if they do create a meeting to let Council know and we will be sure to share the information too.

Mayor Martin addressed Mrs. Murphy and stated that he too wrote a letter of concern in regard to the Biodigester and wanted to make sure she had a copy. He stated that he has 3 major concerns. One being that they have a dedicated route from 71 to 665 but if that route were to be closed for any reason, would West Jefferson be the alternate route for 10-20 trucks a day. The second concern being they say it is a "closed system" facility. Is it closed when the trucks are unloading and loading. The third concern is this will involve methane gas. Will this gas be explosive. Mrs. Murphy stated that she has been told there will probably be an EPA meeting so they are getting all of their concerns and information together to be prepared and rally as many troops as they can to support the opposition.

Mr. Tom Rannow arrived at the podium to speak in opposition to the Biodigester as well. Mr. Rannow stated that he strongly suggests that everyone become involved in this opposition. He stated that Wisconsin has been fighting this for 20 years. Greene County in Ohio fought against one and it took them 4 years to close it. The biodigester issues became so bad that they reduced the property taxes by 25% and it costs the school district 3.5 million dollars. He asked who would be responsible for paying for a new firetruck that can put down foam. It was stated that the trucks these companies use are not up to par and that the drivers are not long haul drivers, and it would go by our school if

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they come through West Jefferson. He stated that we may not notice anything until they start injecting the fields. The smell is awful. He is concerned about it contaminating water wells. He encouraged everyone to sign the petition and thanked Council for creating the Resolution.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS

President Warner addressed the audience to give them background information on the re-vote for Resolution 24-018. At the last Council meeting, Council decided to vacate their vote from April 1st, 2024 after learning from legal counsel that there were a few reasons for needing to do the re-vote. Council also learned that one of the Council members that was told they could not vote on the matter actually could after many conversations with legal counsel. Therefore, Council opted to re-vote.

Re-vote on RESOLUTION 24-018, TO APPROVE THE PRELIMINARY AND FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PER ORDINANCE 1125.10, FOR A PROPOSED CIRCLE K RETAIL GASOLINE SALES AND CONVENIENCE STORE.

Motion to adopt Resolution 24-018 Moved by Samantha Cahill and seconded by Howard Wade.

Deliberations began. "Any questions or comments?" Deliberations ended. Roll call.

VOTED YEA: Samantha Cahill, Linda Hall, Jimmy Little, Howard Wade, and Jen Warner.

VOTED NAY: Erica Bogner and Jeff Patterson. ABSTAINED: None. Motion Carried 5-2-0

Council member "No" votes must be documented and are noted below.

Erica Bogner voted no and explained that the outdated traffic study that was done in 2009 was a concern. She has attempted to find out how many warehouses have been added since then. Although she does not have an exact figure, she knows that it is many. The last number that she heard is daytime increase in population due to the warehouses is 15,000 people a day. Another reason she is also concerned about crime. Convenient stores operations increase the probability of crime. Being open overnight has shown an increased chance of crime which ties into lack of staff and customers. Guaranteeing two overnight clerks is difficult to the high turnover rate ranging from 130%-152%. Due to its location, it provides easy access and a quick getaway for criminals. Lastly, she has environmental concerns. While researching she has learned that UST's, underground storage tanks, are one of the most common sources of ground water pollution. Approximately 60% of all UST's have experienced at least one leak, and leaks can spread thousands of feet into soil, groundwater and contaminate houses and businesses with toxic vapors. What kind of irreparable damage could that do to the area, including the Little Darby. There are over 553,000 UST's nationwide with a backlog of 56,000 cleanups and 9,000 new leaks discovered annually. As of today, West Jefferson currently has 13 UST's installed between 3 gas stations and one of which has been out of compliance since 2022.

Jeff Patterson voted no and explained that he loved all of Erica's points but the main point for him, was when the Circle K representatives came here, and they literally lied to us. He lied to us stating that he talked to the residents when he never even went and talked to them. If we want a company like that here in this town he thinks they are not a very good company, and he felt like it was a bad first impression. They are liars and if we want them in our town then he doesn't think that is a very good idea. We seen what they had in the other location, look at how nice the West Jeff Carryout is across the street and Circle K couldn't do that.

RESOLUTION 24-068 APPROVING THE EXECUTION OF A COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VILLAGE OF WEST JEFFERSON, OHIO AND COLUMBUS LOGISTICS PARK WEST BUILDING II, LLC; AND PROVIDING RELATED AUTHORIZATIONS.

Motion to adopt Resolution 24-068 Moved by Erica Bogner and seconded by Linda Hall.

Village of West Jefferson, OH

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Deliberations began. "Any questions or comments?". Public Service Director, John Mitchell passed out a map to the Council members and explained that originally there were two phases, Columbus Logistics Park West a hashed in area and a clear area. What they are doing is breaking it into 3 parcels with 3 buildings. The original phase 1 has a building on it currently and half of the other parcel doesn't have a building on it. They are making building 1, CRA 1 and that just needs to be amended by the Mayor because it already exists. Building 3 which is on the far left will take over phase 2 CRA and that will be amended administratively. The center area which is highlighted will be the new CRA area that you are looking at tonight which will be building 2. The Director stated that this will clean the plan up. The Mayor stated that this will also help to increase our jobs per requirement as well. The Director stated we can hold them more accountable per building with the jobs. Council member Jeff Patterson asked just so he understands, we are pretty much helping the Village and holding them accountable. The Director stated yes. Deliberations ended. Roll call.

VOTED YEA: Samantha Cahill, Linda Hall, Jimmy Little, Jeff Patterson, Howard Wade, Jen Warner, and Erica Bogner.

VOTED NAY: None. ABSTAINED: None. Motion Carried 7-0-0

***ORDINANCE 24-069, AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS IN VARIOUS FUNDS.**

Motion to waive the second reading Moved by Samantha Cahill and seconded by Howard Wade.

Deliberations began. "Any questions or comments?". Director of Finance, Rebecca Shipley-Arnott explained that the County has been taking over a month to get amended certificates back so even if she gets this in tomorrow, she will be pressed to get it back before the end of the year. It is needed to pay for the 27th pay period. Deliberations ended. Roll Call.

VOTED YEA: Linda Hall, Jimmy Little, Jeff Patterson, Howard Wade, Jen Warner, Erica Bogner and Samantha Cahill.

VOTED NAY: None. ABSTAINED: None. Motion Carried 7-0-0

Motion to adopt Ordinance 24-069 Moved by Erica Bogner and seconded by Howard Wade. Deliberations began. "Any questions or comments?". None. Deliberations ended. Roll call.

VOTED YEA: Jimmy Little, Jeff Patterson, Howard Wade, Jen Warner, Erica Bogner, Samantha Cahill and Linda Hall.

VOTED NAY: None. ABSTAINED: None. Motion Carried 7-0-0

First read of ORDINANCE 24-070 TO REZONE 58.37 +/- ACRES OF LAND (PARCEL #10-00330.000) FROM THE AGRICULTURAL (A-1) DISTRICT TO PLANNED MIXED USE (PMU) DISTRICT, AND APPROVING A PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SUCH REAL PROPERTY, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION ON OCTOBER 16th, 2024.

The second reading and public hearing will be held on December 2nd, 2024 at the Community Center.

***ORDINANCE 24-071, AUTHORIZING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN THE VARIOUS FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$17,000.00 TO COVER BUREAU OF WORKERS COMPENSATION COSTS.**

Motion to waive the second reading of Ordinance 24-071 Moved by Linda Hall and seconded by Howard Wade.

Deliberations began. "Any questions or comments?". Director of Finance, Rebecca Shipley-Arnott explained that our BWC experience has been expensive and if we pay this before the beginning of the year we get a discount. Deliberations ended. Roll Call.

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VOTED YEA: Jeff Patterson, Howard Wade, Jen Warner, Erica Bogner, Samantha Cahill, Linda Hall and Jimmy Little.

VOTED NAY: None. ABSTAINED: None. Motion Carried 7-0-0

Motion to adopt Ordinance 24-071 Moved by Jimmy Little and seconded by Jeff Patterson. Deliberations began. "Any questions or comments?". None. Deliberations ended. Roll call.

VOTED YEA: Howard Wade, Jen Warner, Erica Bogner, Samantha Cahill, Linda Hall, Jimmy Little, and Jeff Patterson.

VOTED NAY: None. ABSTAINED: None. Motion Carried 7-0-0

***ORDINANCE 24-072, AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS IN THE C5 GATEWAY AND MICHAEL/COMET FUNDS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

Motion to waive the second reading of Ordinance 24-072 Moved by Samantha Cahill and seconded by Erica Bogner.

Deliberations began. "Any questions or comments?". Director of Finance, Rebecca Shipley-Arnott explained that this is because the County once again has made an error in our TIF distributions and failed to make the schools whole. They are asking for \$38,000 be made to them or the schools directly. The Mayor wanted to state that this is actually the third time that the County has made this error and that our Finance Director did what she was supposed to, and they distributed the funds incorrectly. The County is aware of the problems because their boss called this time. President Warner asked if this was just money that we got and sent out and the Finance Director stated yes and now she will collect the money back from the company and distribute it to the schools. Deliberations ended. Roll Call.

VOTED YEA: Jen Warner, Erica Bogner, Samantha Cahill, Linda Hall, Jimmy Little, Jeff Patterson, and Howard Wade.

VOTED NAY: None. ABSTAINED: None. Motion Carried 7-0-0

Motion to adopt Ordinance 24-072 Moved by Howard Wade and seconded by Jimmy Little. Deliberations began. "Any questions or comments?". None. Deliberations ended. Roll call.

VOTED YEA: Erica Bogner, Samantha Cahill, Linda Hall, Jimmy Little, Jeff Patterson, Howard Wade, and Jen Warner.

VOTED NAY: None. ABSTAINED: None. Motion Carried 7-0-0

RESOLUTION 24-073 OPPOSING THE VANGUARD RENEWABLES ANEROBIC DIGESTER PROJECT.

Motion to adopt Resolution 24-073 Moved by Samantha Cahill and seconded by Linda Hall.

Deliberations began. "Any questions or comments?". President Warner stated that she and Vice President Linda Hall both attended the Vanguard meeting held at the Fairfield Township hall so if members have any questions they can ask. Deliberations ended. Roll call.

VOTED YEA: Samantha Cahill, Linda Hall, Jimmy Little, Jeff Patterson, Howard Wade, Jen Warner, and Erica Bogner.

VOTED NAY: None. ABSTAINED: None. Motion Carried 7-0-0

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Public Service and Special Events** (Chair, Erica Bogner) None.
- Finance** (Chair, Samantha Cahill) None.
- Employee Benefits** (Chair, Jimmy Little) None.
- Parks and Recreation** (Chair, Jeff Patterson) None.
- Development** (Chair, Linda Hall) None.
- Police** (Chair, Howard Wade) None.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Report for the Mayor – Mayor Martin reported that he had a handout for Council. People have had concerns about housing in West Jefferson and how many rentals we have, and this sheet supplied the information that his Assistant, the Water Department and Finance Department were able to gather. This sheet is attached to the minutes. The Mayor noticed last week while coming into town during rush hour that he did not see one truck and he believes that 29 opening back up has helped with that issue. The Village has had 4 accidents with Amazon trucks. 2 of the accidents involved the trucks hitting our streetlight, 1 truck hit the electric at Dr. Garwood’s location and the other accident involved a truck hitting the bridge on Middle Pike. Amazon has been notified and they are now directing their semi’s not to come through town and being given alternative routes. If you see an Amazon semi come through town, please get the number off of the truck and report it to the Village Office. The Mayor requested from the Clerk that the document he gave Council about the housing and the letter he gave in opposition to the Biodigester be posted with the minutes. The Mayor wanted to comment that he is not a big fan of Facebook. Sometimes he reads Facebook, and he doesn’t necessarily get mad, he just wishes that the commenters new what the truth is. If ever you have any questions please feel free to reach out to him or the Council members. He wanted to wish Council member Howard Wade a Happy 70th birthday. Clerk of Council, Tisha Edwards stated to the audience that all of the Council members phone numbers and emails are listed on the Village of West Jefferson website in the Council section.

Report for the Director of Public Service- Director Mitchell reported that there are just a few minor things going on. Converse Park basketball and pickleball courts were paved. They are just waiting on the painting and sealing of the lines and getting the hoops up. The Department and Park and Recreation Committee are in the process of picking out playground equipment, layout and size of the areas. It won’t be as extravagant as Garrett Park or Westwood Park but will be a nice area for kids to play when siblings are participating in sports or kids that live in the area. The Department is finishing up the completion of the restrooms at Westwood Park. Those will be open for the Spring season. The project that the Department has been working on for the EPA is completed on the physical side, but paperwork is still being completed to finalize that . This week, they are hoping to start on the water line on Darbyview Drive. Council member Samantha Cahill asked about the status of the crossing on Route 40. The Director stated that it is his understanding all the materials are here, but they do have to wait for a curing time on the pedestal because that is 12-15 ft deep, and it takes a minimum of 30 days to cure. AEP has to do some wiring work to finish up the project. Council member Cahill also asked about the status of the funeral home on Center Street. The Mayor stated that they have been in contact with the owner, and they are scheduled to talk next week. He will have an update for Council after that.

Report for Recreation and Special Events Manager – Manager, Shelton Stanley reported that the asphalt curing time for the courts at Converse park was two and half weeks depending on weather and then the painting will begin. The Westwood restroom should be ready for Director of Development Tom Hale to do a final inspection and then the Village will be able to place the sewer line. The sensory friendly photo shoot was held on October 12th and 24 families had their photos taken. The Village partners with the Autism Society of Ohio and Madison County Board of Development. It was a great day, and a lot of people attended. Fall Fest is this coming Saturday. Everything is listed on the flyer that has been posted. Hayrides, a mechanical bull, face painting, trunk or treat, free food, and the haunted house are just some of the items will occur during the evening. The Small Business Saturday event will be held on November 30th. The Snowflake Dance will be in December 20th from 6-8 at the Community Center. Director John Mitchell also wanted to mention that tomorrow there will be tree trimming in Garrett Park. Fellows between Frye and Walnut

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will be closed for 2 to 3 hours between 9 a.m.-12 p.m. There will be 5 new potential trees will be going in to replace those that were damaged from a summer storm.

Report for Director of Finance –Director Rebecca Shipley-Arnott reported September financials were at each Council members seat. Income tax was up 6% in September and 5% up for the year. The 2025 budget meetings are scheduled for Monday, October 28th at 5:30 and the second date may be Tuesday, October 29th or Thursday, November 7th. Letters were sent out to all of our current organizations regarding our annual donations.

Since the last meeting:

Revenue items (over \$10,000 other than water, tax & regularly received items)

10/7/24	Brenneman Family Foundation	Organization donations	\$ 6,000.00
Total receipts since last reporting: 135 receipts for			\$582,488.87
			Thru 10/18/24

Payment items (over \$10,000.00 other than reoccurring expenses; non-payroll)

10/11/24	Choice One Engineering	Various Engineering	\$ 30,482.50
10/11/24	Core & Main	Pipe/Curb box/Tube Blue/Keys/grate	\$ 12,958.85
10/11/24	Management Technologies	Cloud Connect Backup	\$ 31,870.41
10/11/24	MNJ Technologies Direct	1 Yr XDR, Cradlepoint & Supplies	\$ 33,606.75
10/11/24	Whipps	Adapter	\$ 49,090.00
10/18/24	Miller Cable Company	National Rd & Taylor Blair	\$ 12,288.25
10/18/24	Perram Electric	Main St Pedestrian Crossing	\$ 45,796.63
10/18/24	Staffco Construction	Westwood Park Restrooms	\$ 80,250.00

Total payments since last reporting	111 payments for	\$483,104.63
	176 invoices paid	thru 10/21/24

Council member Linda Hall asked if anyone has received an update on the status of the lift in Village Hall. Director Mitchell stated that he will follow up with them to get a status.

Report for Chief of Police – Chief of Police Brandon Smith reported that this past week his department completed Critical Incident training with Battelle. This training occurs annually and this time this occurred with adjacent agencies. It was very beneficial. They are preparing for trunk or treat and the Village Trick or Treat events. They are also preparing for Shop with a Cop and the school parades. The Chief's last week of Executive Leadership College is November 4th which has been very beneficial. It has kept him very busy, and he is looking forward to graduation. They are currently interviewing for a Police Officer position, and we also had an Officer begin bike patrol training to become certified. There were 124 traffic stops, 78 on Main Street and 38 were given citations.

Report for Director of Development –Director Tom Hale reported that it is not his Department, but he was asked to relay that Trick or Treat is Thursday the 31st from 6-8 p.m. which caused a little laugh from the audience. Director Hale reported that there are 3 Development meetings scheduled for this week.

Report for Director of Information Technology – Director Mark Crosten was unable to attend the meeting and no report was given.

Council member Howard Wade asked the Mayor what the Ordinance was in town on killing squirrels. The Mayor stated that there is no hunting within Village limits unless there is a special permit granted by ODNR. He said we are taking care of the feral cats and getting them spay and neutered and then bringing them back. Council member Samantha Cahill asked if we were keeping track of how many of the feral cats we were taking care of. The Mayor stated no, but it is definitely making a difference. The Village does not trap racoons or skunks.

Council member Jimmy Little reported that he is very excited and wanted to let everyone know that West Jefferson didn't have a Cross Country team for many years, and they are now into their 2nd year of having a team and two of the boys are going to Regionals on Saturday at Pickerington. They also cross train for Duathlons and the 16-17 age group in West Jefferson has the 1st-4th places in the United States.

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Recognition of Clerk and Council – Clerk of Council reached out to Council members to ask if they will be taking part in the Parade of Lights in December. The Public Service garage would like to be able to prepare the float if they are interested in being a part of the parade.

At this time Clerk of Council asked Jimmy Little, Chairperson of the Employee Benefits Committee to ask for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 7th Employee Benefits Committee meeting. Moved by Erica Bogner and seconded by Samantha Cahill. All in favor.

Clerk of Council asked Samantha Cahill, Chairperson of the Finance Committee to ask for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 7th, 2024 Finance Committee meeting. Moved by Jen Warner and seconded by Linda Hall. All in favor.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Mr. James Kaufman asked before Council adjourned if he could speak. He arrived late to the meeting and did not sign in. President Warner stated that he could speak at the podium and that he had 3 minutes for comments. Mr. Kaufman stated that he was at the Planning and Zoning meeting held on October 16th, 2024 and that there were about 20-25 people there to discuss the proposal of the Rezoning of the 58.37 +/- acres of land and that he felt they were so disrespected by the Chair and the group. He stated that the Chair asked if there anyone there to speak after the presentation was made and no one said anything. They were in favor of it and went right on with their business. He lives on Hathaway and the project won't affect him, but it will affect his neighbor. He felt that having the meeting at 5:30 most people were still at work, so they didn't come. He stated that he did most of the speaking and two other people spoke. He stated that Erica put most of the items on Facebook after the meeting and they hadn't received any of that information. He thinks the whole things was sad. Don't get him wrong he knows that we need houses in the community but the way this was done was sad. He is an old Planning and Zoning Committee member, and he stated we never did things that way. The Clerk of Council addressed the President to let her know that the 3 minute time limit was complete. President Warner responded to Mr. Kaufman. She stated that she was at that meeting as well as other Council members and the Planning & Zoning Chairperson did not disrespect him he disrespected the Chair. Everything was done accordingly. Yes, there were 20+ people in the room but there were also other cases there to be heard. Two people did speak and expressed their concerns against the project and the other resident that spoke simply had questions. Everyone listened, a time was given to talk, the Developer answered questions and then they voted that is how a meeting is ran. Then you stood up and said you had something to say, and they were going to listen, and you were disrespectful. Mr. Kaufman stated that he didn't have time to rebuttal and the President stated that each person was given their time to talk. Also, the Chair gave him more time than he was allowed. There is a reason that we have a way that a meeting is ran and you were told that evening that you would have time to speak to Council at the Public hearing. Council has not made a decision, and Council has not voted on the matter. She will stand by her comment that the Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission was not rude to him. She hit the gavel at least 3 times to ask you to stop speaking and you did not listen. The Clerk of Council stood to let Mr. Kaufman know that when he comes to speak at the Public hearing he will be given 3 minutes to speak, and it is timed so if he can have all of his questions or comments wrote down that would be helpful. This is the allowed time for all who come to the podium to speak their concerns.

ADJOURN

Motion to Adjourn by President Jen Warner at 7:54 p.m. and reconvene at the November 4th, 2024, regular meeting of Council. Motion moved by Jeff Patterson and seconded by Howard Wade. All in favor.

Tisha Edwards
Clerk of Council
11-5-24
Date

Jennifer Warner
President of Council
11-7-24
Date



Date: 10/21/24

[illegible]

Report to Council

Sept Financials are at your desks.
Income tax was 6% up for Sept and 5% up for the year.

The 2025 Budget Process is underway.
Our First Date will be next Monday October 28th at 5:30
Second Date may be October 29th or November 7th.

Letters were set to Organizations regarding our annual donations.

Since the last meeting:

Revenue Items (over \$10,000 other than Water, Tax & Regularly Recd Items)

Nothing Notiable.

10/7/2024	Brenneman Family Foundation Fund	\$3000 Fireworks, \$2000 Comm Assoc, \$1000 Parks	\$6,000.00	
	Total Receipts since last reporting	135 Receipts for \$582,488.87		thru 10/18/24

Payment Items (over \$10,000 other than reoccurring expenses - non Payroll)

10/11/2024	Choice One Engineering	Various Engineering	\$	21,262.50	
10/11/2024	Core & Main	Pipe/Curb Box/Tube Blue/Keys/Grate	\$	12,958.85	
10/11/2024	Management Technologies	Cloud Connect Backup	\$	31,870.41	
10/11/2024	MNJ Technologies Direct	1 Yr XDR, Cradlepoint & Supplies	\$	33,606.75	
10/11/2024	Whipps	Adapter	\$	49,090.00	
10/18/2024	Miller Cable Company	National Rd & Taylor Blair	\$	12,288.25	
10/18/2024	Perram Electric	Main St Pedestrian Crossing	\$	45,796.63	
10/18/2024	Staffco Construction	Westwood Park Restrooms	\$	80,250.00	
	Total Payments since last reporting	111 Payments for \$483,104.63			thru 10/21/24
		176 Invoices Paid			

Analysis of the Percentage of Rental Properties in West Jefferson

Methodology

All information is from the Utility Department records and the Madison County Auditor’s website. The utility records were current as of 9/18/24, so there may be a slight variation of information over time. Each utility record was compared with the same address on the Madison County Auditors website to determine legal ownership of each property. Taylor Patterson also supplied information from her vast knowledge of individuals living in West Jefferson and their relationships. For example, the Auditor’s website may give a name of “April Jones” as the owner, and the Utility department records have “Brian Jacobs” as the account holder. Taylor usually knew if they were both living at the property.

Many properties in West Jefferson have multiple parcels, but only one house. This analysis did not examine number of parcels, only number of actual homes, including apartments.

Each record was marked as a rental or not, and additional information about the record was noted; whether it was vacant, inactive, and if a family member owned the property, but another family member was listed as the account holder. Notes were also made if the social security number was included in the account information. The account was also updated to include the owner’s name and address, if known.

Raw Data

There are 1530 listed accounts of personal property in the Utility Department files. The printout included 1781 accounts, but business accounts were not included, and adjustments were made for the following apartment complexes.

Westchester Apartments:	60 units (from online information)
Devonshire Apartments:	19 units (from online information)
Bristol Square:	24 units (from Utility Department records)
Eastgate	24 units (from Utility Department records)
Chapel Square	18 units (from Utility Department records)
Three J Court	8 units (from Utility Department records)
Lomar Ct.	12 units (from Utility Department)
Redwood:	<u>150 units (from Public Service records)</u>
TOTAL	315 UNITS

In addition to the apartment complexes, there are 357 other known rentals in West Jefferson, for a total of 672 known rental units.

There are also 47 units that are owned by a family member that does not live at the property, and another 39 units that are inactive for utility service.

Housing Units	Rental houses	Owner occupied houses	Apartment Complexes	Family-owned houses, but not owner occupied	Inactive
1490 +315 = 1805	357	1047	315	47	39
100%	19%	58%	17%	2%	2%

Percentages add up to less than 100% due to rounding.

Analysis

- The percentage of rentals varies, depending on what is included in the definition of rentals. Looking at just houses (this will include small rental properties that meter every unit) West Jefferson has a 19% rental rate.
- If you add in the apartment complexes, West Jefferson has a 36% rental rate.
- If you also add in the family owned, but not occupied by the owner properties the rental rate increases to 38%.
- There are 39 inactive accounts. These are not all rentals, so these are part of the base number of units, but not counted as rentals.

To arrive at these numbers, each rental was considered as a single unit (a single-family home), so the base number is the number of total units, 1805; houses (1490) plus apartment complexes (315). To get a higher percentage of rentals, you could count each apartment complex as **one** property (as some are listed on the auditor’s website). This will skew the numbers much higher, as your base number of units will only be 1498 (1490 houses plus 8 apartments) instead of the appropriate 1805 units.

The usefulness of these different numbers becomes apparent when looking at quality of life and other factors. Living next to a rental property may be much more desirable than living next to an empty, vacant shell of a property. Rentals are not inherently bad, and numbers can be manipulated and misunderstood.

Potential errors

The **highest** number of potential rentals was used when there was a question. There are approximately 12 properties that may or may not be rentals, which would decrease all these percentages slightly.

On the other hand, there are some property owners who will list utility account information in their names, and the property is still a rental. Taylor was helpful with some of these, but some may have been missed inadvertently. This may also have an effect on the final percentages, but not to any great extent.

Purpose of Research

There has been widespread discussion on the number of owner-occupied properties in West Jefferson. Many percentages have been suggested, based upon experience and observation, but no factual analysis has been available. Some neighborhoods have much higher percentages of rental properties than others, which may affect perception. Factual numbers are important for understanding the need and type of appropriate future development, and to better understand local demographics. Additionally, the Department of Development, by ordinance, is attempting to identify all rental properties and to collect a permit fee from landlords.



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October 16, 2024

To whom it may concern,

The proposed Vanguard Renewables Biodigester project has generated a lot of discussion and some pretty intense opposition. My understanding is that when the project was first proposed, both the township trustees and the Madison County commissioners were opposed. After this opposition, Vanguard was able to achieve public utility status, and is now exempt from county regulation, and does not require county or township permission to proceed.

As the Mayor of West Jefferson, I realize our community is not directly affected by the proposed biodigester, however, after studying the available information, including from the meeting held on September 10, 2024, I do have three concerns.

- Although Vanguard says that theirs is a closed system, the potential for foul smells still seems to be a potential problem, particularly for residents living near the facility.
- I have not heard anything about the steps being taken to assure safety from the potential combustibility of the methane gas that is produced at the facility.
- In the event of St. Rt. 665 being closed for any reason, what are the alternative routes for the 10-20 trucks per day? West Jefferson has US-Rt. 40 as our Main Street, and we do not need any additional traffic. Our side roads are not built to withstand the weight of the trucks used by Vanguard.

I join with many in the wider community in opposition to the proposed Vanguard Renewables biodigester.

Sincerely,

Mayor Ray A. Martin
Village of West Jefferson, OH