

Minutes
Special Council Meeting
70 E Columbus St Thornville, OH
March 13, 2023

Council Members:

Erica O'Neill
Lynne Snider
Ashley Moore
Sterling Krout
Kim Billman

Other Village Officials:

Gina Kaetzel- Mayor
Traci Sturgill- Village Administrator
Dan Williams- Chief of Police
Kelly Beem- Fiscal Officer

Guests Present:

Thomas Tower	Holly Holdcraft	Margaret Mohler	Steve Carr
Kevin Howell	Mary Stidham	Jerry Mohler	Daria Carr
Trent Howell	Dale Brussee	Carol Shaffer	Trish Cooperrider
Kristin Krout	Luann Cooperrider	Rusty Davis	Tony Hoyles
Linda Savage	Julie Spohn	Tim Cooperrider	
Amanda Lackey	Ryan Lackey	Martha Rusler	

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance:

Mayor Gina Kaetzel called the Village of Thornville Special Council Meeting to order on March 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. by saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Roll Call was taken with Council member Erica O'Neill, Council President Sterling Krout, Council member Lynne Snider, Council member Ashley Moore and Council member Kim Billman all present. Council member Tasia Savage was absent due to a work event.

Mayor Kaetzel stated we need a **motion** to excuse Council member Tasia Savage from tonight's meeting due to a prior scheduled work event. **Motion** made by Council member Kim Billman and was seconded by Council member Erica O'Neill. A roll call vote was taken with all council members voting aye.

Roll Call

Erica O'Neill- aye
Sterling Krout- aye
Ashley Moore- aye
Kim Billman- aye
Lynne Snider- aye
Motion passed 5-0

Motion to approve the Business Agenda for the Special Council Meeting on March 13, 2023:

Mayor Kaetzel requested a **motion** to approve the business agenda for the Special Council Meeting on March 13, 2023. A **motion** was made by Council President Sterling Krout and was seconded by Council member Ashley Moore. A roll call vote was taken with all Council members voting aye.

Roll Call

Ashley Moore- aye
Lynne Snider- aye
Erica O'Neill- aye
Kim Billman- aye
Sterling Krout- aye
Motion passed 5-0

Minutes
Regular Council Meeting
3 South Main Street
Thornville, OH
March 13, 2023

Parks & Recreation/ Pool Levy- Mayor Kaetzel advised the public the meeting tonight is to discuss the pool replacement and possible parks and recreation levy. After council updates the public on facts of the current situation of the pool, we will then give the public the opportunity to comment. These comments are limited to 5 minutes. The current pool was originally donated by Mr. Hite in 1961 at no cost to the Village. The pool is 62 years old. Some of you already know that over the last several years the pool has been having issues that we have tried to fix. We have managed to keep it operating but last year the pool began to have major cracks in the floor. We thought we were going to have to close it mid-season but Council met in an emergency meeting and decided to remain open but require all patrons to wear pool shoes for their protection. The bottom of the pool was causing injury to feet due to the sharpness of the cracks. Following the season close, we brought in engineers to assess the pool's current state. The engineer's prepared a detailed structural report stating all the sides of the pool were collapsing and pulling away from the sides of the pool due to "freeze heave". This was also causing our floors to crack along with the surrounding concrete on the walkway. The engineer's recommended not repairing the pool at this point. It would be more cost effective to replace the pool entirely and also find the large leak that has been happening for many years. The new pool will now need to be constructed adhering to all State health department guidelines. It is currently grandfathered in due to its age. We are required to change many things with the new pool installation making it a very expensive project. Mayor Kaetzel, the Village Administration and Council all feel it is important to do our best to keep the pool but we do have to bring the situation to the public and let residents decide how we are going to proceed because the Village cannot cover the replacement costs. We are continuing to obtain estimates. The first estimate that we received is \$2.2 million. When we started seeing the major repairs needed to the pool, we set aside \$400,000 of the Shelly family donation hoping that would be enough to repair it. We have kept these funds earmarked for the pool replacement if we move forward with the project. Village Administrator Traci Sturgill added the estimate to repair the pool came back at \$1.4 million and we would still have patched cracks with no timeline guarantee. Mayor Kaetzel also stated we did install a completely new filtration system and building in 2020 which will help the cost of the project.

Mayor Kaetzel explained the Village is looking at putting a \$3.0 mill levy on for the Thornville Village residents to decide if we should replace/ keep the pool. \$2.5 mill of this would be for the pool replacement and \$0.50 mill would be for our current parks & recreation levy that is up for renewal next year. We would be combining those. The current \$0.50 mill levy only brings in \$12,500 per year for the upkeep of our parks. Again, we are still getting in quotes for comparison. The baby pool may be removed due to it now needing to have a filtration system to meet the State health department guidelines. We are looking at zero entry pools and other possibilities for the replacement of that for the small children. Traci added we are also hoping to add a couple water features for the smaller kids. The pool companies we have talked to are booking a year out for new installs so unfortunately the pool will not be opening for the 2023 season. If the decision is made to replace the pool, we will do our best to try and have it open for the 2024 season.

The decision on whether to move forward with placing the pool levy on the ballot for November 2023 not been made at this time. We wanted to update the public on the situation first, get input, ideas and thoughts from all of you. If we are unable to replace it, we will be open to ideas for that area. The TAC (Thornville Activities Committee) has some great ideas for using the park. We really want to continue to utilize our parks as much as possible.

Minutes
Special Council Meeting
70 E Columbus St Thornville, OH
March 13, 2023

If anyone has questions on what the approximate yearly cost the levy would have per household, Village Administrator Traci Sturgill is available after the meeting to help calculate those numbers. She has also attached a breakdown of several different home values with costs to the agenda tonight. You may also stop by or contact her anytime at the Village office for discussion.

Council Comments: Council President Sterling Krout introduced himself and stated he has lived in the Village approximately 5 years now. He has a young family and is very much an advocate for the pool. He has been reading the book "Alienated America" why some places thrive and why others collapse. On the cover you can see a shut down, dilapidated church. This is his biggest fear. He loves this community and feels it is a great place to raise kids. What is important in this book is that it mentions that a strong community will have what's called a "third place". Our first place would be our home, our second place would be our work but we need a strong third place. A place for the community to gather, a place that's informal, a place that's for families to get together and ideas to cross. This is something that the swimming pool has been able to provide for a lot of community members and it has for decades and he really hopes that it can continue too moving forward. This is his urgency as far as why he thinks we need to continue to invest and think about the pool, not just as the pool but as in ways in which it can benefit the community. Sterling added he appreciates everyone's time for attending tonight and how important it is for council to hear what the community has to say as well. Mayor Kaetzel thanked Sterling for his comments.

Public Comments: Mayor Kaetzel opened the public comments and asked everyone to state their name and address for the record.

Carol Shaffer P O Box 66 Thornville, Oh- Asked all Council members, Administrator & Mayor to introduce themselves to her and where they reside. Carol spoke about the Village of Bremen public pool and how beautiful it is and would like to know how such a small town can afford it and if somebody could find that out for her. Village Administrator Traci Sturgill advised sure. She would make a phone call and find out. Traci also advised there are many different ways they could have funded it. They could have had residents or businesses donate it, received grants, has the township residents involved etc. Mayor Kaetzel also added there are a lot of different funds in each Village. They may have an income tax, large donations like we have received here, and very much appreciate, in the past but we can find that out in one phone call. Traci added we will be applying for grants but many of these grants look at the Village's median household income and Thornville is a very high number (\$89,700) as of 2022. There are some grants that don't have this guideline and we are looking for them all. Mayor Kaetzel also added it is very difficult to find a pool grant. It is very unlikely a pool grant will cover this entire cost but any cost's that will save the public is our goal.

Martha Rusler 11325 Ridenour Rd, Thornville, Oh- Advised she had heard rumors that Dick Shelly had left \$1 million dollars for the pool. Mayor Kaetzel stated the money was donated approximately one year ago to the Village for whatever Council wanted to use it for. This is where the \$400,000 was earmarked for the pool repairs. Village Administrator Traci Sturgill wanted to add that the only items we were asked to spend some of the donation funds for were the repairs to the curbs & church sidewalk in the downtown area and this was the first project we did with the donation. The sidewalk down to Circle K adjacent to the Shelly family home was also completed. Mr. Shelly has not attached stipulations to donations that he has given the Village. Traci advised she has always kept a detailed list of the donation funds spent and sent Mr. & Mrs. Shelly updates on what it has been used for, so they always knew what their generous donations accomplished.

Minutes
Regular Council Meeting
3 South Main Street
Thornville, OH
March 13, 2023

Mayor Kaetzel also advised we have purchased a new playground for the park. It should be installed this May. New bleachers were also purchased for the ball diamonds. We have been very careful with the funds and spent it wisely. \$200,000 is also still being held in the general fund for emergency use. Thorn township resident Martha Rusler asked if we were looking at putting in a splash pad. Mayor Kaetzel advised yes; we have looked into splash pad parks also. Traci sent out the survey to the Village residents and an overwhelming majority of the residents chose the swimming pool. A splash pad would be more cost effective, less maintenance and less employees to pay. Village Administrator Traci Sturgill said she can see why some residents are against the splash pad due to being mainly for smaller kids. It doesn't benefit the older kids.

Judge Luann Cooperrider 11995 Zion Branch Rd Thornville, Oh- Judge Cooperrider asked how long the levy would be for. Mayor Kaetzel advised it would have to be a continuous levy to help keep up on the continued maintenance, salaries and repairs to the pool. There will also be a loan payment to pay. The pool doesn't make any profit. We are lucky to break even each year. Luann asked how much the levy will bring in. Traci advised \$80,000 will come in but \$13,000 of that will be for the park's maintenance. Mayor Kaetzel added there is still a lot of work to be done to get to the bottom number that we will need. Luann asked how much the playground cost. Mayor Kaetzel stated \$200,000 is earmarked for the playground. We had to also bring all of it up to state regulations. It will also have a sidewalk to make it more accessible to handicap children. Thornville Fiscal Officer Kelly Beem introduced herself and explained that grants won't cover 100% of the project which is why Traci is talking about a possible loan payment. The money from the levy will help offset the loan payments. A payment on \$1.6 million is approximately \$76,000 per year for 30 years.

Kristin Krout 130 E Columbus St Thornville, Oh- Kristin introduced herself and added she is council member Sterling Krout's wife. She suggested maybe looking at making it smaller if the quotes come back in too high to replace it at the current size.

Margaret Mohler 74 W Columbus St Thornville, Oh- Margaret asked why the township residents aren't included in paying for the levy since they utilize the pool also. She also feels we should give the Village resident's a free membership since they would be the ones paying for the pool. Mayor Kaetzel advised she didn't feel we could give free memberships but we do charge the out-of-town residents a higher membership price. Margaret feels if the village residents are paying for the levy, then they should be compensated for that. Maybe at least give a drastic discount to villagers. Mayor Kaetzel advised we will keep everything in mind while making decisions.

Mary Stidham 11003 Boundaries Rd Thornville, Oh- Mary stated she has lived in Thornville for a long time and saw the pool being built. She feels if something happens to the pool the gangs will come to Thornville because of no place for the kids to go. She asked council why we aren't bringing the township in. Village Administrator Traci Sturgill stated she was told by current village administration and past council members that they had tried this a couple times in the past and the township wasn't interested. This is how the Village of Somerset affords their pool. The Village & Township pay for the levy together and the township writes a check to the Village one time a year for the amount the levy brings in from the township.

Trent Howell Arlington Ave Thornville, Oh - Trent spoke up and said we need to get a meeting scheduled with the Thorn Township Trustees again and try. Council member Lynne Snider added that the township did not want involved with the police levy in the past either. Trent again stated we need to schedule a meeting asap.

Minutes
Special Council Meeting
70 E Columbus St Thornville, OH
March 13, 2023

Steve Carr 201 Willow Way Thornville, Oh- Steve asked how many memberships we sell per year. Traci stated approximately 100 and not many of those are in town Village residents. He also asked what the daily attendance is for the pool. Traci advised it varies daily from as low as 15 to as high as 100 on a hot day and weekend. Possibly 150 on a holiday weekend and good weather. Mayor Kaetzel added that on a day when we have very low attendance, we do have to close it down due to having to pay the lifeguards for so few of patrons. Traci added the pool has always followed a rule of 10 by 2 pm or they close for the day. Steve asked what the cost would be to take it out and fill it in. Mayor Kaetzel advised we have not even looked into that yet because we're trying to save it at this point. He felt this could be used as a selling point.

Dale Brussee 110 Thornhill Dr Thornville, Oh- Dale said so you're saying 25% of the memberships is the village and 100% of the cost is going to be the village? You're also saying it's going to be about 30 years to pay \$1.6 million. Is that at 0% interest rate? Village Administrator Traci Sturgill advised the payment she received on \$1.6 million is at 2% interest since we don't know at this time what our rate will be for a loan. Dale asked if there was anything included for the maintenance of the pool for that period? Traci stated the levy amount would cover the loan payment and Fiscal Officer Kelly Beem added that the memberships, daily admissions, pool parties and concession stand funds would cover the maintenance. Dale stated he doesn't agree with taking the \$0.50 mill levy away from parks & recreation because if the \$3.0 mill levy fails then you have completely wiped out parks & recreation maintenance funds. Village Administrator Traci Sturgill advised the current \$0.50 mill levy isn't up for renewal until next year so if the \$3.0 mill fails, we can still put the \$0.50 mill back on for renewal next year. Dale advised he has a problem with the cost per resident and he agrees with getting the township in also. He knows this is the reason Somerset's pool stays open. Increase the amount of people so the cost of the levy is less. He also added by the time you get done paying the loan off in 30 years you'll be in tune again for redoing the pool. He said if we are a possible 1.5 years out from building a pool and this \$3.0 mill passes, your cost estimates will most likely increase by then and the \$3.0 mill will not cover it, what happens to the levy funds? Does it then go to parks & recreation? Traci advised council will have to have all costs and decide if they are moving forward with installing a new pool prior to putting the new levy on the ballot. She advised we are working as quickly as we can on getting different estimates and numbers. Mayor Kaetzel added once the pool closed we thought we could repair the pool then that number came back at \$1.4 mill and the engineers recommended not repairing it at this cost. It took time to get an engineer study completed. Based on the study results we then moved into getting pool replacement costs as quickly as we can and this is where we are at right now. We have a lot of discussions to have and the timeline is tight to get the levy on the ballot for this year. On one hand she thought this meeting may be a little too soon, but on the other she knew we had to get this information out to the public as soon as possible because we were getting a lot of questions in regards to it opening this year. She wanted to start promoting it because we don't have a lot of time. Dale feels the meeting was premature without having that information to give all the residence now if you're going to put it on for this year. He feels it is creating a disastrous result if you're asking the residence to pay for something you have no idea what the cost is. Mayor Kaetzel stated she as she said we may be a little bit early with this meeting but there have been so many questions that we felt the public needed answers now. This meeting is to let the public know we are adamantly working on it, we want to keep it open and we want the facts out to the public and their involvement now. Our goal is to try and get everything ready for a November election.

Minutes
Regular Council Meeting
3 South Main Street
Thornville, OH
March 13, 2023

Kevin Howell 104 N Columbus St Thornville, Oh- Kevin asked if we are able to get the pool contractors to lock in on the price this far in advance? Mayor Kaetzel stated we are just getting started on all of this with quotes. Those questions will be addressed. His fear is by the time we put the \$3.0 mill levy on and it doesn't get installed for 2 years, by then we may not have enough money for it with the cost increases. He asked if there is a contingency plan in place for that? Village Administrator Traci Sturgill said we have not got to this point in the process yet and she definitely understands where he is coming from on the possible cost increases that could incur prior to the project start date. Kevin added we are in a very tough spot to try and figure a number.

Amanda Lackey 156 E Columbus St Thornville, Oh- Amanda wanted to switch gears to the thoughts of what if we do get this new pool installed and then when we go to open, we cannot get lifeguards and employees? Last year, Heath pool had to go to limit hours and limited days due to staffing issues. Village Administrator Traci Sturgill agreed this is a big concern. Heath pool was only open 4 days a week for 4-hour days. Mayor Kaetzel said issues like this are why we feel we need to bring the decision to the village residents to decide. The Village just does not have the money in its budget to build the new pool which is why we are coming to all of you to decide if this is what you want. Traci added we also have to consider that minimum wage increases every year also. This effects our cost to run the pool.

Steve Carr 201 Willow Way Thornville Oh- Steve added you said earlier you have the results of the survey and the majority of the respondents were in favor of the swimming pool. What were the total number of responses to the survey? Mayor Kaetzel stated approximately 190 surveys were returned. Traci added that only 3-4 of those surveys were in favor of a splash pad.

Judge Luann Cooperrider 11995 Zion Rd Thornville, Oh- Luann feels we should try and put a splash pad in this year and then a pool. Mayor Kaetzel advised we cannot afford to put both in and we are working hard to get the new playground installed for the summer. Luann asked if kids of all ages could use the playground? Mayor Kaetzel advised yes and it is going to be very nice. Luann asked about the estimate we received from a local contractor first. Mayor Kaetzel advised we received that prior to having the engineers report and all the damage and repairs needed. His quote was not for a new pool.

Anthony Hoyles 169 E Columbus St Thornville, Oh- Anthony asked about the repairs needed to the pool and if there was a point like 25% of repairing it without being required to meet all the state codes and guidelines. Mayor Kaetzel advised it is in very bad shape. If you go down there you can see we have dug out around the sides to see what is happening behind the walls. The bottom and interior sidewalls have several large cracks. The damage has been caused by "freeze heave". This means the water has gotten behind it in the winter and froze which then pushes the walls in and causes cracking.

Linda Savage 85 S Church St Thornville, Oh 43076- Linda asked if the new pool will have a zero entry are there any grant funds available for handicap individuals since it will create an environment that a person in a wheelchair can access. Traci stated we are looking at any and all grants possible. We have also hired a professional grant writer to assist us with finding the grants.

Martha Rusler 11325 Ridenour Rd Thornville, Oh 43076- Martha asked if we could put two separate choices on the levy? One for a new pool and one for a new splash pad with costs of each? Fiscal Officer Kelly Beem advised we would have to put on two different levies. Mayor Kaetzel said it could be an idea that if the pool levy fails, we then put on another levy for a splash pad.

Minutes
Special Council Meeting
70 E Columbus St Thornville, OH
March 13, 2023

Margaret Mohler 74 W Columbus St Thornville, Oh- Margaret just feels the splash pad is mainly for the smaller children. Mayor Kaetzel agrees but if we are unable to afford a new pool, then we would hope to at least put in a small splash pad to go along with the other things in the park and new playground. We have a lot of ideas we would like to do with our park to make it more enjoyable for family members of all ages. The TAC committee is working on a lot of things to put on at the park. Those ideas were also on our surveys so we do know what the village residents would like to have. She also agrees with Council member Sterling Krout on families needing that third place outside the home and workplace to gather. Council member Erica O'Neill also added there would be no membership needed for a splash park either which would help out a lot of kids of families who can't afford to come to the pool or purchase a membership.

Jerry Mohler 74 W Columbus St Thornville, Oh- Jerry feels when you think of a splash pad, it would be nice for the younger kids but his grandson is a teenager and he and his friends went to Thornville pool last year but because of the condition of the pool, they ended up going to Somerset pool. If it's a splash pad and not a pool where are those kids going to go? A lot of parents work and these kids are stuck at home. We aren't giving middle school kids anything age friendly with a splash pad. Mayor Kaetzel agrees and this is why we are here tonight to hear everyone's comments and concerns.

Trish Cooperrider 13165 St Rt 188 Thornville, Oh- Trish asked what the deadline is to get everything submitted for the levy this year? Traci advised the month of September.

Margaret Mohler 74 W Columbus St Thornville, Oh- Margaret asked when we go to the voters will we be given something saying this is what we will be voting on? Traci advised yes. We will have a plan of what we are doing prior to voting on the levy. Mayor Kaetzel also advised we may possibly have another informational meeting. We also post all of our council minutes monthly on our village webpage. She is also putting out a newsletter to keep villagers informed and updated on what's going on in the village.

Village Administrator Traci Sturgill added that we can certainly approach the Thorn Township Trustees as residents have requested here tonight. It has been many years since they were last asked to be involved from what she has been told. This all took place prior to my administration so I don't have an answer on what their thoughts on this will be.

Kevin Howell 104 N Columbus St Thornville, Oh- Kevin feels we need to have another meeting like this and get the Thorn Township Trustees here. He was on council 15-20 years ago and remembers trying this then when the village was just trying to repair the pool and they didn't have any luck bringing them onboard but he feels times have changed and a lot of the township utilizes our pool so he feels they need to step up and help us out a little. He feels it never hurts to try. We need to get solid numbers and facts and then sit them down in front of us (public) and have discussions. He feels this needs to happen sooner than later and he will be spreading the word.

Trent Howell Arlington Ave Thornville, Oh- Trent feels this is free money sitting there until they (township) tells us no.

Tim Cooperrider- 12710 Bruno Rd Thornville, Oh- Tim asked who submitted bids so far. Traci advised nothing has been bid. We aren't at that point in the project yet. We have only started working on estimates. One estimate was a commercial contractor out of Indiana, another one out of Columbus.

Minutes
Regular Council Meeting
3 South Main Street
Thornville, OH
March 13, 2023

He just wanted to be sure it was contractors who have built commercial pools. Traci advised absolutely. Tim advised he grew up here and remembers well going to the pool in the summer time. He really hopes this all works out for the kids.

Mayor Kaetzel again added the meeting may have been a little early but herself and council felt they needed to get the information out sooner better than later to the public. We have got a lot of good ideas tonight to think about which is exactly why we are here tonight.

Julie Spohn 132 Craig Dr Thornville, Oh- Julie asked how much room the village has to grow? She feels the pool would be a big selling point for moving here. Traci advised the village has no more availability to grow without land becoming available to annex in and even then we would still need to see if the village residents want their village to grow or expand.

Judge Luann Cooperrider 11995 Zion Rd Thornville, Oh- Luann asked what the items were the villagers wanted to see from the survey results? Village Administrator Traci Sturgill stated dog park, walking path, restaurants and downtown beautifications. Those were our top votes.

Mayor Kaetzel also wanted everyone to know that we will be sending out another survey to see what else the village residents may be looking for like a possible farmers market. Things that will get people out and moving around the village on the weekends. We are doing our best to keep positive energy about the pool and just keep moving forward.

Adjournment: Mayor Kaetzel asked for a **motion** to adjourn the meeting. **Motion** made by Council member Kim Billman and was seconded by Council member Erica O'Neill. A roll call vote was taken with all council members voting aye.

Roll Call:

Erica O'Neill- aye
Kim Billman- aye
Sterling Krout- aye
Ashley Moore- aye
Lynne Snider- aye

Motion passed 5-0

Adjourned at 7:57 p.m.



Mayor Gina Kaetzel



Traci Sturgill, Council Clerk