



The Village News

mywestliberty.com

201 N. Detroit St. PO Box 187

West Liberty, OH 43357

937-465-2716

Mayor Jill C. McKelvey

February 2023

Safety in the Village is important for all of us. We want our children to be safe while crossing the street to go in to get an ice cream cone, pick up a pizza, or run into a shop. In 2022 two pedestrians were seriously injured while crossing in the crosswalks downtown. Right after the most recent accident, I was driving through the downtown area and a man stepped out in front of me and crossed the street. He was not in the crosswalk but I still needed to yield. It is important that each of us is more aware while driving or walking through the community. The State of Ohio recently passed legislation that makes it a primary ticketing offense to text or have your cellphone in hand while driving. West Liberty is a walkable community but we must raise our awareness to keep everyone safe. Please cross at the stoplights or crosswalks and make sure to watch while traffic is turning. Drivers please be more aware of the pedestrians or runners who are crossing the streets. We also have three bike trails that run through the Village. The Simon Kenton Bike Path alone has an average of 1,200 riders on the trail every month. So be aware of the bicyclists riding through the Village. It takes all of us to make West Liberty a safe community.

This spring and summer the Ohio Department of Transportation will be installing two new crosswalks. One will be at the Veterans Park/Leonard Street and the other is at Sidney Street to Thomans' IGA. These crosswalks will have flashing lights and signage. The planning for these crosswalks has been going on for over five years. Drivers need to slow down as they drive through West Liberty and abide by all traffic laws. The Village will also be putting some new signage out to remind everyone of pedestrians crossing the streets. We are all aware that over 8,000 vehicles pass through the Village every day and we want safety to be primary for all of us. The West Liberty Police Department will be patrolling for your safety but need us all to be aware of our surroundings at all times.

Mayor Jill



Clerk's Corner

The Village Office will be closed on February 20th to observe Presidents day.

Municipal Tax packets: for those **with** earned income, are available at the Town Hall Office and the Library. Or at Rita.com If you have **NO EARNED** income, an Individual Declaration of Exemption form needs to be filled out and sent every year. These can be found online at ritaohio.com Form 10A or stop at the town hall and pick up a form.

Village Alert System: If you are signed up but not receiving these alerts, or have **not** signed up, please call the Village office 937-465-2716 for this free service. You can choose to be notified by home phone, text or e-mail. This will keep you updated on snow removal, leaf collection, street work, street sweeping, changes in trash collection, recycling and other important events going on in the Village.

We would like to thank the WL Cheerleaders for their giving spirits and willingness to volunteer within this wonderful village ! The girls, with the encouragement and guidance of their coach, Kim Long, have been very valuable and helpful to the Village on many occasions and we are very thankful for them, and encourage them to **keep volunteering !**

Cindee Boyd
Clerk/Treasurer
937-465-2716
vowclerk@mywestliberty.com



Jeanette Zerkle Council Member

It is February already. Having been your representative for a year now, I want to tell you it is a humbling experience. The Village is involved in a lot of activities and we are personally committed to address issues presented to us by many of you.

Council is exploring options for public parking. As I mentioned before, the absence of available parking is a deterrent to businesses and has created many empty store fronts, which is another grave concern. We will be looking at new ways to promote our village and encourage new businesses to invest in West Liberty and yet protect the principles that make West Liberty the Village we all love.

On another note, February 14th is celebrated as Valentine's Day, which may have been named from a priest who was martyred by the emperor Claudius II Gothicus. According to legend, the priest signed a letter "from your Valentine" to his jailer's daughter, whom he had befriended and (by some accounts) whom he had healed from blindness. Thus, the supposed reason this date is associated with love. For those of us who celebrate Valentine's Day, it is an opportunity for just one more way to tell those we love how much we care.

As a final thought, it is important to love our community and our country and to want them both to thrive. Personal ambitions should be put aside for the people who have entrusted us to do what is in the best interests of our community. We rely on you to keep us accountable and to keep us ever mindful that it is because of you, that we serve.

We encourage you to contact any Council Member with concerns you feel need to be addressed.

Thank you for the honor of representing you.

Jeanette Zerkle, West Liberty Village Council

West Liberty Historical Society Event

Dinner and Dancing at the Opera House !

Saturday February 11th at 7:00 PM

Live Music Fundraiser Gala for the Opera House Stage.

Tickets are \$100 per person, and are available at People's Savings & Loan

Historical Society Annual Meeting Thursday March 9, 4PM

Shane Oelker WL Police Department

In 2015 then Governor John R. Kasich established the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory board to oversee implementation of state standards to guide law enforcement agencies in Ohio to improve the trust between citizens and law enforcement officers. In partnership with the Buckeye State Sheriff's Association and the Ohio Association of Chief of Police nearly 900 law enforcement agencies across the state worked to become compliant with the standards set forth by the advisory board. These uniformed minimum standards ensure that residents can have confidence that their local law enforcement agency strives to maintain a professional approach to law enforcement.

The West Liberty Police Department met and exceeded those standards in 2015 and has continued to be a certified agency through the Ohio Collaborative. As the Collaborative Board continues to release new minimum standards, I am proud to say that the West Liberty Police Department continues to either meet those standards or is working towards becoming certified in the other areas that the board sets forth.

You can find more information on the Ohio Collaborative as well as a list of certified agencies and a list of agencies that are not certified by visiting ocjs.ohio.gov and following the link to the Ohio Collaborative. Respectfully,

Shane Oelker

Chief of Police West Liberty Police Department

**111 Runkle St. PO Box 187 West Liberty, Ohio 43357
937-465-2801 ext. 101**

email at soelker@westlibertypolice.org



Calling all Women Veterans

The Village of West Liberty is looking for women from Logan and Champaign Counties who have served in the military that would be willing to share their stories and be recorded in a small group discussion. These stories will be preserved for future generations. Interested individuals may contact the Village at 937.465.2716 or email mayor.mckelvey@mywestliberty.com.

We would like to set a date for recording these stories in March. For the past year the Village of West Liberty has been recording stories of veterans that received the Purple Heart Medal, served in Vietnam, during the Cold War, and in the Middle East. These recordings may be found at www.mywestliberty.com.

Dear Village of West Liberty Water & Sewer Customers,

Scott Woodruff Zoning Officer

We want to inform you that there will be a 3% rate increase on your base water and sewer bill, which amounts to an additional \$1.82 per month. This increase is due to a combination of factors, including increased expenses due to inflation and planned projects to improve and maintain our infrastructure.

For the water portion of your bill, we will be replacing 30 fire hydrants and 26 watch valves, which will ensure that we continue to provide safe and reliable water service to the community. In addition, we are also working to reduce inflows and infiltration in the sewer system and undertaking several sewer main projects to improve the overall system. Also, a GIS Mapping project was just passed which will be used to help comply with new Ohio EPA Asset Management requirements.

We understand that any rate increase can be concerning, but we want to assure you that this increase is necessary to ensure that we can continue to provide high-quality water and sewer service to the community. To put this in perspective, gas prices went up \$0.30 today, which would be a \$9.00 increase for the U.S. average of 30 gallons per month per person. Another example would be the recent increase in property taxes which averaged 23% county wide or an average of 7.66% per year for last three years. Social Security COLA average for last three years was 5.3%. We hope that this information helps you to understand the reasoning behind the rate increase.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We appreciate your understanding and continued support.

Sincerely,

West Liberty Water and Sewer Department

Brad Hudson Utility Supt.

O (937)465-2179

C (937)210-1652

b.hudson@mywestliberty.com

P.S. What did the sewer worker say to the toilet after he used it? "See you at work buddy."

February Business Anniversaries:

Marie's Candies & Stoner's Ice Cream.

Congratulations !

What is Zoning?

Zoning is how the local government regulates and develops land within its control. It is broken down into multiple categories to help balance a city to ensure proper land use and provide value to citizens that own property. As well, zoning helps protect the local environment and keep property values stable.

There are types of zoning that can be broken down into a few categories that villagers should be aware of: Commercial, Industrial, Residential, Agricultural, Aesthetic, Historical, Rural, and Combination types of zoning. Each of these categories are important to maintain here in the Village in order to keep West Liberty the town people have grown to love and enjoy for years to come.

What is required of me as a Homeowner?

With Zoning, what is required of the homeowner is abiding by the regulations and ordinances put in place by Council over the years. Villagers are required to submit permits for building projects such as Decks, fences, garage/sheds, and any other additions attached to their homes or placed on their property. Residents in West Liberty are allowed to have 25% roof coverage here in the Village. This varies by the size of the lot. Removable sheds and decks do count towards this total roof coverage. There are other items that require permits such as Pools and Signs for local businesses. You can pick these permits up at the Clerks Office or online at mywestliberty.com

Residents and business owners are required to maintain their property to the Village Standards. If not maintained the resident or business owner may receive a Warning Letter or a in person visit by myself in order to discuss what can be done to fix the situation. As the Zoning Officer , I am here to help in whatever capacity I can in order to avoid fines and so forth. I try and give residents and business owners ample time to get in contact with me in order to discuss the situation. Failure to communicate with me or reach the max days given to fix the situation will result in immediate fines. Warning letters can be sent out for various reasons such as: Lawn height, Overgrowth of weeds or grass, trash or junk on property, Expired tags on vehicles, Home Maintenance, Failure to submit a permit for a building project and so forth.

If you have any questions about does this require a permit or not? Just give me a call. I'll be more than happy to answer any questions.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Scott Woodruff
(937)-441-6826

Congratulations



February Business of the Month



216 North Detroit St. West Liberty, Ohio 937-465-9050

Article by Heather Chamberlain, Owner and CEO Theresa's Gingerbread House and WLBA President

We would like to congratulate our February West Liberty Business of the Month Winner, Civista Bank! Civista Bank is a community bank that was founded in 1884. Civista Bank has provided trusted financial solutions to generations of families and businesses. They have been in business for 138 years and have 500+ employees. Prior to rebranding as Civista Bank in 2015, they were known as Champaign Bank. They joined the Civista Bank family in 2007.

Civista is a full-service community bank providing solutions for personal and business banking and borrowing, mortgages, and wealth management. One of the benefits to working with Civista is that they offer self-serve financial literacy education online at civista.bank/civista-learning-vault. They also offer in-class financial literacy workshops - whether you are a teacher looking for a guest speaker to talk about financial literacy with your students, or a non-profit wanting to help the community understanding the ins and outs of first-time homeownership, they are happy to partner with you.

They also give back to their communities. Employees are encouraged to volunteer in the communities they serve. Each year they dedicate time for employees to volunteer at various community organizations. Employees serve as board members, coaches, and attend various community meetings in the West Liberty community such as treasurer of the West Liberty Business Association and member of the PTO.

When asked "What do your customers love the most about your business?", the answer was "Our customers love being greeted by friendly, familiar faces when they come into the branch. Knowing their name and their family or business is important to us and to our customers. Customers can count on us responding promptly to their questions." And that is exactly what you get when you walk into the West Liberty branch of the Civista Bank! They also listed one of their favorite things about having their location in West Liberty is Being part of the community's story. They said it is a great privilege to be a part of helping families, businesses and the community achieve their goals from one generation to the next. Here everyone knows each other and comes together to help one another in times of need. They also added that their favorite thing about West Liberty in particular is that no matter where you go or who you are, you will always be welcomed with a wave and a hello and of course, Stoners Ice Cream Parlor!

Mon-Tue: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Wed: 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Fri: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Sat: 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Start the New Year by ordering your

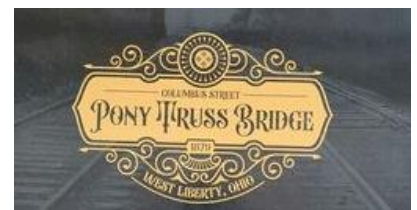
WL Apparel: sweatshirts, t-shirts, hoodies. All colors and sizes.



Scan the QR code or go to.....

<https://villageofwl.itemorder.com/shop/home/>

Pony Truss Bridge Calendars



Help to restore this historical bridge. Buy your calendar today! They are available at the Town Hall for \$10.00 cash/check.

Order today !



2023 West Liberty Business Association Annual Dinner

The 2023 West Liberty Business Association Annual Dinner was held on Thursday, January 19th at 6:00 p.m. in the Opera House. Heather Chamberlain, President of the Business Association, welcomed those in attendance and thanked them for being there. JD Harshfield from Ohio Caverns offered a very heartfelt memorial for Eric Evans, the owner of Ohio Caverns, who passed away last week. Musical selections were then performed by some students from West Liberty Salem High School. Dinner was prepared by Peppercorn's Diner in Urbana.

The speaker for the evening was Todd McCormick from the Logan County Historical Society. Mr. McCormick spoke about not only the history of West Liberty but also many former residents who made history through their accomplishments or inventions. He showcased many of the items that are featured at the museum that have ties back to West Liberty. He brought along many amazing photographs and items from their collection.

Mayor Jill McKelvey gave some thoughts on her appreciation for the business members in attendance and their importance to the village. In the past year, the West Liberty council has created the Community Reinvestment Areas that include the entire incorporated areas of the Village where property owners can receive tax incentives for investing in real property improvements. The Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program is a direct incentive property tax exemption program. Jayne Griffith with the West Liberty City Council also spoke about the fundraising they have been doing to raise funds for the West Columbus Street Bridge project. They are currently selling sponsorships for the 2024 West Liberty Calendar. 2023 Calendars are also available through the Village office.

Mayor McKelvey then talked about the Business of the Month distinction that was started a year ago. The Village Council nominates three businesses each month then those three businesses are emailed out to WLBA members to vote on a winner. The very first Business of the Month was Elle A. Design in April of 2022. The latest Business of the Month was Tami Cox and Country Friends of Ohio in January 2023. Mayor Jill then spoke about getting ready to award the very first Business of the Year. The nominees were the previous year's Business of the Month winners along with any other businesses nominated by the community. These included Hillside Greenhouse, Ohio Caverns, Jones Country Store, Heaven's Dew, Theresa's Gingerbread House, LeVan's Excavating, Tiffany's Touch, Elle A. Design, MCC Thrift Store, Thoman's IGA, Stoner's Ice Cream Parlor, The People's Savings and Loan, Michael's Pizza, Solomon's Garage, Marie's Candies, and Malia Hughes Powered by Fathom Realty. The 2022 Business of the Year is Solomon's Garage. Owners Dave and Katie Neer both grew up in West Liberty and graduated from West Liberty-Salem High School. They opened Solomon's in the village in 2012. Not only are they outstanding business owners willing to offer support to new entrepreneurs when they opened Neer & Farm but the countless hours they have given to the WLBA through Katie's work as secretary and Dave and his team of Technicians who provided judging for our first car show during the June Street Market.

All members are encouraged to participate in the monthly meetings as well as any event committees. The next monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, February 9th at 5:30 pm at Mad River Farm Market. If you are interested in joining the West Liberty Business Association, please email wlbawestliberty.com for more information.

