Batavia Village Council
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, January 27, 2025

The Batavia Village Council met in regular session on Monday, January 27, 2025, at 7:00 pm with Mayor Runck presiding. Mayor Runck called the meeting to order at 7:00.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by former Mayor John Thebout.

Roll Call of Members Present:

Mr. Gipson, Ms. Cole, Mr. Garrison, Mr. Pryor, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Turner

Village Officials Attending the Meeting: Mayor C. Scott Runck, Administrator Ken Geis, Fiscal Officer John Waite, Interim Police Chief Chris Warner, Solicitor Chris Moore, Street Superintendent Wayne Smith, Officer Chris Whitaker, Officer Brian Fletcher

Others Attending the Meeting: Bill Albright, Victor Billingsley, Barb Bruner, Kevin Bucher, Joe Fisher, Lana Fritsch, Chuck Gallagher, Sandy Vernon Gates, Cole Gauch, John Gauch, Donna Ginn, Doug Ginn, John Hartman, Denise Helmsderfer, Ed Heming, Cindy Jacobs, Gary Jacobs, Melissa Kidwell, Jo Ann Martino, Renee Munro, Keith Millard, Tom Miller, Ray Neiser, Rex Parsons, Jim Sauls, Steve Staton, Karen Swartz, John Thebout, Brian Wandstrat, Elizabeth Wainscott, The Webb Family, Mark Wilson, Shawn Young, Lauri Zagar

Reminder to Audience Regarding Questions or Comments:

The Mayor asked the audience to mute their cell phones and reminded the audience that there will be a chance for comments or questions during Public Participation at the end of the meeting.

Approval of Financial Reports:

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to approve the December Bank Statements and Cash Journal, seconded by Mr. Pryor. The **Motion** passed 6-0

Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Turner made a motion to approve the minutes of December 9, 2024 Regular Council Meeting, seconded by Ms. Cole. The **Motion** passed 6-0

Public Comments:

Note: Persons wishing to make comments will be limited to 3 minutes each and there will be a limit of 10 persons making comments at any meeting.

Bill Albright – Mr. Albright was upset with Council and the Village for pursuing growth and he accused Council of being corrupt.

Joe Fisher – Mr. Fisher is against tax abatements. He is in favor of having the Village provide funding to the schools, but believes tax abatements are unfair to other taxpayers.

Steve Staton – Mr. Staton has been a school board member and a member of Village Council. He suggested the school board of being dishonest about their funding and exaggerating the negative effect of tax abatements. Schools receive 60% of their funding from the State of Ohio. Based on his experience as a member of the school board, he believed the potential impact of the tax abatements, if given, was less than a percent. He also reminded the audience that the schools did not complain when Batavia Township adopted tax abatements.

Brian Wandstrat – He objected to the agenda placing Public Comments at the beginning of the meeting instead of after Council acts. He doesn't like the 3-minute time limit or the limit of only 10 commenters. He wondered why the Village was willing to partner with Union Township for marijuana dispensaries when the Village has a prohibition against marijuana dispensaries in the Village. He said it was just a money grab.

Rex Parson – Mr. Parsons told Council that the Lexington Run TIF is a Clermont County TIF and although Batavia Township participates in the TIF, the Township would like the TIF to end.

Keith Millard, Superintendent Batavia Local School District

Mr. Millard presented Council with a 6-page document summarizing the school board's position regarding the Village's use of tax abatements for development.
(A copy of Mr. Millard's presentation is attached.)

Christopher Moore, Village Solicitor

Mr. Moore stated that in light of the comments from Mr. Millard, he is requesting Council to adjourn to Executive Session to confer with council concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action; pursuant to O.R.C. 121.22(G)(3)

Executive Session

Mr. Pryor made a **Motion** to adjourn to Executive Session to confer with counsel concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action; pursuant to O.R.C. 121.22(G)(3), seconded by Ms. Cole

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Council Adjourned to Executive Session at 7:50

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion to return from Executive Session**, seconded by Mr. Pryor.

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Council returned from Executive Session at 8:50

No further action was taken regarding this matter at this time.

Police Department: Interim Chief Christopher Warner

Report on December police activity:

598 calls for service

5 Arrests: 2 for domestic violence, 2 for drugs, 1 for warrants

15 auto accident reports taken

23 traffic stops	25 citations issued	11 written warnings
8 offense reports	18 incident reports	12 mutual aid calls
9 K9 vehicle sniffs	4 K9 assist other agencies	
48 H.S. SRO service calls	32 M.S. SRO service calls	2 E.S. SRO service calls

During Christmas Batavia Police Department Officers actively volunteered to help the Village, the schools and the surrounding community.

Batavia Police Department Officers:

- Assisted the Batavia Local Schools with their Christmas raffle to provide students with gifts
- Had a toy drive for elementary school children
- Sponsored 2 families for Christmas
- Delivered Christmas gifts to families who didn't have transportation to pick up gifts
- Helped over 100 families from the Village, Batavia Township, Union Township, Bethel, Williamsburg and Sardinia for Christmas.
- Had a booth at Christmas in the Village and gave out 100 cupcakes

The Police Department wants to thank the Batavia Public Works department for their help with the Christmas gifts.

The Village is currently interviewing candidates for the position of Chief of Police.

Officer Patrick Kuhl has accepted a position with the Mariemont Police Department and his last day with the Village was Saturday, January 18, 2025.

The Mayor thanked the Chief and the police department for their community outreach efforts. He also thanked the police department for their contributions to the Christmas in the Village event.

This was the end of Interim Police Chief Warner's report

Other Police Department Items: Mayor Scott Runck

The Mayor has promoted Officer Christopher Warner from Police Corporal to Police Sergeant effective January 19, 2025

Ms. Cole made a **Motion** to approve the promotion of Christopher Warner from Police Corporal to Police Sergeant effective January 19, 2025, at the wage rate for Sergeants per Resolution 363-24, seconded by Mr. Pryor

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

The Mayor is recommending the promoting Officer Christopher Whitaker to Police Corporal effective February 2, 2025.

Mr. Pryor made a **Motion** to approve the promotion of Christopher Whitaker from Police Officer to Police Corporal effective February 2, 2025, at the wage rate per the Police Department Wage Schedule, seconded by Mr. Gipson

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Officer Christopher Warner has been serving as Acting Chief of Police since August of last year. The Mayor recommends awarding Officer Warner a one-time Bonus payment to reward him for extra service to the Village. The Mayor is recommending a bonus payment of $3,000.

Mr. Garrison made a **Motion** to approve a one-time bonus payment of $3,000 to Officer Christopher Warner in recognition of his extra service to the Village, seconded by Mr. Gipson

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Village Administrator: Ken Geis

General:

Police Chief Process

The initial phase of the selection process for the Police Chief ended on 12/31/2024. The Village received 24 applications for the position

Public Hearing JEDD

We will have a public hearing on the JEDD with Union Township. There are two sites (Marijuana sales). If passed by the Council, the Village will receive 15% of the revenue collected to allow the Township to use the Village's taxing authority. I am asking that this be passed as an **Emergency** so that the Village can begin collecting tax revenue as soon as possible.

Addresses of the two Union Township marijuana dispensary stores:

4412 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Rd.	693 Old State Route 74
Cincinnati, OH 45245	Cincinnati, OH 45245

Council adjourned to a Public Hearing at 8:57

Public Hearing to consider adopting Ordinance 1540-25 approving a Contract between Union Township and the Village of Batavia to create Joint Economic Development District No. 9 (JEDD).

The Contract creates the Duel Use Cannabis Joint Economic Development District in Union Township for the purpose of facilitating economic development to create jobs and employment opportunities and improve the economic welfare of the people in Union Township and the Village of Batavia, Clermont County.

The JEDD utilizes the taxing authority of the Village of Batavia to collect income tax on the sale of marijuana at two dispensaries located in Union Township. The income tax will be split 85% to Union Township and 15% to the Village of Batavia.

Presentation of the proposed Contract and Ordinance 1540-25 by Ken Geis.

Public Comments, Questions and Discussion of Ordinance 1540-25.

Brian Wandstrat –He wondered why the Village was willing to partner with Union Township for marijuana dispensaries when the Village has a prohibition against marijuana.

Chuck Gallagher– He asked why a marijuana dispensary would ask for a JEDD. Mr. Geis responded that the Village didn't know because that discussion was between the dispensary and Union Township.

There were no further public comments.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn from the Public Hearing by Mr. Pryor; seconded by: Ms. Cole

Public Hearing adjourned at 9:15.

Council returned to regular session at 9:15

Legislation

An Ordinance to consider adopting Ordinance 1540-25 approving a Contract between Union Township and the Village of Batavia t create Joint Economic Development District No. 9 (JEDD).

Ordinance 1540-25

1st Reading Declare an emergency and waive the three readings to generate revenue necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, property, health and safety of the Village.

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to waive the three readings and to declare an emergency to generate revenue necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, property, health and safety of the Village; seconded by Ms. Cole

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to adopt **Ordinance 1540-25**, seconded by Ms. Cole

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Community and Economic Development:

Electric Vehicle Charging Station

Work is substantially completed at the Charging Station, and we met the deadline for opening. We will begin the process to close out the grant process with the EPA.

Road Improvements:

Decorations

The Public Works Department (is removing) removed the decorations, including the tree on Main Street. This operation was delayed because of the snow event

ODOT (Herold Road)

TEC completed plans and submitted the proposal to ODOT for funding through a safety grant. ODOT had some initial feedback that we completed.

On January 14, 2025, we received notice that we were awarded a grant for the project.

There is a Village cost of up to $300,000 for this project. The Administrator asked Council to approve a **Motion** to move forward with the project and to seed a bond to pay the Village's share.

Mr. Meyer made a **Motion** to approve moving forward with the turn land improvement project on S.R. 32 at Herold Road, to approve having the Village issue a bond to pay the Village's cost for the project, and to authorize the Administrator to execute documents necessary for the project, seconded by Mr. Gipson

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Zoning Administrator Chip Stewart

Zoning Permits: There were 200 Zoning Permits in 2024

Streamside	*new home permits*	*55*
Harvest Meadows	*new home permits*	*101*
	Total 2024 new home permits	*156*

Zoning Violations:

working violations in progress	19
violations in court process	5

Verizon Cell Towers: Vendor states that it will be February, 2025 before the fiber is completed near the pole on the bridge on Main Street.

Zoning Cases: There will be 2 public hearings at the February 27 Planning Meeting.
Riverpoint Apartments Final Development Plans
Harvest Meadows Phase 4 Final Development Plans

Village Solicitor: Christopher Moore

In the last month the Solicitor primarily worked on questions about personnel.

The nuisance zoning violations with the Flores property has been brought back into compliance.

The Solicitor has been asked to prepare a lease agreement between the Village and Bean & Brew for the parking lot on N. Riverside Dr. across the street from UDF. In order to lease the property, the Village needs to transfer ownership of the parking lot from the Village to the Village of Batavia Clermont County CIC, Inc.

Mr. Meyer made a **Motion** to approve having the Village transfer ownership of parcels 060202.008 and 060202.009 to the Village of Batavia Clermont County CIC, Inc., to approve leasing the Village parking lot on N. Riverside Dr., consisting of parcels 060202.008 and 060202.09, to Bean & Brew, to approve having the Village Solicitor prepare the lease agreement, and to authorize the Administrator to execute documents necessary for the project, seconded by Mr. Gipson

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Mayor: C. Scott Runck

The Mayor thanked the Police Department, the Christmas Committee, the business community and the public for making the Christmas in the Village event that was held Friday, December 6, successful.

The Mayor will be assigning Committee appointments this month. Any Council Member who wishes to serve on specific Committees, or who no longer wants to serve on specific Committees, should convey that to the Mayor. Appointments will be announced at the February 10 Council Meeting.

The 2025 Vice Mayor will be selected by Council at the February 10 Council Meeting.

Fiscal Officer: John Waite

The Fiscal Officer's report on December activity has been submitted to Council.

2024 income tax revenue increased by $355,832, The General Fund cash balance increased by $355,832. The General Fund year-end balance was $1,407,320.

Legislation

An Ordinance Adopting Full-Year Appropriations for 2025

Ordinance 1539-24

2nd Reading

An Ordinance Adjusting Wages for Fiscal Officer for 2025

Ordinance 1541-25

1st Reading Waive the three readings.

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to waive the three readings; seconded by Ms. Cole

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Mr. Pryor made a **Motion** to adopt **Ordinance 1541-25**, seconded by Ms. Turner

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

A Resolution Amending the Public Works Department Wage Schedule for 2025

Resolution 371-25

1st Reading Waive the three readings.

Mr. Meyer made a **Motion** to waive the three readings; seconded by Mr. Gipson

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Mr. Meyer made a **Motion** to adopt **Resolution 371-25**, seconded by Mr. Gipson

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

A Resolution Amending the Police Department Wage Schedule for 2025

Resolution 372-25

1st Reading Waive the three readings.

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to waive the three readings; seconded by Ms. Cole

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Ms. Cole made a **Motion** to adopt **Resolution 372-25**, seconded by Mr. Pryor

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

A Resolution Adjusting Wages for the Administrative Staff for 2025

Resolution 373-25

1st Reading Waive the three readings.

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to waive the three readings; seconded by Mr. Pryor

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Ms. Cole made a **Motion** to adopt **Resolution 373-25**, seconded by Mr. Pryor

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

A Resolution Amending the Contract with Geis Consulting Group, Ltd. For Village Administrative Services for 2025

Resolution 374-25

1st Reading Waive the three readings.

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to waive the three readings; seconded by Ms. Cole

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Ms. Cole made a **Motion** to adopt **Resolution 374-25**, seconded by Mr. Gipson

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Committee Meetings / Reports

Monday, February 10 @ 7:00 pm	Village of Batavia Clermont County CIC, Inc. Meeting Annual Meeting to appoint CIC Officers
Monday, February 10 @ 7:00 pm	Next Month's Regular Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 18 @ 7:00 pm	Next Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
Monday, February 24 @ 7:00 pm	If needed, next Month's 2nd Regular Council Meeting

New Business, Questions, and Comments from Council

Mr. Gipson stated that Mr. Millard's presentation suggested two options that would satisfy the School. One of the options is for the Village to move forward with annexations and developments but to provide the school with funding to make up for the funding lost from tax abatements.

Last month the developer of the Bauman Lane Taylor Road project commented that delay is placing the project in jeopardy of being cancelled. If the project were cancelled this would have significant

negative economic impact on the Village directly related to this project and potential future development in the Village. At this point, if the Village is to have a project so that it can provide the school with funding, it is necessary for the Village to approve the zoning for the Bauman Lane Taylor Road development, as an emergency.

Therefore, in light of Mr. Millard's presentation and the clear present emergency, Mr. Gipson would like the Village to proceed with legislation to repeal Ordinance 1536-24, currently subject to a Referendum Petition, and adopt a new Ordinance approving PUD zoning for the Bauman Lane Taylor Road development as an emergency.

An Ordinance to Repeal Ordinance 1536-24 Approving Zoning Change to Planned Unit Development (PUD) for parcels 012007E.035, 0102006D.008 and 012006F.024 currently known as the Bauman Lane Taylor Road Development and Declaring an Emergency

Ordinance 1542-25

1st Reading Waive the three readings and declare an emergency.

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to waive the three readings and declare an emergency being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, or welfare, to wit: for the prevention of economic peril of the Village of Batavia, the preservation and addition of employment opportunities in the Village of Batavia to preserve and increase municipal income tax revenues to preserve public peace, health, safety and welfare of the Village of Batavia; to provide a source of housing to combat the immediate and consistent impending housing shortage in the Village of Batavia and surrounding areas; to protect the value of previously made utility infrastructure investments in the Village of Batavia; and to protect the Village of Batavia's influence in and provide a source of public revenue for public infrastructure improvements to be made throughout the Village of Batavia.; seconded by Ms. Cole

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, no, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 5-1

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to adopt **Ordinance 1542-25**, seconded by Ms. Cole

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

An Ordinance Approving Zoning Change to Planned Unit Development (PUD) for parcels 012007E.035, 0102006D.008 and 012006F.024 currently known as the Bauman Lane Taylor Road Development and Declaring an Emergency

Ordinance 1543-25

1st Reading Waive the three readings and declare an emergency.

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to waive the three readings and declare an emergency being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, or welfare, to wit: for the prevention of economic peril of the Village of Batavia, the preservation and addition of employment opportunities in the Village of Batavia to preserve and increase municipal income

tax revenues to preserve public peace, health, safety and welfare of the Village of Batavia; to provide a source of housing to combat the immediate and consistent impending housing shortage in the Village of Batavia and surrounding areas; to protect the value of previously made utility infrastructure investments in the Village of Batavia; and to protect the Village of Batavia's influence in and provide a source of public revenue for public infrastructure improvements to be made throughout the Village of Batavia.; seconded by Ms. Cole

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, no, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 5-1

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to adopt **Ordinance 1543-25**, seconded by Ms. Cole

Vote by Roll: Mr. Gipson, yes, Ms. Cole, yes, Mr. Garrison, yes, Mr. Pryor, yes, Mr. Meyer, yes, Ms. Turner, yes **Motion** passed 6-0

Adjournment:

Mr. Gipson made a **Motion** to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Pryor **Motion** passed 6-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.

ATTEST: _____ _____

C. Scott Runck, Mayor John Waite, Clerk for the Meeting

Keith Millard, Superintendent Batavia Local Schools
Presentation to Batavia Village Council
Monday, January 27, 2025

Good evening. On behalf of the Batavia Board of Education and the Batavia school community, I want to thank you for the opportunity to share about the direction of the District as we enter a period of growth. We appreciated the presentation from Mayor Runck at our January Board of Education meeting and thank you for the time the council is granting tonight.

As I am fond of saying, there has never been a better time to be a Batavia Bulldog. The completion of Bulldog Place has fulfilled the longstanding vision of the Batavia Board of Education to create an educational and community focused hub for all within the community to enjoy. Our new buildings have provided the foundation for program expansions in core academic areas, electives, the arts, and athletics. Our students and families enjoy access to spaces that are enriching and build a sense of community that is sorely lacking in our world. Bulldog Place is busy 7 days a week from morning to night, whether it be school, extracurriculars, or community activities and events. Our facilities exist for one purpose, which is to serve the community.

Not too long ago, Batavia had to host all fine arts programs in spaces not conducive to performances. Through the vision of the Board and the generosity of the community, our arts programs have expanded dramatically, and each building has a dedicated theater space from which students can let their talents flow. The new stage at the middle school has given rise to a middle school theater program, and students at Batavia High School performed the first fall play in recent memory utilizing the amazing theater space they are blessed with.

Academically, the District continues to make strides as students continue to emerge from the dark time that was the global pandemic. The years since 2020 have not only been focused on academic recovery, but also how we re-invent educational delivery to meet the changed learning landscape that emerged from the pandemic.

At the elementary school, there has been a strong focus on literacy and implementing the science of reading, in order to ensure that all of our students have the reading skills necessary to blossom as learners in our information rich society. The elementary school has also heavily invested in personalizing academic interventions through the use of data, and breaking down the one size fits all approach that has dominated traditional educational approaches for decades.

At Batavia Middle School, the pandemic made clear that learning in isolation was harmful to young adolescents, and this has given way to the return of academic teams within the school day. Transitioning through young adulthood has never been more challenging. The Board of Education responded by investing in the middle school educational program, building a sense of belonging at school with teams of caring staff members who work collectively to meet the unique needs of middle school students.

At the high school, there is a focus on ensuring that every student has a pathway, beginning with their freshman year, that will ultimately lead to a successful transition to the destination of their choosing upon graduation. A significant amount of work has been done in the area of

career awareness and readiness, and students at Batavia High School have never had more opportunities to engage in apprenticeships, internships, experiential learning, and workplace learning activities. Through an investment by the Board, there are two staff members whose days are partially dedicated to directing career awareness and career experience activities for students. The Board has also heavily invested in expanding elective opportunities for students, along with expanding the number of AP and honors courses available to them. In an era of specialization, Batavia has embraced the comprehensive high school model, and believes that with a dedicated staff and clear focus on ensuring student success beyond high school, all things are possible.

All of these great things, however, do not happen without the ability to afford them. In my 10 years as Superintendent, we have been very budget conscious and have lived within our means. For the first five years of my tenure, budgets were extremely tight, and much of what I described to you was not possible, as the focus was largely on completing the master facilities plan, and operating dollars were thin. However, all throughout the construction process, the internal dialogue within the District was always about what our programs were going to look like once the building project was completed. A phrase I have borrowed from one of our administrators and community members is that we want the insides of the buildings (i.e. our programming) to be just as beautiful as the outsides of our buildings and our campus is, and fulfilling this vision has been the focus even before the building project was anywhere near completed.

Around the time of the pandemic there was another issue brewing that I doubt anyone is aware of, and it has to do with something known as the State Education Budget Cap. For years, Batavia was the only capped District in Clermont County. In other words, we received less money from the State than the funding formula dictated that we should receive. There were a number of reasons for this, none of which are worth the time to dive into. The part of the story that matters is that there were about 40 districts like us around the state that were significantly impacted by the cap, and it was during the latter half of the pandemic that the District joined an advocacy coalition to help eliminate the budget cap in the the new (at the time) Cupp Patterson Funding Bill that went into effect beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. It was this advocacy by the school district, coupled with very careful and prudent spending of pandemic era funding, which has allowed the District to be able to afford all of the programming additions which are making the insides of our buildings beautiful. I am proud of the fiscal course we have taken as a school district, and all of the enhanced opportunities our students currently have.

But now we stand at a crossroad.

As I shared in a recent update to the community, we partnered with FutureThink to conduct an updated enrollment study for the next 10 years, based on neighborhoods not included in the 2017 enrollment study and new neighborhoods that are in the planning stages. The conclusion of the report is that within 10 years we can reasonably expect that we will grow to a size of over 3000 students.

Enrollment projections can be tricky, as any projection has to balance demographic trends, school enrollment trends, and real estate trends. That being said, our historical enrollment has tracked fairly closely with our previous enrollment studies, and I believe that the influx of housing stock in the next 10 years will lead to a place where we are between 3000 and 3200 students by the mid 2030's.

As I have shared previously with the Council, the real challenge the District will face in the coming years will be increased operational costs related to staffing.

Throughout the District, we are well staffed for 200 students per grade level. As grade level cohorts begin to cross the 200 student threshold, staffing adds start to become a reality. To support the District at the 3000 to 3200 student level (which will range between 225 and 250 students per grade level), 38 additional positions (ranging from teachers to cooks to bus drivers) will be needed, at an estimated cost (in 2025 dollars) of 2.8 million dollars per year.

This brings us back to the issue of tax abatements.

Throughout my superintendency, a top priority has been to live within the means provided to us by the voters, and to only consider going back to the voters to ask for additional operating money if it was absolutely necessary. For a number of years I heard concerns that once we were in the new buildings, the District would have to go back and ask for more operating money. Through our careful management of resources and advocacy at the State level for access to funds we had been denied through previous versions of the funding formula, we have been able to not only live within our means, but also grow academic programming that has benefitted all students, and avoid returning to the ballot to seek additional operating funds.

However, the hard work that has gone into the managing of District expenditures is now threatened on two fronts.

First, there are serious political and economic headwinds at the state level that present an uncertain funding future for public schools. In an era of record inflation that affects all of us, schools are facing the prospect of, at best, smaller state aid increases than in recent years, or at worst flat or reduced funding as we enter the next two years of the State budget cycle.

Second, there is the growing impact that will be felt by the District as we continue to grow and not receive local property tax revenue on Streamside, Harvest Meadows, and the Red Barn Apartment Complex, along with the threat of continued housing growth within the Village coupled with new tax abatements.

Over the past several months discussions have been occurring between the District and the Village to determine if there is any common ground that can be found regarding a payment agreement to make up for abated taxes.

As we have been told several times, any agreement that would be acceptable to the Village would not include any compensation to the District for the taxes that have already been abated for Streamside, Harvest Meadows, or the new Red Barn Apartments. When looking only at Streamside and Harvest Meadows, during the portion of the fifteen year abatement cycle when the neighborhoods are fully developed, the District will forgo approximately $1.3 million dollars in tax receipts annually, and it is not possible for the us to calculate what will be forgone at Red Barn due to a lack of an understanding of established values for this project.

Structure Value	35% Taxable Value	Millage Calculation	Number of Homes	Total
250000	87500	2114.581	200	422916.2
300000	105000	2537.4972	215	545561.898
350000	122500	2960.4134	100	296041.34
400000	140000	3383.3296	0	0
450000	157500	3806.2458	0	0
500000	175000	4229.162	0	0
			515	1264519.438

Property tax revenue forgone at full buildout of Streamside and Harvest Meadows

When looking at the past tax abatements and the cost of the anticipated abatement of the Bauman property, it is the belief of the District that if the Village pursued a growth strategy that did not include tax abatements, the District would be able to afford the increased operating costs of a growing student population without having to ask the community for additional operating dollars for the foreseeable future. This would have presented the ultimate win-win, with the Village achieving its growth strategy and the District having the ability to support new students without placing an additional burden on taxpayers.

It is important to note that as a school district, we have no opinion on the growth strategy of the Village and the use of annexation to achieve the growth goals of the Village. We do, however, have a very strong opinion on the use of tax abatement tools that transfer property taxes already approved by the voters, and redirects them to the pockets of developers and the coffers of the Village. Regardless of the legality of such a strategy, it is wrong insomuch as it creates a harm for the agencies that are expected to serve all of the residents of both the Village of Batavia and Batavia Township.

Given the housing shortage regionally and the attractiveness of Clermont County and Batavia from both economic and transportation standpoints, growth will organically occur without tax giveaways. While there was a time when economic incentives made more sense due to the lack of transportation infrastructure to easily reach the middle of Clermont County, that time has now passed with the completion of the 32 corridor project. There is no need to enrich developers in the pursuit of residential growth at the expense of the community partners who will be responsible for serving new residents. The recipe for successful development is already in place; available land, convenient access, and a market that is demand driven. As the recent announcement of the new neighborhood on 222 proves, developers will locate within Batavia

without tax incentives, as market forces already make building in central Clermont County attractive.

At the end of the day, this is not your money, regardless of what the Ohio Revised Code says. When you utilize a CRA and 100% tax abatement, you are taking money that belongs to the Library, Fire Department, Schools, and essential services provided by the County. Taxes, at their core, should support the public good, and are not intended to increase the profit margin for a housing developer or increase the balance sheet of the Village.

As a school district, we do not have the ability to raise additional revenue without the consent of the taxpayers or the granting of funds from the State Legislature or from Congress, and we certainly do not have the ability to raise revenue by taking it unilaterally from others.

In order to fulfill our mission, it is not just our funds that must be preserved. In today's educational environment, we count on our partners who receive their share of local property taxes to assist in fulfilling our mission of meeting the needs of all children who enter our doors. This is why any agreement that only looks at the school district is not an agreement that can garner our support.

To create the type of community that we all want to be proud of, there can not be rifts between who does and does not pay their fair share of taxes, and the entire community will be negatively impacted if growth continues to be fueled at the expense of funding services that are the underpinnings of a strong and vibrant community.

With all of this being said, there are two possible options that would be acceptable to the District as the basis for an agreement to end the rift that currently divides the Village and the District.

The first agreement option, which is the less desired outcome on the part of the District, is one where the Village continues their current tax abatement strategy, and at a minimum both the District and CJFED are made 100% whole by the Village for all taxes revenues that are redirected through tax abatements, beginning with the Bauman development and including all future developments that contain new CRA and tax abatement agreements.

For the District to agree to this solution, "made whole" is defined as the calculation of the total revenue derived from the application of the effective millage of both the school district and CJFED per the annual effective rates tax table as published by the County Auditor. Using the Bauman development as an example, when fully developed, the estimated annual hold harmless payment to the District from the Village would be just over $1.62 million dollars per year, and the hold harmless payment for CJFED would be just over $291 thousand dollars per year. Any agreement would also have to stipulate that the same agreed upon formula covering the Bauman development will be utilized for all future tax abated developments.

Bauman Hold Harmless Simulation - January 2025

Home Value	35% Taxable Value	Millage Calculation	Number of Homes	Total
250000	87500	2114.581	300	634374.3
300000	105000	2537.4972	238	603924.3336
350000	122500	2960.4134	130	384853.742
400000	140000	3383.3296	0	0
450000	157500	3806.2458	0	0
500000	175000	4229.162	0	0
				1623152.38

NOTES

Effective District Millage **24.16664**

To determing Millage Calculation, multipy the 35% value by 0.02416664

CJFED Sim

Home Value	35% Taxable Value	Millage Calculation	Number of Homes	Total
250000	87500	380.03875	300	114011.625
300000	105000	456.0465	238	108539.067
350000	122500	532.05425	130	69167.0525
400000	140000	608.062	0	0
450000	157500	684.06975	0	0
500000	175000	760.0775	0	0
				291717.74

NOTES

Effective CJFED Millage **4.3433**

To determing Millage Calculation, multipy the 35% value by 0.0043433

The second agreement option, which is the preferred outcome of the District, is one where all future residential growth in areas annexed by the Village occurs without the use of CRA's and tax abatements, which will allow property taxes to be distributed as originally intended by the voters. As mentioned earlier, while we do not like the past practices that have led us to this moment, the District is willing to let bygones be bygones and not seek compensation for currently abated neighborhoods in the interest of resetting the relationship between the Village and the School District, in exchange for a cessation in the use of tax abatements on residential developments on the part of the Village.

From our perspective, this path is the best for all concerned. It will settle past grievances, prevent new ones from forming, and will allow for tax dollars to flow as intended for the betterment of the entire community.

Should there be a desire on the part of the Council to have a collaborative discussion on these proposals, the District is willing to engage in a sit down dialogue, and you may reach out to either myself or Board President Bruner to establish a time where this may occur between selected members of the Board and the Council.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our position.