

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2021 – 7:30 P.M.
MAYOR WILLIAM G. KOONS PRESIDING**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Canton, Carroll, Galicki, Nairn, Porter

MEMBERS ABSENT: Berger

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Fiscal Officer Romanowski, Police Chief Rizzo, Street Commissioner Alder, Engineer Haibach, Solicitor Matheney

VISITORS: Jen Lyndall, Woodrush Circle.; Randy Glorioso, Anglers Dr.; Ray Schloss, Mapleridge Dr.; Ruth Cavanagh, Paw Paw Lake Dr., Chris Bell, Annandale Dr.; Greg Heilman, Chillicothe Rd.

The Mayor called the Regular Council meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Fiscal Officer read the roll. Berger was absent. **Carroll made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 22, 2021, Regular Council meeting, seconded by Nairn. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

VISITORS: Jen Lyndall, President of The Preserve of Chagrin Homeowners' Association (HOA) requested an update on the progress with stormwater issues. The Village committed to cleaning out a ditch, retaining more water in South Russell Village Park, and conducting a lidar study. She observed that this work had been promised for fall 2022 but had been pushed back to December through February. The Engineer referred to a graphic displayed in Council chambers and explained the drainage between the ponds relative to the ditching in Country Estates. Permissions and rights of entry agreements had been obtained from the effected residents and HOA for the ditching. The Street Commissioner will be meeting with two excavating contractors to obtain quotes to complete the work. He added that it would be most advantageous to do this work in the winter. The Engineer stated that the lidar surveys were in process and should be complete by the end of the month. The data should be available in January 2022.

Lyndall asked that a plan be made to present the lidar data to both The Preserve of Chagrin and Country Estates. The Mayor said it will all be public information. Carroll clarified that it would be beneficial for the Engineer to present the information to Council and allow the HOAs to participate since there would probably be questions. Carroll verified the scope of the lidar study with the Engineer and noted that this information would be of benefit for not only The Preserve and Country Estates but also for work the Village might need to do. Porter expressed concern about notifying residents of low flying aircraft during the conduct of the lidar survey, and the Engineer assured him that the aircraft involved would not be flying so low as to concern residents. The Mayor said the Village would get Lyndall and Don Sutliff the information as to when the lidar results would be discussed by Council.

Lyndall asked whether the ditching would help the connection with the water that is on Country Estates HOA property north of Pond 3 which trickles into the current ditch. The Engineer said yes and referenced and explained a waterflow anomaly previously identified by Country Estates

resident, Doug Meil. The Engineer assured Lyndall that once the connection is reestablished, the water will most certainly be going northeast of Pond 4.

Lyndall expressed concern about the wet spring season and project delays and urged Council to stick to the schedule.

The Mayor explained a portion of the waterflow issues and asked Lyndall to explain how her HOA addressed some of them. Lyndall discussed swale/ditch issues that the HOA plans to extend to help with the backyard flooding of some of The Preserve residents. Additionally, they hope to collaborate with a homeowner in Country Estates to resolve another issue by adding dirt. These projects will be addressed in spring of 2022.

The Engineer explained that the ditch the Village is addressing has been designed in such a way as to accommodate potential waterflow should the two HOAs choose to collaborate on extending the ditch.

Regarding retaining water in the Village Park, the Street Commissioner stated that the level was raised in the retention area by a foot and a half.

Randy Glorioso, 112 Anglers, clarified the scope of the ditch project and explained his observations of water issues behind his property. Regarding the 12-inch pipe on his property, he asked if the Engineer had any expectation of the drop in the pond level to accommodate its removal. The Engineer did not think the pond level would need to drop. A 12-inch pipe does not let the water out very fast. Glorioso concluded that once the drainage is functioning properly in the ditch, he could assess the situation with the pipe.

The Mayor and Glorioso referred to the diagram and discussed other water issues in Country Estates. Lyndall added that some of the areas indicated are habitats for frogs and said it would be good not to drain all the water from them if reasonable.

The Mayor proposed an informational meeting, and the Engineer suggested first getting quotes and establishing a timeline. He added that a meeting could occur while the work was in progress and once the ditching work was complete.

In summary, the Engineer explained that the 'Cadillac' long term solution to the problem would be to connect the ditch/swale line the Village will be constructing back to Pond 2 to provide a clear drainage path from Pond 2 to Pond 4. However, this is a private property issue and not a Village solution. The Village is concerned with accepting the Anglers Dr. outfall and having that drain to the proper location. He could make recommendations on what to do on the private property, but it was up to the HOAs and/or owners to implement the solutions.

Porter asked Lyndall how much the HOA is spending to do the ditch line to Pond 2. Lyndall said that two sections of ditching cost \$10,000. The extension would be a couple thousand more. The Preserve would now be funding reserves for routine swale and ditch maintenance. Porter asked if Pond 4 had the appropriate capacity and the Engineer said it has a clear outlet without any apparent restrictions. Everything downstream would be able to accommodate the water as

well. Porter asked if Pond 4 would need to be dredged soon. The Engineer explained that beyond the project he did not anticipate additional silt and said the channel already drained well to Pond 4. Furthermore, the homeowners were discussing changes to Pond 4 and possibly relocating the ditch. He would review their plans to ensure they did not restrict the drainage the Village would be reestablishing.

Ray Schloss, Mapleridge Dr., explained that there was a camper on the corner of Mapleridge Dr. and Bell Rd. He acknowledged that the Mayor was aware of the situation and that Building Inspector Dave Hocevar had spoken to the resident about a month ago after which time the resident put up a fence in front of the camper. According to Village regulations, residents may have a camper, but it must be screened on all sides. Schloss asked Council to view the atrocious screening to see what could be done to properly screen the camper.

As a resident and former Councilman, Schloss also thanked Councilwoman Nairn and Councilman Carroll for all they had done for the Village. Schloss could not say enough for what Nairn had done and wished she would have been with Council for another four, eight, or twelve years. He echoed the same sentiment for Carroll and expressed his appreciation for both.

MAYOR'S REPORT: The Mayor thanked Carroll and Nairn and stated that the job description of an elected official is often encapsulated in one sentence, do what is best for the residents. He acknowledged that it is more complex than this and thanked them for giving of themselves for many years. He thanked them and wished them good luck.

The Mayor stated that Keith Faber, Ohio State Auditor, spoke to the Northeast Ohio Mayors' meeting. Through audits, the State Auditor reported 27 convictions for fraud in 2020.

Income tax revenue was also discussed at the meeting. It was estimated that 40% of the Income Tax revenue would be changing for municipalities with employees working from home.

The Mayor reported that the MC Art fence complies with the Village regulations, and the posts are in the ground with gravel around them. The Mayor addressed the parking situation between the Village and MC Art and said there had been an exchange of emails with the business. The Chief explained that in the past month or so, there had been an increase in vehicular traffic and people parking instead of using the planned route described in the Village's agreement with MC Art Studio. The Village reached out to MC Art, and the business contacted its patrons. The problems seemed to be decreasing as a result.

The Mayor complimented the Engineer, Street Commissioner, and Police Department in helping residents with parking issues relating to the new pavement around the Thanksgiving holiday.

The Mayor advised that the Geauga County Department on Aging needed assistance in delivering holiday meals.

Last Saturday, 270 residents were without power in the southern part of Lake Louise.

Regarding the ordinance dealing with overtime, which was on the meeting agenda, the Mayor recommended Council consider tabling it until he could have a conversation with the employees.

The Village does not dictate top down to the employees. They needed to be heard and this could be handled with a meeting and the ordinance could be adopted on January 10th.

The Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) would again be providing a \$1,500 grant for the Fall Festival. If the Village applied by February 15th, and was chosen, they would double the amount.

Another tree and plaque were sold for the playground.

The Village will return to court on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 to deal with the issue of vehicles parked in front of a Village residence for more than 22 hours at a time. The Village is asking the court for a consequence to be handed down and not another continuation.

13 wreaths were placed at the graves of veterans in the Village's two cemeteries.

Volunteers are needed on Saturday, December 18th to place 800 wreaths at the Chagrin Evergreen Cemetery.

The people of Manor Brook were concerned now that the agreement with Whitetail had been signed. He had a meeting with some of the residents last week who expressed concern because their properties face the project area and with tree removal, they will see and hear the traffic.

The Mayor wished everyone a good Christmas and said Council would be back in action on January 10th, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. He thanked those in Council chambers and viewers on YouTube for their financial support and everything they had done because it has been a great place to live.

FISCAL OFFICER'S REPORT: The Fiscal Officer distributed her monthly report. Porter asked the Fiscal Officer about the Police fund audit. The Fiscal Officer explained that this occurred during the Village's audit. The Village was randomly selected for an audit of the Village's Ohio Police and Fire Pension fund. They examined payroll files and there were no findings. She further reported that for the Village's regular audit, she had provided the auditors all the information requested. However, the Auditor's Office is running behind with it being the end of the year.

The Fiscal Officer reported she was in receipt of paperwork from the Engineer. The Village received one of the big bills for the Road Program and the amount due is \$321,000. Additionally, the Village will owe \$71,000 for Lake Louise Bridge. This is almost \$400,000 that will have to be paid in December. Part of it will be covered by Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) grant money. She verified that there were no outstanding problems with the Road Program before paying the bill.

The Fiscal Officer thanked Councilwoman Nairn for all her years of help with everything from the Cemetery to her proof reading of all of the Council and committee minutes and Village newsletter. Her help would be missed. She thanked Councilman Carroll for his assistance with the fire contract and his work with matters such as the tiered salary system. He put in a lot of hours that people did not see.

The Mayor asked the Fiscal Officer and Solicitor if it were normal for contracts to contain a caveat that there would be no payment or half payment in the event of a cancellation or postponement. The Solicitor said that the Village could try to include one, but the contractors may not agree. The Fiscal Officer explained that the Village attempted to do this in the past, but the contractors would not agree. It may be a matter of finding contractors who will.

The Mayor noted that according to the reported Income Tax, this could be the Village's best year ever. The Fiscal Officer agreed that it would be a very good year, but she would not have a report of the full year until February. She thought much of it was from withholding, which related to the changes in the Income Tax law where taxes were withheld where people work. With the pandemic, withholding had remained with where the employers were located, but this will change next year for people who continue to work from home. The bigger cities stand to lose a lot of money, but the Village could benefit.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Carroll reported that the Finance Committee met December 7, 2021, and the minutes were distributed to Council. Fund balances were discussed which were higher than in the past. However, as indicated by the Fiscal Officer, there are outstanding expenses that will draw down the fund balances. Carroll relayed that the Fiscal Auditor indicated that his fund balances were arrived at independently and matched the Fiscal Officer's to the penny. **Carroll made a motion to approve the fund balances, seconded by Canton. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Carroll made a motion to acknowledge receipt and review of the 12-03-2021 Credit Card Report, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

The Fiscal Officer stated that because the Village is cash balance, typically at the end of the year, all of the purchase orders are closed, and the new year starts fresh. She wanted Council to understand that the Village will be encumbering a lot this year into next year because there are projects in progress and it is necessary to have money on purchase orders to pay these, which is the law. Additionally, a lot of changes will be required once the year-end balances are certified.

SOLICITOR: The Solicitor reported that she attended the Janssen Johnson and Johnson settlement conference call regarding the National Opioid Settlement. It pertained to making sure the Village participated in the settlement. She provided legislation for a participation agreement for Council to consider. The deadline is the end of the year. The Mayor asked if there were a reason the Village should not participate, and the Solicitor said no. The range of money the Village would receive would be between \$9,000 to \$13,000 depending on how many municipalities participated.

ENGINEER: The Engineer stated that the Road Program was wrapping up. The current contract amount is \$433,000. With the remaining work, he anticipated it would come in around \$428,000. He was happy with the quality of work.

The Engineer said he hoped to have preliminary drawings of the retention basin south of Village Hall for Council to view, but the cross sections were not complete. The Engineer reported,

however, that the design was 85% completed. The project would be ready to go out to bid after the first Council meeting in January.

The Lake Louise Bridge project had been on hold due to supply chain issues with the guard rail. However, it had been delivered and after installation, the second phase of the project would begin. The only issue encountered involved a concrete slab that had been found which was hooked to the rear abutment. It took a day to remove, but the contractor had not yet asked for additional compensation. If this occurs, he thought it would be about \$6,000 to \$8,000, which would be an overage to the project. Otherwise, the project was staying within the budget.

As previously discussed, the ditching project would begin after the Street Commissioner obtained the quotes from two contractors. The Street Commissioner said there was a possibility of the spoils from the ditching staying on property which would mean a considerable savings.

Carroll verified that the Engineer would have the stormwater retention basin plan ready to go out to bid since Council had been waiting on it. The Engineer verified that by the end of the year, it would be ready. Carroll advised that Porter would have to carry this torch to make sure it happened. Porter said it would be happening. Carroll reiterated that it was a very high priority. He added that similarly, the sooner the work was done with Country Estates and The Preserve the more positive impact there would be for everyone downstream, to include Parkland Dam and Chagrin Lakes. Porter proposed having a Special Council meeting after Christmas to authorize the project to go out to bid, and the Engineer cautioned that he would have to first determine the status of the final drawings. He would contact the Mayor and Street Committee if and when a Special meeting should occur.

The Engineer stated that regarding the new traffic light, a lot of the preliminary survey work had been done and he should have a set of plans for the Chief in March 2022.

Nairn recalled discussion with the Engineer about an issue with a problematic culvert near the Lantern or Family Life Center. The Engineer stated that the Village has OPWC funding to replace the culverts under Chillicothe Rd. However, the Village cannot award this until July 2022. Otherwise, all scenarios are being considered. He felt the retention pond that will be built south of Village Hall will change the need to replace or reconfigure the culvert that goes under the road at the dental office. It might be possible to shift the funds to a culvert further south. Nairn thought that the culvert previously discussed had not been in the original plan and was further south. The Engineer said this was correct and thought the funding could be applied to it since he kept the culvert description vague in the OPWC application.

The Mayor added that regarding the water on the southeast corner of The Lantern, he would like to put in a pond to catch that water.

Porter asked when the Lake Louise Bridge would be complete, and the Engineer said by the end of February.

STREET COMMISSIONER: The Street Commissioner submitted his month end report.

STREET COMMITTEE: Carroll stated the committee met on December 3rd and the minutes were provided to Council. There was also a joint HR/Street Committee meeting to discuss aspects of overtime to include the definition of a callout and the impact on overtime. In particular, the matter of callout timing was considered relative to the four-hour minimum overlapping with the start time of the workday. In looking at the data, this was a rare occurrence, and Carroll felt that any and all callouts should get the four-hour minimum regardless of timing. This would affect both the Service and Police Departments.

BUILDING COMMITTEE: Canton stated that the December 2nd Building Committee minutes were distributed to Council.

POLICE CHIEF: The Chief submitted his month end report.

SAFETY COMMITTEE: Porter reported the committee did not meet since there was no business to discuss. Porter stated that efforts to improve traffic flow and safety on Daisy Lane was beneficial to the residents. Traffic had slowed and been reduced and would continue to be monitored. The Chief indicated there was a speed box on Daisy Lane monitoring traffic. Canton asked if the box could be programmed to thank people who lowered their speed. The Chief said he had done this for drivers who were below 25 mph.

HR COMMITTEE: Nairn reported that the HR committee had a joint meeting with the Street Committee on December 10th, which Carroll had already discussed.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE: Galicki had no report.

PUBLIC UTILITIES: Nairn had nothing to report.

PARK COMMITTEE: Galicki stated the Park Committee met on December 8, 2021, and minutes had not yet been received. Galicki indicated that there was a question raised about the expenses of the Fall Festival. It was the first time in its history that the Fall Festival had to be cancelled due to weather. Among the lessons learned was to reserve every Sunday in September and the first two Sundays in October as potential dates for the event until it would be possible to schedule a date and rain date. There was a total of \$8,043 that was committed to the Fall Festival prior to cancellation, which included \$2,294 to Game Craze; \$1,800 to Bubble Wanda and face painters; \$621 for A-1 Limo; \$1,300 for Pony Express; \$750 for the Haney String Band; \$310 for CCM Rentals; and \$968 for miscellaneous food. The Village was only able to recoup \$1,300 from Pony Express and \$750 from the Haney String Band. The total cost then was \$5,993 for the Fall Festival.

Carroll asked if there was still a strategic plan being developed for the park, and Galicki indicated it was discussed. The Engineer is engaging some of his associates to assist with the plan. The Mayor said that at the February 28th Council meeting, there will be a presentation of ideas from CT.

ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:

Carroll removed the tabled ordinance terminating the grant agreement between the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the Village of South Russell for the project titled Manor

Brook Headwater Stream Restoration Project bearing Project Number 19(h)EPA-19 / SORUSS-FD31919 and authorizing the Solicitor to send written notice of termination to Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, seconded by Galicki. Carroll explained that when this legislation was first proposed, the Village was getting nowhere with Manor Brook and Whitetail. Yearly \$10,000 easement costs were being discussed as well as having the Service Department go pick up trash and dog waste at the site. It seemed like the Village was not getting anywhere and he felt the Village was being exposed to unneeded liability and excessive costs. Once this legislation was introduced, it started action on considering things differently. The Whitetail Phase I project was presented, which was an excellent opportunity even though it was a portion of the original project at this time. His position was to vote down the ordinance and allow the project with Whitetail to go through. Hopefully, Phase II could occur in the future after the Manor Brook residents were able to get things in order.

Roll call – aye, Galicki and Nairn. Nays, Porter and Carroll. Canton recused himself. The Mayor stated that a nay gets rid of it. Carroll said there was no tie. Galicki and Nairn indicated they required clarification. Galicki thought they were voting to get rid of it, and the vote in the affirmative would reflect that. The nay would then mean it still stood. The Fiscal Officer indicated there was a motion and a second to untable it. Porter stated that an affirmative vote indicated being in favor of the ordinance as it exists. Galicki said this was not his intent. Porter further explained that Carroll suggested voting it down, which would be a nay vote. Galicki and Nairn agreed that they interpreted their votes to support voting it down. Porter indicated that the Mayor broke the tie which voted it down. The Solicitor said that the Mayor said this, but there was not actually a tie because there were only four eligible to vote and four were necessary to pass, not three. The Fiscal Officer indicated that there was a misunderstanding. The Solicitor stated Council would simply need to repeal what just happened and start over. The Fiscal Officer indicated that there had been a motion and a second to untable, which had not been voted on. Porter said untabling would not have required a motion. The Solicitor agreed.

Carroll explained that he untabled the ordinance and clarified that if Council members voted no, it voted down the proposed ordinance. The Fiscal Officer clarified that this vote would be for passing the ordinance and a vote of no would indicated not wanting to go forward. Voting aye would kill the Manor Brook project. Roll call – Nays, Porter, Galicki, Nairn, and Carroll. Canton recused himself. **THE ORDINANCE FAILED.**

There was a question of the Mayor’s ability to break a tie in a four-person vote. A unanimous vote would be required in this instance. The Fiscal Officer explained that it was the majority of Council not the majority of those eligible. The Solicitor concurred.

Carroll provided a third reading of the 2022 Annual Appropriation Ordinance: General Fund balance of \$1,374,218; Special Fund \$4,940,246; Capital Fund \$216,750 for a total amount of \$6,531, 214. Carroll made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2021-75**

Nairn provided a third reading of an ordinance amending the overtime section of the Village’s Employee Handbook and declaring an emergency. Nairn made a motion to adopt, seconded by

Carroll. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2021-76** The Solicitor and Fiscal Officer asked for clarification of which ordinance version had been passed. Carroll clarified that it included the guarantee of four hours for callouts regardless of the time of the call.

Nairn provided a third reading of an ordinance amending the pay increases section of the Village's Employee Handbook to include Service Bonus Program. Nairn made a motion to adopt, seconded by Carroll. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2021-77**

Carroll introduced a resolution authorizing the Village of South Russell to accept the material terms of the One Ohio Subdivision Settlement pursuant to the One Ohio Memorandum of Understanding and consistent with the terms of the July 21, 2021, National Opioid Settlement, authorize the Mayor to execute the participation form on behalf of the Village, and declaring an emergency. Carroll made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Nairn. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Carroll made a motion to adopt, seconded by Nairn. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **RES 2021-78**

Porter provided a third reading on an ordinance approving the agreement between South Russell Village and Whitetail Run Community Association, Inc. for the Manor Brook Headwater Stream Restoration Project, in part, and authorizing the Mayor to execute such agreement and the Fiscal Officer and Solicitor to carry it out as appropriate. Porter made a motion to adopt, seconded by Carroll. Roll call – ayes, Porter, Galicki, Nairn, and Carroll. Canton recused himself. **ORD 2021-79**

Porter provided the third reading approving the Drainage Easement and Environmental Covenant among South Russell Village, Whitetail Run Community Association, Inc., and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for the Manor Brook Headwater Stream Restoration Project, in part, authorizing the Mayor to execute such easement, and authorizing the Mayor, Fiscal Officer, and Solicitor to take all necessary steps to effectuate such easement and record it with the proper authorities of Geauga County. Porter made a motion to adopt and declared an emergency, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, Porter, Galicki, Nairn, and Carroll. Canton recused himself. **ORD 2021-80**

Carroll introduced an ordinance amending the Annual Appropriations increasing Trust and Agency funds \$25,000 and declaring an emergency. Carroll made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Nairn. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Carroll made a motion to adopt, seconded by Nairn. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2021-81**

Carroll introduced an ordinance transferring funds from the Income Tax Fund to the Safety Fund \$200,000, General Fund \$50,000, and Lake Louise Fund \$50,000, and declaring an emergency. Carroll made a motion to waive further readings, seconded by Nairn. Roll call – ayes, all. Carroll made a motion to adopt, seconded by Nairn. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2021-82**

Carroll introduced a resolution requesting Advance of Taxes for the General, Safety, Operating, and Road fund from the County Auditor for tax advance dates of January 21, 2022, February 8, 2022, July 7, 2022, and July 20, 2022. Carroll made a motion to waive readings and declaring an

emergency, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Carroll made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **RES 2021-83**

BILLS LIST

Carroll made a motion to ratify the bills list dated 11/29/2021 in the amount of \$94,717.82, seconded by Porter. Voice vote -ayes, all. Motion carried. Carroll made a motion to ratify the Manor Brook bill dated 11/15/2021 in the amount of \$1,531.90, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, Porter, Galicki, Nairn, Carroll. Canton recused himself.

NEW/OTHER: Porter had no new business.

Canton read a letter on behalf of Councilman Chris Berger conveying his thanks to Mayor, Council, Department Heads, and service providers for helping him learn to be a good Council member in the past year. He thanked Council members Nairn and Carroll for their service to the Village. Canton seconded Berger's words.

Galicki extended his thanks to Council member Cindy Nairn for six years of service to the Village and Councilman Mike Carroll for his eight years of service. They both served honorably and ethically and although often misrepresented and maligned by others during the past four years, the taxpayers and citizens should know that they served the public well. They were good stewards of public funds and always had the courage and character to act in the best interest of the greater public good. He thanked them for the times they took the harder path to best serve the residents. Galicki quoted a staff member of Jimmy Carter who said that doing the right thing always does not result in your reelection. Galicki wished them the best as well as a mariner's wish for fair winds and following seas.

Nairn thanked Council for the last 14 years and said it was an awesome experience.

Carroll expressed concern with a video posted in connection with the Cleveland State University (CSU) Public Management program that contained a presentation made by the Mayor. He was very disappointed in what he saw and added that the Village paid for the Mayor to take this course. It was supposed to have been an opportunity to learn, do self-reflection, and become a better leader and manager. He encouraged the public to look up the video and noted that the Mayor's facts were not presented truthfully, accurately, and portrayed some of Council as not acting in the best interest of the Village as a whole. He took offense to this. Carroll received his Master of Public Administration and City and Urban Management Certificate from CSU, and stated this institution has a statement of honesty and academic integrity. What was presented was not honest and lacked integrity. He would be following up with CSU with his concerns directly.

He thanked all for their kind words and stated it had been an honor to serve South Russell for the past eight years. Carroll's reflection of his time in Council is attached as Exhibit (A).


Carroll made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:09 p.m. to discuss employee compensation, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Council exited Executive Session at 9:43 p.m.

Porter introduced an amendment to the Pay Range Ordinance to increase the high end of the pay bands for the Mayor, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Fire Prevention Officer by 15%. Porter made a motion to waive readings and declared an emergency, seconded by Carroll. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to adopt, seconded by Nairn. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2021-84**

ADJOURNMENT: Being that there was no further business before Council, **Carroll made a motion to adjourn at 9:45 p.m., seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**



William G. Koons, Mayor



Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki

Thank you all for your kind words as it has been an honor to serve the residents of South Russell for the past 8 years. I say that we serve all residents as that is what we are elected to do...not to make personal friendships a priority over what is legal, ethical, fiscally responsible, and transparent.

Over the last 8 years, I can say that I have grown as a councilman and have learned a lot about myself, the community as a whole and politics in general. Some of the experiences have been good...and some not so good if I am being honest.

While some on Council (and some community members) may think that I had a “hard edge” or liked to give the Mayor a hard time on any and all issues, I would say that I have always tried to ensure that we are serving “all residents” in a fiscal, ethical and transparent manner. I have supported the Mayor on several issues that I thought he was right on point but I do not follow blindly when things need to be questioned. That is the responsibility we have as elected officials to be free thinking, debate issues without taking it personally, and ultimately come to a consensus on a decision.

Early this year, the Mayor made a statement that I was questioning his integrity regarding his approach to the Manor Brook 319 project...while, in fact I was given the fact that he and another councilman were discussing exorbitant easement costs outside of council and then claimed he was not. Unfortunately, a public records request of the Mayor and council members on emails and documents did indeed show that discussions were taking place. It should also be noted that the Mayor did not provide all public records as requested which is a direct violation of public records request laws. These are all indisputable facts...not alternative facts...facts that are supported by documents and Village minutes of record. One simple definition of integrity is “doing the right thing when no one is looking”...well the Mayor and a councilman were NOT doing the right thing when no one was looking, so yes; I question their integrity.

Most recently, a video was found on the Cleveland State University website where the Mayor states several lies or distortion of the facts related to Village Issues. This violates Cleveland State University’s statement on “Academic Integrity” – specifically “academic honesty”.

Admittedly, I still need to work on my “Irish” diplomacy, but I do not regret any challenge or questions I have posed on certain issues. I have had certain views on certain issues but once all the facts and details were further explored, some of those views changed. As an example, I felt that going to Geauga County for Building Inspection services should be considered due to the fact our residents are paying for that service already.

When our Building Commissioner retired, and our Building Inspector left for another community; council looked at this possibility much closer. Council at the time elected to have an outside consultant come in and evaluate the workload of the department. While the Mayor disagreed with the results and felt it was biased, it was one method of looking at it objectively. In the end, it was found that the closing of the Building Department could also mean the loss of some other commissions (ABR/PC) which may not be in the best interest of the Village. Ultimately, the Village landed on a part-time model which has worked very well over the last 3+ years. I fully support our current model and it works well for our Village.

My concern and advocacy for all Residents of South Russell has led to the following:

Fire/EMS Contract – only contract of the 6 with language ensuring proper response times based on National Fire Protection Association benchmarks!

Storm Water Funding – advocated for a levy to fund stormwater mitigation. Since a levy can not be directed towards storm water mitigation directly, supported the implementation of the Road Levy with the funds collected off-setting the general funds for roads to be directed towards storm water mitigation projects. It should be noted that Council fully agreed to the Road Levy so that those equal funds collected can be used for storm water mitigation. It has been suggested in the past that the Road levy was to “double” the road program which is a false statement. The Council minutes from those discussion as well as articles in the paper will indicate the only reason for the Road levy was for the Village to allocate funds for storm water mitigation while at the same time continuing to support the roads.

Kensington Green 319 Project – funds being redirected to be used on Village property.

Manor Brook 319 grant project – I was totally against the excess easement costs that a few on Council were willing to handover for the Manor Brook project. I fought for a reasonable easement and even introduced legislation to kill the entire project as it exposed the Village to endless easement fees by Manor Brook. However, this legislation caused the Village to look more creatively at the project and now phase 1 will be started on the Whitetail piece of property in Spring 2022. It is hoped that Manor Brook and the Village can agree to a reasonable easement in 2022 to possibly complete phase 2 at some point in the future.

Mailers to residents prior to road work for culvert replacement – this has allowed residents to proactively participate in getting their driveway culverts replaced prior to the Village repaving a road.

Proactive ditch work for storm water run-off – this includes the ditch between West Bel Meadow and Chillicothe. In addition, advocated for a permitting process to be properly followed so that residents don't enclose their road ditches in front of their homes without considering proper sizing or in-lets.

Lidar Survey for Country Estates – further investigation into the water issues between Country Estates and the Preserve that is transparent and fair to all residents. In the past, blame was shifted from one neighbor to another without really looking at it impartially.

Appropriate raises for Village employees, including most recently a service bonus and a proposed template for a consistent tiered salary system for all employees. There had been discussion in the past asking about how a raise is justified and what metrics to use. I developed a model and methodology to follow to ensure raises are consistent with the overall area.

Possible Bond for Parkland Dam – The Mayor and another council member had stated numerous times that the Village could simply “loan” the 11 neighbors on the Parkland small lake money to fix their dam. While I had pushed back on a “simple” loan due to the pandoras box it would create with Village tax funds being used for private property, it led to exploring a possible bond. Once all the information was gathered and the fact that it would NOT negatively impact the Village was determined, a bond could work for the Parkland neighbors with them FULLY funding the project. I total support a bond for this project.

Retention Pond South of Village Hall – stormwater is one of the highest concerns residents have in our community and we have had two studies to help identify priorities to address. The number one priority was the area South of Village Hall due to the water running over 306 and shutting down the road. The Village engineer stated during numerous meetings that this area needed to be addressed and a retention pond on Village property would be best. While the Mayor has pushed back on this for unknown reasons, Village Council supported the program and work should begin this Spring to install this much needed project.

In closing, I want to thank the Village residents for their past support as that is who we ultimately serve. I want to also thank the current Councilmembers for their dedication in service to the Community as it is an honor to serve as an elected official.

I want to thank the Mayor as well, while admittedly it was difficult to see “eye to eye” on most issues, I can say he does dedicate a lot of time serving the Community and our differences caused me to grow both professionally and personally.

I want to thank all the Village employees as they are the face of the Village and truly have an impact on our residents more than anyone else.

Finally, I want to thank my wife & kids as their support and patience over the last eight years has made the experience more fulfilling.

While I may not be on Council, I will remain engaged and always be available to assist on any issue if called upon. I might just see you on the campaign trail in two years!