

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.  
MAYOR WILLIAM G. KOONS PRESIDING**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bell, Berger, Canton, Galicki, Porter

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Cavanagh

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Fiscal Officer Romanowski, Police Chief Rizzo, Solicitor Matheney, Engineer Haibach

**VISITORS:** Donnelle Richner, Woodside Rd.; Debbie Gretchko, Woodside Rd.; Annie Gruettner, Daisy Ln.; Aimee Krebs, Daisy Ln.; Mitch Herman, Daisy Ln.; Brian Morrison, Woodside Rd.; Laura and Lisa Gorretta, Daisy Ln.; Ellyn Wilkoff, Whitetail Dr.; Jerry Penick, Countryside Dr.; Anne Morrison, Lakeview Ln.; Ralfe Silk, Daisy Ln.; George States, Daisy Ln.; Rich Bistriz, Daisy Ln.; Ryan Macy, Sheerbrook Dr.; Martijn Hilbers, Garden Park Dr.; M. Mascia, Daisy Ln.; Rick Kelly and Carrie Schloss, Hickory Hill Rd., Chagrin Falls; Kelly Estes, Kimberwick Ct.

The Mayor called the Regular Council meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Fiscal Officer read the roll. Cavanagh was absent. **Porter made a motion to approve the Special Council meeting minutes of January 22, 2024, seconded by Canton. Voice vote – ayes, Canton, Galicki, Porter, and Berger. Bell abstained. Motion carried. Canton made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2024, Regular Council meeting, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, Canton, Galicki, Porter, and Berger. Bell abstained. Motion carried.**

**VISITORS:** Carrie Schloss, Hickory Hill Rd., Chagrin Falls, addressed Council. She advised that although she does not live in South Russell, she bikes up Bell Rd. to Gurney Elementary School daily and is very interested in making that route safer for students, families, and residents. She appreciated that the Village was exploring crosswalks and paths along Bell Rd. and understood that the Engineer would be discussing a study on this issue. She was present to hear both the outcome of the study and the survey. The Mayor explained that the Village was looking at three different issues. One was crosswalks from Sugar Bush to Gurney and from the park to Alderwood which would cost about \$40,000 per crosswalk. It is a process, and the Village has not taken any action other than looking into it. Sidewalks are the second issue. A survey was sent out in the newsletter and the Mayor was underwhelmed because only eight people responded. There was a Special Council meeting to address the issue, and only six people attended when he expected a big crowd. After this, someone put the survey on social media and the Chief received over 280 comments. The third issue is the idea of a path along Bell. In 2014, the Village did all it could do along Bell with a 40-inch path. A 48-inch path would have been ideal. Paths the size of those in the Metroparks would entail using 10 feet of someone's yard. In the area between Gurney and the park, there are about four houses, a stream, and guardrails which present issues. The Mayor further explained that before spending thousands of dollars on engineering and legal fees, Council wanted to get the flavor for the community and to determine whether it really wanted to do the path and whether it would be effective. People have also expressed interest in sidewalks, particularly from the Rolling Ridge neighborhood. Those can be easily organized and done but at a cost. If it came down to a vote of the community, he did not think it would pass. However, if Rolling Ridge is really interested in doing something like that, they could create a Special Improvement District (SID) where the residents would go together and formally make

a request to the Village which would then go to the Geauga County Auditor to say that the members of this neighborhood want to raise their property taxes to put in sidewalks. The Mayor explained how SIDs are being used in South Russell for repair of neighborhood issues.

He discussed sidewalks with the Mayor of Pepper Pike since that community recently passed the issue by 65% of the voters. He also spoke to the Mayor of Orange and said they had political upheaval. The Mayor concluded that the Village is trying to do its due diligence before spending a lot of the tax payers' money. Nothing had been done other than discussion in committees.

Jerry Penick, Countryside Dr., asked if there is a master plan for South Russell where there is a design criteria/concept in improving usability with walking, cycling, and supporting the businesses at Bell and Chillicothe Roads. He would want to see anything that would be funded fit into a master plan. The Mayor responded that there is no master plan for growth in the Village, but there is a master plan for the park.

Rich Bistrutz, Daisy Ln., asked how Orange paid for their sidewalks. The Mayor said it was through Pinecrest. He did not know how Pepper Pike would be paying for theirs.

The Mayor added that there was also a request for a crosswalk on East Washington near the restaurants, but this is not really being considered at this point. He reiterated that Council is just trying to gather information and trying to get a pulse of what the community wants.

Galicki advised that there is a provision in the Ohio Revised Code on the costs of sidewalks, whether it is construction or repair. The costs are generally borne by the property owners and assessed by how much property frontage a homeowner has. In trying to get the community to come to an agreement, there are the people who would like to have a sidewalk but have no skin in the game in terms of costs. Then there are people, some on fixed incomes, who have lived in their homes 30 to 40 years who are faced with a large assessment, which creates a different scenario. Also, there are width requirements for paths which are spelled out by the Ohio Department of Transportation. The paths must be 11 feet in width with two feet of clearance from trees and obstructions on either side of the path. There are a lot of logistical difficulties with taking a path down Bell Rd. where it could eat up 11 feet of somebody's property. The Village must abide by guidelines and cannot just call something a path and make it 3 feet wide. There are constraints under which the Village has to work.

Mitch Herman, 52 Daisy Ln., would not deny that sidewalks are important, but it would mean that homeowners on Daisy and Bell would have to bear the expense of installing and maintaining the sidewalks. He asked whether the road would have to be widened for the sidewalks and wondered if there must be a minimum width for the road. There is also the issue of buried electrical and potential water issues after the sidewalks are installed. There will be significant costs. He is vehemently against it and emphasized this was not why he moved to the area. If he wanted to walk on sidewalks, he would live in Chagrin Falls. He thought there should be alternatives to seeking safety for the community children whether it is signage, etc.

Donnelle Richner, Woodside Rd., said she had lived in many places in her lifetime and when she wanted to live in a place with sidewalks and a school you could walk to, she did. Everyone who bought homes in South Russell did so knowing this is how it is. She said that no one stops at stop signs, and questioned why the Village would put a crosswalk across Bell Rd. near the school where the speed limit is 45 miles per hour. Richner did not think drivers would stop. She would not allow her children to cross at a crosswalk in this area. If it is that important, maybe a light should be considered. She also did not think sidewalks were the answer, but perhaps lower speed limits would be. Porter

noted that the speed limit on Bell Rd. is 35 miles per hour. There was further discussion about the speed limit on Bell Rd.

Brian Morrison, Woodside Rd., supports the crosswalks and expressed disappointment in drivers that do not observe the school zone speed limit at Gurney Elementary School. The Chief advised that there is a police presence at arrival and dismissal and at times have to direct traffic. Furthermore, there is an issue with distracted driving resulting in the accident rate rising in the Village.

Morrison reminded everyone about the deed restrictions in the Rolling Ridge area. He believed the ditches needed to be maintained, which ties into storm water drainage on which the Village has spent so much time and money. He noted that Rolling Ridge is called Rolling Ridge because there is a ridge at the corner of Deerfield and Daisy Ln. Morrison added that the cost for sidewalks is about \$9 per square foot. He recalled from discussions with his parents that relative to the deed restrictions, there was supposed to be a path maintained in the neighborhood. He was not sure if it was on the perimeter or somewhere else but thought maybe it could help. The Mayor explained that Morrison's father developed Rolling Ridge.

Kelly Estes, Kimberwick Ct., was excited to hear so many thoughts and opinions from the community. It would be a disservice in a community to not weigh all the options with an expensive project that could potentially change the infrastructure. She wondered if there was a better way to advertise the survey and meetings held in relation to the topic. In sending the survey out to her homeowners' association (HOA) and spreading the word, she found that everyone had an opinion. Estes thought the issue needed to be formulated into options for people. She liked the idea of a phased plan like just crosswalks to a multifaceted approach to crosswalks, paths, and sidewalks. She wanted to organize the community's thoughts better. The Mayor thought when the Village comes up with some ideas that can be discussed, a meeting would be held at Gurney. This would be dependent on Council's determination of when to involve the Engineer and Solicitor in the process. Estes asked if the survey had an end date, and the Mayor said no.

George States, Daisy Ln., advised that he and his wife moved to their home in 1980 to get away from the city and such things as sidewalks. They are completely opposed to sidewalks. They walk on Daisy Ln. daily in better weather and noted that the road is narrow with drainage issues. Putting sidewalks in there would not be an easy task and would be problematic due to drainage and the lay of the land. Regarding safety, he appreciated the stop signs and speed signs that had been recently installed and thought they had done a lot of good. However, he has noticed that there are people who ignore the stop sign and occasionally drivers that roar up and down Daisy Ln. at tremendous speeds. He thought there were some tickets to be issued on Daisy Ln. States did not have a comment on crosswalks but thought a crosswalk on Bell Rd. or even Washington St. might not be a bad idea.

Debbie Gretchko, Woodside Rd., has lived there for 33 years. Taxes just went up immensely and it is hard to vote for anything that will raise taxes more. A lot of the community is more mature and are on fixed incomes. Like many other people, they moved to the area from Cleveland Heights to be in a rural community with great schools. She understood the issue with safety on Daisy Ln., and limits her walks to Woodside and Forest, which are nice places to walk. As far as crosswalks, she did not know how many people were letting their kids walk to school and thought most people drive their kids. Gretchko reiterated that for the time being, South Russell is a small community and did not want to see more tax increases.

Lisa Gorretta, Daisy Ln., has the longest stretch of frontage in the neighborhood and has the stop sign in her yard. She felt this had been effective and that distracted driving is the reason for drivers running

the stop sign. She walks the neighborhood with her dog and feels drivers keep a respectful distance. She is not in favor of sidewalks. Gorretta concluded that she was happy the police were addressing distracted drivers.

Ryan Macy said he had lived in Chagrin Lakes for just under two years. The house he purchased was the only one he could afford in the area. They moved from an area in Virginia that had great access to multiuse trails where he and his family could bike, run, and walk without dealing with traffic. In the past year, he had almost been struck by cars in his own neighborhood at least six times. They do not walk on Bell Rd. because it is narrow, and people drive too fast. He felt this is the reason not many people walk or bike on it. He does not like to run down Bell Rd., but he does because it is the only way to get to some of the trails and parks. More access and safety are needed for the children. He does not permit his children to ride their bikes in the neighborhood because of his own close calls and would not let them ride on Bell Rd. due to safety concerns.

Martijn Hilbers, Garden Park Dr., moved to South Russell from the Netherlands five years ago. Being able to move adds good value to health and life. It is also an investment for the children with teaching them independence. He acknowledged that there was a cost, but explained that in the Netherlands, people bike for fun and stop at restaurants. Hilbers suggested that the old railway lines provide a good opportunity. He thought over time the investment would pay off.

George States offered that he purchased fluorescent safety vests and highly recommended them to other walkers and bikers.

The Mayor stated that the Safety Committee was looking into the crosswalks and the Streets Committee was investigating sidewalks and paths. The committees meet monthly. The Village would find a better way to let the public know what is happening and what Council is thinking.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

The Mayor reported that the first event for the Northeast Ohio City Council Association (NOCCA) will be Thursday, February 22, 2024. The Village has a membership.

The yearly HAZMAT meeting took place in Solon. The Mayor distributed the annual report.

The Mayor heard from two people about the real estate tax increase and explained how the percentage increase varied. He thought it is what it is, and Council did what it could to cushion the blow.

Congressman David Joyce had not yet provided an invitation to go to Washington D.C. Mayors were invited and he thought there were benefits to attending.

The Mayor mentioned developments with Ohio Police and Fire Pensions and the opportunity to contribute \$250 for a lobbying group through the Ohio Municipal League (OML).

Regarding committee assignments, the Mayor requested a motion as well as discussion of meeting schedules. The Solicitor asked if the committee members had been appointed and suggested doing this first. Porter advised that at the previous Council meeting, there were two Council members appointed to the same three committees. Now there are two Council members on the same two committees. Has this solved the issue? The Fiscal Officer and Solicitor offered that these meetings should be sunshined as joint meetings. To answer Porter's question, the Solicitor indicated that reducing it from three to two committees with the same members did not solve the issue. Porter explained that this involved Council members Bell and Berger previously being assigned to three of the same committees and now on two of the same committees, Finance and Streets Committees. The Solicitor recommended

avoiding this issue. The Mayor said that in years past, there had been two people on the same committees. Porter did not think so. Porter suggested continuing the existing committee assignments until a decision could be reached. The Fiscal Officer thought the motion at the previous meeting to do so would suffice because it stated that the committees would be in effect until new committees were determined. The Mayor questioned that there cannot be the same two people on committees, and the Solicitor explained that she was not saying they could not, but that it causes an issue. The Mayor stated that Council would stay on the same committees as 2023. **Porter made a motion that the committee assignments in 2023 be continued for 2024, Chairman of each committee to remain the same, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

The committees will meet and determine their meeting schedules.

**FISCAL OFFICER:** The Fiscal Officer noted there was a large quantity of legislation listed on the agenda, which she described in her report. Due to the receipt of the Certificate of Estimated Resources from the County Auditor, she had to adjust the appropriations amendment increasing Street Maintenance Fund and decreasing the Road and Bridge Fund since Council had elected to suspend levy collection due to the revaluation.

She asked Council to complete the Disclosure sheets for organizations with which they are involved to ensure there are no conflicts.

Regarding the legislation to approve the agreement with Police Prosecutor Dennis Coyne, the Fiscal Officer explained that due to an oversight, there was no 2023 contract, and a motion would be required to ratify his services.

Given this oversight, the Fiscal Officer offered to share a spreadsheet of Village agreements and their expiration dates with the committees with Village officials.

Lastly, Automatic Data Processing (ADP) personnel conveyed that the computers are coming in more quickly than anticipated and the transfer will hopefully take place soon. She thanked the Chief for transferring the equipment to the locked cart, and noted it was more complicated than anticipated.

The Mayor asked for clarification about ethics training. The Fiscal Officer explained that every elected official in each term of office is required to take three hours of public records training, or they can appoint a designee. Traditionally, elected officials have appointed her to take it on their behalf to make sure it gets done. However, she always encourages Council members to take it themselves as it is important, and things change. The Mayor, Councilman Berger, and Councilman Canton started a new term and must get the training. **Canton made a motion for Council to consider and vote to allow our Fiscal Officer to be the designee to do the training on Council's behalf, seconded by Porter. Voice vote, ayes, Canton, Galicki, Porter, Berger. Nay – Bell. Motion carried.** The Solicitor pointed out that a motion was also required for the Mayor, and **Porter made a motion that the Fiscal Officer be designee for the Mayor in the Mayor's stead for the training required of elected officials for 2024, seconded by Canton. Voice vote – ayes, Canton, Galicki, Porter, Berger. Nay – Bell. Motion carried.**

Regarding income tax, the Mayor observed that the Village started out 2023 setting three records and then died down but set a record in December which was reflective of the typical fluctuation of income tax. It seems that the Village has nearly \$2.5 million coming in with income tax every year and it just keeps going up and up. The Fiscal Officer cautioned that it may not continue. With more and more

people going back to the office, the numbers could go down. Galicki suggested that this may be a trend that will continue.

Bell said that a couple of weeks ago, there was a hullabaloo online about property taxes. Some residents were saying that they got their property taxes, and they were much higher than what the Auditor's estimator indicated. They were upset and he did not know if this was just with a few people or if the Fiscal Officer had received phone calls about it. The Fiscal Officer responded that she had received no calls and suspected they were going to the County Auditor's office. Porter said the estimate for his house was off significantly. He further advised that the reality is that the schools take 80 percent of it. If taxes are to be decreased, this is the logical place to start.

The Mayor stated that in the Homestead exemption, there is a \$35,000 limit and people who were trying to get it found that they did not qualify.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Berger stated that in the last Finance meeting, the committee interviewed a gentleman regarding grant writing and the opportunity to hire him as an outside consultant to seek out grants and potentially provide follow through to the completion of the project. Berger thought that it would be beneficial if committees discussed during the March meetings what opportunities they might like to pursue relative to grants. If the Village is to hire the grant writer, pay an hourly rate plus a monthly retainer, Council should know what they want the individual to pursue. The committees need to provide this information so that a list can be compiled to determine whether there is enough work to justify the expense of the grant writer.

**Berger made a motion to make a contribution in the amount of \$250 to OML for purposes of advocacy work, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**Berger made a motion to acknowledge the review of the December 2023 and January 2024 financial reports and they are acceptable to the Finance Committee and they would recommend that Council acknowledge them, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**Berger made a motion to approve amending the Certificate of Estimated Resources increasing Safety Fund revenue \$95,000 and Bell Rd. east fund revenue \$70,000, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**Berger made a motion to approve the Fiscal Officer to complete and submit the application for Real Property Tax Exemption for 1208 Bell Rd., seconded by Galicki.** The Mayor observed that the Village paid over \$3,000 in taxes this year. The Fiscal Officer explained that the Village pays the taxes, then completes the paperwork, and applies to the county. Once they send it to the State and if approved, the Village will receive a refund.

Porter asked if the address 1208 Bell would cease to exist, and there was discussion that it would be necessary to go through the Planning Commission to do a merge process. The Solicitor concurred and explained this would be done to consolidate the lots. Reasons for doing this were discussed, to include the potential of a future Council selling the property. Porter offered to bring it up to the Planning Commission.

**Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

The payment of the yearly Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP) fee was discussed. Additionally, Berger advised that approval of the bills list of 12/30/2023 will have to be addressed at a future meeting when there will be a quorum which there is not due to the absence and abstentions. The

Fiscal Officer stated that a Special Council meeting would be necessary because there is an appropriation amendment for Manor Brook expenses, and she does not want to wait until the end of March. Porter will be unavailable for the next two meetings.

The Mayor said that he had the Solicitor look at the consultant agreement for the grant writer, and she has some issues. He suggested putting it on hold until they know if there is a need for the grant writer. Berger agreed and reiterated that they need to hear from the committees before considering the agreement.

**SOLICITOR:** The Solicitor reported that the Governor signed the bill, and the threshold for competitive bidding will be \$75,000 for the Village and will increase each year thereafter by 3%. It goes into effect April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**ENGINEER:** The Engineer shared his observation of the opinions expressed earlier in the meeting about sidewalks, paths, and crosswalks. Several years ago, he was asked by the Streets Committee to estimate the cost of constructing a sidewalk from the corner of Chillicothe Rd. and Bell Rd. all the way to the Chagrin Falls corporation line. The construction cost he came up with was \$1 million which did not include exceptions like stream crossings and right of way and easement acquisitions. If the Village were to go with a 5-foot concrete sidewalk, there is a chance most of it could fit in the existing Bell Rd. right-of-way. It would be very close to the ditch and near the edge of the pavement. He did not know that this would satisfy what the proponents of the project would want. The Engineer reiterated Galicki's point that a sidewalk is very different from a multipurpose path. A sidewalk is 5-feet wide and has Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility points. However a sidewalk is also not for biking. It is for pedestrians. A multipurpose path has a width more than double that of a sidewalk and the Village would need right-of-way/easements all the way down Bell Rd.

Previously, the potential of utilizing the old interurban rail right-of-way was investigated for a multipurpose path. There are many pitfalls involved, and they are not realistic. It would involve reestablishing a right-of-way that no longer exists, which would be a long and difficult process. To establish a multipurpose trail along Bell Rd., the same right-of-way/easement acquisition issues exist. Regarding the master plan referred to by one of the discussion participants, the Engineer said one does not exist, but it could be developed. If Council were looking at a serious east west corridor through the Village for pedestrians and bicycles, they might want to look along the interurban path on the Village's southern border with Bainbridge rather than trying to squeeze something along Bell Rd. Galicki clarified that the old right-of-way for the interurban was divided up and is now part of peoples' personal properties. It would be necessary to acquire those parcels as well as to get the buy in from the property owners to have a public path go through their backyards. The Engineer concurred. Berger said this would not help the residents on the north side of Bell. Galicki commented that it would be great to have a path that went to the park. The Engineer suggested giving each of the main subdivisions on the north side access points of crossing, like crosswalks. The Solicitor clarified that it would not be necessary to purchase parcels, only easements. The Engineer explained it would be purchasing a 20-foot-wide section at the back end of dozens of parcels, the same way the Village would be purchasing the same amount of land off the front end of dozens of parcels along Bell Rd. He thought it was a good suggestion to have a plan that considers all of the options before starting to move down one path or another. Porter described the potential problem of easements being denied at any given point of the planned path, and the Engineer cautioned that it would be a matter of building an easement or right-of-way bank that goes from administration to administration until it is all done. There is also the potential to seek easements from the Bainbridge properties as well. Having the path on the corporation line increases the likelihood of being able to get a path through there. It also increases the likelihood of identifying grant money as there are many organizations with money

available for construction of trails. With the path being on the boundary of South Russell and Bainbridge, securing grant funding would be more likely because it benefits more than one political subdivision. Porter observed that this would be a long-term project, and the Engineer stressed the importance of a master plan and reiterated the need to bank the easements. Given enough time, persistence, and perceived need by the community, they will be acquired eventually.

The Engineer relayed that the Streets Committee discussed the 2024 Road Program. Southwyck at \$360,000, will be the base bid. The alternates will be Countryside at \$185,000 and Reserve Trail at \$165,000. He hoped to have the information compiled and get out to bid early.

**STREETS COMMITTEE:** Bell reported that the Streets Committee met on February 2, 2024, and discussed the Road Program. \$350,000 is budgeted for 2024. His understanding was that Southwyck was in desperate need of paving, which is why it is the base bid. They would see how Countryside and Reserve Trail come back. **Bell made a motion to go out to bid for the 2024 Road Program with Southwyck Dr. as the base bid and Countryside Dr. and Reserve Trail as alternate bids, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Bell stated that the Village bought a salt truck in 2020. It was a demo truck that was purchased even though it had some use because it was such a long wait for another truck. The hydraulics put on the truck were a brand/model with a bad reputation in the industry and are failing. Replacement of the arm air system will be necessary, and the Street Commissioner obtained a quote for \$14,675. Bell stated further that the Street Commissioner had done due diligence by going out to other service directors and meeting with other companies. A representative from the company that manufactured the faulty one did not show up to the scheduled meeting. The plan is to take the funds from the Vehicle Maintenance budget. **Bell made a motion to approve \$14,675 for repair of the 2020 salt truck hydraulics, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Porter stated that there are grants available from the State for the purpose of infrastructure improvement which would include building a new salt dome for South Russell. The State Senate has a pool of money that it divvies out based on need, location, and number of people served. The Village is on the low end of people served but on the high end of need because of the failing foundation. If awarded the grant, it would go a long way to reducing the cost to the Village for the building of the salt dome by \$400,000. The Village can apply for it, but Porter did not think the Village should wait for the award of the grant before proceeding with tearing down the old one and building the new one. He did not want to get into the situation like the park restroom where the Village was hoping for the grant and then the manufacturer jacked the price up unexpectedly. The Mayor asked what the deadline was for the grant, and Bell said March or April. **Bell made a motion to approve Ohio Senate Capital Budget 2024 grant application for the salt dome, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**BUILDING COMMITTEE:** Bell advised the committee had not met and there was nothing to report.

**POLICE CHIEF:** The Chief submitted his month-end report and had nothing further to report.

**SAFETY COMMITTEE:** Canton asked if the committee could meet Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. Galicki and the Chief concurred.

**Canton made a motion to ratify the performance of Dennis Coyne's Police Prosecutor Services for 2023, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**



**Canton made a motion to approve the following South Russell Police Department events: Cops and Kids Fishing on Sunday, June 2, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.; Bike Rodeo on Sunday, June 30, 2024, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; and Wheels and Shields Touch a Truck on Sunday, July 14, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. until noon, seconded by Galicki.** Bell asked if Wheels and Shields is new, and the Chief explained it would be taking the place of the car show this year. Wheels and Shields will consist of a variety of public safety vehicles and will be like an open house similar to what was done before the car show. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**Canton made a motion that Council votes and approves to give the police safety forces the right to promote Wheels and Shields and Touch a Truck and the Bike Rodeo on our property, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Bell asked where the Cops and Kids Fishing event would take place, and the Chief explained that permission would be requested of Lake Louise.

**HR COMMITTEE:** Berger reported that the committee met on January 30<sup>th</sup> with the employees on duty at the time to discuss the employee handbook. There were a few issues discussed and everyone seemed to be okay with the changes. It is the goal of the HR Committee this year to review job descriptions for all the employees.

**PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:** Canton reported that one quote had been received for the railing at the Rarick Cemetery. The next Properties Committee meeting will be February 29, 2024, at 3:15 in Village Hall. At that time, they will determine a monthly date and time for the regular committee meetings.

**PARKS COMMITTEE:** Canton addressed the need to block off dates for the Fall Festival on the Village website calendar. He suggested blocking every Sunday in September until a date for the Fall Festival was determined, depending on the Browns schedule. **Canton made a motion to block September 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup> on the Village Calendar, seconded by Berger.** It was discussed that rain dates were included. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**Canton made a motion to approve Chagrin Falls Middle School Cross Country meets on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, and Tuesday, October 1, 2024, from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the South Russell Village Park and to waive the pavilion reservation fee, seconded by Berger. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE:** Berger stated that the committee met, and the minutes were distributed. They continue to look at solar panels and are awaiting two of three proposals. The next meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. Porter advised that there was a Special Public Utilities Committee meeting on Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Mayor explained that it is for the MS4 report and he did not think any Council member had ever attended. Berger and Porter stated this would be the committee meeting.

Porter received an email from Daniel Wise concerning a new proposal regarding solar for the Village. Porter described it as bold. It is a federal grant for \$2 million with no Village share. However, the cost of the project must be at least \$2 million and would require a ground-based array, replacing every police vehicle with an electric vehicle (EV), and putting solar panels, battery capacity, and public charging stations on Village property. The committee will hear the proposal from Wise and report back. Porter's concern was whether the Chief had an interest in strictly using EV's and not the hybrid

option. The Chief said that EV's are a challenge especially with all the electronic equipment that goes into the police vehicle. The hybrid has been phenomenal but unfortunately, they could not get one the last two rounds. They will be available again in 2025.

Porter noted the size of the project and objected to the idea of enlarging it so that the Village qualified for the grant. However, with it being a project with no cost to the Village, he would want to hear more about it. Wise will be invited to the meeting on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Mayor stated that he and Porter would be meeting with the Mayors of Moreland Hills and Chagrin Falls. They are way ahead of the Village as far as their solar panels and he wanted to get hints and advice.

#### **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

Galicki provided a second reading of an ordinance amending the 2024 Annual Appropriations increasing Manor Brook expenses \$ 58,728.44 and declaring an emergency.

Berger introduced an ordinance amending the 2024 Annual Appropriations increasing General Fund expense \$35,000, decreasing Building Department Salaries and Benefits \$7,462, increasing Building Department Other expenses \$7,462, increasing Street Maintenance expenses \$210,000, increasing Safety Fund salary & benefit expenses \$95,000, increasing Safety Fund Other expenses \$2,065, increasing ARPA Fund expenses \$22,542.09, and decreasing Road and Bridge Fund expenses \$90,000, and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2024-10**

Berger introduced an ordinance increasing the transfer from the Income Tax Fund to the Special Land and Building Fund \$79,843.98 and decreasing the transfer from the Income Tax Fund to the Street Maintenance Fund \$79,843.98, and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2024-11**

Berger introduced an ordinance employing USI Midwest, LLC as insurance agent for the Village of South Russell and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2024-12**

Berger introduced an ordinance authorizing the 2024 Property and Casualty Insurance with Public Entities Pool of Ohio and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2024-13**

Canton introduced an ordinance authorizing all actions necessary to accept Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) 2024 Energized Community Grant funds and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2024-14**

Canton introduced an ordinance authorizing the Fiscal Officer to apply for and accept NOPEC grant funds for the 2024 Community Event Sponsorship Program on behalf of the Village of South Russell and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Berger. Roll call

– ayes, all. Motion carried. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2024-15**

Porter introduced a resolution authorizing the sale of personal property not needed by the Village and declaring an emergency. Porter made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to adopt, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **RES 2024-16**

Canton introduced an ordinance authorizing the Mayor and Fiscal Officer of the Village of South Russell to enter into a contract with Dennis M. Coyne, Esq. to provide Chief Prosecutor Services for 2024 and 2025 and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter noted that Coyne charges \$110 per hour and this is a good deal. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2024-17**


Canton introduced a Resolution of Appreciation for Steve Latkovic. Canton made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **RES 2024-18**

**BILLS LIST: Berger made a motion to approve the bills list of January 30, 2024, in the amount of \$99,809.79, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**NEW/OTHER:** Galicki, Porter, Bell, and Berger had no new business.

**Canton made a motion for Council to vote and approve the absence of Councilman Porter from Council meetings on February 26<sup>th</sup> and March 11<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Bell. Voice vote – ayes, Canton, Galicki, Bell, and Berger. Porter abstained. Motion carried.**

**ADJOURNMENT:** Being that there was no further business before Council Porter made a motion to adjourn at 8:48 p.m. seconded by Berger. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

  
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William G. Koons, Mayor

  
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Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki