

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.
MAYOR WILLIAM G. KOONS PRESIDING**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bell, Berger, Canton, Cavanagh, Galicki, and Porter

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

VISITORS: Carrie Schloss, Hickory Hill Rd.; Ryan May, Chagrin Lakes

The Mayor called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Fiscal Officer read the roll. **Cavanagh made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2024, Regular Council meeting, seconded by Canton. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

VISITORS: Carrie Schloss, Hickory Hill Rd., Chagrin Falls, requested that the Mayor’s Committee for Safe Bicycle and Pedestrian Transport become an official ad hoc committee. She reviewed the group’s goals and duties.

MAYOR’S REPORT: At the request of the Mayor, **Bell made a motion to establish an ad hoc committee to make recommendations for walking and biking trails throughout the Village, seconded by Canton.** The Mayor explained that through meetings and discussions, the committee will eventually provide a recommendation to Council. He described it as a huge idea with pros and cons and money and different things available which was why they should get the ad hoc committee going. Cavanagh noted that it was necessary to have one Council person on the committee, according to the minutes. The Solicitor did not think this was accurate information. Porter offered that it was not a requirement but would not prevent a Council member from being on the committee. The Solicitor concurred but stated that it was not a requirement. Bell volunteered to be on the committee. The Mayor thought Cavanagh was correct in that previously with the Park Committee, one Council member had to be on the Park and Properties Committees. The Solicitor reminded Council that the Park Committee falls under a completely separate Codified Ordinance and was different than an ad hoc committee. The ordinance for the Park Committee addresses the establishment of the members of the committee and includes a Council member. The Mayor did not want to establish a committee like the Park Committee that goes on forever, just an ad hoc committee.

Cavanagh asked how the survey would be conducted and asked if it would be through the newsletter. Schloss said they would like to be able to advertise their meetings in the newsletter to get more community engagement so they can be inclusive of all ideas. They also wanted to get the survey out as broadly as possible and would like to use the newsletter and other channels as well. Schloss further explained that Google Forms and Survey Monkey would be used for the survey. Once the results were obtained, they would share them with Council.

Porter asked Schloss if the committee envisioned reporting grant opportunities to Council or engaging in the grant process on their own. Schloss said it could be both and they would work with Council. There are skilled grant writers on the committee, but sometimes the applications must come from a jurisdiction. It would depend on the grant opportunity. The Solicitor stated that the ad hoc committee could prepare the application, but it would require Council’s approval to apply. The Mayor said he would not be comfortable with an ad hoc committee applying for grants. The committee would do the dirty work and then come to Council to submit the application. Porter expressed concern with the

committee being authorized to apply for grants because it would commit the Village to follow through with the grant if received. Schloss concurred that the committee could bring recommendations forward and help with content and preparation.

The Solicitor asked what the name of the ad hoc committee would be, and Schloss said that currently it is the Committee for Safe Bicycle and Pedestrian Transport. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Porter asked when the first official meeting would be held, and Schloss stated it would be Thursday, October 17th at 8:30 a.m. in Village Hall. The Solicitor inquired about the purpose, and Schloss said it was about survey distribution, or about finalizing the survey questions. She wondered if Council needed to approve the survey. The Mayor advised that if it has the Village's name on it, then Council will want to see it. Galicki asked if the meetings required sunshine notice, and the Solicitor explained that the reason she asked the purpose of the upcoming meeting was because it will be considered a special meeting, and the purpose must be posted. Porter asked if they would have to keep minutes, and the Solicitor said yes. The Fiscal Officer offered to explain to Schloss offline what the committee will need to do in terms of setting up a meeting, etc. Porter suggested announcing the meeting with an eblast.

At the request of the Mayor, **Canton made a motion to approve the Mayor's appointment of Christy Troyer as the Part-time Administrative Assistant pending her passing of the preemployment testing, seconded by Berger.** Cavanagh relayed that the candidate was interviewed and met with Village personnel who were impressed with her skill and experience. Porter asked if a wage had been set, and the Fiscal officer concurred, but did not know what the Mayor had discussed with her. The Mayor said he had not talked with her about wages because he was waiting for the preemployment requirements to be completed. Porter clarified that this was a conditional offer, and the Fiscal Officer reviewed the hiring process and explained that the pay was set at \$20.60 per hour. Once she has passed the preemployment requirements, an official offer letter will be provided. The Mayor stated sharing of the part-time Administrative Assistant concerned him, so he asked the HR Committee and Department Heads to meet on Monday, October 21st. Porter asked if this included the Streets Department, and the Mayor thought the Street Commissioner might as well come meet her. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

The Mayor addressed a request by Lifeline for a letter of support. The Mayor previously wrote a letter for them in 2019. The letter and Lifeline material were distributed to Council. **Cavanagh made a motion to approve the Mayor's letter of support for Lifeline, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

The passing of Craig Cawrse, resident and landscape architect, was acknowledged.

FISCAL OFFICER: The Fiscal Officer distributed her report. She reminded Council that the budget worksheets are due Monday, October 21st by noon. The Budget Work Session will take place on Monday, October 28, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. before the Council meeting.

Regarding the remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, after paying for the repair work with the Central Retention Basin, there will still be about \$11,000 remaining that will have to be spent by year end for the appropriate expenses. This needs to be done within the next two months. The Fiscal Officer will discuss the matter with the Engineer. The Engineer said that use of the funds is very specific. They can be used for any infrastructure improvement for storm water or sanitary and

must have a quantitative physical improvement. There was discussion about applying it to the local cost share of the Bell Rd. East Culvert Project.

The Fiscal Officer provided the financial summary for the month of September. The Village was down \$178,000, but year-to-date was up \$979,000. However, she wrote over \$400,000 in checks today which included the Road Program. She concluded that for the year, the Village is up, but balances will be decreasing now because all the real estate tax money has been received for the year. The Fiscal Officer advised that the interest for the month of September was \$10,216.

The Fiscal Officer queried Council about their use of the shared Outlook Calendar. None were using it; therefore, the administrative office will stop posting dates to it since it is not being used.

The Reserve Study was distributed to all of Council. Berger said he briefly reviewed it and thought it was a good start and it raised questions. He explained that there was not enough time to review and digest the information before the Budget Work Session. Berger urged Council to familiarize themselves with the study and take notes about needed changes. Questions may be directed to the Finance Committee. The Mayor questioned whether the Reserve Study should fall under the Properties Committee. Berger thought it was a Properties issue to start, with recommendations made to the Finance Committee. The Mayor proposed that Berger would be on the Properties Committee the following year.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: The next committee meeting is on October 17th at 10:00 a.m. Berger had nothing further to report.

SOLICITOR: The Solicitor had nothing to report.

ENGINEER: The Engineer addressed closing of the 2024 Road Program. The awarded contract amount was \$316,075, but the final contract amount was \$298,743.43. Furthermore, Specialized Construction submitted the final invoices.

The Engineer is preparing for paving of Bell Rd. for next year. Pending discussions with the Streets Committee, he thought this would be the 2025 Road Program. The Mayor asked whether the chip seal process would be used, and the Engineer thought it might be possible for Bell Rd. east because it extends the longevity of the asphalt surface. It is not typically part of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) process, but through discussions with the County Engineer, he thought it would be in the scope of the project and funded. Canton questioned whether the Village roads needing repaving could wait, and the Engineer advised that they could wait a year. The robust road programs had allowed the Village to get ahead and the crack sealing had also been beneficial. Porter asked if Bell Rd. east and west were suitable for Reclamite, and the Engineer thought possibly, but was hesitant to say because Bell Rd. east and Bell Rd. west have a different character than all the Village's roads in that the traffic counts are so high. The state does not apply Reclamite to any of the state routes, possibly due to speed limits. He would have to investigate this possibility. Porter noted the issue with the use of Reclamite on roads with higher speed limits. He recommended that the Street Committee discuss this issue. The Mayor asked the Street Commissioner to inquire as to whether Auburn applied Reclamite to East Washington Street because he noticed that the painted lines were not crisp. There was discussion about why this might occur as well as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements to change the binder and pigment material of the road paint, to include eliminating the reflective nature of the paint. The Mayor complimented Specialized Construction on the Road Program. The Engineer agreed that he was very happy with the results.

STREET COMMISSIONER: The Street Commissioner had nothing to report.

STREETS COMMITTEE: Bell reported that the Hemlock Culvert project received Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) funding, and the final applications are due November 1st.

The estimate for the Bell Road East Culvert Project was \$140,000 and the actual cost came in at \$118,430. The Village received a \$70,000 OPWC grant for the project.

The Hemlock Rd. Culvert Replacement estimate was \$92,000. The Village received a \$46,200 OPWC grant, and the remaining balance will be split between the Village and Russell Township. The work cannot be done until after July 1, 2025, due to the grant requirements.

The Cintas contract was discussed. The Street Commissioner proposed that the Village purchase a package of 10 pants, 10 shirts, and a hoodie for \$1,352.25 for each employee from Arborwear every other year. The uniforms could be laundered at the Service Department. Additionally, the floor runners could be purchased and cleaned as needed through the Service Department. Lastly, shop towels could be obtained from Chagrin Falls. This would be an alternative to using Cintas and would be less expensive. The Street Commissioner added that it would be a savings and improve the appearance of the employees. The uniforms also come with decals front and back, which the current uniforms do not have. The question of laundering was brought up, and Bell indicated that currently the Cintas laundering option is not being used by the employees, so the Village is paying for something that is not being used. Porter noted that the proposal would mean a \$6,000 per year savings. He asked the Solicitor about the notice of termination provision in the Cintas contract. She did not know without reviewing the contract. Porter said the Streets Committee will discuss the matter and provide a recommendation. The Solicitor asked if the Village had paid any invoices since the new contract was signed and if the payment was according to the previous contract amount. The Fiscal Officer explained that Cintas charges per uniform and the price per uniform has not changed much. She clarified that the quoted cost per employee with the Street Commissioner's proposal was \$1,352.25 per employee for two years. The Street Commissioner reiterated that the uniform package would be purchased every other year, which would be roughly \$5,000 instead of the \$8,700. The difference could be used to supply the medicine cabinet and eyewash station like they do at the Police Department. Galicki offered that mats would also need to be purchased.

Porter addressed the drawings distributed by the Engineer for the proposed salt storage structure. The committee discussed getting quotes based on the engineering drawings for budgetary purposes and ultimately going out to bid for it. The Solicitor verified that it would eventually be bid out, and Bell concurred. She thought there was an amount that was proposed, and the Engineer said it was in the \$700,000 range. Galicki clarified that the Village has no numbers based on the bid specs, and the Engineer concurred. Porter stated that if the Village puts it out for quotes, then the Village is not bound to anything but will have better budgeting numbers. The Engineer offered that the Village would not have to publicly share the results of the quotes where it would with bids. The Fiscal Officer and Solicitor corrected that they would have to be provided on request. Galicki asked if the quotes could be obtained in the next two weeks for the Budget Work Session. The Engineer said that the final spec packages are available and certain vendors/suppliers/builders could be asked for a quote based on the information. **Porter made a motion that the Mayor, Fiscal Officer, and Engineer are authorized to solicit quotes for the salt storage facility to be built by the Village next year and obtain quotes from a variety of suppliers who would be interested, seconded by Bell. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Bell discussed the purchase of a tire machine and balancer. The money is in the budget, but it will be over \$3,000 which will require Council approval. It is \$3,899 and will eliminate the need to take the tires off site, which takes two hours of labor. The Fiscal Officer asked for clarification because the amount she had for the purchase was \$4,600. The Street Commissioner said it was because the vendor included all the necessary wheel weights. Bell verified it was in the budget and the Street Commissioner concurred. **Bell made a motion to allow the Street Commissioner and Fiscal Officer to purchase a tire machine and balancer from Fisher, and the wheel weights as well, not to exceed \$4,600, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Bell made a motion to approve Construction Progress Payment Application No. 1 – Final to Specialized Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$298,743.43 for the 2024 Road Program, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Porter asked the Engineer if anything had been received in writing from OPWC for the Hemlock Culvert project. The Engineer reiterated that he had, and it said the Village made the cut and requested the final application. Ultimately, the Village will receive correspondence from OPWC providing the project agreement, etc. At this point, Porter wanted to provide the Russell Township Trustees with plans and a final number so they can consider paying the remaining costs. The Engineer would provide Porter with the OPWC final application.

Berger asked the Street Commissioner about approval of the purchase of storage containers. The Street Commissioner explained that it is pending obtaining pricing. He added that they are included in the drawings for the proposed salt storage structure.

BUILDING COMMITTEE: Bell reported that the Building Committee met on October 10th. The minutes were distributed. The next meeting is Thursday, November 14th at 8:00 a.m. in the Building Department.

Bell reported that Inspection Solutions would be exceeding its contract amount. The Fiscal Officer explained that currently, there is only \$2,162 left, and at least \$6,000 in retainer fees and an average of \$3,000 per month for inspections will be required. Bell concluded that it would exceed the contract by \$10,000. **Bell made a motion to amend the contract for Inspections Solutions not to exceed \$10,000 in fiscal year 2024, seconded by Porter.** The Fiscal Officer explained that this will involve amending appropriations at the next meeting. She will investigate the Zoning Inspector's budget since he has not been used much, which would mean not having to amend the budget too much. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.** The Mayor estimated that for the Building Department budget, it would be almost \$60,000 for Inspection Solutions for next year. Berger asked when permit fees were last evaluated. Porter and Cavanagh recalled it was within the last two years. Bell suggested looking at them again.

POLICE CHIEF: The Chief reported that two of the Village's Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) were planning to hold trick-or-treating on Saturday, October 26th. He asked when the rest of the Village would have trick-or-treating. The Mayor proposed that the west end of the Village stay on Halloween from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The Chief advised that there will be some major projects budgeted for 2024 that may not be completed until 2025. The tornado siren upgrade is still pending receipt of parts. The garage project may not break ground, and the crosswalk is not scheduled to be installed until December when parts are received. He has discussed this matter with the Fiscal Officer. The projects were supposed to come out of this year's budget but will need to be included in next year's.

SAFETY COMMITTEE: Canton stated that the Safety Committee will be meeting on October 17th at 9:00 a.m. in the Police Department.

HR COMMITTEE: Cavanagh reported that the HR Committee met on October 3rd, and the minutes are forthcoming. She advised that the committee has decided to let the Street Commissioner find what works best for him with respect to crew leader versus foreman. If it goes forward, a job description will be needed. The Street Commissioner requested part-time workers, whether they are retirees or just individuals needing part-time work. Again, a job description and pay rate would be needed. The committee also discussed hiring the part-time Administrative Assistant, and Cavanagh added that the Streets Department would like to use her as well as the other departments.

Cavanagh made a motion to acknowledge Debra Hladky's resignation, who was extremely helpful to Cavanagh last summer when they typed up the 100th history, seconded by Berger. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE: Cavanagh stated that the Properties Committee met earlier in the evening as a joint Properties and Parks Committee meeting. She reported that the wetlands are looking better at the park. The Cats Den Garden Club will be planting 1,000 daffodil bulbs at Rarick Cemetery on October 16th at 11:00 a.m. and she appreciated the beautification. Porter asked where the bulbs would be planted, and the Street Commissioner said it would be on either side of the staircase and some in the park. The Cemetery has been prepped for the planting.

Cavanagh credited the Mayor with having the great idea of creating a plaque with the names of Eagle and Gold Scout recipients who had projects involving the Village.

The pavilion needs roof repairs, which is being investigated.

Regarding the restroom, everything has been ordered, but the vendor wants a double check on the order. She is checking the paperwork with the Street Commissioner.

PARKS COMMITTEE: Cavanagh reported that Canton was very helpful with the Fall Festival and thanked the Village staff and adult and youth volunteers for their work as well. Porter asked how many people attended, and the Fiscal Officer thought it was about 600. Cavanagh acknowledged the work of Park Committee member, Libby Sharkey, as well as the Kruse family.

Canton noted that despite not having the bounce houses or hayrides, the children gravitated to the playground, bubbles, and the pony.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE: Berger requested a change in date for the upcoming Public Utilities Committee meeting to Friday, October 25th at 9:00 a.m.

Porter addressed the solar project interconnection agreement. The Mayor signed the original one, which went to Yellow Lite, and the Solicitor provided a revised agreement changing the indemnification clause in the contract. He did not think they had heard back from Yellow Lite on this. The Mayor said no, but he asked Yellow Lite that since he already signed the agreement, would they want him to send this back. He had not received a response. Porter said it may not be a pressing issue because the electric work at the Police Department had not been done. He reviewed the steps needed to complete the project and indicated he would provide the Fiscal Officer with the information to apply for the reimbursement from the federal government.

The Mayor said he would have more information on Power a Clean Future later in the week. It would be discussed at the Public Utilities Committee meeting on October 25th.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

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 Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to adopt, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **RES 2024-88**

There was discussion about legislation pertaining to the connection of solar power to the CEI grid. Porter explained that Yellow Lite proposed an agreement, which the Mayor signed. Subsequently, the Solicitor had comments about the indemnification clause in the agreement, after which it went back to Yellow Lite. Porter suggested passing the ordinance including the revised agreement because it is the Village's official view of the contract. The Solicitor replied that this would be so as long as Yellow Lite signed off on it. Porter said they have it and the Village would find out. Porter introduced an ordinance approving the interconnection agreement between the Village of South Russell and the Illuminating Company authorizing the Mayor to execute the agreement and declaring an emergency. Discussion ensued and the Solicitor said her hope was that Yellow Lite would come back with a new contract for the Village to sign. Galicki asked if it would be easier to table the legislation with the questions surrounding it. Porter said the question was only whether the Village's changes to the contract were acceptable to Yellow Lite. The Solicitor pointed out that the indemnification clause was a deal breaker. Additionally, although the Mayor already signed it, she would not suggest they ratify the Mayor's signature on the agreement.

BILLS LIST: Galicki made a motion to ratify the bills list of September 29, 2024, in the amount of \$68,252.70 and ratify the October 15, 2024, bills list in the amount of \$419,543.07, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, Bell, Cavanagh, Galicki, and Porter. Berger and Canton abstained. Motion carried.

NEW/OTHER: Berger and Canton had no new business.

The Fiscal Officer reported that earlier in the year, the Village had under 300 subscribers on the eblast and now it has over 1,000. The word of the Village's transition to virtual communication had been effectively conveyed. Additionally, one of the teen volunteers at the Fall Festival asked attendees sign up for it.

Canton made a motion to approve the date and time for Halloween trick-or-treat which is set for October 31st from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., seconded by Berger. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Bell expressed his thanks to all involved with the Fall Festival.

Cavanagh reminded Council of the October 21st 6:30 p.m. Parks Committee meeting about the Park Master Plan and a burn in the park. Rich Washington of CT Consultants and Pete McDonald of the Western Reserve Land Conservancy (WRLC) will attend.

Regarding the park burn, Galicki asked if anything had been gleaned from the burn training that Village personnel were scheduled to attend. Cavanagh said she did not go. The Mayor said that no one went. Galicki asked if the Village paid for it, and the Mayor said yes.

Porter advised that the November Streets Committee meeting would need to be changed. Porter proposed moving it from November 7th to November 21st at 7:30 a.m.

Porter made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:25 p.m. for the discussion of compensation of a public employee and to invite in the Mayor, Fiscal Officer, Solicitor, and exclude Galicki, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, Bell, Berger, Canton, Cavanagh, and Porter. Galicki recused himself. Motion carried.

Council reconvened at 8:34 p.m. **Berger made a motion to compensate a public employee for damage done to their personal vehicle while on company business to the extent of \$2,941.07, seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, all Motion carried.**

The Mayor advised that he, Cavanagh, and Galicki would be attending the upcoming Ohio Municipal League (OML) Conference and Cavanagh and Galicki would be using their own cars while he would be taking the Village vehicle. He asked if they needed to worry about Galicki and Cavanagh driving their personal cars on South Russell business. The Solicitor said yes. Cavanagh explained that she would be taking a side trip on the way that had nothing to do with the Village, but wondered what would happen if something occurred en route to the conference. The Solicitor said it would not be covered regardless. There is an effort to establish a policy. She further advised that only Village employees and officials can be in the Village car. No one else is covered. The Mayor asked about the scenario of driving the Village car to Columbus but stopping to see his friends at the nursing home. The Solicitor said this is a detour and he would not be covered during that time. The Fiscal Officer said he should not be taking the car to the nursing home. It is to and from the event. The Solicitor concurred. Canton questioned whether the conference was really Village business since it was optional. It was not like going to the bank. Berger clarified that Council approved the Council members' attendance at the conference as being appropriate to their duties as elected officials for the Village. Therefore, it is authorized. The Mayor clarified that he should not drive from the hotel to the nursing home and back. The Solicitor said it should not be in the Village car. Porter suggested he take an Uber. Berger advised he would prepare a draft policy for the next HR meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Being that there was no further business before Council, Cavanagh made a motion to adjourn at 8:37 p.m., seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.



William G. Koons, Mayor


Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki