

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 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: Timothy Alder, Riverview Dr.; Scott Tucholka, Greenbrier Dr.

The Mayor called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Fiscal Officer read the roll. **Porter made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2024, Special Council meeting, seconded by Canton. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2024, Regular Council meeting, seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

VISITORS: Bell presented former Street Commissioner Tim Alder a Resolution of Appreciation, which he read into the record. (Attachment 1) The Mayor expressed appreciation for the former Street Commissioner’s vision of what should be done in the Village and said he made it much better. Alder attributed it to teamwork.

Scott Tucholka, Greenbrier Dr., Chagrin Falls, stated he was requesting Council’s approval for the Chagrin Falls Booster Club Turkey Trot. The race will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Thanksgiving as has been the tradition for the last 17 years. The route runs through South Russell and part of Chagrin Falls. Tucholka advised that 1,800 runners and walkers are anticipated. The Boosters are a support organization for the school district and provide grants for both the athletics and academics across all the grades and this is one of its largest fund-raising events. **Bell made a motion to approve the 2024 Chagrin Falls Booster Club Turkey Trot through the Village of South Russell on Thanksgiving 2024, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

MAYOR’S REPORT: The Mayor distributed his report. He contacted the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA) about the \$800,000 awarded to the Village, adding that the Village had not heard anything from them. As it turns out, there is a 14-page form that they want completed by December 31st. The Engineer said he would assist with it. The Mayor relayed that he asked if the Village could start spending any of this money to survey the community using a mailing, and the Mayor was told no. The Mayor and Engineer discussed the Small Government round of Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) funding.

Cavanagh asked for clarification about the Architectural Review Board (ARB) topic on the Mayor’s report, and the Mayor explained that the ARB is frustrated in the lack of preparation of some of the applicants which results in multiple meetings. There have not been too many cases of this. The matter of charging for subsequent meetings was previously discussed by the Building Committee and determined to be unnecessary. However, the issue has come up again.

FISCAL OFFICER: The Fiscal Officer distributed the budget worksheets and informed Council of two pieces of legislation that were added to the meeting agenda. One was to amend the appropriations for the Hemlock Culvert and the other was a transfer for same.

The Fiscal officer addressed the budget and explained that if the budget contained all the 'wish list' items, it would be over in several funds. She made some initial amendments to propose to Council so that the budget is within the certified fund parameters. After the year-end cash balances are certified, Council can determine whether to amend the budget for 'wish list' items. The big project for next year is the salt storage structure, which is currently expected to be in the \$700,000 range. However, it is only possible to put \$550,000 in the initial budget. Until there are firm numbers for this project, the budget process is at a standstill because this project must be done.

She proposed having a Road Program totaling \$450,000 which would be divided between the Street Fund and Road and Bridge fund as \$340,000 and \$110,000 respectively. Combining storm water and storm sewer, the ask was \$112,000. The Hemlock culvert will be a different fund, and she questioned whether Council wanted to keep or reduce the \$112,000. Porter thought the \$112,000 was for Hemlock. The Fiscal Officer said it was just for storm water and small things that are being done around the Village. Historically, \$21,000 was spent in storm water and storm sewer combined in 2020. In 2021 it was \$54,000, \$136,000 in 2022, \$45,000 in 2023, and so far in 2024 \$115,000 has been spent. Porter suggested leaving the \$112,000 in place and Berger concurred.

Regarding the State Highway Fund, the initial budget will need to be decreased from \$32,000 to \$27,000. This was for the second crosswalk. The crosswalk by the park was budgeted for this year and will be encumbered over if it is not completed. The Mayor thought there may be money floating around to help cover the cost and he would discuss this with the Chief later. The Chief explained a delay in the crosswalk project which could result in not having an invoice until next year.

For Parks and Recreation, at the budget work session the Mayor requested additional funds for the Park Master Plan for trails. The Fiscal Officer proposed putting a hold on this for now until the year-end balances are certified, and the salt structure bids are received.

For the Special Road Fund, she explained that the Village cannot budget for the Hemlock Rd. culvert because it did not know about it at the Tax Budget time. It will be necessary to wait until the new year to budget this. She continued to explain that in Special Land and Building, she only put in \$550,000 for the salt storage structure because those are all the funds available until they know where they will end the year. She also did not include the \$25,000 for a study for the corner lot pending year-end balances.

The Finance Committee met that morning and recommended decreasing the Large Equipment Fund by taking out the \$325,000 for now until the salt storage structure cost is determined. They also recommended decreasing the New Equipment line item in the Safety Budget for \$45,000, which was for the camera upgrade project. The Chief was supportive of this proposal and offered it to the committee. The Chief explained that he would push this project off until next year. Grant opportunities were discussed as well as the long-term costs of the equipment.

The Mayor questioned what would occur with the Large Equipment fund, and Berger explained that the committee was recommending putting a hold on the fund until the year-end balances are certified. In the meantime, the committee requested preliminary quotes for the salt storage structure. This must get done next year, so everything else is secondary. Porter clarified that the salt structure was considered large equipment, and Berger explained that the Village has a reserve fund that it contributes to every year for large equipment like snowplows, etc. \$550,000 is budgeted for the salt structure, and if the \$325,000 for the large equipment was added to this, it would give the Village \$875,000. Until there is a better understanding of what the salt structure will cost, the committee is just putting a hold

on the Large Equipment line item. If the salt structure comes in at \$700,000 for example, there will be money left in the Large Equipment Fund, which would mean deciding what piece of equipment is essential in 2025.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions or objections to the comments made so far. He did not think they were ready to vote but were getting their minds set to where they are going. The Fiscal Officer added that if Council is good with it, she could prepare the budget to be adopted at the next meeting. Porter asked about the deadline for adopting the budget, and the Fiscal Officer explained it was by the end of the year, but there were only two more meetings left for the year.

Lastly, the Fiscal Officer advised that Ohio Fire and Police will likely be increasing the Village's contribution rate. The Village currently contributes 19.5% and over the next four years it would increase to 24%, which is a significant increase. Cavanagh offered that the Ohio Municipal League (OML) wanted the Village to write to block this. Berger offered that a 5% increase to that line item today represents a \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year increase in cost.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Berger stated that the Finance Committee met on November 12, 2024, primarily to review the budget issues. He further reported that there was a joint Finance Committee and Treasury Investment Board (TIB) meeting with Meeder Investments. The Meeder projection is that interest rates will probably go down over the year. The two-year Treasury rate is at 4%. With the uncertainty of the post-election market, it was agreed that the Village would not invest any funds beyond a two-year period. The Village will do short-term investments and continue to watch and discuss future plans. Berger explained that the Village has the STAR Ohio account as well as longer term investments with Meeder. A threshold was previously set of maintaining a minimum of \$1 million in Huntington Bank checking. At the joint meeting, the recommendation was discussed to cut that balance to \$430,000 and take the balance of \$570,000 into STAR Ohio. Berger further explained the ease of moving funds between Huntington Bank and STAR as needed, and that in the STAR account the money will be earning approximately 3.75% interest. The purpose of the Village is not to make investment income, but where there are opportunities, the TIB is seeking to become more professional about investing while being cautious. Meeder is aware of the government investment limitations and the investment instruments used are in accordance with state law. **Berger made a motion to approve to have the Fiscal Officer in moving funds between our Huntington Bank account and STAR Ohio account to maintaining a minimum balance of \$430,000 in the Huntington Bank checking account, seconded by Galicki.** Porter asked how \$430,000 was determined, and Berger explained that it was based on the minimum balance of the overall cash position in 2024, which was about \$2.7 million, less capital expenditures. The anticipated capital expenditures are the park restroom, salt structure, and the police garage. In subtracting these, the Village ends up with about \$1.7 million. 20% is allocated to the checking account and the balance is in the STAR Ohio account. If the Village finds that it is running short on money or constantly pulling money from STAR Ohio, the TIB can redefine the threshold. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

SOLICITOR: The Solicitor had nothing to report.

ENGINEER: The Engineer said the starting of the Bell East Culvert Replacement project is well on its way. He received a detour plan and will forward it to the Streets Committee and the Chief for review. The culvert replacement will take place on Bell Rd. just east of Snyder Rd. There will be a localized closure here, but the contractor will have a road plate on site for any emergency vehicles. The detour route utilizes Munn Rd. and Music St. The plan is to start work December 9th and finish on December 18th. He was aware from a finance perspective, this needed to be paid by the end of the

year. The Engineer's plan would be to have everything ready for the December 9th Council meeting at which authorization to pay the bill can be obtained. Once the work is done, payment can be made.

Cavanagh asked how residents would be informed, and the Street Commissioner said he planned to go door to door to let the residents know. Given the amount of traffic on the road from Newbury, Cavanagh wondered if they should be notified of the project as well. Signage was discussed, and the Engineer offered that the detour plan anticipated this. Without having studied the plan, he thought it would be beneficial to have a sign at Bell Rd. indicating the road closure at Snyder. Bell proposed including the time frame of the closure on the sign. The Chief added that it would be good to do this in advance instead of waiting for the actual closure date. Signage was further discussed, and the Engineer recommended putting up a sign a week in advance right where the culvert will be replaced. The Mayor would ask the County Engineer about signage the Village can borrow.

The Engineer received confirmation from Mr. Excavator that they will be working on the bank stabilization in the Central Retention Basin, and it will be complete by the end of next week. He knew it would be close, but felt confident the Village would have the remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money spent by year's end.

The Mayor relayed that at the Kensington Green Homeowners' Association (HOA) meeting, a recommendation to raise the level of Bullfrog Pond was discussed. The Engineer said that if anything, the water level should be lowered for storage capacity when it rains. The Mayor explained that the rationale was that a higher water level would help the banks around the pond.

The Mayor said that the county is buying a \$775,000 salt dome and wondered if they just used the Village's information. The Engineer said he had not shared the specs with them, so he doubted this. He asked the Mayor to find out how big it would be. Porter asked if the Engineer had gotten any quotes from anyone for the Village's salt structure, and the Engineer said he had not shopped around for quotes. As part of the services agreement for doing the plans and specs, it was up to the Village to do that. If the Village wants him to do it, he could on an hourly basis. Porter thought this would be money well spent. **Porter made a motion that the Engineer shop around the drawings for the new proposed salt storage facility for purposes of obtaining quotes, seconded by Berger.** Porter commented that he thought this motion had been made at the last meeting, and the Solicitor said it was two meetings ago. The Fiscal Officer explained that the previous discussion was to obtain quotes, but it was not clear who was getting them. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Porter asked when there would be written confirmation about the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) money for the Hemlock culvert. The Engineer clarified that Porter was referring to the project agreement, which typically would come in March or April of 2025, a month or two ahead of when the money is deposited into the account, which would be July 1st. Porter wanted to give Russell Township as much warning as possible. The Engineer said that he will be advertising and opening bids prior to July 1st. They are not allowed to award the project until July 1st. Once there is final pricing information based on the bids, this should be shared.

The Mayor asked the Engineer to explain the difference in the timing of the Bell Rd. culvert and the Hemlock Rd. culvert. The Engineer advised that the Bell Rd. culvert was part of the last funding round so as of July 1st, 2024, the Village was able to do that project. There is a 50% split with OPWC, and the Village has ARPA funds that can be spent on a stormwater project which would be applied to the Villages 50/50 local share of the Bell Rd. east culvert.

STREET COMMISSIONER: The Street Commissioner distributed his monthly report. Cavanagh thanked two of the Service Department employees, Rick Pausch and Jeff Pausch for setting up the flags for the Veterans' Breakfast and then coming to eat breakfast on their own time. She appreciated it. The Mayor offered that there was a compliment from the Department on Aging for the Senior Trash Day. He suggested that this should be scheduled the last Saturday of April next year. The Mayor said Shredding Day was a success.

STREETS COMMITTEE: Bell stated that the next meeting is Thursday, November 21st at 7:30 a.m. in the Street Commissioner's office.

BUILDING COMMITTEE: Bell advised that the Building Committee will meet on Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. in the Building Department.

Berger addressed an email forwarded to Council about a residential issue and asked for the status. He explained that it concerned an RV and fence. Bell said it will be discussed by the committee. The Mayor said that there is a complaint form in the Building Department, which will be delivered to the homeowner to have him put the complaint in writing. Canton said this had been an ongoing issue for over a year, and the Solicitor said it was more like three years. Bell recalled that the address is on Bell Rd., but the driveway is on Maple Ridge. The way the RV is parked is actually within the Zoning Code. Canton added that the fence is not high enough to cover the vehicle. The Mayor said this situation has occurred with other corner properties and is probably something the Village should examine. The Solicitor said it had been discussed previously and there is a confusion on the corner house, but that is not necessarily the issue. The issue is the screening of the RV. It is in the Zoning Inspector's reasonable opinion as to whether or not it is adequately screened. This is actually in the code. As she understands, there was a determination that it was reasonably screened. However, she did not fully read the email and was not sure if there were more issues. Additionally, the Solicitor did not think it was appropriate. Canton said that initially the owner of the RV was allegedly going through some hard financial times and the Building Inspector gave him a few months, but it has never been settled. The Solicitor stated that this is typical for the Village to give people time to come into compliance before taking them to court. The Mayor added that this is also an issue of one person's landscaping grass is another person's weeds.

POLICE CHIEF: The Chief addressed the potential for the Geauga County Sheriff's Office (GCSO) dispatch transition again. The Police Department has been working with GCSO to get it done and everything is in place. At the Finance Committee meeting earlier in the day, the matter was discussed. He asked if there were any questions by Council and added that he would like to push forward to get a motion to set a transition date for potentially December 1st for the transition to GCSO for police dispatching only. Canton said as Chair of Safety Committee, he was ready to make the motion but wanted to open it up to discussion by Council. The Chief summarized that the Safety Committee discussed the tech issues the department had experienced, and that GCSO has sound tech software in place. Starting November 1st, the Police Department went to this software and is currently using it, and it is working perfectly. He anticipated improved response times because a large percentage of individuals have cell phones and when 911 is called from a cell phone, it goes directly to GCSO dispatch. With the Village under CVD, the call is then passed from GCSO to CVD. Nothing will change with 911 because it is working the way it should. However, when GCSO gets the call, they will pass the medical call back to Chagrin Valley Fire Department (CVFD), but the Police Department will get the information faster because of the process involved in transferring the call to CVFD. He concluded that this is an opportunity to improve efficiency and response time. With a more stable platform, officer safety improves because with the problematic mobile data terminal system under CVD, officer safety was an issue. For the Police Department and Village, this is a good move. Currently, the Village is the last Geauga County municipality not dispatched

by GCSO. Furthermore, the department already has a good working relationship with other county services used by police. There would be no major issues with the transition other than a different phone number to use for police services. For the average resident, nothing changes.

Canton asked the Chief to reflect on the savings the Village would see. The Chief explained that with the removal of CVD IT, in the first year the Village will save \$18,000. Going forward, the Village will save closer to \$58,000 per year in 2026. He further explained that 2025 will be a tough year, but concessions have been made with the Police Department budget to postpone the body worn camera upgrade which would have been \$46,000. In sum, the first five years, the Village will save about \$300,000 and double that in ten years.

Galicki noted that in the Finance Committee meeting, it was determined that the December 1st transition narrows the negotiation window with CVD. Berger asked if this conversation would be taking place were it not for the large CVD increase. The Chief said that the option had always been there, and he cannot justify a 50% increase in the level of service with the tech issues they had experienced. This option has been under consideration for a while, but the increase had a huge impact. Berger offered that the triggering issue was the increase in costs. The Chief explained that he informed Nick DiCicco, CVD Director, of the status of the transition. He added that he still has a good working relationship with DiCicco. The Chief was informed that Highland Hills has elected to leave CVD. They had been paying \$103,000 per year but their costs doubled to \$220,000. They gave notice as of December 31st and are moving to Bedford Heights Dispatch. When they discussed negotiations to get out of the contract, CVD informed them they are locked into a contract, and CVD has no intention of setting up a special meeting to discuss it. It would be discussed at the next regularly scheduled meeting in December. If there is any traction in that meeting, the entire COG will have to be brought together for a vote in January. The Chief was informed that when they had the vote to make the increase, it was nine opposed but 20 or more agencies favored the increase. DiCicco anticipated this would be the same result for a request for an exception. Thus, any potential for the Village getting an exception for ending the contract early is slim to none. Bell commented that with Highland Hills leaving, this will increase the Village's bill even more. The Chief concurred and added that a lot of agencies are looking at other options. His job is to do what is in the best interest of the Police Department and Village and believes this move will be important for the improvements it will bring.

Cavanagh asked for clarification about the four recent Geauga County entities that went to GCSO. The Chief explained that Chester Township, Bainbridge, Chardon, and Middlefield closed their own dispatch centers and are being dispatched by GCSO. This happened over many years, with the most recent being Chardon last year.

Cavanagh stated that she called the non-emergency number for the police, and everyone must have been on the road because no one answered at 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. to make sure the door to Village Hall was locked after the Paw Paw Lake HOA meeting. She made the call from her cell phone and asked if her call would go straight out to dispatch. The Chief advised that it would first come to the station and then roll over to GCSO, but right now it rolls over to CVD. This is a phone programing issue that he handles.

The Mayor addressed the Solicitor and said he had not seen a piece of paper. He needed to see something from the county about switching. The Chief explained that they have the document that basically states there is no cost for dispatch and the only thing the Village is responsible for is the mobile data terminal air cards, for which the Village already pays. The Mayor clarified that he was asking about a contract or something with them. The Solicitor asked whether any of the other entities have contracts with GCSO. The Chief explained that it is an automatic service that is provided. The Mayor's concern was that the Village will say it is joining GCSO dispatch and then a situation comes up like a hostage situation and the word doesn't get out. Where is the agreement that the Village went with GCSO? He thought they needed to see something that says the Village is going from CVD to GCSO. Porter added that the Village must provide notice to CVD. The Chief said that this is what he is trying to accomplish with this transition. It will be necessary to give notice to CVD. GCSO gave the Village a letter already stating that there was no charge for the dispatch and the Village would only be

responsible for the air cards. The Mayor said that this needed to go to the Solicitor, and she needed to cover the Village on this. He was concerned about confusion between the two dispatching services if a situation occurred. The Chief explained that the same thing occurs today, but it was just the opposite. A recent example was when a resident called South Russell Police Department (SRPD), and CVD answered the phone. The dispatcher, not knowing South Russell very well, asked the caller where they were calling from. The caller told the dispatcher South Russell, and the dispatcher asks where that was, and the resident relayed that it was in Geauga County. The CVD dispatcher then sent the call to GCSO dispatch, which then transferred the call back to CVD. These are errors that happen continuously. It may happen in the future, but the likelihood of it happening now is going to be greatly reduced because the Village is going to GCSO which is much smaller and has more seasoned veteran dispatchers. CVD is having a lot of turnover and not recognizing who and where the Village is. The Mayor said this is not his issue. The Village should have dropped CVD and gone to GCSO years ago. He just wanted to cover the Village and needed something that goes to the Solicitor to say it is good and go ahead and do it. Otherwise, it is a gentleman's agreement.

The Solicitor clarified that even if the Village were to give notice December 31st, technically it is not out of the contract. The Chief concurred, adding that it is in the contract until the end of 2025. The Solicitor asked if there will be a time where CVD is still providing the service since the Village was still paying for it? Porter stated that they are providing fire dispatch. The Solicitor clarified that she is addressing police dispatch. The Chief said CVD would continue to provide the service through 2025. The Solicitor stated that the Village would say to them basically, don't do that with respect to the police. The Chief concurred and said CVD is already aware and understands the proposal. When that happens, they are just going to get notice that the Village is now being dispatched by GCSO. The Solicitor asked if the Village has anything from GCSO that states they are ready and willing to take on the Village. The Chief said he has a letter from the Chief Deputy stating that there is no charge for services and that SRPD is responsible for the air cards. In discussions with the other agencies, the service has been provided to all the other entities. If something happens and the Village decides to go back to CVD, there is nothing that states the Village cannot go back. What is needed to be able to do this? This move is in the best interest of the Village and SRPD. They are currently struggling with the tech and are running into officer safety issues, and this is the right move. Everyone else is satisfied with the service. If additional documentation is needed, he would be happy to get it.

The Mayor said that even if there were no issues, to save \$40,000 the Village should do this. The Village signs agreements on petty little things and this is big, and he was concerned that if the Village is going to put its neck out, he wanted to sign something and have the Solicitor say to do it. Canton asked Galicki if it would be prudent to hold this until documentation was provided by GCSO. Galicki said that if this is the Mayor's desire, but he did not know if December 1st was an artificial date or a required one. January 1st could also be a transition date if it served to provide comfort that there was paperwork that indicated that as of this date, the Village will secede from CVD for police dispatch. Canton asked how long it would take to get the document, and the Chief said he could get it the following day. Porter proposed that the motion specify that documentation will be provided to the Mayor and Solicitor, then it is conditional. Chief gets the documentation, the Mayor and Solicitor are satisfied, and the Village goes forward December 1st. Then the Village has something in writing from GCSO stating that December 1st is okay. He understood the Mayor's concerns about not having anything in writing and that on December 1st there is an emergency call that does not go anywhere.

From a Finance Committee standpoint, Berger said that there was \$40,000 on the table. Has there been any discussion with CVD relative to negotiating a settlement of the obligation? The Mayor said he was embarrassed to say that CVD had not responded to the Village's letter or to the Highland Hills mayor. The Solicitor asked what letter was said. The Mayor clarified it was the termination letter for IT. She verified CVD had not acknowledged it because she thought they had. The Chief said that the termination of IT services was done and had been acknowledged by email and text message. The Solicitor asked who from CVD told Highland Hills that CVD would not hold a special meeting for the issue and how was this communicated? The Chief received

this information today from Director DiCicco who mentioned that they were not inclined to have a special meeting to discuss the exceptions of these contracts. The Mayor said this would be correct because he spoke with the Highland Hills mayor that morning. The Solicitor asked about the regular CVD meeting. The Mayor said they had not had one, and the Solicitor said they would in December. The Chief said they have yet to schedule it, so this is unknown. Following that, a meeting of the entire COG would be necessary. The way it was worded to him, the exception would not have support, and it would be voted down. The Solicitor clarified that her question is that the Village would not have a chance to be heard. The Mayor thought there was a chance to be heard because Highland Hills, South Russell, and Chagrin Falls Township which are three of the four entities who voted the proposal down are all on the Executive Committee of CVD. From his discussion with the mayor of Solon that morning, he did not think there would be a meeting to see what could be done to keep the entities. That was not the feeling. Porter did not know why they would vote to cut their own throats and let the Village out. The Solicitor said in her opinion, if there were \$40,000 for services the Village would not be receiving, she thought there should still be an effort to be heard. The Chief acknowledged this, but still thought the Village needed to make the move, and also still needed to try to make its case. Highland Hills will be doing this even though they are going to Bedford Heights Dispatch. Porter thought there was no harm in being heard whether they agree or not.

Berger asked how the Village could have told CVD on July 1st that the Village wanted out of the contract when the Village had no idea that there was a 28% increase in the pipeline that was not communicated to the Village until October. How can the Village be expected to comply with the contract? The Chief said the response he received was that this had been done in the past with rate increases. They have only met in October/November and have given the rate increases late in the year and there has never been a problem. The problem this time, however, is that it was a complete restructuring of the billing where in the past it consisted of 4% - 5% increases. Berger said this was his point with the 28% increase and he felt the Village had no opportunity to respond to the issue. He concurred with the Solicitor that he would not want to just leave \$40,000 on the table without making an effort. If they don't like what the Village says, perhaps the Village will have to restructure its payment policies.

The Mayor verified the Village had a contract with CVD that goes through December 31st of 2025. The Solicitor explained that the termination /withdrawal provision is that the Village must withdraw by July 1st, but this is not effective until the end of the following year on December 31st. It would be December 31, 2025, regardless. The Chief further explained that if the Village had decided to leave before July 1st, then they would be done as of December 31, 2024. Porter offered that the Village could transition to GCSO and keep CVD as a backup since the Village is paying for it. The Chief added that CVD will continue to provide fire dispatch.

The Mayor summarized that the Village wanted to get some sort of agreement with GCSO and also go to CVD to plead its case knowing that they don't have a leg to stand on. Canton suggested tabling the motion, and the Mayor said it had not been made. Porter suggested making it conditional and the Mayor who is on the CVD Executive Board can make arrangements for the Village to plead its case at some point. The Village will provide the termination before July 1st. So, the SRPD makes the switch December 1st as long as the Mayor and Solicitor receive some written assurances of some kind from GCSO that December 1st is a good date. Then if it works out, in March, April, or May, the Village can send a termination notice to CVD. He did not like paying the money. Berger offered that the termination notice could be sent today. Porter suggested making sure the switch was done first.

The Mayor asked the Solicitor to prepare the termination notice for the November 25th Council meeting so we could have something to terminate December 1st. The Chief said he will have something to initiate. The Solicitor added that it truly is not effective until December 31, 2025, even though there will be no more services December 1st. Berger added that this is unless CVD agrees otherwise.

Canton made a motion that Council vote and approve the transition to Geauga County Dispatch effective December 1, 2024, to allow sufficient time for transition and operational changes with the condition that documentation be received from Geauga County and police only. The Mayor said he wants to strengthen and does not just want a piece of paper. He wanted the Solicitor to say this is okay to make this change, and that the Solicitor approves the agreement with Geauga County Dispatch Center. Porter explained that the Mayor would receive an email or letter. It is not like the usual contract where the Village buys services from a vendor. It is a county program that provides its specialty to any municipality in the county that wants it. The Mayor said he would expect an agreement, but whatever as long as the Solicitor says it is okay to make a switch, which Council will have on November 25th and we will go out December 1st. **Seconded by Berger. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

SAFETY COMMITTEE: Canton stated that the minutes of the October 17th Safety Committee meeting were distributed. A variety of topics were discussed including golf carts, micromobility devices, and the Police Department garage project. CVD was also discussed along with requests made by the Mayor. The Chief stated he would be presenting the project to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) on November 20th, Planning Commission (PC) on November 21st, and the Architectural Review Board (ARB) on December 3rd. After this, they can potentially go out to bid.

HR COMMITTEE: Cavanagh said that a special meeting was held November 4th to discuss the policies drafted by Berger. There is also a proposed ordinance to address the Mayor's authority. Berger explained that the policies stem from HR Committee discussions and serve to resolve confusion and/or clarify the Village's policy with regard to certain situations.

24-1 simply states what the Village's intent is regarding callout provisions, expectations of the employees, duration, and to protect the safety of the employees during such callouts by limiting hours they work. The background is that there have been times where the Service Department has been out 24 or more hours behind the wheel of a snowplow, which is not a reasonable expectation. If this were the case, the Village would need to make other arrangements to avoid having an employee doing his job for more than 16 hours. The Street Commissioner discussed this matter with a colleague and reported there is a CDL law that has requirements in place relative to the allowable time drivers can be on the clock and operating a snowplow. The Street Commissioner needed to look into CDL law further, which might generate questions about the instance where the Village could not cover. Berger said the committee would need to consider this in terms of manpower and bringing in additional part-time employees. The Solicitor asked about mutual aid or the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU). The Street Commissioner said that in this situation, most communities would be facing the same thing. It might be a matter of simply shutting down between certain hours and not having plowing or salting between midnight and 5:00 a.m. unless there is a major emergency. Berger advised that this policy would be tabled pending clarification of the law. Once this information is obtained, it will be included in the Employee Handbook as part of the Village's policies.

Berger made a motion to approve policy 24-2 which speaks to employment recognition and simply states this is what the Village will do in the event that an employee or former employee has passed away and how the Village will recognize that and what is appropriate, seconded by Cavanagh. The Solicitor suggested the motion should include identifying where in the Employee Handbook this will appear. The Mayor said there was no second on the motion and proposed letting the motion die and then discussing the matter at the next HR meeting.

Porter questioned 24-6, concerning recognition and specified a not to exceed amount of \$5,000. He asked if this was for the entire year or for each event. Cavanagh said it would be for the entire year. Berger said he would clarify this in the motion.

Cavanagh asked if Berger wanted to introduce the ordinance for the Mayor's authority. Berger responded no because the committee had not finished discussing it.

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 14th at 2:00 p.m. The Mayor said that the committee will be discussing hiring a consultant to talk about policies, procedures, workplace harassment, social media, etc.

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE: Cavanagh stated that the committee will meet Thursday, November 14th at 1:00 p.m. Cavanagh asked about the status of the Reserve Study. Berger advised that the Reserve Study is under the Properties Committee, but the intention is that it is a living document that over the course of the year will be reviewed and corrected as a first cut of the process. The Finance Committee discussed the Reserve Study recommendation that the Village set aside \$275,000 in replacement cost items every year. However, that has not been done in the budget nor will it be done until it is determined what the \$275,000 worth of items are and whether it is a reasonable amount. He thought review of the Reserve Study would not begin until after the first of the year.

PARKS COMMITTEE: Cavanagh had nothing to report.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE: Berger reported that the Public Utilities Committee will meet Friday, November 15th at 9:00 a.m.

The Mayor suggested untabling the Power a Clean Future resolution and voting it down.

The Mayor reviewed items discussed in the Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) annual meeting which included that to predict the weather for Northeast Ohio, it is best to look at the weather in Alaska because that is the best correlation dealing with weather. Starting in June 2025, electricity rates for people who get their power from the grid system for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland will go up 20% based on when the price of electricity was bid on a year and a half ago.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Porter made a motion to untable the ordinance regarding Power a Clean Future resolution, seconded by Berger. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Porter provided a third reading of a Power a Clean Future Resolution authorizing the Village of South Russell to become a Power a Clean Future Ohio community and to adopt a goal to reduce the carbon footprint of the Village, increase energy efficiency, and reduce the energy cost to the Village, so moved. There was not second – motion failed.

Porter provided a third reading of 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, so moved, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2024-92**

Berger introduced a resolution requesting advance of taxes for real estate taxes collected for 2025 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. **RES 2024-93**

Berger introduced an ordinance approving the pay schedule for employees and officials of the Village of South Russell for 2025 only effective January 1, 2025, and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2024-94**

Berger introduced an ordinance amending the annual appropriations increasing income tax transfers \$7,500 and Special Road Fund expenses \$7,500 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 2024-95**

Berger introduced an ordinance transferring up to \$7,500 from the Income Tax Fund to the Special Road Fund 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 2024-96**

BILLS LIST:

Berger made a motion to ratify the bills list of October 30, 2024, in the amount of \$61,423.35, seconded by Galicki. The Mayor commented about the mileage paid recently for the Mayor and two Council members to attend the OML conference and said this was among the policies drafted and there would be some good situations there. At the next Finance Committee meeting, the Mayor wanted to discuss a situation where the Fiscal Officer did not charge the Village for mileage when she made a trip to Columbus because she visited other people using her private car. The Mayor thought she should be reimbursed like he and the Council members were. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

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

Cavanagh said she looked at the 250th and she and the Mayor have to sit down to do some kind of resolution. She will bring it up at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Being that there was no further business before Council, Bell made a motion to adjourn at 8:38 p.m., seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.


William G. Koons, Mayor


Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki

RESOLUTION NO.	<u>2024-81</u>	FIRST READING	<u>September 9, 2024</u>
		SECOND READING	<u>Waived</u>
INTRODUCED BY:	<u>Chris Bell</u>	THIRD READING	<u>Waived</u>

A RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR TIMOTHY ALDER

WHEREAS, Timothy Alder began his employment with the Village of South Russell in 1999 as a Driver/Operator for the Street Department and ultimately was appointed and served the Village as the Interim Street Commissioner and then Street Commissioner from October 2019 through September 2024; and

WHEREAS, Timothy Alder was dedicated to serving the community by coordinating and executing stormwater mitigation projects to include countless driveway culvert replacements, ditch cleaning and maintenance, and in general instituting drainage solutions to provide flooding relief to residents; and

WHEREAS, during his time as Street Commissioner, Timothy Alder provided excellent service to the Village’s senior citizens by coordinating the Geauga County Department on Aging Special Trash Pick-up Day; and

WHEREAS, Timothy Alder took pride in overseeing the updating of the department’s large equipment to meet current demands; and

WHEREAS, Timothy Alder was responsible as Street Commissioner for often robust yearly Road Programs and for keeping the Village roads clear of ice and snow, allowing them to remain open and safe; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Village of South Russell, County of Geauga, State of Ohio, that:

SECTION 1. The Mayor and Council of the Village of South Russell, Ohio express their sincere appreciation to Timothy Alder for service as the former Street Commissioner and for his dedication to the community.

SECTION 2. The Mayor and Council desire this commendation of Timothy Alder to become a permanent part of the records of the Village of South Russell.


SECTION 3. That it is hereby found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the passage of this Resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and any of its committees on or after November 25, 1975, that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

SECTION 4. This Resolution shall be effective at the earliest time allowed by law.

Passed this 9th day of September 2024.




 Mayor William G. Koons



 Ruth Cavanagh



 Christopher Bell



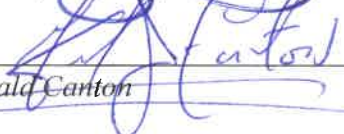
 Dennis Galicki



 Christopher Berger



 Mark Porter



 Gerald Canton

Attest:

I certify that Resolution No. 2024 – 81 was duly enacted on the 9th day of September 2024 by the Council of the Village of South Russell and published in accordance with the Codified Ordinances of the Village.



 Fiscal Officer