

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025 – 7:00 P.M.
MAYOR WILLIAM G. KOONS PRESIDING**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Cavanagh

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

VISITORS: Members of GSNEO Cadet Troop 71359; Curtis Grube, Hall St. Chagrin Falls; Lisa Novak Antil, Bell Rd.; Krysti Ellis, Maple Hill Dr.; Emily Gold, Alderwood Trail

The Mayor called the meeting to order, and the members of Girl Scout Troop 71359 led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Fiscal Officer read the roll. Cavanagh was absent. **Porter made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2025, Regular Council meeting, seconded by Canton. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

VISITORS: Members of Girl Scout Troop 71359 addressed Council relative to holding a drive-through fundraising Girl Scout cookie sale on the Village campus on Saturday, March 15, 2025, from noon to 4:00 p.m. Additionally, Council also received an application from Girl Scout Troop 70671 to use the Village campus for a cookie sale on March 8, 2025. **Berger made a motion to approve the use of Village campus by Girl Scout NEO Troop 70671 on Saturday, March 15th from 9:00 a.m. to noon for sale of Girl Scout cookies to raise funds for the troop pending receipt of the organization’s certificate of insurance and authorizing the Mayor to sign the application thereof, seconded by Galicki.** The Fiscal Officer pointed out that the written application received by the Village was from Troop 70671 and the troop addressing Council is Troop 71359. It would appear that the application for which the motion was made would be for a different troop than the one present at the meeting. Emily Gold, Alderwood Trail, clarified that she had not submitted an application yet. **Berger amended the motion for Girl Scout Troop 70671 for Saturday, March 8th, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried. Berger made a motion to approve use of Village campus by Girl Scout NEO Troop 71359 on Saturday, March 15, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to noon for sale of Girl Scout Cookies to raise funds for the troop pending receipt of the organization’s certificate of insurance and authorizing the Mayor to sign the application when submitted, seconded by Galicki. Bell clarified that the sale was from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Berger corrected the motion, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

MAYOR’S REPORT: The Mayor reported that at the February 24th Council meeting, Fire Prevention Officer Davis will present an agreement with Chagrin Valley Fire Department (CVFD) for the use of First Due, a type of software program that normally would cost \$3,000 but will be provided for free. There will also be a discussion with the Fire Prevention Officer about the park burn, and hopefully there will be a motion to conduct the burn. The Mayor explained that the Park District provides no written agreement to conduct the burn and asked the Solicitor to draft one. The Solicitor said that this would be a conflict with her firm, and she would need to get informed consent from both sides to represent both.

FISCAL OFFICER: The Fiscal Officer pointed out the graphic on the front of her report which showed all of the Village residences that will be covered for the first TextMyGov notification which will be sent on Friday, February 14th. Once the text is received, the residents can opt out if they choose. She further explained features of the program and gave an example if there were a power outage, it would be possible to identify the area of the outage and send information to only those residents. The Chief has gotten everything set up and the widget for the service is on the Village's website. Additionally, through social media, 35 people signed up for it within the first couple of hours of posting it.

The Village received the \$1,500 Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) Sponsorship Grant for the Fall Festival.

The Fiscal Officer asked the Mayor for clarification about the May 21st hike he mentioned at the previous Council meeting. The Mayor stated that the Park Committee does not know about it yet and more information will follow.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Canton stated that the next committee meeting will be February 21st at 3:15 in Village Hall. Additionally, there will be a Treasury Investment Board (TIB) meeting on February 24th at 3:15 p.m. in Village Hall. Porter indicated he would be unable to attend, and the Fiscal Officer explained that Canton, as chair of the Finance Committee, is on the TIB. Porter is not required to attend, however he is welcome, as is anyone who is interested.

SOLICITOR: The Solicitor had nothing to report.

ENGINEER: The Engineer reported working on the Bell Rd. East paving project which is currently in the design stage. He further reported that there had been correspondence with the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA) about the bicycle and pedestrian money. There will be a conference call with the Mayor, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and NOACA on the status of that matter. At the Public Utilities Committee meeting on February 7th, there was discussion about the drainage in the Hazelwood neighborhood. Regarding the salt structure, the Engineer reported that since this will be a design-build proposal, the Village is scheduled to solicit statements of qualifications for interested design-build firms. Porter reported the following timeline for the structure: advertise, February 15th through February 28th; minimum requirements, March 24th; contract award, April; in service, fall of 2025. The Engineer concurred.

STREET COMMISSIONER: The Street Commissioner submitted his month end report and had nothing further to report.

Bell shared that he read that neighboring communities were having problems with their salt supply. With the Village's overabundance of salt in the beginning of winter, he was curious as to whether there had been a decent dent in the salt stored in the current salt dome. The Street Commissioner said that the salt is about 6-feet off the back wall, and there are still the sides, and there is still a balance of 1,000 ton on order. The Village is still in good shape. Bell confirmed that there was still significant salt in the salt dome that may have to be transferred to the new building if the Village does not get a lot of winter weather. The Street Commissioner said he will not transfer anything from the old salt dome into the new structure. When the salt contract is done in the spring, he will just order that amount and have them put it directly in the new structure and then continue to take it out of the old dome until it is gone.

STREETS COMMITTEE: Galicki advised that in the absence of the committee chair, he had nothing to report, and the next meeting date had not been determined.

BUILDING COMMITTEE: Porter said that in the absence of the committee chair, the next committee meeting had not been scheduled. He noted the legislation for the new Building Department copier. **Porter made a motion to extend the service agreement with Gallagher Architects, Inc. for building plans examination services for one year from the retroactive date of January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025, of which extension Gallagher Architects, Inc. agrees, seconded by Berger. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

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

SAFETY COMMITTEE: Bell advised that the committee will be meeting Thursday, February 13th at 8:00 a.m. in the Police Department.

HR COMMITTEE: Bell addressed the legislation for the Ohio Deferred Compensation Roth 457 Plan for employees. The next meeting will be February 11th at 7:30 a.m. in Village Hall. The Mayor asked that the committee discuss in service training for employees at their meeting.

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE: Berger reported that the next Properties Committee meeting will be held on February 18, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

The Mayor raised the question of how the Girl Scout cookie sales would be handled if there were bad weather. He questioned whether the Chief would be the point of contact for cancellation or for opening a garage door for the scouts to be out of the weather. The Chief was not certain it would be a good idea for liability reasons to open the Service Department garage. The scouts said they were planning to bring tents, and he thought they would be protected. If there was severe weather, the scouts would have to give consideration for cancelling the event.

PARKS COMMITTEE: Berger is working with Cavanagh to schedule the next Park Committee meeting.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE: Porter stated that the Public Utilities Committee met February 7th and the minutes were distributed. Regarding the Central Retention Basin (CRB), the committee discussed the issue of the resident who is directly south of the basin on Chillicothe Rd. There was a question of whether the Village should plant some trees to help screen the properties in this area. The resident feels strongly that he was promised some kind of screening, but Porter did not see any express unambiguous promise made to him when reviewing the pertinent meeting minutes. However, the committee thinks that up to seven evergreens should be planted at the places designated by the homeowner for the purpose of screening. The estimated cost is about \$1,000 per tree and would be a stormwater expense and the Street Commissioner would arrange the plantings in the spring. The same resident brought up the lights at the Cemetery which consist of two small lights on the brick wall, requesting that they be turned off. The committee declined his request and felt they should stay on for safety reasons.

Galicki reminded Council that in order to accommodate a single resident, the Village already expended in excess of \$40,000 to modify the design of the CRB. That expense was born by the Village to accommodate a desire. This same property owner has assumed use of Village property for a garden

planted in the far reach of his yard. Now he is asking for screening. Given the fact that this is for the benefit of one resident, Council should be critical in its evaluation of the need to plant trees. There was no promise and perhaps this is an expense that should be born by the property owner given the fact that he is looking for privacy screening. Furthermore, there are members of the Kensington Green community who received no offer of screening or light mitigation when the Lantern was built. He wondered whether it was a valid issue for the Village to be responding to with respect to satisfy the requests of one resident.

Galicki also asked Porter to elaborate on the almost \$1 million stormwater mitigation on Hazelwood which was addressed in the committee minutes. Porter explained that putting the pipe in between South Russell and Russell will help considerably, but Hazelwood has issues with its installed drainage which dates back to the 1950's. The Engineer explained it dates from when the homes were built and is a hodgepodge of underground piping. Porter described the pipe between Russell and South Russell as the cork in the bottle and if the Village can get that situation taken care of by summer, then upstream the Village can address the hodgepodge of water piping that residents and various other people have installed over the years, making the flow better to reduce flooding. The sticker shock, however, is considerable. The Engineer explained that his estimate for the replacement and improvement of the storm sewer would be \$500,000. The roadway paving would also be \$400,000, which has been on the five-year look ahead for the Road Program for a handful of years. His recommendation would be to tie the two projects together because a storm sewer project is a great ask for Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC). Additionally, if the paving is done in conjunction, he could ask for funding for the combined project. Galicki asked if this was something that should be considered for an Erosion Special Improvement District (ESID) if it is on private property, but the Engineer explained that it was in the right-of-way. Porter commented on the large projects recently taken on by the Village and said that this one would solve flooding in that neighborhood. The Engineer said that this project may not happen in the next few years, but it is important to look ahead and discuss it now.

Porter relayed that the committee also addressed the Sugar Bush Pond dredge issue. A quote of \$32,000 was received for the project and rejected. Porter advised that according to the Engineer, it is a manmade pond and can be simply drained and returned to a meadow and stream although the residents may not be in favor of this. He proposed splitting the cost with the homeowners and added that this was one of the Village's first forays into dredging when it had almost never been done that in the past. The Engineer said there was some kind of arrangement with Sugar Bush Homeowners' Association (HOA) where the Village assisted them financially in dredging out the silt pond. At the time, they raised concern that the earthwork that was being done upstream with the Manor Brook project could fill the silt pond again. The Engineer said that it seems like the silt pond has filled, but he could not definitively say that it was the result of the work at Manor Brook, but it may have contributed. Porter concluded that this was the rationale with considering the splitting of the cost again. Galicki clarified that the silt pond is on private property and would potentially fit with an ESID. The Engineer concurred. Galicki saw this as a solution without the expenditure of public funds. Porter suggested the Mayor discuss options with the HOA.

Bell asked if the proposed Hazelwood project is all in South Russell or also in Russell, and the Engineer clarified it is all in South Russell. He then described specifics of the drainage issues. Funding was also discussed.

Regarding the request for the planting of the trees with the CRB, the Mayor asked everyone to take a look at the resident's situation although he wholeheartedly agreed with the situation with the Cemetery

lights. He suggested waiting to make a motion on the matter until the next meeting. Canton described his own issue with a neighbor's lights and suggested an option for the resident was to not look out his window. He further stated that the issue with the garden encroaching on Village property was addressed with the resident. However, Canton offered that the Village planted screening trees as a courtesy for residents on Manor Brook, and perhaps as a good neighbor, it would be best to plant a few trees adjacent to the Village property. Galicki said that with Manor Brook, there was a greater good for a neighborhood with respect to the screening. It is not an individual per se who is benefitting. He clarified that the resident making the request wants the trees planted on his property and questioned the use of public funds to make improvements to private property. Ultimately, the landowner can do whatever he wants to his own property to improve his feeling of privacy. The Mayor suggested waiting until March to give everyone a chance to look at the situation. The Mayor said he agreed with Galicki and did not know how many trees you can put up to replace what is gone.

Regarding Hazelwood, the Mayor discussed the building that had occurred over time where there had once been ponds and fields in relation to the flooding issues. One resident is currently building an addition onto his home and all the water comes right at it. The Village will have to work with the owner and the architect to protect it.

The Mayor reported receiving an email and phone call from the State Representative's people asking about the needs of the Village for the budget. It was like the checkbook was wide open, so he has been discussing it with the Engineer. The Mayor thought about paving the Bellwood neighborhood in 2027 or replacing seven rotting garage doors and a bad floor in the Streets Department. The Mayor indicated that the request is due March 7th and asked that ideas be discussed at the next Finance Committee meeting.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Canton provided a second reading of an ordinance authorizing all actions necessary to accept Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) 2025 Energized Community Grant. Canton made a motion to waive the third reading, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2025-11**

Canton introduced an ordinance employing USI Midwest, LLC as insurance agent for the Village of South Russell and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2025-12**

Canton introduced an ordinance authorizing the 2025 Property and Casualty Insurance with Public Entities Pool of Ohio and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2025-13**

Porter introduced an ordinance approving the sales order agreement and maintenance contract between the Village of South Russell and Lake Business Products for the purchase and maintenance of a copier, waiving the connectivity and network support fee portion of the agreement, authorizing the Mayor to execute the agreement, and declaring an emergency. Porter made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2025-14**

Berger introduced a resolution adopting the Roth 457 Plan under the Ohio Public Employees Deferred Compensation program administered by the Ohio Public Employees Deferred Compensation Board for participation by “eligible employees” of the Village of South Russell and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **RES 2025-15**

Canton introduced an ordinance amending the annual appropriations increasing Street Maintenance Fund expenses \$15,000, Safety Fund expenses \$140,203.56, Income Tax Transfers \$65,000, Special Land and Building Fund expenses \$23,450, Bell East Capital fund expenses \$71,855.63 and decrease Road and Bridge Fund expenses \$15,000 and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2025-15**

Canton introduced an ordinance transferring up to \$50,000 from the Income Tax Fund to the Special Land and Building Fund and up to \$15,000 from the Income Tax Fund to the Bell Road East Capital fund and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2025-16**

Canton introduced an ordinance transferring from the Income Tax fund to the Safety Fund up to \$1,250,000; Operating Fund up to \$165,000; Street Maintenance Fund up to 598,769; Special Building and Land Fund up to \$170,000; General Fund up to \$250,000; Parks & Recreation Fund up to \$3,500; and Large Equipment Fund up to \$100,000 and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2025-17**

BILLS LIST: Canton made a motion to ratify the bills lists of January 30, 2025, in the amount of \$44,475.78, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

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

At 7:52, Bell made a motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of conferring with the Solicitor regarding pending litigation involving the Village pursuant to Section 121.22 (G)(3) of the Ohio Revised Code and invite into Executive Session the Mayor, Police Chief, Fiscal Officer, and the Solicitor, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Porter made a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:00 p.m., seconded by Berger. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: Being that there was no further business before Council, Canton made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 p.m., seconded by Berger. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.



William G. Koons, Mayor



Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki