

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bell, Canton, Cavanagh, and Galicki

MEMBERS ABSENT: Berger and Porter

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

VISITORS: Jeff Greenlief, Chillicothe Rd.; Anton Yeranossian, Chillicothe Rd.

The Mayor called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Fiscal Officer read the roll. Porter and Berger were absent. **Canton made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2025, Regular Council meeting, seconded by Bell. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

VISITORS: Jeff Greenlief, 5249 Chillicothe Rd., was in attendance to revisit the topic of screening for his property with Village trees on Village property. He hoped that Council would discuss it and consider it at the Council meeting. Anton Yeranossian, 5251 Chillicothe Rd., thought that planting of screening trees was part of the original plan with the Central Retention Basin. When the vegetation was removed, it left everything open, and he wanted to know what would happen with the proposal. The Mayor read from the March 1, 2022 minutes, “The Mayor summarized that clearing will occur in March and in late September or October, the Village would meet with Greenlief to figure out what would be needed to screen the area,” and then noted the minutes reflected his explanation of the funding. The Mayor said he thought when the Village installed the Central Retention Basin, it was going to have a row of arborvitae all along to shield. He did not know what could be done to shield it. He met with the Street Commissioner to discuss the matter and said it is a touchy situation with deciding what the Village can do on its property to help Greenlief because his view had changed and is not what it was. He did not presently have an answer. In looking around with recent projects, the Village had taken down a lot of trees. He went on to say that the Village barely got the Central Retention Basin done in time on December 30th to meet the funding requirements. He thought the Village was now at the point of considering what could be done to make it look better.

Canton relayed that Porter asked him to report on this issue. The committee is not ready to make a motion yet because they want more discussion. However, the committee is leaning towards six trees to be planted on Village property. Yeranossian clarified that this would be on Chillicothe Rd. Canton said that the committee would like the Street Commissioner, property owners, and possibly the Engineer to look at the area. The committee wants a written plan to be made that will go to different committees, the area to be staked, and a determination made about the type of tree to be planted. The Mayor explained that with something like this, the Village’s Engineering firm develops plans, like with the park and now with trails. The Mayor thought there needed to be a plan for a bigger picture with the trees. The Village also has the Street Commissioner finding ideas of things to do with the corner property. With the Manor Brook project clearing, 15 arborvitae were planted on the top of the hill, so the Village has done things like that. He assured Greenlief and Yeranossian that they would not be forgotten. The Village would keep them involved and keep them informed.

Bell noted that in doing some research, he was impressed with how inexpensive a group of 20 2-3-foot Giant Arborvitae would be. He noted that if the Village is planning to provide screening for the south side of the Central Retention Basin, there are also residents on the cul-de-sac of Annandale Dr. who have expressed concern with the change in sound and view during the wintertime. He proposed that the Village should also consider placing them on the east side. The Mayor added that the Village will be putting up a large salt structure which will be in some peoples' backyards. Greenlief and Yeranossian are not the only residents who will need to see some changes. He assured them that they will be kept apprised of the situation.

MAYOR'S REPORT: The Mayor followed up on three items discussed at the last Council meeting as well as some new items. He first noted the loss of information when committees change. Next, he addressed the efforts of the part-time and full-time Administrative Assistants in keeping the Building Department going in the absence of the Building Department Administrative Assistant. Regarding the upcoming installation of the park restroom, the Service Department employees visited Moreland Hills, which has an identical restroom. They were able to glean information about what it will take to install and maintain the restroom. In 2023, the project went through the boards and the Engineer developed a plan identifying the exact location. The Fiscal Officer located and distributed this information to officials.

The Mayor discussed the proposed burn in the park and said that the Village will communicate about it with residents through the Chagrin Valley Times and the newsletter. He suspected the Village would have less than a week's notice about when it will happen. He added that the burn is part of the Master Plan created for the park and has been recommended by the Audubon Society, members of the Park Committee, and the Western Reserve Land Conservancy. They know what they are doing and understand why it will be beneficial. There was a Park Committee meeting last year where the topic was addressed and was attended by experts and the public. The Mayor distributed material related to a burn. He received a quote from Davey Tree for \$10,000 to conduct the burn. The Geauga Parks will do it for free, and the Mayor asked the Properties Committee to consider making a motion at the next Council meeting to pay \$250 for lunches. There will be 8-10 people from the Park District, Bainbridge Police, South Russell Police, the fire department, and the service department personnel and he is thinking about having a luncheon. The Mayor reported that with vegetation growth, the park is shrinking, and the Street Commissioner will reestablish the boundaries and establish the fire breaks. The burn will take place on the 10 acres on East Washington Street since there is only one home and a couple of businesses close by, and the Village has not mowed that area. He hoped to get it done this year.

Regarding the March 11, 2025, Special Council meeting, the Mayor explained that Rich Washington, Verdantas, will be present. He did not see the need to have the Engineer attend. The Mayor explained that he will just be asking people for their ideas about where they want trails. The Engineer advised that Washington would have some preliminary maps for the meeting. The Mayor wanted to let people know that the Village got a grant for \$800,000 from the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA) to get people off the streets into safer areas. He suspected there would be requests for dirt, stone, and asphalt trails, and that there would be good ideas and bad ideas. There will be a map displayed on the screen in Council chambers and all participants will receive a map of the Village so that they can identify where they want trails. He will have Carrie Schloss speak first. There will be no discussion about trails, only information obtained. The Mayor thought there would be a report by Washington by June and a ribbon cutting ceremony in 2027, which would be his goal.

The Mayor addressed the need for alternate members of Planning Commission (PC) and Architectural Review Board (ARB) as well as residents to serve on the Board of Building Standards, America's 250th, the Tax Board of Review, and the Treasury Investment Board (TIB).

FISCAL OFFICER: The Fiscal Officer reported that the Village received acknowledgement of being certified as an America 250 Ohio Community. Additionally, the part-time Administrative Assistant applied for and received a complimentary flag.

Regarding the campus reservation by Girl Scout troop 71359 for drive-through cookie sales, a request was made to change the date from Saturday, March 15th to Friday, March 14th from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. **Galicki made a motion to move the event from Saturday, March 15th to Friday, March 14th from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.** Galicki noted that the original proposal was on a weekend, and wondered if this change would cause any issues with Village business hours, which go to 4:00 p.m. The Chief did not think so.

The Fiscal Officer advised that as previously reported, the State Auditors are ready to begin the Village's audit. She received an engagement letter from the auditor's office, which will require a motion to allow her to sign it so that they can begin the audit. **Canton made a motion to approve signing the engagement letter with the State Auditor, seconded by Bell. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Lastly, the Fiscal Officer reported that she had been contacted by the county about getting prepared for the 2026 budget. She will be distributing worksheets to the departments soon.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Canton reported that the TIB met on March 10th with Meeder Public Funds which provided the investment strategy update. As of December 31, 2024, the portfolio cash on hand was \$1,450,365 and securities, \$1,063,776 for a grand total of \$2,514,141. The weighted average yield was 4.03%. The next meeting will be held June 2, 2025, at 3:15 p.m.

SOLICITOR: The Solicitor had nothing to report.

ENGINEER: The Engineer provided an update on the schedule for the paving of Bell Rd. east with the funding availability from Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) through NOACA. The Engineer explained that they are moving ahead with the project with contract documents, scope, and design for paving Bell Rd. east. The Village has received funding from NOACA, which is an 80/20 split. The Village has also received Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) grant funding. He had anticipated having the construction begin and end by the end of 2025, which is no longer the case. The project is now on the ODOT 2026 (fiscal calendar) construction schedule, and the Engineer has already submitted a request to extend the OPWC grant funding through the end of 2026 instead of 2025. He has not received a response to this request yet. The design will be complete by August 2025. ODOT bids projects a few times throughout the year, and the Village is slated for the ODOT bidding cycle that begins December 1, 2025, for a 2026 springtime construction start and October 31, 2026, completion. The Village's share of the funding will be split between 2025 and 2026. All the design work, ODOT coordination, and prep for bidding will happen in 2025. The construction happens in 2026. He anticipates the Village will spend about \$120,000 this year and the rest will be in 2026. Knowing that this is the schedule, he asked the Street Committee what the Village would want to do about a local road program for 2025 or 2026. Bell Rd. east was going to be the local road program but given the split year timing with the big money being spent in spring of 2026, he wanted to know how the committee wished to structure the local road program. Galicki noted that the committee would

discuss this. He asked for clarification about outstanding culvert work, and the Engineer said that although there is a minor culvert project, there would be no advantage to doing it early. Through conversations with the Street Commissioner, the Engineer was informed of some needed temporary repairs for Bell Rd. east since it will not be paved this year. Galicki said the committee would be interested to hear the Engineer's recommendation about which paving project should go forward in lieu of the Bell Rd. paving.

The Mayor raised a drainage issue of a resident who is building a garage addition in the Hazelwood and Fairview area, and the Engineer said the Village should take a larger look at the overall drainage patterns for Hazelwood. Replacement of the storm sewer system and paving should be combined so that the Village can perhaps benefit from OPWC funding for an infrastructure project. The Mayor wanted this to be a top priority for the Public Utilities Committee. Regarding the specific resident's issue, the Engineer thought there was some work the Village could do now which would not be wasted when it comes time to do the storm sewer work on Hazelwood.

STREET COMMISSIONER: The Street Commissioner submitted his report. The tattered flag at the corner was replaced by a donated flag which had flown over the Capitol. The south park was mowed, edged, and pruning was done in preparation for mulch. Mowing was also conducted in the park in preparation for the burn. Service Department staff pruned trees in the Manor Brook area and a chipper is being borrowed for these trimmings. They will continue west with the pruning.

STREET COMMITTEE: Cavanagh said the committee would be meeting in the coming week.

BUILDING COMMITTEE: Cavanagh will be setting up a committee meeting.

POLICE CHIEF: The Chief requested approval for the 2025 Cops and Kids fishing event to be held at Lake Louise on June 22, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. **Cavanagh made a motion to support the Chief and his department with the 2025 Cops and Kids Fishing event at Lake Louise on June 22nd, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Canton noted that the garage addition was coming along, and the Chief said it should be done in 30 days.

SAFETY COMMITTEE: Bell reported that the committee is scheduled to meet Thursday, March 13th at 8:00 a.m. in the Police Department. Galicki advised that he had not yet met with Chief Zupan, but it is on his to-do list.

HR COMMITTEE: Bell stated that the committee is scheduled to meet at 5:30 p.m. on March 24th. Cavanagh asked if this could be a joint meeting with Streets committee.

The Mayor addressed employee training for discrimination and harassment and asked if there is a timeline for a decision. Bell hoped to discuss this at the next committee meeting.

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE: Galicki said there was nothing to report.

PARKS COMMITTEE: Cavanagh reported she sent out an email last week to have a meeting next week for the parks committee. She had heard back from three members. Cavanagh wants to meet before the installation of the restroom and the burn. The Mayor asked if the Properties Committee had given the Parks Committee to Cavanagh. Galicki said no that the Council member on the Park

Committee remains with Councilman Berger. The Solicitor concurred and asked if Cavanagh was acting on behalf of the committee chair, and she said yes.

Canton suggested having the playground inspected again this year. The Street Commissioner said it was inspected previously, but he did not know if repairs or updates were made. Going forward, he has assigned one of the Service Department staff to wash and stain it. The blatantly obvious repairs will be fixed and items listed on the previous inspection will be checked. Once this is all done, he will contact the inspector used by Chagrin Falls. Canton verified that this individual is licensed to inspect playgrounds. The Street Commissioner said yes and added that he is from outside the Village.

Regarding the restroom, the Street Commissioner said he took elevations and put stakes in the ground where the restroom is supposed to go. The Mayor asked what sort of notice the Village would receive about delivery of the restroom. The Street Commissioner did not know, but thought he could work with the company. Additionally, he would close the whole park on that end for the duration of the project because he would not want to try to set the building, have an open hole, and regrade the parking lot drainage with traffic trying to park. It would be better to close it for a short time. Cavanagh advised that she reread the material, which said the building would be ready on the 26th, not delivered. The Street Commissioner agreed, adding that the company will call to ask when the Village wants it delivered. The company has inspected the site for delivery and found no issues.

Cavanagh made a motion to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the Thrasher, Dinsmore, & Dolan Informed Consent letter, seconded by Galicki. The Solicitor explained that it was suggested that she look at the Release and Waiver of Liability prepared by the Geauga Park District with respect to the burn. Her office also represents the Geauga Park District, so it was a conflict of interest. However, the conflict of interest can be waived by both parties. This is the Village's informed consent letter and is almost identical to the letter sent to the Geauga Park District. She expected that they would sign it and once the Village signs, she would be able to review the agreement. **Cavanagh amended her motion to say to sign the Thrasher, Dinsmore, & Dolan Informed Consent letter for the burn. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE: Canton reported that the committee met on March 7th and the minutes were distributed. The bulk of the meeting dealt with the Greenlief property and Central Retention Basin tree screening as discussed earlier. The need for a stormwater iPad for outfall and ditching monitoring was presented to the committee. Additionally, remaining salt was discussed as well as the new salt structure going out to bid in April. The Street Commissioner verified that qualifications had been done, and the Engineer concurred and explained that he and members of his firm developed a strategy to rank the design-build firms that responded. Next, he will need to meet with the Properties Committee to discuss this methodology and get their input so that they can move forward with the project. The Mayor said that normally, Properties Committee takes care of land. The Engineer asked the Mayor to tell him which committee it should be then, and the Mayor said the Streets Department. The Mayor said that the three of them and Dave Hocevar would keep their eyes on this one.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Cavanagh introduced an ordinance approving the Participation Addendum between the Village of South Russell and Canon USA for the purpose of participating in the NASPO Program for Multi-function Devices and Related Software, Services and Cloud Solutions related to the copier for the Building Department purchased from Lake Business Products, authorizing the Mayor to execute the Participation Addendum.

BILLS LIST: Canton made a motion to ratify the bills lists of February 27, 2025, in the amount of \$12,153.15, seconded by Bell. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

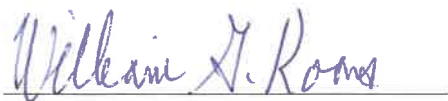
NEW/OTHER: Cavanagh and Canton had no new business.

Regarding the salt structure issue, Galicki referenced the Mayor’s statement that the Properties Committee is just land. He offered that the purview of the Properties Committee is the physical plant of the Village, which has previously been the case. Streets are streets. Although salt is used on the streets, the construction of the salt structure project should be with Properties. The Mayor responded that for the Police Department garage, it was a Safety issue. That is their facility. The garage is the Street Commissioner’s. The salt structure is a Street Department property. The Properties Committee has always taken care of the land. Galicki advised if this is the case, then the Street Department should have taken care of the Reserve Study in terms of the future projects and improvements on the Village properties. If this is how the Police garage was done, perhaps it was done in error. He contended that especially with a major construction project, it would fall under Properties Committee. Perhaps at the discretion of the Mayor, it could be under HR. The Mayor said it was not under the discretion of the Mayor. Properties Committee has taken care of the properties and the park. He reiterated that the Police Department takes care of its building, and the Service Department takes care of its building. Galicki asked who would handle Village Hall? The Mayor said they would figure that out. Galicki thought there should be a better plan than figuring it out as they go. Perhaps the way they approach these matters should be codified. He is a member of the Streets Committee, but he does not view that the construction of a salt structure falls under Streets. The Mayor said this was Galicki’s opinion. Galicki agreed and suggested there might be others who share his opinion, but he does not believe the direction they are heading in having it in the purview of Streets is correct.

Bell made a motion to ratify the absence of Councilman Porter for the February 24, 2025, and March 10, 2025, Council meetings, seconded by Canton. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Bell made a motion to renew the network equipment licenses for three years, seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: Being that there was no further business before Council, Cavanagh made a motion to adjourn at 7:54 p.m., seconded by Canton. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.



William G. Koons, Mayor



Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki