

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2025 – 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

**VISITORS:** Kyle Canter, Sugar Bush Ln.; Toby Leahy (CFPD), Chad Goldberg (CFPD), Jordan Fedor and family; Misha Alexander, Chillicothe Rd.; Steve Brenner and family; Jay Mihalek, Potomac Dr.; Tim Schaaf, Bell Rd.; Mary Rensel, Chelsea Ct.

The Mayor called the Regular Council 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 October 23, 2025, Special Council meeting, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2025, Regular Council meeting, seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, Canton, Cavanagh, Porter, Galicki, and Berger. Bell abstained. Motion carried.**

**VISITORS:** The Chief recommended the appointment of Jordan Fedor as a full-time police officer. Previously, Fedor served as a police officer with University Hospitals and Chagrin Falls Police Department. His experience also included anti-money laundering investigations in the banking industry and membership with the UAS Drone Team. **Bell made a motion to confirm the Mayor's appointment of Jordan Fedor as a full-time police officer to the South Russell Police Department, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.** Officer Fedor was sworn in by the Mayor.

The Chief then recommended promoting Stephen Brenner to the rank of Sergeant. Brenner had been a law enforcement officer for the past 34 years and his experience included leadership roles. He is a certified field training officer and earned a South Russell Officer of the Year in 2024. **Bell made a motion to confirm the Mayor's appointment of Stephen Brenner for the position of Sergeant with the South Russell Police department, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.** Brener was also sworn in by the Mayor.

Next, Jay Maholic provided information regarding the upcoming annual Booster's Turkey Trot scheduled for Thanksgiving morning. He noted that the event route and procedures would remain the same as in previous years, with an expected turnout of approximately 1,600 participants. The Chief confirmed that the police department would assist with traffic control as usual. **Canton made a motion to approve the annual Turkey Trot, seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Porter noted that representatives from the Sugar Bush Homeowners Association (HOA) were present anticipating that the Village would enter into a contract with CMG Contracting for the purpose of dredging the Sugar Bush Silt Pond and some other improvements. The estimated cost is \$32,950. He noted that CMG was also the contractor for the Village's salt structure and Hemlock

Culvert replacement. Porter said it was a worthwhile project because according to the Engineer, the Village's Manor Brook project contributed to the silt in the Sugar Bush silt and regular ponds. The Solicitor asked if CMG provided a contract, and Porter said there was just the quote. However, he thought Council could approve the expenditure. The Solicitor explained that the approval would be subject to an agreement that is acceptable to Council and the Solicitor. The Solicitor verified that this would be a one-time event, and Porter agreed. The Fiscal Officer clarified that the Village would be paying the expense up front and then the Sugar Bush Homeowners' Association (HOA) will reimburse a portion of it to the Village. Porter concurred, adding that it would be a 20% reimbursement. Kyle Canter, HOA president, agreed.

Porter introduced an ordinance for the purposes of the Village entering into a contract with CMG Contracting that is designed to address and excavate the silt pond for the Sugar Bush HOA, as well as the expenses of \$32,950. Porter made a motion to waive readings and declared an emergency, seconded by Berger. Galicki noted that when Porter introduced the ordinance, he mentioned that it was for dredging and other things. He asked what these other things were. Porter said the quote described construction specifics that included removal of trees. He concluded the charges were for dredging preparation and landscaping after dredging. Cavanagh asked for clarification about the total, and Porter explained that Sugar Bush HOA would reimburse the Village for 20% of the total cost, approximately \$6,500, which would be paid on completion of the project. Cavanagh noted that Paw Paw Lake would have appreciated a deal like that in 2016 and she was conflicted over this matter. The Solicitor asked if there would be a contract for the repayment to the Village by Sugar Bush, and Porter indicated this would be preferable. He asked Canter if Sugar Bush HOA had been reinstated by the Secretary of State, and Canter stated he was in the process of determining this but offered to bring a check to the Village prior to it entering an agreement with CMG. Porter agreed. Cavanagh verified that the intent was for the HOA to become an active HOA with a board and meetings. Bell asked that Porter amend the ordinance to include the contract with Sugar Bush or require the 20% up front. Porter amended the ordinance to include that the Sugar Bush HOA people pay the 20% prior to the beginning of work by the contractor. Canter agreed and the Solicitor concurred. Bell noted that he recalled the Engineer stating that the silt problem was a direct result of the work in Manor Brook, which made him more comfortable since he was typically not excited about doing work on private property. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Cavanagh noted that her affirmative vote was with the thought that she would like Paw Paw Lake and other low-lying areas to be treated with the same respect when issues arise. Motion carried. **ORD 2025-62** Porter asked the Fiscal Officer to contact CMG to let them know the quote is successful and that the Village will need a contract from them. Porter also asked Canter to make the payment before December 1<sup>st</sup>. Canter agreed.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** The Mayor reported that a recent Building Department court case had been dismissed. The Mayor also provided an update on the planning of the upcoming 250th celebration. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) approved a 32-foot height variance for the new salt structure, and the Mayor further shared that it had been approved by all the boards. He also informed Council of a meeting he attended with state legislators.

Regarding the appointment of a representative to the Chagrin Valley Fire Department (CVFD) Advisory Committee, the Mayor noted that there was an ordinance that specified that this appointee was to be the Safety Committee chair. The Solicitor stated that was not true, that it was just a motion. The Mayor clarified that he was able to appoint anyone he wanted for the position, and the Solicitor concurred. Porter clarified however, that this was subject to the confirmation by Council. Since it does not take effect until January 1<sup>st</sup>, the Mayor wanted to do this at the next meeting. The Solicitor explained that on the designated form provided with the contract to CVFD, Councilman Bell was already identified since he is the current Chair of the Safety Committee. However, this is not accurate because the Mayor had not appointed Bell for the current contract. The Mayor agreed. The Solicitor stated that with respect to making sure that the contacts are correct, the sooner the appointment is made and confirmed by Council, the better. The Mayor said that Bell would be an excellent choice, but he did not like that he had no real choice. The Solicitor reiterated that the Mayor had a choice. He can make the appointment and Council confirms. The Mayor verified he did not have to do it at the current meeting and the Solicitor agreed but explained it would mean that what was provided to the CVFD is not accurate since he had not made that appointment. Porter pointed out that the contract does not start until January 1<sup>st</sup>, but the Solicitor said that did not matter. Rather, the issue is about communication and having the correct contact person for CVFD. The Mayor asked Bell if he would accept the position as the Safety Committee Chairman to be the CVFD Advisory Committee representative. Bell said he would accept but asked what would happen on January 1<sup>st</sup> in the event he was not the Safety Committee Chairman. The Solicitor asked if Bell was being appointed as a specific person or as the Chair of the Safety Committee. The Mayor clarified that it was as a specific person. **Porter made a motion to confirm the Mayor's appointment of Christopher Bell to be the representative from the Village to the CVFD Advisory Committee, seconded by Berger. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.** The Mayor asked that this matter be put on the Safety Committee meeting agenda for further discussion.

**FISCAL OFFICER:** The Fiscal Officer reported that the transition to the new UAN accounting system was proceeding smoothly.

She distributed her report, which consisted of a list of information that was required to move forward with the 2026 Budget and asked if Council wished to discuss it. The Mayor asked if the Finance committee wished to put it off to the next meeting. The Fiscal Officer advised against doing this given that there are only two meetings remaining for the year. Galicki stated that as of the last Council meeting, there were any number of estimates that Council needed but did not have for the budget. Prior to approving an unknown budget, he asked if those estimates had been provided. The Fiscal Officer advised that the information she had was distributed to Council and suggested going through the list. Council could then make decisions about these items on a case-by-case basis. Cavanagh asked for clarification about the budget process, and the Fiscal Officer explained that in putting the budget together, it is necessary to operate within the Village's Certificate of Estimated Resources which was received from the county in August after the Tax Budget Work Hearing. Hopefully there will be year-end cash balance carry over, but the initial budget must be within the certificate. Once she does the budget and it is within the certificate, Council adopts legislation approving the budget which then goes to the county. After filing it with the county, there is a budget, and the Village can spend money come January 1<sup>st</sup>. Once 2025 is closed and the cash balance carry-overs are determined, this is submitted to the county which then

issues a revised Certificate of Resources. At that point, anything that did not make it in the first swipe of the budget can be potentially added if there are enough cash balances to cover them.

Council then held an extensive discussion on the 2026 budget and various capital improvement projects. Among the approved or tentatively supported expenditures was a new Village phone system. Of the cloud based or server-based options, the Chief recommended the on-site server system because if the internet goes down, both external and internal communications are lost with the cloud-based version. The Fiscal Officer advised that the initial expense would be more, but the long-term would be less expensive than the cloud-based option. The initial cost would be between \$25,000 and \$30,000, which is in addition to the first-year annual license. The Fiscal Officer used \$33,000 for the budget.

The Mayor addressed the \$8,400 allocation for the 250th celebrations and referenced a list of activities and associated costs he provided at the previous Council meeting. The Fiscal Officer said Council could identify an “up to” amount of money to earmark for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary without the details, which could be decided next year. The other option would be to approve the money per the activities outlined in the Mayor’s list. Porter suggested doing the former option. Regarding this list, Berger asked Council to reconsider holding an event on New Year’s Day in terms of calling out Village employees. The Village would be paying triple time for those employees. Perhaps it could be done another day. Otherwise, he agreed with capping the amount at \$8,400.

Next, a \$10,000 upgrade to the microphone system in the Council chambers was discussed. The Chief explained that an upgrade is available for the system where microphones would be suspended from the ceiling to replace the desktop microphones. The quality is supposedly much better than what is currently being used, which was installed during COVID.

The Fiscal Officer asked if the Gurney and Sugar Bush crosswalk would be put in the budget. The Mayor said this was up in the air until the Village is given the cost from Verdantas. The Chief said the cost is \$32,000. The Mayor said that information about the path would be provided by Rich Washington later in the month and suggested leaving the amount at zero until the Village knows whether they will be installed. Cavanagh asked if this expense could be included with the paths, and the Mayor thought they were not there yet. Galicki explained that it could be included but would not be part of the grant money the Village would receive, which is solely for construction costs.

The Mayor noted the Police Department building addition cost would be \$110,000 and was discussed in the Budget Work Session. The Mayor thought it was needed but should be put off until 2026. Bell was comfortable pushing it off for a year. The Chief concurred.

Regarding the official estimates, photos, and supporting documents for the Service Department garage doors, the Mayor said they got them earlier and had looked at them forever and estimated \$50,000 during the Budget Work Session. Bell noted that Council had not received any of this information. The Fiscal Officer agreed. The Street Commissioner explained that late winter last year he gave the Properties Committee pictures of doors and an estimate. Galicki did not recall official quotes. The Street Commissioner said they were provided at a Properties Committee meeting at the end of last winter. He has not refreshed these quotes. Porter asked if the quotes were still good, and the Street Commissioner said they have been honoring everything since. Porter

clarified that it was unknown whether they would honor these quotes now. The Street Commissioner explained that the door that was just purchased was \$7,200. There are six more doors to replace. The Fiscal Officer stated that she included \$50,000 in the budget.

The Mayor noted that there was no budget for the improvements on the corner lot, and Berger said that was fine since they do not have a plan yet. Council also discussed replacing the vinyl flooring in the Police Department with carpet squares in the amount of \$3,000. Additionally, \$3,000 was included in the draft budget to address the deterioration of the brick columns on the Service Department building. The Street Commissioner spoke to two masonry companies that said they would provide a price in spring 2026. Other items discussed were \$12,000 for park maintenance to include the restroom, an increase of \$2,000 under Vehicle Maintenance for installation of GPS systems on the Service Department vehicles, and \$12,000 for a traffic study along Chillicothe Road, which the Mayor said he would eliminate. The Chief explained that it was needed to reduce the speed limit on Chillicothe Rd. given the potential trail and crosswalks at Chillicothe and Bell Roads. The traffic study is required to proceed with the state's process.

Under Large Equipment Fund, the Mayor began with the Street Commissioner's request to sell the one-ton truck and replace it with a pickup truck for \$50,000. The Street Commissioner thought the Village could get \$17,000 for the one-ton truck, which is a 2012. The Mayor noted that the Street Commissioner is also asking for a multiuse truck, skid steer, and an excavator. The Street Commissioner determined that the multiuse plow truck was a priority. It would come with a salt body, plow, and salt controllers that match the large trucks for uniformity across the fleet. The cost estimate is \$190,000 with the Cadillac version being \$199,000. The Street Commissioner verified he had quotes. He further explained that to replace the truck with another large truck would be \$247,388. In 2020, the vehicle was \$205,162. The Street Commissioner did not want another large truck. Rather he wanted to downsize the truck. He explained that the smaller truck would allow drivers without a CDL to operate it. Cavanagh expressed concern that this truck would be sufficient to get to the edge as there were complaints the previous year about the quality of plowing. The Street Commissioner explained the truck would push a 10-foot plow where the big truck has an 11-foot plow. The loss of one foot is not significant as they make double passes down most of the roads and would be curb to curb. The Street Commissioner provided further details of what would be included in the \$199,000 version. The Mayor explained that the feeling was that the Village could not live without four big red International snow plows. Although the Street Commissioner understood this, he explained the weight of the truck is a bonus in moving heavy snow, and is overkill for what the Village does. His vision was to ultimately replace the 2007 plow truck with a smaller truck and then maintaining two large trucks. He believed that the body system on the smaller trucks could transfer three times before having to replace it, clarifying that the life expectancy of a plow truck is between 12 and 15 years. He concluded that there was a 20-year lifespan of the upfit package. The Street Commissioner had a variety of quotes for the chassis which range from \$65,000 and \$80,000. He explained that in the next two cycles, rather than spending \$190,000 on a truck, the Village would instead be looking at a \$60,000 to \$90,000 range.

Bell asked about the off-season usage of the trucks, and the Street Commissioner said that the large trucks sit, and the one-ton dump truck does the majority of hauling. Bell thought there would be more flexibility with the smaller truck and suggested trying one to see how it works. If it is a

failure, the Village can go back to the big truck next cycle. The Street Commissioner provided additional support for the efficiency of the smaller truck. Council settled on \$190,000 for the budget.

The Fiscal Officer clarified that the discussion pertained to what will be included in the budget and the Street Commissioner will not be able to go out and buy a truck on January 1<sup>st</sup>. There is a bidding process. If it is state bid, she will need the paperwork before anything can be done. The Street Commissioner advised that the quotes he obtained were state bid from Sourcewell,

Regarding the skid steer, the Street Commissioner said there were more models he wished to look at, but he was able to determine that \$40,000 was a likely cost. It would be a stand-on machine, although the Service Department employees expressed the desire for a sitting model for mowing the park. However, they only mow the high grass twice a year, and one can be rented for that purpose. Bell interjected that renting one as needed would be more economical than spending \$45,000 given the Village's anticipated expenses, including a new truck. He thought it should be omitted from the budget as well as the excavator. The Street Commissioner stated that there was an issue with the hydraulic system on the backhoe. It has 5,000 hours on it and is showing its age. It was suggested to the Street Commissioner that it can be replaced when it breaks as replacements are readily available. The Mayor concluded that the \$190,000 multiuse truck and the \$50,000 pickup truck would be included in the budget.

Under Special Road Fund, the engineering for the Hazelwood Culvert Project was estimated at \$700,000 with a \$300,000 grant, a \$50,000 0% loan, and a \$350,000 Village share. Berger pointed out that this would be \$400,000 for the Village with the loan. The Fiscal Officer stated that the Engineer had recently informed Council about this project, but Council had not yet decided whether or not to proceed. Engineering work must be performed for the LPA Scope, which allows it to move forward through the queue. Porter recalled that the Public Utilities Committee agreed that the project should go forward because although it is a small street, it has big problems in terms of stormwater drainage, and the project has a big price tag. This would be another example of the Village's stormwater mitigation efforts with the help of grant money. With the current budget, Porter thought the Village could afford to do it since it would go a long way to mitigate flooding problems on the western side of the Village. The Mayor said the engineering estimate is \$185,000 in 2026. The project's completion would be in 2027. It was clarified that the \$135,000 in engineering for the initial work would be in addition to the \$700,000 construction costs, and the Fiscal Officer did not know how much it would cost to manage the project. The Mayor clarified that the project would carry over from 2026 to 2027 and the ultimate cost would be \$535,000 over two years. The Fiscal Officer clarified that it would be at least that much, but \$135,000 would need to be budgeted for 2026 if Council wished to do the project. Construction for the project would be in the 2027 budget. \$50,000 was estimated by the Engineer for this year and \$85,000 next year for engineering, but she cautioned that it is already the middle of November, and she did not know how much work would be possible this year. This is the reason she put the entire amount in the 2026 budget.

The Bell Road East paving project was discussed. The estimated cost is \$1.825 million which is offset by a Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA) grant for \$1,018,000, Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) grant for \$250,000 and a \$50,000 loan, and Permissive Tax funds of

\$40,000. The Village will receive funding of \$1,360,000 and have a local share of \$464,986. The Fiscal Officer explained that \$1.5 million will come from the Bell Road East Fund where the grant money will be, \$40,000 from the Permissive Tax Fund, and \$235,000 from the Road and Bridge Fund. This project must be done next year, or the Village loses all funding.

Absent detailed information and estimated costs, the trail project was not budgeted. The Fiscal Officer advised that this project was included in her Certificate of Resources since the project was supposed to have been done in 2026. Project progression is dependent on submission of required paperwork and details, and the Village was instructed that with the expeditious submission of required documentation, the project could make it into the 2027 year, but in all likelihood, it will be in the 2028 year which begins July 1, 2027. She thought this would be more of a 2027 project. The Mayor commented that this was the original goal.

The Mayor reviewed other potential Village projects to include bocce ball court, silt pond measuring, Daisy Ln. drainage, Manor Brook flooding near the power lines, Alderwood/Country Estates, paving of the Village campus parking lot, and holiday decorations. Berger suggested the addition of \$5,000 for holiday decorations for 2026, which includes the purchase of pieces that will be reused. The Fiscal Officer concluded that she would pull all the information together and let Council know at the next meeting what will have to be removed. She added that also by the next meeting, HR Committee should have a recommendation for potential salary increases for 2026.

The Mayor addressed the status of the bocce ball court request, and thought Council was waiting for a proposal. Berger offered that there is a Parks Committee meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. and hoped that the individuals would attend with the supporting documentation and information requested by Council. Cavanagh asked if they had contacted the Street Commissioner, and he responded no. The Mayor said he was supposed to tell the Street Commissioner two weeks ago that they wanted to go stake out the location and either they were supposed to contact the Street Commissioner or vice versa.

Cavanagh thought the Village should go forward with silt pond measuring. Porter added that license agreements are currently being considered by two Homeowners' Associations (HOAs). If they are approved, Council will need to determine what is required to do silt pond monitoring. He thought a small boat, a measuring device, and life jackets would be needed but would not cost much. Galicki suggested that a pond management firm like Aquadoc could also be engaged to do it. Cavanagh stated this would cost \$750. The Mayor suggested setting aside \$4,000-\$5,000 to investigate this. Porter thought \$2,500 would suffice and Cavanagh agreed.

Daisy Ln. drainage was discussed, and Porter thought this was a matter for the Public Utilities Committee. The Mayor asked if it would be done in house, and the Street Commissioner said yes. Manor Brook flooding would also be done in house. It involved an area near the power lines which would be addressed by creating two small ponds. This would also be left at \$0 for the budget. Regarding flooding in Alderwood/Country Estates, the Mayor stated that this was rearing its ugly head again, but nothing had been done and they should leave it at \$0 for the budget. He saw it as more of a private issue.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Canton reported signing and crosschecking checks. The next Finance Committee meeting will be held on November 21 at 3:15 p.m.

**SOLICITOR:** The Solicitor had nothing to report. Galicki referred to the Solicitor's bill which reflects a charge of \$100 on October 13<sup>th</sup> relative to the Solicitor consulting a colleague through text about the vote on the CVFD contract. He wondered if this was a valid charge. She said it was, but she could write it off. Galicki noted that the Solicitor will soon begin to serve as the Solicitor to a neighboring community and another Solicitor will work with the Village from time to time but the current Solicitor will still be involved. He asked if there will be separate charges if the stand-in Solicitor has consultations with the current Solicitor. The Solicitor said that there have been other times where she has consulted with colleagues and the Village has been charged. If that is an issue, she can consider it. The other Solicitor will be at the Village's meetings, but the thought was that she would still do the work. 95% of her work is done outside of the meeting. Galicki verified that one solicitor would be charging for the meetings and the other for behind-the-scenes work, and the Solicitor concurred. Cavanagh thought this did not seem very efficient. The Solicitor offered that they could consider another way. Berger offered that an option would be to change Council meeting dates to resolve the conflict. The Mayor thought there would be time spent following Council meetings where the two solicitors would be meeting, which would be an added expense to the Village. The Solicitor reiterated that other options can be considered.

**ENGINEER:** In the absence of the Engineer, Cavanagh relayed information she received via email from him. He reported that the 2025 Road Program is complete. Miscellaneous road repairs were expanded to maximize the budget allowance up to the awarded contract value of \$324,748. The final construction cost was \$324,730. 80 square yards of additional pavement repair was added while staying within budget. The Engineer also reported that he was working through an issue with the salt storage building. The contractor found that the concrete foundation walls needed to be much larger than anticipated, which will cost the Village over \$100,000 more. The Engineer is working with CMG to develop an alternate design proposal to minimize the overage. He would have more information at the upcoming Streets Committee meeting. Bell asked for clarification about who did the design work for the salt structure. The Fiscal Officer explained that it is a design-bid-build where the Engineer produced a general design used to go out to bid and award the contract. The contractor then designs it. She concluded that the Village already has a lot of money invested, but there is no clear design, and no shovels in the ground. Galicki recalled asking the Engineer about cost overruns or unanticipated costs, and the Engineer responded that once the contract is signed, that is the price the Village pays. Galicki wondered how this would play into the costs. The Fiscal Officer explained that typically, the Engineer would have designed the project and then the contractors would have to stay within the specs. But this is different in that the Engineer developed a basic concept and provided it to the contractor to design. When CMG designed it, they must not have agreed with the Engineer on something. It is about \$114,000 more and the Engineer was going to try to find a way to change the design to reduce the cost.

**STREET COMMISSIONER:** The Street Commissioner submitted his monthly report and had nothing further to report. He thought the paving work looked great. 13 driveway culverts were replaced.

**STREET COMMITTEE:** Cavanagh reported that the next Streets Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.



**Cavanagh made a motion to approve Construction Progress Payment Application No. 1 to Specialized Construction in the amount of \$311,740.94 for the 2025 Pavement Repair Program, seconded by Galicki. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**BUILDING COMMITTEE:** Cavanagh advised that the next committee meeting will be at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup>. She understood that the Building Department was not happy with the iWorQ program. The Fiscal Officer explained that there was a small improvement with the training piece, but the program itself does not work for the Building Department or Finance. There was discussion with the Building Department Administrative Assistant about the possibility of cutting the Village's losses and considering another option. Inquiries will be made with the State of Ohio and the county to see what they might recommend. There was also discussion about ultimately progressing to taking credit card payments. The Fiscal Officer's goal for next year is to use technology to the advantage of Admin. Berger asked the Fiscal Officer to attend the Building Committee meeting to focus the discussion on coming up with a gameplan before spring.

**POLICE CHIEF:** The Chief submitted his monthly report. He shared that for the fourth year in a row, the South Russell Police Department was presented the Platinum Award from AAA on outstanding service, dedication, and significant impact made by improving the quality of life through traffic safety programming. In keeping with this award, the Chief hoped for a good plan for the bike trail.

**SAFETY COMMITTEE:** Bell said that the Safety Committee was scheduled to meet on November 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

**HR COMMITTEE:** Bell reported that the next meeting would be on November 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 a.m.

Berger submitted a document for Council's consideration containing draft definitions of the Village's committees. He also suggested adding a committee for Administration Technology and provided a definition and scope in the document. Berger welcomed Council's input and hoped to discuss the definitions by the December Council meeting.

**PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:** Berger advised that there will be a Properties Committee meeting on Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. He reported that the committee held a special meeting on Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup> and the minutes were distributed. The committee along with community members discussed holiday lighting and decorations. The Committee's preference was for the holiday décor to be in a classic style for the Village campus, park, and cemeteries. The Street Commissioner obtained quotes and made suggestions. The estimated cost would be \$9,200 for lights, trees, cut trees, and lift rental for installing the lights. Some of the items are reusable, but things like live wreaths will have to be purchased yearly. A favorable quote was received for the trees, wreaths, and roping from Chagrin Pet and Garden. Information was also obtained from Trimlight, which installs permanent lighting with different color options. Berger did not know the cost of this program but pointed out that it would save on future installation costs. A quote would be required, but that will not be happening this year. **Berger made a motion that Council approve moving \$10,000 in funds from the road striping program to a new account called Holiday Lighting and Decorations, seconded by Galicki.** Cavanagh noted that there was some real dissatisfaction with past years of decorating, and she agreed that the Village needed to step it up. She appreciated the efforts of the community participants. Ideas for engaging businesses at the

intersection to mirror the Village's display were presented by the community members. It was noted that other community members are welcome to provide suggestions for the future.

Bell suggested identifying a date by which the decorations are taken down. Berger acknowledged this was discussed and it will be by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

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

Berger stated that the \$9,200 estimate includes the wreaths to be placed on the veterans' graves, which will occur on December 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

Regarding the accident that damaged the Cemetery gate, the Street Commissioner explained that the gate on the north side needs to be replaced. The vehicle also removed one of the trees. Galicki stated that the insurance company of the individual who caused the damage should be replacing these items. For the purpose of obtaining quotes, the Fiscal Officer located the construction paperwork for the original gates which she would provide to the Street Commissioner. The Mayor wanted Council to consider eliminating the gates since he could not recall them ever being closed.

**PARKS COMMITTEE:** Berger stated that the next Parks Committee meeting will take place on Monday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE:** Porter advised that the next Public Utilities Committee meeting will be on November 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:15 p.m.

## **ORDINANCE/RESOLUTIONS**

Porter introduced an ordinance approving the Cost-Share Agreement with the Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. regarding the Hyfi Water Level Sensor Network for the period of January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, and authorizing the Mayor to execute the Cost-Share Agreement on behalf of the Village. Porter made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to adopt, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2025-63**

Canton introduced a resolution requesting advance of taxes for real estate taxes collected for 2026. 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. **RES 2025-64**

Porter introduced an ordinance approving the contract with CMG Contracting, LLC for the Hemlock Road Culvert Replacement in the Village of South Russell in the amount of \$97,650, authorizing the Mayor to execute the contract on behalf of the Village, 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 Cavanagh. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2025-65**

## **PAYMENT LIST**

Canton made a motion to ratify the Payment List of 11/3/25 in the amount of \$45,316.40, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

**NEW/OTHER:** Canton and Porter had no new business.

Galicki noted that in previous years, in recognition of Veterans Day, usually a Council member has made a few comments, but no such assignment was made this year. Galicki displayed his military decorations and service ribbons, and shared the following comments about Veterans Day:

As the senior veteran and longest serving veteran in the Village, each year Veterans Day is a day that we remind Americans to thank veterans for their service. We owe it to those who served to recognize their sacrifices all year long. How can we recognize these sacrifices? This morning, we had a luncheon, and that's great. Who doesn't love a free meal? But I would offer that you can continue to thank them and honor their sacrifice by, as elected officials, reflecting on your oath of office. The oath we take is surprisingly similar to those taken by enlistment or commissioning as an officer, by those who wear the uniform. Do we put as much on the line in the execution of our duties as those who have served the country in uniform? As elected officials, contemplate how seriously do you take the words of your oath? Do we approach our positions in elected office from a perspective of a politician looking to reward cronies or pursue personal agenda, or feed our ego, or from the perspective of a selfless public servant? Do we talk about transparency and by our actions avoid the very notion of transparency? Are we honest in our dealings with our fellow citizens, or spin a tale to support a particular agenda? Do we favor a particular neighborhood or HOA at the expense of others? Does our board and committee membership reflect a cross section of citizens with disparate points of view? Or are they populated with members who exhibit a group think mentality? Do we talk of building memorials but fail to properly display our nation's flag because it would be inconvenient to do so? Do we support the rights of individual citizens and property owners, or do we abrogate them when it is convenient? Do we over promise and under deliver, and then place blame? In the past week's election, only approximately one third of our registered voters cast a ballot. As we continue to serve as elected officials or prepare to take office in January, let us remember that we serve all our residents and not a select few. We as elected officials may not have had the privilege, opportunity, or inclination to serve as military veterans have, but all have the opportunity to exercise sound judgement, patriotism, honorable conduct, integrity, and good citizenship in the execution of our duties as public servants to honorably execute our oath of office. On this Veterans Day, I challenge all elected officials currently serving and those who will take office in January to seriously consider being more of a true public servant and less of a politician. Individuals and groups who stand up to put their lives on the line, to defend their country from very real threats to our national security as do those in our nation's military are true patriots. But true patriots are also those who speak out and challenge our government leaders, those who put their lives on the line by actively advocating for justice, freedom, working with integrity, and doing the right thing.

Bell thanked Galicki and Porter for their service to the country as well as all members of the community who have served.

Berger referred to the Parks Committee report and advised that the Village committed to pay Ted Kruse \$350 for the apple cider, tent rental, etc. **Berger made a motion to approve to pay Kruse**

**the \$350, seconded by Cavanagh. Porter clarified that it is in the Fall Festival budget. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Canton made a motion at 9:04 p.m. to enter into executive session to consider a complaint against a public official pursuant to Section 121.22(G)(1) of the Ohio Revised Code and invite into executive session the Mayor and Solicitor, seconded by Galicki. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Council reconvened at about 10:00 p.m. subsequent to a motion by Berger, which was seconded by Bell.

Berger made a motion to enter executive session to discuss an investigation of charges of a public official pursuant to Section 121.22(G)(1) of the Ohio Revised Code and invite in the Solicitor, seconded by Canton. Roll call – ayes, Berger, Bell, Canton, Galicki, and Porter. Nay – Cavanagh.

Council reconvened at 10:31 with a motion by Berger to come out of executive session, seconded by Bell.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Being that there was no further business before Council, Berger made a motion to adjourn at 10:32 p.m., seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.



William G. Koons, Mayor



Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by Leslie Galicki