

RESOLUTION NO.	<u>2025- 77</u>	FIRST READING	<u>December 29, 2025</u>
INTRODUCED BY:	<u>CHRIS BERGER</u>	SECOND READING	<u>WAIVED</u>
		THIRD READING	<u>WAIVED</u>

**RESOLUTION OF NO CONFIDENCE AND NO TRUST IN MAYOR  
OF THE VILLAGE OF SOUTH RUSSELL AND DECLARING AN  
EMERGENCY.**

**WHEREAS**, Dr. William G. Koons, is the current elected Mayor of the Village of South Russell (“Village”), is one of the executive officers of the Village, is required to carry out the legislation passed by Council, is expected to follow the policies and procedures of the Village, and is generally tasked with the oversight and management of the Village;

**WHEREAS**, in a statutory village in Ohio, the mayor's duties are primarily executive, administrative, legislative, and judicial, as defined by the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), as well as all other duties and powers granted by Ohio law, but almost all of the mayor's actions must be confirmed or approved by Council;

**WHEREAS**, during his terms as Mayor, William Koons has engaged in a series of behaviors and actions which are contrary to the good order of the Village; and,

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons, without notice to Council or any approval of Council, met with a former employee that resigned in light of a possible disciplinary investigation for falsifying Village records and offered to have him reinstated as an employee of the village;

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons, without approval of Council, negotiated the terms of a contract on behalf of the Village with The Chagrin Falls Suburban Volunteer Association (“CVFD”) for fire and EMS services as follows:

- a. Met with CVFD leadership regarding contract without informing Council.
- a. Advised Fire Chief Zugan in advance of August 13<sup>th</sup> meeting that a counterproposal would be forthcoming and to “act surprised.”
- b. Represented SRV at CVFD Advisory Board meetings in contravention to Council’s express appointment of the chair of safety as the representative.
- c. Voted to approve new agreement without prior Council authorization.
- d. Told Councilmember Berger at a follow up meeting that this was a done deal. Council has to vote to approve. Council has no choice. Berger asked Mayor to make a counterproposal to CVFD to include an 8% increase in the prior contract price for 1 year. Mayor agreed to pass the proposal along to CVFD but did not.
- e. Council asked mayor to approach Russell Township and request a proposal for fire/EMS services for calendar years 2026-2028. Mayor said he would go to a Russell Township Trustees’ meeting. Sent email to ask but included proposal numbers from CVFD in the email to Russell Trustees. The Mayor did NOT ask Russell Trustees for a proposal at Russell Township Trustees’ meeting.

- f. Sent email following morning to Fire Chief Zugan telling him that Russell Township Trustees would not quote. Mayor said that he would ask for a vote from Council on October 13<sup>th</sup>.
- g. Council members went to the October 2, 2025, Russell Township Trustees meeting and got a commitment from the Trustees to provide a fire/EMS proposal to the Village.
- h. Meanwhile, Mayor texted CVFD Chief Zugan on September 25, 2025, informing him that Council would ask Russell Township Trustees for a quote.
- i. Mayor told Village community members prior to October 13<sup>th</sup> that the Village had committed to CVFD and needed to honor that commitment. The Mayor has no authority to commit the Village without prior Council approval.

Because of the Mayor's unauthorized actions, Council was compelled to approve the contract with CVFD;

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons acted without authorization or approval from Council when he informed the Kensington Green Homeowners Association ("KGHOA"), in negotiations with the Village for a proposed easement agreement, that the Village would reimburse KGHOA for legal fees incurred by it to review the agreement; however, Council was able to step in and prevent such actual reimbursement of legal fees to KGHOA;

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons acted without authorization or approval from Council when, during negotiations between the Village and the Whitetail Run Community Association ("WRCA") for a proposed easement agreement for a stormwater project, he offered the WRCA a three-year payment plan at ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) per year for the easement agreement; however, Council was able to step in and stop this action;

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons acted without authorization or approval from Council when he accepted a match grant funding proposal from NOACA, committing the Village to a minimum two hundred-thousand-dollar (\$200,000) investment (as of 25 November 2025, the commitment will be a minimum of \$600,000 and, potentially, more than \$1,000,000) and providing a timeline for project completion, including a 2026 ribbon cutting ceremony to the public when Council has not to date approved the project;

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons acted inappropriately and without the approval of Council in situations where the Village has hired new employees.

- a. Mayor was repeatedly informed of Village rules for hiring new employees. Mayor was repeatedly asked not to contact references until initial interviews had taken place and department heads were ready to proceed to the next step.
- b. On one occasion, Mayor personally went to a neighboring community to inquire about an applicant that had worked there. Mayor Koons did not have the authorization paperwork to receive/review the employee file nor had the department head made the decision to move forward with the candidate at that time.
- c. On one occasion, Mayor contacted a neighboring community to ask about an applicant that subsequently declined to interview.
- d. On multiple occasions, the Mayor took female applicants to lunch to interview one on one after being advised not to;.

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons acted without authorization or approval of Council by informing the Geauga Fresh Farmers Market that it may convene on Village property without an agreement, reviewed by the solicitor, that included proof of insurance;

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons acted without notice to the Park Committee or Council and without authorization or approval of Council by committing the Village to pay vendors in connection with the Fall Festival 2025;

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons disregarded the chain of command by directing Village employees, contrary to the instructions of their department heads, to perform certain tasks, including disseminating confidential information and thereby jeopardizing an ongoing police investigation;

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons acted without authorization or approval of Council by directing select Village employees to be dismissed early from work and paid for the entire work shift, while requiring other employees to finish their work shift at their usual rate of compensation;

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons acted without authorization or approval of Council when the Mayor invited select Village employees to Village sponsored events, with compensation during such events and providing meals at the Village expense; and

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons was required by Council to attend sensitivity training in the workplace at his own expense due to issues raised by personnel;

**WHEREAS**, Mayor Koons, fully aware of Ohio's Sunshine Laws, did on December 1, 2025, send an email to a majority of members of the Parks Committee requesting their action by text response in contravention to Ohio Sunshine Laws;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Council of the Village of South Russell, that:

**SECTION 1.** The Council members of the Village of South Russell have NO confidence, and NO trust, in the Mayor to effectively lead the Village of South Russell.

**SECTION 2.** The Council members of the Village of South Russell respectfully and willingly submit this vote of NO Confidence to the Citizens of the Village of South Russell.

**SECTION 3.** The Council members of the Village of South Russell urge the Citizens of the Village of South Russell to consider the actions of the Mayor going forward in light of this Resolution of NO confidence, and NO trust, because the Citizens of the Village of South Russell deserve better.

**SECTION 4.** 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 of any of its committees on or after December 2, 1975, that resulted in formal actions, were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22, Ohio Revised Code.

**SECTION 5.** That this Resolution is declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, property, health and safety of the inhabitants of the Village and for the further reason to immediately inform the Village citizens; wherefore, provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of all members elected to Council, this Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and immediately upon its passage by this Council.

William H. Koons

Mayor, Presiding Officer

ATTEST:

Danielle Romanowski

Fiscal Officer

I certify that Resolution No. 2025 - 77 was duly enacted on the 29<sup>TH</sup> day of DECEMBER, 2025, by the Council of the Village of South Russell, and published in accordance with the Codified Ordinances of the Village.

Danielle Romanowski

Fiscal Officer

We, the undersigned Council Members of the Village of South Russell proclaim NO Confidence in Mayor William Koons.

Mark E. Porter

Council Member Mark Porter,  
President Pro Tempore

Dennis M. Galicki

Council Member Dennis M. Galicki

Gerald Canton

Council Member Gerald Canton

Christopher J. Berger

Council Member Christopher J. Berger

Ruth A. Cavanagh

Council Member Ruth Cavanagh

Christopher Bell

Council Member Christopher Bell