

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026– 7:00 P.M.  
MAYOR WILLIAM G. KOONS PRESIDING**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bell, Berger, Canton, Cavanagh, Rensel, Porter

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Fiscal Officer Romanowski, Police Chief Rizzo, Solicitor Matheney

**VISITORS:** Benjamin Stewart, Paw Paw Lake Dr.; Leslie Satchell, Haskins Rd., Chagrin Falls; Gary Dole, Maple Hill Dr.

The Mayor called the Regular Council meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Fiscal Officer read the roll.

Berger opened the discussion with a formal statement. He acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the Fiscal Officer, Village staff, and the Solicitor for their assistance throughout the Council vacancy appointment process. He noted that their support ensured the process was organized, transparent, and thorough.

Berger also formally thanked all applicants who submitted letters of interest, resumes, and written responses to Council's questions. He specifically recognized the eight individuals who were interviewed, expressing that Council was fortunate to have such a qualified and dedicated group of residents willing to serve the Village. He described the selection process as both rigorous and challenging. He stated that the decision involved identifying a "first among equals," emphasizing that all eight candidates were highly qualified and capable of serving effectively. He clarified that not being selected should not be viewed as a rejection of service, but rather as a pause in civic involvement. He encouraged the applicants who were not selected to continue participating in Village government, including serving on boards and Council committees.

Berger stated that Council established high standards for evaluating the candidates. The criteria included:

- Demonstrated ability and willingness to perform Council duties.
- Prior attendance and engagement at Council and committee meetings.
- Active participation in advancing Council's agenda.
- Communication of a clear and concrete vision for the Village's present and future.
- A work history reflecting successful teamwork and the ability to meet or exceed goals and expectations.

He emphasized that the evaluation process was thoughtful and deliberate, reflecting Council's commitment to selecting the candidate best suited to meet the Village's current needs.

Canton thanked the Mayor and Berger for their leadership in the process. He echoed the sentiment that the Village is fortunate to have residents willing to step forward and serve. He expressed appreciation to all eight candidates and reiterated his gratitude for their willingness to contribute to the community.

Cavanagh stated that after reviewing the resumes and participating in half of the interviews, she was impressed by the caliber of applicants. She noted that the candidates demonstrated genuine belief in the work of Council and described them as talented and accomplished individuals. She reiterated that the Village was very fortunate to have such qualified residents.

Bell concurred with the prior comments, particularly those of Berger. He reflected on the unexpected nature of the vacancy and acknowledged that Council would have preferred the democratic process of filling the seat through an election. However, he recognized that Council was obligated to act under the circumstances. He expressed enthusiasm for the direction the Village was moving and appreciation for the eight candidates. He stated that each applicant possessed unique skills and strengths and would have been a strong addition to Council. Ultimately, however, Council was required to determine which individual best fit the Village's immediate needs.

Rensel agreed with the previous statements and thanked the applicants for responding promptly to the vacancy announcement. She acknowledged the effort involved in assembling references and resumes and attending meetings and interviews on short notice. She also appreciated the candidates' willingness to share their perspectives on opportunities within the Village.

Canton read the following resolution into the record:

**WHEREAS**, on February 1, 2026, a vacancy on the Village of South Russell Council was created when Council Member Misha Alexander resigned from her position, which term began on January 1, 2026, and ends on December 31, 2029;

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Sections 733.31(A)(2) and 731.43(A)(1) of the Ohio Revised Code, when the office of a member of Council of the Village becomes vacant, such vacancy shall be filled by election of Council for the unexpired term, unless Council fails within 30 days to fill such vacancy then, in that instance, such vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the Mayor; and

**WHEREAS**, after advertising for persons interested in the vacant seat to submit their interest by February 10, 2026, after considering each submission, and after interviewing with each person who timely submitted their interest on February 14, 2026 and February 16, 2026, Council desires to make the appointment to the office of a member of Council for the unexpired term ending December 31, 2029.

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

**SECTION 1.** In accordance with Sections 733.31(A)(2) and 731.43(A)(1) of the Ohio Revised Code, Mark Porter is hereby appointed to the office of a member of Council of the Village of South Russell for the unexpired term ending December 31, 2029.

**SECTION 2.** 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 3.** 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 allow such Council member to immediately discharge the duties of the office for the unexpired term, subject only to first being administered, and taking, the oath of office; 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.

Canton made a motion for Council to vote and approve Mark Porter to the position of Council with a term lasting until December 31, 2029, and made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – ayes, Bell, Berger, Canton, Cavanagh. Nay – Rensel. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – ayes, Bell, Berger, Canton, Cavanagh. Nay – Rensel. The Mayor indicated the resolution had passed four to one.

Bell administered the oath of office to Porter.

**Canton made a motion to approve the minutes of February 5, 2026, Regular Council meeting minutes, seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried. Rensel made a motion to approve February 7, 2026, Special Council meeting minutes, seconded by Berger. The Mayor identified a correction in the meeting time.**

**FORFEITURE HEARING: Bell made a motion to untable the Forfeiture Hearing, seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Ben Stewart, the property owner, argued that Mr. Satchell effectively walked off the job. He acknowledged that he had been unprepared at a prior meeting but stated that the essential issue before the body was the contractor's decision to halt work. To support his position, Mr. Stewart read a text message dated October 17, 2024, in which Mr. Satchell stated that the job was "on hold" until the parties could meet and come to a better understanding regarding labor costs and charges moving forward. The message further indicated that lost time could not be made up, and that any continuation of work would require a written addendum signed by both parties. Mr. Stewart interpreted this communication as a unilateral suspension of work and characterized it as evidence that the contractor had abandoned the project.

In addition to the text message, Mr. Stewart testified that Mr. Satchell did not work full days, which in his view contributed to delays. He stated that over approximately twenty observed workdays, the contractor typically arrived around 8:00 a.m. but left between noon and 2:00 p.m., averaging approximately 1:30 p.m., and took a half-hour lunch. According to Mr. Stewart, this pattern demonstrated a lack of sustained effort and prolonged the timeline. He also asserted that although Mr. Satchell had signed on as the general contractor, he did not retain subcontractors as expected and instead performed most of the work himself. Mr. Stewart maintained that this staffing approach further delayed progress and deviated from their original understanding at the time of contracting. Taken together, he argued that the shortened workdays, project delays, and the decision to place the job on hold justified forfeiture of the permit deposit.

Mr. Satchell disputed the characterization that he walked off the job and presented a different account of events. He stated that at the outset he informed Mr. Stewart that the project would take approximately four to six months and involved substantial work, including renovation of a basement consisting of nine rooms, plumbing work extending to a second-floor bathroom, framing, insulation, and preparation for drywall. He stated that by the time the dispute arose, he had completed approximately ninety-eight percent of the framing and had insulation installed and drywall ready to proceed. He described the work as organized and methodical, emphasizing that certain aspects of construction could not be rushed without compromising quality.

Mr. Satchell further testified that working conditions contributed to delays. He stated that debris and stored materials in the work area required him to move items before proceeding and that there were recurring issues with securing dogs so that contractors could access the space. While he acknowledged frustrations, he maintained that he continued to work and made significant

progress, stating that within roughly two and a half months he had completed the basement framing and related structural preparations.

A central issue, according to Mr. Satchell, was compensation for additional work beyond the original agreement. He explained that the overall project estimate was approximately \$85,000, with about \$45,000 allocated to labor. Payments were made in installments, including two \$15,000 payments and a subsequent \$10,000 payment for materials. As the project progressed and additional work was requested, he stated that he sought a meeting to clarify labor charges and timeframes. He testified that he could not secure a meeting with both homeowners together due to their schedules and that he felt he could not continue performing additional work without a written understanding regarding compensation. For that reason, he placed the project on hold pending further discussion.

Mr. Satchell stated that after he contacted the Building Department and formally paused the job, Mr. Stewart became upset and informed him that he was no longer permitted to return to the property. He denied abandoning the project, asserting instead that he paused work to protect himself from performing uncompensated additional labor and that he was effectively terminated after requesting a meeting. He also responded to criticisms about the quality of his framing, including allegations concerning windowsills and fasteners, asserting that his methods were sound and that no substantive defects existed.

During deliberations, Council focused on clarifying the narrow scope of its authority. Berger stated that the dispute over the remodeling contract itself was not before Council and should be resolved in another forum. Council's only responsibility, he explained, was to determine whether the construction deposit should be returned, to whom it should be paid, and whether it should be refunded in whole or in part. He noted that the record showed the contractor, Satchell Remodeling, had paid the \$1,087.50 deposit, as evidenced by check submitted to the Building Department. He further relied on prior testimony from the Building Inspector, who had stated that approximately 70 percent of the permitted work had been completed before the parties' relationship ended. Berger proposed refunding 70 percent of the deposit, \$761.25, to the contractor and forfeiting the remaining 30 percent, \$326.25, to the Village to offset administrative costs.

Bell agreed with the 70 percent calculation, noting that the contractor had passed inspection at that stage and that only a final inspection remained. From the Village's perspective, he stated, the project was compliant through that point.

Cavanagh questioned whether the remaining 30 percent could instead be paid to Mr. Stewart. Discussion followed regarding permit fees and inspection costs. The Building Department Administrative Assistant explained that permit fees cover inspection services and that construction deposits are generally refundable upon completion. The Solicitor confirmed that Council had discretion in allocating the remaining funds.

**Cavanagh made a motion to remit 70%, or \$761.25 to Mr. Satchell and \$326.25 to Mr. Stewart, seconded by Bell. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.** The Building Department Administrative Assistant advised that processing would take at least two weeks, and the Solicitor confirmed that the matter was concluded from the Village's standpoint.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** The Mayor distributed his report. He received the retirement notice of the Building Department Administrative Assistant, Ruth Griswold, who will be leaving July 31, 2026. He conveyed that she would be sorely missed.

The Mayor's report addressed the status of the Village's cleaning service, goals for the year, and statistical information from meetings he attended.

**Cavanagh made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of conferring with the Village Solicitor regarding imminent litigation involving the Village, pursuant to section 121.22(C)(3) of the Ohio Revised Code and inviting into the executive session the Mayor, the Solicitor, the Fiscal Officer, and Ruth Griswold, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**At 7:58 p.m. Berger made a motion to exit Executive Session, seconded by Bell. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**FISCAL OFFICER REPORT:** The Fiscal Officer distributed her report. She included a map showing that 95% of homes in the Village are participating in the TextMyGov app.

The Fiscal Officer provided the status of a project identified by the Administration and Technology Committee to create a formal welcome letter for new residents. She explained that research had been conducted using prior newsletters and that department heads were being asked to identify key information for inclusion in the new resident letter and corresponding webpage. The intent was to send this information automatically upon notice of a home sale. Examples discussed included clarifying that the Village participates in CCA rather than RITA and that residents must contract independently for trash service. The initiative was described as a way to improve communication and reduce confusion for new homeowners.

The Fiscal Officer reported that she had successfully submitted the annual state report using new financial software, describing the process as significantly easier than prior manual filings. Completion of the report allowed January financials and bank reconciliations to proceed. She noted that the transition to software has streamlined reporting and is expected to make the upcoming audit smoother.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:** Berger reported that the Finance Committee submitted minutes from the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. The next meeting will take place on March 12, 2026, at 3:15 p.m.

**SOLICITOR REPORT:** The Solicitor then addressed a procedural defect in the prior appointment of Mark Porter. She explained that the resolution appointing Mr. Porter did not properly waive three readings because the required three-quarters vote had not been achieved. The Solicitor advised that Council did not need to appoint by resolution and could instead cure the issue through a motion of Council.

**Canton made a motion to appoint Mark Porter as member of the Village of South Russell Council for the unexpired term ending on December 31st, 2029, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – Ayes, Bell, Berger, Canton, and Cavanagh. Nay – Rensel. Motion carried.**

**STREET COMMITTEE REPORT:** Under committee reports, Bell stated that the Street Committee meeting had been canceled due to council interviews and would be rescheduled in coordination with the Public Utilities Committee to minimize demands on the Village Engineer.

Cavanagh referenced the Building Committee and asked about the salt building project, including a previously approved \$4,500 adjustment. The Fiscal Officer responded that the contractor had recently collected payment and anticipated starting work within the next week or two, weather permitting.

**POLICE CHIEF REPORT:** The Chief reported that new body-worn cameras had been deployed and were operational.

**SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT:** Canton reported on a joint HR and Safety Committee meeting held February 10th to interview candidates for sergeant and officer positions. The applicants were described as strong, and the Chief indicated swearing-in ceremonies were anticipated at upcoming meetings.

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT:** Under HR matters, Berger introduced a draft consolidated hiring process document but, after discussion with the Mayor, Council agreed to defer action until March 2nd to allow additional review.

Berger then presented a revised job description for the Building Department Administrative Assistant. He explained two substantive changes: removal of assistant zoning inspector duties and reassignment of reporting authority to the Fiscal Officer. The intent was to create a flexible administrative structure allowing cross-training and reassignment among departments as needed.

Bell supported the change, noting it provided flexibility and structure in a department without a formal head. The Fiscal Officer agreed that cross-training would strengthen coverage.

**Cavanagh made a motion that we adopt the new position for an Administrative Assistant going forward as written, seconded by Rensel. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Council next addressed compensatory time accrual. Berger explained that significant snowfall had resulted in heavy overtime for Service Department employees, pushing them toward or beyond the existing 80-hour comp time cap. He outlined the financial risk of increasing the cap but stated that usage remains subject to approval by department heads and the Mayor, limiting scheduling concerns. The Fiscal Officer explained that once employees exceed 80 hours, payroll automatically cashes out the excess, creating administrative adjustments and immediate expense. Raising the cap would reduce that pressure and provide flexibility.

**Berger made a motion to raise the limit on comp time that may be accrued in the Village from 80 hours to 160 hours, seconded by Cavanagh.** There was discussion as to whether this included Police and the Mayor suggested informing the hourly employees of what was being discussed. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

**PROPERTIES COMMITTEE REPORT:** Under Properties Committee discussion, Cavanagh stated that the committee needed to develop plans for the undeveloped southeast corner of the Village campus. Ideas discussed included landscaping, flowers, a split-rail fence, and possibly a gazebo or decorative feature. Gary Dole, 63 Maple Hill Dr., expressed preference for maintaining open green space with limited additions. The Mayor reported that a retired landscaper had offered volunteer assistance and raised concerns about invasive tree species currently on the property.

**PARK COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT:** Cavanagh had no report.

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT:** Berger noted that the Public Utilities Committee meeting had been deferred and would be rescheduled alongside the Street Committee. Porter stated that his appointment to Council created a vacancy for the citizen representative position on the Public Utilities Committee and encouraged interested residents to apply. Berger also reported ongoing discussions with Geauga Soil & Water regarding MS4 report services and anticipated a forthcoming comparison report.

**SAFE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORT COMMITTEE REPORT:** Bell reported for the Safe Bicycle and Pedestrian Transport Committee (SBPT) minutes from the February 7<sup>th</sup> meeting were distributed. The committee discussed a potential trail levy but agreed with the Finance Committee that it would be considered a “want” rather than a “need” at this time. Members recommended reviewing financial projections with the County Auditor before considering ballot action and continuing to pursue grant funding opportunities.

**ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE:** Berger introduced a draft motion intended to memorialize Council’s position on broadcasting, recording, and transcribing Council and committee meetings. He explained that significant progress had already been made through the work of the Fiscal Officer and her staff, who had been converting audio recordings into written transcripts using AI technology. Traditionally, he noted, preparing minutes required hours of manual transcription, but AI tools had substantially reduced that burden.

Berger stated that while Council meetings would continue to be livestreamed by video, committee meetings present logistical challenges because they are not always held in Village Hall. His proposal was that all committee meetings be audio recorded, and those recordings be submitted to the Fiscal Officer for AI-assisted transcription into detailed minutes. These would not be verbatim transcripts, but structured minutes describing what occurred, subject to review and approval just like regular Council minutes. He also noted that the Village had purchased an additional digital recorder to serve as a “traveling recorder” for meetings held at various locations.

Cavanagh asked whether recording would be mandatory and expressed concern about properly operating the device. She referenced a prior Building Committee meeting where AI-generated minutes closely matched her own handwritten notes. The Fiscal Officer responded that the process was straightforward: record the meeting, return the device, and staff would handle transcription and circulate the draft minutes for committee approval.

Rensel observed that recording could also be done using a smartphone voice memo feature and questioned whether a specific recorder was necessary. Berger responded that the method was flexible so long as the recording could be downloaded. Bell added that he had already been using an AI recording device for Street and SBPT Committee meetings and found it efficient. Berger encouraged coordination with the Fiscal Officer to determine the best technology going forward, emphasizing that this was an opportunity to use AI constructively to improve transparency.

Porter then raised a procedural concern. He recalled that the Village ordinance governing committees may provide that the method of keeping minutes is at the discretion of the committee chair. If that were the case, he suggested that implementing mandatory recording might require an ordinance amendment rather than a simple motion. The Solicitor stated that she would review the relevant code sections to confirm. Berger agreed that if an ordinance was necessary, Council would proceed accordingly.

Berger then introduced a second matter: an upgrade to the Village Hall microphone system. He explained that the Chief had been working with a company called Just Add Tech to improve audio quality for meetings and livestreams. The existing tabletop microphones were wired and limited flexibility in room setup. The proposed system would install a ceiling-mounted array containing approximately 100 microphones capable of directing and isolating sound zones within the chamber, thereby improving recording clarity and eliminating visible tabletop equipment.

**Berger made a motion to approve the microphone upgrade for Village Hall with Just Add Tech Inc. in the amount of \$10,000 even, seconded by Bell.**

Cavanagh asked whether the new system would remove the current microphones and whether the equipment would be visually obtrusive. The Chief explained that the microphones on the tables would be eliminated and replaced by a discreet white ceiling-mounted disc. The upgrade would also improve livestream audio quality and restore flexibility in how tables are arranged. Cavanagh confirmed that the cost was a one-time expense. Bell added that the purchase was a budgeted capital expense within the Village Hall budget. The Chief confirmed that it was within the approved budget.

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

## **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

Berger provided a third reading of an ordinance authorizing all actions necessary to accept Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) 2026 Energized Community Grant and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-09**

Bell provided a third reading of an ordinance approving Attachment A to the Master Services Agreement for professional services to allow Verdantas to prepare the plans on behalf of the Village for ODOT approval to resurface Bell Road from Chillicothe Road to the Village east corporation line in an amount not to exceed \$143,000, authorizing the Mayor and the Fiscal Officer to execute the attachment on behalf of the Village, and declaring an emergency. Bell made a motion to adopt, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-10**

Berger provided a third reading of an ordinance authorizing the 2026 Property and Casualty insurance with Public Entities Pool of Ohio and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-11**

Canton provided a third reading of an ordinance adopting a new moratorium on the reviewing, issuing, and processing of any permits relating to retail dispensaries, cultivators, or processors of adult use cannabis within the Village of South Russell for a period of 12 months, and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to adopt, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – Cavanagh, Rensel, Canton, Porter. Nays, Bell and Berger. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-12**

Berger provided a third reading of an ordinance transferring up to \$1,440,000 to the Safety Fund, up to \$375,000 to the Operating Fund, up to \$39,000 to the Street Maintenance Fund, up to \$170,000 to the Special Land and Building Fund, up to \$460,000 to the General Fund, up to \$21,000 to the Parks & Recreation Fund, up to \$100,000 to the Large Equipment Fund, and up to \$360,000 to the Bell Road East fund, and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-13**

Berger provided a third reading of an ordinance amending the 2026 Annual Appropriations increasing Income Tax Transfers \$235,000, Street Maintenance expenses \$62,000, Special Road Fund expenses \$135,000 and Special Land and Building expenses \$5,000, and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call - ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-14**

Berger provided a third reading of an ordinance transferring up to \$50,000 to the Street Maintenance Fund, \$50,000 to the Special Land & Building Fund and \$135,000 to the Special Road Fund, and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-15**

Berger introduced an ordinance requesting the County Auditor to certify to the taxing authority the total tax valuation of the subdivision and the dollar amount of revenue that would be generated by a specific number of mills and declaring an emergency. (Road and Bridge)

Berger introduced an ordinance requesting the County Auditor to certify to the taxing authority the total tax valuation of the subdivision and the number of mills necessary to generate the specific dollar amount of revenue and declaring an emergency. (Trail) Berger made a motion to waive readings and declaring an emergency, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Bell. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.  
**ORD 2026-16**

Berger introduced an ordinance approving the proposal with terms and conditions from Business Communication Specialists for the phone system for the Village of South Russell Police Department in the amount of \$16,650.50, authorizing the Police Chief to execute the proposal with the terms and conditions on behalf of the Village, and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Cavanagh. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried.  
**ORD 2026-17**

**PAYMENTS REGISTER:** Berger made a motion to ratify the Payment Register of February 13, 2026, in the amount of \$286,831.25, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

**NEW & OTHER BUSINESS:** Cavanagh, Rensel, Bell, and Canton had no new business.

Berger introduced a draft motion establishing a formal submission deadline of noon on the third business day prior to a Council meeting (Wednesday at noon for a Monday meeting). Under the proposal, agenda items would be submitted by that deadline, compiled by the Fiscal Officer and her staff, and then forwarded to him as President Pro Tem for approval before distribution.

Cavanagh clarified the timing, confirming the Wednesday noon deadline. Porter asked whether that timeline provided sufficient time for packet preparation. The Fiscal Officer responded that receiving materials earlier was preferable, explaining that Council packets are typically finalized on Thursday and posted. She described the amount of coordination involved in assembling materials and indicated that late submissions had created logistical strain.

The Mayor questioned why the President Pro Tem would approve the agenda, noting that the President Pro Tem traditionally presides only in the Mayor's absence. The Solicitor explained that while the Codified Ordinances establish the general order of business, no one currently reviews and approves the compiled agenda. The issue was not about control of content, but about ensuring consistency, proper classification of committee items, and timely distribution.

The discussion expanded to include public participation rules. The Solicitor noted that the Codified Ordinances set a Thursday deadline for visitors requesting to be placed on the agenda, which would conflict with a Wednesday submission deadline for Council business. Cavanagh asked whether individuals could still simply appear and speak. The Solicitor confirmed that while there is a formal sign-up process in the ordinances, Council has historically allowed flexibility.

Porter suggested that if deadlines were adjusted, the ordinance should clarify both the visitor deadline and the discretion of the Mayor—or President Pro Tem in the Mayor's absence—to allow individuals to address Council even if not formally on the agenda. The Fiscal Officer

agreed that aligning visitor deadlines with the proposed Wednesday deadline would create consistency.

The Mayor then raised a broader concern, questioning whether agenda approval authority should rest with a single Council member. Berger responded that he took no particular interest in controlling the agenda but emphasized the practical difficulty of attempting to obtain approval from all Council members within the limited timeframe before packets must be finalized. Someone needed to review placement and organization to avoid delays.

The Fiscal Officer provided historical context. Initially, agendas simply followed the order of business, but over time she began listing detailed discussion items to ensure matters were addressed and not overlooked. Recently, however, complaints have arisen about items being listed under incorrect categories. She requested that someone review and approve agenda classifications so responsibility did not rest solely with staff.

Bell stated directly that the need for structure arose in part from last-minute submissions and resulting in staff disruptions. He expressed support for moving forward with a clearer process.

Porter also noted that special Council meetings may be called not only by Council but also by the Mayor or three council members and suggested that the draft language be reviewed for accuracy. After further discussion, members agreed that because ordinance provisions regarding visitor deadlines might require amendment, the Solicitor should prepare a formal ordinance revision rather than proceed solely by motion.

Berger concluded that edits could be incorporated and asked the Solicitor to draft appropriate amendments for consideration at the March 2nd meeting.

Following the agenda discussion, there was brief clarification about an upcoming visitor, Mike Roberto. The Mayor confirmed that Roberto had previously informed him that he would attend the March 2nd meeting. The Mayor added that a representative from USGS was tentatively scheduled for April.

Porter expressed appreciation for Council's confidence in appointing him and stated that he looked forward to working collaboratively for the benefit of the Village.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Being that there was no further business before Council, Cavanagh made a motion to adjourn at 8:48 p.m., seconded by Canton. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.



William G. Koons, Mayor



Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by: Leslie Galicki