

Public Utilities Committee Meeting

February 26, 2026

Called to Order: 6:41 p.m. (Public Utilities) / 6:42 p.m. (Stormwater)

Adjourned: 7:28 p.m.

The Public Utilities Committee convened at 6:41 p.m., followed immediately by the Stormwater portion of the meeting at 6:42 p.m. Present were Mr. Bell (Chair), the Street Commissioner, the Village Engineer, Council Member Renzel, and committee staff. Council Member Porter was absent but had expressed his regrets. The Mayor had submitted a list of topics for discussion, which Mr. Bell had annotated for clarification.

Laurel Road / Countryside Drive Drainage Concerns

The Committee first addressed concerns raised by residents on the east side of Laurel Road regarding drainage between their properties and those along Countryside Drive. The Engineer explained that stormwater in this area generally sheds from the backyards of Countryside Drive properties toward Laurel Road. He noted historical drainage challenges in the broader area, particularly near the Manor Brook and Countryside cul-de-sacs, including Ponds 1, 2, and 3, where water does not drain efficiently.

Discussion included the former HOA-owned park property between Laurel and Fernwood, which had been subdivided into narrow rear-yard parcels. Historically, drainage flowed partially toward Hazelwood and partially toward Bell Road. The Engineer explained that the upcoming Hazelwood storm sewer project would provide improved outlet capacity for rear-yard swales that currently lack adequate discharge points.

Committee members emphasized that before any action is taken, clarification is needed regarding the specific nature of the residents' concerns. The Committee agreed that it must determine whether the issue constitutes a Village responsibility, a private property matter, or an issue with broader public benefit. The consensus was that the Mayor or affected residents should provide more detailed information to allow the Committee to assess potential Village involvement.

Manor Brook / 501 Manor Brook Swale Erosion

The Committee discussed longstanding erosion problems near 501 Manor Brook, where an existing swale collects roadway runoff and conveys it through a culvert before discharging near the property. The Engineer described the issue as primarily one of water velocity rather than volume. Fast-moving water has displaced large rocks and, when debris clogs the receiving culvert, flooding occurs at the Reserve Trail intersection and onto adjacent properties.

Although earlier discussions in 2019 questioned Village jurisdiction, the Committee determined that because the swale collects roadway runoff and impacts public infrastructure, it constitutes a public issue requiring action.

Initial consideration of constructing a retention basin was rejected after stormwater modeling showed that storage capacity was not the core problem. Instead, staff proposed in-house improvements to slow the water's velocity by creating impoundment areas within the channel.

The property beneath the power lines is owned by the Whitetail Master Association. The Committee agreed that prior to commencing work, the Village must obtain written authorization—either an easement or a work agreement—from the HOA. An estimated cost of approximately \$9,500 was discussed, and the project is tentatively scheduled for summer, weather permitting.

Tree City USA and Central Retention Basin Landscaping

The Committee briefly reviewed the possibility of applying for Tree City USA designation through the Arbor Day Foundation. Members clarified that the program primarily offers recognition rather than significant grant funding.

Discussion expanded to landscaping and planting at the Central Retention Basin. While no formal landscaping plan currently exists, members considered the potential for community planting events, possibly in coordination with watershed organizations or county programs that promote rain gardens and native plantings. The importance of selecting appropriate native species and consulting environmental professionals was emphasized.

Members also noted the aesthetic and ecological success of the Village's wetland restoration project at the park, which has improved stormwater management while enhancing wildlife habitat.

Kensington HOA Spillway Erosion

The Committee discussed erosion around the Kensington HOA spillway. The Engineer explained that while erosion is present, the spillway ultimately discharges into the Village's Central Retention Basin, which has substantial downstream capacity. As such, the issue is not currently causing broader flooding problems.

The Committee agreed that Village involvement would be limited to offering technical advice to the HOA unless further issues arise.

MS4 Annual Report and Stormwater Compliance

The Committee reviewed the status of the Village's MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) report required by the Ohio EPA. Historically, reporting had been completed by CT Consultants and later transitioned to the Chagrin River Watershed Partners.

Due to staffing changes and cost considerations, the Village is exploring transferring reporting responsibilities to the Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District. Carmela Shale of Geauga Soil and Water has reviewed prior reports and is preparing follow-up questions. The Committee was advised that the April 1 deadline can be met if an agreement is finalized promptly.

Recent annual reporting costs ranged from approximately \$7,000 to \$10,000. Geauga Soil and Water's structure includes a participation fee based on municipal size (estimated between \$3,000–\$5,000), which supports matching state funds.

The Committee also discussed data collected from a USGS stream gauge and questioned the practical application of the flow data being gathered, noting uncertainty regarding its return on investment.

USGS Presentation to Council

The Mayor has suggested inviting the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to present to Council on April 6 regarding water quality monitoring. Committee members expressed concern about receiving a proposal sufficiently in advance to allow informed discussion rather than making decisions immediately following a presentation. The Committee agreed that advance documentation should be requested.

Family Life Center / Lantern & State Route 306 Drainage

The Committee revisited prior work completed at the Family Life Center's stormwater retention basin. Previously, the Village installed an outlet control structure to slow discharge, as the original configuration allowed water to exit at the same rate it entered.

The basin now functions properly, though sediment accumulation over time may reduce capacity. The Engineer noted that while the facility benefits downstream properties and Village infrastructure, the Village's ability to compel maintenance by the property owner may be limited. Historically, the property owner has allowed Village access for maintenance when requested.

Greenleaf Property and Central Retention Basin Buffer

Discussion followed regarding a property owner near the Central Retention Basin who had previously requested additional buffering and grading adjustments during basin construction. Council had authorized additional excavation costs (approximately \$50,000–\$60,000) to increase setback from the property line. The owner was also offered permission to connect a private drainage ditch to the basin but has not done so. Additional tree plantings were installed at the owner's request.

The Committee acknowledged the need to define reasonable limits of Village accommodation.

Daisy Drive Flooding

Residents on Daisy Drive have experienced flooding issues. The Committee discussed potential grading and swale modifications to improve surface water control and reduce backyard flooding. Past adjustments to weir elevations in the park's wetland project have already helped reduce downstream flow toward Country Estates and Ponds 1, 2, and 3. Members agreed that further review of grading and overflow routing may be warranted.

Centralized Trash Collection Program

The Committee revisited the concept of a centralized trash collection contract. Prior efforts had generated significant public opposition and failed to advance. Members noted disparities among HOAs—some have negotiated favorable private rates, while others have not—creating differing resident interests.

Staff is reviewing prior documentation and considering outreach to communities that have successfully implemented centralized systems. The issue remains under review.

ESID Stormwater Assistance Program

The Committee received an update on the county ESID program, which provides stormwater financing assistance for private property improvements. While participation has been limited, the Village continues to support the program and may promote it to residents facing drainage challenges.

Community Engagement and Beautification

The meeting concluded with discussion of resident engagement in landscaping and beautification initiatives, including possible collaboration with volunteers who previously organized holiday

decorations. Council Member Cavanaugh has initiated outreach to interested residents. Members emphasized the importance of celebrating environmental successes and improving community communication.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.