

Building Committee Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2026 – 3:30 p.m.

The Building Committee meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. Present at the meeting were Chairwoman Cavanagh, Councilmember Canton, Mayor Koons, Solicitor Matheney, Building Department Administrative Assistant Griswold, and Administrative Assistants Galicki and Troyer. The discussion focused primarily on evaluating replacement software for the Building Department and addressing several operational and code-related issues affecting the department.

The meeting began with Chairwoman Cavanagh explaining that the primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Village's options for replacing the current iWorQ software system used by the Building Department. Administrative staff had recently reviewed two potential alternatives—GovWell and CitizenServe—and the committee sought input from staff members who had participated in demonstrations of the systems. The committee also needed to consider the timeline for making a recommendation to Council, particularly because a pricing discount offered by GovWell would expire at the end of March.

Administrative Assistant Troyer reported that she and Administrative Assistant Galicki had reviewed the GovWell system in detail and had also attended a presentation on CitizenServe. Based on her review, she believed GovWell would be better suited for a small municipality such as the Village. She explained that CitizenServe appeared to be designed for larger communities and that the interface was cumbersome and overly complex. She noted that if the system is difficult for staff to navigate on the administrative side, it would likely also be difficult for residents and contractors to use.

Administrative Assistant Galicki concurred with Troyer's assessment. She explained that after attending the CitizenServe demonstration, both staff members independently came away with similar impressions—that the program was cumbersome and not user-friendly. She described CitizenServe as similar to a “glorified iWorQ,” noting that it appeared to repeat many of the same problems the department had already experienced.

Galicki then described the GovWell system, which she and Troyer had observed in use during a visit to the City of Twinsburg. She explained that GovWell features a public-facing portal that allows residents or contractors to navigate the permitting process more easily. For example, a contractor could enter a request such as building a deck, and the system would generate a step-by-step guide outlining the required permits and approvals. The system also incorporates artificial intelligence features that analyze uploaded plans and compare them against codified ordinances and zoning requirements. According to Galicki, this process could flag potential issues before the plans reach the Building Inspector, potentially reducing the amount of follow-up communication required to obtain missing or incorrect documentation.

Galicki further explained that GovWell offers several modules, allowing municipalities to purchase only the components they intend to use. She clarified that these modules differ from the “module rollout” previously experienced with iWorQ, which introduced new sections of the program incrementally. In contrast, GovWell's modules represent different functional areas of

the software, such as permitting, inspections, or public records requests. If the Village did not require a particular function, it could decline that module and potentially reduce the overall cost.

Another feature discussed involved contractor registration. Under the current process, contractors must submit original signed bonding documents each year. GovWell allows contractors to upload documentation electronically and certify its authenticity through an electronic signature attesting that the documents are accurate and original. Troyer noted that Twinsburg currently uses this process, and their legal department has accepted it as sufficient verification. While the Village would need to confirm whether such a process would be acceptable under its own legal framework, the feature could simplify annual contractor registration.

The staff members reported that during their visit to Twinsburg they spoke with several municipal employees, including inspectors and administrative staff who regularly use the system. According to Galicki, the employees expressed strong satisfaction with GovWell and described the customer support as responsive and effective. Support typically begins with an AI assistant, but users can request assistance from a live representative if necessary. The staff emphasized that this level of support contrasted sharply with their experience with iWorQ, where they had encountered delays and difficulty obtaining assistance.

Another advantage noted was that GovWell's support team operates within the same time zone as the Village, whereas CitizenServe's support operations are located in a different time zone. Staff felt this would make it easier to obtain timely technical support during the workday.

The committee also discussed references from other municipalities. Staff reported that officials from Twinsburg, Hunting Valley, and Chagrin Falls had extensively researched multiple vendors before selecting GovWell. According to the feedback received, GovWell was considered the best option among several competitors. Although Chagrin Falls ultimately did not adopt the system due to cost considerations, their administrative staff reportedly expressed disappointment about not moving forward with it.

The committee reviewed the proposed order form from GovWell, which listed several software modules. After reviewing the document, the group concluded that most of the modules appeared necessary for the Village's operations. The only module that raised questions was the planning and zoning component. Members discussed whether that feature would be needed or whether it would primarily duplicate processes already handled manually. Solicitor Matheney suggested that the feature might primarily assist with processing paperwork, collecting fees, and routing planning documents to agencies such as the county planning commission. The committee agreed that this module could be reviewed further before finalizing the order.

The committee also discussed the cost structure for the GovWell proposal. According to the order form, the agreement included a one-time implementation cost of approximately \$24,000 followed by annual fees of approximately \$17,000. Over three years, the total cost would be roughly \$58,000. Staff noted that GovWell had indicated they might be willing to reduce the price toward the lower end of the estimated range if the Village moved forward quickly. The discount offer, which could reduce the cost by approximately \$6,000, would expire at the end of March.

In comparison, CitizenServe had quoted a substantially higher cost—approximately \$38,500 for the first year and \$13,500 annually thereafter, with additional fees for services such as GIS integration. Based on the cost comparison and the system demonstrations, staff and committee members expressed greater confidence in the GovWell proposal.

The discussion then turned to the issue of data migration from the existing iWorQ system. Administrative staff reported that they had already downloaded all available data from iWorQ as of February 18 because of concerns about access to the system. Since that date, staff have been operating offline and maintaining records separately. As a result, if the Village transitions to GovWell, the data entered since February 18 will likely need to be manually entered into the new system.

Staff expressed concern about iWorQ's cooperation during the data migration process. Although the iWorQ contract states that the company must provide an electronic copy of the Village's data within three to five business days after termination of service, staff noted that other municipalities had reported difficulty obtaining timely access to their data. Because of this uncertainty, GovWell had provided procedures that would allow migration using the data already downloaded by the Village.

The committee acknowledged that the migration process may be imperfect and could require additional manual data entry. However, once the transition is complete, staff believed the new system would streamline operations and eliminate many of the inefficiencies currently experienced.

Solicitor Matheny also addressed the legal implications of terminating the iWorQ contract. She explained that although the Village believes iWorQ breached the agreement by introducing new indemnification requirements, the company could still attempt to enforce the remaining balance of the contract. If a dispute arose, it could potentially require litigation in Utah, where the contract specifies that legal actions must be filed. Despite these risks, the committee recognized that the current system was not functioning adequately and that moving to a new platform may be necessary.

Following this discussion, the committee considered the next steps. Solicitor Matheny explained that the Building Committee could make a recommendation to Council to adopt GovWell as the Village's new software provider. She had already prepared draft legislation authorizing the agreement so that Council could act promptly if it chose to proceed. The committee also agreed that Council would likely need to discuss the termination of the iWorQ contract in executive session before authorizing formal notice of termination.

Additional discussion included the timeline for implementation. Based on information provided by GovWell and the experience of other communities, the system could potentially go live later in the year. In some municipalities, the public portal became operational before all historical data had been migrated, allowing contractors and residents to begin submitting applications while the data conversion process continued in the background.

The committee also discussed payment processing. Although GovWell includes the ability to accept credit card payments through its portal, the Village would still need to establish a contract with a payment processor and obtain the necessary equipment. Staff noted that most payments are currently made by cash or check, and while credit card payments are increasingly common, the Village has not yet implemented that capability.

The meeting then shifted briefly to several additional Building Department matters. Griswold reported receiving a complaint about permanent roofline lighting installed on several homes, where lights remain installed year-round and change colors for various holidays. She provided several addresses where these installations had been observed and asked committee members to visit the locations at night to evaluate the visual impact. The committee discussed whether existing ordinances address permanent decorative lighting or whether new regulations might be needed.

Other items discussed included the placement of a salt storage structure associated with a driveway business, the condition of several residential properties requiring enforcement attention, and concerns about building permit fee structures. Staff noted that the current permit fee schedule may not adequately cover the Village's costs, particularly for projects requiring multiple inspections. Examples were provided showing that some large projects generate relatively small permit fees when calculated by square footage rather than project valuation.

Before concluding the meeting, the committee briefly discussed staffing considerations in light of Building Department Administrative Assistant Griswold's planned retirement on July 31. Griswold indicated she would be willing to assist part-time if needed to ensure a smooth transition during the implementation of the new software system and the training of future staff.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting concluded at approximately 4:21 p.m.