

Finance Committee Meeting
April 16, 2026, 3:15 p.m. Village Hall

Present: Council Member Canton, Council Member Porter, Fiscal Officer Romanowski

The Committee discussed the appropriate use and oversight of the Mayor's discretionary fund. The conversation centered on distinguishing true emergencies from routine expenditures that had been treated as urgent in the past. Participants expressed concern that certain recent expenses, such as a proposed \$14,000 bathroom project and a garage door issue, did not meet a reasonable definition of an emergency. In contrast, they agreed that situations such as a burst pipe causing active water damage may qualify. There was consensus that additional oversight or involvement of multiple officials might be appropriate in determining what constitutes an emergency, particularly when immediate action is required.

The committee reflected on the balance between being able to respond quickly in urgent situations and ensuring accountability through Council involvement. It was suggested that the Mayor should have communication with council leadership—such as the President Pro Tem, on what constitutes an emergency, followed by formal ratification of expenditures by Council. Members generally agreed that the current amount was reasonable but emphasized that all expenditures ultimately require Council approval and are not solely at the Mayor's discretion.

Further discussion addressed procedural compliance with state law, particularly the requirement for purchase orders to be issued prior to expenditures. The FO noted that purchases were often brought forward after the fact, creating complications when approvals had not been secured in advance. The group reiterated that in non-emergency situations, expenditures should be pre-approved, while in genuine emergencies, a post-expenditure ratification process could perhaps be followed. They also acknowledged the potential personal liability of officials if funds are spent without proper authorization.

The committee then shifted to operational matters, including a recent situation involving road conditions on Hemlock Road, where differing authorities led to confusion over whether the road should be closed. This highlighted the need for clearer delineation of authority in emergencies and operational decisions. The group discussed whether formalizing a process for declaring emergencies would be beneficial, though concerns were raised about adding unnecessary administrative complexity.

Attention then turned to new software being implemented in the Building Department. The FO explained that the GovWell system credit card processing would be introduced at no cost to the Village, with transaction fees applied to users. Credit card payments would incur a 3.5% fee, while ACH transactions would cost a flat \$1 but could take several days to clear. The system is expected to streamline processes, reduce in-person visits, and guide users step-by-step through permit applications. Training is already underway, and implementation is anticipated within two to three months. The software also includes AI-assisted features that may enhance the Village website without additional cost.

The FO presented an expense summary for the Hemlock Road Culvert project. The committee reviewed the breakdown of engineering and construction expenses and discussed the approach for requesting partial reimbursement, acknowledging that the township may dispute the request. Plans were made to present the information at an upcoming PUC meeting.

The FO clarified confusion surrounding a reported \$2 million grant from NOACA for another trail project. She explained it was part of a long-term planning document from NOACA rather than an awarded grant. The Village has a limited window to indicate interest in being included in the plan, which could potentially lead to

funding between 2028 and 2031. The committee discussed the implications of participating, including the required local match and coordination with the Village of Chagrin Falls. Members expressed concern about the short decision timeline and the uncertainty surrounding project details and obligations.

Regarding upcoming levies, the Road and Bridge Levy is progressing through legislation readings. The Operating Levy remains under discussion pending decisions about a potential Bike and Trail levy. The timeline for placing issues on the November ballot was reviewed, with emphasis on completing the required readings and allowing sufficient time for potential revisions. Porter suggested moving forward with introducing relevant legislation for the Bike and Trail levy at the April 27 meeting to ensure compliance with deadlines and to provide residents with an opportunity to weigh in on proposed funding initiatives. FO reminded the committee that SBPT Chair Chris Bell suggested Finance and SBPT have a joint meeting to discuss this issue.

Meeting adjourned at 3:46 p.m.