

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 20, 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, Street Commissioner Young, Engineer Haibach, Solicitor Matheney

VISITORS: Anthony & Tracy Gerbino, Bell Rd.; Anastasia Nicholas, Chagrin Valley Times; Sarah Kaseler, Alderwood Tr.; Elsie Tarczy, Sheerbrook Dr.; Janice Hill, E. Bel Meadow Ln.; Muffi Sherwin, Holly Ln.; Katherine Malmquist, Louise Dr.; Ralfe Silc, Daisy Ln.; Allison Skok, Bel Meadow Ln.; Newell Howard, Manor Brook Dr.; Bella and Donald Mullally, W. Bel Meadow; Ally Dean, Bell Rd.; Joe Pianekki, Paw Paw Lake Dr.

The Mayor called the Regular Council meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Fiscal Officer read the roll. Council reviewed the **minutes of the June 15, 2026 Regular Council meeting. Porter made a motion to approve, seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, Bell, Berger, Cavanagh, Rensel, and Porter. Canton recused himself. Motion carried.**

VISITORS:

Elsie Tarczy opposed the proposed walking path from Route 306 to South Russell Park. She stated that the project would cost a substantial amount while benefiting only a small number of residents and argued that any Village levy should support a service available to the entire community. She noted the possibility of future ambulance-related costs and other tax levies, questioned the use of approximately \$800,000 in Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA) funding for the path rather than roads and bridges, and requested that the project be tabled and removed from consideration.

Muffi Sherwin supported Tarczy's position. She regularly walks in and around the park and believed the path would serve only a small portion of the Village, particularly not residents east of Route 306 or farther toward the Village center. She believed Village tax dollars could be better spent elsewhere.

Katherine Malmquist also opposed the path because she did not believe the number of residents served justified the requested expenditure. She described leading a hiking group on the existing Bell Road shoulder without incident. She also described a medical emergency near Founders Field and the National Guard Armory in which it took approximately fifteen minutes for dispatchers to determine the correct ambulance jurisdiction. Chief Rizzo explained that the building is in Bainbridge Township although adjacent property is owned by Chagrin Falls, making the area jurisdictionally complicated.

Tracy Gerbino, stated that she had previously emailed the Village suggesting that the speed limit between Gurney Road and the park be lowered instead of constructing a path costing more than one million dollars.

Donald Mullally stated that he and his wife opposed the path because they did not believe it would benefit the community broadly.

Newell Howard criticized NOACA's funding and accountability and distributed information he said was produced by NOACA. He asserted that Geauga County contributes substantially more to NOACA than it receives and questioned whether the promised funding for Bell Road and the trail was guaranteed in writing. The Mayor stated that NOACA had awarded approximately \$1.09 million for Bell Road East and \$800,000 for the trail, with the projects operating on a reimbursement basis. The Mayor said Bell Road East is expected to be completed in 2027 and agreed to obtain additional written information. Bell stated that the Village has a signed an agreement with NOACA and advised Howard that it is a public record available through the Fiscal Officer.

MAYOR'S REPORT: The Mayor reported that two Village 1776 events had been completed. He discussed a proposed 1776 dinner in August and a possible Monarch butterfly release to be combined with an ice cream bike ride. He also raised the possibility of a simple Chagrin Valley remembrance on Thursday, September 10, 2026, in recognition of the twenty-fifth anniversary of September 11th and invited Council's comments.

Bell questioned the Mayor's written characterization of the NOACA trail grant as a surprise, citing a November 7, 2019, Chagrin Valley Times article in which the Mayor identified obtaining a NOACA grant for a Bell Road walking and bicycle trail as a future goal. The Mayor maintained that he had not secured the grant and was surprised when the award letter was received in March 2023.

The Mayor also reported that the proposed campout would not move forward because there was insufficient public interest. Council discussed changing the proposed dinner to Friday, August 21, with the butterfly release and ice cream bike ride on Saturday, August 22. The Fiscal Officer cautioned that waiting until the August 17th Council meeting for approval would leave too little time to arrange the event and payments. The Mayor agreed to provide Council with an updated event proposal.

FISCAL OFFICER REPORT: The Fiscal Officer reported that the Village Hall basement construction began that day. The Village anticipated moving Building Department personnel into Village Hall by September 1st. She stated that the administrative team was optimistic about the move and expected improved coordination.

The GovWell program is functioning well, and the Building Department received its first online payment that day. The Fiscal Officer said the system allows credit card or checking-account payments and is expected to substantially reduce in-person traffic as users become accustomed to the online process. Administrative staff have been entering data, working with GovWell to correct issues, and making system adjustments as needed.

In response to a question concerning income tax receipts, the Fiscal Officer stated that June 2026 receipts were approximately \$235,000 compared with a June high of \$359,000 in 2023. Through June approximately \$1,614,000 had been collected in 2026 compared with approximately \$1,647,000 in 2025.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT: Berger reported that the Finance Committee met June 11th and would meet again Thursday, July 23rd at 9:00 a.m. The Mayor asked about discussion in the committee minutes concerning the Chagrin Valley Dispatch contract and whether an upcoming discussion should be handled by the Safety Committee or Finance Committee. Bell stated that as the Village's representative to the Chagrin Valley Fire Department, he had invited department representatives to attend the August 17th Council meeting so all Council members could hear the same information and ask questions. Suggested topics included call activity for the first six months, the department's financial condition, planned capital expenditure, and other relevant updates. The Mayor stated he would cancel his separate breakfast meeting he had scheduled with the Fire Chief.

SOLICITOR REPORT: Solicitor Matheney reported that she had nothing to report. Council had no questions.

ENGINEER REPORT: The Engineer deferred the recommendation regarding the 2026 Road Program to the Streets Committee portion of the meeting. He then discussed a possible Bell Road West "road diet." Under the concept, the centerline would remain in place while the edge lines would be moved inward, reducing travel lanes from approximately eleven feet to ten feet and increasing each paved shoulder from approximately four feet to five feet. He explained that narrower appearing lanes can calm traffic and provide additional space for pedestrians while still accommodating large vehicles. He believed the work could be included as an alternate in the Village's annual striping program and remain within the approximately \$25,000 budgeted amount.

The Engineer reported that about eighty percent of survey data collection had been completed for the Hazelwood storm sewer and pavement replacement project. Survey crews could not open or access several small inlet basins, primarily on the north side of Hazelwood. He requested Village assistance opening the basins so elevations, pipe sizes, and connections could be accurately documented and included in the design.

The Engineer also requested permission to obtain access to private property near Hazelwood and Fairview. At 134 Fairview, surveyors needed to inspect the pond and possible outlet structure, but vegetation and the lack of private-property authorization prevented access. He requested limited clearing sufficient for survey equipment. He also requested temporary access to 137 Fairview, 139 Hazelwood, and 600 Hemlock to investigate existing drainage facilities. He stated that a permanent storm-sewer easement along the northern property boundary of 137 Fairview might later be useful, depending on the final design. Council and the Mayor agreed that Village representatives would contact the property owners that week, using the Village's existing temporary work agreement, and the Engineer offered to participate in site visits if needed.

The Engineer described Hazelwood's existing drainage system as a combination of enclosed ditches, different pipe sizes, and different materials installed over many decades. The design team

was evaluating utilities and infrastructure to determine the best alignment for a new, properly sized storm sewer that would allow property connections and reduce flooding and overland flow.

The Engineer reported on a meeting with the County Engineer's Office regarding MRF funding for Bell Road East. The original request was \$40,245 based on the amount believed to be available, but County officials advised that approximately \$72,000 to \$73,000 may be available and that the Village was not necessarily limited to its accumulated amount. County officials said they would counter-offer rather than reject a larger request outright. The Engineer recommended requesting \$100,000. He also reported that the County may consider funding roads not traditionally designated as connector roads if the Village can present a strong justification.

Berger made a motion that Council authorize the Engineer to submit a proposal to the County Commissioners for release of funds in the amount of \$100,000 related to the MRF program for Bell Road East, seconded by Bell. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

The Engineer had no update regarding Sugarbush. The Street Commissioner stated that he had recently spoken with the contractor, who was still attempting to move the project forward.

STREET COMMISSIONER REPORT: The Street Commissioner reported that Village crews resumed work at Maple Hill after completing major work on the bocce court. The department was waiting for hard-surface material for the court and expected to complete final grading and seeding after the material was installed. Crews planned to begin removing grates and cleaning the Hemlock drainage system the following week. Work had also begun on the red brick garage columns.

The Street Commissioner had inspected the Rarick Cemetery and observed a low area in the middle that may create drainage concerns. He planned to discuss the matter further with the responsible parties before offering a recommendation.

Regarding the bocce court, four tons of surface material were expected to be ordered. Most fill had been placed, but final grading remained necessary to create accessible slopes. A picnic table would be placed near the court. He was hoping the court would be available for the Fall Festival.

Council discussed a concrete pad and driveway extension outside the new salt structure. The Street Commissioner received two quotes, with the lower quote being approximately \$68,000, and he was waiting for a third. He explained that the existing asphalt driveway was already failing under construction traffic and would be further damaged by heavy salt trucks, particularly from turning movements. The proposed work would replace the driveway section between the service garage and old salt building with approximately eight-inch concrete. Because the contractor was already mobilized, completing the work during the current project could reduce costs. Council also discussed drainage from the new structure toward the driveway and the need to monitor the interface between asphalt and concrete.

The Mayor requested that the bocce court volunteers attend a congratulatory photograph at the court on Tuesday, September 8th at 6:30 p.m.

STREET COMMITTEE REPORT: Bell reported that the Street Committee met on July 16th. The Village received no bids for the swap-loader truck. An unsolicited email proposal from a dealership could not be accepted. The committee recommended proceeding through Sourcewell pricing. The Street Commissioner would determine whether a 2027 truck could be obtained for the same price as a 2026 model; if so, the Village would pursue the 2027 vehicle and otherwise would proceed with the 2026 model. The next Street Committee meeting was scheduled for August 6th at 5:30 p.m., followed by Public Utilities at 6:30 p.m.

Bell made a motion to recommend awarding the 2026 Road Program contract to Specialized Construction in the amount of \$274,766.10, seconded by Rensel. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

The contract will pave Waverly Lane, address Bell Road East driveway aprons for owners replacing culvert pipes in preparation for the 2027 Bell Road project, and may permit additional repairs if funds remain.

Bell made a motion to accept the recommendation from NOACA and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to move the trail project to state fiscal year 2029 if we choose to move forward, seconded by Rensel. Roll call. Ayes - Rensel, Bell, Berger, Cavanagh, and Porter. Nay-Canton. Motion carried.

The Mayor communicated that at a June 24th meeting it was stated funding could be reassigned if the Village did not proceed. The state fiscal year 2029 schedule would run from July 1, 2028, through June 30, 2029, and would provide additional time if the Village elected to continue the project.

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT: The Building Committee met July 13th. The committee discussed appointing an alternate member to the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and noted that the Solicitor had prepared the necessary legislation. Cavanagh commended Building Department and other administrative staff for the substantial work required to load information into the GovWell system.

The committee identified updating the zoning code with a solar checklist and reviewing Building Department fees as priorities. Cavanagh explained that current fees may not cover the cost of repeat inspections when work does not initially comply with code.

The Street Commissioner reported that the salt structure was complete and interior concrete was scheduled to be poured that week, followed by exterior concrete. Previously identified construction concerns had been corrected. Permanent structural cross-bracing required by the Engineer would eliminate one bay on each side, but the affected areas could still be used for storage.

The committee also discussed two Bell Road properties that had not responded to repeated zoning enforcement contacts. The Mayor stated that prior court actions had not succeeded and recommended gathering written complaints from residents who considered the conditions an eyesore or nuisance.

The next Building Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12th, at 8:00 a.m.; the previously scheduled July 29th meeting was canceled.

The Mayor announced a potluck luncheon for departing Building Department employee Ruth Griswold on Friday at noon.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT: Chief Rizzo submitted his month-end report and highlighted crash statistics. Geauga County recorded 771 crashes during the first six months of 2026, while South Russell recorded eight. South Russell's current share was approximately 1.04 percent, and its five-year average was approximately 1.2 percent of all Geauga County crashes. The Chief stated that he was proud of the Village's safety record.

SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT: Canton asked the Chief to summarize the recent police officer interview. Chief Rizzo reported that the Village has been attempting to fill two full-time positions since January and interviewed a strong candidate who was also on other eligibility lists. The candidate has accepted a conditional offer. The Mayor initially stated that he preferred to wait until all testing was complete, but the Solicitor explained that the Mayor could appoint the candidate subject to successful completion of pre-employment requirements and Council could confirm the conditional appointment.

The Mayor indicated he would like to appoint Matthew Politzer to the open full-time patrol officer position effective upon successful completion of pre-employment requirements.

Canton made a motion that Council vote and approve the hiring of Matthew L. Politzer as a member of the South Russell Police Department effective upon the successful completion of pre-employment requirements, seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT: Berger advised that the Human Resources Committee met the morning of July 20th and scheduled its next meeting for August 17th at 8:00 a.m.

Bell stated that remarks made by the Mayor at the prior Council meeting had caused concern among Village employees. He was requested to read a letter received from the Police Chief and Fiscal Officer into the record:

Dear Elected Officials,

We are compelled to respond to a recent characterization of our workforce as employees who, "sit in air-conditioned offices, seldom get dirty, seldom face danger, sit in a nice chair, and work standard hours." The description is not only inaccurate, but it is also deeply disappointing, disrespectful, and offensive to the employees who dedicate themselves every day to serving the Village.

The statement minimizes the realities of our work, dismisses the challenges we face, and creates an unnecessary divide between departments. Being oblivious

to the fact that many of us routinely work beyond standard hours, respond to emergencies and unexpected situations, and carry responsibilities that extend far beyond simply sitting at a desk is deeply troubling. Even when our work takes place in an office environment, it requires constant attention, problem-solving accountability, and the ability to handle stressful situations that directly affect the organization and the residents we serve.

The suggestion that our jobs are easy because we may work indoors or have access to basic workplace comforts is both disrespectful and insulting. The value of an employee's contribution should not be measured by whether they sit in a chair, work in a climate-controlled environment, or return home with dirt on their clothes. The members of this organization contribute in meaningful ways that are essential to the success of the Village.

What is most troubling is the divisive nature of these remarks. No one has ever indicated that the Service Department labor force is inferior in any way. Rather than recognizing the unique challenges faced by different departments, the statement appears to pit one segment of the workforce against another.

Every employee has different responsibilities, pressures, and demands, and all deserve to be treated with respect and appreciation. The comments also raise a broader concern regarding the apparent lack of recognition for the contributions made by the majority of the workforce. While the mayor gives considerable attention and acknowledgement to the Service Department, the efforts of many other employees appear to be overlooked or minimized.

The success of the Village is not the result of one department alone. It is achieved through the collective efforts of employees across all departments who work diligently, often behind the scenes, to ensure operations run effectively and efficiently. When leadership repeatedly highlights and rewards one group while characterizing others as employees who merely sit comfortably in offices, it creates the perception that some contributions are valued more than others.

Whether intentional or not, this perception damages morale, fosters resentment, and undermines the sense of teamwork that is essential to a healthy work environment. We believe employees should be able to expect constructive and respectful dialogue from leadership, not comments that diminish their work or question their commitment. Statements such as these damage morale, undermine trust, and foster resentment among employees who work hard every day to fulfill their duties.

To make such inaccurate and offensive comments in order to make a case for administrative assistance for a particular employee should never have been pitched in such a way. We implore you to do your homework and seek the true facts in this case. We firmly believe the manner in which this topic was introduced was to conceal what is truly happening behind the curtain.

We respectfully request that the contributions of all employees be acknowledged fairly and accurately. Regardless of job title, work location, or working conditions, every member of this organization deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and professionalism. Additionally, we believe an apology is warranted.

To make such a statement about your workforce in a public meeting was highly inappropriate. Employees deserve acknowledgment that these comments were inappropriate, dismissive, and harmful to workplace morale. A sincere apology, coupled with a commitment to recognize and respect the contributions of all employees equally, would be an important step towards restoring trust and reinforcing the principle that every employee's work is valued.

Respectfully, Chief Michael Rizzo, Fiscal Officer Daniel Romanowski.

Canton stated that he had viewed the prior meeting while out of state and believed the Mayor's remarks had offended employees. He offered the Mayor an opportunity to modify the remarks and apologize. The Mayor responded as follows:

My initial statement was that I was looking for a win-win situation where the people who work mostly physical or the people who work mostly mental are treated equally. I do not intend to offend. I intended to have a win-win situation. I planned my remarks. I wrote them down. I rehearsed them because I felt they were coming from the heart. There was no intention to hurt anyone's feelings. I think the female employees, you know, just talk about, let's talk about the female employees, you know. In April, I provided each one of them with a hanging plant to say thank you for your work. For the fire department, for the police department, I've been heavily involved and honor our first responders. So I don't think there has been any intent.

In fact, I think I've demonstrated the ability to appreciate what they do. And I've tried to be fair to everybody. Do I sometimes slip? I'm sure I do. I have no intention to hurt anybody's feelings, to insult anybody. Maybe my methods weren't the best, but I felt I was trying to do what was best for the Village, which is the only thing I really do, is to do what's best for the Village. If I tripped up at this time, I did, and I'm sorry.

But I had no malice, no intention to hurt anyone. And I said I've had a demonstration of appreciation for the first responders and for what used to be back in the day, Secretary's Day, to make sure those people are recognized. So I've tried to demonstrate to do what is best.

Maybe I slipped up on this time, but there was no malice, no intent to hurt anyone's feelings. I've been with some of these people for over 20 years, so I think they know what I believe in and what I want to do for the Village. Okay.

Berger then read the Human Resources Committee's statement into the record:

In response to comments made by the Mayor on June 15, 2026, addressing the Village employees, we state for the record:

1. This committee categorically rejects the Mayor's statements addressing the police and administrative departments as being "desk jobs," in "air conditioning" and implying that the level of effort required of these employees is less than that of others.
2. This committee finds the Mayor's statements to be divisive and disrespectful to all Village employees and contrary to promoting the good order of the Village and accomplishing its goals.
3. The committee finds that in a subsequent meeting with some but not all employees, the Mayor attempted to explain his comments but did not apologize for them. This committee calls on the Mayor in the strongest possible terms to issue an immediate apology to ALL employees for such statements.
4. This committee acknowledges the value of all Village employees and offers each and every one the firm, resolute support of all the committee members in the performance of their respective and respected jobs.

Respectfully submitted, Christopher J. Berger.

Bell stated that referring to female employees as "the ladies" and giving them flowers because they are women could be considered sexist. Additional discussion followed regarding the absence of an apology during the Mayor's earlier meeting with staff. The Mayor reiterated that he had not intended harm and ultimately stated that he would provide a written apology to every employee the following day.

Berger distributed a proposed Resolution 24-6, making a motion to create and adopt an employee recognition policy, and to set aside a date to be determined with funds authorized so that we might gather together with all of our employees in celebration of their work; and in addition to recognize any employees who have retired in the previous year, or any elected officials who have retired or left office. Seconded by Rensel. Porter recommended deleting the words, "as required" from the policy. **Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.**

Council discussed consolidating separate employee recognition events into one annual gathering at a restaurant so employees would not be required to work during their own recognition event. The event would also recognize employees or elected officials who had retired or left office during the prior year.

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE REPORT: The Properties Committee met July 13th. Cavanagh stated that seasonal decorating should be planned earlier and implemented according to a set schedule so the Village would not be arranging patriotic or holiday decorations at the last minute. She suggested beginning Christmas planning in September or October.

She further reported that the Planning Commission was scheduled to meet July 23rd to continue a hearing that had been tabled regarding cosmetic and lighting changes at the gas station.

The next Properties Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 10th at 9:00 a.m.

Council discussed an L-shaped mound of surplus topsoil near the salt structure. The Street Commissioner explained that it was graded to drain toward the creek and that an existing French drain and yard drain also serve the area. The mound would buffer vehicle headlights from nearby properties and would eventually be seeded and landscaped with trees or other plantings while remaining mowable.

The committee also discussed downed trees in Rarick Cemetery. A survey was considered necessary to confirm property boundaries before cleanup. Cavanagh requested that the survey be completed as soon as possible and before seasonal weather delayed the work.

The Mayor asked Council to consider the proposed 1776 dinner on August 21st. The concept contemplated a catered dinner at the pavilion for a minimum of twenty-five and maximum of forty participants. Council questioned the anticipated cost, public participation, and staff effort. After discussion, the Mayor withdrew the proposal and stated the dinner would not proceed.

PARK COMMITTEE: Cavanagh reported that the Parks Committee needed to meet and that arrangements for the Fall Festival were progressing. She planned to confirm whether Ted Kruse would again provide apple cider activities and stated that an alternate source was available if necessary.

A resident's daughter pursuing a doctorate in biology had advised that beech trees in the park were affected by nematodes and that no cure was available. Cavanagh suggested consulting Holden Arboretum or another specialist and noted that deer browsing prevents replacement saplings from developing as the canopy declines.

Cavanagh was scheduled to meet with Kelly Ballou regarding a Monarch butterfly release in connection with the Village's bike event and ice cream activity on August 22nd. She also reported that private funding may be available for toddler playground equipment for children approximately two and three years old. A potential area had been identified with the Street Commissioner, and equipment options were being investigated.

Cavanagh stated that there had been little enthusiasm at the Properties Committee meeting for a separate September 11th remembrance because the schools already address the anniversary extensively. She suggested the Mayor explore a joint event with other communities. She also reported that some park plantings were dry and needed deadheading and that volunteers had worked on them that day.

Council complimented the Parks Committee and Mayor for the recent band performance in the park.

Cavanagh made a motion to hold the ice cream bike ride and butterfly release on Saturday, August 22nd, time to be determined, seconded by Rensel. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT: Porter reported that the Public Utilities Committee did not meet in July. Two committee members, the Street Commissioner, and citizen representative Todd Kruse attended a Russell Township Trustees meeting to request reimbursement of approximately one-half of the Hemlock Culvert Replacement project cost, slightly more than \$31,000. The Street Commissioner provided project details to the Trustees. Russell Township planned to determine the appropriate funding source and respond. The committee will follow up in approximately one month.

The next Public Utilities Committee meeting was scheduled for August 6th at 6:30 p.m. at the Service Department office.

SAFE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORT COMMITTEE REPORT: Bell reported that the committee met July 10th. The committee consists of three Council members and two voting public members, and meetings are open to the public. The next meeting was scheduled for Friday, August 7th, at 7:30 a.m. at Village Hall.

The committee discussed the proposed path and preferred additional time to investigate alternative funding, develop the project more fully, and conduct public education before proceeding. The committee recommended that the levy not be placed on the ballot in 2026, while acknowledging that the final decision belonged to Council.

ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE: Berger reported that the committee met July 20th and would meet again on August 17th at 7:00 a.m. The committee had developed an event form intended to organize Village events. **Berger made a motion to approve the use of the event form in the Village in scheduling events.** The Mayor stated that his event proposal form contained additional information and suggested that the committee's form be revised. Berger agreed to **table** the motion pending review of the Mayor's comments.

Council discussed dates offered for a facilitated Council retreat but did not select an August date, preferring to consider a later date in the fall.

The committee discussed continuing technology service concerns involving Geauga ADP. Berger invited ADP's leader to the next committee meeting, and the invitation was accepted. Work continued with a designer on a revised Village website, with assistance from the Police Chief, Fiscal Officer, and Phyllis Marino. The committee was also investigating digitization of large Building Department drawings stored in the attic, potentially with student assistance through a school program.

Because the Village's long-time cleaner was retiring, the committee interviewed vendors and recommended proceeding with a cleaning service agreement.

Council discussed recent internet and cellular coverage problems. Chief Rizzo stated that the Police Department's AT&T mobile connections were functioning well and that Verizon appeared to have more significant gaps, particularly in low-lying areas. He obtained contact information for a Verizon representative and agreed to request assistance. Berger stated that increased customer complaints can influence carriers to consider additional infrastructure and encouraged residents to report service problems directly to their providers.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Berger made a motion to untable the ordinance declaring it necessary to levy a tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation for the Bell Road path project, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Berger provided a third reading of an ordinance declaring it necessary to levy a tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation and declaring an emergency. The motion to adopt received no second and therefore failed.

Cavanagh introduced an ordinance approving the contract between Ohio Mobile Gaming Corp. and the Village of South Russell for rental equipment consisting of an inflatable bouncer, and slide for the 2026 Fall Festival in an amount not to exceed \$1,013.86, authorizing the Mayor to execute the contract, and declaring an emergency. Cavanagh made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Cavanagh made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-48**

Cavanagh introduced an ordinance approving the contract between A-1 Mr. Limo Inc. and the Village of South Russell for trolley shuttle services for the 2026 Fall Festival in an amount not to exceed \$725.40, authorizing the Mayor to execute the contract, and declaring an emergency. Cavanagh made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Cavanagh made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-49**

Cavanagh introduced an ordinance approving the contract between Flower Entertainment, Inc. and the Village of South Russell for various services for the 2026 Fall Festival in an amount not to exceed \$4,350.00, authorizing the Mayor to execute the contract, and declaring an emergency. Cavanagh made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Cavanagh made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-50**

Canton introduced an ordinance amending Section 478.03(b) of the Codified Ordinances of the Village of South Russell to remove Bell Road as one of the roads upon which golf carts are prohibited in the Village and declaring an emergency. Canton made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, Rensel and Berger. Naves, Bell, Canton, Cavanagh. Motion failed. Ordinance will move to second reading at the next Council meeting.

Cavanagh introduced a resolution authorizing the sale of personal property not needed by the Village and declaring an emergency. Cavanagh made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Cavanagh made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **RES 2026-51**

Berger introduced an ordinance amending the 2026 Annual Appropriations increasing General Fund expenses \$20,000 and declaring an emergency. Berger made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Berger made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-52**

Porter introduced an ordinance amending the Certificate of Estimated Resources increasing General Fund revenue \$20,000 from a NOPEC NEC grant and declaring an emergency. Porter made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Porter made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-53**

Cavanagh introduced an ordinance approving the Service Agreement between the Village of South Russell and Coverall North America, Inc. d/b/a Coverall for cleaning services for the Village buildings in an amount not to exceed \$8,500, authorizing the Fiscal Officer to execute the agreement on behalf of the Village and declaring an emergency. Cavanagh made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Cavanagh made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-54**

Cavanagh introduced an ordinance amending Section 264.01 of the Village of South Russell's Codified Ordinances and declaring an emergency. Cavanagh made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. Cavanagh made a motion to adopt, seconded by Porter. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-55**

Bell introduced an ordinance approving the project grant/loan agreement with the Ohio Public Works Commission State Capital Improvements Program for a grant in the amount of \$300,000 and a loan in the amount of 50,000 to the Village of South Russell for the Hazelwood Storm and Pavement Project, authorizing the Mayor to execute the agreement, authorizing the Fiscal Officer to execute the promissory note, and declaring an emergency. Bell made a motion to waive readings, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Bell made a motion to adopt, seconded by Berger. Roll call – ayes, all. Motion carried. **ORD 2026-56**

PAYMENTS REGISTER:

Berger made a motion to ratify the June 30, 2026, payment register in the amount of \$21,931.34, the July 10, 2026, payment register in the amount of \$144,844.08, the July 14, 2026, payment register in the amount of \$400.00, and to approve the July 20, 2026, payment register in the amount of \$65,475.14, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

Cavanagh made a motion to appoint James Haas as an alternate member of the Architectural Board of Review, seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

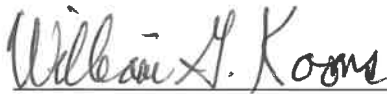
NEW & OTHER BUSINESS:

Rensel advised that she would be absent from the October 19th Council meeting. Council confirmed that the September meeting had previously been moved from Labor Day, September 7th, to Tuesday, September 8th.

Berger made a motion to approve Council Member Rensel's absence from the October 19th Council meeting, seconded by Cavanagh. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

Being that there was no further business before Council, Bell made a motion to adjourn at 9:10 p.m., seconded by Porter. Voice vote – ayes, all. Motion carried.



William G. Koons, Mayor



Danielle Romanowski, Fiscal Officer

Prepared by: Leslie Galicki