

Administration and Technology Committee Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2026, 8:00 a.m. Village Hall

The Administration and Technology Committee meeting was called to order with Councilman Bell, the Fiscal Officer, and the Chief present. Phyllis Marino was also welcomed to the meeting as a guest. It was noted that Councilman Mark Rensel, who is assigned to the committee, had notified the chair that he would be out of town and unable to attend.

The committee began by reviewing the agenda and briefly discussing an insurance matter that had been placed on the agenda due to a claim that had been filed. Members indicated that there had been no updates or additional information since the claim was submitted. As a result, the committee agreed to leave the matter on hold until further information is received.

The next discussion centered on document retention and transparency requirements related to council meeting recordings and minutes. At the previous council meeting, concerns had been raised about how meeting recordings and draft documents are retained. The Fiscal Officer explained that under the Village's records management practices, draft minutes remain in draft form until they are officially approved by council. Once approved, the official minutes become the permanent record of the meeting and must be retained indefinitely. The recordings, however, are treated differently.

The committee clarified that the original audio recordings of meetings are considered public records and must be retained for two years. However, the various working documents created during the process of producing the final minutes—including transcripts, drafts, and editing versions generated through transcription software—are considered temporary records. Once the final minutes are adopted by council, those intermediate documents are considered “no longer administratively necessary” and may be disposed of according to records retention guidelines. The committee agreed that the written transparency document should be revised to clearly reflect that only the original recordings must be retained for two years while the final approved minutes are permanent records.

Related to this topic, the committee discussed procedures for situations in which the YouTube livestream of a council meeting fails or is disrupted. Members noted that although the Village records meetings and posts them online, technology failures occasionally occur. The committee discussed the importance of providing public notice if such a disruption occurs so that residents understand the reason a video recording may not be available. Members suggested that if a recording fails, a notice should be posted promptly—ideally the following day—explaining what occurred. The notice could be placed on the Village website and potentially shared through other communication channels. For example, if the livestream stopped partway through a meeting, the notice could explain when the failure occurred and whether audio recording or written minutes would still be available.

The committee briefly discussed the number of residents who typically view council meetings online. Members reported that live viewership usually ranges from two to five viewers, though it can increase to around eight when particularly controversial or high-interest topics are on the agenda. Most viewing occurs after the meeting, with recordings typically receiving between 35

and 45 views over time. Members noted that meetings involving the fire department tend to attract higher viewership.

The discussion then shifted to improving communication with residents. The committee reviewed a sample communication document from the City of Pepper Pike and discussed how a similar approach might be used for South Russell. The original idea had been to mail a detailed information packet to new residents that included information about utilities, local services, and community resources. However, as staff began assembling the materials, it became clear that the packet would become quite lengthy and difficult to maintain as information changes.

The committee discussed utilizing a dedicated “New Resident” page on the Village website containing comprehensive information. A short welcome letter from the Mayor and Council could then be mailed to new residents directing them to that page. This would allow the Village to keep the information updated online without having to continually reprint and distribute large packets. The proposed website page would include information about utilities, waste collection, pavilion rentals, schools, building registration requirements, and services provided by the Village departments.

The committee also discussed including information about the **TextMyGov** communication system in the welcome materials. Residents can sign up for TextMyGov to receive alerts and notifications from the Village. The Chief explained that the Village has achieved approximately 92 percent coverage of residents through the system by compiling phone numbers and addresses from several sources, including post office data and resident submissions. The Village can use geofencing technology within TextMyGov to send targeted notifications to specific neighborhoods or streets. For example, the system has been used to notify residents in specific areas about road closures, downed power lines, or other localized issues.

The Chief explained that the system allows the Village to upload resident data once per year to match phone numbers with addresses. During the past year, staff gathered approximately 400 additional records to improve the accuracy of the system. Going forward, the Village will track property transfers throughout the year so that updates can be incorporated during the next annual upload. Residents can still sign up on their own at any time for general messages, but geofencing capabilities require the address-linked database.

The committee discussed how communication methods have evolved and whether the traditional printed newsletter remains effective. Members suggested that many residents no longer read lengthy newsletters and instead prefer shorter, more frequent updates delivered digitally. The committee expressed interest in using TextMyGov and the Village website to distribute smaller pieces of information more frequently rather than relying on a large periodic newsletter.

This discussion led to a review of the current Village website. Members noted that the website’s homepage currently displays a large image that requires users to scroll down before finding important information. The committee discussed redesigning the homepage to make it easier for residents to quickly access current information and important links. One concept discussed was simplifying the layout so that major announcements and current updates appear prominently on

the front page, with links directing users to additional pages for calendars, videos, or detailed information.

The Chief estimated that a redesign of the homepage by the Village's website vendor might cost between \$500 and \$1,000. The committee agreed that obtaining an estimate from the vendor would be appropriate before presenting the proposal to Council. Members also discussed upcoming accessibility requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act. By April 2027, smaller municipalities such as South Russell must ensure their websites meet ADA accessibility standards. These standards include features that assist users who may have visual or hearing impairments by providing descriptive text, metadata, and other accessibility tools.

Members discussed possible tools to assist with compliance, including accessibility software that scans websites for issues and produces reports identifying pages that may not meet standards. The committee agreed that the website vendor should be asked about their capability to ensure ADA compliance as part of any redesign.

Another website enhancement discussed was the addition of analytics tools to track how many visitors access the website. Members suggested that adding a simple visitor counter or integrating Google Analytics could provide useful data about how residents use the website and which pages receive the most traffic.

The committee then returned to the new resident communication initiative. Staff had begun preparing draft materials but asked the committee whether it preferred a simple welcome letter directing residents to the website or a larger printed packet of information. Some members expressed the view that a packet containing key information might still be helpful to new residents who are learning about Village services. Others noted that printed materials can quickly become outdated. The committee agreed that staff should continue developing the concept of a welcome letter and bring back a more refined draft for review.

Next, the committee addressed conflict-of-interest disclosures for elected officials. Members had previously submitted forms identifying organizations with which they are affiliated. The committee discussed how those disclosures should be used going forward. It was suggested that council members should have access to a list of each official's potential conflicts so they can recognize situations where a member may need to recuse themselves from a discussion or vote.

The committee discussed examples of potential conflicts, such as serving on the executive board of an outside organization that conducts business with the Village. Members agreed that holding a general membership in a civic organization would not necessarily constitute a conflict, but serving in a leadership role could require recusal if the organization were involved in Village matters.

The committee also discussed the possibility of developing a formal code of ethics for elected officials. A sample code used by the City of Green Bay and later adapted by Hunting Valley had been circulated for review. Members agreed that although council generally works cooperatively, having a written code outlining expectations for ethical conduct could still be beneficial. The topic will remain on the committee's agenda for further review.

The committee then discussed the Village's cannabis moratorium. Council had recently voted to extend the moratorium for another year. However, members noted that a majority of voters had supported allowing cannabis businesses. As a result, the committee discussed whether the Village should at least examine how its zoning regulations would address such businesses if they were eventually permitted.

Members suggested that the Building Department committee should review existing zoning classifications and identify where commercial activities are currently permitted. This would allow council to better understand what options exist and what zoning restrictions might apply to a cannabis dispensary or similar business. Members also noted that state licensing limits and traffic considerations might make South Russell an unlikely location for such a facility, but the committee agreed it would be prudent to review the issue rather than simply postponing it indefinitely.

Another administrative topic involved assigning council liaisons to outside organizations that interact with the Village. The committee noted that council already designates representatives to organizations such as the Chagrin Valley Fire District but has not yet done so for Chagrin Valley Dispatch. Members agreed that a list should be created identifying all organizations where the Village has official representation so that council can determine whether formal appointments are appropriate.

Trash Day planning was also discussed. The annual Village Trash Day is scheduled for May 2. The committee had received a planning document prepared by the Service Department outlining procedures and responsibilities. Members agreed that the document provided a helpful starting point and would be refined by the Streets Committee.

One challenge discussed was how to enforce rules about materials that cannot be accepted, such as construction debris or certain hazardous materials. Because residents bring items directly to the drop-off site, it can be difficult to refuse materials after they have already been transported. Members suggested that clearer communication in advance could help address this issue. The Chief offered to create a dedicated webpage listing the "do's and don'ts" for Trash Day and then send a TextMyGov notification directing residents to that information a few days before the event.

The committee also discussed operational and safety considerations for Trash Day. The event involves heavy equipment such as loaders and requires volunteers and workers to handle large volumes of waste. Members emphasized the importance of using proper safety equipment and clarifying liability coverage for volunteers. They also discussed coordinating with neighboring communities that sometimes provide equipment or staff assistance. It was suggested that formal authorization should be confirmed when outside personnel or equipment are used.

The committee briefly revisited a separate issue related to the Village-wide yard sale, which typically occurs the week before Trash Day. Some homeowner associations within the Village prohibit yard sales, which can create confusion when the Village advertises a community-wide event. The committee agreed that staff should contact the Village of Chagrin Falls to better understand how their yard sale event is organized and promoted.

The meeting then moved into a discussion of technology services provided by ADP. Members noted that ADP employees have recently begun organizing a union, which could potentially affect service delivery or pricing in the future, although no immediate changes are expected. The Chief reported that when issues are escalated directly to ADP's leadership, they are typically resolved quickly. However, routine support requests submitted through the ticket system can sometimes involve delays or confusion.

Additional discussion focused on challenges associated with Microsoft cloud-based file sharing. While Microsoft Office applications themselves function well, staff have experienced difficulties with shared drives and document access within the cloud environment. Members described situations where moving a file or changing a location inadvertently caused other users to lose access. The Chief indicated that the Village previously used Google Drive without similar issues and expressed concern that the Microsoft platform may require adjustments to security settings or configuration. The committee agreed that a short summary of the problem should be prepared and forwarded to ADP's leadership so that the issue can be addressed.

Before concluding the meeting, the Chief requested council approval for the annual Cops and Kids Fishing Event, scheduled for May 31 at Lake Louise. The event has already been approved by the Lake Louise board, and the Chief asked that council approve the event at the next council meeting.

With no further business to discuss, the Administration and Technology Committee meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 a.m.