

Human Resources Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: July 20, 2026

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Location: Village Hall

Members Present: Chairman Berger, Council Member Rensel, Fiscal Officer Romanowski, Police Chief Rizzo

Absent: Council Member Bell

Call to Order

Chairman Berger called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Approval of Previous Minutes

The committee reviewed the minutes of the June 8, 2026, Human Resources Committee meeting. No corrections were offered, and the minutes were approved without objection.

Council Retreat Planning

The committee discussed scheduling the annual Council retreat. Several potential August dates remained under consideration, although member availability and facilitator scheduling had not yet been confirmed. Rensel agreed to contact the facilitator to determine which dates remained available before the Council meeting that evening. The committee noted that the retreat agenda would include:

- Solicitor's presentation
- Fiscal Officer presentation
- Guest speaker
- Vision planning for the Village

An update would be provided during the Council meeting so a date could be finalized.

Employee Relations and Workplace Morale

The committee devoted significant discussion to employee morale following comments made by the Mayor during the June Council meeting concerning the Street Department and other Village employees. Chairman Berger explained that the committee has responsibility for employee relations and therefore considered the matter within its jurisdiction. The Fiscal Officer described a subsequent meeting the Mayor held with employees, explaining that employees did not view the meeting as an apology and that the Mayor later confirmed it had never been intended as one.

The Chief and Fiscal Officer stated they had jointly prepared a letter expressing their disappointment regarding the Mayor's comments, which was scheduled to be read into the Council record that evening. They emphasized the importance of demonstrating support for Village employees and department heads and further explained that internal morale within their respective departments remains strong because employees continue to work well together and remain committed to serving the Village. Their primary concern centered on deteriorating communication with the Mayor, repeated circumvention of department leadership, favoritism among departments, and actions they believe have undermined cooperation between Village departments.

Specific examples were discussed, including:

- Employees throughout the Village viewing the Council meeting recording.
- The Mayor discouraged progress on the Administrative Technology Committee's basement office consolidation project by telling another employee the project would not occur despite Council's direction.
- Concerns that conflicting information from Village leadership creates confusion among employees and slows implementation of approved projects.

Rensel expressed appreciation for the work performed by Village employees and apologized for not responding more forcefully during the July Council meeting. She emphasized her support for all departments and acknowledged the professionalism demonstrated by staff despite recent events.

The committee discussed the importance of visibly supporting employees through Council statements and maintaining open communication with department heads. Berger also encouraged Council members to spend more time interacting informally with employees throughout Village departments, explaining that regular communication helps identify concerns before they become larger problems. The committee agreed that its report to Council should acknowledge the professionalism of Village employees, reaffirm support for department heads, and note that comments perceived as divisive or disrespectful do not reflect the committee's views.

Police Department Staffing

The Chief reported that interviews had been completed for a vacant full-time police officer position. A conditional verbal offer has been extended pending successful completion of background investigations, medical examinations, psychological testing, and other pre-employment requirements. Because the Police Department has operated with two full-time vacancies for approximately seven months, the Chief requested authority to move more quickly with the appointment rather than waiting until the August Council meeting. The committee discussed presenting a conditional appointment resolution during the July Council meeting that would authorize the Mayor to administer the oath of office immediately upon successful completion of all hiring requirements, allowing the new officer to begin training without delay.

The Chief also reported:

- One additional full-time vacancy remains.
- A highly qualified retired school resource officer is interested in part-time employment but is not seeking full-time work.
- Additional full-time applicants have recently begun applying, and further interviews are anticipated before the next committee meeting.

The committee reviewed the successful partnership with Chagrin Falls Schools that provides a School Resource Officer during the school year while making the officer available to assist the Village during summer months. The Chief reported the arrangement continues to work well by helping cover vacations and staffing shortages.

Despite current vacancies, scheduling adjustments and supervisory coverage have enabled the department to maintain operations while recruitment continues.

The Fiscal Officer also reported that the newly hired Building Department administrative assistant has integrated well, is learning quickly, and is expected to help streamline operations.

Safety Officer Position and Job Descriptions

The committee continued discussions regarding the Safety Compliance Officer position.

The Fiscal Officer reported that updated Position Analysis Questionnaire (PAQ) information had been incorporated into revised job descriptions, which would be reviewed before distribution to the committee.

The Chief and committee members agreed that assigning safety responsibilities to a properly trained employee would provide a more effective solution than previous alternatives. Responsibilities would include:

- OSHA compliance
- Safety inspections

- Accident investigations
- Road work safety oversight
- Employee safety training
- Authority to immediately stop unsafe work practices
- Required safety reporting

The committee agreed the individual selected for this responsibility must receive formal training and have full authority to halt unsafe operations whenever necessary. Members further agreed that once implemented, all Village employees should receive an explanation of the Safety Compliance Officer's authority and responsibilities during an all-employee meeting to ensure consistent understanding throughout the organization. The committee also discussed obtaining additional certification allowing the Safety Officer to serve as a backup Designated Employer Representative for Department of Transportation drug testing requirements.

Employee Recognition Policy

The committee reviewed a draft Employee Recognition Policy (Motion 24-6).

Discussion focused on creating a consistent policy that treats all employees equally while eliminating perceptions of favoritism.

Several revisions were agreed upon:

- Remove multiple recognition dates in favor of one annual employee appreciation event.
- Include retirement recognitions as part of the annual event rather than holding separate Village-sponsored retirement celebrations.
- Ensure all employees are treated consistently regardless of department.
- Consider holding the event at an off-site venue so Village employees are not responsible for setup and cleanup.
- Continue allowing individual departments to celebrate retirements privately on their own time if they choose.

The committee agreed that recognition programs should be fair, consistent, and inclusive of all Village employees.

Janitorial Services Contract

The Fiscal Officer reported that negotiations with Anago Cleaning Services ended after the company's representative unexpectedly resigned, resulting in poor communication and delays. Following additional review, staff recommended moving forward with Coverall Cleaning Services. Coverall's pricing was slightly lower than Anago's, and the company demonstrated greater responsiveness. Contract documents had been prepared for Council consideration that evening. Background checks will be completed for personnel assigned to clean secure Police Department areas before work begins.

Police and Fire Retirement Fund

No updates were available regarding pending legislation affecting the Police and Fire Retirement Fund.

Safety Boot Reimbursement Policy

The Fiscal Officer requested clarification regarding the Village's boot reimbursement policy.

She explained that:

- The handbook currently allows up to \$500 annually for footwear reimbursement, divided into two \$250 periods.
- Another section of the handbook requires certain employees to wear safety footwear at all times.
- A reimbursement request raised questions because multiple pairs of non-steel-toe shoes had been purchased before steel-toe boots were later submitted for reimbursement.

The committee discussed whether employees whose positions require safety footwear should always wear approved safety boots or whether exceptions should exist depending on assigned duties. Rather than making an immediate policy change, the committee agreed to revisit the issue after the Safety Compliance Officer position is established. Members also suggested obtaining comparable policies from neighboring municipalities before revising Village policy to ensure consistency and best practices.

Action Items

- Confirm Council retreat facilitator availability and finalize the August retreat date.
 - Read the department heads' employee support letter into the Council record.
 - Include a Human Resources Committee statement affirming support for all Village employees and department heads.
 - Present a conditional appointment resolution for the Police Department's new full-time officer.
 - Continue recruitment for remaining police vacancies.
 - Complete review and distribution of revised job descriptions.
 - Begin identifying training opportunities for the future Safety Compliance Officer.
 - Schedule an all-employee meeting after the safety program is finalized.
 - Revise the Employee Recognition Policy to establish one consistent annual appreciation event that includes retiree recognition.
 - Present the Coverall cleaning contract for Council approval.
 - Research neighboring municipalities' safety footwear policies before revising the Village handbook.
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Adjournment

With no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:57 a.m.