

Village of Gates Mills
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL
April 21, 2026

A regular meeting of the Council of the Village of Gates Mills, Ohio was held at the Village Town Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. with Mayor Siemborski presiding. The meeting was live-streamed to the internet.

1. Roll Call starts at 0:55

Councilmembers present: Broome, Greco, Onysko, Perez, Turner, Young.

Other Village officials present were Treasurer Spear, Clerk DeCapite, Service Director Biggert, Police Chief Minichello, Fire Chief Majeski, Fire Captain Feig, Finance Administrator Mulh, Village Engineer Courtney, and Law Director Hunt.

Councilmember Broome moved to excuse Councilmember Steinbrink, and Councilmember Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Greco, Onysko, Perez, Turner, Young.
Nays: None
Motion carried.

See 32:06 for the correction of opinion given on virtual attendance by the Law Director at the March 17 meeting.

2. Minutes of Regular Council Meeting of March 17, 2026 starts at 1:40

Councilmember Young moved to approve the March 17, 2026 minutes, and Councilmember Greco seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Greco, Onysko, Perez, Turner, Young.
Nays: None
Motion carried.

3. Pay Ordinance # 1308 \$651,854.93 starts at 2:02

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Pay Ordinance #1308, and Councilmember Perez seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Greco, Onysko, Perez, Turner, Young.
Nays: None
Motion carried.

4. Mayor's Report starts at 3:00

a. Rust Belt Riders presentation regarding food composting - starts at 4:00

Zoe Apisdorf, Residential Sales and Partnerships Manager at Rust Belt Riders (RBR), described the Municipal Composting Program handout in Council's packet, on the screen, and on the village website.

Questions and comments start at 14:18:

Broome - If someone wants to buy the soil, what is the cost?

RBR - \$15 for a small bag. \$30 for a large bag (1 cu. ft.). \$380 per yard, depending on the product type.

Perez - Would we start with 2 bins in a corral?

RBR - We start with 3 in the corral in order to be ahead of volume based on enrollees.

Greco - How are the current enrollees getting their product to you?

RBR - They are dropping off at our community drop-off sites. The closest to GM are the Mayfield Village Civic Center/Heinen's at Wilson Mills and SOM Center and Lowe's Greenhouse and Garden Center in Bainbridge.

Perez - Food scraps diverted would be reported to the County as organic waste recycling? Biggert - Yes.

Young - Since there is a drop-off facility at Wilson Mills and SOM, do you expect having one closer to be the driving factor in participation or is it merely an education process. RBR - It's both.

Broome - Are buckets and compostable bags options compatible with this system?

RBR - Yes, and we can educate a whole host of ways to handle foods scraps.

Siemborski - Should we send out a survey to see how many residents are interested in this? Current enrollees pay \$144 a year. At a cost of \$15,000 - \$20,000 annually to the village, a lot of participation would be necessary to make it justifiable from the village standpoint as opposed to individual participation.

Greco - Does the survey mention the cost to the village?

Turner - No.

Greco and Young - We need to tell residents how much the service costs.

Turner - We have to nail down exactly what the cost would be as there are variable items in the proposal that impact the cost. Cost is going to be based on the survey response.

Young - We have a first-year estimate of about \$21,000 that includes startup costs of \$5,000. What do we expect the annual cost to the village in year two and on might be?

Turner - That depends on what the uptick is in the first year, and she believes the \$16,000 for the first year, excluding the startup cost, is high.

Siemborski - What do participation rates in other communities look like?

RBR - Shaker Heights started around 4% of their total population when they first opened up service for free for residents. It grew from 4% to 9% in 15 months.

Onysko - Do you anticipate an escape velocity where your product coming in is actually paid for by the sale of the soil?

RBR - We expect that when our soil sales reach a certain point, costs can begin to be offset, but not in total.

Onysko - How long does it take from the time something is put in the bin to the time it's soil? RBR - Three to six months.

Siemborski - The proposal states that if the volume is greater than what was expected, we would be charged more for more bins. There was not language in the opposite direction that said if the volume is less than expected, then we would be prorated or factored downward. Would you be agreeable to that?

RBR - That's very reasonable and something to bring back to our Director to discuss.

Young - Having heard it's critical to have a drop off at a place where people go regularly, do we have any place in the village that the villagers visit once a week?

Turner - We were considering the recycling area behind the Town Hall or the school parking lot.

Young - We are a geographically distributed community. Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights are geographically concentrated communities with shopping centers frequented on a weekly basis. He is not sure that model works for GM.

Perez - Have you talked to the school district about using the parking lot?

Turner - No.

Siemborski - The most frequented places are the library, post office, and pickleball courts. To use the school parking lot would require negotiating with the school district - another complication to something that doesn't need to be complicated.

At 28:11 the Mayor asked if Council wanted to survey the residents to see what the interest is. All Councilmembers agreed. Councilmember Turner indicated the survey is almost completed, and Councilmembers are encouraged to review it and comment. The May Pink Sheet will alert residents the survey is being mailed, as well as provide a code to scan to get into the survey.

Resident Jann Holzmann, one of several residents who brought the RBR idea to Council and an enrollee in the service, commented coffee grounds are not good for our septic systems. Composting is great for our sustainability in the environment and the reduction of methane gas. Composting in your own yard takes much longer than three months. RBR's Tilth soil is fantastic. Our residents would benefit from having a site here. Education should be a part of the project. It would be a great offering, especially with our anniversary year.

Resident Jennifer Pinto, another sponsor of and enrollee in RBR, finds, when you actually quantify, that it is amazing how much she and her family are diverting from the landfill into the bins.

The Mayor stated we'll go forward with the survey. Included will be a cost or range of cost.

At 32:06 Law Director Hunt apologized for the mistake made when he was asked for an opinion on Councilmember Greco's virtual attendance at the March 17 meeting. About 6-7 months ago, we amended our Code to permit virtual attendance with the right to vote by Councilmembers. The opinion given at last month's meeting

was that there was not the right to vote. Thankfully, it did not make a difference in any of the votes that evening.

b. Tree City USA Proclamation - starts at 33:19

Gates Mills has achieved the status of Tree City USA through the efforts of our Tree Canopy Committee. Along with this distinction comes a commitment to have an annual community Arbor Day observance and proclamation. This year's Arbor Day is on May 9 at 10:00 a.m. at Marston Park. The Gates Mills Land Conservancy will contribute an oak in memory of Tom Liederbach, one of the founding members of the Conservancy. The Gates Mills Garden Club will also contribute a tree in memory of longtime member Laurie Peterson. The Village will install and maintain the trees.

Councilmember Turner added this is our first formal Arbor Day. Nationally, Arbor Day is April 22. We can designate a different day each year if we want. This year we had an opportunity to celebrate and recognize these two individuals, and bring the Village, the Land Conservancy, and the Garden Club together.

The Mayor continued with more activity on May 8 and 9 - Cindy Halle, on her terrace in front of her store, is going to have well-known florist Charles Phillips present.

c. Walking Bridge renovation costs and report and funding submission - starts at 37:02

R.E. Warner has submitted cost estimates for the 32 findings in their structural assessment of our interurban walking bridge. The overarching finding is that the entire bridge should be scraped of rust, primed, and painted - at a hefty price. The remaining findings are all items that would need repair - those are less expensive, but still require someone to scrape, prime, and paint before repairing the problem. None of the findings are immediate safety issues. The report had a total cost, if you include the contingencies, of \$5,000,000. Roughly \$1,500,000 of the total is for design and construction contingencies - typical factors to add in on construction projects. In this case, we're doing a refurbishment/renovation project. There's probably little risk that something won't be designed or constructed properly, so we can probably discount those contingencies. In addition, the report specifies the repairs be done according to the standards that existed at the time or better. That may not be the standard that we want to follow. We don't need a train bridge. We need a pedestrian bridge.

Next step is to meet with R.E. Warner, the Village Engineer, the Service Director, and others to determine how to approach this. We now have the ability to contact the appropriate companies and provide them with detail of the items that need to be corrected within the next year or two, and see what the cost would be.

In December we submitted a community project application for funding through the state capital budget with assistance from State Representative Dan Troy, presenting the interurban bridge and the contiguous Arboretum as a \$995,000 community project of which \$595,000 was requested of the state.

By the deadline of April 24, we will apply to NOACA to be included on their list of 2027-2030 transportation improvement programs - primarily roadways, but it also includes other forms of alternative transportation like walkways.

At 44:21 Councilmember Broome asked if the largest portion of the scraping/priming/painting cost was containment. The Village Engineer agreed.

The Mayor indicated this project isn't going to happen this year. The best thing we can do at this point is get the costs firmed up, get the scope and the standard firmed up, and get our name into places that could be interested in supporting us.

d. 640 Chagrin River Road - starts at 46:39

Does Council wish to extend the building permit that expired April 20 to allow the owners an opportunity to continue to make improvements?

Recall last summer Council approved the Building Official to issue a nine-month building permit for exterior renovation work. In those nine months, the owners have done a lot - roofing, windows, doors, and some landscaping - but it's not complete. We met with the owners at the property on March 30 and gave them a list of items that are not complete. Since that time, nothing further has been done. The next significant date is June 10 when the owners and the Village report to the Municipal Court Judge. As the permit has expired, the owners can't do much.

Law Director Hunt added that the reason this falls under Council jurisdiction is because this was an appealed Architectural Board of Review decision. The appeal is to Council. Following a series of hearings, Council last summer decided to grant the nine-month extension to finish the exterior of the home and all site work - driveway, landscaping, grading, and seeding. Nine months have expired and the owners request additional time to finish the list of incomplete items by June 10. He has seen correspondence from the owners that they have re-engaged the general contractor and has been told the general contractor will sub out to a landscaper.

Councilmember Young asked if there is any benefit to the Village to not extend the permit. The Mayor replied in his view, no. Councilmember Perez asked were the owners agreeable to the list of items provided. The Village Engineer replied they agreed to complete everything. We've given them a very detailed list and provided details for anything they had questions on. Further Council discussion resulted on June 1 being the permit extension end date in order to allow for an inspection and court prep. Councilmember Perez asked if the items are reasonable to accomplish between now and June 1. The Village Engineer replied absolutely.

Councilmember Greco made a motion to instruct the Building Official to extend the building permit for 640 Chagrin River Road until June 1, 2026. Councilmember Young seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Greco, Onysko, Perez, Turner, Young.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Added Agenda Item: Speed Cameras at St. Francis - starts at 55:18

The addition of the two speed cameras in the St. Francis school zone on Mayfield Road requires an amendment to our agreement with Sensys Gatso to increase

the current two cameras to four cameras. They have drafted a one-page document that has been reviewed by the Law Director, Mayor, and Police Chief. No other terms have changed.

f. Police Locker Room - starts at 56:10

Wanting to renovate the police locker room this year, a cost estimate of about \$100,000 was prepared by Service Director Biggert with input from the Police Chief. We received \$25,000 from a resident at the end of 2025 to help with this project. We also have \$10,000 grant money from NOPEC for energy efficient projects. So we have probably close to \$35,000 - \$45,000 put aside, but we would be in need of more.

The big cost items are lockers. We need 15 - 20 lockers at \$2,500 each. The existing lockers aren't big enough for the officers' uniforms, vests, or gear. The new lockers are detachable and movable if we ever have an opportunity to have a larger renovation. Some of the remaining work - removal and demolition - could be done by our own service crew. We will ask the Service Director and the Village Engineer to get firm quotes on the rest of it - framing, ceiling, carpentry, flooring, and so on.

g. OPWC Grant Decision (Wastewater) - starts at 59:26

Recall that last year the Village applied for funding from the Ohio EPA for a loan and from the Ohio Dept of Public Works for a grant for the consolidation of the Hunt Club's wastewater system with our system. We did not qualify for the grant. We did qualify for the loan. We reapplied for the grant and were notified we made it out of District One and were heading to Columbus. We submitted to the Ohio Dept of Public Works Small Business Government Subcommittee a 148-page application to demonstrate our need. That decision will be made on May 14. The Hunt Club has been informed of all this. They want to work with us and the village system. It's just a matter of where's the money coming from.

Village Engineer Courtney added we pre-scored the project, a requirement, at 56. OPWC scored the project at 62. Knowing projects above 47 - 48 have all been funded over the last couple years, he thinks we're in perfect shape.

5. Financial Report attached and, on the website, starts at 1:01:49

Mayor Siemborski reported income tax and real estate tax numbers are better than last year - about \$70,000 in total. We have been spending more money - salaries, overtime, and salt during a tough winter. We need to be careful as we go forward to make sure we're spending money wisely and keeping our eyes fixed to the budget.

Councilmember Broome noted EMS costs are up from this time last year by \$35,000. Do we get reimbursed for any of those runs? Finance Administrator Mulh replied yes, you can find it on the front page (Ambulance Income). The Mayor added reimbursement is not at full dollar though. Councilmember Young asked why is it that here in GM we're paying the balance when in other communities the balance is billed to the user? Fire Captain Feig advised Mayfield Village does not choose to balance bill employees or residents of Mayfield Village. Gates Mills has followed the same course. We are permitted to instruct Mayfield Village to have their carrier bill differently. The Mayor suggested we think about what that means financially. What dollars would we

have had for the first quarter if we had balance billed? How far can we go back? Fire Chief Majeski shared that some of the fire chiefs in the area are coming up with a system to bill assisted living and nursing homes for responses. We can only bill on transports to the hospital. If they're not transported, we still have to pay the full amount to Mayfield Village, but we're not allowed to bill the insurance company.

6. Clerk's Report - None

7. Treasurer's Report - starts at 1:07:21

- A sharp eye cast upon the Treasurer's memorandum on municipal income tax found an error. The error was the premise that you could offset your Gates Mills income tax against taxes paid in your community of employment entirely. You can't. You can only offset half. He has prepared a municipal income tax 2.0 memo for anyone interested.
- In two days from now, the committee that is trying to get rid of real estate tax in Ohio is going to say how they are doing regarding their petition drive. Perhaps too late, but now state organizations, teachers, firemen, policemen, and mayors have combined together in a big organization to resist. The Ohio Budget Office says that if the real estate tax is eliminated, the income tax rate would have to go to 11% - 15% and the sales tax would have to go to 15% - 18%.

The third item - a while ago our investment advisor, Ancora, said they thought it would be a fine idea to increase our exposure to the lowest investment grade corporate debt. Council has passed an investment policy that allows this kind of an investment with a two-year maturity or less. Ancora wants to stretch that out. Treasurer Spear hasn't pushed this for two reasons. 1) He does not think it's a good idea. The incremental spread going from agencies to corporates doesn't justify any risk at all at this particular time. 2) In theory he should not come to Council with this before he goes to his Treasury Investment Board which Council has stipulated exists in the investment policy. It always has existed. It's never been staffed, until last year when we had a three-member board. Two of the members, who by definition must be members of Council, resigned from the board. We haven't had a quorum since.

Council should decide 1) we don't need this Treasury Investment Board, or 2) appoint two members of Council, or 3) appoint two members of the community. Please do not leave a board on the books that the Treasurer needs to consult with yet can't because a quorum is not possible.

After Council discussion, it was determined the Treasury Investment Board is not necessary. The Board existed before we had an outside manager. Then we hired an outside manager bound in a fiduciary capacity to comply with our investment policy statement. The Treasurer and the Finance Administrator monthly review the portfolio for conformity. The Law Director will draft some language to eliminate the board for the next meeting.

8. Police Department Report attached and, on the website, starts at 1:15:09

Chief Minichello brought an example of a Blue Envelope which is available in the lobby of Town Hall. Ohio's Blue Envelope Program is a voluntary initiative

designed to improve interactions between officers and individuals with disabilities. It acts as a silent communication tool, helping drivers with special needs share information during traffic stops to foster safety and understanding. Drivers place their license, registration, and insurance inside the Blue Envelope.

The Police Chief thanked Councilmember Onysko for developing an augmented activity summary of the traffic camera enforcement program. As expected, we will continue to see a dip in citations issued - an indication that drivers are paying attention to their speed.

Councilmember Young asked if after Sensys Gatso first goes through the camera images and rejects what they determine is not appropriate, then does the GM Police Dept do a second check and reject additional images. The Police Chief agreed.

Councilmember Perez asked if we know the percentage of eligible citations that are paid. The Mayor replied, off the top of his head, we know that on first notification we receive about 55%. After second notification, we receive another 10%. We are extremely close to using the collection agency, and have been told that could be another 10%.

Councilmember Young asked if we have any idea when cameras will go up at St. Francis. The Police Chief responded definitely by next school year, but they're going to be operational before then. Councilmember Young asked if there is any exposure on our selective protection of students. The Law Director replied no.

9. Service Department Report attached and, on the website, starts at 1:23:22

A Flood Response Plan was attached to the monthly report prompting Councilmember Broome to ask if we had to move any trucks during flooding. Service Director Biggert responded we had to move some trailers closer to where employees park when there was an ice jam a couple weeks ago.

10. Fire Department Report attached and on the website starts at 1:23:56

- The new F350 pickup truck has arrived and is being up-fitted.
- We sent all of our fire safety inspectors to attend the mandatory update training with the State of Ohio.
- We sent 3 firefighters to attend the Fire Behavior Mobile Lab - an all-day class presented by the Ohio Fire Academy.
- The hydrant flushing and maintenance program has started for the year. An updated hydrant list was sent to Cleveland Water.
- All police dept radios have been reprogrammed for our local GM channel so that police, fire, and service depts can all go to one channel and use it as a talk around or for unified command when we have an emergency here.
- Thank you firefighters and service workers for the help with the March 31 flooding on Chagrin River Road north of Mayfield Road - an unusual situation of quick and very heavy localized flooding in an area known for only minor flooding.

Added Agenda Item: Committee Updates - Broadband (Chairperson Deacon) - starts at 1:28:07

Highlights of the April status meeting with CVG include:

- We are very close to hooking up the village center. All the hardware is in place, but no switches yet.
- CVG encountered a mismarked gas line issue, and they were very responsive in fixing that.
- The color-coded map provided to Council at the last meeting and physically posted in several places is a nice tool to respond to villagers asking when am I in the queue.
- CVG continues to be incredibly good partners not only with their responsiveness but also interacting with the community. Six or seven CVG people presented at last week's monthly Aging Well meeting. CVG is going to be one of the sponsors of the June Garden Club tour. They continue to look for opportunities to give back to the village.
- CVG President Don Fellows attended the road program pre-construction meeting and exchanged info with the contractors. They have agreed to stay out of each other's way and hope there will be little tripping over each other.
- We had a few questions about the CVG area on Chagrin River Road. We can remediate with plantings on the mounds when the construction is done, or, as suggested by the Mayor, start sooner.

11. **Resolution No. 2026-22 (First Reading)** starts at 1:32:35

"A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter Into a Community Cost-Share Agreement with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District for Funding of a Community Cost-Share Project" was read by Mayor Siemborski. This is a document consistent with last month's conversation on funding the \$125,000 stormwater overflow problem we have at the bottom of Old Mill and River Roads. Generally, we had \$60,000 in our account with NEORS D to do qualified projects, and we were able to advance about \$50,000 on future credits that NEORS D would likely give us, reducing the village's cost to something in the range of \$15,000. The Village Engineer believes NEORS D will agree to fund the entire project, so the whole \$125,000 will be funded through the program instead of us having a \$15,000 outlay.

Councilmember Broome asked when do we want to get started with this, and the Village Engineer replied the next item on the agenda is authorizing bids for the project. Councilmember Broome moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-22 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Greco seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Greco, Onysko, Perez, Turner, Young.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Resolution No. 2026-22, and Councilmember Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Greco, Onysko, Perez, Turner, Young.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

12. Motion to approve advertising for bids for the Old Mill Storm Sewer Replacement Project - starts at 1:34:31

Councilmember Perez made a motion to approve advertising for bids for the Old Mill Storm Sewer Replacement Project. Councilmember Greco seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Greco, Onysko, Perez, Turner, Young.
Nays: None
Motion carried.

13. **Resolution No. 2026-23 (First Reading)** starts at 1:35:48

“A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter Into a Contract with Lake Erie Construction for the 2026 Guardrail Project and Declaring an Emergency” was read by the Mayor. This is the second year of the two-year guardrail replacement program. We went out for quotes and the only quote received was over \$75,000 - above the bid threshold - so we had to publicly advertise the work. It is more money than we planned for at \$89,425 plus another \$10,000 or so of engineering cost getting us to a little over \$100,000. That’s a direct function of some of the storms we’ve had damaging additional guardrail. We are already in April and there’s not a lot of people doing guardrail work. We would like to commit to the contract and get this secured.

Councilmember Broome moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-23 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Greco, Onysko, Perez, Turner, Young.
Nays: None
Motion carried.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Resolution No. 2026-23 and Councilmember Perez seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Greco, Onysko, Perez, Turner, Young.
Nays: None
Motion carried.

14. **Resolution No. 2026-24 (First Reading)** starts at 1:38:22

“A Resolution Adopting a Cybersecurity Program in Accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 9.64(C); and Declaring this to be an Emergency” was read by Mayor Siemborski.

Finance Administrator Mulh provided Auditor of State Bulletin 2025-007 dated August 27, 2025 and summarized the requirements and guidelines for adopting a cybersecurity program, the reporting requirements after discovery of a cybersecurity or ransomware incident, permitted ransomware payments, and the public records exemption for cybersecurity program records and documents. Ohio Revised Code Section 9.64 requires political subdivisions to set and adopt standards safeguarding against cybersecurity threats and ransomware attacks. The due date for our

implementation is July 1, 2026. Any Councilmember wishing to review the cybersecurity program may do so by examining the document in person at Town Hall. It's highly confidential. Detective Sergeant Mike Day and Techspert's Adam Siemienski assisted the Finance Administrator in putting together the cybersecurity program.

Resolution No. 2026-24 remains on first reading.

15. Council Discussion - starts at 1:44:47

Councilmember Young asked when the pedestrian bridge is planned for installation. The Village Engineer responded the end of June.

16. Business from the Audience - starts at 1:45:24

Dr. Duangjak stated in Gates Mills you have a lot of land. You can set up another container and make your own compost. She has been doing it for years. She does not like the idea that Gates Mills will pay for it.

Added Agenda Item: 200th Anniversary - starts at 1:46:08

The Mayor shared the winning 200th Anniversary logo. There is a desire to enhance the 4th of July parade by having five hot air balloons ascend from the polo grounds. The cost is between \$2,500 and \$5,000. Bill Lavigna, who ran the Blossom Time Balloon Fest for years, is going to organize this. With insurance approval, we're hopeful we could have one nominated MVP in each balloon basket.

17. Adjourn

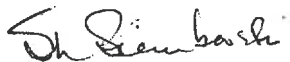
There being no further business, it was moved by Councilmember Broome, seconded by Councilmember Greco, and unanimously carried, that the council meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth DeCapite, Clerk

Approved:



Steven L. Siemborski, Mayor