

Village of Gates Mills
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL
June 17, 2025

A regular meeting of the Council of the Village of Gates Mills, Ohio was held at the Community House on Tuesday, June 17, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. with Mayor Siemborski presiding. The meeting was live-streamed to the internet.

1. Roll Call starts at 0:06

Councilmembers present: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

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

Councilmember Broome moved to excuse Councilmember Press. Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

2. Minutes of Regular Council Meeting of May 20, 2025 starts at 0:40

Councilmember Turner previously called the Finance Administrator and stated she found the wording in the last two sentences on Page 2 could cause confusion as to the total cost of the water fountain. The sentence should end after "GM Improvement Society".

Mayor Siemborski requested "\$10,000" be changed to "\$250,000" on Page 3, Item d.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve the May 20, 2025 minutes as amended and Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

3. Pay Ordinance # 1298 \$499,378.35 starts at 2:40

Councilmember Steinbrink moved to approve Pay Ordinance #1298. Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

4. Mayor's Report starts at 3:25

a. Senior Services

The first task group meeting was attended by ten residents on June 12th. The observations from the group are our population is aging, and there's increasing challenges with mobility, socialization, and completing everyday tasks. Many of the services that we have had in the past were offered by individual clubs within the Village to their members, but not extended to all villagers. As those members have passed or moved, the services disappeared. What is needed is some degree of process or structure in which we could catalog what we currently do, complement with a more comprehensive set of offerings like the Community Partnership on Aging (CPA) provides, and more actively and intentionally involve the various village organizations. The cost is about \$30,000 to be part of CPA. We have existing talent, Jean and Robin, to serve with coordinating senior services. The Mayor would like a sense of Council on going forward with this:

Turner - During the Comprehensive Plan discussion phase, the community was interested in looking at CPA, but they also said let's take a look at what we have already and catalog that and communicate it. The task group's direction sounds like a similar track to what residents were asking for in the Comprehensive Plan. There are other communities that already contract with CPA who might have ideas about how to maximize their services and which services might be most appropriate for a community like ours.

Atton - His mother-in-law lived in Independence, Ohio, where they offered all their own senior services just to their own residents. She relished all the services, she lived alone for twenty years and felt part of the community. The objective was to allow people to live in their own homes, without getting isolated, for as long as possible.

Onysko - It's one of the few things that has no downside to it - with a small associated cost. Put an entire page in the Pink Sheet telling what the programs are. Services not used can be changed down the road.

The task group will meet again in a month.

b. Sidewalk Project starts at 10:50

Meetings with two of the three affected property owners need to be brought to the forefront before progressing with the sidewalk to connect the lower elementary school parking lot to the village center.

c. Post Office Lease starts at 11:09

The Mayor has talked to three potential consulting firms specializing in Landlord negotiations of post office leases. The cost is \$5,000 - \$10,000. Our goal is to get a fair deal and perhaps reimbursement for costs incurred such as the new generator. We are going to put out a RFP to the three organizations. Once bids are received, the Mayor and the Service Director will evaluate and update Council.

Councilmember Atton cautioned we should be thinking about a contingency plan for the post office building in the event the post office said they did not want to continue their lease. What if they wait until the eleventh hour to say no deal? The earlier we start thinking about that possibility the better off we'll be.

d. Gates Mills Dam Remnant Removal Project starts at 13:58

The paperwork between ODNR, Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP), and the Village of Gates Mills has been signed. The next step is CRWP will schedule a meeting to lay out the project game plan. Design work will begin as the permitting process could take six months. Ideally, a year from now the work would actually take place in the water.

Added Agenda Items:

e. St. Francis Festival starts at 15:10

See Police Department Report.

f. Pickleball/Tennis Court Water Fountain starts at 15:30

The supplier has not yet received the Elkay fountain.

g. 2025 Priorities starts at 15:48

Mayor Siemborski noted Councilmember Press mentioned at the last meeting that there were a few priorities not on the Mayor's 2025 Priority listing but they were in the Comprehensive Plan. So that they don't get forgotten, the Mayor at the next meeting will prepare a paragraph on each of those priorities and decide with Council whether those are things we want to consider and do something about or not.

5. Financial Report attached and on the website starts at 16:34

Mayor Siemborski reported we are soft in the area of traffic cameras. They continue to produce a safe speed, the primary objective, and the revenues have gone down a bit - about \$200,000 short on the revenue side and therefore maybe \$100,000 short on the net profit side for this year. We will bring to Council at the next meeting a contract for review to hire a collection agency for the final attempt to collect unpaid tickets. First and second notices come from Lyndhurst Court. After second notices are not responded to, we can ask the Judge to issue judgements against those individuals, thereby leaving the court system and entering back into the private world where we hire a collection agency to chase those down.

We've spent more money than planned in Service Dept overtime and salt due to the January and February weather using up our overtime budget. Police Dept overtime is over budget. The time missed by an officer out for five months was filled by part timers or overtime.

6. Clerk's Report starts at 19:18

The Clerk asked anyone who speaks to please do so with a microphone for recording purposes.

7. Treasurer's Report starts at 19:40

Treasurer Morgan reported the Investment Committee is meeting with Ancora tomorrow. The bond portfolio has \$8,800,000 with 16% of the very low coupon bond portfolio running off this year for reinvestment at higher rates - basically 5%. All are welcome to the meeting at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

8. Police Department Report attached and starts at 20:29

The Police Chief commented on the St. Francis Festival. There were no issues Thursday, Friday, nor Sunday. If there is going to be a problem, it typically occurs Saturday night. There were no issues inside the festival, but it was at capacity. St. Francis did a really nice job with security measures, but in doing so, slowed the entrance process. A long line of 300 people reached past Villa Serena at 8 p.m. and the decision was made to disperse the line. Upon dispersion, incidents broke out on the front tree lawn and spilled into Mayfield Heights borders, unfortunately falling into their jurisdiction. There is a meeting scheduled tomorrow with the leadership of Mayfield Heights, the Church, and ourselves. The Mayor offered we need to be sensitive to our neighbors. The festival is within our bounds and we need to work with our neighbors to make sure it is safe.

At 23:48 Councilmember Atton asked why only 70 - 80% of passes at 58 mph or higher are being issued citations. What proportion of the citations issued are we actually collecting? The Mayor indicated 20% of the pictures taken consistently are not readable and not provable. The Police Chief stated about 55% of the citations issued are collected after the first notice is sent. Lyndhurst Court started sending out second notices about a month ago, and we don't know the results yet. We are currently evaluating which collection agency to contract with to pursue unpaid citations beyond the second notice. The Mayor believes collecting 70 - 75% of all citations issued would be considered successful by peer standards.

In regard to recent discussions on expanding this program to other roads in the Village, Councilmember Atton thinks we should be prepared to subsidize less traveled roads by the revenues we're getting from the most traveled road - this is about safety not money. Councilmember Broome finds the control that the traffic cameras have created on the speeds on Mayfield Road has allowed our police officers to spend more time doing traffic enforcement in other areas that are problematic.

9. Service Department Report attached and starts at 33:15

Village Engineer Courtney, standing in for the Service Director on vacation, replied to Councilmember Deacon's question about catch basin repairs. This year we submitted to the County for the rebuild of the tops of about 50 catch basins primarily on Brigham and Old Mill Roads. Both are county roads, so we get half the material costs reimbursed by the County. We moved the county work up earlier in the year with the goal of receiving reimbursement in the same year as the expense.

The Village Engineer anticipates the start date for milling and repaving Hillcreek and Andrews Roads to be in about two weeks. Once we do have a fixed date, the Service Dept will distribute a notice to all the residents in the area.

We had another water main break on Mayfield Road west of West Hill Road. Fortunately, it appears the break was off to the side of the pavement next to a drive apron, so there should be very little pavement repair needed as a result of that break.

Guardrail replacement is expected to commence in the next two to four weeks.

10. Fire Department Report attached and starts at 37:10

Councilmember Atton asked if the Carpenter Road gas well leak was on private or village property, and the Fire Chief responded village property. The leak was detected on a cursory inspection, the emergency contact was notified, and we shut a portion of the well off with their permission until they could get a crew out to replace the broken pipe. Councilmember Atton thinks we ought to be paying attention to gas wells that are finished in terms of productivity being cleared and closed by the operator. The Fire Chief advised ODNR has a data monitoring system, and each well has to have an emergency contact person that can come out within a reasonable amount of time in case there's a problem with the well. We have taken extra steps to buy the monitoring equipment and also send our people to the oil well class that's sponsored by the state.

Fire Chief Majeski, together with Hillcrest Hospital, developed an updated form for use by fire personnel responding to a call. The document provides the condition of an individual and serves as a handoff document once the EMS squad arrives.

11. Committee Reports starts at 42:25

Broadband (Councilmember Deacon)

- Summer: CVG continues its work on community engagement and doing market research. For example, in order to get residents to complete a survey, CVG makes a \$5 contribution to the GM Improvement Society.
- End of 2025/Early 2026: CVG plans to do signups to better align with the delivery of service since construction doesn't start until early next year.
- An engineering meeting has been scheduled for June 25th. Councilmember Onysko is not available. Councilmember Deacon will attempt to push the meeting date out to allow Councilmember Onysko to attend.
- Councilmember Broome advised Spectrum has been going door to door in his neighborhood saying they would provide high speed and fiber optic to the houses, but it would be hung from the poles.

Tree Canopy (Councilmember Atton) starts at 45:03

- The committee submitted an application for a grant from the County on June 6th. There were 51 applications submitted. We were able to get six very strong letters of support from various not-for-profit organizations that we've worked with in the first year of this process. We should know the results around July 11th.

Wastewater (Councilmember Broome) starts at 46:50

- The committee met on June 12th. The product of that meeting is Ordinance No. 2025-27 increasing the rate that was set in 2002 to the same rate that Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District charges customers, including the customers who have sewer service in the western part of the village. NEORSO charges \$120.45 per

1,000 cubic feet. Our ordinance was written in one hundred cubic feet, so we have converted that charge to \$12.05 per one hundred cubic feet.

- Any user of the Wastewater Treatment System would be charged the greater of the metered water flow multiplied by \$12.05 per one hundred cubic feet, or a minimum charge of \$100 per quarter. The minimum previously was \$50 per quarter. Most of the users on the system are paying the minimum.
- The effect of the increase is not financially significant to the village's bottom line in the long run. The ordinance, preferably with an updated user rate, is required to be attached to the loan application to the Ohio EPA Water Pollution Control Fund for the conversion and consolidation with the Hunt Club.
- We have the authority to bill monthly.
- Future rate increases will occur when NEORSD changes their published rate.

Moved to Agenda Item No. 18. **Ordinance No. 2025-27 (First Reading)**

"An Ordinance to Amend Section 933.07 of the Codified Ordinances of the Village of Gates Mills Regarding Rates and Charges for Use of the Village's Wastewater Treatment Facility Services for Existing and New Customers".

Inclusion of language in the ordinance regarding the frequency and standard for future rate increases appears to have been overlooked.

Ordinance No. 2025-27 remains on first reading.

At 54:42 Councilmember Atton asked where negotiations with the Hunt Club stood. Mayor Siemborski reported since we were notified in January that we were preliminarily awarded the Ohio EPA loan and that we would not get the District One Public Works Integrating Committee grant, Village Engineer Courtney's firm has investigated the underground pipes on the Hunt Club property that would feed into the new system.

Village Engineer Courtney stated the Hunt Club has infiltration and inflow into their sanitary sewer system that goes to their wastewater treatment plant that has to be resolved. In times of dry weather there is almost no flow at the plant meaning there is leakage into the ground before reaching the plant. During times of heavy rain all that extra water gets into the pipes through the treatment plant. The Hunt Club has cleaned and televised and provided a report about the condition of their entire on-site sanitary sewer system. A review by Mr. Courtney's firm has identified the locations of cracks, low spots, and leaks, and what portions of the system need to be replaced by the Hunt Club at their expense and as a contingency before we will allow them to tie into our system. The design work for the project has been completed as well. Questions to the Village Engineer/Comments:

Atton - The repairs and replacements are something the Hunt Club has to do anyway, right? Whether they replace their own wastewater treatment plant, or they tie into a pump station that ties into our system, it's something they need to fix.

Steinbrink - Wouldn't Ohio EPA or Cuyahoga County Board of Health require the Hunt Club to replace 100%, just like any homeowner replacing their septic tank is required to replace with brand new back to the house? Yes, they are not going to want to see a

new facility, be it a wastewater treatment plant or a pump station, with a leaky system tied into it. It would be caught at many different levels, if we didn't insist on it here. Broome - We are going to require them to do it. We have to protect our system too. Steinbrink - Fixing it is inadequate. It should be 100% replacement/brand new PVC. Courtney - We haven't presented that full plan to anybody yet. He shares the opinion that complete replacement is the way to go. The sanitary sewer doesn't have to be basement depth. To just replace portions and leave old pipe in place would be a bad idea.

At 1:00:00 Councilmember Atton wonders if the Hunt Club is seriously thinking about the alternative of building its own new wastewater treatment plant. If they replace the pipes as discussed they should be able to get a permit to build their own. It has been reported the Hunt Club had a meeting of members at which a wastewater treatment facility costing \$750,000 and an assessment on members was discussed. He hopes that we price our proposal a little bit under their alternative and has said so from the very beginning. If they can't get a permit, then they don't have an alternative, which is a powerful commercial position to be in for us. Discussion:

Siemborski- The Hunt Club always said there are alternatives and they're looking at all the alternatives. We never assumed that we were the only option.

Courtney - Does not think there is any question they would be able to get a permit to put in a new wastewater treatment plant.

Broome - Believes the \$750,000 number includes the cost of replacing the sanitary sewer lines because we have been very clear that is their burden.

Courtney - It's very important when discussing pricing to clarify the subject. Are you talking about a wastewater treatment plant, a pump station, including or excluding the internal pipe replacements.

Broome - We talk about commercially reasonable here. We are also mindful that generally the reason that we organize government is to provide for the general welfare. It's not a flat-out commercial negotiation. We have to protect the village's system.

12. Ordinance No. 2025-17 (Third Reading) starts at 1:03:55

"An Ordinance Amending Section 155.03, Water Debt Service Fund, of the Codified Ordinances of the Village of Gates Mills" was read by Mayor Siemborski. Language to be added to the existing ordinance would allow for the use of the water debt service fund, rather than the general fund, for water repairs, replacements, maintenance, and ongoing operations of \$25,000 or greater.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Ordinance No. 2025-17 and Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

13. Ordinance No. 2025-18 (Third Reading) starts at 1:05:24

"An Ordinance Amending Chapter 131, Council, of the Codified Ordinances of the Village of Gates Mills" was read by the Mayor. This ordinance deals with virtual versus in-person meetings.

Law Director Hunt stated comments were received from two Councilmembers since the last meeting and he has tried to incorporate them into version two emailed on Sunday. One comment was we ought to require a quorum of four members in person at any Council meeting - emergency, special, regular, or hearing - for a meeting to be held, and others could attend virtually. For a committee meeting, only the Chair need attend in person. The other comment regarded monitoring virtual attendance. Language was added requiring advance written notice and the reason be given to the Clerk and the Council President.

Councilmember Broome thinks we have to say the rules set forth in paragraph (e)(3) on page 2 regarding advance notice of virtual attendance and reasons therefore do not apply to emergency meetings. The emergency meetings after Ed Welsh's passing really put a lot of strain for getting everybody in the room at the same time.

Councilmember Deacon did not find written in the ordinance any limit on the number of times a member could attend virtually. Councilmember Steinbrink finds that to be a good point. If it's being abused, six members of Council could effectively rescind this ordinance at the next meeting. Councilmember Deacon agreed.

Law Director Hunt will make a final pass at the wording and recirculate for passage at the next meeting.

Ordinance No. 2025-18 remains on third reading.

14. **Resolution No. 2025-19 (Second Reading)** starts at 1:10:57

"A Resolution Submitting the Question of the Renewal of an Existing 3.5 Mill Tax Levy for the Purpose of Current Expenses; and Declaring an Emergency" was read by Mayor Siemborski. The comment was made by a Councilmember last meeting that even though it's relatively straightforward, it is a tax issue and perhaps some members of the community would have a question or comment. Has anyone received any questions or comments from constituents on this document or the need to renew the levy? No.

Councilmember Broome moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2025-19 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion to suspend the rules.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Resolution No. 2025-19 and Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

15. **Resolution No. 2025-24 (First Reading)** starts at 1:12:27

“A Resolution to Adopt the Solid Waste Management Plan for the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District” was read by Mayor Siemborski. Council received a colorful document which came from the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District. It describes the waste management methods to be used in the upcoming 2026-2040 planning period and details how the goals established will be achieved. The plan needs to be reviewed and approved or disapproved by municipalities that are part of the District by August 10.

Resolution No. 2025-24 remains on first reading.

16. **Resolution No. 2025-25 (First Reading)** starts at 1:16:00

“A Resolution Approving and Adopting the Tax Budget for the Village of Gates Mills for Fiscal Year 2026: and Declaring an Emergency” was read by the Mayor. This document is evidence of our need for the millage from all our levies to operate sufficiently. It is due July 10.

Councilmember Broome moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2025-25 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion to suspend the rules.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Resolution No. 2025-25 and Councilmember Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

17. **Resolution No. 2025-26 (First Reading)** starts at 1:17:13

“A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a Seventh One-Year Extension of an Agreement for the Provision of School Resource Officer Services with the Mayfield City School District and Declaring an Emergency” was read by the Mayor. The current agreement ends on July 31 which is why we are asking for an emergency. This arrangement allows the Village to have a police officer on staff, currently Arch Kimbrew, but assigned to serve as a School Resource Officer at GM Elementary School and GM Environmental Education Center 184 days out of the year. The Village has an extra officer when school is not in session. Mayfield School District partially funds the officer’s annual village salary at a percentage that does not change.

Councilmember Broome moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2025-26 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Resolution No. 2025-26 and Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

19. Other Council Matters starts at 1:20:40

Councilmember Steinbrink reported Verizon has installed equipment on the Gilmour cell tower but has not turned service on, and suggested Council and the Mayor send a joint letter to Verizon requesting the equipment be powered up. The Mayor advised three separate letters were sent last week via registered mail to Verizon from Gilmour, the Police Chief, and the Mayor requesting service be turned on. Let's give them 20-30 days to respond.

Councilmember Onysko reported minor changes were made to the hardware upgrades specified in the TechSpert proposal appropriated for last month. The \$32,000 cost is about where it was last month. All the pricing has been reviewed and it's on point. The next step is to order the hardware.

20. Business from the Audience starts at 1:23:50

Resident Sean O'Hagan shared his concerns about events occurring in communities involving the federal ICE agency. There is no reason to expect that Gates Mills will not be impacted by ICE's brazen and terrifying tactics. Gates Mills' public officials have sworn an oath to uphold the US Constitution - your charge is to ensure that Gates Mills is not a party to ICE's campaign of terrorizing communities through unlawful detainment and the denial of due process. To that end, he urges the review of all village and police practices, partnerships, and affiliate relationships.

Resident and Heritage Home Program Coordinator Chuck Spear reported the date printed on a recent mailing announcing a general information meeting is in error. The correct meeting date is June 25th at 6 p.m. at the GM Library and will be added to Gates Mills Connect. Two percent money is available for home repairs on houses built before 1976 and worth less than \$750,000.

21. Executive Session starts at 1:28:24

Councilmember Broome moved to go into Executive Session for purposes of discussion of acquisition of real estate. Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: None

Motion carried. Executive Session commenced at 7:01 p.m.

Mayor Siemborski reconvened the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

22. Adjourn

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

Respectfully submitted,



Beth DeCapite, Clerk

Approved:



Steven L. Siemborski, Mayor