Village of Gates Mills
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL
October 20, 2026

A regular meeting of the Council of the Village of Gates Mills, Ohio was held at the Community House on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. with Mayor Siemborski presiding. The meeting was live-streamed to the internet.

1. Roll Call starts at 0:56

Councilmembers present: Broome, Greco (via Zoom starting at 5:34 p.m.), Perez, Sommer, Steinbrink, Turner, Young.

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

Councilmember Turner moved to excuse Councilmember Greco. Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Perez, Sommer, Steinbrink, Turner, Young.
Nays: None
Motion carried.

2. Minutes of the Special Council Meeting of September 12, 2026 starts at 2:23

Clerk DeCapite apologized for misspelling Councilmember Barbara Sommer's name. Sommers is incorrect and should be Sommer.

Councilmember Steinbrink moved to approve the September 12, 2026 minutes as amended, and Councilmember Young seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Perez, Sommer, Steinbrink, Turner, Young.
Nays: None
Motion carried.

3. Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of September 15, 2026 starts at 3:15

Councilmember Young moved to approve the September 15, 2026 minutes, and Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Perez, Sommer. Steinbrink, Turner, Young.
Nays: None
Motion carried.

4. Pay Ordinance # 1314 $632,617.68 starts at 3:51

Councilmember Greco joined the meeting via Zoom at 5:34 p.m.

Councilmember Young moved to approve Pay Ordinance #1314, and Councilmember Broome seconded the motion.

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

5. Mayor Siemborski administered the Oath of Office to Michael Day, Lieutenant, Police Dept. at 5:06

6. Mayor's Report starts at 11:29

- Arboretum

The stairs and the lights are installed. The railings are expected in 3-4 weeks, and they have been paid for by a $15,000 contribution from the Gates Mills Improvement Society's Marston Park Fund.

- St. Francis School Zone Traffic Program - starts at 12:33

Having recently heard more negative comments regarding the camera enforcement of the speed zone after all these years, rather than praise for our kids' safety, the Mayor described a variety of ways that were explored over the past year to respond to the excessive speeding in front of St. Francis. The final decision was to restrict school zone camera enforcement hours to 90 minutes in each direction, compared to the more widely-used 2-hour school zones, so that it did not appear to be a money raising scheme. To avoid confusion, school zone hours when camera enforcement would take place were posted on poles. No new signage was required, because the Mayfield Road speed limit is governed by the state and is 45 mph from the border of Gates Mills on the east to the border on the west. As we continue to get phone calls and letters, we will continue to explain safety is our number one issue.

7. Financial Report attached and on the website starts at 14:22

Mayor Siemborski reported the County has caught up on real estate tax remittances to the Village, the rollback was received in October, and we've exceeded our annual budgeted amount. Municipal income taxes are up $193,000 this year compared to this time last year. Traffic camera receipts are down $237,000. There's less revenue for us, but the goal of safety and reducing speeds on Mayfield Road hill is nicely being accomplished and sustained.

We have spent more dollars than we have in the past. Everything seems to cost more. We've had problems on some of our roads - the culvert on Battles Road will cost over $150,000 and the cost of the Old Mill at River storm water problems has risen to roughly $275,000. We are doing our best to make sure we are bidding those costs and controlling them as best we can.

Overall year to date, we are at a $1,380,000 shortfall. That includes close to $600,000 that has been put aside for the fire truck.

8. Treasurer's Report - starts at 18:44

Treasurer Spear reported he will schedule a meeting with Ancora to review their quarterly results, and he will invite all Councilmembers. It was a difficult quarter for the bond market as Treasury yields rose across the board on renewed inflation concerns. The Gates Mills portfolio returned -1.93% for the quarter, outperforming the -2.56% Bloomberg Intermediate Aggregate Index. Year to date, the portfolio has returned -1.29% versus -1.99% for the benchmark. The main driver of the outperformance was the portfolio's shorter duration of 3.8 years compared with 4.2 years for the benchmark. About 16% of the portfolio matures over the next twelve months. These bonds carry an average coupon of less than 0.89%, while the bonds we have purchased this year carry coupons of roughly 4.25% to 5.25%. As these maturities are reinvested, the portfolio's interest income should increase meaningfully.

Councilmember Broome noted negative return occurs only if we were to sell now. As long as we hold to maturity, then there is no negative return. Treasurer Spear agreed, adding recently we have sold securities when the County remittance of real estate taxes got behind and we needed to draw down our Star Ohio account and sell some securities in order to pay our bills.

9. Clerk's Report - None

Moved to Agenda Item No. 11. Service Department Report attached and on the website - starts at 22:00

Service Director Biggert reported the Chagrin River Road culvert work was completed today, and it will be seeded tomorrow. We are getting ready to start the Battles Road culvert. Old Mill Road reopened this past Monday. Guardrail replacement along a portion of Mayfield Road remains to be finished and represents about 40% of the 2026 program. There are no other road projects planned between now and the end of the year.

Councilmember Perez asked what happened on the Old Mill project that increased the cost and requires approval of an amendment to the NEORSD agreement and approval to increase the appropriation on the agenda later tonight. The Service Director explained voids were found underneath the concrete towards the end of the project when the road was opened up. This required cutting some additional concrete out and added cost and time to the project. It is believed last year's lengthy undetected water pipe leak at the hydrant uphill caused the wash out. The Village Engineer contacted NEORSD and they agreed to increase funding through the community cost share agreement to cover the additional cost. The Mayor noted the cost is now $275,000 in total. We have to spend the money before requesting the reimbursement, and we are hoping to pay the expense and receive the reimbursement in 2026 so it's a wash on the books.

10. Police Department Report attached and on the website - starts at 25:56

Police Chief Minichello provided further detail on the items in the written police dept report.

A traffic camera report will be available at the next Council meeting.

12. Fire Department Report attached and on the website - starts at 28:32

Fire Chief Majeski reported the hydrant flushing and maintenance program for the year is done. Of the compiled list between 2025 and 2026, we had 80 out of service hydrants, and 74 have been either repaired or replaced by the Cleveland Water Dept. In 2027, we plan to start a program over several years with assistance from the Service Dept to strip the paint off the hydrants and repaint.

We were informed by Spartan Motors, manufacturer of our new fire truck, that production is ahead of schedule. We expect to receive it December 2027. There was a roll back in emission controls for diesel engines, so we are able to use the same engine that we have in our present Engine 1411, which saves us at least $40,000.

Mayor Siemborski noted the next five-year insurance company rating audit will occur in 2028. The rating, based on factors such as training, dept size, and preparedness, is used to set our home insurance rates. Having 74 of our 750 fire hydrants not working was a detriment, we expect the next rating to improve, and credit goes to the Fire and Service Depts and Cleveland Water Dept for catching up over the last two years.

13. **Ordinance No. 2026-25 (Third Reading)** starts at 32:44

"An Ordinance Amending Section 155.04 of the Codified Ordinances of the Village of Gates Mills to Eliminate the Treasury Investment Board" was read by the Mayor.

The Mayor stated we will bring this back next month for a final decision.

Ordinance No. 2026-25 remains on third reading.

14. **Ordinance No. 2026-51 (First Reading)** starts at 33:07

"An Ordinance to Amend the Annual Appropriation Ordinance No. 2025-51 to Increase Certain Appropriations and Other Expenditures of the Village of Gates Mills, Ohio for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2026" was read by the Mayor.

The Mayor recalled when we set the annual budget, we set the appropriation level at the exact same amount, providing no cushion. As the year shapes up, additional appropriations are brought to Council for approval. Finance Administrator Mulh has prepared and distributed in advance a spreadsheet of the various items that support this additional appropriation ordinance, including $274,519 for payment of the Old Mill Road project, so we can turn around and ask NEORSD for reimbursement by the end of this year.

Councilmember Broome compared the spreadsheet to the ordinance and determined Section 2 of the ordinance should reflect an appropriation increase of $57,000 (not $80,000).

Councilmember Broome asked if the $350,000 in Section 7 is the same as the $350,000 in Resolution No. 2026-55. The Finance Administrator replied no, Ordinance 2026-51, Section 7 is the appropriation increase. Resolution No. 2026-55 is the transfer of cash between the General Fund and the Capital Improvement Fund.

Councilmember Broome moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Ordinance No. 2026-51 as amended be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Turner seconded the motion.

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

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Resolution No. 2026-51 as amended and Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion.

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

15. **Resolution No. 2026-52 (First Reading)** starts at 37:48

"A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter Into a Second Amendment to the Community Cost-Share Agreement with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District for Funding of a Community Cost-Share Project; and Declaring an Emergency" was read by the Mayor.

The Mayor stated this is the Old Mill Road at Chagrin River Road project discussed earlier. The initial cost was $125,000. Under resolution passed in September, we increased that by $72,000 given the additional length of the road - that brought the project to $197,301. We are asking for approval of the final $77,218 previously authorized by the Mayor and needed for correcting and filling the void found underneath the road. The total reimbursable cost is $274,519.

Councilmember Steinbrink moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-52 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Young seconded the motion.

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

Councilmember Steinbrink moved to approve Resolution No. 2026-52 and Councilmember Young seconded the motion.

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

Moved to Agenda Item No. 18. **Resolution No. 2026-55 (First Reading)** starts at 40:17

"A Resolution Authorizing and Directing the Transfer of Certain Sums from the General Fund to the Capital Improvement Fund" was read by the Mayor.

The Mayor stated this is the $350,000 on the schedule just reviewed under Ordinance No. 2026-51.

Councilmember Broome moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-55 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Perez seconded the motion.

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

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Resolution No. 2026-55 and Councilmember Perez seconded the motion.

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

16. **Resolution No. 2026-53 (First Reading)** starts at 41:32

"A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor and the Treasurer to Enter Into an Agreement with the Gates Mills Land Conservancy to Provide Funds to the Conservancy from the One (1)-Mill Charter Land Conservation Levy Fund" was read by Mayor Siemborski.

Councilmember Turner read from the four "whereas" clauses found on page 1 of Resolution No. 2026-53:

- This applies if the Charter amendment is renewed by the voters on the November 3, 2026 election
- The levy renewal will last for a period of five years from 2027 through 2031
- The Land Conservancy has assisted the Village with preserving and protecting the natural resources and open space in the village in the past
- The Village wishes to authorize a new agreement with the GM Land Conservancy

Councilmembers received a proposed Agreement between the Village of Gates Mills and Gates Mills Land Conservancy (Revision 1) last Friday. Revision 2 was distributed today. There is one addition to the "whereas" clauses, middle of page 2 of Revision 2 - "Whereas, the Land Conservancy has represented to the Village that as of January 1, 2027, it will have on hand a minimum cash balance of $700,000".

Councilmember Turner then detailed the differences between the proposed Agreement (Revision 2) and the 2021 Agreement between the Village and the Land Conservancy:

- Five-year term commencing January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2031
- Allocation is 70% Land Conservancy/30% Village compared to 50/50
- Paragraph 9 is new and provides for the Land Conservancy to come to Council for additional funds if needed to fulfill requirements by law or by the agreement with the Village

- Paragraph 11 is new and requires a fundraising plan with goals to be presented to the Village on a semi-annual basis

At 47:21 Councilmember Turner asked Councilmember Broome to explain new Paragraph 5 of the Agreement (Revision 2). It requires the Conservancy to have a liquid cash balance of a minimum of $700,000 of immediately available and unencumbered funds. It does not require them to keep that into perpetuity. That money is available to the Conservancy to use for the purposes of the Land Conservancy. If at any point during the levy period, the immediately available cash or investments on hand fall below $700,000, the Conservancy is required to immediately notify Council and present a financial plan for the restoration of immediately available cash funds or investments on hand to $700,000 by the end of the levy period. This is somewhat similar to the 2021 Agreement, but the formula in the 2021 Agreement addressed obligations that have been satisfied and are no longer relevant here. What this does is allows Council to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars. Keeping the Conservancy solvent is extremely important for the Village and the Conservancy.

Councilmember Perez believes the requirements of the Conservancy to report their activities and financials is not only helpful, but it's a good transparency mechanism. Councilmember Broome hopes it fosters a cooperative environment between the Village, Conservancy, and Tree Canopy Committee as they carry out invasive species removal, tree plantings, and other conservation efforts.

At 52:40 Councilmember Greco noted the last time Council spoke there was an allocation of 80/20 and now it's 70/30. Why the difference? Councilmember Turner recalled a robust discussion at the last Council meeting with a lot of differences in opinion about the allocation. Councilmembers were asked to submit any additions to the language or sense of what the allocation should be to Law Director Hunt. What came out of that was the 70/30 allocation and some of the edits to this resolution.

The Law Director emphasized the current 2021 Agreement requires a cash balance minimum of $700,000 at December 31, 2026 going into any new agreement. So they're starting at a minimum of $700,000 and he recalls $900,000 was last reported.

Councilmember Steinbrink wished to clarify that the Agreement (Revision 2) sent out this afternoon is virtually identical in principle, with the exception of the split, to the 2021 Agreement. The Mayor, Councilmember Turner, and the Law Director agreed as a general matter.

Councilmember Turner moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-53/Agreement (Revision 2) be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Broome seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Perez, Sommer, Steinbrink, Turner, Young.
Nays: Greco
Motion carried.

Councilmember Turner moved to approve Resolution No. 2026-53/Agreement (Revision 2). Councilmember Broome seconded the motion.

Ayes: Broome, Perez, Steinbrink, Turner, Young.
Nays: Greco, Sommer
Motion carried.

In light of the passage of Resolution No. 2026-53, Councilmember Turner made a motion that Council support the endorsement of the conservation levy on the November 3, 2026 ballot. Councilmember Perez seconded the motion.

Councilmember Steinbrink asked if Council can do that, and Law Director Hunt responded yes, the only prohibition in state law and under our charter and ordinances, which does not speak to this, is the use of public funds to support an issue on the ballot. There have been no public funds used for this motion, so it is legitimate.

Councilmember Greco asked if this was done five years ago. Councilmember Turner responded yes, it was endorsed by Council.

Ayes: Broome, Perez, Sommer, Steinbrink, Turner, Young.
Nays: Greco
Motion carried.

17. **Ordinance No. 2026-54 (First Reading)** starts at 58:06

"An Ordinance Amending Chapter 1167, Signs, of the Codified Ordinances of the Village of Gates Mills" was read by the Mayor.

Councilmember Steinbrink stated there were some questions from residents and Councilmembers earlier this year regarding the signs ordinance and whether we should permit illuminated signs in the village commercial district. That issue was taken up and discussed at three separate P & Z meetings. There was not any unanimous support for any type of backlit sign, illuminated signs, or anything with colors in the village because it wasn't consistent with the look and feel of the village. There was also some confusion on enforcement, and that would be left to Inspector of Buildings Biggert to enforce whether signs were in compliance or not.

P & Z made some recommendations and changes to the signs ordinance to clarify sign requirements and when a permit is required. Perhaps the biggest item is the existing size exemption for village and community signs that is unconstitutional to have. Law Director Hunt was asked to speak to that. The Law Director stated there was a case several years ago out of the northern district of Ohio involving the sign ordinance in the city of North Olmsted. The court clearly said that exemptions that were in that ordinance were unconstitutional if they were not the same as the regulations for private property owners, and that is precedent for Gates Mills because we are in the northern district of Ohio. That exemption needs to be deleted from our sign ordinance.

The Law Director complimented the P & Z Commission's efforts over three meetings discussing this, going through it in detail, making the suggestions, including the limited lighting that is now permitted in the commercial district for a limited period of time from dusk until 11 p.m.

The Law Director explained the next steps. Even though the P & Z Commission put this amendment to the ordinance together, it needs to be referred back to the P & Z

Commission for a formal recommendation - we have to comply with state statute on this, as we don't have any regulations with respect to that in our Code. Then a public hearing in front of Council with a 30-day advance notice that includes the recommendation of P & Z as well as the text. The ordinance is on first reading tonight, and he believes we ought to refer back to P & Z by motion this evening. Councilmember Broome suggested allowing Council time to digest the material before having a substantive discussion at the November meeting (second reading) and then make the motion to refer it back to P & Z. The timetable would then be P & Z would make a recommendation back at their December meeting, and we can publish a public hearing for the January regular meeting of Council (third reading). Councilmember Steinbrink is in agreement with the timetable and will advise P & Z at their November meeting on where things stand.

Ordinance No. 2026-54 remains on first reading.

19. Council Discussion - starts at 1:05:00

Councilmember Turner and a small group (Councilmember Perez, Jennifer Pinto, and Jann Holzmann) who previously introduced Council to composting and Rust Belt Riders have been notified that the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District has grants available up to $25,000 for composting, recycling, equipment, communications, etc. - but not the service of removing the compost. The deadline to apply is November 7. Monies are not to be spent before the grant is received and there is not an obligation to spend the money. The group is going to apply if it's appropriate, not wanting to miss out on the opportunity.

At 1:07:03 Councilmember Perez noted the successful New Resident Social held a couple weeks ago was MC'd by Chuck Spear and Karen Schneider and was attended by 24 new residents who enjoyed the opportunity to meet others. Many thanks to the Community Club, Garden Club, and other organization volunteers.

Councilmember Broome advised that Les Hazlett is going to be retiring at the end of January. He takes care of the downtown area of the village, and the village center looks spectacular because of his efforts. Stop and thank him.

20. Business from the Audience - starts at 1:08:40

Noel, a volunteer with the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, highlighted the importance of Issue 10, a supplemental revenue levy on the general election ballot. The Board provides a full range of services to over 15,000 children and adults, including residents here in Gates Mills. Their mission is to help children and adults live, learn, play, and work in the community. It's a testament to the Board that they have not gone out for any increase in revenue in over 20 years.

At 1:10:32 Resident William Kinney shared the general consensus among his friends in the community about the proliferation of speed and Flock cameras and the sense of overreach in a community that is pretty happy otherwise. The fines associated with the cameras are excessive and usury. If you need more money, you should do it through the conventional method of raising taxes in some form.

At 1:12:45 South Euclid Councilperson At-Large Ryan Trimbath spoke to the St. Francis speed cameras. He is in support of protecting students and reducing speeds, but has two concerns about the camera enforcement program. First is the clarity of the eastbound signage. While individual signs may meet the MUTCD requirements provided by the state, their combination and arrangement on the eastbound approach is very confusing. Second, MUTCD recommends, not requires, advanced warning when the drop in speed is greater than 10 mph. You have a 45 to 20 mph drop in speed. He encourages the village to consider whether the overall arrangement communicates applicable speed clearly and enough for drivers to slow down safely. He is asking the village to honor its public commitment, per the September 2025 Pink Sheets, by converting citations issued during the applicable 30 days to warnings. Clear signage and initial emphasis on education support student safety while building public confidence in enforcement.

21. Adjourn

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

Respectfully submitted,

Beth DeCapite, Clerk

Approved:

Steven L. Siemborski, Mayor