

**Village of Gates Mills**  
**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL**  
**August 19, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Council of the Village of Gates Mills, Ohio was held at the Community House on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. with Mayor Siemborski presiding. The meeting was live-streamed to the internet.

1. Roll Call starts at 3:08

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

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

2. Mayor Siemborski administered the Oath of Office to Patrolman Sam Bellissimo at 3:20

3. Fire Chief Majeski introduced and Mayor Siemborski administered the Oath of Office to Firefighters Robert Hansen at 5:49 and Travis Veleba at 8:16

4. Minutes of Regular Council Meeting of July 15, 2025 starts at 10:56

Councilmember Broome moved to approve the July 15, 2025 minutes and Councilmember Press seconded the motion.

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

Abstain: Deacon

Nays: None

Motion carried.

5. Minutes of Special Council Meeting of August 5, 2025 starts at 11:41

Councilmember Broome moved to approve the August 5, 2025 minutes and Councilmember Turner seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

6. Findings and Conclusions of Fact for 640 Chagrin River Road starts at 12:13

This item will be on the September agenda.

7. Pay Ordinance # 1300 \$707,139.52 starts at 12:27

Councilmember Broome asked about (1) payment to AKE Environmental for a cell alarm system and (2) reimbursement for Mayfield Village ambulance service.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Pay Ordinance #1300.  
Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

8. Gates Mills Land Conservancy Report - Jamie Carracher, President starts at 14:37

Mayor Siemborski introduced Land Conservancy President Jamie Carracher here tonight to highlight and answer any questions Council might have on the written report included in their packet covering GMLC activity over the first six months of 2025.

Notable items in addition to those contained in the report:

- The date of the Land Trust Alliance Field Trip is September 4th
- The GMLC Annual Meeting is on October 15th at the Community House and all villagers are welcome

Councilmember questions and comments start at 19:34:

Atton - If we extrapolate out the \$840,000 cash balance at the end of June to the end of 2026 - which is the end of the sharing agreement term when the required cash balance is \$700,000 - it looks like the cash balance will be close to \$1,000,000 if there is no additional expenditure for land. It's a lot of money and good to have.

Carracher - Agreed. We do our due diligence when looking at uses for those funds.

Atton - His understanding is all GMLC properties will never be sold for development, yet that is not absolutely clear in the GMLC bylaws. He would feel much better if that were memorialized on paper. Does the GMLC Board agree?

Carracher - Yes, our Board definitely agrees and has researched the options to codify that. The strictest method is putting conservation easements on owned properties. The challenge is the time and expense of creating a separate legal entity to hold property, then establish the conservation easement, and then re-qualify for tax exemption - the process does not happen all at once and that's a lot of tax burden. So the Board is looking at other options and is aligned to protect acquired properties.

Press - Is it fair to say we have been told for years that GMLC would put easements on those properties and it never seems to happen?

Carracher - He can't speak to past years. The dilemma is how do we do it in a way that is sustainable and tenable. We are a 15-member volunteer board with one part-time employee.

Press - Could you tell us about the open access policy and where it applies?

Carracher - The Board voted to establish open access on (1) the Sherman Road Preserve where we periodically mow a walking trail and (2) the Wick Preserve used primarily by equestrians. There is no public access to our other properties.

Press - By putting open access on Sherman Road, are you in effect creating a kind of public park? There have been complaints about ATVs.

Carracher - The Board voted that the two properties would be open to the public using a soft launch. We haven't promoted it. We still have more work to do.

Press - If somebody gets hurt over there, who's liable?

Carracher - We have ample insurance for various use cases, and he would need to go back and research anything more specific.

Press - For many years village land conservancy collections all went to the Land Conservancy. The current arrangement which expires next year is a 50/50 split with the village. So next year there has to be a renewal of the levy and presumably a renewal of the contract between the village and the conservancy. What are your aspirations for the split next year when the new levy is presumably agreed and put on the ballot?

Carracher - We are not prepared to talk about a preferred split. We do look forward to discussing with Council and the Mayor what that might look like. We value our partnership together, and we think we're a strong contributor to the value that villagers get.

Deacon - You annually review a number of properties and monitor them for changes. What types of changes do you typically look for?

Carracher - We visit at least once a year every property that we own or have an easement on. It's part of our land trust alliance accreditation. We are looking for signs of disturbance by people or other - like trash - and we investigate. We make sure owners of easements maintain the viability of the easement. We look at environmental concerns such as tree canopy and extent of invasives. We continue to focus more and more on the stewardship side of things.

Siemborski - The village has been participating with the Land Conservancy on some of the invasives projects and are looking at other invasives eradication projects that the Land Conservancy and the village can do together later this year and next year.

#### 9. Mayor's Report starts at 30:41

- Since reporting last month on the flooding of Gates Mills Estates Drive properties in late June, Service Director Biggert and Village Engineer Courtney have talked to most of the owners, toured the 21 yards, and determined one yard requires a significant amount of work, ten yards require some work, and ten yards require little or no work. Once they determine what is the responsibility of the village and of the homeowner, we will contact each of those individuals with a plan going forward.
- We have had calls concerning grass, weeds, and cutting trees. Most of this can be taken care of by people either knowing that there are ordinances that need to be followed or voluntarily following what they should be doing to take care of their yards. The village takes care of things generally that are within the 30' right of way.
- About 20 cars, trucks, and trailers on a large construction project at the Settlers Ridge cul-de-sac created congestion and tension among neighbors. Solutions included parking either at Feller Field or the top of Old Mill hill by Cardinal Lane and carpooling down to the work site.
- So if there are issues, call or email the Mayor, Village Engineer, or Service Director. They communicate with each other and generally go to see what the situation is and proceed from there.
- Since Councilmember Onysko suggested looking at some of our downtown buildings last month, we met with him to go through the report prepared by an outside firm last January that identified some of the issues in the main building and the cost of doing repairs. It's evident from that report the building has in many cases outlived what it was built for over 100 years ago

and then refurbished 60 years ago - there's little ADA access, no elevators. We will put together a committee this fall and start looking at what other municipalities do and develop some schematics or ideas on what we could do with the facilities.

a. Senior Services starts at 38:55

Meeting attendees of the July 10 Senior Service meeting were invited to submit potential senior service survey questions. These submissions were reviewed by residents Jan Bohinc and Joy Banish and Town Hall Coordinator Jean Misch. A final version was developed focusing on four key areas - socialization, safety, transportation, and health. On August 14th a paper copy of the survey was mailed to every household in the village. An electronic version was also made available on the village website. We are going to further encourage responses by putting reminders on Gates Mills Connect. The survey will remain open through September 30. This will give us time to analyze the survey results, have the committee meet again and be able to talk financially too about what this might mean as we get into the October/November budget season.

b. Sidewalk Project starts at 42:07

Background: In 2023 then-Mayor Schneider initiated a sidewalk/safety project to connect pedestrians from Gates Mills Elementary School to the library, post office, town center, and city hall. Resolution No. 2023-34 authorizing the Mayor to accept a grant and to execute a project award agreement with the County for the village's Chagrin River Road Public Sidewalk Extension Project was brought before Council and approved. The \$157,531 grant was received later that year - essentially the lead money on this project. Mayor Siemborski's term in office has focused on getting the rest of the money needed for the project and asking the Village Engineer to draw up the plans. Three organizations were successfully solicited for a total of over \$100,000 and we have roughly \$250,000 in the bank for the sidewalk, signage, and downtown lighting. Since that time Village Engineer Courtney and his firm have put together a sidewalk plan by creating a sidewalk on the east side of River Road starting at the lower school parking lot, proceed south to short of Colvin, cross over River Road to the west side, cross over Glenwood and proceed south, cross the creek to the Community House parking lot and the sidewalk would continue in front of the Community House. We sent two or three letters to the affected homeowners earlier in the year to be transparent and to make the plans available. Questions have been raised by several residents, especially regarding safety, leading the Mayor to hire a safety consultant (GPD Group) to determine whether the plan design is safe. As of this afternoon, GPD sent a report and a conclusion that the sidewalk design is safe. So this is not a safety issue; it may be an aesthetics issue.

We have on the agenda two items that we're asking for Council's approval tonight - (1) to award the sidewalk construction contract to the lowest bidder and (2) to put out the contract for the pedestrian bridge. The bridge has a longer manufacturer lead time, and we need to get that ordered if we want to have any chance of having this done this year.

When GPD gave us the report earlier today, they indicated there is a slightly safer plan, and that is presented on the map in front of you tonight. That plan would

have the sidewalk proceeding and crosswalk proceeding farther south on the east side of River Road almost to the corner of Colvin. The reasoning is motorists are more likely to anticipate pedestrians crossing at intersections rather than at mid-block locations, and motorists turning from side streets have better visibility of pedestrians at crosswalks immediately adjacent to an intersection. This plan has some appeal - it allows students to walk down Colvin to River Road, not to the lower parking lot, and perhaps we don't need the sidewalk at all on the east side of River Road, satisfying some of the neighbor concerns about more sidewalks than we need.

Comments and questions from Councilmembers starts at 50:28:

Turner - Along with other Councilmembers, she was supportive of this project. However, the devil is always in the details. Seeing the drawing here for the first time, she too questions the need for a sidewalk on the east side of River Road from Colvin down to the lower school parking lot. Not many individuals walk down there. From talking with the school, she understands children walk down Colvin to River Road and then into the village. The positioning of the crosswalk is important for safety reasons, and it seems like that work is done. The pedestrian bridge is important because the closeness of the current walking path to River Road on the west side has been an issue for many years. What all is planned in terms of signage, lighting, street markings, etc. from a safety and aesthetic perspective?

Siemborski - Let's get all the questions, then we can figure out the answers.

Press - His recollection is when we first talked about this during the prior administration, the cost of this project was well under \$100,000. Now we're talking about something on the order of \$300,000.

Siemborski - There is no \$300,000. The construction cost for the sidewalk, pedestrian bridge, and lighting is \$255,656.

Steinbrink - His recollection is this has always been a six figure project. There were discussions a number of years ago to clean out and rent the old Ohio Bell building owned by the village next to the lower parking lot. Connecting that potential business all the way into the village was part of the driving reason for a sidewalk down there. He agrees that section of the sidewalk might not be necessary anymore.

Deacon - We did give Chagrin Valley Gig a right of first refusal to lease or buy the Ohio Bell building, but they have not acted. Are there any restrictions on the grant? Can we plan this the way we want? Are there timing restrictions?

Siemborski - There are no operating restrictions. The grant money needs to be spent by the end of 2026.

Deacon - Asked Village Engineer Courtney to describe at the appropriate time how the bridge piece works - how it protects pedestrians.

Atton - Agrees the stretch of sidewalk north of Colvin on the east side of Chagrin River Road is not necessary.

Onysko - In his effort to get ADA compliant with everything that's in our downtown buildings, he asked for a description of how kids get from the parking lot to the school right now.

Siemborski - There's two ways. Parent drop off/pick up is at the lower parking lot and the kids walk up/down the stairs. Buses go up Colvin and into the semicircle to drop off/pick up kids.

Onysko - By eliminating the stretch of sidewalk from the lower parking lot to Colvin, are we taking away the only capability for a wheelchair or stroller to access the school without maneuvering any stairs?

Steinbrink - All the handicap spots are in the parking lot up top behind the school, and in his opinion, there is lots of parking up there. The lower lot is for excess overflow parking.

Broome - There are much safer ways to make ADA access at the school. Colvin is very narrow. To maneuver a wheelchair from the lower lot down a sidewalk up Colvin would be an unsafe route.

At 1:01:12 Village Engineer Courtney shared his understanding that the pick up/drop off for summer camp occurs at the lower school parking lot much of the time. Running the sidewalk all the way to the lower parking lot was done so that when drop off/pick up occurs during the summertime, there would be access from the lower parking lot all the way to the Community House. Right now the kids walk along the edge of the street and then they cross over once they get down to Colvin and they walk in the grass to the lower parking lot. That's a little different than school time pedestrian activity.

At 1:01:57 the Village Engineer addressed Councilmember Turner's question. There would be one painted crosswalk at Colvin across Chagrin River Road and then also one across Glenwood at that same point. There would be ODOT compliant pedestrian signals installed that would be on demand. It is not a stop light. If somebody pushes the button, the lights are going to flash and warn oncoming northbound and southbound traffic that there is a pedestrian ready to enter into the crosswalk. That is the predominant way crosswalks are identified. Although not shown on these plans, he believes we should put up some crosswalk ahead signs in either approach coming northbound and southbound to give advanced warning as well.

At 1:02:54 the Village Engineer spoke to Councilmember Deacon's bridge question. Right now when the kids cross the creek, they walk in the street, on the bridge, for the road. This will be a pedestrian bridge that will be set behind the guardrail of that bridge on the west side of the road, and will be linked on either end by the sidewalk. Anybody walking across the creek will not have to walk in the street. They'll be able to go across a pedestrian bridge.

At 1:03:27 the Mayor invited the audience to comment at the microphone:

Dr. Birnbaum, Colvin and Chagrin River Road - Feels the Village Engineer told him this project would proceed whether he liked it or not, a claim the Village Engineer vehemently denies. Dr. Birnbaum offered the highest compliments to the community, surroundings, residents, and safety forces. He addressed the five- or six-week summer camp program because that's what the east side section of sidewalk is about. He witnesses daily the children are dropped off at the school, they play at the school playground, and then walk down Colvin in small groups always accompanied by an adult. They don't walk from the parking lot to downtown. It doesn't happen. They go up the stairs. The only cars that travel Colvin are those of the cautious people who live there. There has never been a single safety incident. He understands why we want to do this. If this is the path forward, he believes there are simple, sensible options - advanced signage to warn drivers or add a crossing guard for those 5-6 weeks. It isn't for the entire school year. Aesthetically you're going to ruin the ambiance of this neighborhood. It's a huge expense for something that isn't going to be used. He doesn't think there was a lot of transparency the way it was handled. He appreciates Councilmembers Turner and Atton and the Mayor took the time to come and

understand what he's saying. His property goes down a slope - put a sidewalk there and what happens with erosion and liability? We're actually putting children in harm's way by adding the east side sidewalk - next to a street where there's no curbs, where it's not safe to have a sidewalk, and it won't look right.

Jared Capella, Chagrin River Road - His property is going to be the most impacted. He thanked the Mayor and the Village Engineer for meeting with him about a month ago for over an hour to answer questions. At that time they discussed moving the utility pole at Glenwood and River Road in order to eliminate the big kink in the sidewalk, as shown on the plans before us tonight, leaving his fence parallel to the sidewalk. Aesthetically it will look better and it will prevent the demolition of his fence. He wonders what the status is on moving the pole.

Courtney - We bid the sidewalk straightened out and not touching your fence as an alternate. Following our meeting we reached out to First Energy about a cost to move the pole. This morning an update was received saying it sometimes takes up to 6 months to generate a number. He appealed to First Energy to get us a number sooner so that we can have a discussion with Mr. Capella about the cost of the pole and how that relates to the benefit of leaving the fence alone.

Jared Capella - Would you be willing to do a brick sidewalk so it matches the look and feel of the red brick sidewalks along Old Mill Road by the Historical Society and Hunt Club? It would look better than concrete.

Siemborski - We'd take a hard look at that and I'd be inclined to do so.

Jared Capella - He requested a safety report for the last ten years, and there have been no incidents to pedestrians walking between the school and the village. To him, as a resident and owner of the most impacted property, it sounds like we're spending a lot of money to solve a problem that doesn't exist. Council please consider that.

Ariel Capella, Chagrin River Road - Their fence proposed for relocation borders their main stretch of grass where their two young children play catch and kick a soccer ball. Their other two grassy spots aren't usable for those things. They would be losing a lot if the fence were moved.

Courtney - The intention is to not move the fence.

Ariel Capella - She walks to and from town with two children, stroller, and a puppy. Yes, there is one section by the bridge which gets a little close, especially because you're going with traffic. There is a speed limit sign right there hopefully slowing people down. She agrees additional signage for children crossing, putting in a speed bump, or a crossing guard might be useful. There's very few kids coming down Colvin and going into town after school. If the campers are the main issue, it seems they are very protected.

Siemborski - Having previously lived in the same home as the Capellas and experienced the daily walks across the bridge, he is happy to see the pedestrian bridge. He thinks it's a smart and safer thing to do.

Jamie Carracher, Colvin Road - He is a frequent walker between Colvin and downtown. The bridge, especially, is dangerous with only inches on each side. He walks with his dog and also his dad who walks crooked sometimes so he warns him - don't go 6 inches, traffic does not slow down. He has not seen the sidewalk plan and doesn't know what the solution is, but thinks there is a safety issue there.

Steinbrink - We have a number of crossing areas in the village center that aren't marked and don't have on demand flashing lights. Why is that a requirement here in this type of situation, and not elsewhere in the village?

Courtney - In a school zone.

Betsy Dvorak, Brigham Road - There was a safety assessment done and it was hot off the press today. There were two different sidewalk versions - one with the crosswalk over River Road short of Colvin Road (mid block) and one with the crosswalk over River Road almost at the intersection with Colvin Road. Did the safety assessment address both versions?

Siemborski - Yes, the report assessed both versions. Since the second version (close to the intersection) was GPD's preferred method, we copied and gave that to Council today.

Betsy Dvorak - She does not like the concept of accepting a grant for a specific purpose without knowing what our taxpayer responsibilities will be at some point in the future. There are trees and their roots can destroy the sidewalk. Are we going to destroy trees by virtue of the fact that we're erecting a sidewalk? There might be an answer, some unknown variables to consider. If we aren't talking about erecting the sidewalk for the purpose of getting the children from the school to the library, then what is the entire purpose? Since she is a taxpayer, she thinks it's important to have these questions answered. It's not a wise expenditure of our taxpayer money if the citizens of this community are going to be subsequently financially responsible for a structure that benefits parents that don't even live in this village, because very few children that live in this village actually attend GMES.

Siemborski - We can get the cost to maintain 140 feet of sidewalk as well as the various activities and purposes enhanced by the sidewalk plan.

Sean O'Hagan, Colvin Road - He and his son, wife, and dog walk around the village a lot. Thank you all for considering this. He has been excited about this project for years and remembers coming to voice his support as Council was considering resolutions to accept the county money. The dramatic speed change from 45 mph to 25 mph just before the rise over the creek, the motorists who rip through town regardless of speed limits, the poor visibility, the four-month early onset of darkness, and the weather are all considerations relevant to tonight's discussion. He has observed the teenage camp counselors doing exceptionally well, and has also observed this year a 6-year old running by himself across the street and the nearest counselor was 50 feet away. If he were a science teacher at GMES and he could get to the Chagrin River safely with a ratio of 20 kids to one teacher, he would be down there doing life science in that river but wouldn't dream of doing it right now. This is a really high impact change that we're considering for safety and what it means to be in our village.

Beth DeCapite, Colvin Road - Finds from walking that the intersection of Colvin and River Roads is dangerous. She remembers when there was a flashing traffic light at that intersection and the disappointment when it was taken down. The original purpose for promoting acceptance of the grant was not just summer camp. It would provide for the children at GMES to have safe access to the resources in the town center, the river, the arboretum.

Steve Willensky, Woodstock Road - Walks at least four mornings a week with his dog frequently going across the creek bridge. He has never seen an unattended kid crossing over to the school. He can think of a lot of other places in the village that are a lot more



dangerous - Gates Mills Blvd. His sense is this might be a nice thing to do, not a need to do thing. It's a lot of money. If you can just put the little pedestrian bridge over the creek to help people get across that one narrow section, that would probably fix it. He is not sure we need a sidewalk.

At 1:31:23 Mayor Siemborski suggested a motion to approve the pedestrian bridge so that we can get that ordered because of the lead time involved. He did not hear anybody object to the bridge, and several have raised safety concerns personally. With regard to the construction of the sidewalk, he suggests holding off on that to further evaluate the very recently received safety report and revised drawings, meet with Dr. Birnbaum and the Capellas to discuss aesthetics, and get some answers on the utility pole, the cost of pavers versus stamped concrete, and what it would look like if we started the sidewalk at the northeast corner of Colvin as opposed to running it further up north, coming back to Council at the next meeting for action on the sidewalk piece.

Moved to Agenda Item No. 23. **Resolution No. 2025-35 (First Reading)**

"A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter Into a Purchase Agreement with Contech Engineered Solutions LLC for a Prefabricated Pedestrian Bridge System and Declaring an Emergency".

Councilmember Turner moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2025-35 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion.

At 1:33:56 Councilmember Broome acknowledged the subject of the vote is the bridge only, but where is the connection? There would have to be a little piece of something, whether it's sidewalk or no sidewalk. Village Engineer Courtney explained the sidewalk project stops about 10 feet either side of where the bridge would go. We would purchase the bridge and abutments directly, no middleman, and then that 10-foot piece of sidewalk on either side would be done as a separate quote because that'll be less than \$75,000. We don't want to pick that work yet because we need to get the bridge ordered first so we know what foundation system we're going with. Councilmember Broome said there is going to be ingress and egress on and off the bridge. We can't just vote to order the bridge - we are necessarily committing to at least 10 feet on either side of the bridge to approach the bridge.

At 1:37:48, in response to Councilmember Press' question earlier, the Village Engineer explained the factors in determining the east side of Chagrin River Road is not an appropriate location for the pedestrian bridge.

Ayes: Atton, Steinbrink, Turner.

Nays: Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press.

Motion failed.

Resolution No. 2025-35 remains on first reading.

Moved to Agenda Item No. 24. **Resolution No. 2025-36 (First Reading)**

"A Resolution Accepting a Bid and Awarding a Contract for the Downtown Sidewalk Improvements; and Declaring an Emergency".

Resolution No. 2025-36 remains on first reading.

At 1:40:16 Councilmember Deacon asked if just doing the bridge would come out of the grant money. Yes.

At 1:40:31 the Mayor recapped and noted this does fall a bit short of the commitment that a previous Council made about extending it to the school parking lot. Councilmember Onysko wonders where the breakdown in communication occurred. This was proposed in the previous Mayor's term, worked all the way through to right now, and at the very last minute it appears we just piecemeal part of it off. If the previous Mayor is the one who brought it up, was it presented to the community? Is there a problem with the process? Councilmember Turner offered that conceptually we supported this. This is the first time we've seen a schematic and had the opportunity for residents to comment on that schematic.

c. 2025 Road Program starts at 1:46:02

We have substantially completed the road program which included Hillcreek and Andrews. We've done patchwork on Colvin - it will need a fair amount of work next year. Our Village Engineer has received an updated village roadway assessment report from PMG that will be brought up at the Service Committee meeting sometime in September. Village Engineer Courtney reported Council awarded a contract of \$850,000 for this years road program, and we should come in about \$810,000.

10. Financial Report attached and on the website starts at 1:47:10

Mayor Siemborski reported we are even or better on municipal income taxes and on real estate taxes than last year. There were no large overages on the expense side - those that have occurred are things like police dept overtime to cover an officer on medical leave, as well as additional fire dept time for weekend staffing.

Councilmember Press noted interest income is down this year \$17,000 relative to last year. One would expect interest income would be going up as we are going from a period of low interest rates into a period of high interest rates. The Mayor explained we record interest when it is received, unlike a corporation that accrues interest, so it could be timing. Good question. We will check and get back to you.

11. Clerk's Report - None

12. Treasurer's Report starts at 1:48:49

Treasurer Morgan reported on the bond portfolio. Year to date the return is 3.14% and the trailing year is 4.46%. That may not sound like a lot, but for a conservative bond portfolio, it's doing better than its benchmarks. The market value is \$8,670,207. We're in good shape there.

To Councilmember Press' point, the yield on the portfolio should improve. As the lower coupon bonds mature, we're investing in 5% coupons that we're buying at a discount.

13. Police Department Report attached and starts at 1:49:43

Councilmember Atton commented on the big jump in citations in July from May and June. Is there a reason? The Police Chief stated seasonality is the impetus.

14. Service Department Report attached and starts at 1:50:28

Councilmember Atton referred to the recycling rates in item number 3, and asked what is a good number, what is the best achieved. Service Director Biggert answered comparisons to other cities with curbside, leaf, and tree pickup is like comparing apples to oranges. For us, comparison to the past is the best measurement.

Councilmember Atton noted a lot of soil has been moved at 640 Chagrin River Road, but not much else. Service Director Biggert agreed and stated he has asked the contractor for a brief schedule of benchmarks and timing. The contractor advised today that the homeowner insisted on doing the excavation, footers, and brick work himself. The contractor's mason will be there Friday. The permit was issued at the time of the last Council meeting and runs nine months from the date of issue.

15. Fire Department Report attached and starts at 1:52:53

Fire Chief Majeski is attending to other fire department matters. If there are questions, please contact him.

16. Committee Reports starts at 1:53:18

Broadband (Councilmember Deacon)

- Chagrin Valley Gig engagement continues with their sponsorship of the September 21st 5K Fox Trot. You may have seen details in the Pink Sheet.
- Office hours will begin in September on Wednesdays (9/3, 9/10, 9/24) from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Village Hall Council Chambers. Information will be shared and questions answered. This is not for signing up.
- Engineering studies are underway. We still expect construction to begin at the first of the year. It will take 12 - 18 months. Village buildings will be done first.

Tree Canopy (Councilmember Atton) starts at 1:55:28

- Although we were unsuccessful in securing a county grant, they are eager to help us put together our own planning effort starting in the 4th quarter.

Wastewater (Councilmember Broome) starts at 1:56:03

- The committee met on the 11th and unanimously recommended proceeding to Council with the Hunt Club project.

Councilmember Press again suggested tying Gates Mills Elementary, the place with the highest density of sewage and the least amount of property, into the system. Village Engineer Courtney explained there could be a substantial capacity problem with the pump station behind Village Hall and with the wastewater treatment plant at the corner of Mayfield and River Roads. In addition, since you can't tie a gravity line from

the school into the force main that goes up to the wastewater treatment plant, the school would have to be pumped as well - at great expense. Councilmember Press asked if there isn't enough capacity to go around, then shouldn't we understand which of the two projects we get the biggest bang for the buck from. The Mayor said we don't know whether the school has any interest in that or not, and he will call Dr. Barnes or Scott Snyder.

**17. Ordinance No. 2025-18 (Revised 7/15/25) (Third Reading)** starts at 1:59:03

"An Ordinance Amending Chapter 131, Council, of the Codified Ordinances of the Village of Gates Mills" was read by the Mayor.

Law Director Hunt stated there were not any changes of any significance whatsoever from our draft that we had last meeting. He had asked at the last meeting, because Council had gotten the draft at the last minute, to look it over for a month and that's what you have in front of you. He did make a few wording changes here and there that are not substantive provisions.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Ordinance No. 2025-18, and Councilmember Press seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

**18. Resolution No. 2025-30 (Second Reading)** starts at 2:01:13

"A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into an Agreement with Municipal Collections of America, Inc. for Collection Agency Services" was read by the Mayor. There was good discussion last month about this and the collection efforts allowed in the state of Ohio.

Councilmember Turner moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2025-30 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Broome seconded the motion to suspend the rules.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Resolution No. 2025-30 and Councilmember Turner seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

**19. Resolution No. 2025-31 (First Reading)** starts at 2:03:38

"A Resolution Authorizing Additional Fees to be Paid to the Law Firm of Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP for Special Legal Services and Declaring an Emergency" was read by

Mayor Siemborski. In May Council approved up to \$36,000 for invoices on hand. Since that time another invoice for \$598 has been received. The Mayor requested approval for an additional \$2,000 in case another broadband question for Greg Dunn comes up.

Councilmember Broome moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2025-31 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Press seconded the motion to suspend the rules.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

Councilmember Deacon moved to approve Resolution No. 2025-31 and Councilmember Atton seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

Moved to Agenda Item No. 31. Executive Session starts at 2:05:12

Councilmember Broome moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of seeking legal advice from our Law Director relating to real estate matters. Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried. Executive Session commenced at 7:34 p.m.

Mayor Siemborski reconvened the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

20. **Resolution No. 2025-32 (First Reading)** starts at 2:50:10

“A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a First Amendment to the Indenture of Lease with Gavi’s River, LLC for the Coffee Shop at 1501 Chagrin River Road to Clarify Options to Renew the Term Thereof” was read by the Mayor. This amendment will align the coffee shop and the restaurant lease terms.

Councilmember Deacon moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2025-32 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion to suspend the rules.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

Councilmember Deacon moved to approve Resolution No. 2025-32 and Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None

Motion carried.

21. **Resolution No. 2025-33 (First Reading)** starts at 2:51:25

“A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a First Amendment to the Amended and Restated Indenture of Lease with Gavi’s River, LLC for the Restaurant at 1501 Chagrin River Road” was read by Mayor Siemborski. The Mayor felt several housekeeping matters needed to be documented in an amendment - hours of operation, the rate charged for sewage, the cost and sharing agreement of the Burton Court renovation, along with one or two other small things.

Councilmember Broome moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2025-33 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion to suspend the rules.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

Councilmember Deacon moved to approve Resolution No. 2025-33 and Councilmember Broome seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

22. **Ordinance No. 2025-34 (First Reading)** starts at 2:53:14

“An Ordinance Authorizing the Disposal by Sale of a Vehicle that is Unneeded for Village Purposes and Declaring an Emergency” was read by Mayor Siemborski.

Service Director Biggert stated we have taken delivery on a new 550 plow truck and the old 550 is surplus equipment with over 100,000 miles. Watts Excavating was the highest bidder at \$15,000. and is anxious for the truck, which is why we declare an emergency.

Councilmember Deacon moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Ordinance No. 2025-34 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion to suspend the rules.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

Councilmember Deacon moved to approve Ordinance No. 2025-34 and Councilmember Broome seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

23. **Resolution No. 2025-35 (First Reading)** - see 42:07

24. **Resolution No. 2025-36 (First Reading)** - see 42:07

25. **Resolution No. 2025-37 (First Reading)** starts at 2:54:35

“A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a Contract for Emergency Repair to the Old Mill Road at County Line Road Stone Culvert and Declaring an Emergency” was read by the Mayor.

Village Engineer Courtney explained we had two emergency repairs that became necessary when we found sinkholes in the road. The first one is on Brigham opposite Racebrook Road. A catch basin failed and there's a hole in the road just outside the edge line. Further investigation showed a 24" metal pipe about 75 feet long that has failed underneath the road. We solicited proposals from 6 contractors and got 3 numbers back. He recommends hiring Nerone & Sons for \$60,565.36 to repair the Brigham project.

We solicited 6 contractors for the Old Mill project. We only got one number back which was above the bid limit. The Village Engineer is seeking Council's approval to advertise for bids and have a recommendation back for next month. The Old Mill at County Line Road sinkhole is outside the limits of the pavement and we've got a little bit more time. It's a little less hazardous but still needs to be addressed. We have a 30" round stone culvert that must be over 100 years old. It's falling apart underneath the road. Soil and everything underneath the road is starting to wash into the culvert. We're going to line the culvert, grout around the outside of the pipe, and fix everything up so it's watertight again.

The Law Director suggested Resolution No. 2025-37 be kept on first reading. There are blanks within it, but the resolution will be ready next month after we get competitive bids and hopefully have a contractor that Council can approve. We do need a motion to authorize competitive bidding for the Old Mill Road/County Line Road stone culvert.

Councilmember Deacon asked if the Old Mill rickety pipe railing would be addressed as well. Village Engineer Courtney replied we don't anticipate doing anything with the wall or railing, but he will take a look.

Councilmember Broome made a motion to authorize the Village Engineer to bid the Old Mill Road at County Line Road stone culvert emergency repair. Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Resolution No. 2025-37 remains on first reading.

26. **Resolution No. 2025-38 (First Reading)** starts at 3:00:23

“A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a Contract for Emergency Repairs to the Brigham Road at Racebrook Road Storm Sewer and Catch Basin and Declaring an Emergency” was read by Mayor Siemborski.

Councilmember Broome moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Resolution No. 2025-38 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Steinbrink seconded the motion to suspend the rules.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Resolution No. 2025-38 and Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

Mayor Siemborski commented the Brigham and the Old Mill emergency repairs are not expected costs, but they are not surprising costs. We seem to have those kinds of things come up a couple times a year. Service Director Biggert and Village Engineer Courtney are anticipating the surplus from the road program and surplus from the guardrail program should cover probably close to 98% of both the Brigham and Old Mill projects.

**27. Ordinance No. 2025-39 (First Reading) starts at 3:01:55**

“An Ordinance to Amend Section 318.07 of the Traffic Code of the Village of Gates Mills to Increase the Civil Penalty for Exceeding the Speed Limit When Recorded by a Traffic Law Photo-Monitoring Device” was read by the Mayor. The memorandum in your packet suggests increasing the first tier penalty from \$135 to \$155. This \$20 increase brings the penalty established in 2023 to the 2025 levels of other communities, and \$5 is to recover the increased court filing fee in 2024. The other tiers would not change.

Councilmember Press asked if lowering the threshold is being considered, and the Police Chief responded no.

Councilmember Deacon moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Ordinance No. 2025-39 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Atton seconded the motion to suspend the rules.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

Councilmember Broome moved to approve Ordinance No. 2025-39 and Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion.

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



Nays: None  
Motion carried.

**28. Ordinance No. 2025-40 (First Reading) starts at 3:04:24**

“An Ordinance to Amend Section 318.07 of the Traffic Code of the Village of Gates Mills to Increase the Civil Penalty for Exceeding the Speed Limit in a School Zone When Recorded by a Traffic Law Photo-Monitoring Device” was read by the Mayor. Per the memorandum included in your packet, in late April a traffic study by Gatso was done at our request at St. Francis, and the study indicated high levels of speeding ranging from 20-40 mph during arrival and dismissal, in both directions. We’ve checked the charges for school zone speeding in other municipalities and we are in alignment with those - \$200 starting at 6-10 miles over the speed limit, although we would start charging at 8 miles over, and then increasing fines at tiers 2 and 3.

Police Chief Minichello indicated the cameras would be on 24/7 in both directions. He doesn’t expect to see a large volume of citations covering the period outside arrival and dismissal times when the speed limit is 45 mph.

Questions and comments from Councilmembers start at 3:07:10:

Steinbrink - He understood there was not an excessive amount of speeding at St. Francis when the study was done in April. Did he misunderstand?

Minichello - Outside school zone hours, he agrees, there is not an excessive amount of speeding. During school hours, he does not agree. We didn’t talk too much about during school hours.

Steinbrink - Do you have numbers to share with us?

Minichello - Yes, but not here now.

Steinbrink - St. Francis is pretty well set back. There aren’t that many kids walking near the road. Did we also look at Gilmour and Gates Mills Elementary?

Minichello - The challenge with Gilmour is we only have one side of the street. We don’t see nearly the volume at Gates Mills Elementary as we do on Mayfield Road.

Steinbrink - Have we looked at targeted enforcement at St. Francis during school hours?

Minichello - Yes. You see a violator, go after the car, and by the time you get stopped, the car is at Mayfield and West Hill starting to go down the hill. That becomes a problem.

Deacon - The ordinance is just for the fine, but not for Gatso to do the camera?

Minichello - This is just the fine. Gatso will be providing the camera and technology. There will be an amendment to the existing contract on the agenda next month.

Broome - Is concerned that focusing all on Mayfield Road is going to push traffic to other roads that are less equipped to handle more traffic - Wilson Mills, Brigham, Old Mill. Eventually maybe we’re going to end up with cameras on other roads.

Steinbrink - He is not in favor of cameras on other roads.

Press - Why do we care about safety on Mayfield Road and not care about safety in the village?

Minichello - It’s important to note we are probably at least 3 months out.

Councilmember Press moved that the rules requiring ordinances to be read on three different days be suspended and that Ordinance No. 2025-40 be placed on its final passage. Councilmember Onysko seconded the motion to suspend the rules.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Turner.  
Nays: Steinbrink  
Motion carried.

Councilmember Onysko moved to approve Ordinance No. 2025-40 and Councilmember Deacon seconded the motion.

Councilmember Atton noted the reference to Gates Mills Heights at the top of page two, section two. We will fix that.

Ayes: Atton, Broome, Deacon, Onysko, Press, Steinbrink, Turner.  
Nays: None  
Motion carried.

29. Other Council Matters starts at 3:14:05

Councilmember Onysko found the sidewalk vote was not an easy decision. It put him in an awkward position to go against the people prior to him who did all the work and give consideration to last minute comments. He would like to know when the process started and when the neighbors were notified.

At 3:17:11 Councilmember Press mentioned sound cameras are gaining popularity. Sound cameras detect very loud vehicles, like 85 decibels, primarily motorcycles or cars that have had their mufflers modified. Hunting Valley has identified a couple of different service providers, but hasn't agreed to do it yet. They cost about \$25,000. We have had noise complaints near the intersection of River and Brigham Roads, and we have had complaints on Sherman. We ought to talk about it at a future meeting.

At 3:18:29 Councilmember Press recalled in May 2024 Council passed a charter amendment motion by a vote of five to two. The purpose of the amendment was that if Council makes a significant change to voting, that had to be ratified by the voters. Then in February 2025, in his absence, Council voted to table the motion. He is giving notice that at the September meeting he will make a motion to untable it.

Councilmember Press would also like to correct the record. One of his colleagues said in the minutes of the February meeting that he felt the May motion that passed 5:2 was sprung on Council at the 11th hour. Councilmember Press checked the record and that motion was discussed at three prior Council meetings. Nothing was sprung on anyone. Councilmember Steinbrink stated that's incorrect. The language was sent out to Council 30 minutes before the meeting. Are you going to give us material to review in advance of the September meeting? What are you going to send us? It would be helpful if we all had information that you feel pertinent to discuss.

30. Business from the Audience - None

31. Executive Session - see 2:05:12 Motion to enter an executive session to receive legal advice from counsel regarding a real estate acquisition was made by Councilmember Broome and seconded by Councilmember Deacon.

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

Nays: None  
Motion carried.

The Mayor reconvened the meeting at 2:50:11 on the video.

32. 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