

**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

December 1, 2025 7:00 PM

Call to Order – Mayor Thompson

7:00 PM

Village Representatives in Attendance

Mayor Thompson
Councilwoman Heather Phillips
Councilman Edward Shimborske
Councilman Dan Wimmers
Clerk/Treasurer Mark Mockensturm

Councilwoman Dana Dunbar
Village Administrator April McDonald

Citizen Attendees

Nasrin Afjeh
Yarko Kuk
Darren Moore

Phillip Runyan
Elena Stemaszak

Mayor Thompson introduced Mr. Moore, who will be joining Council next year. Mayor Thompson thanked him for his willingness to serve the community.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Phillips and seconded by Mrs. Dunbar to approve the minutes from November 10, 2025, Council meeting as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments

Mrs. Afjeh stated that, in her opinion, Ms. Phillips and Mrs. Dunbar withdrew their support from Mrs. O'Connell, who had previously intended to run for Mayor. She expressed concern about the current Mayor's fiscal responsibility and stated that several recent resignations were, in her view, due to difficulties working with him. She asked Council to vote against items brought forward by the Mayor today and expressed concern that additional problems may arise if the situation is not addressed. She stated that she did not receive her packet on Friday because no one was available in the office.

Mrs. Stelmaszak indicated that she submitted a public records request earlier today for the agenda attachments but did not receive the information yet. She expressed that members of the community are interested in greater collaboration with Council; however, this is challenging when information is not readily accessible. She noted that posting agenda materials in advance would simplify access for residents, eliminating the need for formal records requests.

She also addressed the running projects list, which was mentioned at a Council meeting approximately six months ago. She recalled that Ms. Phillips had suggested tracking the list publicly so the community could follow ongoing projects without needing to attend meetings to ask for updates. She stated she would like to know where that initiative stands and would like to see it implemented.

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Additionally, she noted that last month was the first time she became aware that Flock cameras were installed in the community. She stated she would like to understand their purpose, how the collected data is being used, and how the community is funding the system.

Mr. Runyan stated that at last month's meeting there was discussion regarding transparency with the community. He shared that Mrs. Stelmaszak had asked him to participate in these efforts. He stated concerns that items are brought up and then seem to disappear, and that there is currently no effective way for residents to interact with Council. He explained the goal is to create a better dialogue with the community as a whole by receiving information from Council and presenting it in a more accessible way, possibly through social media, which would allow for more ongoing discussion.

He noted that often there is no understanding of why decisions are made, and used the Flock cameras as an example, stating that clearer explanations of topics discussed at meetings would benefit residents. He stated that the current format only allows him to speak at Council without real dialogue in return, and he hopes to help create a space that allows for more back-and-forth communication. He added that while questions are important, having answers is equally important. Mayor Thompson responded that there was a time when more dialogue occurred during meetings, and while it was welcomed, the practical realities eventually made it counterproductive. As a result, citizen comments were changed to a comment period only, rather than a question-and-answer format. Mr. Runyan stated that he respects and understands that, acknowledging that a Q&A during meetings could limit Council's ability to complete its work.

Mayor Thompson noted that discussions have taken place about finding a way to achieve the best of both worlds, though a solution has not yet been reached. He stated that the room is designed to foster give-and-take, and for a long time that was how meetings operated, but it has recently become difficult to accomplish. The Village is working on identifying a format that would allow for more productive dialogue.

Mr. Runyan clarified that the intent would be to provide residents with an easier way to understand what is happening in the community and a simple format to access that information.

Finance & Future Planning

Ms. McDonald shared the most recent financial recap, which was as of November 26. Since then, we have received \$219,812 from RITA, which will put us over the revenue budget for income tax for the year. An additional deposit is expected around December 15. Interest income has not yet been counted, as we are currently receiving November's bank statements.

She reported that \$73,740 has been expended for the three walk path lighting projects. Some funds are still being held due to pending dimming controls; we are waiting to hear back from the contractor regarding this issue. On tonight's agenda, there are several items of financial legislation, including authorization for a bucket truck. Additionally, the 2026 Nature Conservancy contract came in at \$18,000, the same amount as the 2025 contract. This includes consideration for the floristic assessment.

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Ms. McDonald noted that once the financials are closed for the month, they will be sent out.

Human Resources – Ms. Phillips

No Report

Safety – Mrs. Dunbar

No Report

Services & Environment – Mrs. Greeley

Ms. McDonald reported that the latest deer cull reached 23 out of the 30 deer allocated for this year. Mayor Thompson shared that he received a call last week from a resident expressing a desire to increase the number of deer to be culled. He noted that the current year's limit is 30, up from 15 last year.

Mr. Wimmers commented that last year's cull was completed within two weeks. Mayor Thompson observed that this year the cull reached 18 deer relatively quickly, but progress slowed afterward. Mayor Thompson noted that there does not seem to be significant interest in changing the allocated number of deer. Mr. Wimmers added that there was considerable debate about increasing the limit to 30 and expressed his personal view that 30 is an appropriate number.

Streets & Bridges – Mr. Shimborske

Mr. Wimmers inquired about the status of Indian Road, noting that although the area was redone, barrels and cones have remained in place ever since. Ms. McDonald stated she is attempting to obtain an update from the county, as the project is a county repair. She explained that the county was originally expected to obtain three estimates before hiring a contractor. She added that the Village is very concerned about winter plowing in that area. Ms. McDonald reported that Mr. Pelland has been reaching out to the county almost weekly for updates. Mayor Thompson stated he contacted a county official last week and requested further review of the issue but received an unsatisfactory response. Mr. Wimmers noted his understanding that asphalt contractors have not been paid because the work is not yet complete. Ms. McDonald confirmed that the contractors have not invoiced the Village.

Mayor Thompson explained there have been recent personnel changes in the county department responsible for the storm system, and those changes have not resulted in improved service. He stated that the Village intentionally held off on paving because the county still needs to address underlying sewer issues; paving beforehand would risk the new pavement being torn up.

Mr. Wimmers stated it is now too late in the season to pave, regardless. Mayor Thompson added that the asphalt plants are likely closed but noted that this should not prevent the county from completing the necessary underground work and performing patching in the interim. He emphasized that the Village has made the county aware of its frustration with the delays.

Mr. Shimborske asked whether the county would be providing the Village with an alternative plan. Mayor Thompson stated that the Village would continue to follow up with county officials. He

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added that a suggestion had been made for the Village to consider completing the repairs itself and then billing the county for the work.

Mayor Thompson noted that, over the years, the Village has worked to build strong relationships with the county and that the county has historically been very responsive and has completed a significant amount of repair work. However, responsiveness has declined recently, contributing to the current frustrations.

Utilities, Equipment, Buildings & Grounds – Mr. Wimmers

Mr. Wimmers reported that the committee has not met; however, last week he visited the service building with Mr. Pelland to assess its condition. He noted definite roofing issues, as well as additional structural concerns that will require future planning. Specifically, the back wall appears to be separating.

Regarding the roof, Mr. Wimmers stated they are exploring alternative options used on other commercial flat-roof buildings, including newer technologies. He added that the existing roof structure is uncertain due to the extensive tar from past repairs, which may complicate installation of a new roof. In the interim, a temporary “band-aid” solution may be necessary.

Mayor Thompson noted that funds have been budgeted for roof work. Ms. McDonald stated she is waiting for an alternative roofing material quote and will send to Council once received.

Solicitors Report – Mrs. Tharp

No Report

Administrator’s Report

Ms. McDonald thanked Mr. Shimborske and Mrs. Dunbar for their service, noting that this is the final meeting of the year and the conclusion of their terms. She expressed appreciation for their professionalism, guidance, and contributions to the community. She reported the White Field soil sampling will take place next week, after which the engineer will develop a plan based on the results.

Ms. McDonald added that she is still awaiting an update regarding the dimming issues with the walk-path lighting. She has not received any additional complaints, and asked that any further concerns be shared with her.

Mayor’s Report

Mayor Thompson stated that he would also like to recognize Mr. Shimborske and Mrs. Dunbar. He expressed his appreciation for their efforts while emphasizing that the community has greatly benefited from their contributions. He thanked them for stepping forward and dedicating their time, especially at a time when fewer individuals are willing to do so.

Mrs. Dunbar stated that serving on Council has been rewarding, and that she has learned a great deal. She expressed her appreciation for everyone who has supported her throughout this journey and shared that it has given her better insight into how to serve the community.

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Old Business

No Old Business

New Business

Mr. Wimmers stated that he would like to table the cybersecurity policy resolution at this time. He requested clearer definitions within the policy, particularly regarding responsibilities in the event of a cybersecurity breach. He noted that the current draft is vague about which parties, such as contracted outside providers are responsible for specific aspects, and it also references “executive management” without identifying whether that refers to the Village Administrator, the Mayor, or another position. He emphasized the need for greater accountability in the policy.

Mr. Shimborske asked whether he had consulted with Ms. McDonald or Mrs. Tharp regarding the sections he found unclear. Mayor Thompson stated that Mrs. Tharp could provide background. Mrs. Tharp explained that a new state law requires cities to have a cybersecurity policy in place by January 1. The law is vague and identifies required elements but leaves implementation details to each municipality. Ms. McDonald contacted the Village’s I.T. company Nemsys, which is aware of the new requirement, and asked them to develop a policy based on Ohio’s legislative framework, which again is vague and lacks a promised state template.

The Ohio Legislature was expected to issue clearer guidance but did not, leaving municipalities and cybersecurity companies to interpret the requirements. Mrs. Tharp noted that while cities must comply by January 1, townships have until June or July; villages fall into an unclear category, further contributing to confusion. Mr. Wimmers asked what repercussions might occur if the policy is not in place by January 1. Ms. McDonald stated that the guidance is unclear but noted it may result in an audit finding.

Mr. Shimborske asked whether the policy could be modified after adoption. Mrs. Tharp confirmed that it can be amended and recommended adopting a policy now to meet the state requirement, then making updates as additional information becomes available. Mr. Wimmers asked whether Council could set a timeline for review possibly within three months, to consider amendments; Mrs. Tharp agreed that would be appropriate.

Mayor Thompson stated there appears to be a need to pass the policy before year end, and that it can later be amended or replaced. Ms. McDonald confirmed that, if adopted, the policy takes effect January 1, and any new information from herself, Nemsys, or Mrs. Tharp would be brought back to Council for amendment.

Mayor Thompson suggested assigning the matter to a committee, noting that cybersecurity is not his area of expertise. Mayor Thompson noted there may be residents with relevant expertise who would be willing to help. He suggested adopting the policy now to meet the requirement, then returning in the first quarter of 2026 with recommended amendments or, if necessary, a new resolution.

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Mr. Wimmers reiterated that the resolution is vague and appears to be only a template. Mrs. Dunbar stated that while the policy must be somewhat broad to avoid naming individuals, positions and responsibilities still need clarification, particularly regarding the term “executive management.”

Mrs. Tharp clarified that the resolution is not a contract with the Village’s cybersecurity provider; rather, the state requires the Village to adopt an internal policy, separate from its Nemsys contract. Mr. Wimmers expressed concern that the policy does not identify responsibilities that logically fall to Nemsys. Ms. McDonald explained that employees cannot install programs without the Nemsys intervention and administrative access, which places responsibility for those functions on Nemsys.

Mrs. Dunbar noted that such policies are common and that the state appears to be pushing municipalities toward consistent standards due to the sensitivity of information they handle. She referenced the Village’s transition of tax collection to RITA, which reduces local handling of personal identifiable information. She suggested that the Village also consider outsourcing payroll in the future, as it involves handling sensitive data such as social security numbers. Mr. Shimborske suggested referring the matter to Mr. Wimmers’ committee, with Mrs. Tharp forwarding any new information, and allowing the committee to determine when amendments should be made. Mr. Wimmers agreed and Mayor Thompson will assign it to the Building & Grounds Committee, with cybersecurity as a subcommittee focus, gathering input from Nemsys and the Village’s liability insurance provider.

Mayor Thompson expressed hope that by the first quarter of 2026 the Village would have recommendations for amendments. He also noted that cybersecurity is continually evolving and the policy will require ongoing review. Mrs. Dunbar agreed, describing it as a “living document,” and stated that routine review, mock security exercises, and employee training will be important. Ms. Phillips asked whether other technology upgrades such as project management systems or Joint Rec systems should also be addressed by the same committee for consistency. Ms. Phillips noted it is something for Council to think about moving forward.

Mr. Wimmers stated that when Council reviews ordinances and resolutions, the process often moves directly to reading the legislation and taking a vote. He requested adding a segment before each resolution to allow members time to ask questions, particularly since some items are first received the Friday before the meeting. He believes this would provide an opportunity for clearer understanding before voting.

Mayor Thompson agreed that the suggestion makes sense and noted that, perhaps due to the pace of moving through the agenda, that discussion period has not always been fully utilized. He stated that, in his view, the opportunity for discussion has always existed prior to reading the legislation, and he welcomed ensuring it is clearly provided going forward.

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Ordinances & Resolutions

Mayor Thompson read Resolution 2025-20:

Resolution 2025-20:	Authorizing the hiring of legal counsel for The Village of Ottawa Hills consistent with the provisions of Section 733.48 of the Ohio Revised Code.
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Motion to waive three readings:

Motion –	Mr. Shimborske
Second –	Ms. Phillips
	Unanimous Approval

Motion to adopt legislation:

Motion –	Mr. Shimborske
Second –	Ms. Phillips

Yeas (4) –	Ms. Phillips, Mr. Shimborske, Mrs. Dunbar, Mr. Wimmers
Nays (0) –	

Mayor Thompson read Resolution 2025-21:

Resolution 2025-21:	Adopting a cybersecurity policy.
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Motion to waive three readings:

Motion –	Mr. Shimborske
Second –	Mr. Wimmers
	Unanimous Approval

Motion to adopt legislation:

Motion –	Mr. Shimborske
Second –	Mr. Wimmers

Yeas (4) –	Ms. Phillips, Mr. Shimborske, Mrs. Dunbar, Mr. Wimmers
Nays (0) –	

Mayor Thompson clarified that Council will adopt the cybersecurity policy with the understanding that it fulfills Ohio's requirements, while also committing to the creation of a subcommittee to review, revise, and improve the policy moving forward.

Mrs. Dunbar asked whether staff is prepared for implementation, noting that the policy takes effect January 1. Ms. McDonald stated that Nemsys, the Village's IT provider, is developing training

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materials, although the policy itself provides limited guidance on training requirements. She added that many municipalities are in the same situation, and that few models or templates exist to reference, making it challenging to find examples to mirror when drafting the resolution.

Mr. Wimmers asked whether the service department uses Village-owned cell phones. Ms. McDonald stated they do not; they use walkie-talkies instead. Mrs. Tharp noted that she will send Mr. Wimmers documents from OMAA that outline required policy components and served as part of her reference material. Mr. Wimmers asked whether other states have enacted similar requirements; Mrs. Tharp stated she was unsure but would research the question.

Mayor Thompson read Resolution 2025-22:

Resolution 2025-22:	Authorizing the purchase of one bucket truck.
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Motion to waive three readings:

Motion –	Mr. Shimborske
Second –	Ms. Phillips
	Unanimous Approval

Motion to adopt legislation:

Motion –	Mr. Shimborske
Second –	Ms. Phillips

Yeas (4) –	Ms. Phillips, Mr. Shimborske, Mrs. Dunbar, Mr. Wimmers
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Nays (0) –

Ms. McDonald stated that the bucket truck under consideration is the same one approved by the Finance Committee and included in the 2026 budget during the October budget meeting. She noted that the Village purchases through the State of Ohio Cooperative Purchasing Program, ensuring state-bid pricing or lower. She added that staff attempted to obtain a trade-in value for the current van-style bucket truck; however, due to the vehicle being more than 15 years old, the dealer declined. Once the new truck is received, Council will need to pass an ordinance declaring the old vehicle surplus so it can be sold.

Mr. Wimmers asked whether the current bucket truck is a van. Ms. McDonald confirmed, adding that it does not reach the height capability of the industrial truck being proposed. Mr. Wimmers asked what tasks require the service department to have a bucket truck. Ms. McDonald explained that the department intends to take on more tree trimming, especially emergency trimming, which is not included in the Village's tree-trimming contract. The truck would also be used for installing flower baskets and any work requiring elevated access. She added that she is interested in what the 2026 contractor cost savings will be, noting that the Village must currently call contractors such as Blanchard for emergency tree work because staff lacks the necessary equipment.

Mayor Thompson read Resolution 2025-23:

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Resolution 2025-23:

Authorizing a 2026 contract with the Nature Conservancy for services related to implementation of the environmental strategic plan and other functions.

Motion to waive three readings:

Motion – Mrs. Dunbar
Second – Mr. Shimborske
Unanimous Approval

Motion to adopt legislation:

Motion – Mrs. Dunbar
Second – Mr. Shimborske

Yeas (4) – Ms. Phillips, Mr. Shimborske,
Mrs. Dunbar, Mr. Wimmers

Nays (0) –

Ms. McDonald stated that this is the Village’s annual contract with The Nature Conservancy, and the price for 2026 will remain the same as 2025 at \$18,000. The Service & Environment Committee requested a floristic assessment, as one has not been completed since 2021. She noted that the 2021 assessment was comprehensive, and a new one will assist with the deer cull by eliminating the need for an aerial deer count.

Mayor Thompson noted that The Nature Conservancy provides significant support beyond land management, most recently assisting with a grant application and securing funding. Mrs. Dunbar stated that the contract includes work in four specific areas. Ms. McDonald referred to Exhibit A on page 6, which outlines the description of services through page 10. These services include treatment efforts in areas such as Epworth, the sled hill, and the Evergreen area, with a focus on invasive plant control. This year, work also addressed concerns related to the spotted lanternfly.

Ms. McDonald stated that the Conservancy manages the Village’s “Adopt an Area” sites, including Epworth and the sled hill, and is working to contact the Toledo Zoo regarding the Monarch butterfly signage and monitoring. They also assisted with coordinating the bamboo harvest project with the school and the zoo, through which bamboo was collected for the red pandas, an experience she described as very positive. Additionally, the Conservancy prepares four articles annually for the Village. She will forward the 2025 detailed scope of work summarizing their 2025 efforts once it is received.

Mayor Thompson highlighted two major recent projects completed through the partnership: restoration work behind Epworth Church two years ago and improvements at the base of the sled hill more recently. He stated that these projects would not have occurred without the ongoing contract and that the relationship has yielded significant benefits, including a \$400,000 grant for sled hill improvements. Ms. McDonald added that community engagement has also been strong, noting that both Ms. Phillips and Mrs. Dunbar have attended Conservancy-led classes, several of

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which were well received. Mrs. Dunbar noted that the Conservancy will also be working in the cemetery, which contains many invasive species.

Executive Session

At 8:01 PM Mr. Shimborske made a motion to move into an executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee & for the purpose of discussing the potential purchase and/or sale of real property Mrs. Dunbar seconded the motion, which passed unanimously

At 9:02 PM Council returned to regular session.

Next Meeting Date

January 13, 2026

Adjournment

9:03 PM



Mayor Thompson