

**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

February 2, 2026 7:00 PM

Call to Order – Mayor Thompson

7:00 PM

Village Representatives in Attendance

Mayor Thompson
Councilwoman Wendy Greeley
Councilman Mark Mockensturm
Councilman Darren Moore
Councilwoman Heather Phillips

Councilman Edward Shimborske III
Councilman Dan Wimmers
Village Administrator April McDonald
Solicitor Kati Tharp

Citizen Attendees

Nasrin Afjeh
Yarko Kuk
Peggy Lewis
Nate Roque
Jessica Roque
Sue Reuther
John G. Lewis
Christina Kwiatkowski
Emery Geosits
Shelly Overmyer

Larry Nameche
Jason Stelmaszak
Elena Stemaszak
John Lewis
Will Lewis
Christine Seehoher
Matt Kwiatkowski
Phillip Runyan
Bob Overmyer
Chris Sargent

Acting Clerk

A motion was made by Mr. Shimborske and seconded by Ms. Phillips to appoint Ms. McDonald as acting clerk for the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinances

Mayor Thompson read Ordinance 2026-1

Ordinance 2026-1

Confirming the appointment of Carl Reuther as Police Chief of the Ottawa Hills Police Department and waiving the residency requirement as described in section 737.15 of the Ohio Revised Code, and declaring an emergency.

Motion to waive three readings:

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

Motion to declare an emergency:

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

**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
February 2, 2026 7:00 PM**

Motion to adopt legislation:

Motion – Mr. Shimborske
Second – Mr. Wimmers

Yeas (6) – Mrs. Greeley, Mr. Mockensturm
Mr. Moore, Ms. Phillips,
Mr. Shimborske, Mr. Wimmers

Nays (0) –

Swearing In

Mayor Thompson introduced Carl Reuther and swore him in as the new Ottawa Hills Chief of Police.

Proclamation

Mayor Thompson presented a proclamation to Dana Dunbar and thanked her for her many years of service as councilwoman.

Mayor Thompson presented a proclamation to John Lewis and thanked him for his many years of service as councilman.

Mayor Thompson introduced Emery Geosits, who is the newest member of the Board of Education.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Phillips and seconded by Mr. Mockensturm to approve the minutes from January 13, 2026, Council meeting, as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments

Mrs. Afjeh stated that the minutes from last month do not accurately reflect her comments and differ from what she said. She questioned why her statements were not recorded as spoken. Mrs. Afjeh also stated Council should not pass the aggregation legislation on the agenda tonight. Additionally, Mrs. Afjeh expressed concern that council continues to distribute proclamations on behalf of all citizens, stating that not all citizens share those views.

Council Action

Ms. McDonald stated a motion is needed for the 2026 Edgevale Road project and that the motion would authorize the project to go out to bid in coordination with the engineer. She explained that the bid notice will be published in The Toledo Blade for three consecutive weeks and that a question-and-answer period will be provided during which contractors may submit questions to the engineer. Ms. McDonald noted that she does not yet know the exact date the notice will be posted but stated that a motion is needed to authorize the engineer to proceed.

A motion was made by Mr. Shimborske and seconded by Mr. Wimmers to accept bids for the 2026 road improvement projects. The motion passed unanimously.

**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

February 2, 2026 7:00 PM

Mayor Thompson stated that the project involves the reconstruction of Edgevale Road, which will include replacement of pavement, curb, and sidewalks as needed, along with installation of a new water line. He explained the existing water line is approximately 100 years old, undersized, and made of cast iron, and that its replacement will provide a significant improvement. He noted that Lucas County Sanitary Engineering is responsible for the water line portion of the project and that the Ohio Public Works Commission is a funding partner, providing approximately \$300,000 in grant funding and an additional \$300,000 in a zero-interest, 10-year loan. He added that the project will be extensive and likely disruptive for nearby residents during construction.

Mayor Thompson then introduced the need for adoption of Council rules. He explained that after consulting with Solicitor Tharp, several portions require revision, and he recommended using the meeting for discussion and bringing back a more finalized version for adoption at the next meeting. Mr. Wimmers asked whether Council could adopt the rules as written and amend them later. Mrs. Tharp advised against that approach, stating it would be better to review and discuss proposed changes before adoption. She noted she had made additional revisions and felt those should be discussed first, but agreed it would be helpful to begin reviewing items at this meeting.

Mayor Thompson stated that some administrative changes are straightforward, but his main concern relates to the committee section and ensuring clarity around roles and responsibilities. He explained that, as a statutory village operating under the Ohio Revised Code, Council serves as the legislative authority while the Mayor serves as the executive authority. He noted that committees are intended to review matters and bring recommendations back to Council, not to direct operations. Mr. Shimborske stated that Ms. Phillips' comments at the previous meeting also prompted further thought about roles, and he would like to discuss some of those items under New Business. Mayor Thompson agreed that it is important for everyone to have a clear understanding of responsibilities.

Mayor Thompson expressed concern that some of the proposed committee language, particularly references to committees "overseeing" certain functions, could create confusion about authority. He noted the current committee structure has existed since 1991 and has worked well, and suggested maintaining flexibility without detailed definitions. Mr. Moore asked what the expected work product from committees is. Mayor Thompson explained that committees typically review matters and return to Council with recommendations, citing the annual budget process as an example.

Mr. Moore asked for clarification on the purpose of a work session. Mrs. Tharp noted the term had only recently been defined. Ms. Phillips asked if it functions as a Committee of the Whole, and Mayor Thompson confirmed that work sessions serve that purpose, allowing Council to discuss planning matters without taking legislative action. Mrs. Tharp noted her definition may need to be updated. Mayor Thompson said work sessions would be held as needed and confirmed that minutes would be taken. Ms. Phillips suggested referring to them as "Committee of the Whole work sessions," which Mrs. Tharp agreed made sense and asked if that language should be placed under Article II – Meetings.

**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

February 2, 2026 7:00 PM

Mayor Thompson then reviewed proposed changes to the Hearing of the Public section, including adding time for public comment at both the beginning and end of meetings and implementing a sign-in process. The sign-in would request a name, address, whether the speaker represents an agency, and the topic they wish to address. Ms. Phillips suggested making the topic optional, which Mayor Thompson agreed was reasonable. Mr. Mockensturm asked when individuals would need to sign in, and Mayor Thompson stated they could do so upon arrival and would not be limited from speaking. Mr. Wimmers asked if someone who had not signed in initially could still speak later, and Mrs. Tharp explained that the sign-in is intended as a request to help organize speakers, not a strict requirement. Ms. Phillips added that it also helps with preparing accurate minutes, and confirmed that not signing in would not prevent someone from speaking.

Mrs. Tharp noted she revised the sign-in language to simply request a name and address, as the previous wording had been confusing. Mayor Thompson added that changes to Article VII still require further review. He concluded by stating that the rules would not be adopted at this meeting and would instead be brought back for consideration at the next meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Mockensturm and seconded by Mrs. Greeley to table the adoption or re-adoption of Council rules. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance & Future Planning – Mr. Mockensturm

Mr. Mockensturm reported that, as it is still the beginning of the year, financial activity has been limited. In January, approximately \$236,000 in municipal income tax collections were received, while the total budgeted amount for 2026 is \$4,534,000, meaning collections have a long way to go. He noted that revenue typically increases once tax filing season begins. Additional revenues received included \$9,081 for Village Life, \$16,400 from the gas excise tax, and \$15,000 in real estate levy funds.

On the expense side, the Village is currently operating below budget, with only about 4% expended so far. However, Mr. Mockensturm cautioned that this early snapshot appears more favorable than it will later in the year, as expenses are just beginning. As of the end of January, total funds across all accounts were approximately \$8,996,000. Of that amount, \$3,400,000 is already encumbered, leaving an available balance of \$5,597,000. He stated that he would like to begin charting these figures month to month to better track financial trends.

Speaking in his role as Finance Chair and looking ahead, Mr. Mockensturm suggested holding a work session to begin addressing capital improvement needs related to Village facilities and buildings. He expressed concern that conditions may eventually become unsafe and unhealthy for employees if not addressed. He proposed working collaboratively through joint meetings of the Building and Grounds and Finance Committees, or possibly a Committee of the Whole work session, to begin developing a plan. Mayor Thompson agreed, noting that while there are challenges with current facilities, there are also opportunities if the Village plans strategically. He also mentioned the Edgevale Road project, which is now estimated at about \$3 million, an increase from earlier projections.

Mrs. Greeley asked about Village investments and when the last meeting was held with the

**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
February 2, 2026 7:00 PM**

investment advisor. Ms. McDonald responded that she speaks with the advisor monthly and meets in person when needed. Ms. McDonald confirmed that all bank reconciliations and investment documentation is forwarded to the Clerk-Treasurer.

Mr. Mockensturm added that he and Ms. McDonald are working on financial projections, including evaluating the need for a new bucket truck. He noted that the current bucket van is becoming unsafe and unreliable, and if it fails, the Village may need to hire outside services. They hope to complete an analysis to determine whether purchasing a new bucket truck is a practical option and present their findings by the next Council meeting.

Human Resources – Ms. Phillips

Ms. Phillips reported that the committee had not met but wanted to briefly review the running projects list. She noted that planning for the 2026 community events has not yet begun. Regarding the employee handbook update, she explained that she compared the Village's current handbook with the version that was recently provided. After completing her review, she forwarded the materials to Ms. McDonald to work through with Mrs. Hoffman to determine the next steps.

Mr. Wimmers added that the company previously engaged to assist with the handbook revisions is waiting for the Village to submit its draft. Ms. McDonald confirmed that is correct. Ms. Phillips also noted that the sample handbook contained references to fire departments, positions the Village does not have, and other sections that do not align with how the Village operates, which will need to be revised or removed.

She added that the other items still on the list include developing a community engagement plan and exploring collaboration opportunities with University of Toledo students.

Safety – Mr. Moore

Mr. Moore reported that the Safety Committee is scheduled to meet on February 10 at 8:30 a.m. Agenda items include a proposed speed study on Exmoor, Exmoor Road markings, traffic flow concerns on Ashborne, parking on Boshart Way, discussion of the Flock cameras, and the Ottawa Hills school closing policy and how it affects the Village.

Mr. Moore stated that he would like to work with the Finance Committee, using safety needs as a justification and driver for capital improvements, noting that many of the issues discussed ultimately come down to safety and the need to make appropriate investments. He also referenced the backlog of resident landscaping-related items and said he plans to review the running projects list and address anything that falls under safety at the next meeting.

Mayor Thompson emphasized that decisions about closing school are among the most difficult a superintendent must make and are often no-win situations. For that reason, he suggested the Village be mindful about becoming involved in those decisions.

Mr. Moore clarified that the committee's intent is not to influence school decisions, but rather to understand the process and ensure there is a reliable communication chain. He stated that, based on his understanding, communication and awareness have been inconsistent. He added that every

**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

February 2, 2026 7:00 PM

pedestrian, driver, and teacher traveling to the school is on Village property until they enter school grounds, making their safety a Village responsibility. He explained that the goal is simply to understand the process and establish clear communication, which could be accomplished through a brief discussion.

Services & Environment – Mrs. Greeley

Mrs. Greeley reported that her committee has not met, but noted that bow season concluded on February 1 and the Village reached its goal of 30 deer. She commented that it took nearly the entire season to reach that number compared to last year. Mayor Thompson responded that 30 is a good number, and Mrs. Greeley agreed, adding that she still sees deer tracks throughout the area.

Mrs. Greeley also asked about the work taking place at Central and Indian and what was being done there. Ms. McDonald explained that it is related to gas line work that required digging and that the Garden Club had been notified. The full extent of any landscape damage is not known yet but noted the work is within the right-of-way. Mayor Thompson added that gas companies are not typically known for thorough restoration following this type of work.

Streets & Bridges – Mr. Shimborske

Mayor Thompson noted that as the Edgevale project moves forward, Council will need to begin planning for 2027. He explained that the next major project would be the replacement of the Evergreen Road bridge, which is estimated to cost approximately \$3 million. He added that the Village has secured a substantial grant of \$2.5 million toward that project. Typically, the Village completes engineering for a project one year and proceeds with construction the following year.

Equipment, Utilities, Building & Grounds – Mr. Wimmers

Mr. Wimmers reported that the committee has not met recently, as they are waiting on the soil sample report for White Field. He stated that once the report is received, the committee will meet to review the findings and also discuss Hardman Field at that time.

Solicitors Report – Mrs. Tharp

No Report

Administrator's Report

Ms. McDonald announced that Officer Wolke will be giving an E-Bike safety presentation on February 25th at 6:00 p.m. in the high school auditorium. The presentation will cover safety, applicable laws, and what officers are seeing in the community, especially with spring approaching. The event is open to the public, and the later start time is intended to encourage attendance by both parents and students.

Mr. Mockensturm asked whether any local legislation would be considered regarding e-bikes. Mayor Thompson replied that the State already has laws in place. Mr. Wimmers commented that Ohio's legislation on the issue is fairly loose.

Ms. McDonald also noted that three council members were able to attend the TMACOG meeting, now known as the Lake Erie West Regional Council. She said the village caucus is a valuable

**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

February 2, 2026 7:00 PM

opportunity to connect with other administrators. She further reported that The Nature Conservancy submitted a grant application on the Village's behalf, with award notifications expected in about a month. If approved, the Village could receive up to \$15,000 for Tree of Heaven removal, particularly in areas near the sled hill and behind Village property. Mayor Thompson added that the Tree of Heaven is the host tree for the spotted lanternfly.

Lastly, Ms. McDonald recognized Mr. Nameche, noting that Monticello and Stratford provided lunch for Village employees the previous week. She thanked him for their generosity and expressed appreciation on behalf of village staff.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Thompson announced that he is making reappointments to the Joint Recreation Board with Julie Kowalczyk, Jennifer Shimborske, and Meredith Douglas. He explained that the board includes representation from both the Village and the School District, with Mr. Moore serving as the Council representative along with three citizen members from the Village. The School Board appoints two citizen members and one Board of Education representative.

Regarding the Ashborne and Osborn traffic discussion, Mayor Thompson stated that there are clearly a number of issues to review and that it will be important to involve the school in those conversations. Based on a recent meeting, it appeared the school was not fully aware of the concerns. He emphasized the importance of working collaboratively with the school board, noting that they carry significant responsibility and share concerns about the safety of residents.

Mayor Thompson also noted that the Village continues to have a vacancy in the Clerk-Treasurer position. He has reached out to a few individuals to gauge their interest in the role. Under the Ohio Revised Code, if the position remains unfilled after 30 days, it becomes a mayoral appointment. He stated that the Village is hoping to find someone with the same level of background, knowledge, and work ethic as Mr. Mockensturm.

Ms. Phillips asked whether the position would be posted on social media, the Village website, or shared with the school for additional outreach. Mayor Thompson responded that those are all options and agreed that the community has many skilled individuals who may be interested.

Old Business

Council discussed the growing list of pending items and the need to better organize and prioritize work. Mr. Wimmers noted that the "to-do" list is becoming quite extensive and suggested that this could be an opportunity to hold a Committee of the Whole work session where Council could come together to review the list and determine a clearer direction. Mayor Thompson agreed, stating that the list has become large and that it may be helpful to go through it, assign items to the appropriate committees, and begin prioritizing them. Mr. Wimmers noted that some items are already assigned, but Mayor Thompson added that further organization is still needed. He also emphasized the importance of recognizing that much of the work ultimately falls to Ms. McDonald, and with current staffing shortages, Council should be careful not to create an unrealistic administrative burden. He suggested seeking Ms. McDonald's perspective on top priorities since she is involved in day-to-day operations.

**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

February 2, 2026 7:00 PM

Mr. Shimborske expressed concern that the chain of command has become somewhat blurred. Drawing on his experience serving under previous managers and mayors, he said the process once operated more efficiently when agendas were prepared and prioritized by administration, allowing Council to focus on legislative matters. He felt that, over time, more responsibility shifted onto Council, which contributed to the growing backlog. In his view, the administrator should play a larger role in setting priorities and preparing agendas, as Council members are not present daily to manage operational details. Mayor Thompson agreed that this had historically been the approach and suggested returning to a more structured system, even though it may require more work from Ms. McDonald. He also noted that increased efficiency would likely result from clearer roles and more focused committee activity.

Mr. Moore suggested starting by reviewing the list and identifying which items can be handled administratively, which require committee review, and which need Council deliberation. He proposed that committees discuss assigned items and return with recommendations. Mayor Thompson agreed with the concept but suggested modifying it slightly to also consider Ms. McDonald's perspective when prioritizing. Ms. Phillips commented that the process should connect back to the Village's long-term planning, asking whether Council should set those long-term goals or if administration should take the lead. Mr. Shimborske stated that, in his view, administration should guide long-term planning while Council focuses on short-term actions that support those broader goals. Mr. Moore added that reviewing the long-term capital plan is important to ensure the Village is not making short-term fixes that will need to be redone in a few years.

Council also discussed how items are added to and removed from the list. Mr. Moore asked who has the authority to take items off, noting that some had recently been removed from the Joint Recreation list. Mr. Shimborske stated that, in theory, the administrator should be responsible for maintaining and prioritizing the list. Ms. Phillips explained that the list developed in response to frequent inquiries from residents about various issues.

Mr. Shimborske responded that Council should be mindful of how they can help make the process more efficient. He recalled that in the past, committee chairs would review agendas in advance and occasionally meet briefly with the administrator to discuss items, which kept communication focused and limited unnecessary demands on administrative time. Mayor Thompson concluded that the next step will be to begin refining and prioritizing the list, and that what remains may become the focus of a future Committee of the Whole discussion.

New Business

No New Business

**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
February 2, 2026 7:00 PM**

Resolutions

Ms. McDonald explained that the aggregation program dates back to 2001 and is not new to the Village, noting that it was approved by Council along with 13 other communities at that time. She stated that the authorization being discussed is required and that, at times, these items must move quickly because energy rates change daily.

Mayor Thompson added that the program is structured as an opt-out program, meaning participation is not mandatory and residents may choose not to take part if they prefer.

Mayor Thompson read Resolution 2026-2:

Resolution 2026-2:	Accepting the proposal of Archer Energy, LLC. to extend an agreement providing natural gas supplies through opt-out aggregation to eligible residential and small businesses in the Village of Ottawa Hills, and declaring an emergency.
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Motion to waive three readings:

Motion –	Mr. Wimmers
Second –	Mrs. Greeley
	Unanimous Approval

Motion to declare an emergency:

Motion –	Mr. Wimmers
Second –	Mrs. Greeley
	Unanimous Approval

Motion to adopt legislation:

Motion –	Mr. Wimmers
Second –	Mrs. Greeley

Yeas (6) –	Mrs. Greeley, Mr. Mockensturm Mr. Moore, Ms. Phillips, Mr. Shimborske, Mr. Wimmers
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Nays (0) –

Mayor Thompson read Resolution 2026-3:

Resolution 2026-3:	A resolution authorizing the Mayor and/or Village Administrator to enter into a customer supply agreement for the provision of third-party electric generation for residential and small commercial aggregation participants
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**OTTAWA HILLS VILLAGE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

February 2, 2026 7:00 PM

within the Village of Ottawa Hills, and
declaring an emergency.

Motion to waive three readings:

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

Motion to declare an emergency:

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

Motion to adopt legislation:

Motion – Mr. Wimmers
Second – Mr. Mockensturm

Yeas (6) – Mrs. Greeley, Mr. Mockensturm
Mr. Moore, Ms. Phillips,
Mr. Shimborske, Mr. Wimmers

Nays (0) –

Mayor Thompson read Resolution 2026-4:

Resolution 2026-

A resolution recognizing March 9th through
March 13th, 2026 as Pedestrian Safety Week.

Motion to waive three readings:

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

Motion to adopt legislation:

Motion – Ms. Phillips
Second – Mr. Mockensturm

Yeas (6) – Mrs. Greeley, Mr. Mockensturm
Mr. Moore, Ms. Phillips,
Mr. Shimborske, Mr. Wimmers

Nays (0) –

Next Meeting Date
March 2, 2026

Adjournment
8:34 PM



Mayor Thompson