

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of Village of South Amherst
PUBLIC HEARING
November 24, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The public hearing concerning the annexation of PPN 0500010102029 and Conforming of Boundaries of the Village was formally called to order by Mayor Jones at 6:15 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Scott Jones, Councilmember Michele Jeffers, Councilmember Robb Koscho, Councilmember Jeanne Maschari, Councilmember Becky Siesky, Councilmember Sangiacomo, Fiscal Officer Michelle Henke, Records Clerk Laurie Beran, Assistant Fiscal Officer Wendy Kolmorgen, Utility Administrator David Valentine
Residents: Chester Arcaba 6230 Russia, Steve Iwanek 249 W Main, Mark Leshinski. 592 S Lake

PURPOSE

Councilmember Maschari presented:

Annexation PPN 0500010102029

The Village is in the process of annexing 15.83 acres of village-owned property currently located in Amherst Township. This land, which is vacant and situated behind the cemetery, is being annexed in preparation for conforming the official boundaries of the Village of South Amherst.

Conforming of Village Boundaries

The Village was incorporated in 1918. Since then, several annexations have occurred; however, the required annual process of formally conforming these annexations to the village boundaries—by submitting them to the County Commissioners for approval—was not completed. As a result, some tax revenues have continued to be allocated to Amherst Township or New Russia Township instead of the Village. Additionally, some residents have remained eligible to vote for township trustees based on the boundaries recorded at that time. By conforming the boundaries, tax dollars will remain in the Village of South Amherst, supporting the services provided to residents, such as road maintenance, snow removal, and fire protection.

We anticipate holding one additional public hearing before presenting this matter to the Village Council for a vote. If the Council approves, the administrative process will take some time, but we hope the boundary updates will be completed before the end of next year.

Once finalized, you will see changes reflected on your real estate tax bill, and residents in the affected areas will no longer vote for township trustees. A new tax district will be assigned to the Village of South Amherst, and related tax revenues will flow accordingly.

Open Discussion

Councilmember Sangiacomo inquired if property taxes would increase. Councilmember Maschari stated that at this time they would not increase, that instead of the tax money going to the townships it would stay within the village.

Councilmember Maschari explained that the project began in response to new residents' questions about voting for township trustees while living in the village. She spent over a year researching historical records, including multiple visits to the commissioners' archives. The review was unrelated to current issues in New Russia Township and was recently completed after extensive effort.

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Steve Iwanek asked for clarification of the parcel in question. A zoning map was presented.

Chester Arcaba asked about the difference between incorporation and annexation.

Councilmember Maschari explained that incorporation occurred in 1918 when the village was established as a small strip of land, likely stretching from West Main to East Main and extending just behind the initial properties. Annexation, on the other hand, refers to the process of adding additional parcels of land over the years to expand the village and provide essential services such as police, fire protection, water, and road maintenance. Examples of annexed areas include Annis Road to Russia Road, South Lake, and sections at the end of town. An issue was identified when it was discovered that, although annexations were completed correctly, some were not properly recorded. This caused confusion regarding voting for township trustees and the allocation of tax funds. To resolve this, extensive research into records dating back to 1918 was conducted over the course of a year to clarify the reasons behind certain voting and tax arrangements. Amherst Township was contacted and asked, "what do you do with our tax dollars?" They never replied. Amherst Township collects approximately \$29,000.00 annually in property from village residents and New Russia collects approximately \$7,000.00. Mr. Arcaba stated that he believed remaining part of New Russia Township was advantageous because it allowed residents to influence election outcomes and participate at their trustee meetings. Mr. Arcaba commented that in the overall budget, the \$7,000 expense would not have a significant impact.

Mr. Iwanek expressed disagreement with property tax funds going to the townships when the village received no benefit in return. He also stated that the influence of residents within the portion of the village covered by New Russia Township on trustee elections was not justified.

Mark Leshinski inquired as to how much property was paid on municipally owned property. The fiscal officer responded that the Village only pays the special storm water assessment, and the only parcel that is charged tax is the property to the west of the cemetery that is farmed by a local farmer. The farmer's rent is equivalent to the amount of tax charged.

Mr. Arcaba asked how the property tax is appropriated. The fiscal officer responded that proceeds are appropriated to specific funds according to the ORC. The general fund on inside millage receives the bulk of property tax which is approximately \$172,000.00 annually, and the cemetery receives approximately \$9,000.00 annually and the rest is the voted fire levy money.

ADJOURNMENT 6:34 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING
November 24, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The public hearing concerning 2026 Temporary Appropriations was formally called to order by Mayor Jones at 6:45 p.m.

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PRESENT

Mayor Scott Jones, Councilmember Michele Jeffers, Councilmember Robb Koscho, Councilmember Jeanne Maschari, Councilmember Becky Siesky, Councilmember Sangiacomo, Fiscal Officer Michelle Henke, Records Clerk Laurie Beran, Assistant Fiscal Officer Wendy Kolmorgen, Utility Administrator David Valentine
Residents: Chester Arcaba 6230 Russia, Steve Iwanek 249 W Main, Mark Leshinski.592 S Lake

PURPOSE

Fiscal Officer Michelle Henke:

Council reviewed the 2026 temporary appropriations, which were drafted based on the tax budget submitted in July. These appropriations serve as a guideline until permanent appropriations are finalized at the end of February. Members received detailed sheets for review and were asked questions or items to flag for consideration.

Councilmember Maschari requested \$4,000.00 for sound system upgrades. Additional potential expenditures discussed included equipment for storm sewer maintenance, specifically a sewer camera estimated at \$10,000 to reduce reliance on outside vendors and improve response time for blockages and collapses. There was also mention of purchasing additional road closure signs.

The discussion then shifted to water projects. Eastwood Environmental, which provides water testing services at a reduced rate when the chlorinator is not in operation, will implement a 5% rate increase. Major water line replacements were identified as upcoming priorities, including approximately 3,000 feet on Russia Road from Annis to South Lake, estimated at over \$600,000 excluding engineering costs. A second major project would be the Maroy, Thompson, Oakdale neighborhood which could approach \$1 million. The Maroy, Thompson, Oakdale projects would affect roughly 75 residents and involve replacing outdated hydrants from the 1940s. Engineering costs remain unknown at this time.

Regarding cemetery maintenance, no major projects are planned for the coming year. For cemetery roads, the immediate goal is to regrade gravel areas and address potholes, with work on the park parking lot also anticipated. While no urgent road reconstruction is scheduled, concerns were raised about thin pavement and edge deterioration, particularly on roads impacted by recent storm line installations. Future planning will consider drainage improvements and structural integrity to prevent failure.

ADJOURNMENT 6:56 p.m.