

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of Village of South Amherst
REGULAR MEETING
May 26 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The council meeting was called to order by Mayor Scott Jones at 7:00 p.m.

LORD'S PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Councilmember Michele Jeffers	EA	Fiscal Officer Michelle Henke	EA
Councilmember Robb Koscho	P	Records Clerk Laurie Beran	P
Councilmember Mark Leshinski	P	Law Director Matthew Mishak	P
Councilmember Anthony Savage	P	Utility Admin. David Valentine	P
Councilmember David Troike	P	Assistant F.O. Wendy Kolmorgen	P
Council Pro Tempore Jeanne Maschari	P		

(EA – excused absences)

Councilmember Maschari moved to excuse Councilmember Jeffers. Councilmember Savage seconded the motion.

Jeffers **Absent** Koscho x Leshinski x Maschari x Savage x Troike x Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA May 26, 2026

Councilmember Koscho moved to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Savage seconded the motion.

Jeffers **EA** Koscho x Leshinski x Maschari x Savage x Troike **X** Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilmember Savage moved to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Maschari seconded the motion.

Jeffers **EA** Koscho x Leshinski x Maschari x Savage x Troike **X** Motion carried.

VISITORS

CED Penny Becker

MAYOR

Memorial Day

Memorial Day was a truly meaningful and memorable occasion. I feel both blessed and honored to have been part of it. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed, including those who worked hard to place the flags, maintain the grounds, and support the event in so many ways. I also want to recognize our police, fire personnel, and all volunteers whose dedication made the day possible. Finally, we remember with deep gratitude those who made the ultimate sacrifice, whom we honored today.

FISCAL OFFICER

Payment Listing 5/8-5/21/26

Presented to council.

Financial Reports

The following Financial Reports for May 2026 were presented to council: Revenue Summary, Fund Summary and Appropriation Summary.

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Income Tax Non-Filer

Recommend Option 1: which is to use letters only being sent to non-filing delinquent residents. This fee is included in our normal fees. Option 2 would be an additional fee per subpoena issued. Historically, we have done well with the letters.

Councilmember Savage moved to approve Option 1. Councilmember Maschari seconded the motion. Jeffers EX Koscho x Leshinski x Maschari x Savage x Troike x Motion carried.

RECORDS CLERK

Village Wide Paper Shredding Day

In conjunction with the Lorain County Solid Waste Management District the Village is able to sponsor at no cost a Community Shredding Event on Saturday, August 22 from 9 a.m. to noon or the truck is full. Residents will be asked to enter the parking lot from S. Lake St. and exit onto W. Main.

Benches

The village will be receiving benches made from recycled material as part of a program offered through the Lorain County Waste Management District, to be placed at the park.

UTILITY ADMINISTRATOR

Water/Storm

Russia Rd Log Jam

Due to consecutive storms with heavy rain, a log jam was created on village owned property on Russia Rd. causing flooding issues. The log jam has been cleared and water is flowing. If any resident experiences flooding issues, please contact the service department.

Water System

Councilmember Leshinski gave an update regarding a conversation he had with Joe Waldecker of Lorain County Rural Water Authority about the village water system on May 22, 2026.

It was noted that, based on prior debt summaries, the North Lake Street water project is expected to be paid off by July 1, 2026. Current estimates suggest the village carries approximately \$300,000 in water-related debt across four loans. As of December 31, of last year, the total balance was approximately \$362,490. Remaining loans extend through 2028, 2034, and 2041, and responsibility for repayment will remain with the village.

LCRWA indicated they may cover engineering plan costs if the village pursues regionalization, though further discussions are needed. This process is likely at least a year away. Engineering studies are estimated to be between \$100,000 and \$300,000.

Previous estimates (March 13, 2023) indicated a full water system replacement would cost just over \$8 million, with residents paying approximately \$4,700 per connection. This cost would likely be spread over 10 years (120 months), equating to about \$40 per month. Current figures remain similar, though slightly increased.

Comparison of water rates shows the village currently charges \$20.76 per 1,000 gallons plus a \$20 user fee, while the regional provider charges approximately \$20.58 per 2,000 gallons with no user fee. The

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village's user fee fund currently holds approximately \$268,000, which is insufficient to cover outstanding loan obligations.

Concerns were raised regarding the future of the water tower. If abandoned, it would require either continued maintenance or demolition, both of which would incur additional costs. It was also noted that the water tower currently functions as a pressure relief mechanism within the system.

The Ohio EPA is encouraging regionalization and offers approximately \$4 million in annual grant funding, with applications due in March and awards announced in June or July. Questions remain about whether phased implementation is possible.

Additional discussion addressed potential impacts on water pressure due to nearby infrastructure projects (e.g., Pheasant Run in LaGrange), which could increase pressure by up to 20 PSI if check valves fail. Infrastructure reliability remains a concern.

It was noted that if the village transitions to another system, hydrant service may incur additional costs (previously estimated at approximately \$60 per hydrant per month), which could total roughly \$4,800–\$5,000 monthly. This may also affect residents' insurance rates.

Council emphasized the importance of continued research and discussions, including clarification of financial responsibilities, infrastructure ownership, grant funding, and long-term system sustainability. The process would take multiple years and require careful planning if implemented. Councilmember Leshinski will touch base with LCRWA in August.

Park

Parking Lot

Stone was added and graded to level out ruts and potholes throughout the parking lot and entrance.

Garden Bed

The overgrown front garden bed at the park entrance has been cleared and is now ready for revitalization.

COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds

Village Hall Roof

A recommendation was made to Committee Chair Leshinski to convene a meeting to discuss repainting the Village Hall roof and to include Mr. Valentine in all communications pertaining to matters affecting his departments.

Garage & Storage

Councilmember Koscho requested that the Building & Grounds meeting agenda include discussion of the use of the storage garage, as well as its repair or replacement. It was noted that quotes have been obtained for both repair and full replacement, and these items will be included on the agenda.

Councilmember Troike noted that the original intent of the garage was for the Village to supply electricity, with the space divided equally between the Village and the Fire Department.

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Starlink Internet

Discussion was held regarding improvements to the park and service garage security in light of recent upgrades, including the new playground, parking lot improvements, and landscaping enhancements. It was noted that some activities in the park have not met expectations, prompting consideration of installing security cameras.

Current trail cameras are insufficient due to poor image quality, particularly at night. Reliable security cameras would require internet access, especially at the service garage, which currently does not have connectivity. Two options were reviewed: installing wired internet, which would require trenching and additional infrastructure at significant cost, or utilizing Starlink as a wireless internet service.

Starlink would allow for the installation of wireless security cameras at the service garage and park, plus provide internet access to the area without the need for costly excavation. The service is estimated at approximately \$50 per month. It was noted that extending the existing network from Village Hall to the garage would be cost-prohibitive, while Starlink has proven to be a reliable alternative.

Councilmember Troike moved to approve Starlink satellite internet service. Councilmember Savage seconded the motion.

Discussion: Clarification was given that the request is for internet service to support web-based surveillance cameras at the service garage and park. The proposed Starlink service (approximately \$55/month for 50 GB) would provide wireless connectivity within a defined coverage area to support camera monitoring and general internet use at the garage.

Hardwired fiber options were considered but deemed significantly more expensive due to trenching, installation, and infrastructure costs. Starlink offers a more cost-effective and flexible solution that can be implemented quickly without construction. Current internet access at the garage relies on mobile hotspots, which are unreliable and dependent on phone presence.

It was noted that the camera system would utilize cloud-based storage rather than a DVR, allowing remote access to footage. While not expected to reduce current phone plan costs, the Starlink option was presented as a practical starting point and a low-risk solution that can be reevaluated if needed.

Jeffers EX Koscho x Leshinski x Maschari x Savage x Troike x Motion carried.

Safety

Events & New Business

The Police Chief and Fire Chief requested improved communication regarding Village events to allow for proper planning and safety preparedness. This includes advance notice of events and food truck participation so the Fire Department can conduct necessary inspections. It was noted that businesses are currently not required to notify the Village when hosting food trucks, resulting in office staff having no more information than safety forces. As a result, events and food trucks may occur without prior awareness. It was suggested that the permitting process includes additional guidance or a checklist to improve notification and coordination.

It was recommended by Councilmember Maschari to hold a joint meeting with the Fire Department and relevant Village staff to ensure clear communication and coordination, including their participation in

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discussions on a proposed food truck ordinance. The ordinance would establish requirements for food truck permitting and considering outreach to local businesses once procedures are established.

Concerns were also raised regarding new businesses and occupancy permits. An example was provided involving a new business (Zips), where required fire suppression system plans had not yet been submitted. It was clarified that the Fire Department was aware of the situation and that the business is currently permitted to serve coffee and ice cream only. Any expansion to food preparation requiring cooking equipment will not be approved until plans are submitted and inspections are completed. It was emphasized that Fire Department approval is required before the Health Department will authorize such operations.

It was noted that a “New Business Packet” has been developed to guide applicants through the process, ensuring coordination among zoning, building, and fire officials. Further follow-up will occur with Fire Department representatives to ensure inspection responsibilities and communication procedures are consistently carried out.

ORDINANCES

Ordinance No. 1857-26 *(Emergency)* **AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF COUNCIL TO PERFORM THE DUTIES OF THE VILLAGE FISCAL OFFICER AS CLERK OF COUNCIL DURING THE FISCAL OFFICER’S ABSENCE, RATIFYING AND CONFIRMING PRIOR ACTIONS TAKEN IN RELIANCE ON SUCH DESIGNATION RETROACTIVE TO MAY 11, 2026, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

Councilmember Troike moved to approve Ordinance No. 1857-26 as an emergency. Councilmember Koscho seconded the motion.

Jeffers EX Koscho x Leshinski x Maschari x Savage x Troike x Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 1858-26 *(Emergency)* **AN ORDINANCE CREATING THE POSITION OF PUBLIC WORKS OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR AND FIXING THE RATE OF COMPENSATION AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

Councilmember Troike moved to approve Ordinance No. 1858-26 as an emergency. Councilmember Savage seconded the motion.

Jeffers EX Koscho x Leshinski x Maschari x Savage x Troike x Motion carried.

Ordinance No. 1859-26 *(First Reading)* **AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICIES FOR THE VILLAGE OF SOUTH AMHERST**

VISITORS

CDE Penny Becker – Thanked council and staff for their participation in the annual Memorial Day parade. Ms. Becker did request that when various activities are scheduled to please forward her information so she may help to promote the activity. Councilmember Maschari suggested a welcome packet for new residents that could include a community calendar and information on the local churches and businesses. Mayor Jones recommended a proposal be developed and presented to council for the additional hours.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Donations & Transparency

Councilmember Maschari reported offering flowers from their personal residence to be used for Village beautification efforts, with the understanding that they would be donated at no cost and removed by the recipient. The flowers may be incorporated into park landscaping plans, which include a new design for the area. It was noted that the plantings, including irises and Solomon's seal, are perennials and should return annually, helping maintain a neat appearance.

The councilmember emphasized that the donation was made transparently and clarified that any work performed on her private property would be compensated personally, to avoid any appearance of impropriety. It was further noted that the beautification efforts are conducted by a separate committee and are not formally affiliated with Village operations.

ADJOURNMENT 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Henke / Jeanne Maschari
Fiscal Officer Michelle Henke *Pro Tempore*



Mayor Scott Jones