

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**  
Minutes of Village of South Amherst  
REGULAR MEETING  
June 22, 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	P	Fiscal Officer Michelle Henke	P
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	EA
Council Pro Tempore Jeanne Maschari	P		<i>(EA – excused absences)</i>

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**      June 22, 2026    Amendment: Building & Grounds Update, Pioneer Cemetery, Swear-In Firefighters

Councilmember Savage moved to approve agenda as amended. Councilmember Jeffers seconded the motion.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**      June 8, 2026

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

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

**VISITORS**

Penny Becker – CED

Dawn Howell – Beautification Committee

Stephanee & Joey Koscho 209 N Lake St

SAFD: Chief Aaron Grimm, Assistant Chief Ron Zaleha, Kyle & Alana Kudela Family, Jim Becker, Logan Becker & Ali, Alex, Arthur Meade, Jason Barnard, Alex Justice

**MAYOR**

**Appointment(s)**

**Assistant Fire Chief**

Councilmember Savage moved to approve Kyle Kudela as an Assistant Fire Chief. Councilmember Jeffers seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Kudela was sworn -in as Assistant Chief by Mayor Jones.

**Swearing In of Firefighters**

Mayor Jones swore-in the following Fire Fighters: Logan Becker, Alex Justice and Arthur Mead.

**Audit Committee**

Councilmember Jeffers moved to approve Stephanie Koscho as the Village resident representative to the Audit Committee. Councilmember Leshinski seconded the motion.

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

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Urban Development Update

The mayor clarified that the proposed urban development initiative is a countywide effort involving multiple communities and is not specific to South Amherst. Participation would involve ongoing discussions and potential future legislation among participating communities.

The mayor acknowledged concerns that some Council members felt they did not have sufficient information to vote and emphasized respect for each member's vote. He noted the importance of maintaining communication with county officials, as the Village regularly relies on the County for funding opportunities and assistance.

Council members were encouraged to engage with county representatives to obtain additional information and attend an upcoming urban development update meeting scheduled for June 30 at Lorain County Community College.

The vote regarding participation in the Urban Development Designation taken on June 8 was valid under O.R.C. 737.17(B), as the matter considered was not legislation but rather a vote on participation in a county initiative. Therefore, the voting requirements applicable to legislative measures did not apply.

Flock Safety

The mayor provided information on the Flock Safety program to the Safety Committee for review. Committee members were asked to evaluate the program and develop a recommendation on whether the municipality should participate.

Village Sign Project

The mayor presented a proposal for new village entrance signs and shared a design rendering with Council. The signs would be constructed by the same local craftsman who donated and built the Council podium. The estimated cost is \$950 per sign, including materials, installation-ready mounting, and future maintenance at no additional cost.

Councilmember Maschari moved to approve 3 signs Councilmember Jeffers seconded the motion.

*Discussion: Council members expressed support for the design, noting that it reflects community pride and could enhance the village's appearance. Questions were raised regarding sign regulations and placement, and it was clarified that the signs are municipal property and would not create visibility or traffic concerns.*

Jeffers    Koscho    Leshinski    Maschari    Savage    Troike    Motion carried.

Tree Debris Solution

Council discussed options for assisting residents with storm-related tree debris following recent severe weather events. The mayor noted that previous debris collection efforts were difficult due to noncompliance with collection guidelines and that the Service Department lacks the equipment and resources to assume ongoing debris removal responsibilities.

The Village Administrator reported obtaining estimates from local contractors. One contractor estimated a cost of approximately **\$2,500 per day** for debris collection services, while others indicated costs would depend on the volume and size of materials collected. Concerns were raised regarding the Village's existing ordinance, which places responsibility for storm debris removal on property owners once roadways have been cleared.

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Councilmember Maschari moved to establish a storm debris assistance program with an initial annual budget of \$5,000. Councilmember Savage seconded the motion.

*Discussion: Council discussed the proposed \$5,000 funding amount for a storm debris assistance program and whether additional funding may be needed. Members noted that public notification would be critical to ensure residents are aware of any debris collection program and associated requirements.*

*Council also discussed criteria for activating the program, including limiting it to significant storm events. Suggestions included requiring a mayoral declaration of emergency, with Council confirmation, before Village-funded debris collection services would be authorized.*

*Additional discussion focused on the difficulty of predicting severe weather events and the need for safeguards to prevent routine situations from being classified as emergencies. Council expressed support for starting with a \$5,000 allocation, evaluating its effectiveness, and reviewing the program as needed. The service department would conduct a village-wide assessment of storm debris to determine the extent of need before implementing collection services.*

Jeffers  Koscho  Leshinski  **Nay** Maschari  Savage  Troike  Motion carried.

## **LAW DIRECTOR**

### Abstentions and Voting Discussion

Following a vote at a previous meeting that included 2 abstentions, the Law Director provided guidance on abstaining from votes. He explained that abstaining is generally reserved for situations involving a conflict of interest, such as a financial or personal benefit, and that abstentions can affect Council's ability to act if they prevent obtaining the required majority vote.

South Amherst Rules of Council require members present to vote unless excused by law, with abstentions permitted only in cases of a personal conflict of interest. The Law Director emphasized that Council members should be informed on matters before them and, when additional information is needed, may use a motion to table legislation for further review rather than abstaining.

Council members discussed situations in which they may feel unprepared to vote due to insufficient information and the importance of requesting additional time or information before a matter is considered. The Law Director encouraged the use of procedural motions, such as tabling an item, to ensure informed decision-making.

## **FISCAL OFFICER**

### Payment Listing 6/6-6/19

Presented to council.

### Financial Reports

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

### Appropriation Ordinance 239

General Fund: Increased to cover the recently approved Fire Chief and Assistant Chief compensation, police radio purchases required for the transition to the State MARCS radio system, and funding for the proposed village entrance signs.

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Enterprise Funds: Increased addressing water security deposit refunds and applied payments and provide additional funding in the Storm Water Management Fund for current and future stormwater-related needs.

Tax Budget 2027

Councilmember Savage moved to approve the 2027 Tax Budget. Councilmember Jeffers seconded the motion.

Jeffers  Koscho  Leshinski  Maschari  Savage  Troike  Motion carried

**UTILITY ADMINISTRATOR**

**Park**

Playground update

Equipment was delivered today. Special thanks to Danny Hyster and his crew at Diggers of Ohio for the site preparation work completed last Friday in advance of the installation. Final touches to the playground area are expected to be completed on Thursday, and the playground will be ready for the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on June 27.

**COMMITTEES**

**Building & Grounds** (Councilmember Leshinski presented.)

Update

The chair asked whether it would be appropriate to contact contractors to obtain quotes for building improvements. The mayor encouraged committee members to work collaboratively with the Village Administrator and obtain information as needed, while recognizing staff workload limitations.

It was clarified that previous discussion regarding building replacement originated from Safety Committee discussions and that quotes had been obtained for both replacing the existing fire department garage with a metal building and making repairs to the current structure.

Councilmembers also discussed the condition of the Service Department garage and the need for future improvements. The mayor noted that attention has shifted toward evaluating options for new or improved service garage to better support equipment storage, vehicle maintenance, and daily operations.

The Grounds Committee was asked to review available information, work with the Village Administrator to evaluate potential solutions, and provide recommendations to Council. Committee members were reminded to submit committee meeting minutes to the Records Clerk for official recordkeeping and to utilize Village email accounts for committee communications.

Pioneer Cemetery

Stones are being reviewed for repair and thanks to Howards Tree Service for their timely and efficient service.

**Ordinance** (Councilmember Savage presented.)

Mobile Food Vehicle

The official ordinance will be presented at the next regularly scheduled council meeting. However, a permit fee does need to be set, and the recommendation was made of \$50.00 by the committee.

Councilmember Savage moved to set the annual permit fee of \$50.00 for a Mobile Food Vehicle. Councilmember Jeffers seconded the motion.

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*Discussion: the rationale for the proposed \$50 application fee was explained as covering approximately two hours of the Zoning Inspector's time for review and administration of the permit process. Councilmember Leshinski questioned the involvement of the Zoning Inspector. It was clarified that the Zoning Inspector had been assigned responsibility for the review process and that mobile food vehicles are regulated under the Village's zoning ordinances.*

Jeffers  Koscho  Leshinski  Maschari  Savage  Troike  Motion carried

The Records Clerk stated that the applicable zoning ordinance will be amended to ensure the language is consistent and conforms with the provisions contained in both ordinances.

Meeting 6/24 - Animal & Fowl

Residents are encouraged to attend an Ordinance Committee meeting on June 24 to discuss proposed legislation on the Animal & Fowl issue.

**ORDINANCES**

Ordinance No. 1855-26 (Final Reading) AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICIES FOR THE VILLAGE OF SOUTH AMHERST

Councilmember Troike moved to approve Ordinance No. 1855-26. Councilmember Koscho seconded the motion.

Jeffers  Koscho  Leshinski  Maschari  Savage  Troike  Motion carried

**APPROPRIATIONS**

Appropriation Ordinance No. 339

Councilmember Troike moved to approve Appropriation Ordinance No. 339. Councilmember Maschari seconded the motion.

Jeffers  Koscho  Leshinski  Maschari  Savage  Troike  Motion carried

**VISITORS**

Dawn Howell – Beautification Committee

A brief update was provided on planning for the Village's Semiquincentennial celebration. Organizers have secured a food truck and additional entertainment, with logistics currently being finalized. Council members were encouraged to attend and support the event as an opportunity to promote community unity and engagement. Events will be held at the Community Park from noon to 4 p.m. on June 27.

The speaker also commented on the proposed food truck permit fee, noting that food truck operators may be reluctant to participate in community events if required to pay a fee, particularly in a small community where sales opportunities are limited. It was suggested that Council consider the potential impact of permit fees on attracting food trucks, as they are often a significant draw for event attendance.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Feral Cats (JM)

Councilmember Maschari shared residents' concerns regarding feral cats and the feeding of colonies without proper maintenance of feeding areas. It was noted that several community members currently care for feral cats and, in some cases, arrange for spay and neuter services at their own expense.

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The resident proposed organizing interested volunteers to explore a trap-neuter-return (TNR) program and, in the future, potentially seeking Council support for limited annual funding to assist with spay and neuter costs.

Councilmembers expressed support for exploring the idea but noted that the issue should be evaluated comprehensively, including factors that may attract feral cat populations, such as neglected properties and animal abandonment. Further discussion and planning with interested residents was encouraged before any funding commitment is considered. Councilmember Maschari will organize a meeting with concerned residents.

Notification System

Council discussed the Village's ability to communicate with residents through the CodeRED notification system. It was noted that the system can be used for both emergency alerts and important community notices, such as parades, hydrant flushing, food drives, meetings, and major village events.

The mayor and village administrator emphasized the importance of using the system thoughtfully to avoid overuse and prevent residents from becoming desensitized to alerts. Emergency notifications should remain the primary focus, while non-emergency notifications should be limited to significant community events and public information.

The mayor also discussed the value of annual planning and scheduling major events in advance so notification needs can be identified and coordinated throughout the year.

**ADJOURNMENT** 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Fiscal Officer Michelle Henke

  
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Mayor Scott Jones