



# The Village Grapevine

A PUBLICATION OF THE VILLAGE OF YELLOW SPRINGS

## A SEASON OF COMMUNITY



**JOHNNIE BURNS**  
VILLAGE MANAGER

The summer edition of our Village newsletter arrives as Yellow Springs is in full swing. The cover photos from Street Fair, Juneteenth, Pride, and the Fourth of July community celebrations highlight a few of the many events that bring people into our public spaces throughout the summer. Each is distinct in its history and purpose, but together they reflect the energy and variety of summer happenings in the village.

Warm weather has a way of filling our streets, parks, and gathering spaces. From downtown activity to neighborhood events and time spent in our parks, there is a steady rhythm of people coming together in different ways. These moments, planned and unplanned, are part of what shapes daily life here during this time of year.

We are fortunate to have many partners who help make these events possible. The Chamber of Commerce, the Yellow Springs Community Foundation, and Miami Township Fire & Rescue all play important roles in supporting these efforts. I also want to recognize our Police Department and Public Works crew for the work they do behind the scenes to keep events running safely and smoothly.

Thank you for being part of the community and for everything you contribute to it. We hope you enjoy the months ahead and find time to take part in what is happening around the village.



## UPCOMING EVENTS



**ART ON  
THE LAWN**



**PORCHFEST**



**FALL STREET  
FAIR**





Gavin DeVore Leonard  
President



Angie Hsu  
Vice President



Carmen Brown  
Council Member



Senay Semere  
Council Member



Stephanie Pearce  
Council Member

At the March 16, 2026 Village Council meeting, Council adopted Resolution 2026-12 establishing the Village Council Goals for 2026–2027. Since then, Council has held several goal-setting workshops and continued refining these priorities. The goals help guide policy and long-term planning efforts, focusing on key areas such as housing, financial sustainability, infrastructure, economic development, and community engagement. While the Village remains focused on delivering essential day-to-day services, these goals help identify where additional time, resources, and attention will be directed in the coming years.

**Priority: HIGH**  
★★★★★

Develop a clear, data-driven housing strategy.

Advance priority Village-led housing initiatives.

Develop and run a thoughtful strategic planning process and complete a Council and staff supported plan.

Align capacity and goals for current and proposed projects to assure manageable workload and improve outcomes.

**Priority: MEDIUM**  
★★★

Clarify role of Village in economic development, including expectations for intergovernmental communication to support long-term planning.

Evaluate and advance Lawson Place Apartments as a Village-owned housing asset.

Explore policy tools to encourage property utilization and reduce vacancies.

**Priority: HIGH-MEDIUM**  
★★★★★

Identify and implement cost-cutting strategies while tracking progress on a return to a balanced budget by 2028.

Deepen our shared understanding of the budget and clearly identify what is considered a need.

Strengthen policies and tools for rental housing management.

**Priority: MEDIUM-HIGH**  
★★★★

Prioritize environmental sustainability and energy efficiency housing-related decisions.

Evaluate zoning code vis-à-vis housing goals.

**Priority: MEDIUM-LOW**  
★★

Consider policies affecting pop-ups, markets, and micro-enterprises.

Review Community Reinvestment Area and Tax Increment Financing policies and consider legislation if needed.

**Priority: LOW**  
★

Develop a Village-wide communications plan.

Assess Village sidewalk policy.

Revisit existing parking plans.







**Elyse Giardullo,  
Assistant Village Manager**

## ***Thank you, Elyse!***

The Village announces the resignation of Assistant Village Manager Elyse Giardullo. A Yellow Springs native, Elyse has played a key role in advancing Village initiatives and supporting operations across departments.

Reflecting on her time with the Village, Elyse shared, "I want to sincerely thank Village Council, staff, and the community for the support and trust you have shown me over the past two years. It has been an honor to serve in this role, especially in the community where I grew up." The Village thanks Elyse for her leadership and dedication, and wishes her continued success in her next chapter.



**Nía Holt,  
Planning & Zoning Director**

## ***Welcome, Nía!***

The Village is pleased to welcome Nía Holt as its new Planning & Zoning Director.

Nía joined the Village in May, bringing nearly ten years of planning and zoning experience to the role. Prior to joining the Village, she served as Community Development Director for the City of Riverside.

We are excited to have Nía on the team and look forward to the knowledge, leadership, and perspective she will bring to the Village's planning and development efforts.



**Kevin Martin, Supt. of Water  
and Wastewater Treatment**

## ***Congrats, Kevin!***

The Village is happy to announce the promotion of Kevin Martin to Superintendent of Water & Wastewater Treatment. Kevin has been serving in an interim role, where he has demonstrated strong leadership, technical expertise, and a deep commitment to the Village's utility operations. His performance in this capacity made him a natural choice for the position.

We look forward to Kevin's continued leadership in maintaining and improving the Village's water and wastewater systems, and to his ongoing contributions in this expanded role.

## ***New Faces at the Village***



**Damion Day  
YSPD Recruit**



**Toran Hochstettler  
Utility Service Worker**



**Travis Maynard  
Electric Lineman**



**Rachel Sevison  
YSPD Dispatcher**



**Mark Steenson  
YSPD Police Officer**



As the longest-serving current employee of the Village of Yellow Springs, Samantha Stewart has spent more than two decades helping shape two of the community's most important gathering spaces: the Youth Center and Gaunt Park Pool.

Sam first arrived in Yellow Springs in 1997, shortly after graduating from high school. Like many who come to the village, she quickly became part of its fabric. Her early years included working at Carol's Kitchen at the corner of Dayton and Corry Streets, followed by time at Moody Shoes in both of its former locations. But it was a phone call in the fall of 2002 that set her on a path that would define her career. Her future sister-in-law suggested she apply for a job with the Village. Sam started part-time at the Youth Center in the John Bryan Community Center, working just a couple of days a week for a few hours at a time. Over the years, that role grew into something much larger.

Today, as the Village's Parks and Recreation Supervisor, Sam oversees both the Youth Center and Gaunt Park Pool. Along the way, she has become a steady and familiar presence for generations of families. "I think that we've come a long way from when I started," Sam says. "I've seen a lot of changes, and I love it."

Much of what Sam is most proud of reflects a commitment to strengthening programs while building community trust. She points to her work securing grants and outside funding as an important part of that effort, helping expand opportunities without placing additional burden on residents. "Finding funding for certain things, getting grants to help offset costs, so that it's not just always asking the community for money. I'm pretty proud of that," she says. She also takes pride in something less visible but equally important: consistency. Keeping experienced staff, especially at the pool, has helped create a sense of familiarity and trust for families who return each summer. "It's important that the same staff come back," Sam explains. "It's good for the kids and the parents. It helps them feel more comfortable." When asked what she enjoys most about her role, Sam doesn't hesitate. "Working with the kids. One hundred percent," she says. "Talking to them on a daily basis and helping them navigate their teens."

At Gaunt Park Pool, Sam has watched the facility become a gathering place for generations of residents. She takes pride in the fact that the pool continues to serve people of all ages, from young swimmers learning a life skill to longtime residents who look forward to opening day each summer. "I think it keeps a lot of our senior community active. They look forward to it every year," she says. Longtime resident Pat Peters, whose father helped organize the Jaycees fundraiser that brought a pool to the village, has been swimming at Gaunt Park Pool for more than seventy years and says Sam's dedication has helped keep it a treasured community asset. "One of our main village assets is Samantha Stewart," Pat says. "Samantha is a true professional. Each year she has what I call the best lifeguards and staff at the pool. Most of the lifeguards return summer after summer, and it's apparent that they have been trained well by Samantha. I go to the pool just about every day during the summer, and truly enjoy and appreciate what Samantha does for the pool and our village." Sam also emphasizes the importance of keeping swim lessons free, giving children the opportunity to learn a skill that can last a lifetime. "Getting kids in the water and teaching them such a valuable life skill matters," she says.

The Youth Center has also transformed during Sam's time with the Village. What began as a small program has grown into a valued community resource. "It's changed from being 'just the Youth Center' to 'It's the Youth Center,'" Sam says. "The community sees it as a resource now."

Facility improvements, including a new kitchen and updated spaces, have helped support that growth and create a more welcoming space for kids and families. Some of the most meaningful work, however, happens beyond the walls of the building. During the COVID-19 pandemic, community members stepped up to help provide meals for children and families, an effort that continues today. "We have a bunch of fairy godparents in this town," Sam says, crediting Paula Hurwitz, Amanda Banaszak, and Kate Anderson Carrigan for their support. "Kate, with the Beloved Community Project, still brings a home-cooked meal every Wednesday. That's been going strong for five years."

When asked what she hopes people experience at the pool and Youth Center, Sam keeps it simple: "That you get whatever you came for," she says. "Whether it's fun, relaxation, or time with family." Even after more than twenty years, Sam is quick to point out that the success of these programs is a shared effort. "It's never just me," she says. "It's my staff. It's the program. It's being supported. The whole thing doesn't work if one of those pieces isn't there."



Samantha Stewart, Parks & Recreation Supervisor



## 2026 YSPD COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Yellow Springs Police Department's annual community feedback survey is here!

We heard your feedback last year that the survey was too lengthy, so we streamlined it to 20 questions. The survey should take no more than 5 minutes to complete.

Your responses will help improve communication, safety, and community engagement. The survey will remain open until 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 1, 2026.

Scan QR code or visit [www.surveymonkey.com/r/YSPD2026](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YSPD2026) to participate!



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### A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Thank you to residents Brenda Hubbard Ibarra and Kim Alexander Camarata for contributing historic Yellow Springs photos to the Village's Facebook Throwback Thursday series! Your submissions help preserve and share our community's history.

Have vintage photos you'd like to share? We'd love to feature them! Email your photos to [bguenther@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:bguenther@yellowsprings.gov) with the subject line "TBT Photos." JPG and PNG formats are preferred, and higher-resolution images are appreciated.





After being in business for more than a decade – thirteen years, to be exact – you might think an institution as successful as Yellow Springs Brewery (YSB) would rest on its laurels and take it easy. No one would blame an award-winning craft brewery with a loyal following for putting its collective feet up and coasting for awhile. But that’s never really been the vibe at 305 N. Walnut Street.

So, what’s been going on lately at YSB?

When we sat down with Lisa Wolters, co-founder of the brewery, the big news of the day was the launch of the 12-pack format for the YSB’s most popular beer, Boat Show. “It’s a big move for a small brewery like us,” Wolters said. “Twelve packs have picked up steam over the past couple years. So we know we’re missing out on those sales.”

Wolters noted that the packaging artwork for the new twelve-pack cartons was created by renowned artist Don Pendleton, who designed YSB’s iconic eagle logo, as well as the labels for all of the cans the brewery distributes. “It really feels like a piece of artwork,” Wolters declared. “Creativity is one of our core values, so I’m pretty excited about that.”

In other exciting news, YSB is in the midst of its Hazy Series, a collection of throwback New England-style IPAs that were all precursors to Boat Show. “These were our recipes that we were testing and seeing what



*Yellow Springs Brewery patio along the Little Miami Scenic Trail.*

we wanted to do,” explained Wolters. “It’s fun. People are paying attention because they kind of remember those beers.” The most recent release was Turbo Dub, which was tapped on July 1. The fourth and final release of the series will be Dr. Bunsen, which is scheduled for October 10.

YSB also recently released this year’s variant of Just Be Nice, made in collaboration with YS Pride, for the annual June celebration. YSB brews beers collaboratively with other local nonprofits as well, such as WYSO, Glen Helen, and the Yellow Springs Film Festival. A portion of the brewery’s proceeds from each of these beers goes to the respective nonprofit with which they collaborated.

Working with local nonprofits has been a core mission of YSB for most of its existence. In addition to the various beer collaborations, the brewery also hosts its bi-monthly Community Cheers fundraiser, where a portion of its Wednesday sales go to a designated, local nonprofit. For the months of July and August, donations are benefiting the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Clark, Greene & Madison Counties.

Other fun things to look forward to at YSB include new artwork in the Taproom, where a new artist’s work cycles through every six weeks. Rachel Hall – whose work was recently displayed at Winds Cafe – will be the featured artist from July 27 – September 6.

At the Barrel Room, YSB hosts a monthly Locals’ Night. However, in lieu of an August Locals’ Night, its annual Oktoberfest will take place on August 29.

Regarding YSB’s events at the Barrel Room, Wolters fondly declares, “It’s quite a good time.”



*Yellow Springs Brewery’s NEW Boat Show 12-Packs.*





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## Village of Yellow Springs

100 Dayton Street, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387  
937-767-7202 | [www.yellowsprings.gov](http://www.yellowsprings.gov)

### VILLAGE COUNCIL & CLERK

Gavin DeVore Leonard, Council President  
[gavin.leonard@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:gavin.leonard@yellowsprings.gov)

Angie Hsu, Council Vice President  
[angie.hsu@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:angie.hsu@yellowsprings.gov)

Carmen Brown, Council Member  
[carmen.brown@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:carmen.brown@yellowsprings.gov)

Senay Semere, Council Member  
[senay.semere@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:senay.semere@yellowsprings.gov)

Stephanie Pearce, Council Member  
[stephanie.pearce@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:stephanie.pearce@yellowsprings.gov)

Judy Kintner, Council Clerk  
[clerk@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:clerk@yellowsprings.gov)

### VILLAGE MANAGER & STAFF

Johnnie Burns, Village Manager  
[johnnie.burns@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:johnnie.burns@yellowsprings.gov)

Elyse Giardullo, Assistant Village Manager  
[elyse.giardullo@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:elyse.giardullo@yellowsprings.gov)

Paige Burge, Chief of Police  
[paige.burge@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:paige.burge@yellowsprings.gov)

Michelle Robinson, Finance Director  
[michelle.robinson@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:michelle.robinson@yellowsprings.gov)

Nía Holt, Planning & Zoning Director  
[nia.holt@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:nia.holt@yellowsprings.gov)

YSPD (Non-Emergency)  
937-767-7206

### VILLAGE MAYOR & CLERK

Steve McQueen, Village Mayor  
[mayormcqueen@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:mayormcqueen@yellowsprings.gov)

MacKenzie Baird, Clerk of Mayor's Court  
[mackenzie.baird@yellowsprings.gov](mailto:mackenzie.baird@yellowsprings.gov)

## MONTHLY PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULE

### Village Council

First and Third Mondays at 6:00 PM

### Planning Commission

Second Tuesday at 6:00 PM

### Environmental Commission

Second Thursday at 6:00 PM

### Public Arts and Culture Commission

First Tuesday at 6:30 PM

Check out our YouTube channel to watch livestreams of  
Village Council and Planning Commission meetings:  
[youtube.com/@yellowspringscommunityaccess](https://youtube.com/@yellowspringscommunityaccess)



OPEN CAMERA,  
AIM,  
TAP LINK

## AMERICA 250 EVENTS

9/4

### WEST VIRGINIA MINE WARS

Speaker: Lou Martin

10/3

### WATCHDOGS OF DEMOCRACY

Speaker: Jeremy Blevins

Visit [www.yellowsprings.gov](http://www.yellowsprings.gov) for details.



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### Village Grapevine Editorial Staff / Contributing Writers

Elyse Giardullo, Assistant Village Manager

Ben Guenther, Digital Media Manager

Cameron Fortin, Leadership Team Assistant

Aaron Arellano, Planning & Economic Development Coordinator



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