

**Council for the Village of Yellow Springs
Regular Session Minutes**

In Council Chambers @ 5 P.M.

Monday, May 18, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

President of Council Gavin DeVore Leonard called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

ROLL CALL

Present were Council President DeVore Leonard, Vice President Angie Hsu and Council members Carmen Brown, Senay Semere and Stephanie Pearce. AVM/Project Lead Elyse Giardullo, Solicitor Amy Blankenship (via ZOOM) and Village Manager Johnnie Burns were also present.

SWEARINGS IN

DeVore Leonard swore in Katia Svensson; Jon Search, Alan Raney and Brian Mayer to Environmental Commission.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes of May 4, 2026 Regular Meeting
2. Credit Card Report for April, 2026

Semere MOVED and Hsu SECONDED a MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

There were no changes made.

PETITIONS/COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk will receive and file:

Mitzie Miller re: Downtown Parking (2)
Mitzie Miller re: Downtown Handicap Parking Availability (2)
Phillip O'Rourke re: Invitation/Best Hometowns
Mayor's Clerk re: Mayor's Monthly Report (2)

Hsu reviewed communications.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Stephen Green requested that Council make a determination as to whether or not the walnut trees located on the Glass Farm pose a "harm" and could be removed. He commented that these are volunteer trees and produce a substance that kills many plants, creating a detriment to his "entire backyard". He pointed out a phrase in the agreement between the Village and Tecumseh Land Trust allowing removal of trees that "cause harm". He noted that there is no way to cure the soil once infiltrated.

Jacintha Williams requested a senior shuttle service.

Mitzie Miller commented on returning cost for sidewalks to property owners.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/LEGISLATION

Brown MOVED and Pearce SECONDED a MOTION TO READ EMERGENCY LEGISLATION BY TITLE ONLY. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

Emergency Reading of Ordinance 2026-08 Establishing a Moratorium on the Issuance of Zoning Permits and Approvals for New Data Center Uses in the Village of Yellow Springs and Declaring an Emergency. Hsu MOVED and Semere SECONDED a MOTION TO APPROVE.

Burns noted that he had wanted the number of megawatts low enough for the Village to manage, but high enough to accommodate a small data center such as MVECA. The peak load limitation of 2 megawatts or less, Burns said, addresses any concerns he had previously expressed.

DeVore Leonard OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING. There being no comment, DeVore Leonard CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING and CALLED THE VOTE. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A ROLL CALL VOTE.

Reading of Resolution 2026-21 Authorizing the Village of Yellow Springs to Apply for an ODNR Nature Works Grant for Improvements to Gaunt Park Softball Field. Hsu MOVED and Brown SECONDED a MOTION TO APPROVE.

Giardullo presented information regarding the grant application, highlighting chronic field drainage issues due to improper engineering. She noted that improvements to the field are long overdue, and will support female athletes, since the field serves, among other entities, women's league softball and the High School women's softball team.

Giardullo noted that the grant covers 75% of the cost, and that the application is due in by July 1, with grant awards available July 2027.

Burns suggested increasing the request to the maximum of \$50,000.00 and including accessibility features. The "Paths to Mobility" aspect of the grant, he said, could improve access to drinking fountains, to the field and bleachers, etc. This would increase the match to \$12,500.00, he noted.

Brown added that inclusion of mobility features improves scoring for the grant in that it can add up to 25 points.

DeVore Leonard MOVED TO AMEND TO RESOLUTION TO APPROVE APPLICATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,000.00, ACKNOWLEDGING A REQUIRED MATCH OF \$12,500.00. Brown SECONDED, and the MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

DeVore Leonard CALLED THE VOTE ON THE AMENDED RESOLUTION, and the MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

Reading of Resolution 2026-22 Authorizing a Grant to Home, Inc. for Home Repair Program as Appropriated in 2026 Village Budget. Hsu MOVED and Brown SECONDED a MOTION TO APPROVE.

Blankenship explained that while Council had appropriated \$20,000.00 in their 2026 budget for this program, they had provided no details. The resolution makes clear, Blankenship said, that Home, Inc. can be reimbursed for grants they have made to homes and homeowners located in the Village of Yellow Springs.

DeVore Leonard CALLED THE VOTE, and the MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

SPECIAL REPORTS

There were no Special Reports.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Burns highlighted an award to the Electric Department from the Ohio Senate for reliability and safety.

He noted that the public pool is filled and ready for opening day on Saturday.

Planning and Zoning Director Nia Holt will start in the position on May 26th.

Kevin Martin has received the position of Water and Wastewater Supervisor.

OLD BUSINESS

Prioritization of Village Goals. Giardullo presented a summary of Council members' responses to Village priorities.

DeVore Leonard broke the priorities into categories as follows:

High

- housing strategy
- housing on village property
- strategic plan
- aligned capacity

High-Medium

- balanced budget
- understanding budget
- rental housing

Medium-High

- environmental sustainability in housing
- updating zoning

Medium

- economic development role
- reduce vacancies

Medium-Low

- pop-ups, etc.
- CRA/TIF

Low

- communication plan
- sidewalks
- parking

Done/Clear

- PPM
- website

DeVore Leonard noted that goals could be shared as priorities or as focus areas.

Brown asked whether several of the goals be consolidated, and offered to do this.

Semere commented that the goals priority needs to be run through the filter of a strategic plan.

Hsu stated that she would like staff feedback regarding priority order, noting that alignment of priorities with staff capacity is critical.

Council will re-prioritize goals for creation of a finalized document for the June 1 packet.

Residential Sidewalk Discussion. Burns introduced the topic, stating that the allotted \$50,000/year for sidewalks will not make any significant impact on village sidewalks. Street trees are heaving sidewalks, he said, and the grinding done several years ago needs to be done again and in more areas of town.

Burns opined that the Village either needs a much larger allocation for sidewalk maintenance or that maintenance of sidewalks should be returned to property owners. He added that there are several options for payment if responsibility is returned to property owners, including assessment every five years with the option for shared contracting at a reduced cost and for assessment to property taxes.

DeVore Leonard asked whether lowering of expectations could constitute a third option, in the sense that villagers have become accustomed to relatively under-maintained sidewalks.

Burns responded that he had found only one other municipal entity that has responsibility for property owners' sidewalks, indicating that the Village's model is unusual.

Hsu asked for property owner options if they are unable to pay. She commented that several of the assessment options seem to add a high level of work to staff and seem open to disagreement. She asked what the cost to the Village would be to be able to maintain sidewalks at a higher/more responsive level, commenting that having that number might aid in making a decision.

Pearce commented that shifting responsibility to property owners seems like a shift to increased staff time, given noticing, inspection and follow up activities. She brought up the issue of affordability as a factor in her eventual decision and asked whether alternative sources of funding might be accessed.

Brown expressed concern regarding affordability and suggested a hybrid model to assist people who could not afford the repairs.

DeVore Leonard identified the question as to whether property owners who do not own sidewalks pay for sidewalks they do not own. He identified the need to pin down the amount of money needed to effectively address sidewalk repair.

Burns pointed out that every time a sidewalk is added, the cost for sidewalk maintenance increases.

Burns suggested waiting until Council is discussing the Capital Improvement Plan to make a final decision.

Council expressed general agreement with this approach.

Municipal Land Trust Information. Brown shared information regarding MLT's, referencing the memo she had provided. Responding to a question from DeVore Leonard, Brown stated that her intention was to put the idea on the radar as Council gets closer to developing affordable housing on Village-owned land.

DeVore Leonard asked what Brown would like to see with regard to MLTs going forward.

Brown responded that an MLT is another tool available for affordable housing, to be discussed further when specific development is discussed.

Discussion of Fewer Meetings During June/July/August. DeVore Leonard noted that at this point, the only possible meeting that could be cancelled is the second meeting in June. Hsu MOVED and Brown SECONDED a MOTION TO CANCEL THE JUNE 15th COUNCIL MEETING.

NEW BUSINESS

Consideration of Updates to Village Mediation Program Coordinator Job Description. Brown stated that she would like to have herself and another Council member meet with the current VMP Coordinator and two members of the Steering Committee and the Village Manager to discuss the matter.

Brown stated that the letter Council members received from a member of the Steering Committee contained some inaccuracies. She pointed out that while the VMP program is indeed not a Council commission, it is paid for with public funds, and is associated with Council.

Pearce offered to join Brown for meeting purposes.

DeVore Leonard asked for clear information regarding the structure of the program and where there may be any area of disagreement.

Burns expressed that he would prefer not to be in the position of supervising the program.

Giardullo expressed the need for some separation between the VM and the VMP, since this is a program frequently used by YSPD.

DeVore Leonard asked that more information regarding the program be provided once the topic is ready to return to Council table.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REPORTS

DeVore Leonard presented some feedback regarding Planning Commission's 2026 goals. He noted that all members seemed interested in doing something proactive with Kieth's Alley.

Council members had some questions, but expressed general agreement with the idea.

Hsu noted that Kieth's Alley is not on the goals list, but that she is willing to listen more information to determine whether it should be added.

Semere reported that the TRAC Application project through MVRPC has been put on hold due to funding issues, with no firm date of return.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

June 1: Executive Session re: Clerk and VM Pre-Evaluation Check-In
Village Goals
Ordinance Approving a Second Second Quarter Supplemental Appropriation
Ordinance Regulating Wells in Village of Yellow Springs
Ordinance Establishing a Moratorium on Smoke Shops in Village of Yellow Springs
Resolution Establishing Utility Policy for Village-Owned Rental Properties
"Feeding Wild Animals in the Village" Discussion
June 15: MAY BE CANCELLED
July 6: Transportation Summary
July 20:

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:50pm Semere MOVED and Brown SECONDED a MOTION TO ADJOURN. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

Signed: _____
Gavin DeVore Leonard, Council President

Attest: _____
Judy Kintner, Council Clerk