

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

In Council Chambers @ 6 P.M.

Monday February 2, 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 Gavin DeVore Leonard, Council Vice President Angie Hsu and Council members Carmen Brown, Senay Semere and Stephanie Pearce. Solicitor Amy Blankenship, AVM/Project Lead Elyse Giardullo, Police Chief Paige Burge, Planning and Economic Development Coordinator Aaron Arellano and Village Manager Johnnie Burns were also present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pearce noted a counter-intelligence workshop she attended in town that she thought would be of interest to Council and others, and promised to let the group know if another workshop is planned.

Semere provided information on an interfaith community gathering in support of the Springfield Action Community in the face of loss of protected status for some Haitian residents.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes of January 20, 2026 Regular Meeting
2. Minutes of January 20, 2026 Special Meeting: Work Session
3. Minutes of January 23, 2026 Special Meeting: Retreat

Hsu MOVED and Brown SECONDED a MOTION TO APPROVE ALL CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS. 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:

David Hergesheimer re: Re-open Short Street
Mitzie Miller re: Mills Lawn and Traffic
Evelyn LaMers re: Re-open Short Street
Carol Cottom re: Re-open Short Street
Chris Zurbuchen re: Re-open Short Street
Charlene Prestopino re: Short Street Presentation Comments
Barbara Mann re: Apply for AARP Grant
Jason Lavek re: Traffic Safety on Fairfield Pike
Ralita Chambers re: Comment and Suggestions to New Council

Hsu reviewed communications.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/LEGISLATION

Hsu MOVED and Semere SECONDED a MOTION TO READ IN ALL EMERGENCY LEGISLATION BY TITLE ONLY. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

Emergency Reading of Ordinance 2026-02 Approving a First Quarter Supplemental Appropriation and Declaring an Emergency. Brown MOVED and Hsu SECONDED a MOTION TO APPROVE.

DeVore Leonard explained that because no motion was taken at the reading of this legislation on January 20th, the ordinance was required to return to Council for motion and vote.

Burns explained that the HVAC unit in the Village-owned building failed and must be replaced, and that the Village received its Aid to Construction reimbursement from Cresco, comprising the total of the supplemental.

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.

First Reading of Ordinance 2026-03 Repealing Chapter 220.01 “Rules and Procedures” of the Codified Ordinances of the Village of Yellow Springs, Ohio and Enacting New Chapter 220.01 “Rules and Procedures”. Semere MOVED and Pearce SECONDED a MOTION TO APPROVE.

The Clerk explained that Rules and Procedures are reviewed with each new Council. She explained what had been redlined based upon conversation during Council’s retreat and that she had redlined several sections as a poor fit with the ordinance format and more appropriate to a resolution or a policy, all for Council review.

Brown asked that the section referencing the process for complaints against Council and among Council be reviewed. The Clerk offered to work with her on those redlines. This will require a new ordinance.

Council worked through the redlines with no changes made.

No vote was called.

Reading of Resolution 2026-04 Adopting the 2025 Greene County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. Hsu MOVED and Pearce SECONDED a MOTION TO APPROVE.

Burns explained that he, along with Brian Housh, had participated in the update process, which occurs every five years. Burns noted that if the HMP is adopted inclusive of the requirements listed for Yellow Springs it will allow the Village to apply for grant funding to provide the initiatives listed.

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

Reading of Resolution 2026-05 Authorizing the Village Manager to Apply for Loan Funds from the Environmental Protection Agency in an Amount of up to \$100,000. Brown MOVED and Hsu SECONDED a MOTION TO APPROVE.

Burns referenced the information he had provided at the previous meeting, noting that previous Council had approved a planning loan in the amount of \$59,000. Based on current information, he said, that amount remains sufficient for the anticipated scope of work. The additional amount provides some flexibility and can also be rolled into construction cost if needed.

The Clerk asked that Council add language specifying the “up to \$100,000.00” language, stating that she had unfortunately omitted that detail.

DeVore Leonard MOVED TO ADD THE REQUESTED LANGUAGE. Hsu SECONDED, and the MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

DeVore Leonard CALLED THE VOTE ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE AS AMENDED AND THE MOTION PASSED 5-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Mitzie Miller asked that Council respond to citizen questions raised during meetings.

Ralita Hilderbrand requested that Council create a policy requiring cybersecurity protocols for Council members. She asked that all Council members receive training in Sunshine Law.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Short Street Presentation. Giardullo presented a powerpoint regarding Short Street. The presentation focused on two approaches; seasonal closure with limited infrastructure and permanent closure with more robust infrastructure. Giardullo expressed that staff do not support seasonal closure for several reasons, one of these being the danger inherent in requiring drivers to relearn traffic patterns periodically. Max Crome, Crome Architecture, provided options and vision for a permanent community space.

Citizen Comments. Citizens provided comment on a variety of aspects concerning the permanent or seasonal closure of the space as follows:

Ralita Hilderbrand spoke in favor of proceeding with the plan for increasing parking in the downtown area. She stated that cost of the Short Street project is a concern.

Mitzie Miller suggested traffic changes to improve safety.

Jill Pauley asked several questions.

Matthew Kirk made several suggestions.

Speaking in favor of permanent closure, variously citing pedestrian safety improvements and community—including young adults—benefit: Valerie Koshaloff; Eric Oberg; Gary Zaremsky; Dan Koffman; Rose Pelzl; School Board President Amy Bailey; Melissa Heston; Donna Silvert.

Speaking in favor of reopening Short Street, variously citing cost concerns, lack of handicap parking and driver inconvenience: Jean McKee; Marcia Wallgren; Chris Zurbuchen

Council Discussion. Burns addressed several questions asked, including traffic flow on US 68, jurisdiction over village streets, etc.

Council shared some of their concerns regarding a decision and all of the considerations that need to be taken into account.

Pearce opined that the Short Street matter has created division in the village. She stated that she disagreed with much of the information provided in the presentation, characterizing it as incorrect and ultimately skewing the presentation. Pearce asked for solid evidence of safety issues posed by Short Street.

Pearce asked that Council consider whether Short Street fits into Council's goals. She asked for labor costs for bringing the plan as far as it has come, and asked why that information was not included in the cost information provided.

Hsu stated that more handicap parking is needed in the downtown area. She commented that more needs to be done to improve the safety of school drop-off and pick-up. Hsu addressed the idea of the need for more bathrooms in the downtown area as the inception of the project, stating that provision of more bathrooms should be followed up on separate from the Short Street question.

Hsu expressed concern over financing the project, saying that not having funding makes it hard for her to agree to the project. She added that the intersection of planning and communicating with citizens and gathering opinion and ideas was flawed, though she supports the vision and the potential.

DeVore Leonard expressed concern regarding funding, connecting it to the ongoing problem of how to prioritize projects.

Brown commented on the vision for use of Short Street as the project unfolds. She asked whether Crome's temporary option might be feasible as a long-term option while funds are raised for the full project, given Council's funding concerns.

Pearce objected that the area is on the cusp of turning into a three-year construction zone, which is not ideal.

Burns stated that the Village is unable to apply for funding until Council makes a decision regarding permanent closure. He provided some ideas for temporary improvements at low cost to greatly improve the temporary space.

Semere stated that he is open to the idea of permanent closure, but not without a "proven financial plan." He stated that he was unwilling to leave Short Street closed while the planning period is engaged.

Hsu commented that the idea of establishing priorities is key, and that she did not clearly understand how Short Street became a priority.

DeVore Leonard commented that he generally agreed with Semere in that he was unwilling to keep Short Street closed while funding and design details are addressed.

DeVore Leonard framed the decision before Council as determining whether to keep Short Street closed and pursue the project; to open Short Street temporarily while a final decision is made, or to simply reopen the street and abandon the project.

Pearce stated that she had not wavered in her decision to reopen the street and abandon the project.

Semere voiced his desire for a permanent decision as soon as possible, adding that he is in favor of reopening Short Street.

Brown commented that she was inspired by the presentation. She noted that work on two of the buildings adjacent to or on Short Street will likely cause street closure in the near future. Brown added that school pick up and drop off goes more smoothly with the street closed, speaking in favor of keeping the street closed while funding is identified to complete the full plan and employing one of Crome's suggestions for temporary space in the interim.

Hsu stated that she favors opening the street, commenting that the plan can be revisited and "done better" with a fresh start.

DeVore Leonard summarized that alignment with goals and priorities earlier in the process would have been helpful. He emphasized that he does not think the project is without merit or that it could not be brought back with more information.

Burns offered that the parking plan provided in the presentation was originally part of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, but that Council had pulled it out due to objections six years ago. Had Council not pulled the plans, he said, we would currently have ample parking in the downtown area. He provided the example of the proposed multi-modal path, which was approved by Council allowing staff to apply for and receive full grant funding. The point, he stated, is that funding sources only become available and viable after Council commits to a project. Burns asked that Council agree to leave Short Street closed to allow staff time to actively pursue funding for a permanent community space. He added that if Council only gives the go-ahead for the parking plan it will still be a win, but, he said, Council may find itself down the road in six years regretting that they had not pursued the Short Street project.

The Clerk asked Council whether there exists an interim step that would provide staff a designated time period in which to raise funds.

Brown explained that funders need to understand the planned outcome of a given project before they will provide grants.

Semere commented that there is adequate information to obtain funding at this time. He stated that he is in favor of the project only if funding is certain.

Hsu asked for more detail as to the possible grants.

Burns responded that there are grants he could apply for from ODOT, Greene County, MVRPC, etc. if there was a Council decision to pursue the project.

Hsu asked whether the street could be reopened but with Council's approval to pursue funding for the permanent closure to facilitate grant application.

Burns responded that funding entities would want a date for closure.

Brown advocated for closure with the interim plan until funds are raised.

Pearce MOVED TO REOPEN SHORT STREET.

DeVore Leonard characterized the position of the majority of Council as in favor of permanent closure but only after funds are secured.

Council debated what type of motion should be considered, given the variables.

The Clerk cautioned that if the vote is to close Short Street, she sees that as a complete stop to pursuing the project.

DeVore Leonard summarized that the process has been difficult and uncertain, but that he does not hear Council giving a permanent "no" to the project despite the desire to reopen the street. He concluded that Pearce's motion was sufficient, since more direction cannot be added to the motion.

Brown cautioned that Council should be aware of the huge amount of staff time that has been devoted to the project and that expecting an immediate pivot is unrealistic.

DeVore Leonard SECONDED THE MOTION ON THE TABLE AND CALLED THE VOTE. The MOTION PASSED 4-1 ON A ROLL CALL VOTE, with Brown voting against.

DeVore Leonard CALLED A FIVE MINUTE RECESS.

MANAGER'S REPORT

There was no report given.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Board and Commission Seat Assignments. DeVore Leonard received confirmation from all Council members regarding their continued or selected Liaison and Alternate assignments.

Draft Village Values/Village Goals Document. DeVore Leonard explained that the Values portion of the resolution will be discussed at the Work Session set for February 17th due to time constraints.

Retreat Follow-up Information. DeVore Leonard briefly noted a productive retreat held January 23rd.

Nominations: DeVore Leonard MOVED and Pearce SECONDED the nomination of Stephen Green as a returning full member of Planning Commission. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 on a VOICE VOTE.

Brown MOVED and DeVore Leonard SECONDED the nomination of Brian Gibson as a full member of Environmental Commission. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 on a VOICE VOTE.

Brown MOVED and Hsu SECONDED the nomination of Johanna Schultz-Herman as a returning full member of Environmental Commission. The MOTION PASSED 5-0 on a VOICE VOTE.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

March 2: **Reading of Resolution 2026-11** Approving Village Goals for 2026-2027

Prioritization of Projects/Requests

Special Reports Topic Discussion

Quarterly Financials

End of Year Report: Finance

End of Year Report: Treasurer

March 16: Annual Calendar Update
 Personnel Policy Manual Ordinance

April 6:

April 20: Solicitor Evaluation Timeline

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:44pm DeVore Leonard MOVED and Hsu 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