

VILLAGE OF OAKWOOD MINUTES  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**ATTENDED:**

Eloise Hardin- Council President	Erica Nikolic- Mayor
Norman Bliss- Council at Large	John Montello- Law*
Taunya Scruggs- Ward 1	Matt Jones- Engineer
Yvonne Evans-Warren- Ward 2	Tom Haba- Service Director*
Paggie Matlock- Ward 3	David Tapp- Fire Chief*
Mary Davis-Ward 4*	John Freeman- Police Captain
Malcom Sims, Jr. – Ward 5*	Roland Walker-CBO*
	Karen Gaither- Recreation

**ABSENT:**

James Climer- Law
Mark Garratt- Police Chief

\*=Late Arrival

**Meeting opened:** 7:05 By Hardin

1. Meeting came to order
2. Pledge
3. Roll Call

*Unveiling of Gary V. Gottschalk Memorial plaque*

**Joe Mestnik**, editor of a local newspaper and friend of Mayor Gary V Gottschalk. He lived from December 18, 1944, to September 12, 2025. There are no words that describe the enormity of his intelligence and ability to develop a vision to transform Oakwood Village into a beautiful, recreational, financial powerhouse and see it through to completion. I first met Mayor Gottschalk in 1956. He grew up on Richmond and Robertdale Roads on Oakwood Village's panhandle. His father and mother, Vernon and Elsie Gottschalk, built their house. His father was at that time in charge of the Bedford YMCA. My first real contact came riding on the School Bus. During winter he, along with many others, played on the hills and slopes of Hawthorne Valley Country Club Golf course. We had snowball fights, tobogganing, moonlight night skiing, creek ice skating and just having fun. Gary, even at a young age, truly knew how to enjoy life to its fullest. He was a great golfer and played for free on world class golf courses. After high school we went our separate ways. He graduated and received a full scholarship to Case Western Reserve in Physics. In 1989 I was elected to the Bedford School board. He was in Saudi Arabia. In 1991 he came back from his and he told me he was going to run for mayor,

and I of course agreed to support him. He won the election by a very slim margin but immediately came to me and discussed his vision to make Oakwood Village a thriving community. He heard of my involvement with the Oakwood Planning Commission and council. As a member of the Bedford school board, we worked together to attract new business and create jobs. This arrangement brought in millions of dollars to the area and the board went for 14 years without a new operating levy. This was the first agreement of this type of arranged partnership in the United States. He worked hard and smart to keep major businesses like Petitti's and Northern Haserot along with attracting many high-tech companies like Thermo-Fischer Scientific, View Ray, Geis and many more. He worked to raise new funding sources and reduced the tax burden on all. He also organized one of the safest communities and worked with Glenwillow and Walton Hills to combine cooperation and development of police and fire protection. He also envisioned a roundabout with a water feature on Richmond and Pettibone Roads that eliminated the huge mile long traffic jams. He helped further the development of Oakwood's Park and worked with Mt. Zion and Bishop Macon to make a thriving institution along with Mount Zion Circle. He widened Broadway in front of Sam's and Levin's to maximize traffic flow and control. He initiated taking down abandoned buildings and beautified the village with walking paths across Oakwood including having Wendy's reengineer the looks of their fast-food restaurant. He helped design the Meadows housing development with parks, trees and ponds and only approved housing with stone or brick frontings. He attracted entertainment during the summers that brought people from all over the Cleveland area and put Oakwood Village on the map. He worked hand and glove with the Bedford school system and during the summer provided advanced educational programs and recreational programs for our children. Gary provided municipal stability from 1991 until the day he died on September 12, 2025, 34 years! I spoke with him early in the morning on the day he died and his thoughts were still on what could make Oakwood Village great. He left a legacy of stability, beauty, fun and safety. God Bless Mayor Gary!

Official swearing in of Clerk of Council, Carol Jackson, and Assistant Clerk of Council, Nina Curry.

Motion to recess made by Sims seconded by Hardin.

Vote: **YES** Hardin, Bliss, Scruggs, Evans-Warren, Matlock, Sims.

Recessed at 7:24

Reconvened 7:39

Motion to approve minutes of February 13, 2026. Made by Sims seconded by Davis.

Vote: **YES** Hardin, Bliss, Scruggs, Evans-Warren, Matlock, Sims.

**Approved.**

#### *Clerk Correspondence*

Curry gave a flier to all of council regarding national police week and explained. Copies were made available to residents.

*Open Floor comment*

**Victoria Berry** 53 year resident of the village, expressed concern about short term rentals as Airbnb and their impact on the neighborhood, as well as concerns about a new construction project on Drake Road near her property. She voiced concern about loud noise, dozens of cars parked on the road in no parking zones, witnessed outside drinking. There is also a non-buildable lot someone is looking to build on which is a concern for the residents. Council questioned width size of lot and shutting down Airbnbs. Council wanted to ensure contractors are bonded and insured.

*Reports*

**Mayor** -appreciated the plaque. Updated council on community garden with only one plot left. Garden club is a partner. A project is being planned for the community center with the assistance of children aged 10 to teenagers. She detailed projects for the 2026 road repair program. She mentioned other events planned with information available to residents. She spoke about a core team for the master plan and a grant.

Law director

**Montello**-Congratulated the new clerks and appreciated the support for the police.

Police

**Freeman**-This is National Police week we have handouts for everyone including blue bulbs to display and other items. He mentioned 111 police officers were killed in the last year.

recreation

**Gaither**-Summer registration is up to June 8<sup>th</sup> – July 31. Several classes are running. Details are on website.

Fire

**Tapp**- He stated a house fire on Raynham left extensive damage no injuries except two dogs and a cat. We will work on CPR training for all employees.

Building

**Walker**-Completing software training. Enforcement for high grass is difficult due to the rain. Scruggs roof companies coming into the city must get permits, and the noise ordinance Freeman: Work can begin at 7 am. Council members asked about several issues regarding demo of vacant property and someone living in a camper behind a house on Tyron, stop work orders on Pettibone construction. A resident who collects scarp placed it in his yard. Walker will be working to resolve the issues. Hardin asked for legislation to address rentals.

Engineer

**Jones**- Addressed Arbutus and Kentucky required work. We are looking to finalize a grant for funding street repairs. Construction is to begin in 2027.

*Service*

**Haba-** Updated council on activities including storm damage, community garden, mulching beds, flower planting timeline. Council asked about the pillars and talked about removal.

*Legislation:*

**2026-40-** A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING AN APPLICATION FOR THE  
2026 CUYAHOGA COUNTY COMMUNITY PLANNING  
SERVICES PROGRAM (CPSP) MASTER PLAN GRANT  
AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

INTRODUCED BY MAYOR/BLISS

Motion to Suspend. Made by Bliss and seconded by Matlock

**YES:** Hardin, Bliss, Scruggs, Evan-Warren, Matlock, Sims, Davis

Motion to approve by Matlock and seconded by Scruggs

**YES:** Hardin, Bliss, Scruggs, Evan-Warren, Matlock, Sims, Davis

Motion passed.

**2026-41-** A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND  
VILLAGE ENGINEER TO MAKE APPLICATION TO  
THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
DEVELOPMENT FOR FUNDING UNDER THE 2026 SPECIAL  
MUNICIPAL GRANT PROGRAM (CDBG) AND AUTHORIZING THE  
SIGNING OF CONTRACTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT  
THERETO, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

INTRODUCED BY MAYOR/BLISS

Motion to move by Scruggs seconded by Matlock.

Vote **YES:** Hardin, Bliss, Scruggs, Evan-Warren, Matlock, Sims, Davis.

**Motion Passed.** Move.

**2026-WS-21-** A PAY ORDINANCE CONCERNING THE EMPLOYMENT  
OF DIONNA HAMMETT AS SECRETARY OF OAKWOOD'S  
BOARDS AND COMMISIIIONS AND SETTING FORTH THE DUTIES  
AND COMPENSATTION FOR THE POSITION AND DELCARING AN  
EMERGENCY.

INTRODUCED BY MAYOR/BLISS

Motion to suspend Matlock seconded by Scruggs

Vote **YES:** Hardin, Bliss, Scruggs, Evans-Warren, Matlock.

Vote **NO:** Sims.

Motion to adopt by Davis and Seconded by Evans-Warren

Vote **YES:** Hardin, Bliss, Scruggs, Evans-Warren, Matlock.

Vote **NO:** Sims.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:05 pm  
Scruggs seconded Davis.

VOTE YES: Sims, Evans-Warren, Hardin, Bliss, Matlock

Eloise Hardin  
Approved (date)

5-27-2026  
Posted (date)

Eloise Hardin  
Council President, Eloise Hardin

Nina Curry  
Assistant Clerk of Council, Nina Curry