

VILLAGE OF OAKWOOD MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

June 2nd, 2026

Amended 6-5-26

ATTENDED:

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

ABSENT:

James Climer- Law
Mark Garratt- Police Chief
John Montello- Law
John Freeman- Police Captain
Roland Walker-CBO

*=Late Arrival

Meeting opened: 5:05 by Hardin

1. Meeting came to order
2. Pledge
3. Roll Call
4. Executive session (For the compensation of personnel of Mrs. Hladky)

This was a special Village Council meeting for Oakwood called to order at 5:05 PM. The meeting was held pursuant to Section 7.08 of the Village Charter and was limited to specific agenda items only—no public comment was allowed, though council members offered to meet with constituents after the meeting.

INTRO BY COUNCIL
AS A WHOLE

Ordinance 2026-44 - Energy Efficiency Feasibility Study

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE INITIATION OF A NO-COST FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR AN ENERGY SAVINGS PERFORMANCE CONTRACT WITH LEOPARDO EFFICIENCY AND PROVIDING NOTICE TO THE MAYOR, DIRECTORS, AND VILLAGE STAFF TO ASSIST IN THE CORRDINATION OF SITE VISTS AND DATA COLLECTION

Motion to override veto made by Matlock and seconded by Evans-Warren.

Vote YES: Hardin, Scruggs, Evans-Warren, Matlock, Davis, Sims

Vote NO: Bliss

Motion passed.

INTRO BY COUNCIL

AS A WHOLE **Ordinance 2026-46** - Compensation Adjustments

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING PAY ADJUSTMENT RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY 1, 2026 AND HIRING LIMITS FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYEES AND POSITIONS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY 3% compensation increase for full and part-time employees. Exceptions: All directors (except fire chief) excluded from 3% increase. Fire department members (including fire chief) : 4% increase. **Amendment:** Clarified fire chief inclusion with fire department for 4% raise

Motion to amend by Evans-Warren seconded by Sims.

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

Motion passed.

Motion to suspend the rules made by Evans-Warren and seconded by Sims.

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

Motion passed.

INTRO BY COUNCIL

AS A WHOLE **Ordinance 2026-47** - Finance Director Position Designation

AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE POSITION OF FINANCE DIRECTOR AS A PART-TIME POSITION AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Motion to suspend rules by Evans-Warren seconded by Sims.

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

Motion passed.

Motion to adopt made by Sims seconded by Matlock.

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

Motion passed.

5:47 recess to make copies of all 2nd amended agenda to go into Ordinance 2026-48

INTRO BY COUNCIL

AS A WHOLE

Ordinance 2026-48 - Pay Adjustments (Retroactive)

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING PAY ADJUSTMENTS
RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY I, 2026 AND HIRING LIMITS FOR CERTAIN
EMPLOYEES AND POSITIONS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Motion to suspend rules made by Evans-Warren and seconded by Sims.

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

Motion passed.

Motion to adopt made by Sims and seconded by Evans-Warren.

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

Motion passed.

INTRO BY

MAYOR

Ordinance 2026-49 - Employment of Karen Howse

A PAY ORDINANCE CONCERNING THE EMPLOYMENT OF KAREN
HOWSE AND SETTING FORTH THE DUTIES AND COMPENSATION FOR
THE POSITION AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY JOB DESCRIPTION
EXHIBIT A

Motion to suspend made by Bliss and seconded by Matlock.

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

Motion passed.

Motion to adopt made by Bliss and seconded by Matlock.

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

Motion passed.

Motion for an executive session made by Matlock at 6:16 for discussion of
personnel matters for compensation for Mrs. Hladky and it was seconded by
Evans-Warren.

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

Motion passed.

Motion to leave executive session at 6:45 made by Scruggs and seconded by
Evans-Warren.

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

Motion passed.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Sims and seconded by Bliss.
Vote YES: Bliss, Sims, Hardin, Davis, Matlock, Scruggs, Evans-Warren.

Meeting adjourned at 6:47pm

Major Themes & Concerns

Financial Crisis: The village is dealing with significant financial uncertainty following the departure of the finance director. Council repeatedly expressed frustration about not having clear financial projections or bank reconciliation data.

Staffing Issues: Multiple department head positions are vacant, creating operational challenges and limiting the administration's capacity.

Transparency & Communication: Tension between council and administration regarding financial information, budget projections, and personnel decisions.

Compensation & Parity: Discussion about maintaining pay parity between departments (particularly police and fire) and ensuring employees receive promised raises.

Procedural Questions: Debate about proper notice requirements for agenda items and executive session procedures.

Here are the key statements made by the ****Mayor**** during this meeting:

Mayor's Comments

1. ****On the Energy Efficiency Study (Ordinance 2026-44)**:**

- "I just want to say, can we bring it to vote? Are you ready?"

- Expressed concern about coordination with the administration, stating they should cooperate and that there needs to be contact with the administration to determine timing for the study to take place

- Acknowledged: "I agree at this time. There is no time to conduct such an extensive study. But go on record with the fact that we are sensitive to that and that we will work with the administration so that it can take place without it being a hindrance."

2. ****On Financial Reports and the Finance Director Departure**:**

- Explained that financial reports cannot be provided until bank reconciliation is complete

"We cannot give you financial reports or statements until we have, which is why I was surprised to see this legislation"

Noted the previous finance director left in May and it's only been about a month

Stated: "So, you know, it has been a month since he left, so there you now, five, six months of time to request documents."

3. ****On Hiring Karen Howse (Interim Finance Director)**:**

- Explained that Karen House was brought in to help get the council the financial information they need

- "So that's how you see the four and the three. Well, I mean we had a finance director up until May ..."

- "So we can work to get you what you need as soon as possible, so you can make an important decision."

4. ****On Budget Projections and Raises**:**

- Addressed concerns about not having financial projections before making compensation decisions

- Indicated that consultants (Julian and Ruth) are working on bank reconciliation and should have 2025 completed within 2-3 weeks

- "So right now, they'll finish 2025, and they'll give us an idea of how far we're off from what we've been recording."

6. ****General Procedural Comments**:**

- "For the record, for the record" (emphasizing points)

- Responded to council's frustrations about communication and transparency

The Mayor's overall tone was defensive about the lack of financial information while also trying to justify the interim hiring and explain the timeline for getting financial data to council.

Here are the key statements ****Mr. Sims Jr. **** made to or about the Mayor:

Sims Jr.'s Comments

1. **On the Energy Efficiency Study (Ordinance 2026-44)**:

- "The mayor vetoed this because of the current state of the administration. I just want to spotlight that the administration should do a better job in making sure that positions are. Are not filled all together at one time. cause then we'll be in this situation where we think that we may not be able to provide or do things in function as a village. And I think that is a very important thing that we need to consider as council and the administration, that we shouldn't have these big department heads are not filled, and I mean that's all I have to say"

2. **On Hiring and Finance Director Issues**:

- Made a direct request to the Mayor regarding future personnel changes:
- "Mayor, may I request next time when you let go a director, especially if it being a finance director, that is important to our everyday task. Minute order is this related to the motion on the floor This is related to, this is following up sir, can I finish? It's related to the legislation, so... Can I finish, please? You have a minute. Yes, please let him finish. Thank you. Next time I ask that council be addressed to ensure that our current finance director is dismissed and fired, and not have to figure it out ourselves."

3. **On Budget Management**:

- "Because our main job is to make sure that our budget is managed daily. And without being on the same page and being in limbo, we just end up not being able to make decisions and figure out where we're financially."

Summary

Sims Jr. was critical of the Mayor's handling of staffing vacancies and the lack of communication about the finance director's departure. He emphasized that council needs to be informed promptly about personnel changes and that better financial management and transparency are essential for the village's operations.

Based on the transcript, **it's unclear whether the floor was ultimately given to the Mayor**.

Here's what happened:

1. **Sims Jr. made his comment** about requesting that council be addressed when the finance director is dismissed

2. **The Mayor attempted to respond**, saying: "Well, excuse me. It's a little more of a FOP now, but, yeah, so."

3. ****The Council President intervened****, saying: "Mayor, Mayor, you didn't have the floor to respond. No, no, I didn't give you the floor. He made his comment."
 4. ****The Mayor then asked****: "May I have the floor?"
 5. ****There was a brief exchange**** where the Mayor said: "No, he wants to sit here and tell me how to do his job. He has the right to respond."
5. ****The Council President then said****: "Let's finish the vote here."

Sims: [00:35:41] Next time I ask that council be addressed that our current finance director is dismissed and fired, and not have to figure it out by ourselves. Because our main job is to make sure that our daily, our budget is managed daily. And without being on the same page and being in limbo, we just end up not being able to make decisions and figure out where we're at financially. [00:36:10][29.3]

Nikolic: [00:36:14] And may I ask that when you have an FOP contract before you, that you focus on that and not your, um, now, then, you go out and I'm saying it's a good thing to do. Well, excuse me. It's a little more of a FOP now, but, yeah, so. [00:36:37][23.0]

Hardin: [00:36:38] Mayor, Mayor, you didn't have the floor to respond. No, no, I didn't give you the floor. He made his comment. You didn't have the Okay. [00:36:51][13.5]

Nikolic: [00:36:53] May I have the floor? [00:36:53][0.7]

Hardin: [00:36:59] Let's finish the vote here. [00:37:00][1.2]

Nikolic: [00:37:01] No, he wants to sit here and tell me how to do his job. [00:37:09][8.0]

6-10-2026

Approved (date)

Eloise Hardin

Council President, Eloise Hardin

June 10, 2026

Posted (date)

Nina Curry

Assistant Clerk of Council, Nina Curry