

VILLAGE OF OAKWOOD MINUTES

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

January 13th, 2026

Attended

Eloise Hardin- Council President	Erica Nikolic- Mayor
Norman Bliss- Council at Large	James Climer/Sam O' Leary -Law
Taunya Scruggs- Ward 1	Brian Thompson- Finance
Yvonne Evans-Warren- Ward 2	Tom Haba-Service
Paggie Matlock- Ward 3	Dave Tapp-Fire
Mary Davis-Ward 4	Mark Garratt- Police
Joseph Lastery- Ward 5	Roland Walker- Building
	Karen Gaither-Recreation

Absent

Matt Jones- Engineer

Meeting opened at 7:00 pm by Hardin (Everything was moved to the regular meeting)

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Minutes
5. Clerk Correspondence
6. Departmental Reports
7. Ward Reports
8. Committee Reports
9. Floor open for comments from Village Residents on meeting agenda and comments in general Village residents. Please state your name, address, and subject you wish to discuss for the record. Please limit your comments to five (5) minutes. Thank you!
Please sign in to speak.
10. Legislation
11. Adjournment

OPENING & SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Police Officers' 30-Year Service Anniversaries

Two officers were honored for 30 years of service (as of December 28, 2025):

Captain John Freeman III

- Grew up in Oakwood; moved here in 1978
- Parents still live in the village
- Has known Chief Garrett since 7th grade (played baseball against Walton Hills rivals)
- Praised the quality of current and retired officers in the county
- Expressing love for the city as reason for staying

Chief Mark Garrett

- Grew up in Walton Hills
- Emphasized continuous learning, adaptation, and evolution
- Praised the high-quality police officers in the department
- Acknowledged multiple job opportunities over the years but chose to stay
- Joked about hoping the baseball team would improve

Mayor's Comments:

- Called both officers "exemplary" in service and professionalism
- Praised their immediate response to requests
- Extended open doors for any need
- Expressed hope to serve with them for many years to come

Formal Resolutions (2026-02 and 2026-03) were read and passed unanimously (7-0) honoring both officers.

ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Clerk of Council Transition:

- Joseph announced this was her last meeting as Clerk of Council
- Moving to Shaker Municipal Court

- Introduced **Evan Garrett** as new Assistant Clerk of Council
 - Requested Records Commission meeting before departure to handle Iron Mountain records destruction
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DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

1. MAYOR'S REPORT (Erica Nikolic)

Election & Gratitude:

- Thanked all candidates for being professional and congratulatory
- Honored to continue serving the village

Ongoing Programs for 2026:

- **Soul Food Cooking Class:** Second Friday of each month; full schedule available online
- **Knitting Club:** Tuesdays (ongoing)
- **Black History Month Quilting Project:** Community quilting initiative with local quilters

2026 Priorities:

1. **Grants:** Double the number of grant applications
 - Every grant = money that wouldn't otherwise be obtained
 - Focus on projects for police, departments, and going above/beyond
2. **Expanding Partnerships:**
 - **\$105,000 County Road Preventive Maintenance Reimbursement** awarded by County Executive Chris Romayn
 - Funds going back to general fund
 - Goal: Expand county/community partnerships for more dollars
3. **Small Business Outreach:**
 - Goal: Meet with all ~234 small businesses in Oakwood by end of year
 - Learn about specific needs, expansion desires, and community vision

Community Garden Support:

- Praised Keymah Durden (Rid-All Green Partnership) for offering partnership at no cost
 - Noted he would help draft USDA grant for additional resources
 - Located only 3 minutes from garden site
 - Urged council to move garden legislation forward
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2. LAW DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Jim Climer)

Completed Transactions:

- **Vakarena Property:** Former gas station at Macedonia/Broadway now fully owned by village
- Available for council/mayor discussion on improvements

Pending Legislation:

1. Sign Ordinance Amendment:

- Address complaints about political signs in public rights-of-way
- Regulate volume and location of signs
- Legislation to be drafted by next meeting

2. Airbnb Ordinance:

- Currently being revised before presentation to council
- Not satisfied with current draft

3. Charter Review:

- Deadline: Early March for May primary
- Two presentation options:
 - Single issue vote (up/down on all amendments)
 - 15-20 separate revisions voted individually
- Board of Elections prefers single issue
- Council to decide and get on agenda soon

Cost of Special Election:

- Quoted in "the teens" (exact amount pending final bill)
- No additional cost for multiple issues on primary/general election
- Only charges for special elections

Executive Session Request:

- Initially requested but later withdrawn (no personal matter to discuss at this time)
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3. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Brian Thompson)**Year-End Activities:**

- Closing out December and year-end financials
- Reviewing final documentation
- Processing all 2025 bills
- Completing final audit requests

Monthly Budget Reports:

- Committed to providing monthly departmental budget usage percentages
- Will show each department's budget status (over/under)
- Starting after December close-out

Year-End Timeline:

- Two-week window should be sufficient to settle books
- Fourth Tuesday meeting could include year-end financial review

Audit Status:

- Auditors projected completion by end of January
- Information forwarded to council

Health Insurance Documentation:

- Acknowledged issue: Ordinance states "council reviewed and compared several options" but only one option presented

- Will reconvene with Law Director to revise ordinance language
 - Addressed seven questions from Councilwoman Davis:
 - Year-end accrual balances provided
 - \$60,000 pertained to concrete pad at fire department
 - Certificate of availability of funds on file for 2025-88 and 2025-87
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4. SERVICE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Tom Haba)

Winter Weather:

- Rougher winter than previous years
- Several expensive equipment breakdowns
- Salt supply adequate for season (unless severe weather)
- Balancing road safety with salt usage

Transfer Station:

- Over \$1 million upgrade in progress
- Machinery delayed (expected to arrive)
- Large amount of cardboard currently outside parking lot
- Will be cleared once equipment arrives

Road Maintenance Issues:

- Councilwoman Davis requested cleanup of garbage along Oak Leaf and Fair Oaks roads after next thaw
- Will mention to Waste Management
- Cuyahoga County prisoners sometimes assist during better months
- Oak Leaf sign issue at Alexander/Fair Oaks corner noted

Village Engineer:

- Not present at meeting
- Mayor to follow up on attendance

- Objective: Discuss designated streets for improvement
 - SCMR budget discussions to continue in Finance Committee meetings
 - Separate finance committee meeting may be scheduled
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5. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT (Dave Tapp)

2026 Priorities:

- **Walton Hills Contract Renegotiation:** Number one priority; contract up in 2027, so renegotiation needed this year
- Will request committee with mayor to negotiate

Call Volume:

- ~100 calls since beginning of year
- Averaging almost 10 calls per day
- 10 home inspections completed
- 25 smoke detectors installed

Fire Prevention:

- Emphasized importance of working smoke detectors
- Recent fire in Bedford Heights with no working detectors (residents were home, fortunately)
- Offering free home inspections and smoke detector installation
- Plenty of detectors available

Recognition:

- Congratulated John Freeman and Mark Garrett on 30-year service recognition
- Both instrumental in helping with transition to chief's position

Equipment Status:

- All equipment up and running
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6. BUILDING DEPARTMENT REPORT (Roland Walker)

New Property Maintenance Initiative:

- Distributing property maintenance guidelines to all residents
- Goal: Get village back to "original beauty from the past"
- Full property maintenance season (vs. half-summer last year)
- Residents will have time to prepare

Four Homes Identified for Demolition:

- Just in past week, four additional homes identified as needing demolition
- Years of neglect made some homes unsalvageable
- Initiative aims to prevent future deterioration

Maintenance Education:

- Basic maintenance information (power washing, scraping, painting)
- Spring is ideal time to start (just soap and water can make big difference)
- Helps identify needed repairs before harsh weather

Contractor Listings:

- New building department commitment: Licensed, registered contractor list
- "New day" for building department; not going backwards
- Residents can request list (won't be online to avoid promoting one contractor over another)
- Covers: general contractors, roofing, windows, plumbing, electrical, etc.

Future Employment:

- Not yet prepared to address future building department staffing
- Still working on that

Exterior Maintenance Program:

- Council President Hardin announced plan to **resume exterior maintenance program** (previously suspended)
- Program includes village assistance
- More details to come

7. RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Karen Gaither)

Senior Programs:

- Senior Lunches: 40-45 in-house residents
- Also providing lunches to shut-ins who can't attend facility

Community Events:

- MLK celebration on Sunday: 45-50 residents attended
- Some drove, others took bus
- Live band performance at community center end of month
- Flyers available for event dates

2026 Calendar:

- Completed full year of events calendar
- Available for council review

2026 Goals:

- Maximize community center usage
- Upgrade exercise room
- Currently, residents go to Planet Fitness, Silver Sneakers, other facilities
- If exercise room upgraded, could retain residents and keep money in village
- "This is your community center" - encouraging more participation

8. POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT (Mark Garrett)

Weather-Related Issues:

- Upturn in accidents due to bad weather
- Call volume increased
- Everything running smoothly

New Year's Eve Gunshots:

- Received complaint about shots fired at midnight on New Year's Eve
- Investigation found: No complaints for fireworks or gunshots in records
- Likely due to blizzard conditions
- Communities around borders had several complaints
- Difficult to enforce without invading privacy
- **Zero tolerance policy** for firearms violations
- Fortunately, no calls received this year

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

1. Sharon Macklin - Police Harassment Concerns

Issue: Felt family was being followed/harassed by police

- Truck and son's Challenger being followed
- Officer allegedly said "nobody's going to bother my mayor, I'm her bodyguard"
- Son felt intimidated when pulled over

Chief Garrett's Response:

- Offered to investigate with specific dates/times
- Police have cameras in every car and GPS on all vehicles
- Assured no targeting of family
- Invited her to call him directly with concerns

Mayor's Clarification:

- Stated she does NOT have a bodyguard or security detail
- Officer was "just kidding"

2. Johnny Jackson - Community Beautification

Issues Raised:

1. Garbage Cans:

- Hates garbage cans visible in front of houses
- Reduces property values
- Suggested ordinance requiring cans in back
- Noted older residents can't move cans to back

2. Interstate Cleanliness:

- Interstates are "terrible, absolutely horrific"
- Paper, cans, sometimes tires
- Suggested calling ODOT (Ohio Department of Transportation)
- Noted he used to pick up trash years ago
- Wants to keep Oakwood beautiful

Tone: Passionate, long-time resident; praised building department's property maintenance initiative

3. Alfred Grant - Concrete Pillars

Issue: Concrete pillars at Macedonia/Broadway corner sitting for 15-20 years

History:

- Geist was supposed to move them free of charge
- Previously considered for Mount Zion
- Expensive to move (moving 20 feet cost \$1,500-\$2,500 due to power lines)
- Mayor wanted to sell them but couldn't get value due to moving costs

Suggestions:

- Place at village entrance as monumental markers
- Use General Crane to move them (they move culvert logs)
- Alternative: Demolish them

Council President's Response:

- Village just bought property on next corner

- Developers could move them across street as part of development
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4. Yolanda Hicks - Election & Community Garden

Community Garden: In favor

Election Concerns:

- Process was good overall
- Only 39% voter turnout disappointing
- With 4 candidates, no clear majority winner
- Suggested **ranked-choice voting** for future special elections to ensure 50%+ winner

Law Director's Response:

- Ranked-choice voting would require charter amendment

Legislation

2025-37(AMENDED)

INTRODUCED 6-10-25

By the Mayor and

Council as a whole

1st read 6-10-25

2nd read 6-24-25

3rd read 7-8-25

Tabled 7-8-25

A RESOLUTION REFERRING TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION A PROPOSED ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO SELL VILLAGE LAND DESIGNATED ON THE RECORDS OF THE CUAHOGA COUNTY FISCAL OFFICER AS PERMANENT PARCEL NO. 795-08-028 and 795-08-029

No action was taken with this and it was on the table.

2025-38 (AMENDED) INTROUDCED BY MAYOR

AND COUNCIL AS A WHOLE

1ST read 6-10-25

2nd 6-24-25

3rd 7-8-25

Tabled 7-8-25

A RESOLUTION REFERRING TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION A PROPOSED ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO SELL VILLAGE LAND DESIGNATED ON THE RECORDS OF THE CUAHOGA COUNTY FISCAL OFFICER AS PERMANENT PARCEL NO. 795-08-030 and 795-08-031

2025-39 (AMENDED)

Introduced 6-10-25

By the Mayor and Council as a whole

1st read 6-10-25

2nd read 6-24-25

3rd read 7-8-25

Tabled 7-8-25

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH J WALL HOMES, LLC, C/O JOHANNAH WALLACE, INDIVIDUALLY TO SELL VILLAGE LAND DESIGNATED ON THE RECORDS OF THE CUAHOGA COUNTY FISCAL OFFICER AS PERMANENT PARCEL NO. 795-08-028 AND 795-08- 029

1st read 6-10-25

2nd read 6-24-25

3rd read 7-8-25

Tabled 7-8-25

2025-40 (AMENDED)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH J WALL HOMES, LLC, C/O JOHANNAH WALLACE, INDIVIDUALLY TO SELL VILLAGE LAND DESIGNATED ON THE RECORDS OF THE CUAHOGA COUNTY FISCAL OFFICER AS PERMANENT PARCEL NO. 795-08-030 AND 795-08- 03

2025-41 (AMENDED)

Introduced 6-10-25 By the Mayor as a whole

1st read 6-10-25

2nd read 6-24-25

3rd read 7-8-25

Tabled 7-8-25 A RESOLUTION REFERRING TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION A PROPOSED ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO SELL VILLAGE LAND DESIGNATED ON THE RECORDS OF THE CUAHOGA COUNTY FISCAL OFFICER AS PERMANENT PARCEL NO. 795-09-043.

2025-42 (AMENDED) Introduced 6-10-25

By the Mayor and Council as a whole

1st read 6-10-25

2nd read 6-24-25

3rd read 7-8-25

Tabled 7-8-25 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH J WALL HOMES, LLC, C/O JOHANNAH WALLACE, INDIVIDUALLY TO SELL VILLAGE LAND DESIGNATED ON THE RECORDS OF THE CUAHOGA COUNTY FISCAL OFFICER AS PERMANENT PARCEL NO. 795-09-043

No action was taken for this resolution it was on the table.

2025-81

Introduced 9-19-25

By Mayor

1st read 12-9-25

2nd read 12-23-25

3rd read 1-13-26 AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE OAKWOOD COMMUNITY GARDEN AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Motion to adopt ordinance made by Matlock seconded by Evans-Warren.

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

Motion passed.

2025-82

Introduced 12-9-25

By mayor

1st read 12-9-25

2nd read 12-23-25

3rd read 1-13-26

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF A TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH ROBERT HALF, INC. FOR AN ASSISTANT TO THE MAYOR AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

REMOVED FROM DOCKET

2025-82 - Temporary Employment Agreement with Robert Camp

- Removed because it was only viable during 90-day period.
- Will be replaced with permanent hire ordinance including salary, name, job description, and required expertise.

Motion to remove made by Davis and seconded by Bliss.

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

Motion passed.

2025-86

Introduced 12-23-25 by council as whole

1st read 12-23-25

2nd read 1-13-26

A RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF
MICHAEL P. PARISH

Motion to suspend made by Davis and seconded by Hardin.

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

Motion passed.

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

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

Motion passed.

2025-89

Introduced 12-23-25

By council as a whole

1st read 12-23-25

2nd read 1-13-26

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A
CONTRACT WITH JAMES A PALLADINO TRUST TO SELL CERTAIN
VILLAGE LAND DESIGNATED ON THE RECORDS OF THE SUMMIT
COUNTY FISCAL OFFICER AS PERMANENT PARCEL NUMBER 33-
00324 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Action Taken: NO ACTION - HELD FOR FURTHER REVIEW

Council President Hardin's Statement:

- "I'm going to leave it, I want to look at something"
- Indicated she wanted to review the ordinance before proceeding

Result: The ordinance was **not voted on** and remained on the agenda without action

2025-90

Introduced 12-23-25

By council as a whole

1st read 12-23-25

2nd read 1-13-26

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INTENT OF THE VILLAGE OF OAKWOOD, OHIO TO DISPOSE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY AS HA YING BECOME OBSOLETE, UNNECESSARY OR UNFIT FOR VILLAGE USE THROUGH INTERNET AUCTIONS DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR 2026 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Motion to suspend rules made by Davis and seconded by Hardin

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

Motion passed.

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

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

Motion passed.

2025-91

Introduced 12-23-25

By council as a whole

1st read 12-23-25

2nd read 1-13-26

A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A PICK-UP PLAN OR PURPOSES OF PERMITTING
EMPLOYEES OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WHO ARE
ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE OHIO POLICE AND FIRE
PENSION FUND TO DEFER TAXES ON THEIR EMPLOYEE
CONTRIBUTIONS TO SAID FUND AND DECLARING AN
EMERGENCY

Motion to suspend rules made by Scruggs seconded by Evans-Warren.

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

Motion passed.

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

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

Motion passed.

2026-01

Introduced 1-13-25

By council as a whole

1st read 1-13-26

A RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF
PAUL MAYHEW SMITH

Motion to suspend made by Hardin and seconded by Scruggs.

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

Motion passed.

Motion to adopt made by Davis and seconded by Hardin.

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

Motion passed.

RESOLUTION 2026-02: HONOR CHIEF MARK GARRATT (30 YEARS)

A RESOLUTION TO HONOR MARK GARRATT ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE OF 30 YEARS

Motion to suspend rules made by Scruggs and seconded by Davis

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

Motion passed.

Motion to adopt made by Scruggs and seconded by Hardin.

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

Motion passed.

RESOLUTION 2026-03: HONOR CAPTAIN JOHN FREEMAN III (30 YEARS)

A RESOLUTION TO HONOR JOHN FREEMAN ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE OF 30 YEARS

Honor Captain John Freeman III (30 Years)

A RESOLUTION TO HONOR CAPTAIN JOHN FREEMAN III ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE OF 30 YEARS

Motion to suspend rules made by Davis and seconded by Hardin.

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

Motion passed.

Motion to adopt made by Davis and seconded by Hardin.

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

Motion passed.

FIRST READING - MOVED TO AGENDA (NO VOTE YET)

ORDINANCE 2026-05 (formerly 2026-WS-01): Employee Dishonesty Bond

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF AN EMPLOYEE DISHONESTY AND FAITHFUL PERFORMANCE OF DUTY POLICY OF INSURANCE IN LIEU OF SURETY BOND PURSUANT TO RC SECTION. 3061 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Status: First reading

Vote Result: MOVED TO AGENDA - NO VOTE

Action: Remains on first reading for next meeting

ORDINANCE 2026-08 (formerly 2025-WS-43): Charter Amendment Submission

AN ORDINANCE TO SUBMIT TO THE ELECTIONS OF THE VILLAGE OF OAKWOOD THE QUESTION OF ADOPTING A PROPOSED AMENDED CHARTER FOR THE VILLAGE OF OAKWOOD AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Status: First reading

Vote Result: MOVED TO AGENDA - NO VOTE

Action: Remains on first reading for next meeting

ORDINANCE 2026-06 (formerly 2026-WS-03): Health Insurance with Medical Mutual

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRACT WITH MEDICAL MUTUAL COVERING ELIGIBLE OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE VILLAGE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Status: First reading

Vote Result: MOVED TO AGENDA - NO VOTE

Action: Remains on first reading for next meeting

ORDINANCE 2026-07 (formerly 2026-WS-04): Dental & Vision Insurance with Anthem

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTACT WITH ANTHEM BLUE CROSS/BLUE SHIELD TO PROVIDE VISION AND DENTAL INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR ELIGIBLE OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE VILLAGE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Status: First reading

Vote Result: MOVED TO AGENDA - NO VOTE

Action: Remains on first reading for next meeting

Motion to adjourn made by Davis seconded by (inaudible).

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

Motion passed.

There was no time stated when meeting was adjourned.

July 14th 2026

Approved (date)

Eloise Hardin

Council President, Eloise Hardin

July 15th 2026

Posted (date)

Nina Curry

Assistant Clerk of Council, Nina Curry