



# MINUTES

## AD HOC LEGAL SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

Monday, November 17, 2025

5:00 PM

Village Hall – 21 East Church Street, Lake Orion, MI 48362

(248) 693-8391 ext. 102

### 1. Call to Order

The November 17, 2025, Ad Hoc Legal Services Review Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM by Village Manager McClary.

### 2. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

#### PRESENT

Council Member Alex Comparoni Jr  
Council Member George Dandalides (remote)  
Council Member Eric Papacek  
Village Manager Darwin McClary  
Police Chief Mark Amundson

#### STAFF PRESENT

Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Lynsey Blough

### 3. Minute Approval

#### A. Approval of November 3, 2025 Ad Hoc Legal Services Review Committee Minutes

**MOTION** made by Council Member Dandalides, Seconded by Council Member Comparoni Jr, to approve the Minutes of the November 3, 2025 Ad Hoc Legal Services Review Committee Meeting, as presented.

**VOTING YEA:** Comparoni Jr, Dandalides, Papacek, McClary, Amundson

**VOTING NAY:** None

**ABSENT:** None

**MOTION:** Carried

### 4. Call to the Public

None.

## 5. Other Items

### A. Review of Legal Services Proposals - Beier Howlett; Secrest Wardle; and Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton

Council Member Papacek stated that all three firms appeared highly qualified, with his scores for each falling within a close range. He noted that Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton scored well but raised concerns about how a new firm would familiarize itself with current Village issues. Beier Howlett also scored strongly, with only a minor question regarding a past complaint mentioned in their materials. For Secrest Wardle, he found the proposal less detailed regarding daily operations and current issues, and the organization of the materials made evaluation more difficult. Overall, he indicated that all three firms seem like viable candidates for interviews.

Council Member Dandalides stated that all three firms are well-qualified. He scored Secrest Wardle highest due to their clear plan to become familiar with Village matters. Beier Howlett scored slightly lower because of their smaller staff, though he viewed their familiarity with current Village issues as a benefit. Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton scored lowest because they did not explain how they would get up to speed or identify attorneys for prosecution or litigation. He noted that interviews may help clarify differences.

Council Member Comparoni Jr. agreed with concerns raised about Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton, noting their proposal lacked information on prosecution services and that they had been previously terminated by several communities. He felt their pricing was fair. He rated Beier Howlett highly, stating the Village is familiar with their work and he found no significant negatives in their proposal. Regarding Secrest Wardle, he felt the proposal was less polished and included many additional fees. He remarked that all three firms are generally comparable, and that selecting finalists will be difficult, likely requiring face-to-face interview

Police Chief Amundson stated that all three firms are highly capable and generally very similar in qualifications. He noted that Beier Howlett and Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton appeared nearly identical in quality, while Secrest Wardle's proposal was harder to navigate despite containing the required information. He expressed some discomfort assigning numerical scores in areas outside his expertise but ultimately felt all three firms were strong in prosecution services. He emphasized that prosecution quality matters more than the number of attorneys, as one qualified prosecutor is sufficient for the Village's needs. He believes his scores for Beier Howlett and Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton were likely very close, with Secrest Wardle only slightly behind. Overall, he sees no major issues with any of the firms and considers them all very comparable.

Village Manager McClary said all three firms are strong but he scored them more strictly. Beier Howlett ranked highest for him due to strong past performance, though he marked them down for having fewer attorneys, smaller staff, and mid-range pricing. Secrest Wardle scored well but he deducted points for unclear prosecution assignments, missing insurance documentation, unusual service exclusions, and a weak plan for handling daily work or getting up to speed. Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton scored lowest for him due to generic, non-Village-specific

answers, lack of conflict-of-interest analysis, missing insurance certificates, multiple past municipal terminations, and repeated canned responses. He noted that written proposals only go so far, and interviews may shift impressions.

Committee Members discussed differences in their scoring of the first three law firm proposals. Council Member Papacek noted he did not downgrade firms for fewer attorneys or years in business if they could meet Village needs, and he found all three firms generally solid. Council Member Dandalides said numerical scores varied, but all three could advance. He noted Secret Wardle's exclusions for labor/bankruptcy services were not disqualifying. Village Manager McClary explained scoring differences were partly due to other firms including those services, but agreed exclusions should not disqualify a firm.

Village Manager McClary outlined the next steps at the next meeting:

- Review and score the remaining three proposals
- Discuss and finalize interview questions
- Select at least the top three firms to interview (possibly more)
- Identify potential interview dates and times

Committee Members discussed whether interview questions must be identical for all firms and noted Beier Howlett should likely be included due to existing work with the Village. Village Manager McClary suggested members rank all six firms to identify the strongest candidates.

After coordinating schedules, the next meeting was set for Monday, December 1, at 5:00 PM.

## 6. Adjournment

**MOTION** made by Council Member Papacek, Seconded by Police Chief Amundson, to adjourn the November 17, 2025, Ad Hoc Legal Services Review Committee Meeting.

**VOTING YEA:** Comparoni Jr, Dandalides, Papacek, McClary, Amundson

**VOTING NAY:** None

**ABSENT:** None

**MOTION:** Carried

The November 17, 2025, Ad Hoc Legal Services Review Committee Meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.

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Darwin McClary  
Chairperson

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Lynsey Blough, CMC  
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

Date Approved: as presented on December 1, 2025