

The 6/5/25 council work session focused on two main areas: addressing the village's issue with non-filing of local income taxes and providing an update on Village Projects.

Addressing Local Income Tax Non-Filers (RITA): The village faces a significant problem with residents (approximately 380 out of 2,000, or 10%) not filing their local income taxes with RITA (Regional Income Tax Agency). To combat this, a plan has been developed to send letters to non-filers. These letters will inform residents that they have 30 days to file their outstanding taxes with RITA or arrange a payment plan. Failure to comply within this period will result in being cited into Mayor's Court.

The proposed penalties for non-filing include an M4 misdemeanor and potential fines of up to \$250 per year of non-filing, in addition to penalties and interest charged by RITA. However, the council intends to waive these fines if the resident resolves the filing issue with RITA within the initial 30-day period, though court costs cannot be waived. If a resident is eligible for an exemption and has simply failed to file it, all fines will be waived upon resolution. The primary goal is to increase compliance rather than simply levy fines, especially since many non-filers may have no taxable income. The look-back period for non-filing is six years, extending back to 2019. The council is also proactively cleaning up the non-filer list, removing individuals who are deceased or no longer reside in the village. They anticipate many questions and excuses from residents and plan to provide clear guidance and resources for resolution.

Minerva Lake Road Improvements (Task Order #28): The session also included an update on the Minerva Lake Road improvements project, which involves a full reconstruction of the road from Farview Road to State Route 3. This project includes roadway, drainage, and pedestrian improvements, specifically a standard five-foot-wide concrete sidewalk on the north side.

Financially, the project has a total fee of \$75,500, with nearly all of it invoiced as of May 23rd, and a remaining \$5,500 that will not be spent and will revert to village funds. The design and bidding phases are complete. To encourage more bidders, this project was combined with Task Order #34 (Northland Plaza Drive), which successfully attracted three bidders. The next step is for the Mayor to receive legislative approval to enter into an agreement with the chosen contractor.

A key discussion point revolved around the sidewalks. While they are included in the current bid at an estimated cost of \$44,000 (to be paid from the general fund, not the street fund), the council is considering whether to proceed with them, particularly in light of potential future funding from the "Link Us" project or other grants that might support sidewalks on both sides of the road. The strategy for removing the sidewalks from the scope if desired is to execute the agreement at the full bid price and then issue a change order to deduct the sidewalk work, rather than complicating the initial bidding process with numerous alternates. The council also briefly discussed the possibility of

adding small, related scope items, such as addressing a low area, but stressed that such additions would only be discussed and agreed upon *after* the main contract is signed. There was also uncertainty regarding whether potential future grant funding could be applied to a project already in progress.

Seeking External Funding for Sidewalks and Project Funding Clarification

The discussion began with exploring external funding options for sidewalks, primarily through **Safe Routes to Schools** and **NOACA/MORPC grants**. For Safe Routes to Schools, coordination with the school district is crucial, as they must identify specific pathways as priorities. The council acknowledged the complexity of navigating various funding sources, including the "Link Us" project, and the need for engineering support, which may or may not be covered by grants.

A key point of clarification was regarding the **OPWC (Ohio Public Works Commission) funding** for the Minerva Lake Road project. While the initial application sought a \$600,000 loan and a \$400,000 grant, there was confusion due to a website posting that showed a \$1,000,000 grant and a \$100,000 loan. It was confirmed that the **actual approved funding is a \$400,000 grant and a \$600,000 loan**, which will be repaid from the street fund over 27 years, freeing up money for additional roadway projects.

Minerva Lake Road and Northland Plaza Drive Project Updates

The council discussed the **timeline for decisions on sidewalks** for Minerva Lake Road. It was recommended that council **avoid specifying sidewalk inclusion in the legislation** and instead handle it via contractor administration. A decision on whether to proceed with the sidewalks should be made by **July 1st**, as this is the earliest the agreement with OPWC can be executed, with a notice to proceed anticipated in mid-July. The council intends to pass the relevant legislation at the next council meeting, possibly as an emergency measure to expedite the process due to OPWC timing restrictions.

Task Order #34, the Northland Plaza Drive improvement, was then detailed. This project involves a **full reconstruction** of the road from Ponderosa to Farmington, but **no new drainage or pedestrian improvements** (like curbs or storm sewers) are planned beyond improving the road's natural slope for water runoff. This is a complete rebuild, tearing down to the sub-base, not just a resurfacing. Construction is anticipated to take **120 days**.

The combined projects (Task Orders #28 and #34) were awarded to **Strauser Paving Company** as the low bidder at approximately **\$1.8 million** (Minerva Lake Road at \$1.321 million, Northland Plaza Drive at \$476,000). This came in slightly under the estimated cost for Minerva Lake Road and slightly over for Northland Plaza Drive, resulting in an overall bid just 2.2% over the engineer's estimate. The next steps involve

finalizing contract paperwork, communicating detours to the public and first responders (including school districts, who influenced a one-way traffic change during construction), and issuing a notice to proceed in mid-July. Communication with affected residents, particularly those on Minerva Lake Road and businesses on Northland Plaza Drive, about parking and project impacts is also a priority.

Maintenance Building Project Update (Task Order #30)

An update was provided on the **new 2,700 square foot maintenance building**, which will include office and storage space, along with site and utility improvements. The total fee for this project is \$120,000, with approximately \$41,500 remaining.

The project is currently awaiting a **building permit** from Blendon Township, with a resubmission having been sent. The village has an expedited review process, and a response is hoped for by the end of the week. Applications for utility connections (natural gas, electricity, water) are also being finalized. The process has faced some internal delays due to staff availability and changes.

Resident concerns arose when a subcontractor began clearing debris before residents were notified, as previous updates on the village website had ceased. There was also confusion about the plans, as initial draft designs were posted online, differing from the final bid documents. The current plan for the access road to the maintenance building utilizes an existing access point, which is more cost-effective than a previously considered location that would have required navigating a steeper part of the site. The council acknowledged resident inquiries about potentially moving the access road and the cost implications of such a change. Finally, residents on Jordan Road have been requesting trees and other landscaping to be replaced as part of a separate, earlier project that cleared debris and improved visibility.

Landscaping for the New Maintenance Building

The council discussed the lack of a significant landscaping plan for the new 2,700 sq ft maintenance building, which requires the removal of numerous trees. It was suggested that the village explore grants for trees, possibly larger and more mature ones, to replace those removed. This is seen as a "finishing touch" that projects often miss. The building's new location is set further back from the road than originally planned, making it less visible from the street and behind existing landscaping, including a large pine tree. While some existing trees are dead or dying, significant tree removal will still occur for the building's footprint. The need for new landscaping, particularly between the building and nearby houses, was highlighted as a crucial discussion point.

Lake Improvements and Erosion Concerns (Task Order #31)

An update on the lake improvements design (Task Order #31) for comprehensive dredging was provided. The project aims to develop preliminary plans for a Clean Water Act permit application. Key fieldwork for threatened and endangered species, architectural/historical resources, and archaeological resources is complete, as is preliminary hydraulic modeling for stormwater management during construction. The next steps involve submitting reports for historical/archaeological resources and completing hydraulic modeling and preliminary design.

The permit, if secured, would be valid for five years, allowing the village time to secure funding and finalize design. While a nationwide permit is a shorter, six-month review process, a significant portion of the \$219,500 fee (about \$130,500) remains unused.

A major concern raised is **significant erosion downstream of the spillway and along a pedestrian path in the MI homes development**, which has become a more pressing safety issue than the long-term dredging project. This erosion is severe ("looks gnarly") and likely caused by a combination of road runoff and spillway discharge. Potential fixes include slope stabilization using vegetative growth, soil makers, or retaining walls, though access for equipment is difficult. Dredged material from the lake cannot be used for this purpose.

The long-term dredging of both lakes is estimated to be a **\$4-5 million project**, with more extensive improvements potentially reaching \$7-8 million. The council was bluntly informed that finding grants specifically for dredging these "stormwater ponds" is extremely challenging, as most grants focus on ecological restoration, which doesn't apply to these man-made ponds.

Given the limited available resources and the emerging safety hazard posed by the erosion, the council was presented with a critical decision: continue spending the remaining \$130,000 on the dredging design (which might lead to a project that never gets built due to cost) or redirect focus and funds to the more urgent erosion issue. While dredging has been a long-standing goal, the immediacy and safety implications of the erosion were emphasized, suggesting it might be the more "emergent" and fiscally responsible priority.

Jordan Road Pathway Connection (Future Discussion)

A separate but related discussion touched upon connecting Jordan Road to the rest of the village via a path. Two options were briefly mentioned:

1. Running a path along the west side of the North Lake, which would require a bridge estimated to cost \$400,000-\$500,000.
2. Cutting across the northern part of the North Lake, requiring a longer bridge at \$600,000-\$700,000 or more. A third option involved filling a portion of the North Lake to create a pedestrian path, which would require a permit and specialized

dredging equipment, though the permit fee itself is low. The high cost of these options and the challenges of permitting for "filling" a lake (even a stormwater pond) were highlighted.

The council agreed to consider revisiting the lake issues, including the erosion and potentially a smaller-scale North Lake dredging/path project, in the next 30-60 days. They also agreed to move forward with a tree survey and an urban forestry program, particularly for village-owned properties, as many existing trees are dead or dying.

Lake and Erosion Management Priorities

The council recognized the immediate need to address **erosion downstream of the spillway**, describing it as a growing safety hazard that requires more urgent attention than the long-term lake dredging project. While acknowledging the desire to connect the village with paths (a "great ask" from residents), they agreed that **tree removal and a tree survey** are prudent initial steps for the long-term health of the village's ecosystem, regardless of the dredging project. They plan to select a contractor for the tree survey next week.

Concerns were raised about the **\$130,000 remaining in the lake improvements design budget** and whether it should continue to be spent on a dredging project that may never be built due to its high cost (\$4-5 million, potentially up to \$7-8 million) and the lack of available grants for "stormwater ponds." The village's bond proceeds, the only identified funding source for these projects, are dwindling. The sentiment was to prioritize fixing the more immediate erosion issue, even if it costs more over time, rather than continue with a potentially unfeasible dredging design. The erosion, exacerbated by heavy rain events, was described as "gnarly" and in need of slope stabilization.

CCTV Analysis and Storm Sewer Improvements Postponed

The **2024 CCTV (Closed-Circuit Television) analysis** project (Task Order #32) is largely complete, with most of its \$16,000 budget invoiced. The remaining work involves finalization and updating village plans. Challenges were noted in the Jordan Road area where manholes could not be located, leading to a decision to postpone further sewer work there.

The planned **2025 storm sewer improvements project** (Task Order #33), intended to address deficiencies identified in previous CCTV cycles through pipe lining and point repairs, has been **postponed**. This project, with an estimated construction budget of \$200,000, was nearly ready for bidding. However, due to higher-than-expected out-of-

pocket costs for the Minerva Lake Road project (around \$350,000 from the general fund due to OPWC funding structure) and uncertainty about the storm sewer utility credit generating enough funds, fiscal staff recommended postponing the project to late 2025 or mid-2026. While these are not "priority one" or "immediate repair" items, the council aims to be fiscally responsible. Instead, a separate CCTV program will proceed as a standalone project, funded within the storm sewer budget. The lining method used (CIPP - Cured-in-Place Pipe) is a highly effective, long-lasting solution (50+ years) that strengthens existing pipes.

Water Line Improvements (Task Order #35)

A **\$3,000 set-aside for 2025 water line improvements** (Task Order #35) was discussed, with about \$2,000 remaining. The focus is on a specific residential area (East Shore Drive, Kerwood Drive, North Lake Court) that has experienced multiple water main breaks, particularly affecting one resident. The current recommendation is to replace the water line serving North Lakeport.

A key factor in the project's scope will be whether the existing water line is located within or outside the pavement. If outside, it primarily involves trenching through yards. If inside the pavement, a significant cut would necessitate considering a larger paving project for North Lakeport, even though its current pavement condition assessment score is relatively good. The council also acknowledged a general consensus to **remove center islands** in courts during future projects due to ongoing damage from vehicles and maintenance difficulties, as these structures were not built to modern traffic standards. The next step for the water line project is to coordinate with the mayor to have contractors mark the line's location.

Water Line Location and Pedestrian Path Master Plan

The discussion on water line improvements focused on precisely locating the water line in the problem area of North Lake Court. The village requested a targeted marking of only the water line to avoid unnecessary utility markings and associated costs.

The council then moved to **Task Order #36, the Pedestrian Path Master Plan**, which aims to develop a comprehensive plan for pedestrian routes throughout the village. This plan, with a budget of \$20,500 (no invoicing yet), is anticipated to start in late June and be completed by Fall 2025. The ultimate goal is to provide a document that will assist the village in budgeting for future pedestrian improvements and, crucially, in applying for outside funding (like from "Lincolns" or OPWC). The master plan will identify key destinations (e.g., schools, municipal building) and propose realistic routes and types of paths (e.g., concrete sidewalks, shared-use paths), without getting into detailed design.

This "guiding principle" document will help ensure consistency in future projects and maximize investments.

Minerva Lake Road Master Plan

Task Order #37, the Minerva Lake Road Master Plan, is similar in scope, focusing on roadway improvements from Cleveland Avenue to Farview Road. This \$42,500 project, also new and starting in late June, aims to provide a planning schedule and a document to pursue grants. The plan originated from resident discussions about engineering challenges and potential realignments of Minerva Lake Road, particularly the more complex western sections. The master plan will lay out potential changes, including minor shifts, to inform residents in advance and coordinate changes across the long road. It will also assist with budgeting and grant applications. Minerva Lake Road currently has a "fair" pavement condition score in the low 50s.

Potential Future Projects: Valley Road and Minerva Lake Road (North Bay to East Shore)

The discussion then shifted to potential future projects, highlighting **Valley Road** as the **worst-scoring road in the village** (PCA score of 22), surpassing Maplewood Drive. A **complete reconstruction of Valley Road** is recommended, including pedestrian improvements (sidewalk on the east side), potential water line upgrades to the swimming pool, and addressing a priority-one, condition-grade D storm sewer that is rotting away. The ideal time for this project would be Fall 2025, but due to current timing, it's unlikely to start design soon enough for that. The project would need to be carefully timed with the pool's shutdown schedule.

Another potential project is the stretch of **Minerva Lake Road from North Bay to East Shore**, particularly the area in front of the Municipal Building. This section, with a "fair" PCA score of 57, would also involve a complete reconstruction and **storm sewer improvements** to enhance the connection between the two lakes. A 2017 hydraulic study indicated that the existing culvert connecting the lakes could be improved for better flow and water quality. This project would be coordinated with the broader Minerva Lake Road master planning and any future dredging, potentially alleviating choke points during lake maintenance. The speaker humorously noted that in a perfect world with "unlimited money," both lakes would be dredged and this road torn up simultaneously for maximum efficiency.

Challenges for Valley Road Project and Shared-Use Path at Quiet Brook Vale

The discussion around the **Valley Road reconstruction** highlighted timing as a major hurdle. It's unlikely the project can be completed this year (2024) after Labor Day due to the closing of asphalt batch plants, which typically don't reopen until late March or early April. The project is extensive, requiring a full tear-down and rebuild, and ideally

includes pedestrian improvements and utility upgrades (waterline to the pool, storm sewer). The best-case scenario for construction would be in Spring 2025, coordinating with the pool's opening.

Concerns were also raised about incorporating the Valley Road project into existing contracts, with legal counsel advising against it due to significant differences in scope. This means a full public bidding process would be required.

A **shared-use path at Quiet Brook Vale** was briefly mentioned, noting existing erosion along its edge. This project was initially designed by another engineering firm, and the council was advised to consult legal counsel regarding potential recourse or involvement from that firm. This project is considered less urgent than the dam erosion.

Resident and Internal Surveys

The meeting also provided updates on upcoming surveys:

- **Resident Survey:** This is moving forward, with Eric developing questions based on council agreements. The survey will be managed by an independent third party (Pete DeSalvo, recommended by Eric) to ensure impartiality and avoid any perceived relationship between the village and the responses. This is crucial for maintaining transparency and adhering to public records laws.
 - **Internal Surveys (Exit and Intern Surveys):** Two internal surveys have been discussed. The exit survey will collect data from departing employees, but results won't be analyzed until enough data accumulates (potentially two years) to protect individual anonymity in a small organization. The goal is to identify trends in turnover. The intern survey has undergone review, with some questions (e.g., gender) removed to encourage participation and avoid unintended demographic insights. The council is pleased with the progress on these surveys, seeing them as important tools for future improvement.
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Committee Assignments and Meeting Logistics

The final part of the discussion touched on **committee assignments**, clarifying that the current process involves the council working as a group, differing from past practices. The meeting itself was a "work session," and frustration was expressed about its length (over two and a half hours) before the main meeting had even officially started. There was a desire to wrap up the work session, with appreciation expressed for the consultants' time.

Council Committee Assignments and Roles

The council discussed restructuring their committee assignments to be more efficient. Previously, three members led six committees with frequent, lengthy meetings. Now, they aim for a system where each of the three main committees (Legislation, Finance, and Streets) has a dedicated lead, but work is done collaboratively by the full council.

A proposed change in leadership was offered, with a member suggesting taking on **Legislation** (traditionally involving drafting laws, though currently handled by administration) and another taking **Finance** (working closely with the fiscal officer as a liaison to explain financial matters to the council and residents). The "Streets" committee is firmly assigned, with one member explicitly stating they "have to stay on the streets" and "don't believe in budget."

The importance of proactive legislative planning was stressed. Instead of reacting to deadlines, the council should track cyclical legislative needs (e.g., levy renewals, salary determinations, budget deadlines) to avoid emergency actions. However, some items, like insurance statements, will always be received late in the year, necessitating last-minute action. An immediate priority identified was the **council salary reading**, which needs to pass within four meetings to avoid starting the process over. Council members were reminded that they can discuss matters in pairs but not as a group of three or more due to open meeting laws.

Village Operations and Resident Concerns

Several operational updates and resident concerns were addressed:

- **Pool Memberships and Concessions:** The village has 210 full pool memberships. Concession stand orders have been placed, but initial sales are slow due to bad weather.
- **Tree Removal:** A very large, split, and swaying tree near the south side of the dam/Maplewood area will be removed. The decision was based on a second opinion from Russell Trees (after an initial assessment by Brad) due to ongoing concerns about tree removal. The cost is almost double the initial estimate. Additionally, dead limbs at the pool still need to be removed, and staff will investigate access for equipment.
- **Muskrat Removal:** Muskrats are present again and are being removed as recommended by AquaDoc, the lake management company, because they chew on cords that power the \$50,000 fountains and electrical equipment.
- **Maintenance Garage Misinformation:** Residents have been calling with misinformation about the new 2,700 sq ft maintenance garage, believing it was being built in the wrong location and that trees were being cut down improperly. The council clarified that the current location was approved in March (as recorded in a March 28th video) and was specifically chosen to be pushed back

behind houses for aesthetic reasons, despite the increased cost. Residents have been instructed to direct their questions to Barb at the office and not to contact Mike directly. Fencing will be put up to keep residents out of the work zone. A resident's request to move the driveway would incur additional costs.

Other Projects:

- **Crack sealing** is scheduled for July, with notices to be posted on Facebook.
- **Potholes** that reappear will be addressed by the maintenance team.
- **Fence painting** (retouching existing painted fences, not natural ones) is a large upcoming project for the maintenance team.
- The **resident survey** is moving forward, with Eric preparing the questions for committee review next week. The **tree survey** bids are being reviewed, and a purchase order will be issued soon.
- The **pool discount legislation** needs to be passed quickly, potentially as an emergency measure on Thursday, to ensure discounts are available for pool patrons. The previous legislation was based on a total value that is no longer applicable.

The meeting concluded past 9:45 PM, with plans to discuss remaining items next week.