

## Executive Summary – Council Work Session, December 4, 2025

**Meeting Date/Time:** December 4, 2025, 7:00 PM

**Attendees:** Mayor Southard; Councilmembers Grant, Pinter, Koss, Martin, Paessun, Camara; Fiscal Officer Jeff Wilcheck; Village Planner Eric Fischer; Village Attorney Jesse Shamp.

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### 1. Budget and Appropriations

Fiscal Officer Jeff Wilcheck presented updates on the **2025 budget**:

- **Ordinance 2025-19 (Annual Compensation):** Revised to reduce the Police Department to **nine positions**.
  - **Ordinance 2025-22 (Annual Appropriations):** Adjusted wages/benefits to reflect police staffing changes and updated estimates for IT services.
  - **IT Contract:** Increased to **\$37,000** due to a server replacement for data backups.
  - **Capital Projects:**
    - **Server Closet Cooling:** \$1,000–\$1,500 for air conditioning to prevent overheating.
    - **New Conference Room:** \$7,500 allocated to convert an existing room for meetings.
    - Discussion ensued about potential **space repurposing** (basement use, rearranging record/conference rooms) to create flexible meeting and rest spaces for officers.
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### 2. Police Department Oversight and Hiring Legislation

Council extensively discussed **Resolution 2025-36**, addressing police hiring oversight:

- Establishes formal **Council review and confirmation** of all police hires before final offers.
- Requires **background disclosure** (disciplinary history, lawsuits, certifications, etc.) to Council via the village attorney prior to approval.
- Adjustments were proposed to clarify conditional offers: Chief may extend **conditional offers**, but **final offers require Council approval**.
- Discussion highlighted the need to **include the Police Chief** in upcoming deliberations for transparency and procedural input.
- Council agreed to:
  - Send the draft resolution to the Chief for review ahead of the next **Safety Committee meeting**.

- Schedule a **January work session** to review the hiring process and interview procedures in detail.

### **Key Objectives:**

- Improve transparency and accountability in police hiring.
  - Ensure Council receives complete applicant information.
  - Align practices with comparable municipalities (e.g., Blendon Township).
  - Review and potentially update **interview procedures** and **probationary review processes**.
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## **3. Infrastructure and Capital Projects**

### **a. Green Line / Trail Connectivity Project**

- Discussion centered on **trail alignment and jurisdictional issues** related to the “Green Line” connection to Alum Creek.
  - Clarified that construction beyond village limits will be governed by an **MOU with the City of Columbus**, with **contractors bearing liability** until project completion.
  - Funding comes from **grants**, not village income tax. Village will **front funds (~\$200K–\$250K)** and be reimbursed within ~90 days.
  - Concerns about aesthetics, lighting, and safety were raised, but officials confirmed these would fall under **Columbus’s jurisdiction post-construction**.
  - Next steps: Engage engineering firms for **design and cost estimates**; prioritize safe routing and communication to residents.
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## **4. Pool Renovation Project**

- **Resolution 2025-35:** Authorizes Brandstetter Carroll to perform architectural/engineering work for pool rehabilitation.
- Council discussed consulting **Patterson Pools** (builder of the baby pool) for a **cost comparison** before final approval.
- Past grant-funded work with MKSK will inform design and budgeting.
- Concerns raised:
  - Estimated costs (\$4–5M) include unnecessary landscaping and amenities.
  - Preference to phase improvements (prioritize pool structure, defer extras).
  - Reassess restroom and concession stand sizing for cost efficiency and practical use.

- Consensus: Gather direct construction estimates from Patterson Pools to refine the design scope before proceeding.
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## 5. Administrative Updates

- **Job Descriptions:** Department heads finalizing 2025 revisions.
  - **Ordinance 2025-29 & 2025-31:** Address property tax levies and millage rates; deadlines set for early February filing with the Board of Elections.
  - **Resolution 2025-32:** Confirms grant timelines for Lincoln's project funds (flexible use through 2028).
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## 6. Key Themes and Takeaways

- Strong focus on **fiscal management** and efficient allocation of funds.
- Renewed emphasis on **oversight and accountability** in police hiring.
- Ongoing efforts to **maximize grant funding** for infrastructure while maintaining transparency with residents.
- Collaborative and solution-oriented discussion, with humor and civility throughout.

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Jeffrey Wilcheck, Fiscal Officer

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Tiffany Southard, Mayor