

Detailed Summary – Committee as a Whole Date: September 18, 2025 **Time:** 6:30 p.m.

Attendees: Council President Camara, Councilmembers Martin, Passeur, Pinter, and Paessun; Mayor Southard, Village Attorney Jesse Shamp, Fiscal Officer Jeff Wilcheck, and Chief Delp

Finance & Tax Updates

- **Property Taxes:**
 - 2025 collections are **\$10,280 ahead of 2024**.
 - Historical fluctuations noted (2022 still impacted by COVID delinquencies).
 - Concern raised over an **uptick in residential delinquencies**.
 - **Income Taxes:**
 - Initially up **11% year-to-date**, peaked at **15%**, but now only **3.95% ahead of last year**.
 - Decline may be timing-related; October advance will provide clarity.
 - 2026 projections trimmed to **3% growth** to remain conservative.
 - Potential strain on **capital project funding**.
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Supplemental Appropriations (Planned for Council)

- **Fire/EMS Contract:** Additional **\$13,000** required; budgeted amount (\$257,000) underestimated versus contract (\$270,000).
 - **Street Lighting:** Funds need to be moved from “general government” to **street lighting/security fund**.
 - **Sidewalk Expansion (River Lake Road):** Engineer estimate pending for increasing sidewalks from **4 ft → 5 ft**.
 - **Waterline Project (North Lake Court):**
 - **\$15,000** for survey + **\$50,000** for design.
 - **\$65,000 appropriation** expected from waterline maintenance fund.
 - Possible additional work if roadbed replacement required.
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Leaf Removal Contract

- **Groundmaster (current vendor):**
 - Strong track record, praised for reliability.
 - Bid: **\$36,000 for 1 year** (3-year option: \$35k → \$37k → \$38.5k).
- **Five Seasons (challenger):**
 - Lower bid: **\$29,250 for 1 year**.
 - Concerns about past performance, equipment, and responsiveness.
- **Council Decision:**

- Leaned toward **renewing with Groundmaster for 1 year**, prioritizing service quality over ~\$6,000 savings.
 - Plan to rebid next year with more detailed requirements.
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Capital Projects & Infrastructure

- **Sidewalk/Pathway Projects:**
 - Multiple engineering proposals underway (Jacobs and others).
 - Costs could exceed **\$100,000 for engineering alone**.
 - **Storm Sewer Funding:**
 - Resolution to transfer **\$85,000 from general fund** to cover Minerva Lake Road storm sewer costs.
 - **Pool Bathhouse Replacement:**
 - Architect **Brandstetter Carroll** favored.
 - Proposed designs expand current facility (**1,000 sq. ft. → 1,500–2,000 sq. ft.**).
 - Debate over **concession stand size** and balancing resident needs vs. financial feasibility.
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Safety & Traffic Updates

- **School Traffic:**
 - New loop system reduced backups on Green Line and Lake Road.
 - Afternoons at **Hawthorne and Minerva Park** remain “controlled chaos” (15–20 minutes).
 - Some families ignore service road, creating illegal cut-throughs on 161.
 - **Minerva Lake Road Construction:**
 - Ongoing congestion, narrow lanes, and damage hinder enforcement.
 - Residents making unsafe maneuvers onto Westerville Road.
 - Meeting scheduled with contractor **Strawser** to address closure logistics.
 - **Speed Control:**
 - Signs relocated:
 - **Quiet Brook Vale** (curve near pond).
 - **Minerva Lake Road**, now facing incoming traffic.
 - Early feedback shows **speed reduction success**.
 - Resident compliment received for sign placement.
 - **Seasonal Safety:**
 - With shorter days and **Halloween approaching**, council stressed promoting reflective clothing and caution for pedestrians.
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Community Events & Parking Enforcement

- **Neighborhood Garage Sales:**
 - Expanded to **Friday–Sunday** (previously Saturday only).
 - Saturday traffic expected to be most difficult.
 - **Extra officer assigned** for traffic management.
 - Problem areas: **Curves on Curwood, North Lake Road, and Lakewood.**
 - New map used to strategically place **No Parking** signs.
 - Idea raised to introduce **picture-based signs** for clarity, especially for **non-English speakers.**
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Halloween Policy

- Debate on formalizing adherence to **MORPC’s trick-or-treat schedule.**
 - Concern about past deviations (e.g., rain dates causing overwhelming crowds).
 - Consensus: **No ordinance needed**; simply acknowledge following MORPC unless council votes otherwise.
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Legislation Reviewed

1. **Ordinance 2025-16** – Third reading of “short-cutting” ordinance.
 2. **Resolution 2025-19** – Accepting budget commission rates and certifying tax levies (emergency).
 3. **Resolution 2025-21** – Authorizing bidding/contract for **Valley Road improvements.**
 - Engineering already complete.
 - Mayor must report back on contract amounts.
 - Council retains final say via appropriations.
 4. **Resolution 2025-22** – Contract with **Brandstetter Carroll** for pool bathhouse design and oversight (emergency).
 5. **Resolution 2025-23** – Transfer of funds for **Minerva Lake Road storm sewer project.**
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Other Business

- **Newsletter Deadline:** October meeting dates must be set quickly to meet publication cutoff.
- **Finance Meeting:** Confirmed for **October 2nd.**
- **Planning & Zoning:** Two hearings scheduled next week.
- **Westerville Schools Levy Presentation:**
 - District officials (possibly Treasurer Nicole Marshall) requested to present.
 - Council agreed to offer **October 9th and 23rd** dates.
 - Presentation limited to **10–15 minutes**, minimal Q&A.
- **Chatbot Proposal (CivicPlus):**

- Cost: **~\$5,000 per year.**
 - Functions: after-hours responses, redirect to forms/links, analytics of common inquiries.
 - Deferred to future work session discussion.
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Closing

- Meeting adjourned briefly before the start of the formal council session.