RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Orwell Village Council **REGULAR Meeting** **Date: March 17, 2026**

Council President Ruks called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Clerk-Finance Director Kim McKinley performed roll call and the following council members were present: Mr. Adkins, Mr. Cottrell, Mr. Denihan, Mr. Hartz, and Mr. Ruks.

Also Present: Solicitor Cris Newcomb and Village Manager Dr. Sean Ratican.

Public: Warren Dillaway, Star Beacon. Duane and Barb Squibbs.

Agenda: Mr. Denihan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ruks to amend agenda by removing under old business items e, f & g. Roll call, 5 yeas: Cottrell-yea, Denihan-yea, Hartz – yea, Ruks – yea, Mr. Adkins-yea. Motion passed.

Mr. Cottrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Adkins to accept agenda as amended. Roll call, 5 yeas: Denihan-yea, Hartz – yea, Ruks – yea, Mr. Adkins-yea, Cottrell-yea. Motion passed.

Mr. Cottrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Adkins to go into executive session, with members of council and solicitor to discuss discipline of a public employee with no action to follow. Roll Call, 5 yeas: Denihan-yea, Hartz – yea, Ruks – yea, Mr. Adkins-yea, Cottrell-yea. Motion passed. Entered executive session at 5:04 p.m. Cottrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Adkins to come out of executive session. Roll Call, 5 yeas: Hartz-yea, Ruks-yea, Adkins-yea, Cottrell-yea, Denihan-yes. Motion passed. Exited executive session at 5:38 p.m.

Public: Duane and Barb Squibbs of 2396 US RT 322 wanted to discuss the shut off fee of $50 added to his boys' water bill. His son lives next door to parents. Mr. Squibbs acknowledges that his son should of paid bill on time, however, he has been having trouble receiving his bill for the last five years. Mr. Squibbs receives his bills for multiple addresses in one envelope. Billing clerk indicated bills are being mailed and suggested he check with post office. Mr. Squibbs contacted the local USPO, and the local PO indicated that it was not a local issue. Mr. Squibbs contacted USPO in Cleveland; they would investigate it. Mr. Squibbs indicated that he was receiving his bills in the last few months and Shane(Gregory) is texting him a copy of the bill. Mr. Squibbs said bill was paid before shut-off was to occur. Dr. Ratican spoke with son on date in question. He notified water department to reconnect or stop the disconnection. Payment of water bill is consistently late even with phone calls from utility clerk. Mr. Gregory forwarding copies of bill to property owner. Dr. Ratican explained that the village is in the process of updating utility program. Customers will be able to create an account to view and pay bills. Councilor Denihan felt the utility department went above and beyond to accommodate customers, payers need to be held accountable and act responsibly. Solicitor Newcomb said village manager has the authority to waive the shut off fee.

Minutes: Mr. Denihan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hartz to approve the minutes of the regular council meeting held on February 17, 2026. Roll call, 5 yeas: Ruks - yea, Mr. Adkins-yea, Cottrell – yea, Denihan-yes, Hartz-yea. Motion passed.

Mr. Cottrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Adkins to approve the minutes on the work session held on Mark 10, 2026. Roll call, 5 yeas: Mr. Adkins-yea, Cottrell – yea, Denihan-yea Hartz – yea, Ruks – yea. Motion passed.

Bills: Mr. Denihan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hartz, to approve the payment of bills. Roll call, 5 yeas: Cottrell – yea, Denihan-yea, Hartz – yea, Ruks – yea. Adkins – yea. Motion passed.

SCAD: Councilor Hartz presented his SCAD report from meeting held on March 9, 2026. Report includes monthly financials and call numbers. The Ohio Supreme Court upheld the 4-year prison sentence in the Slepsky case. Windsor EMS added EMT to department. SCAD is working on IT policy per HB96. Next meeting is March 13, 2026.

Village Manager Report:

There was a resignation on the police department. There are no plans at the moment to advertise position. SRO will cover shifts over the summer; the department will reassess later.

Dr. Ratican has received final figures for new vehicles. He will give Midway an opportunity to match; difference is 15K-20k.

Dr. Ratican reported that the village received a grant for abandonment of five wells in the amount of $46,225. The replacement generator for iron plant was not funded.

A WPCLF grant is due on Friday. There have been several complaints about water pressure from industry and residents. Dr. Ratican proposes to replace a 4" water main, with a larger line, from the water plant to the center of town. The grant would help cover research and design of project. The EPA has requested a plan to replace the aging infrastructure. In addition, the village needs to have an SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) on file.

Vice President Cottrell inquired about the status of new building. Dr. Ratican informed the contractor that the village was interested in expanding its footprint and considering the upgrades. Engineering will finalize design, create blueprints, and submit to building department.

Solicitors' report: None

Finance Report Ms. McKinley provided a summary of the submitted February reports. Mr. Hartz made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cottrell, to approve the finance report. The motion passed with all in favor.

Zoning: Zoning committee is working on residential inspections and sidewalks. Councilor Hartz inquired about a property on SR 45 south of Sunset; there are flag markings in yard.

Old Business:

RESOLUTION NO. 26-03-01R: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FISCAL OFFICER AND/OR VILLAGE MANAGER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ERIE BANK DEMAND DEPOSIT MARKETPLACE (DDM) PROGRAMMING FOR THE PURPOSES OF INVESTING CERTAIN FUNDS AND MONIES OF THE VILLAGE OF ORWELL AND NOT DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Mr. Cottrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hartz, to waive the three-reading rule. Roll call, 5 yeas: Cottrell-yea, Denihan-yea, Hartz-yea, Ruks-yea, Adkins-yea. Motion passed. Mr. Denihan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hartz, to pass Resolution 26-03-01R. Roll call, 5 yeas: Denihan-yea, Hartz-yea, Ruks-yea, Adkins-yea, Cottrell-yea. Motion passed.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-03-02: AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A CYBERSECURITY POLICY FOR THE VILLAGE OF ORWELL AND NOT DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Mr. Hartz made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cottrell, to waive the three-reading rule. Roll call, 5 yeas: Hartz-yea, Ruks-yea, Adkins-yea, Cottrell-yea, Denihan-yea. Motion passed. Mr. Cottrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ruks, to pass Ordinance 26-03-02. Roll call, 5 yeas: Adkins-yea, Cottrell-yea, Denihan-yea, Hartz-yea, Ruks-yea. Motion passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-03-03R: A RESOLUTION AMENDING APPROPRIATIONS IN VARIOUS FUNDS WITHIN THE BUDGET OF THE VILLAGE OF ORWELL AND NOT DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Mr. Denihan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hartz, to waive the three-reading rule. Roll call, 5 yeas: Adkins-yea, Cottrell-yea, Denihan-yea, Hartz-yea, Ruks-yea. Motion passed. Mr. Hartz made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cottrell, to pass Resolution 26-03-03R. Roll call, 5 yeas: Cottrell-yea, Denihan-yea, Hartz-yea, Ruks-yea, Adkins-yea. Motion passed.

New Business: Vice President Cottrell inquired about summer help. Dr. Ratican reported that a position in available in the public works department; plan to supplement department with summer help. Vice President Cottrell would like village to initiate a cadet program for students since the fire department is staffed during second shift. Dr. Ratican will be looking at SAFER in April. The purpose of the grant is to increase the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry-minimum standards.

Solicitor Newcomb distributed information on property tax millage created by Ashtabula County Auditor Scott Yamamoto. The auditor has been getting a lot of questions about HB on how it gets rid of taxes and impacts, so he provided a handout to explain millage and where individuals can go to see where the tax dollars go. The auditor does not have a fix; he has no control on what happens at the state level. The is no funding revenue in place if the tax goes away. The auditor is responsible to keeping the books for the county. Representative Thomas is holding roundtables throughout his district. Members and administration are encouraged to attend and ask questions. Representative Thomas plans to hold meeting at Windsor; if so, Dr. Ratican will attend.

Public: None

Media: Warren Dillaway inquired about the Cybersecurity Policy. Dr. Ratican explained that the policy was required by HB96 and was spearheaded by Finance Director McKinley with significant input by Solicitor Newcomb. Dr. Ratican said policy was reviewed by village IT company. Company said policy was well done and had no additional feedback.

Warren asked for clarification on the funding source and purpose for waterline replacement grant. The funding source is WPCLF(Water Pollution Control Loan Fund) and would be for research and design. Dr. Ratican explained other projects including storm water management that will need to be addressed. He would like to develop a paving program to pave the seven miles of streets within the village over a period of years through OPWC. However, catch basis will need to be added or replaced before any paving.

Mr. Cottrell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Adkins, to adjourn the meeting. Roll Call, 5 yeas: Denihan-yea, Hartz-yea, Ruks-yea, Adkins-yea, Cottrell-yea, Motion passed with all in favor. Council President Ruks adjourned the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Approved: April 21, 2026

Village Manager

Clerk of Council

President of Council