

Mayor & Village Administration Report (combined), 3/17/26

Submitted by Mayor Densmore

Nomination for the Regional Planning Commission. Earlier in the month I nominated Jason Snyder, the current chair of the Golf Manor Planning Commission, to an open seat on the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission. The nomination was accepted, and he is one of three candidates for that position. All the municipal planning commissions across Hamilton County are eligible to vote. Ballots are due from each municipality by the end of the month.

Appointments for the Wiehe Project Steering Committee. We are currently working with Hamilton County to develop a plan for our business district at North Wiehe. You can refer to my prior combined administration mayors report for further details about the process we are following for this. I have appointed the following residents: Phyllis Thomas, current member of the Community Engagement Committee, David Blathers, current member of the Golf Manor Planning Commission. I've also approached Council woman Brittney Kriemer who has expressed interest in serving on the steering committee, and we are working out the details of that.

Leak discovered in the Men's Locker room. The maintenance team had to tear out the shower walls to identify the source and fix the leak. This further complicates spring access to bathrooms, as there is currently a bad water valve in the park that will prevent access to the park bathrooms until it is fixed. We typically wait until April/May to open the park bathrooms, so this is not an immediate concern but important to keep in mind financially as we look at reopening these spaces.

Our second Little Free Pantry should be installed this week at the West Losantiville location, near the bus stop across the street from the gas station and Kalab's body shop. I want to once again thank the members of our WeThrive team and all those who helped with the construction and the ongoing maintenance required, and of course all those whose donations are keeping it, along with the East Losantiville location stocked.

Municipal Hall update. The renovations to the kitchen have accelerated over the past several weeks. I want to thank our Maintenance Director Jim Putthoff for that. We still need to do the countertops and flooring, but otherwise the major work including new electric and gas and water lines, drywall, painting and new cabinetry installation have all been completed.

OML/Mayors Association Updates. There are three items occurring through the state legislature for me to pass along:

- The State will eliminate the local government fund of any municipalities that chooses to use Ranked Choice Voting. That bill (Senate 63) passed both chambers and is awaiting the Governor's signature.
- A bill prohibiting local legislation to regulate AirB&Bs and other short term rentals is working its way through the State legislature, currently in committee.

- An effort for a statewide referendum to abolish property taxes is collecting signatures—they are trying to get 600k signatures to insure the required 400k by June. The state will be looking at a loss of over 24 billion dollars if property taxes are abolished. I asked our fiscal officer last fall to begin looking at our exposure should this ballot measure pass, and to provide an outline of possible ways the village could respond if our financial sustainability was threatened. I will circle back to this topic when we fill our village administrator position.

Energy Alliance recommendation. The contract we have for the village's energy supplier will expire in May. This is not the aggregation, but rather the service provider we use for our own facilities. Energy Alliance is the company that helps us navigate pricing. They are recommending that we stay with our current provider, Dynergy, for 24 months. This is based on [current bidding](#). [Last month's bidding](#) was similar. Energy Alliance doesn't believe prices will be coming down anytime soon. Unless there is an objection from Council we'll be going with their recommendation.

Park Update. I authorized security cameras for the park over the summer, but there were supply delays. We've been notified by the provider that our cameras should be delivered and installed by the first week in April. As the council is aware we've had a number of incidents involving vandalism to park bathrooms and structures. The cameras at the very least will help us, if not better identify the culprits, better identify what patrol adjustments need to be made in the park.

Supplemental IT Services. We are looking at supplementing our IT support following the network breach that occurred last fall. Our fiscal officer identified a company for this purpose, so I had our legal counsel take a look at the contract, and I met with one of the owners of the company today. They do some work with Greenhills. To compare scope of work and fee structure I've also reached out to the company that does work for the City of Loveland, and have a followup meeting with them tomorrow.

Village Administrator Search. I've emailed the resume of Nathan Cahall to all the council members, and encouraged them to reach out to him with any questions they have. He is available to serve as an interim administrator while I conduct a search for my appointment of a full time administrator. He meets my requirements, and I believe he meets the criteria that council has presented to me. He said that he could be available this evening in person or by phone to answer any questions. I stated when I sent out the resume to everyone that there was no expectation of having a vote this evening.

Appointment of Chief of Police. I have an update on the appointment of our Police Chief. As many of you know, Chris Campbell retired at the end of last year. We advertised statewide and received resumes from 8 candidates, and scheduled an initial phone interview with each.

Eric Pridonoff, our fiscal officer, has a background in HR and researched which [initial questions](#) to ask, I reviewed them and gave my approval. Those questions have been included for your review. I sat in on each phone call to ensure that the format was the same for each call. For each phone call I introduced myself, thanked the candidate for their interest, told them I'd be listening in. Eric questioned each candidate and then I thanked them at the end of each interview.

After each call Eric and I reviewed and shared our opinions about the candidate's responses. It took a little over two weeks to get through all the candidates. Once we had completed all the phone interviews we discussed who we thought the strongest candidates were. We agreed on who we thought the top two candidates were, and agreed that the third place spot was a tie between two candidates. On the basis of this I selected the four finalists. One of those candidates said during the interview that he had some family issues that might cause him to pull out of the process and indeed he did after we had selected him as one of the four. (For context I'll share that this was one of the two candidates that Eric and I agreed was the best). So in the end, we just had three finalists.

Each of the finalists were required to do a polygraph, a drug screen, a background check and a comprehensive psychological evaluation, which upon completion were all sent to me. Early on in the process, Eric had spoken to the chief of our neighboring Amberley Village Police Department about how to ensure that our selection process could withstand scrutiny. The Amberley Police Chief suggested an interview panel made up of police chiefs or former police chiefs be part of the final process. I met individually with the Amberley Police Chief to discuss the various ways to do this. He recommended and reviewed with me four organizations two of which were privately owned, two of which were associations of police chiefs— one being the Hamilton County Association of Police Chiefs, the other being the Ohio Association of Police Chiefs. I selected the Ohio Association of Police Chiefs to conduct the final intensive interview. I met with the lead coordinator of the Ohio Association of Police Chiefs to discuss the process, including which questions should be asked. Those [questions](#) have been included for your review. We also discussed in detail how the candidates' responses to questions would be graded. That [scoring rubric](#) has also been included for your review. The association asked that the resumes for each finalist be sent to them ahead of time for review, with each candidate's name redacted from the résumé. Each candidate henceforth was referred to as either [Candidate A](#), [Candidate B](#) or [Candidate C](#). When the candidates arrived for their interviews, they were instructed not to use their name during the interview. I sat in on the interview of all three candidates to confirm that the process was the same for each candidate. The three chiefs that conducted the interview were [Retired Chief Heinz Von Eckartsberg of Dublin Ohio](#), [Chief Bob Chabali of Deerfield Township](#), and [Chief Robert Buchanan of Monroe](#).

There were 270 total points possible for each candidate in the scoring process, and in the end there was a 2 pt difference between the two highest scores. The chiefs on the panel each individually told me that they were confident that either of these two highest scoring candidates would make an excellent police chief. These were candidates A and C.

I then received for each candidate the report from their intensive psychological interview. The psychological interview was conducted the week before the interview panel, but the written report from it was not available until after the interview panel. I reviewed those psychological reports this past weekend. Then followed up yesterday with the psychologist to make sure my understanding of some of the scores was correct. Of those two candidates that performed best in the Interview Panel, the psychological testing indicated that Candidate C had a higher leadership score than Candidate A, and a higher command presence score. But he also had a very low orientation to others score, and a low empathy score. Candidate A, however, had the highest empathy score of all three tested. He also had the highest score for orientation to others, and the highest score on integrity. On the basis of all these factors I made my decision to appoint Candidate A as our new Police Chief.

I have said this to some of you before, that whenever we have the chance to scientifically test our intuition we should do so, and I believe I was afforded the opportunity to do that here, because of the work of Eric Pridonoff and Chief Wallace of Amberley Village. The process they guided me through I believe is beyond reproach. I've known our interim Chief of Golf Manor since before he was a Captain. He is well known in our community and beyond. I have received many letters recommending that I appoint him to the position of Chief of Police, including from: The Harrison Police Chief, Cheviot Police Chief, Woodlawn Police Chief, Reading Police Chief, Wyoming Police Chief, Deer Park Police Chief, Fairfax Police Chief, Hamilton Township Police Chief, UC Chief of Police, Deer Park Silverton Fire Chief, President of Mills Fence Company, Dave Willacker of the Cincinnati Circus Company, The Director of Community Security (SAFE Cincinnati) of the Jewish Federation, and Rabbi Avtzon of the local Yeshiva.

Our Charter requires a confirmation vote. If there is a motion and a second to do so we can proceed with a vote. Or we can discuss the appointment first, either in open council or in executive session, or both. Presuming he's confirmed, I'm prepared to swear him in now, or later. In fairness to Council, I don't have any expectation that we vote in today's 3/17/26 council meeting— I just wanted to publicly inform you of the outcomes of the process and my decision.

This Mayor's report is respectfully submitted to the residents of Golf Manor. Thank you for the honor of being your Mayor.



Mayor Stefan C. Densmore
Village of Golf Manor