

**VILLAGE OF JEFFERSON
COUNCIL MEETING**

October 6, 2025

Meeting called to order by Mayor Chiacchiero.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Moment of Silence:

Opening Prayer: **Jim Kemmerle of the Bethel Bible Church**

Roll call of Council Dreier-Absent, Febel, Martuccio, Roderick, Sekanina, Orvos

Corrections or Additions to the Agenda:

Add a Motion under Safety. Motion to accept the Fire Chief's Recommendation to hire Megan Justice to the Fire Department at the rate of pay per the Wage Ordinance pending her physical and background check effective October 6, 2025.

Agenda Addition and Motions – Council Member Pasquale Martuccio
Village of Jefferson Council Meeting
October 06, 2025

Before we move on, I need to bring something to Council's attention that deeply concerns me, not just financially, but procedurally. Being somewhat familiar with this subject, having worked in the financial industry about twenty years ago as a licensed advisor with Edward Jones and other broker-dealers, and holding both Series 7 and 63 licenses, I decided to take a closer look at this stock sale before tonight's vote. The Village currently holds 548 shares of Principal Financial Group. As of last Friday's close, those shares had a market value of roughly \$46,032, give or take.

Yet the offer before us from Potemkin Limited is for \$28,331, that's only \$51.70 a share, nearly \$17,700 below market value. Potemkin Limited is not a reputable brokerage firm; the SEC and even Principal Financial Group themselves have

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issued public warnings about these so-called mini-tender offers. They target unsuspecting shareholders and buy at a steep discount, exploiting people who don't read the fine print. So the real question is: how did this even make it to the Council agenda? Who reviewed this? Who verified the price? Because we have three fail-switches that are supposed to prevent exactly this kind of mistake — the Finance Committee, the Administrator, and the Mayor — and all three failed. The Finance Chair, Mr. Sekanina, should have caught this. The Administrator, who is up for probation review tonight, should have immediately seen that something didn't add up. And the Mayor, who never misses a photo-op when there's a ribbon to cut or a fundraiser to announce, should have asked the simplest question of all: "What's the market value?" When every safeguard fails, that's not an accident. That's a culture of carelessness, and it costs the taxpayers real money. And I'll say this plainly, I can't justify losing \$17,700 of taxpayer value while we've got levies on the ballot next month, asking residents for more money, and while we're out there fundraising for Memorial Park. We're passing the hat for a handicap swing, and at the same time, we're about to throw seventeen thousand dollars away to an out-of-state brokerage scam. That doesn't make sense. But, unfortunately, the concerns don't end there. A few weeks ago, a meeting was held at the fire department where the Mayor, the Administrator, and both members of the Safety Committee were present, and they reportedly announced who the next Fire Chief would be. I wasn't invited, and neither were the rest of Council. Under Ohio's Sunshine Law, when a quorum of a committee meets to discuss public business, that's a public meeting. It must be publicly noticed, open to attendance, and recorded. You can't simply call it a "staff meeting" when Council members are present and discussing Village business. That doesn't fly legally, and it certainly doesn't fly ethically. Truth to be told, I'm not surprised, since violating sunshine rules has been an issue with the Chiacchiero administration and the Diehl administration, when three advertised meetings were conducted but no minutes exist. Mr. Sekanina is well aware of this as well. And now, to make matters worse, I have asked both the

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Administrator and Mr. Sekanina to address the poor quality of our Council meeting audio system. Residents, including our County Commissioner, have complained they can't

hear the proceedings; even the Clerk-Treasurer struggles to make accurate minutes from the recordings. Yet, according to my last conversation with Mr. Sekanina, he believes there's nothing wrong. I'm beginning to think this administration simply doesn't want the public to hear clearly what's being said in these meetings. That's disgraceful, because transparency starts with being heard. Taken together, these issues, the financial oversight failure, the closed-door decision-making, and now the lack of transparency in even our recordings, paint a clear picture of how this administration is operating: behind the scenes, without accountability, and without regard for the public's right to

know. For that reason, I will vote NO on ending the Administrator's probation. This isn't personal, it's about principle. I will not endorse a leadership culture that ignores procedure, mismanages public assets, and treats the rest of Council like spectators. The people of Jefferson deserve better than that. This is not the way we should be doing business in Jefferson!

So tonight, I'm asking this Council and this administration to do three very simple, but very important, things: First,

table Resolution 25-R-3398 authorizing the sale of the Village's 548 shares of Principal Financial Group stock, pending verification of market value and written confirmation from Principal Financial Group's Investor Relations

Department on the legitimacy of the offer. Second, I'm asking the Mayor and the administration to stop operating in

the shadows and start following the Ohio Open Meetings Law — the Sunshine Law. Every member of this Council

has an equal right to be informed and to deliberate on public business, and the public has the right to hear those discussions.

And third, I'm asking that we take immediate action to upgrade and repair our Council meeting audio system. If the people can't hear their government, then their government isn't truly public. Let's bring Jefferson into

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the 21st century and make sure our meetings are as clear and transparent as we claim to be. These are basic steps, fairness, openness, and accountability. And if we can't commit to those three things, then we're failing the people who trusted us to sit in these seats.

Agenda Addition and Motions for Council
Consideration

Mr. Mayor, I move to amend tonight's agenda to include the following:

1. During the reading of Resolution 25-R-3398 (Potemkin Limited Stock Sale): Motion to Table Resolution 25-R-3398 pending verification of market value and confirmation from Principal Financial Group's Investor Relations Department on the legitimacy of the offer. The Finance Committee and Administrator shall report back to Council before reconsideration.

2. Under New Business – Item A: Sunshine Law Compliance Directive

Motion to direct the Mayor and Administrator to ensure all committee and administrative meetings that discuss or deliberate public business comply fully with the Ohio Open Meetings (Sunshine) Law, including proper public notice, accessibility, and recorded minutes.

3. Under New Business – Item B: Council Chamber Audio Upgrade

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Motion to authorize the Administrator to obtain quotes within 30 days for the purchase and installation of an upgraded audio recording and sound system for Council Chambers, ensuring clear and audible public meeting recordings consistent with modern accessibility standards.

Respectfully submitted,

Pasquale Martuccio
Jefferson Village Council Member

Motion by Councilperson Martuccio to add the three motions to the agenda
The Motions are

- 1. During the reading of Resolution 25-R-3398 (Potemkin Limited Stock Sale):**
Motion to Table Resolution 25-R-3398 pending verification of market value and confirmation from Principal Financial Group's Investor Relations Department on the legitimacy of the offer. The Finance Committee and Administrator shall report back to Council before reconsideration.
- 2. Under New Business – Item A: Sunshine Law Compliance Directive**
Motion to direct the Mayor and Administrator to ensure all committee and administrative meetings that discuss or deliberate public business comply fully with the Ohio Open Meetings (Sunshine) Law, including proper public notice, accessibility, and recorded minutes.

- 3. Under New Business – Item B: Council Chamber Audio Upgrade**
Motion to authorize the Administrator to obtain quotes within 30 days for the purchase and installation of

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an upgraded audio recording and sound system for Council Chambers, ensuring clear and audible public meeting recordings consistent with modern accessibility standards.

2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Clerk Treasurer told Council regarding the first motion to table Resolution 25-R-3398 pending verification of market value and confirmation from Principal Financial Group's. Fisher stated she had talked with Solicitor Fairchild regarding the sale of the stocks.

Solicitor Fairchild told Council for the Village to sell the shares the Village would have to obtain their own Brokerage Account, and it would also cost money.

Mayor Chiacchiero stated that number two an announcement was made. We felt that it was owed to the fire Department who the new Fire Chief would be leading the department.

Councilperson Martuccio asked the Mayor if there were two members of the Saftery Committee meeting present. If so the law says at any time if you have two members of Council of the same committee together it constitutes a public meeting.

Mayor Chiacchiero told Councilperson Martuccio it was an announcement.

Minutes: Approval/Addition/Correction

Motion by Councilperson Sekanina to approve the Council Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2025.

2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Motion by Councilperson Sekanina to approve the Special Council Meeting Minutes of September 22, 2025.

2nd

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Roll: All yea, motion carried

Mayor Chiacchiero told everyone that before we move to Visitors Comments. Legally Council cannot comment on Confidential Personnel Matters.

Visitor's Comments (five-minute limit per council rule #13)

Jake Rice from the Jefferson Fire Department spoke to Council in regard to the recent activities at the Fire Department.

Good evening,

In light of a recent event, I wanted to share my thoughts that took place on October 2, just 36 hours after your new leadership took over the Jefferson Fire Department. We knew there were internal department issues that needed to be addressed, no more than that of others no matter where you work. We were ready to move forward as a team to bring back morale, teamwork, and energy throughout the department. That all has changed because we inadvertently do not fit the agenda of the new regime. We reported to a meeting expecting growth with new leadership, only to end with a forced resignation of three Captains. I have never been involved in a meeting where rules were read at the beginning that included, "there will be no discussion, there will be no arguments, and all things stated will be final". Your three previous captains who brought a combined 55.5 years of service, one who was last year's fireman of the year, another who was a two-time recipient of the Fireman of the year, and the last one-time recipient of fireman of the year and given the neighborhood hero award this year, were forced to resign. None of us have ever had a poor review, been spoken to about any professional issues, or had any disciplinary actions against them. This is not about being nonproductive, this is simply a head hunt of your new department heads because we simply do not fit their agenda of promised ranks of their friends. I find it completely wrong and disrespectful to even be having this conversation with all of you, but it is only right that it is addressed, and you all understand a new leadership was not promoted, but rather men who cannot separate friendship and promises from business. You have appointed a new wave of iron fist warriors with an agenda that if you do not fit, you are not welcome. It is a sad day for the Village of Jefferson, Jefferson

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Township, and Lenox Township residents that we once served. As you can see tonight the room is full of those who supported us for many years, including our families. I ask that moving forward you use information you gather to fix things, not turn it around and rid good people with good ethics and morals. Sadly, tonight we will be handing our resignations to you all along with 10 others who refuse to become a statistic of this new leadership. I hope you fully understand and realize what you are losing. Not to worry, our friendship, family-oriented knot and love will not be broken by a new leadership with the wrong agenda. We are all forever grateful and will never be remorseful for the time we have poured into this department. We thank each of you for your support over the years. Of these 13 resignations that you are receiving tonight, please note this is a combined total of 133 years of dedicated service to this department, as well as the only 3 Ohio state certified fire inspectors, and one of two: Ohio state certified fire investigators. We wish nothing but the best with your department moving forward.

Thank you for your time.

Jake rice

Frank Snyder of 116 West Jefferson Street spoke to Council saying that he has concerns with two motions regarding Council Meeting Minutes and there have been other issues in the past. He questions if the Council members and staff read the Council Minutes or their packets. Tonight, there were meeting minutes passed the Regular Council Meeting of September 15, 2025, and the Special Council Meeting of September 22, 2025, that Councilperson Febel approved meeting minutes and he was not present at the meeting. Snyder questioned if Council rubbers stamp everything. Snyder also has concerns with the Levy Resolutions that were passed August 4, 2025, as an emergency.

The **Resolution** is declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety of the citizens of the Village of Jefferson, Ohio, such emergency arising out of the necessity to hire an Administrator to ensure the uninterrupted provision by the Village of public services and the proper supervision of Village employees and departments, and shall take effect and be in force immediately after its passage. Snyder asked Council if they pay attention to the Resolutions they are passing.

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Mayor Chiacchiero told Council that the **Resolution** has nothing to do with the Administrator. The emergency verbiage was incorrect and the wording for the Ordinances was correct.

Administrator Murphy told Council that the **Resolution** was approved by the State of Ohio it was just a oversight in the verbiage.

Also present:

Pat Bradek, Jen Skinner, Jessica Scott, Jonelle Gorko, Christina Edison, Tim Harrold, Kenzie Brown, Carrie Brown, Tracy Stowers, Kelly Farina, Dave Farina, Kathy Cunningham, Keith Stewart, Amber Stewart, Joe Edison, Aaron Painter, Harleigh Peck, Dave Eastdale, Stephanie Wessell The Jefferson Gazette, Rachel Peer, Lorrie Peer, Diana Mackensen, Olivia Springer, John Maylish, Adam Lee, Heather Rice, Morgan Pacheco, Sophia Koclec, Angela Riffle, Jake Rice, Jennifer Miller,, Logan Platt, Thomas Ricker, Connie Rice, Ralph Rice, Nathaniel Miller, Jacob Peer, Sherrif Bill Neimi, Bill Painter Get Your Graphics, Kasey Farina, Cole Farina, Kelly Fuhrman, Frank Snyder Jefferson Rotary, Greg Fuhman, Warren Dillaway The Star Beacon, Wendy Sintic, Jon McMannes, Harold Specht, Chip Ashcraft, Heather Ashcraft, Mary Howe, Jamie Dean and Scott Dean.

DEPARTMENTS

Administrator Murphy

Village Administrator's report for the period ending October 3, 2025.

Projects update:

Project		Status	Vendor	Grant/Loan		Total Cost
ACTIVE PROJECTS	Project #					
WWTP EQ Basin	OPWC – R37	Submitted to DOD/EPA Resubmitting to OPWC – R37	VERDANTAS	Engineering grant \$90,000		\$1,250,000

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WWTP Clarifier Improvement Phase 1	OPWC – R38	Contracted-Union Industrial.	VERDANTAS	\$207,500 Grant \$50,000 Loan		\$615,000
WWTP Clarifier Improvement Phase 2	OPWC-R39	Submitted to DOD/EPA Resubmitting to OPWC – R39	VERDANTAS			\$369,000
WWTP Clarifier Improvement Phase 3	OPWC-R40	Submitted to DOD/EPA Resubmitting to OPWC – R40	VERDANTAS			\$389,000
Village Street Paving Program 2025	36360 (Roads)	Bid accepted	Karvo Companies			\$222,895.00

In the Village

Aqua waterline project should be wrapping up with final stages of construction. Completely new sidewalks will be installed on the south side of E. Ashtabula St.

As you may have noticed, holiday decorations are going up a little earlier this year. The Street department will have its hands full this season with many projects, including a 30-foot Christmas tree being installed this year. Taking advantage of the pleasant weather will help them come in time for holiday season.

Street Dept.

Fixing a stormwater drain near E. Jefferson and Cucumber St. This was the drain damaged by Spectrum. Spectrum accepted my invoice, and the repairs will be paid for by them. Completed on 10/1/25

Zoning:

Permits issued since the last council meeting: **1**
Total permits 2025 = **35**

Recreation Department:

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Haunted Woods will be happening again this year. It is scheduled for October 10th and 11th from 6pm-9pm on both nights. I am asking those who attend to be mindful of parking and please be extra careful with your children due to increased traffic.

Trick or Treat will be October 25th from 4pm-6pm. The Fire Department will be hosting a fundraiser, passing out candy and selling hot dogs as well.

Wastewater Treatment Plant:

Plant is running normal. No issues to report or new business to report.

Other notes:

I have applied for T-Mobile Grant where funds are available up to \$25,000 to fund various community projects in rural areas. The project selected for this grant is to install a lighted push-button crosswalk, connecting the Dog Park to the Memorial Park. In addition, a second project for new sidewalk connecting Giddings Park and Memorial Park. This sidewalk must cross railroad tracks, and which is a safety concern. Once the new park is opened next year, this area will see an abundance of vehicle and foot traffic and will be a great safety addition to that area.

I also submitted the Ohio Community Fund Grant. The project used for this grant is to install an ADA wheelchair swing and wheelchair accessible picnic tables. Total amount for this anticipated project came to \$20,900.70. It should be noted; both these grants are highly competitive.

The Asbestos removal from the Memorial Park building has been completed. I want to thank Mr. Darrin Demshar and Medico for their quick response and donating all work.

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I want to add, A Marlene J. Laidley passed away approximately two years ago. Upon her passing, her estate donated \$10,276.08 to the Village Recreation Senior Center at her request. That donation was received on September 30th.

The Mayor and I had the opportunity to speak with Mr. John Ringer last week about coordinating a fundraiser through Ringer Screen Printing. John has a daughter who faces challenges and is limited to a wheelchair. We decided to work together to raise funds for wheelchair accessible swings at Giddings Park. More information will be available on the website and Rec Center Facebook page soon. The fundraiser will be selling shirts with the project logo and available online.

Fire Chief Dave Locy and Assistant Chief Bob Gregg officially started their new roles on October 1st. We have already been working together and making positive changes to the Fire Department and personnel. I look forward to working with both in their new roles.

Councilperson Martuccio asked the Mayor how much the Christmas tree cost.

Mayor Chiacchiero told Council it was about \$28 thousand dollars.

Clerk -Treasurer Fisher told Council it was about \$30 thousand dollars with shipping, but she would check it out.

Councilperson Martuccio asked the administrator how many donations do we have collected for the Park.

Administrator Murphy told Council we have had a lot of small donations. Letters have been sent out. But I have not got much feedback

Clerk Treasurer Fisher told Council that we have collected around \$1500.00 dollars.

Clerk /Treasurer Fisher

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Payroll Report/Special Pay Report

Chief Mackensen

FYI: September Police Reports

Chief Lachey

FYI: September Fire Reports

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Building and Lands

Committee Report: No Report

Forestry

Committee Report: No Report

Finance

Committee Report: No report

Ordinance/Resolution to Read:

Resolution No. 25-R- 3395

A Resolution authorizing the transfer of funds from the 704 Unclaimed Funds to the 101 General Fund

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**Motion by Councilperson Sekanina for the Second Reading of Resolution
No. 25-R- 3395**

2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Ordinance/Resolution to Read:

Reading of Resolution No. 25-R- 3396

A Resolution Accepting the Amount and Rates as Determined by the Budget Commission and Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies and Certifying them to the County Auditor.

**Motion by Councilperson Sekanina for the Second Reading of Resolution
No. 25-R- 3396**

2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Motion by Councilperson Martuccio to Table Resolution 25-R-3398 pending verification of market value and confirmation from Principal Financial Group's Investor Relations Department on the legitimacy of the offer. The Finance Committee and Administrator shall report back to Council before reconsideration.

2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Reading of Resolution No. 25-R- 3398

A Resolution Authorizing the Village Clerk/Treasurer to accept the cash offer to purchase the Village's shares in Principal Financial Group, Inc. Pursuant to the terms contained in the offer letter and accompanying documents Received from Potemkin Limited and dated July 1, 2025

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Councilperson Roderick asked Council how we decided to sell the shares.

Clerk-Treasurer Fisher told Council that she received the paperwork in the mail. Before she sent it to Solicitor Fairchild, she had talked with both Steve Murphy, Steve Sekanina and Mayor Chiacchiero about the monies. She told them that the Village is receiving about \$1600.00 dollars a year from it and it might be more beneficial to cash them in. Fisher stated she does not know anything about trading or selling shares in the stock market.

Solicitor Fairchild told Council it is Councils decision to sell it or keep it.

Administrator Murphy told Council that he will investigate the Principal Financial Group and the shares. Administrator Murphy thanked Martuccio for the information. We could have avoided the public display of making people look stupid in the Council meeting. Council and the Administration should have been informed before the Council Meeting, and we would not be asking these questions now and we would have had the correct answers. We as a municipality need to work together.

Recreation

Committee Report: No Report

FYI: Flier for the Haunted Woods

Safety

Committee Report: No Report

Motion by Councilperson Febel to accept the resignation from Adam Gozelanczyk from the Jefferson Police Department effective February 17, 2025.

2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried

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Motion by Councilperson Febel to accept the Police Chief's recommendation to hire Adam Gozelanczyk as a Part Time Police Officer for the Jefferson Police Department effective February 17, 2025, at the rate of pay per the wage Ordinance.
2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Motion by Councilperson Febel to accept the Fire Chief's Recommendation to hire Megan Justice to the Fire Department at the rate of pay per the Wage Ordinance pending his physical and background check effective October 6, 2025.
2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Utilities/Wastewater Treatment/ Service

Committee Report: No Report

Mayor

Motion by councilperson Febel to accept the Mayor's Recommendation to take Administrator Murphy off probation and put him to his full-time status.
2nd

Roll: Febel - yea, Martuccio - nay, Roderick - yea, Sekanina - yea, Orvos- yea.
Motion carried.

The next Village of Jefferson Council Meeting will be on Monday October 20, 2025.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

The Jefferson rotary Club will be selling the famous Ham and Bean Soup October 11th and 12th, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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Motion by Councilperson Martuccio to direct the Mayor and Administrator to ensure all committee and administrative meetings that discuss, or deliberate public business comply fully with the Ohio Open Meetings (Sunshine) Law, including proper public notice, accessibility, and recorded minutes.

2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Councilperson Sekanina stated this motion suggesting that the Mayor and the Administration are not following the sunshine laws. Councilperson Sekanina asked Solicitor Fairchild if this law is already in place why do we have to have the motion.

Solicitor Fairchild told Council this motion is requiring the Council to make sure the Sunshine laws are followed by Administration. This is another way of making sure the laws are followed.

Motion by Councilperson Febel to authorize the Administrator to obtain quotes within 30 days for the purchase and installation of an upgraded audio recording and sound system for Council Chambers, ensuring clear and audible public meeting recordings consistent with modern accessibility standards.

2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried

Administrator Murphy told Council that he and the Clerk-Treasurer have had discussion about getting the system fixed. Hudson has been here a few times and fixed some of the issues. The issues are pointed out and will be corrected.

Council discussed and all agreed that the sound system needs updated.

Visitor's Comments (five-minute limit per council rule #13)

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Frank Snyder of 116 West Jefferson Street spoke to Council thanking the Village Council and the Village of Jefferson for everything they do for the Rotary. The Rotary will be selling the famous Ham and Bean Soup October 11th and 12th, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Snyder also told Council about the Flag program and hopes that everyone in the Village gets involved. When joining, a flag will be put in your front yard.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

MEETINGS

None

ADJOURN

Motion by Councilperson Sekanina to adjourn the Council Meeting.
2nd

Roll: All yea, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Submitted by,

Patricia A Fisher, Clerk of Council