

**Village of Mariemont
Council Meeting
February 9, 2026**

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present was Mr. Ayer, Mrs. Brownknight, Dr. Lewis, Mrs. Stock, Mr. Van Stone, and Mrs. Wells.

Assistant Police Chief Pittsley said Police Officer Patrick Kuhl has completed his probationary period. Officer Kuhl was hired on February 9, 2025. He started his career in law enforcement in 2007 with the New Richmond Police Department. He also served the communities of Ameila and Batavia. He graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. He recommends that Officer Kuhl be moved to Regular Full-Time Employee status. Dr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Members of Council congratulated Officer Kuhl.

Minutes:

Mr. Van Stone moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer to approve the minutes as written for January 26, 2026. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Communications:

*From Cindependent: Update on Mariemont Theatre. Ian Shefer, graduate 2004 Mariemont High School, was granted permission to address Council. He is a curator with the Secret Base Cinema, which programs movies at the Mariemont theater. There is a lot of concern about the transition to take place, specifically with who is taking it over. He does not believe these are the appropriate people to handle such a historic property, nor do they understand the delicate economy that comes with a small historic village like Mariemont. He urged Council to do their due diligence and to consider other options in town. Many in the wider Cincinnati film community do not support Cindependent or this transition. He asked Council to consider this very carefully.

*From Tax Administrator Barlow: January 2026 Monthly Report

*From Service Superintendent James: Spending Request – Pretreatment for Snow Events \$6227.50. Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to approve the request. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Permission to Address Council:

Mr. Dave Sprockett, 6739 Murray Avenue, was granted permission to address Council. He expressed concern with the installation of the Flock LPR cameras last year. These cameras track information and the data is shared with a larger database. There has been reporting in the past year of how insecure these systems are including a Motorola system with 60 cameras connected to the open internet. Additionally, there have been calls for investigations due to the lack of two factor authentication to get into the system. In the wrong hands, these systems can easily track someone's movements. He asked Council to consider, at the very least, removing Mariemont's data from the larger network that is not under its control. Assistant Police Chief Pittsley said the system is as secure as it can be. He is not aware of any data breaches but will look into it and speak with Sergeant Geraci, who oversees the program. Mrs. Brownknight said no one is questioning the cameras are valuable. It is a good question of privacy versus safety and warrants further discussion as to who has access to this data. Mayor Brown said he will speak with Chief Hines about the matter.

Ms. Karen Fallon, business owner, 3909 Oak Street, was granted permission to address Council. She is representing the business partners of the Old Town Center (Dan Cotton, CCI Design, Chris Kepes, Kepes Architecture – present at the meeting, Kelsey Alonso, Studio G, Laura Middleton, Laura Middleton Interior Design – present at the meeting, Julie Kraus, Director of Asset Management SPS Partners) who presented a

concept they believe will not only enhance the Old Town Center's appearance but will also contribute to is economic growth. One year ago, the entire northeast corner of Chestnut and Oak was void of any viable businesses. Working with the owners of the buildings and the empty spaces have been leased and renovated to businesses that are in the residential design industry. They have created a design community. The businesses encompass all aspects of residential luxury, including two residential architects, one professional interior designer and two showrooms featuring products for the interior trade design. Collectively, they would like to address some initiatives that would not only contribute to the economic development of the area but also help make us better partners with the residents of Old Town. They ask consideration to re-brand the Old Town Center to "The Mariemont Design District" and change the signage on Wooster Pike and Oak Street to read "Mariemont Design District". They would cover the cost of such signage and help with the design. Parking for their businesses has always been challenging. The 8 spaces on Oak/Chestnut Square already have an ordinance and signage in place for 4-hour parking Monday-Friday 8-6 p.m. They are requesting enforcement of the ordinance. Most of the individuals parking in these spaces are tenants of these two buildings. However, the businesses are also tenants. Sunset Properties has offered to send a letter to each tenant advising them that the parking ordinance as posted will now be enforced. We will welcome a new retail tenant in March. Their business and clientele will be an asset to our business district. Retail will also bring additional traffic and parking issues. The following were suggested: public parking signage in front of the church parking lot, small arrow signage at the corners of Lane B and Lane C and Oak Street directing people to the public parking area in front of Ann Buntin Becker Park. They look forward to partnering with the Village on these initial ideas and welcome active participation and dialogue.

Ms. Jennifer Degerberg, 3855 Oak Street, was granted permission to address Council. She owns retail space at 6804 Wooster Pike. She and several of her surrounding neighbors are excited to share their support for this exciting, positive and progressive opportunity for a business development area in the old Historic District. She added that the new retailer, Krombholz Vintage Jewelers, moving into the old firehouse will be selling antique and vintage jewelry. There also will be a needlepoint store opening. Mrs. Brownknight voiced her support.

Mr. Jim Goetz, 3900 West Street, was granted permission to address Council. The Parks Advisory Board is very pleased to learn of the approved appropriation by the US Congress of \$936,000 in funding for Mariemont park projects. We appreciated the efforts of former Councilman, Randy York, in developing the grant request and following through the legislative process and of Congressman, Greg Landman, for his sponsorship of the legislation. The Parks Advisory Board respectfully requests that it be directly involved in the specific planning for utilization of this grant funding and that Council consider the recommendations the Parks Board will provide for allocation of the funds.

Mayor Brown said the Parks Advisory Board will be involved. The decisions regarding the disposition of funds and projects will be handled through the Health and Recreation Committee led by Mr. Ayer. The committee sessions will be open to the public and members of the Parks Advisory Board. Mr. Goetz asked for a better sense of what he wanted the board to do. It is comprised of 12 highly active and involved members volunteering their time tirelessly. What is the purpose of a Parks Board if not to help advise Council with how the money is going to be spent within the parks in Mariemont? It is his hope that the board's recommendations would carry more weight. He asked for acknowledgment that the reason for a Parks Board is to perform vision planning for all the parks. Mayor Brown said he is not doubting the sincerity or participation of the Parks Board and did not mean to offend. He wants to make sure that all voices in Mariemont get to participate in the process in the most democratic way. Of course, the Parks Board will have opinions based on experience and expertise and the Village will listen to them. Mrs. Brownknight, Mr. Van Stone and Mrs. Stock all commented that Council has listened to and valued the input of all of the various boards within the Village. Mr. Ayer assured Mr. Goetz that the priorities of the Parks Board will be weighed very highly.

Mrs. Brownknight said relative to the Mariemont Theatre she was proud that the announcement was in every news outlet locally. Tonight is the first negative feedback she has heard. Ms. Brownknight runs an

organization that co-founded the region's largest film festival. They employed one of the area's most respected curators who was extremely excited about partnering with Cindependent. She respects the dissent that was presented tonight. She made it clear that Cindependent is an extremely reputable operator whom she knows and has worked with for many years and is well respected among curators locally and nationally. Dr. Lewis commented that this decision was made by a private business.

Ms. Mandi Beecroft, Manager Mariemont Library, was granted permission to address Council. She announced several programs at the library including; Valentine's Day printing workshop; parent/child monthly book club starting February 18th; Microgreens and Sprouts which teach adults how to grow sprouted seeds and microgreens at home all year long. Participants will get a packet to take home to start sprouting!

Mr. Ayer said last week the Village of Mariemont received notification that the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026 was signed by President Trump. This appropriations package includes the \$936,000 Community Project Funding for the Mariemont Centennial Parks Improvement Project. The funding is "earmarked" and will be available from a federal agency. Over the next several weeks the Village will receive instructions from the appropriate agency(s) who will administer these funds with instructions and timing on how to apply and receive the funding. This is the largest award for the Village since Isabella Hopkins donated the Bell Tower in 1929. It puts Village Council over 4 million in outside money raised over the past four years. It provided adequate funding to complete all of the Centennial Projects. With this, the big and bold vision of the Centennial Committee can be realized. We want to acknowledge and thank Congressman Landsman, Chris Dalton, Jack Leighninger, and all of Team Landsman for their perseverance throughout this process and their unwavering support of the Village. Thank you to the nine Village organizations who wrote letters of support. Thank you to State senator Catherine Ingram, the Cincinnati Public Library, former State Representative Sedrick Denson, and the Hamilton County Commissioners for their letters of support as well as their generous assistance and guidance. Finally, thank you to the Village organizations who have specifically contributed to the overall vision and planning for these Village assets. The Mariemont Recreation Association and the Preschool Parents Group for their contributions to Dogwood Park, the Mariemont Preservation Foundation for their work on Dale Park, and the Garden Club for their efforts toward the reproposing of Hopkins Park. He added that details will be forthcoming and will be shared with Council and the residents of the Village.

Pay the Bills:

Mrs. Stock moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to pay the bills. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met on January 30, 2026, at 11:07 AM. In attendance were the Committee Chairperson Bob Van Stone, Committee Member Alicia Stock, Mayor Bill Brown, Fiscal Officer Kelly Rankin, Chief Rick Hines, Assistant Chief Dan Copeland and Capt. Jason Williams. The sole agenda item was the purchase of a Fire Department vehicle for Assistant Chief Copeland. Chief Hines led a discussion concerning the purchase and outfitting of the vehicle. He reported that he found a 2025 Chevrolet Tahoe priced at \$51,000 which is currently on hold at the dealership pending a Council decision. This will be significantly lower than the price for a 2026 model. The outfitting cost should not exceed \$12,000. The combined vehicle purchase and outfitting cost of \$63,000 could be funded with \$35,000 previously appropriated in the 2026 capital improvement budget and \$28,000 from the EMS account. Mrs. Rankin agreed with this funding approach. The Committee unanimously voted to approve the purchase of said vehicle with cost not to exceed \$63,000. The meeting was adjourned at 11:28 AM. Mrs. Brown knight moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Safety Committee

The Safety Committee met on Friday, January 30th, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the Municipal Building. Present were Safety Committee members Alicia Stock (chair), Matthew Ayer (member), and Bob Van Stone (member); Mayor Bill Brown; Chief Hines; Lt. Nick Pittsley; IT Consultant Mike Manford; Senior Administrative Assistant Joanee Van Pelt; and Administrative Assistant Allison Uhrig.

Agenda Item 1: Security Cameras

The Safety Committee, Chief Hines, Mayor Brown, and Village administrative employees Joanee Van Pelt and Allison Uhrig discussed the request for enhanced security at the Municipal building. Chief Hines and the Mariemont Police Department consider the building upgrades essential for the security and safety of Village employees. The committee reviewed quotes from Dial One Security and Johnson Controls, with the former offering more favorable pricing. The committee also reviewed a quote from Dial One Security for cameras at the Carillon, which are required based on inclusion in the LWCF grant for the Dogwood Park renovation project and prior negotiations with the Thomas J. Emery Memorial to secure the Bell Tower.

The Safety Committee agreed to reconvene after the following quotes are obtained:

- IT Consultant Mike Manford will attempt to negotiate more favorable pricing with Dial One Security for a 3-year minimum service plan on all three quotes (Municipal Building Access Control, Municipal Building Video Intercom, and Dogwood Park Bell Tower Camera System).
- Village Engineer Chris Ertel is working to get a quote from AltaFiber for the corresponding WiFi installation at Dogwood Park.

Agenda Item 2: Crosswalk Safety

The Safety Committee, Chief Hines, and Mayor Brown discussed resident safety concerns about multiple crosswalks in the Village, including the inconsistency of school crossing guards at the intersection of West Street and Madisonville Road. Chief Hines explained that filling crossing guard roles has been problematic due to the fragmented hours and exposure to weather conditions. Chief Hines and Mayor Brown agreed to approach the elementary school administration about providing training and funding for school staff members to fill crossing guard roles.

Alicia will reach out to Village engineer Chris Ertel to determine pricing for a traffic study of the Village square that meets ODOT requirements, including the crosswalks by the elementary school. Alicia will also research potential grant funding for crosswalk safety lighting. The meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m. Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mrs. Brownknight to accept the recommendation of the Safety Committee. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Public Works & Service Committee

The Public Works and Service Committee met on February 2, 2026, at 5:00 PM. In attendance were the Committee Chairperson Lila Wells, Committee Members Susan Brownknight and Bob Van Stone, Mayor Brown, Village Engineer Chris Ertel, and Fiscal Officer Kelly Rankin.

First on the agenda, Mr. Ertel presented his 2026 Street Rehabilitation Project (attached) which included recommended streets for resurfacing this year and estimated costs. He also gave the committee his written 2025 Mariemont Pavement Condition Report (attached). Per Mr. Ertel's report, West Street has received a grant from the Ohio Public Works

Commission (OPWC) for 44% of the project cost up to \$88,000. The Village will be informed in May by OPWC of the pending applications for the other three streets were awarded. After discussion, a motion was given by Bob Van Stone, seconded by Susan Brownknight, to approve Mr. Ertel's recommendations to get bids for his street rehabilitation plan. The motion was approved unanimously and will be presented to Council for approval.

The second item regarding grants was discussed as mentioned. There was further discussion regarding the sidewalks and a possible grant Mr. Ertel may consider applying for in May but nothing was concluded. Meeting adjourned at 5:35pm.

Mayor Brown said it is hard to determine what work will actually be done until we get the grant information in May. He asked to add Indianview from Miami to Hiawatha to the project. The road needs more than a cold patch. Engineer Ertel said the average time the Village resurfaces the streets is every 17 years, which is better than most municipalities in southern Ohio. Once the bid work is accepted, should there be additional work needed, it can be done through change orders. Mrs. Brownknight moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to accept the recommendations of the Public Works & Service Committee. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Miscellaneous:

*Monday February 23, 2026- Brief Presentation to Council from Hamilton County Auditor Jessica Miranda regarding Property Tax Relief Services will be held at 6:00 p.m. prior to the start of the regular Council Meeting. Please advise Mrs. Van Pelt if you will not be able to attend.

*Nominations for Outstanding Citizen of the Year are due to Mrs. Van Pelt by March 10, 2026.

*Village Offices will be closed in observation of Presidents' Day Monday February 16, 2026.

Resolutions:

"To Confirm the Reappointment of Christopher M. Ertel as Village Engineer for Calendar Year 2026; and To Set Compensation" had a first reading.

"To Confirm the Reappointment of Village Zoning Officer Rod Holloway for Calendar Year 2026; and to Set Compensation" had a first reading.

"To Confirm the Reappointment of Kelly I. Rankin as Village Fiscal Officer; and To Establish Pay Rate" had a first reading.

"To Appoint Maggie Kenner as a Member of the Pool Commission for Calendar Years 2026 and 2027" had a first reading.

"To Appoint Richard L. Kay as a Member of the Pool Commission for Calendar Years 2026 and 2027" had a first reading.

"Resolution To Update Swimming Pool Fees for Calendar Year 2026; and To Declare Emergency" had a first reading. Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to suspend the rules to allow for the second and third readings. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. The Resolution had a second and third reading. Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to adopt the Resolution. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mrs. Stock to invoke the Emergency Clause. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Resolution No. R-4-26 was adopted.

"Resolution Adopting Cybersecurity Policy for Calendar Year 2026" had a first reading.

“To Authorize the Solicitation of Bids for 2026 Street Repairs; and To Declare Emergency” had a first reading. Mr. Van Stone moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer to suspend the rules to allow for the second and third readings. The Resolution had a second reading. Mrs. Brownknight moved, seconded by Mrs. Stock to amend the Resolution to add “from Miami Road to Indianview and Hiawatha grind and resurface”. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. The Resolution had a third reading. Mrs. Brownknight moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to adopt the amended Resolution. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Mr. Van Stone moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer to invoke the Emergency Clause. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Resolution No. R-5-26 was adopted.

Ordinances:

“To Repeal Ordinance No. O-6-25 Pertaining to Maximum Pay Rates for all Grades of Recreation Employees and to Enact New Legislation Pertaining to Maximum Pay Rates for All Grades of Recreation Employees” had a first reading.

“To Amend Ordinance O-9-25 of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances to Increase Payment for Employees” had a first reading.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

William A. Brown, Mayor

Kelly I. Rankin, Fiscal Officer