

McDonald Village Council
September 23, 2026
Regular Council Meeting

Staff: Police Chief Ryan Ronghi, Fire Chief Fred Marcum, Solicitor Douglas W. Ross, Village Administrator Thomas Domitrovich, Fiscal Officer Stephanie Smith, and Office Manager Amy Cunningham.

Visitors: Michaylen Lewis, Stephanie Lewis, Dana Larson, Shawn Larson, Sherry Sutton, Lynn Sutton, Lynn Miller, Justin Rance, Denise Deltondo, Shirley Jo Nemec, Karen and Sam Muche, Ron and Kathy Jones, Larry and Judy Schmidt, Sharon Mayfield, Marie McNulty, Sandra Guarino, Joe Guarino, Liz Johnson, Tim Scarbrough, Kathy Miskell, Jay and Marianne Ryan, Sandra Frazzini, Joe Midlick, Mary Kay Skufca, Jean Morello, Cathy Woods, Susan Lipkovich, Linda Lee, Fred Harvey, Stacy Foster, Joanne Frantz-Carkido, William Rushen, Jason Brown, Linda Getz, Ray Getz, Sam Gatta, Kelsy Gatta, Patsy Daltorio, Sheryl Bueno, Bob Steele, Blaine Carter, Nick Gallo, Lori Gawdyda.

Press: Bob Coupland *Tribune Chronicle*, WFMJ.

1. The September 23, 2026 meeting of McDonald Village Council was called to order by Mayor Ray Lewis at 6:04 p.m.

Roll call:

Mr. Schmidt – present
Mr. Metzinger – present
Mr. Sanson – present

Mrs. Reckard – present
Mr. Bosheff – present
Mr. Puckett – present

2. Pledge of allegiance

One minute of silence in remembrance of American troops serving throughout the world and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

3. Approval of the September 9, 2026 Council minutes and the September 16, 2026 Special Council minutes.

It was moved by Mr. Schmidt to approve the September 9, 2026 and September 16, 2026 minutes as mailed:

Roll call:

Mr. Schmidt – aye
Mr. Metzinger – aye
Mr. Sanson – aye

Mrs. Reckard – aye
Mr. Bosheff – aye
Mr. Puckett – aye

Motion carried.

4. Adoption of agenda:

It was moved by Mr. Schmidt to accept the agenda as presented:

Roll call:

Mr. Schmidt – aye
Mr. Metzinger –aye
Mr. Sanson – aye

Mrs. Reckard – aye
Mr. Bosheff – aye
Mr. Puckett – aye

Motion carried.

5. Mayor's report- Mayor Lewis read a statement into the record regarding WFMJ's "WatchDog Report". (see attached).

Mayor Lewis would like to appoint Richie Rider to Fire Captain, based on Chief Marcum's recommendation.

It was moved by Mr. Schmidt to appoint Richie Rider to Fire Captain.

Roll call:

Mr. Schmidt – aye
Mr. Metzinger –aye
Mr. Sanson – aye

Mrs. Reckard – aye
Mr. Bosheff – aye
Mr. Puckett – aye

Motion carried.

6. Report of Village Officials:

Village Administrator Thomas Domitrovich echoed Mayor Lewis's statement to the public. It is disconcerting to see how an uneven slant can be given to Council and the Administration that we are trying to do something improper. There is an upcoming levy that is absolutely necessary for daily operations to continue in the Fire and Police Departments. Some people are using the data center conversation as a wedge to draw a divide between the residents in the community. Mr. Domitrovich resents that. We are working for the well-being of this community. It was not just casual conversation to pass the garbage bill on to the residents or do the tax increase. These are things that have been developing over years. This is a time for realizing the facts and truths. There is a lot of concern financially in the near future.

6. Report of Village Officials cont'd.

Mr. Domitrovich stated that the OPWC grant for 2027 street paving is scoring the best right now. If the Village is awarded the grant, it would be in the amount of \$75,000 which would go toward paving Sixth Street. Mr. Domitrovich stated that all cities are lined up with approval of the rate increase for MVSD.

Police Chief Ryan Ronghi referenced the WFMJ article. He said it is rage baiting at its finest. It seems to be intentional to keep everybody divided so they can benefit from that. Chief Ronghi stated that the issue with a data center has gotten crazy. We all understand that we need something down there. Chief Ronghi stated that an article was in the Business Journal in November 2025 discussing a data center in the industrial park. We had 15 meetings between that article and July 15. Chief Ronghi does not understand the anger that the Village and Mayor are hiding something. He discussed how people are willing to overlook and attack Mayor Lewis's character publicly. This has crossed a line with Chief Ronghi. He has never seen the Village like this. What Mayor Lewis has put into this Village in the 10+ years since he's been here is unmatched.

Officer Hake will be leaving the Police Department at the end of the month to start a new position in Liberty. Officer Pratt is still on light duty. There are 176 road hours, 34 hours that were flexed to cover shifts for October. This is in addition to the 168 hours that they work at the school. This amounts to about \$8,000 for overtime for October. The Police Department will not be able to work Oktoberfest. They will have to contract with the County. Chief Ronghi stated that the end date for the Flock cameras is October 14 and they will opt out.

Fire Chief Fred Marcum stated that calls to date are 432. Mutual aid from August 19 to September 22 is four given, two received, and four from Lane. To date, there have been 158 transports with total charges at \$160,664 and total revenue is \$61,828. September 27 is the live burn training. Rescue 37 is back in service. Chief Marcum stated we do not have the resources to operate emergency services. He discussed the need for the levy.

Office Manager Amy Cunningham stated no report.

Solicitor Ross stated no report.

7. Committee reports:

President Pro Tem Mr. Schmidt stated that Caucus met this evening and the following items were discussed: agenda, Fiscal Officer's report, Council minutes, legislation, October meetings with October 6 being Committees and October 7 and 21 being Council. Also discussed was the promotion of Richie Rider to Fire Captain and the Ram Roast.

7. Committee reports cont'd.

Mr. Schmidt discussed the diagram that Oppidan presented during their open house. He described how the Mayor and Council were surprised about the size of the facility.

Parks & Buildings Mrs. Reckard stated that McDonald High School would like to use Ramsay Pavilion on October 22 for the Ram Roast.

It was moved by Mrs. Reckard to allow the McDonald High School to utilize the Ramsay Pavilion on October 22 for the Ram Roast.

Roll call:

Mrs. Reckard – aye
Mr. Metzinger – aye
Mr. Sanson – aye

Mr. Schmidt – aye
Mr. Bosheff – aye
Mr. Puckett – aye

Motion carried.

Mrs. Reckard thanked Mayor Lewis's family for attending the Council meeting tonight. She knows this is a very trying time for all of them. Mrs. Reckard tells everyone that Mayor Lewis is always "McDonald forward".

Safety Committee Mr. Schmidt congratulated Richie Rider in his promotion to Fire Captain.

Finance & Capital Improvement Mr. Puckett stated no report.

Service Committee Mr. Metzinger stated no report.

Planning Commission Mr. Bosheff stated that Planning Commission met on September 21 and approved replat requests for 616 Washington Blvd and lots 208, 209, 210, and 211 on Pennsylvania Avenue for building a new home. Also, residents shared their concerns regarding data centers.

Levy Exploration Committee Mr. Sanson stated that he met with Chief Marcum and Captain Caraway to discuss a promotion strategy. They discussed a citizen's committee to promote this. Also discussed were yard signs and promotional information that would need to be distributed throughout the Village and on social media.

Homecoming Festival Committee Mr. Schmidt read the itinerary for the upcoming Oktoberfest which includes a craft market, kids crafts, pickleball tournament, kids'

7. Committee reports cont'd.

activities, and entertainment by Saxon Club and No Funk No Justice amongst many other events.

8. Remarks from persons or groups present: Elizabeth Johnson, 871 Ravine Drive South. Mrs. Johnson is submitting a petition for the public record on a formal request, post moratorium. She described what moratoriums are intended for. Mrs. Johnson suggested that the Village tell Oppidan to go back to Minnesota and wait for us. She stated that we need an independent environmental assessment. Mrs. Johnson stated that we need to get together and develop a strategic business development plan for this Village. She gave her suggestions on how to move forward. Mrs. Johnson said that, by the Village allowing Oppidan to come in and scare everyone, this is indicative that the Village is not in charge-they are.

Solicitor Ross stated that Oppidan has not submitted an application, let alone an official site plan to the Village. He confirmed that nothing official has ever been submitted with the Village to act on by Oppidan or any other developer.

Sandy Frazzini, 805 New Jersey Avenue. Mrs. Frazzini thanked Council for the moratorium and all that Council has done. She stated that there are lots of people that want to help and asked Council if they would allow this.

Mayor Lewis stated that he doesn't know what the next step is. He is busy defending his character. Mayor Lewis stated that, when Chief Ronghi spoke, it doesn't apply to 99% of this room. He stated that social media is disgusting. Mayor Lewis stated that the Village appreciates every resident. Mrs. Reckard gave her thoughts on what she would like to see happen. Mrs. Frazzini asked if Oppidan has walked away to which Mayor Lewis replied that he does not know the answer.

Denise Deltondo, 820 Iowa Avenue. Ms. Deltondo thanked Council for passing the moratorium. She was shocked to hear that Oppidan signed a purchase agreement on the McDonald Steel property. The citizens were told nothing about this. Ms. Deltondo gave her thoughts and read some information on the data center and its effects on children's education. She is requesting an industrial and environmental assessment of all industrial zoned properties to explore other business opportunities. Ms. Deltondo is also concerned that our Fire Department is not equipped to handle a fire at the data center if one would occur. She requested that the Village not rezone the industrial property until the assessments are examined. Also, Ms. Deltondo is in support of the safety services levy.

8. Remarks from persons or groups present cont'd.

Solicitor Ross stated that is private property. The Village does not own that. If they sign a contract to sell their property, that is not something that the Village knows. We don't control who owns it. All we can do is control it through zoning and legislation.

Stacy Foster, 811 Florida Avenue. Mrs. Foster believes that part of the problem has been transparency and she is hopeful the Village will encourage community involvement. She suggested an open forum. Mrs. Foster spoke on her father's experience while in office. She feels bad for what Mayor Lewis and his family are going through. Mrs. Foster stated that everyone is present because they love this community. She agreed with Mayor Lewis on his thoughts regarding social media.

Cathy Woods, 509 Illinois Avenue. Ms. Woods described her love for and history of the Village. She shared her concerns with a data center which include energy and water consumption as well as noise and light pollution. Ms. Woods is concerned that people will move out. She described the time during the mill and how residents were unaware of the potential health risks. Ms. Woods is thankful for the moratorium and is hopeful Council will keep the residents informed and permit residents to give their input.

Mary Kay Skufca, 540 Dakota Avenue. Mrs. Skufca thanked the Village for everything that they do and for listening to the residents. She is sorry that it has become so personal. Mrs. Skufca is concerned with how her life will be affected in regard to construction and the amount of time it would take. She gave her thoughts on the chaos at the open house and the proposed size of a data center.

Mayor Lewis stated that the meeting was 100% Oppidan's meeting. Aside from the preliminary drawing, the Village saw that information for the first time that night.

Cara Pecchia, 110 W. Adam St. Mrs. Pecchia has never seen the Village in this state. This shows how passionate both sides of this argument are. Mrs. Pecchia knows that the Village never set out to do anything nefarious or shady. She also knows that this Village is upset and scared. What brings this Village together is our community.

Mrs. Pecchia appreciates that we are looking into getting an environmental study done. She does not think Oppidan is the right fit for our Village. Mrs. Pecchia feels that they disrespected us by telling us they were in a purchase agreement. Also, the size of the proposed data center was very disrespectful. Oppidan does not know who they're dealing with. Mrs. Pecchia feels that they disrespected our Council by not telling them any of this.

8. Remarks from persons or groups present cont'd.

Lynn Miller, 924 Ohio Avenue. Mrs. Miller questioned the timing of the levy that is on the ballot. She asked if there is a better list of what is being provided with the levy. Mrs. Miller is thrilled with the moratorium but she would like continued connection with the Village to know that residents are safe. She stated that the mill and a data center are two separate things.

Chief Ronghi stated that the Village had the "State Of the Village" in January 2024. They presented three revenue streams which included garbage collection, income tax forgiveness and the levy. They have been preparing for this. Chief Ronghi discussed the need for the levy. Chief Marcum stated that they would have to make sure he has every tool that he would need to handle an emergency at their expense before he would approve any plans for a data center. He discussed the Fire Department's need for the levy.

Bob Steele, 881 Ravine Dr. South. Mr. Steele stated that the Village needs communication like this. He feels that if we can continue this, we can make a greater Village.

Joe Guarino, 837 Connecticut Avenue. Mr. Guarino commended the Fire and Police Departments for the wonderful job they did on September 15 when he needed their services. He stated that residents have lost the trust of the Mayor and Council because of perceived secrets. They want to regain that trust. Mr. Guarino gave his thoughts on how he feels that Oppidan is playing poker with the Village. He proposed that Council pass a resolution that would incorporate the things that Liz Johnson and Sandy are asking for. These things address guidelines and an environmental plan.

William Johnson, 871 Ravine Dr. South. Mr. Johnson doesn't believe that anyone is trying to do harm. He described his history with the Village and how the Village does what they need to do. Mr. Johnson described what life was like during the time of the steel mill. He also discussed his experience in finances and would like to be on the committee. Mr. Johnson is concerned with how things will change if a data center comes to the Village.

Marie McNulty, 334 Grant read a letter from her sister, Fran Vitullo, 500 Dakota Avenue. In her letter, Ms. Vitullo discussed the WFMJ public records request. She is troubled by the lack of transparency and trust. Ms. Vitullo discussed in her letter, a conversation that she had with a colleague, who's community went through a similar situation. She described that there is a pattern where developers meet with local leaders and residents are the last to know. Ms. Vitullo asks that the Mayor and Council work with the residents, not Oppidan and AP.

8. Remarks from persons or groups present cont'd.

Ms. McNulty hopes that there is a coalition of many residents. She is glad to see that the Village is opting out of the Flock cameras. Ms. McNulty suggested having a meeting with the five owners of the industrial park and getting their opinions. Also, she described her time while working at the Fire Department.

Blaine Carter, 445 Utah Avenue. Mr. Carter did a public records request where he asked for the zoning ordinance and some data on the levy. He suggested putting this information, as well as draft legislation, on the website. Mr. Carter described his experience as a civil engineer and how some of these municipalities go through the process of communicating to their residents and consultants. Mr. Carter feels that this needs to be done. He asked that more documents be put on the website and also suggested a steering committee for the industrial park.

Sue Lipkovich, 490 Utah Avenue. Ms. Lipkovich thanked everyone for the moratorium. It gives some time to get some studies and calm the fears of residents. Ms. Lipkovich expressed regret about the WFMJ report that affected Mayor Lewis and his family. She feels that social media creates more harm than good. Ms. Lipkovich went to the November 2025 meeting where she asked for a resolution. She stated that we, as residents, are also at fault. We let them do what they were doing without showing up to the meeting. Ms. Lipkovich stated that, it is out of fear that residents are here and she hopes that the Village hears them. Ms. Lipkovich went to the Niles Council meeting the night after the moratorium where she passed out pamphlets of the Oppidan presentation to their Council members. She spoke with a few Niles Council members in which one told her that the data center that was proposed for the Village is three times the size of the one that was proposed in Niles before they voted for a moratorium. Ms. Lipkovich did not go there to cause trouble. This would affect Girard, Niles, Weathersfield, and McDonald. Ms. Lipkovich stated that she is a 22-year cancer survivor and she is frightened. She really wants an environmental study.

9. Old Business: none.

10. New Business: none.

11. Legislation:

A. Second Reading Of A Resolution Accepting The Amounts And Rates As Determined By The Budget Commission And Authorizing The Necessary Tax Levies And Certifying Them To The County Auditor.

It was moved by Mr. Puckett that the resolution pass second reading as read.

11. Legislation cont'd.

Roll call:

Mr. Puckett – aye
Mrs. Reckard – aye
Mr. Bosheff – aye

Mr. Schmidt – aye
Mr. Metzinger – aye
Mr. Sanson – aye

Motion carried.

B. Emergency Reading Of A Resolution Directing The Fiscal Officer To Transfer Inactive Deposits To Active Deposits.

It was moved by Mr. Puckett to suspend the Rules of Council.

Roll call:

Mr. Puckett – aye
Mrs. Reckard – aye
Mr. Bosheff – aye

Mr. Schmidt – aye
Mr. Metzinger – aye
Mr. Sanson – aye

Motion carried.

It was moved by Mr. Puckett that Resolution No. 1967-26 pass emergency reading as read.

Roll call:

Mr. Puckett – aye
Mrs. Reckard – aye
Mr. Bosheff – aye

Mr. Schmidt – aye
Mr. Metzinger – aye
Mr. Sanson – aye

Motion carried.

12. Fiscal Officer's report:

Mrs. Smith stated that the bills for the Fiscal Officer's report total \$38,513.82.

I, Stephanie Smith, Fiscal Officer of the Village of McDonald, Ohio do hereby declare that the bills are true and correct and the money is in the bank to pay them.

It was moved by Mr. Puckett to accept the Fiscal Officer's report and pay all bills.

12. Fiscal Officer's report cont'd.

Roll call:

Mr. Puckett – aye
Mrs. Reckard – aye
Mr. Bosheff – aye

Mr. Schmidt – aye
Mr. Metzinger –aye
Mr. Sanson – aye

Motion carried.

13. Miscellaneous: none.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Sanson at 7:56 p.m. All voted aye.

Mayor

Attest to:

Fiscal Officer