MINUTES
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

7:00 p.m. **November 3, 2026**

Pursuant to Codified Ordinance Chapter 107 and ORC Section 121.22, notice of the following meeting was given on October 30, 2026.

ROLL CALL

Council Members Present: Kary, Luciano, Sievers, Tomaselli, Anderson, Carr and Garry

Others Present: Mayor Fiala, Law Director McConville, Service Director Knecht, City Engineer Lannon, Fire Chief Ungar, Police Chief Schultz, Chief Building & Zoning Inspector Keller, Parks & Recreation Director Keller, Clerk Novak

The meeting was led in Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilwoman Sievers.

Fire Department Ceremonial Swearing In
Mayor Fiala swore in Firefighters Dan Ostroske, Dalton Hall, Patrick Gallagher, Frank Schmidt, James Keough and Lieutenant Clay Holub.

STANDING AND REGULAR COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee of Full, Mr. Carr – No report.

Economic Development Committee, Mr. Anderson – No report.

Environmental Planning Committee, Mr. Kary – Mr. Kary report there was a committee meeting this evening.

Finance and Audit Committee, Mr. Tomaselli – No report.

Parks & Recreation Committee, Ms. Sievers – Ms. Sievers reported there was a committee meeting this evening.

Personnel Committee, Ms. Sievers – No report.

Safety Committee, Mr. Tomaselli – Mr. Tomaselli reported there was a committee meeting this evening to discuss lateral transfer hires within the Police Department; Resolution No. 2026-135 is on the agenda.

Service Committee, Mr. Anderson – No report.

WPCC Committee, Mr. Garry – No report.

Planning Commission, Mr. Kary – No report.

CORRESPONDENCE: No correspondence.

PUBLIC PORTION:
Heath Wenzel, 4404 River Street, Willoughby – See Exhibit A.

Mr. Wenzel asked about a public safety hearing meeting. Mr. Tomaselli stated that could happen during a separate Safety Committee meeting.

Jeff Malecki, 1249 South Beachview Road, Willoughby - Mr. Malecki stated that he had previously provided information to Council by email and encouraged members to carefully review and research the materials, noting that any information he presents can be substantiated through public records and legal resources. Referencing a report that indicated a $40 million infrastructure deficit, he expressed concern about the City's infrastructure needs and questioned whether constructing a new pool should take priority over investments in stormwater and other foundational infrastructure improvements. Mayor Fiala clarified that the $40 million figure represented the total infrastructure program rather than a deficit and noted that approximately $10 million had already been spent toward those efforts. Mr. Malecki stated that a city's long-term success depends on maintaining and strengthening its infrastructure before pursuing new recreational amenities. While acknowledging recent community investments, including the development of Osborne Park and ongoing expenditures for police and fire equipment, he urged the City to focus resources on improving aging infrastructure to ensure Willoughby remains safe, secure, and structurally sound for future generations. He concluded by encouraging a fiscally conservative approach that prioritizes repairing and maintaining existing assets before undertaking additional large-scale projects.

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Garry that all ordinances and resolutions be read by caption only and that as to legislation not containing an emergency clause, the rules requiring that ordinances and resolutions be read on three separate days be waived.

Roll Call 7 yes
0 no Motion carried 7 to 0

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-130 – Second Reading
A resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a General Maintenance and Lighting Replacement Project Agreement, by and among the Lake County Board of Commissioners and the cities of Willoughby, Eastlake, Mentor, Painesville, Wickliffe and Willowick, for Maintenance and Lighting of Route 2.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-134
A resolution approving EAS #8-9-26 for an auto body repair and paint shop at the existing building located at 2270 Lost Nation Road (Nesmir Auto Body).

Motion made by Mr. Kary and seconded by Ms. Sievers to adopt Resolution No. 2026-134.

Roll Call 7 yes
0 no Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-135
A resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, Police Officers below rank of Sergeant, to revise the pay plan provisions applicable to lateral transfer hires in Article 17 of the agreement between the City of Willoughby, Ohio and the Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Mr. Tomaselli and seconded by Mr. Anderson that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-135 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 7 yes
0 no Motion carried 7 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Tomaselli and seconded by Mr. Anderson to adopt Resolution No. 2026-135.

Roll Call 7 yes
0 no Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-136
A resolution honoring and commending Willoughby-Eastlake Water Pollution Control Center employee John (JY) Yurchick and thanking him for his forty (40) plus years of service to the City of Willoughby.

Service Director Knecht read this resolution in its entirety.

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Mr. Garry to adopt Resolution No. 2026-136.

Roll Call 7 yes
0 no Motion carried 7 to 0

MAYOR'S REPORT – Mayor Fiala acknowledged the efforts of Shana Boyd in preparing and submitting the City's application for the America in Bloom Award, noting that Willoughby was one of only 45 communities nationwide to receive the recognition this

year. He stated that the award represents much more than landscaping and floral displays, as it reflects the community's commitment to civic pride, volunteerism, and beautification efforts. He stated that the achievement is a significant accomplishment for the City and publicly recognized Ms. Boyd for her dedication and work in securing this honor on behalf of Willoughby.

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Law Director McConville – Mr. McConville stated that Jen Eberlin joined the Law Department as the new administrative assistant and began work on Monday. He thanked Cheri Lory for assisting with her onboarding process. Jen has already shared some promising ideas for improving electronic filing and office organization.

Service Director Knecht – Mr. Knecht reported that the Service Department's leaf collection program is underway, with all crews actively collecting leaves throughout the City. Residents are encouraged to place leaves at the curb, as crews will continue making rounds and are also scheduled to work on Saturday to help keep pace with seasonal demand. He noted that the department is continuing to acclimate several new employees but expects collection efforts to proceed smoothly. He expressed appreciation for John Yerchick and his many contributions to the City, describing him as an outstanding employee.

Regarding the status of a previously approved sidewalk replacement project on Hartshire. Mr. Knecht explained that the contractor had experienced a scheduling delay but has indicated that the work is still expected to be completed this fall.

City Engineer Lannon – Mr. Lannon reported that a combination of favorable weather and strong performance from project contractors has enabled the City's construction and infrastructure projects to progress efficiently this season. As a result, projects are wrapping up on schedule, remain well under control, and are meeting the deadlines associated with various grant and funding agencies.

Mr. Carr commented on the recent stormwater basin cleanup work at the Chagrin Mill Farm and Bald Eagle areas, noting that the project appeared to be completed quickly and effectively. Mr. Lannon stated that the work is being monitored in coordination with county stormwater and soil and water conservation agencies and confirmed that the contractor did an excellent job meeting the project requirements. He added that the contractor also improved the adjacent walking path, addressing a remaining project item, and expressed hope that residents are pleased with the results.

Regarding the walking path, Mr. Carr stated that the Sommers group and the homeowners association may be exploring a cost-sharing arrangement to pave the path, which he believes would be a valuable community improvement. Mr. Lannon explained that the path was originally introduced as a voluntary amenity during the development process and was incorporated into a broader design vision that included curved roadways and additional pedestrian features. He noted that while a path was required, the original

commitment did not specify that it be paved, and he agreed that an asphalt surface would be a worthwhile enhancement if the parties are able to reach an agreement.

Mr. Carr stated that if the contractor completed the basin cleanup efficiently and at a cost below the available performance bond amount, he suggested the City consider engaging the contractor for other stormwater maintenance projects, including the Big Turtle. Mr. Lannon agreed that the project was exceptionally well managed, noting that the contractor coordinated in advance with local schools to obtain temporary site access and completed the work exactly as scheduled.

Fire Chief Ungar – Chief Ungar thanked Council for allowing the ceremonial swearing-in ceremony to take place and for arriving early to view the department's new apparatus. He stated that the vehicle is expected to be fully outfitted and placed into service within approximately one month. He noted that the Fire Department is fortunate to have several highly skilled firefighters, including one with a background in fabrication, who are assisting with the vehicle's customization in-house. He explained that having an outside vendor complete comparable outfitting work would typically cost between $15,000 and $20,000, making the in-house approach a significant cost-saving measure for the City. He added that the project also provides department personnel with a sense of ownership and pride.

Police Chief Schultz – Chief Schultz thanked Council for approving Resolution No. 2026-135. He congratulated John Yerchick on his retirement and recognized his years of dedicated service to the City. Additionally, he congratulated Chief Unger, recently promoted personnel, and new department hires, commending the Fire Department for its outstanding service to the community.

Regarding the new Police Station, Chief Schultz thanked Ms. Keller for coordinating the decorative wrap on the electrical box located outside the facility, which prominently displays the department's police patches and enhances the appearance of the site. He also drew attention to the new canine memorial statue located near the Grove Avenue entrance. The memorial was conceived, designed, funded, and installed as an Eagle Scout project by Colin Neath, son of Sergeant Matt Neath. He stated that the memorial honors the police canines that have served the community, including Sergeant Neath's canine partner, Loki, who served for eight years, and expressed appreciation for Colin's hard work and dedication in bringing the project to fruition.

Regarding the timeline of the new Police Station, he explained that while he could not provide a specific opening date, the project continues to move forward despite several unforeseen delays. He noted that recent exterior improvements, including the installation of illuminated building signage, have enhanced the facility's appearance and that the station is progressing well toward completion. He recognized Assistant Police Chief Matt Tartaglia for his extensive efforts and dedication throughout the project, noting that his leadership has been instrumental over the past several months. He stated that the department hopes to schedule public tours and special preview opportunities once the building is ready.

Chief Building and Zoning Inspector Keller – Regarding the gas station development on Lost Nation Road, Mr. Keller stated that while construction had not yet commenced as originally anticipated, the project remains on schedule and no new issues or delays have been reported. He also highlighted the continued progress at Shepherd's Glen, where construction is nearing completion on the final residential units. He stated that the development has transformed into a well-established neighborhood and represents a significant success after years of inactivity and development challenges on the site.

Mr. Kary stated that he had recently spoken with the owner of the proposed gas station, who indicated that construction staging was expected to begin shortly, although minor scheduling delays had occurred as contractors completed other commitments. He also thanked Mr. Keller and the Planning Commission for their efforts in overseeing development along Lost Nation Road. He expressed concern regarding the condition of several industrial properties throughout the City, noting that some sites contain long-standing accumulations of debris, abandoned trailers, and neglected outdoor storage areas that are not readily visible from public roadways. He explained that the City has begun contacting property owners to address these conditions and emphasized the importance of improving the appearance and maintenance of industrial areas.

Parks & Recreation Director Keller – Ms. Keller thanked everyone for the discussion regarding the Euclid Avenue pool this evening. She clarified that the decorative electrical box was a project of the Willoughby Arts Collaborative, with the artwork created by Renee Boyle. She will pass along the City's appreciation.

She stated the Senior Center is now open on Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. through March. The expanded hours coincide with the start of the youth basketball league, allowing the facility to serve both program participants and senior residents during that time.

Finance Director Hoffman – Absent. Mr. Carr reported on behalf of Finance Director Cher, who was unable to attend the meeting. He advised that the 2027 budget forms had been distributed to all departments and that departments will have the month of November to evaluate their funding needs and submit their budget requests to the Finance Department.

He also provided an update on the City's technology initiatives, noting that the Finance Department is currently migrating the New World financial software system from local hardware servers to a cloud-based platform. The project is expected to be completed by mid-December and will include implementation of the E-Suite employee portal, which will allow employees to access their payroll information electronically. As a result, direct deposit pay stubs will no longer be printed and distributed.

Mr. Carr stated that information received from the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA) indicated that 4,086 non-filer notices had been mailed to taxpayers who had not submitted municipal income tax returns for tax year 2025 or prior years. This receipt of a notice does

not necessarily mean taxes are owed, but stated that residents may begin contacting the City with questions regarding the mailed notices.

COUNCILMEN REPORTS

Ms. Sievers – No report.

Mr. Kary – No report.

Mr. Tomaselli – No report.

Mr. Luciano – No report.

Mr. Garry – No report.

Mr. Anderson – No report.

Mr. Carr – No report.

The Regular Council Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Date approved 11/17/26

Clerk of Council

Robert E. Carr, President

Robert A. Fiala, Mayor

Exhibit A

PUBLIC COMMENT TO WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

Flock Safety Program | November 3, 2026 | Heath Wenzel

Good evening, members of Council.

I'd like to begin by thanking Chief Schultz for his presentation at our last meeting. I appreciate the examples he provided demonstrating how Flock has assisted law enforcement.

Those benefits deserve consideration. But there's a difference between demonstrating that something works and demonstrating that it's good public policy.

The chief reported 57 criminal arrests associated with Flock notifications this year. That's meaningful information. But how many of those arrests depended on Flock? How many alerts were inaccurate? And what happens when the technology gets something wrong?

In February, in Sherwood, Arkansas, a Flock camera misread a license plate, mistakenly identifying a family's vehicle as stolen.

Police stopped the vehicle and detained an innocent couple at gunpoint while their six-week-old baby remained in the back seat.

Imagine that for a moment. You've committed no crime, yet you're suddenly being treated as a dangerous criminal because technology made a mistake.

And we don't have to look across the country to find examples of misuse.

Just minutes from Willoughby, in Highland Heights, a police dispatcher resigned following an investigation into unauthorized Flock searches. Records showed more than 20,000 searches associated with one account, including thousands involving individual license plates.

What I find particularly troubling is that the department didn't discover the problem through its own oversight. It came to light through outside reporting.

At our last meeting, Chief Schultz discussed departmental policies, training, and trusting officers to do the right thing. I appreciate that approach, but trust isn't a substitute for verification.

As Thomas Sowell has frequently emphasized, public policy must be evaluated not simply by its intended benefits, but by its costs, incentives, and unintended consequences.

The chief also stated that Flock isn't used for surveillance, yet described its ability to reconstruct a vehicle's movements across an interconnected network.

There's a fundamental difference between how technology is being used today and what it's capable of doing tomorrow.

So I have a few questions.

Who independently verifies that the safeguards are working? How frequently are access logs audited? And what procedures protect innocent residents from erroneous alerts?

At previous meetings, I requested a Public Safety Committee hearing, annual transparency reporting, and Council review before any renewal or expansion. I'd appreciate an update on those requests.

I'm not questioning the intentions of our police officers. I'm asking Council to independently evaluate the benefits, risks, and trade-offs of the technology we've adopted.

Because ultimately, the responsibility for demonstrating that this program is necessary, effective, and appropriately controlled belongs to the government that chose to implement it.

Thank you.