

MINUTES REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

7:06 p.m.

May 5, 2026

Pursuant to Codified Ordinance Chapter 107 and ORC Section 121.22, notice of the following meeting was given on May 1, 2026.

ROLL CALL

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

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

The meeting was led in Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilman Garry.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Garry and seconded by Ms. Sievers to approve the Regular Council Meeting Minutes of April 21, 2026.

Roll Call	6 yes	
	1 abstain (Tomaselli)	
	0 no	Motion carried 6 to 0

STANDING AND REGULAR COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee of Full, Mr. Carr – No report.

Economic Development Committee, Mr. Anderson – No report.

Environmental Planning Committee, Mr. Kary – No report.

Finance and Audit Committee, Mr. Tomaselli – No report. There will be a committee meeting on May 19th to discuss capital.

Parks & Recreation Committee, Ms. Sievers – No report.

Personnel Committee, Ms. Sievers – No report.

Safety Committee, Mr. Tomaselli – Mr. Tomaselli thanked Chief Ungar for bringing the new ambulance to City Hall this evening. Mr. Carr noted the ambulance came in under \$100,000 budget.

Service Committee, Mr. Anderson – No report.

WPCC Committee, Mr. Garry – No report.

Planning Commission, Mr. Kary – No report.

CORRESPONDENCE: Clerk Novak read a request from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control for a stock transfer for G & HR Gas LLC, Harrys Beverage, 3525 Lost Nation Road, Willoughby, OH 44094. There were no objections.

PUBLIC PORTION:

Councilwoman Sievers read a proclamation honoring Willoughby Baseball League's 75th anniversary. There will be a celebration at Todd Field all day on Saturday, May 9th for the anniversary. Mayor Fiala presented the proclamation to the Willoughby Baseball League.

Jeffrey Malecki, 1249 South Beachview Road, Willoughby, Ohio –

Mr. Malecki stated he was here tonight as a member of the community to speak on the McKinley–Windermere Village project, even though it was tabled this evening. At this juncture, it is evident that the City and the residents have reached an impasse. Residents have consistently voiced their concerns in significant numbers. These concerns include issues related to density, compatibility with the existing neighborhood, safety, infrastructure, and the overall impact this development may have on the community. Despite ongoing engagement, there has not been a meaningful resolution that adequately addresses these issues.

When a matter reaches this level of deadlock, the City's ordinances provide a clear path forward. He stated he wanted to specifically reference Ordinance 1109.074, "Review by Others." This ordinance exists for situations of this nature; projects of such scale and impact have the potential to significantly affect neighborhood design, the integrity of surrounding streets, and the future development of adjacent properties.

He stated that the project is not a routine subdivision. It is a project that will permanently shape the character and functionality of the neighborhood. Given the magnitude of its potential impact, the ordinance not only allows but expects the need for an independent professional analysis. Engaging an outside planner, city engineer, or landscape architect, individuals without a vested interest would provide an objective evaluation as to whether this proposal aligns with sound planning principles and the long-term interests of the community.

He stated that public trust is strained. Many residents feel their concerns have not been fully heard, and confidence in the process is diminishing. Invoking this ordinance should not be viewed as a delay tactic, but rather as a responsible step toward ensuring transparency, accountability, and well-informed decision-making. It helps ensure that any final decision is not only legally defensible, but also grounded in unbiased, professional expertise.

He stated that if a mutual agreement cannot be reached and it is clear that one has not, it is incumbent that the City utilizes every available tool to arrive at the best possible outcome. He respectfully requests that the City require an independent review under Ordinance 1109.074 before any final action is taken. Once this development is completed, its impacts will be permanent.

Nicholas Coma, 1372 Brooks Drive, Willoughby, Ohio -

Mr. Coma stated he wanted to express his sincere appreciation for the recent proclamation and ongoing support of Willoughby Baseball. He stated he has been a coach for 11 years and is currently coaching both the 14U and 10U teams.

Mr. Coma stated he was here tonight to bring attention to the condition of Daniels Field. Last night, during a scheduled game, the umpires assessed the field and ultimately determined that the playing conditions were inadequate. For his 14U team, which plays on a full 60-90 field, Daniels Field cannot currently accommodate safe and proper play. The base paths are too close to the grass, and there is a significant lip along the infield that creates unsafe conditions. He stated that a lot of improvement has already been made such as upgraded fencing, improved netting, and additional infield dirt; however, the field still does not meet the standards required for his travel league. He has been cautioned that the current conditions are considered both unplayable and unsafe.

He wanted to bring this issue to the City's attention in hopes that it can be prioritized moving forward. There are a large number of young athletes in the community, and there is already a limited number of suitable fields available. The field was previously utilized by the high school at the JV level, but since their relocation to Willoughby Hills, it is no longer being used in that capacity. Ms. Keller stated that the ballfield improvements are part of the capital money discussion.

Bill Collins, 3849 South Beachview Road, Willoughby, Ohio -

Mr. Collins thanked Council in securing a delay of a few weeks on the Windermere Project. He stated he wanted to clarify a key point, which he believes may have already been addressed: is the entire parcel of land including the building considered a single property that will be sold as one development? This is an important question for the community.

There is significant concern among residents that the building will be included in the sale. From the resident's perspective, developers are typically focused on maximizing profitability, and it is unlikely they would retain the building to preserve the existing community. Instead, there is a strong belief that the structure would be demolished to make way for additional units. He stated that many in the community feel this outcome is almost certain if the building is included in the transaction.

If, however, the building is excluded, the property would presumably need to be subdivided. That process would require approval, and he hopes the City would carefully consider denying such a request.

Additionally, he stated he wanted to revisit past discussions regarding the north end of Willoughby. Years ago, Council acknowledged efforts to improve the area's image and move away from the perception of being "the other side of the tracks." While recent initiatives such as the Osborne Park project are positive steps forward, this proposed development does not appear to align with those goals. In fact, it may undermine the broader vision of community improvement.

For that reason alone, Mr. Collins stated that the proposal warrants serious reconsideration. Even if all technical requirements are met, Council still retains the authority to deny the request. Should that decision be challenged, Mr. Collins believes Council would have strong support from the broader community. It is also important to note that concern is growing beyond the immediate area. Residents from mid and south Willoughby are becoming aware of the situation and are voicing their opposition as well. For more than three years, the community has consistently expressed its position on this issue. At the meeting held at McKinley, there was a clear statement that if the community did not support the project, it would not move forward. He is trying to understand how the current situation aligns with that commitment. He stated that when the matter returns, the concerns of the community will be taken into full consideration and that the proposal will ultimately be denied.

Daniel Rowan, 38647 Ninadell Avenue, Willoughby, Ohio - Mr. Rowan stated he has serious concerns regarding the proposed Windermere Housing project. He stated that based on his understanding, the development appears to function as a form of permanent supportive housing, which is intended to address homelessness by placing individuals coming from extended housing situations. These programs often serve individuals who may be dealing with mental health challenges and substance use disorders. While he recognizes the broader mission of addressing homelessness, he questions whether this particular location is appropriate for such a project.

Mr. Rowan stated that it appears that public funds are being allocated to a private entity, and the cost structure raises questions. For example, the allocation of approximately \$3 million for a relatively small number of units seems unusually high, and it is unclear what the total financial obligation will ultimately be once permitting, environmental approvals, and other associated costs are included. This raises concerns about fiscal transparency and accountability. He believes that the project may not accurately reflect the current character of the neighborhood. As a lifelong resident who attended McKinley Elementary, he can attest that the neighborhood has evolved significantly, and he is concerned that the proposal does not adequately account for these changes.

Finally, he stated he wanted to raise concerns about potential ethical considerations. There appear to be relationships and activities involving local officials and individuals associated with this project that could present a conflict of interest or, at minimum, warrant further review.

Vivian Stropke, 899 Shadowrow Avenue Willoughby, Ohio -

Ms. Stropke stated she was recently made aware of the proposed building situation affecting her area. She has lived in her home for 33 years and deeply values the character of the neighborhood. It is a quiet, park-like community with many family-friendly amenities, including a beautiful park, swimming pool, playground, candy shop, and ice cream store. She respectfully asked that any decisions made help preserve the safety, charm, and quality of life that residents have come to appreciate.

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Tomaselli that all ordinances and resolutions be read by caption only with the exception of 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 excepting Ordinance No. 2026-47.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-43

A resolution approving EAS #3-3-26 for the construction of six (6) duplexes located at 1200 Lost Nation Road (Windermere Village).

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Anderson to amend Resolution No. 2026-43 striking out six (6) duplexes and replacing with five (5) duplexes.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Anderson to table Resolution No. 2026-43.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-44

A resolution approving EAS #4-3-26 for construction of a wireless communication tower located at 4822 E. 355th Street (TAG Towers III LLC).

Motion made by Mr. Garry and seconded by Mr. Luciano to adopt Resolution No. 2026-44.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-45

A resolution pursuant to Sections 5705.19 and 5705.191 of the Ohio Revised Code submitting to the electors of the City of Willoughby, County of Lake, State of Ohio, the question of a renewal of a nine-tenths (0.9) of one mill tax levy for the purpose of current expenses.

Motion made by Mr. Tomaselli and seconded by Mr. Garry to adopt Resolution No. 2026-45.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-46

A resolution pursuant to Sections 5705.19 and 5705.191 of the Ohio Revised Code submitting to the electors of the City of Willoughby, County of Lake, State of Ohio, the question of a renewal of a two (2) mill tax levy for the purpose of general construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, and repair of streets, roads, and bridges in the City.

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Luciano to adopt Resolution No. 2026-46.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-47 – First Reading

An ordinance amending Chapter 913 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Willoughby, Ohio, titled “Sanitary Sewerage Systems Charges”, specifically, replacing Section 913.14, titled, “Sanitary Sewer Tap-in Fees”.

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-48

An ordinance amending Chapter 951 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Willoughby, Ohio, titled, “Point of Sale Inspection”; specifically, Section 951.01 titled, “Certificates of Inspection and Occupancy Required.”

Motion made by Mr. Kary and seconded by Ms. Sievers to adopt Ordinance No. 2026-48.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-49

A resolution authorizing a temporary moratorium on the acceptance, processing, or approval of any application for gasoline stations or automobile service stations within the City of Willoughby for 6 months after the effective date of this resolution, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Anderson that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-49 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Anderson to adopt Resolution No. 2026-49.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-50

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to distribute request for proposals for Todd Field Improvements related to the Chagrin River Trail Project, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Mr. Tomaselli that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-50 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Mr. Tomaselli to adopt Resolution No. 2026-50.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-51

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to accept and enter into an amendment to the lease agreements between Lake Business Products and the City to provide desktop printers and copiers for use by various City Departments, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Luciano that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-51 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Luciano to adopt Resolution No. 2026-51.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-52

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Constellation NewEnergy, Inc. for the purchase of electricity for the City of Willoughby's Street Lighting for a period of thirty-six (36) months effective with the May, 2026 meter read date, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Garry that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-52 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Garry to adopt Resolution No. 2026-52.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-53

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Dynegy Energy Services East, LLC for the purchase of electricity for the Willoughby-Eastlake Water Pollution Control Center for a period of twenty four (24) months effective with the June, 2026 meter read date, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Mr. Garry that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-53 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Mr. Garry to adopt Resolution No. 2026-53.

Roll Call 7 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

MAYOR'S REPORT – Mayor Fiala stated that at Councilwoman Sievers request, the City has initiated code revisions to eliminate two family homes from the R50 district. It will go before the Planning Commission, and then from there it will go to Council.

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Law Director Lucas – No report.

Service Director Knecht – No report.

City Engineer Lannon – Mr. Lannon stated that bids have gone out for the SOM Center Road and Ridge Road sidewalk projects, as well as for the voluntary program. While final bid results are not expected in time for the next council meeting, preliminary information may be available for discussion. Mr. Carr asked about the work associated with Route 84 that is expected to begin after June 1, following the end of the school year. Discussion focused on anticipated traffic impacts, including resident concerns about possible diversion onto neighborhood streets such as Willoughcroft, Shankland, and Arlington. Mr. Lannon stated that traffic for the sidewalk projects will be maintained with flaggers, while the retaining wall project on Route 84 will require a full closure. Mr. Lannon stated that no formal detour route has been finalized for neighborhood streets, but acknowledged that drivers may seek alternate routes. The City is also coordinating with Willoughby Hills regarding nearby River Road work in an effort to reduce overlapping traffic disruptions and improve overall traffic management.

Fire Chief Ungar – Regarding the new ambulance that was at City Hall this evening, Chief Ungar stated he appreciates Council's and administration's continued support in keeping his fleet in top shape and the patience afforded on the project. Although the vehicle was approved in 2023 and was expected to take about 15 months, the refurbishment ended up taking nearly three years due to delays beyond his control. Fortunately, it is now complete, and as Councilman Luciano noted, the cost savings provide at least a silver lining. Mr. Carr asked about the timeline for the refurbishment versus the long lead time for ordering new. Chief Ungar stated the timeline likely would have been about three years either way. However, the final refurbishment cost was about \$230,000, compared with more than \$415,000 for a new vehicle next year, so the savings was still significant.

Police Chief Schultz – No report.

Chief Building and Zoning Inspector Keller – No report. Mr. Kary stated that AT&T has been laying fiber throughout the City, and there have been complaints about the quality of the work. Does the City have any authority over how they do it? Mr. Keller stated that if the work is in the right-of-way, the contractor is required to restore it properly. If anyone has a specific issue, they should call Mr. Keller or the Service Department.

Mr. Kary stated he received calls today from Fairway Glen residents who thought City trucks were causing problems, but they were actually an AT&T subcontractor. They were parking on Fairway Glen property and blocking children from getting to their buses, creating a real mess. He asked if someone could follow up on that tomorrow. Mr. Keller stated he would follow up. Mr. Kary voiced concerns about the installing of the line outside the house i.e., "rope-a-dope" instead of installing a box first and running the line through that. Mr. Carr stated his concerns were more about the street work than the house connections. Some of the boxes were very large and the lawns looked awful.

Parks & Recreation Director Keller – No report.

Finance Director Hoffman – No report.

COUNCILMEN REPORTS

Ms. Sievers – Ms. Sievers thanked everyone for attending this evening; residents presence and engagement are always greatly appreciated and play a vital role in supporting her work as a Councilwoman. She thanked Council for tabling the Windermere project. She believes it is a prudent approach that allows additional time for careful review and consideration. Ms. Sievers encouraged everyone to attend the 75th anniversary of Willoughby Baseball. The event will begin at 9:00 a.m. and feature a full day of festivities, including two live bands.

Mr. Kary – Mr. Kary stated he too was glad that Council tabled the EAS for McKinley so that communication can take place regarding the questions raised by Council this evening.

Mr. Tomaselli – No report.

Mr. Luciano – No report.

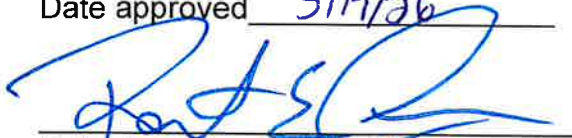
Mr. Garry – No report.

Mr. Anderson – No report.

Mr. Carr – No report.

The Regular Council Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Date approved 5/19/26



Robert E. Carr, President



Clerk of Council



Robert A. Fiala, Mayor