

MINUTES REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

7:06 p.m.

March 17, 2026

Pursuant to Codified Ordinance Chapter 107 and ORC Section 121.22, notice of the following meeting was given on March 13, 2026.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Mr. Anderson

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

Motion made by Mr. Garry and seconded by Ms. Sievers to excuse Councilman Anderson from tonight's meeting.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

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

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Tomaselli and seconded by Mr. Garry to approve the Regular Council Meeting Minutes of February 17, 2026.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Garry and seconded by Mr. Tomaselli to approve the Regular Council Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2026.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

STANDING AND REGULAR COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee of Full, Mr. Carr – No report.

Economic Development Committee, Mr. Anderson – Absent.

Environmental Planning Committee, Mr. Kary – Mr. Kary reported there was a meeting this evening to discuss EAS #2-1-26.

Finance and Audit Committee, Mr. Tomaselli – Mr. Tomaselli reported there was a committee meeting tonight to further discuss the 2026 operating budget; the committee is recommending passage of the budget.

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

Personnel Committee, Ms. Sievers – No report.

Safety Committee, Mr. Tomaselli – No report.

Service Committee, Mr. Anderson – Absent.

WPCC Committee, Mr. Garry – No report.

Planning Commission, Mr. Kary – No report.

CORRESPONDENCE: Council President Carr read into the record a letter from Willoughby resident Shade Green, 38470 Crossbrook Avenue, Willoughby, Ohio. (Exhibit A).

PUBLIC PORTION:

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

Mr. Malecki expressed his sincere gratitude to several individuals for their assistance and support on March 11, 2026 acknowledging Paul Narorocki from the Service Department for providing aid during a medical emergency. He thanked the men and women of Willoughby Fire Station #2 for their immediate response and the professional care they offered. He thanked Dan Knecht for listening to his concerns regarding Two Town Creek, as well as Tim Hordinsky for his attention and support. He also recognized John Crislip and Ally Cooper in the Service Department and Ward 2 Councilman, Mr. Kary.

Mr. Malecki stated he was here tonight to raise a serious concern regarding Two Town Creek, which runs directly through his property; specifically, the increasing water flow volume, the heightened potential for flooding, and the associated life-safety risks. During the most recent rainstorm, which was not a 100-year storm event but instead produced only 3.3 inches of rain over 48 hours, according to the National Weather Service and NOAA data. The creek experienced a dramatic increase in both water volume and velocity. From his backyard, he stated he observed water levels that were significantly higher and more aggressive than what has occurred during similar rainfall events in the past. He stated the creek overflowed its banks and the floodwaters reached within five feet of his home. He has documented these conditions with photographs and videos taken in real time during the storm, and he is prepared to share with the City.

Mr. Malecki stated these conditions raise substantial concerns not only for the safety of residents and nearby properties but also for erosion, stress on infrastructure, and the long-term stability of the creek corridor. The watershed feeding Two Town Creek is now

carrying more runoff than it was originally designed to handle, due largely to upstream development, alterations to stormwater systems, and other contributing changes over time. As a result, residents living along the creek are now experiencing potentially hazardous conditions that could lead to flooding, property damage, or threats to personal safety even during large storm events.

Mr. Malecki is respectfully requesting a meeting with Mayor Fiala; Ward 1 Councilwoman Kristie Sievers; Ward 2 Councilman Ken Kary; Service Director Dan Knecht; and City Engineer Tim Lannon. His goal is to review the City's 11×17 stormwater system prints, discuss current conditions, examine available data, and explore potential solutions before more serious issues occur. He is also requesting copies of the 11×17 documents for his personal records. Mr. Malecki stated his goal is to raise concerns and to work collaboratively with the City to understand what is happening within the watershed and to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are taken to prevent future losses to property owners and the City. A meeting will be set up with Mr. Malecki.

John Skolny, 38440 Crossbrook Avenue, Willoughby, Ohio-

Mr. Skolny stated he wanted to address Council regarding the proposed gas station planned for the neighborhood adjacent to his home. Mr. Skolny thanked members of his community for organizing residents and encouraging them to attend the previous commission meeting in large numbers. Mr. Skolny was disappointed with how that meeting unfolded, explaining that despite significant community turnout and many shared concerns, residents were not given the opportunity to have their questions properly heard or addressed.

Mr. Skolny stated there was an extensive discussion at the previous meeting about outdoor dining for another establishment on the agenda, Lakeshore Lounge. He explained that City code, as discussed at that meeting, limits outdoor seating to 30% of the restaurant's indoor seating capacity because it serves food. He noted that the gas station proposal also includes outdoor seating, yet he has not heard of any indoor seating being planned for that location. He asked whether the same 30% rule applies in this case, or whether the code is being interpreted differently.

Regarding the developer's plans, Mr. Skolny expressed appreciation for the developer's willingness to work with nearby residents, such as adding additional buffer space between the gas station and homes, however, he is worried about the future of the property. He stated the owner was granted a land-separation rider, Mr. Skolny fears the parcel could later be sold to another business that may not share the current developer's consideration for the neighborhood. He emphasized that although he opposes the gas station and feels the approval may now be inevitable, residents still have legitimate concerns.

Mr. Carr asked Law Director Lucas for clarification on the seating-capacity issue Mr. Skolny raised. Mr. Lucas explained that he was the one who brought up the seating requirement at the previous meeting. He confirmed that the regulation discussed limiting outdoor seating to 30% of indoor seating is written into both the code and the Conditional

Use Permit (CUP) for the establishment. Therefore, the same legal limitation would apply to the gas station as well.

Bill Collins, 3409 South Beachview Road, Willoughby, Ohio -

Mr. Collins expressed his strong support for Mr. Malecki's concerns regarding the conditions at Two Town Creek. He explained that his property sits directly against the creek, and although his home is positioned slightly higher on an incline, he has personally witnessed significant flooding in the area. He emphasized that the referenced "100-year flood" description is not true, noting that the creek has overflowed on multiple occasions, rising far enough up the incline to nearly reach his garage. During one such event, several nearby homes, including Mr. Malecki's, prior to his residence were heavily flooded, which Mr. Collins described as a major issue that urgently needs to be addressed.

Mr. Collins stated his primary concern is what's going on with McKinley and the property located behind it. He stated the matter has resurfaced for the third or fourth time and stressed that, since the process is just beginning again, it should be stopped as quickly as possible. After reviewing the available plans, Mr. Collins stated that the proposal does not align with the City's established details and criteria. He stated he is a vocal representative of the north end community and he intends to raise awareness once again and encourage strong neighborhood involvement.

Donna Arnold, 38432 Shearwater, Willoughby, Ohio -

Ms. Arnold stated she is concerned about the proposal to add another gas station in the area. With stations already located at both ends of a corridor, placing an additional one in the middle seems unnecessary and inconsiderate of nearby residents.

She also noted the issues that arose when homes were built directly along the golf course. She stated her husband worked there during the summers, and homeowners frequently complained about property damage from golf balls; an outcome that should have been anticipated. Decisions like these make it feel as though residents' concerns are not being considered.

Motion made by Mr. Tomaselli 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 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-20

A resolution approving EAS #2-1-26 for construction of a gas station and convenience store located at the corner of Lost Nation Road and Tamarac Boulevard (Tamarac Gas Station).

of the ARPA Funds in the agreement for the Chagrin River Riparian Storm Water Management and Water Quality Project, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Tomaselli that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-23 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Tomaselli to adopt Resolution No. 2026-23.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-24

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Willoughby-Eastlake School District necessary to the Enhanced School Resource Officer Program Coordinator Position, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Mr. Tomaselli and seconded by Mr. Garry that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-24 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Tomaselli and seconded by Mr. Garry to adopt Resolution No. 2026-24.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-25

A resolution to make appropriations for the current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Willoughby, Ohio during the period ending December 31, 2026, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Mr. Garry and seconded by Mr. Tomaselli that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-25 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Garry and seconded by Mr. Tomaselli to adopt Resolution No. 2026-25.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-26

An ordinance providing for the manning levels and compensation of elected and appointed officials and salaried and non-union employees of the City of Willoughby, Ohio; repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof which may be inconsistent herewith or which may be redundant hereto; and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Ms. Sievers that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Ordinance No. 2026-26 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Ms. Sievers to adopt Ordinance No. 2026-26.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-27

A resolution approving an agreement between the Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (Police Sergeants and Lieutenants) and the City of Willoughby, Ohio, 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. 2026-27 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Luciano to adopt Resolution No. 2026-27.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-28

A resolution approving an agreement between the Ohio Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association (Police Officers below the rank of Sergeant) and the City of Willoughby, Ohio, and declaring an emergency.

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Ms. Sievers that the rules of Council requiring three separate readings be suspended and that Resolution No. 2026-28 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Mr. Luciano and seconded by Ms. Sievers to adopt Resolution No. 2026-28.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-29

A resolution approving an agreement between the Ohio Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association (Communications Clerks, Communications Operators and Police Records/Communications Supervisor) and the City of Willoughby, Ohio 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. 2026-29 be declared an emergency measure.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Luciano to adopt Resolution No. 2026-29.

Roll Call 6 yes
 0 no

Motion carried 6 to 0

MAYOR’S REPORT – Mayor Fiala reported that the City, along with five other municipalities along Route 2, have begun discussions with the county engineer regarding lighting and ongoing maintenance for that corridor. The goal is to reach a compromise that would allow for the immediate repair of the lights, followed by a long-term solution for maintenance and repair. He stated that the municipalities are hopeful for cooperation, but are also prepared to engage in difficult conversations if necessary. He stated the first meeting, which included service directors, mayors, and city managers, was held the previous week, and a second meeting is scheduled for April. The intent is to have a final

agreement by July 1 identifying who will fund the lighting repairs and cover annual maintenance costs. He added that he would continue to keep Council updated.

Regarding the State of the City, Mayor Fiala stated the event would take place next Wednesday, March 25th. He noted that while the chamber has always held a State of the Cities event, no one had thought to do one for residents directly. All department directors and chiefs will be present, and the City hopes to gauge community interest. He recalled that previous attempts such as “Coffee with the Mayor” or “Mayor’s Night Out” had low attendance often with more city representatives than residents, though ward meetings tend to attract larger crowds.

Regarding the Route 2 lighting issue, Mr. Tomaselli asked whether the county might ultimately require each city to maintain and fund the lighting independently if the county cannot. Mayor Fiala confirmed that such a scenario is indeed on the table. He explained that the discussions involve two main components: the cost of replacing the lights and the long-term maintenance obligations. Initially, the question was whether municipalities and the county would share replacement costs, but the collective municipal response was “no”. One county commissioner had indicated that the county would pay for replacement costs; however, Mayor Fiala stated that the county may instead be shifting those costs into the proposed maintenance agreement, calling it “a bit of a shell game.” He explained that all involved municipalities maintain the shared position that the lighting is the county’s responsibility and that point may be the primary area of contention.

Mayor Fiala stated that the latest maintenance agreement provided by the county contains many issues, noting that the only topics the municipalities unanimously agreed on were basic facts like the names of their communities and the county they reside in. He remains hopeful for an amicable resolution but stated that the cities are prepared for a more adversarial process if required. To that end, requested records detailing the revenue the Lake County Engineer receives, how those funds are allocated, and the county’s overall plan for maintaining its assets, including other county roads have been made.

DIRECTOR’S REPORTS

Law Director Lucas – No report.

Service Director Knecht – Mr. Knecht explained that crews had collected leaves the previous day under good conditions, but overnight snow and ice required them to shift priorities to road safety. Because many people were expected in town that day, crews focused on clearing and salting roads rather than continuing leaf collection. He stated that leaf pickup would resume the following day, with the expectation that the entire City would be completed by the end of the week, concluding leaf operations until the fall season. He stated that road patching was ongoing wherever needed and expressed appreciation for residents who call in to report issues the crews may not immediately notice, as well as for Council members who do the same. Mr. Garry asked whether any large trees had fallen during the weekend windstorms. Mr. Knecht stated that one major tree had gone down

and several large limbs had fallen, but given the severity of the winds, the City was fortunate the damage was limited.

City Engineer Lannon – No report.

Fire Chief Ungar – No report.

Police Chief Schultz – Chief Schultz thanked Council for the passage of Resolution No. 2026-24 as well as the union contract resolutions.

Chief Building and Zoning Inspector Keller – Absent.

Parks & Recreation Director Keller – No report.

Finance Director Hoffman – Ms. Hoffman thanked Council for the legislation passed pertaining to the Finance Department.

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 7:47 p.m.


Date approved 4/2/26



Robert E. Carr, President



Clerk of Council



Robert A. Fiala, Mayor

Exhibit A

Public Comment for Tuesday Council Meeting – Gas Station Near Residential Homes (~200 ft)

Dear Mayor and Members of Willoughby City Council,

My name is Shade Greene, and my home is located **directly behind the proposed gas station site**. Because I may be unable to attend Tuesday's council meeting, I respectfully ask that this statement be **entered into the public record and shared with council members before the vote**.

For the past five years, my family and I have greatly valued the **quiet and serenity our home has provided**. The addition of a gas station — particularly with outdoor dining and vape product sales — will undoubtedly change the way my family and the residents whose homes sit directly behind this development experience our homes.

Traffic and activity from the gas station itself will already introduce increased vehicle movement and noise into an area that has historically been residential and quiet. Approving outdoor dining and vape product sales would further intensify these impacts by encouraging customers to remain on the property longer and congregate outside rather than making a quick stop and leaving.

The request for **outdoor dining** raises particular concern for the surrounding residential neighborhood. Outdoor seating can lead to groups gathering, conversations carrying into nearby yards, music from vehicles, and general activity during evening hours. With homes located only about **200 feet from this site**, these sounds can easily travel into neighboring homes and backyards. Outdoor dining areas may also contribute to increased litter, food waste, and trash blowing into adjacent residential properties. When commercial development is located this close to family homes, it is important that additional activities remain compatible with the surrounding residential environment. Outdoor dining introduces a level of noise and congregation that can significantly disrupt the quiet enjoyment of nearby homes, particularly during times when families are putting children to bed or preparing for work and school the next day.

The request to allow **vape product sales** also raises serious concerns for families living immediately adjacent to this site. Many communities are actively working to limit youth exposure to vaping due to well-documented health risks and the increasing prevalence of vaping among adolescents. Allowing vape sales at a convenience store located only about **200 feet from residential homes** increases the likelihood of youth traffic, attempted underage purchases, and people congregating in close proximity to family homes.

Beyond youth access concerns, vape sales may also affect the **residential environment and families' ability to comfortably enjoy their outdoor spaces**. Residents in this neighborhood spend time in their backyards with their children, and the presence of a retail location selling vaping products so close to homes increases the likelihood of vaping occurring near the property, exposing nearby residents and children to aerosol emissions and lingering odors.

Given the immediate proximity of family homes, I respectfully urge the council to **deny the requests for outdoor dining and vape product sales.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shadé Greene

38470 Crossbrook Ave, Willoughby, OH