

# MINUTES REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

7:04 p.m.

March 3, 2026

Pursuant to Codified Ordinance Chapter 107 and ORC Section 121.22, notice of the following meeting was given on February 27, 2026.

## ROLL CALL

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

**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

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

Motion made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Garry to go into executive session in accordance with ORC 121.22(G)(4) to review negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment and ORC 121.22(G)1 to consider the promotion of a public employee; inviting Service Director Knecht, Human Resources Administrator Ballard, Finance Director Hoffman, Police Chief Schultz, and Law Director Lucas.

Roll Call      7 yes  
                    0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

The Council meeting reconvened at 7:30 p.m. from the executive session.

## STANDING AND REGULAR COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee of Full, Mr. Carr – No report.

Economic Development Committee, Mr. Anderson – Mr. Anderson reported that he attended the bar and restaurant management group meeting today where they were holding a meeting to prepare for the rib cook-off. Because the recent Channel 5 news story brought renewed attention to the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) topic, the group asked him to attend the meeting. He explained at the meeting that he's still unsure whether a DORA is a good idea, and that, in his view, the bars and restaurants would need to be fully committed before the City would consider any next steps. He plans to speak with the merchants at their next meeting as well, and it is his intention to gather signatures so the City can clearly see how many people support the idea. He did tell them that he doesn't expect anything to happen soon. Mr. Carr added that, at some point, the City needs to gather resident feedback. Mr. Anderson agreed, noting that the key stakeholders are the

bars and restaurants, the merchants, the City, and the residents, and that all four groups must be involved before moving forward.

**Environmental Planning Committee, Mr. Kary** – Mr. Kary reported that EAS #1-1-26 was addressed this evening and the committee is recommending passage of that EAS to Council.

**Finance and Audit Committee, Mr. Tomaselli** – Mr. Tomaselli reported there was a committee meeting this evening to discuss the 2026 operating budget. There will be further discussion on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

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

**Personnel Committee, Ms. Sievers** – No report.

**Safety Committee, Mr. Tomaselli** – No report.

**Service Committee, Mr. Anderson** – No report.

**WPCC Committee, Mr. Garry** – Mr. Garry reported the annual joint meeting is scheduled for this Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at Willoughby City Hall.

**Planning Commission, Mr. Kary** – No report.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Clerk Novak read a request from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control for a new D-3 license for The Septathlon LLC, Septathlon, 4041 Erie Street, Willoughby, Ohio 44094. There were no objections.

Mayor Fiala explained that the Vitalone's own the building and they have a potential tenant interested in opening a pins mechanical type venue. Mr. Carr asked whether this was for the large building in the back. Mr. Tomaselli clarified it was the space between Erie and Vine. Mayor Fiala stated that the prospective tenant can obtain a D3 license but will also need a D5 for serving beer and wine, and that he is applying proactively while still early in discussions. Mr. Carr asked whether the administration supported the plan, and Mayor Fiala confirmed it aligns with recommendations to bring more experiential attractions to the area.

Mr. Tomaselli inquired whether the liquor permit would remain tied to the location if the tenant backed out months later. Mayor Fiala responded that the owner holds the permit and could sell it. He stated that the applicant is a young entrepreneur and is very eager to pursue the project.

#### **PUBLIC PORTION:**

**Jeffrey Malecki, 1249 South Beachview Road, Willoughby, Ohio** – Mr. Malecki stated that although he had several concerns, including issues related to Two Town Creek, the main point he wished to address was the conduct at the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday. He noted he was fortunate to have left before witnessing what he described

as rude behavior from the community toward the commission. While acknowledging the meeting began roughly, he emphasized that courtesy should be shown by both citizens and officials. He expressed embarrassment over how some residents treated the commission and the developer, who was attempting to invest in the community. Mr. Malecki voiced support for the proposed gas station project, stating the City needs the revenue and cannot always attract large businesses. He believes that most of the residents didn't understand where in the process the project was. He thanked Council for their work.

**Motion made by Mr. Tomaselli and seconded by Ms. Sievers 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. 2026-18**

**A resolution approving EAS #1-1-26 for updating of the existing patio located at 38770 Lakeshore Blvd (Lakeshore Lounge).**

Motion made by Ms. Sievers and seconded by Mr. Anderson to adopt Resolution No. 2026-18.

Roll Call      7 yes  
                   0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-19**

**A resolution accepting a donation of \$2,000 from the Willoughby VFW Post 1500 to be used for the purchase of training equipment at the new Willoughby Police Department facility.**

Motion made by Mr. Tomaselli and seconded by Mr. Anderson to adopt Resolution No. 2026-19.

Roll Call      7 yes  
                   0 no

Motion carried 7 to 0

**MAYOR'S REPORT** – Mayor Fiala explained that, following Jeff Malecki's comments and acknowledging Terry Forman's earlier suggestion, the City needs to develop an onboarding and training program for all boards. He referenced last Thursday's meeting, noting that control of the meeting was lost and that better training, particularly for board and committee chairs would help prevent similar situations. He stated the goal is to gather all board and commission chairs to review appropriate conduct, Robert's Rules of Order,

and strategies for managing unruly crowds. He emphasized that the situation likely escalated because the acting chair was overwhelmed and that with proper training, such incidents could be avoided.

Mr. Tomaselli agreed that training is a good idea but clarified that the Planning Commission chair was not present at the meeting. He stated that the vice chair was placed in a difficult position and, although the situation could have been handled better, the vice chair does not regularly serve as acting chair. Mr. Tomaselli stated that attendance at committee meetings is important, especially when significant issues draw large crowds and require participation from all voting members.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORTS**

**Law Director Lucas** – No report.

**Service Director Knecht** – Mr. Knecht reported that crews continue rotating between snow, ice, and pothole repair, and are also picking up litter when possible, focusing first on the worst areas. Mr. Carr asked when leaf collection would be added back into the schedule. Mr. Knecht stated that leaf pickup is still planned, but the timing depends on the weather; crews want to avoid scheduling it during snow events, so it will likely resume within the next few weeks.

**City Engineer Lannon** – Mr. Lannon thanked Council for signing the letter of support for funding applications for the Lost Nation corridor improvements.

**Fire Chief Ungar** – No report.

**Police Chief Schultz** – Chief Schultz thanked Council for the passage of Resolution No. 2026-19. He thanked Brent Woerner and everyone at the VFW for their support and generous gift, which will be put to good use for the new facility. He stated that during last week's stretch of good weather, construction crews were finally able to pour the floor of the jail portion of the new facility. The floor was covered through the weekend, and by Thursday or Friday crews should be able to begin building the remaining structure in that area.

**Chief Building and Zoning Inspector Keller** – Absent.

**Parks & Recreation Director Keller** – No report.

**Finance Director Hoffman** – No report. Mr. Carr thanked Ms. Hoffman for her hard work on the budget as well as the directors.

## **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 7:59 p.m.*

Date approved 3/17/26  


Robert E. Carr, President

  
Clerk of Council

  
Robert A. Fiala, Mayor