



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting
Friday, September 19, 2025 at 8:30 AM
Council Chambers
4230 Lake Avenue

Minutes

Opening of Committee Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting of the Ashtabula City Council Finance and Personnel Committee was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Committee Chair Kym Foglio.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair: Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Member: President John Roskovics

Absent: Vice Chair: Ward 5 Councilor Jane Haines, Finance Director Vladimir Kan

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper, Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon, Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg, Water Pollution Control Superintendent Mark Verzella, Lt. Geoff Cannon

Visitors:

Sunshine Law Certification

A quorum was established as defined by the Ashtabula City Council Rules of Order. The meeting met the requirements of the Ohio Sunshine Laws Open Meetings Act.

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors

Finance Director's Report

Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon provided the report in Finance Director Vladimir Kan's absence.

It was recently discovered that earlier this year, former Finance Director Marie Yvrose Augustin changed the income tax collection procedure and dropped the practice of sending assessment letters to tax customers. Assistant City Solicitor Catherine Colgan verified that the letter is necessary as part of the tax collection process. The practice of sending letters has been reinstated with some changes to the timeframe for submitting payment. Previously, tax customers were given 30 days to submit payment. That timeframe has been shortened to 10 days. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper stated that she will verify with Assistant Solicitor Catherine Colgan that the 10-day timeframe is acceptable. City Manager James Timonere stated that due to delays with the U.S. Postal Service delivering mail, that doesn't allow for much time to submit payments.

The Ashtabula Municipal Court is working with the Ohio Attorney General's Office to collect old fines and court costs going back 10 years. Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon stated that the Court has already started to collect on that, and it should bring in additional revenue.

There are negative balances in several funds. The first is the Streetlighting Fund. City Council addressed that at its recent meeting by renewing the streetlight assessments; however, that will not help the balance this year. An appropriations ordinance was also approved to allow a transfer from the General Fund to the Streetlighting Fund. City Manager James Timonere asked if the City had received its property taxes from the County. Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon stated that the assessments were received in August, but the remaining taxes will be received from the state. The second fund with a negative balance is the Auto Registration / Permit Tax Fund. Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon stated that the fund was over encumbered. Expenses in that fund have shifted. She stated that initially the fund was used for fuel and road salt, but now it is used for professional services and operating costs. Officials believe the fund will end the year with a positive balance because of projected revenue. The Sanitation Fund also has a negative balance. Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon stated that the fund is in trouble. The revenues do not support the expenses. She stated that the City Manager and the Finance Director are working on a plan to address it. City Manager James Timonere stated they have been working on a plan to roll out the recycling program to the rest of the City. He has been working on a spreadsheet to see what the rate increase will look like. He stated that currently, even if the City got a loan to cover the cost of the trash and recycling bins, there is not a mechanism to pay the loan back. The last fund with a negative balance is the ESID Fund. She stated that the fund is fully encumbered for the Castleblock payment, which has not been made yet because the funds have not been received from the County.

President John Roskovics asked about the \$650,000 balance in the paving fund. City Manager James Timonere stated that final payments for the 2025 paving program have not been made yet. He stated that the fund will always have a large balance due to the way the paving program is structured. The second half streetlight assessment collection for the current year and the first half collection for the following year pay for the paving program each year.

Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon stated that \$300,000 was transferred from the General Fund to the Public Works Fund. The Finance Director may have to move some additional funds to cover overtime. City Manager James Timonere stated the majority of the funds the City will receive from the November 2024 snowstorm will go back into that fund. The City is expected to receive more than \$100,000.

Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon stated that \$175,000 was budgeted to be transferred to the Public Health Nursing fund and only \$50,000 has been transferred to date.

City Manager James Timonere noted the bed tax the City has received. To date, the City has collected \$38,000 due, in part, to the success of the Riverbend Hotel.

Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon also discussed income tax collection. There are 864 accounts in collection with the Ohio Attorney General's Office. To date, \$866,870.31 has been collected. There is an outstanding balance of \$564,735.69 in collections with the Ohio Attorney General's Office. As of September 17, 2025, 3,673 income tax returns had been processed for 2024 with \$24,277.73 due on returns. There are currently 80 accounts on payment plans with \$116,718.36 due on the plan accounts.

President John Roskovics asked how the sanitation rate increases would be structured. City Manager James Timonere stated that the rates are in the codified ordinances. The rate increase would be presented to Council for consideration. The sanitation rates have not been increased since 2018, when they were increased by 50 cents. Committee Chair Kym Foglio asked approximately how much of a rate increase is expected. City Manager James Timonere stated he has a spreadsheet with anywhere from \$1.00 to \$4.00.

Updated Income Tax Process

Ashtabula Municipal Court Fines Collection

Statement of Cash Position

Revenue Report

Expense Report

City Manager's Report

City Manager James Timonere provided the report. Promotional exams for the fire department are scheduled for January. An Entrance Exam for the police department is scheduled for November. Staffing levels are sufficient. The police department is currently down one officer, with retirements expected in both the police department and fire department in 2026. There are also currently two openings in the Finance Department. Lt. Chris DeFina was promoted to Jail Administrator and the first corrections officer starts next week.

New Business

City Manager James Timonere stated he has been working with Mr. Kan and other department heads to finalize the 2026 budget. He is also preparing to start contract negotiations with the various unions.

Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon stated that interest was budgeted for \$335,000 and 90 percent has been collected to date. The City will exceed the budgeted amount by the end of the year.

City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper stated that she has a contract for the new probation officer for reimbursement of training costs should she decide to terminate her employment with the City.

President John Roskovics asked if the Solicitor's Office had hired the additional personnel they planned to. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper stated that the part-time victim's advocate was hired and is doing a great job.

Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon stated that the financial reporting for 2024 is still incomplete. She is hoping it will be completed by next month. She stated that this is the first year the City has worked with this firm and the first year is always the hardest. She is anticipating it will not be as difficult in the years to follow.

Next Meeting

October 17, 2025

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 a.m. by Committee Chair Kym Foglio.