



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Safety Forces Committee
Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 8:30 AM
Council Chambers
4230 Lake Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

Minutes

Opening of Committee Meeting

Call to Order

The Ashtabula City Council Safety Forces Committee meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Committee Chair Terence Guerriero.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair: Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Vice Chair: Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Member: Council President John Roskovichs

Absent: None

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg

Ashtabula Department Heads Present: Police Chief Rob Stell, Fire Chief Shawn Gruber, Lt. Geoff Cannon

Visitors: None

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

Police Department – Chief’s Report

Chief Rob Stell reported that calls for service were slightly higher than normal for the time of year, though not drastically. He noted that the call volume for the year was higher than it has been for the past five to 10 years. The department handled approximately 17,000 calls for service in 2025, which breaks down to about 47 calls per day. The committee discussed the significance of this volume with Chief Rob Stell explaining that while some calls take only 10 minutes, others could require officers to be on the scene for two hours or more. Chief Rob Stell stated that typically four officers are on duty per shift. City Manager James Timonere clarified that the minimum manning is four officers and one dispatcher per shift. Committee Chair Guerriero asked if multiple officers respond to an incident, does it still count as a single call for service. Chief Rob Stell confirmed that it does.

Chief Rob Stell shared that the department received donations from Molded Fiber Glass foundations totaling \$40,000 for the purchase of new MDTs (mobile data terminals) for their in-car computers. The equipment will be purchased soon. The committee discussed the new Dodge Durango vehicles, which have been converted to K-9 units. Chief Rob Stell explained that all K-9 officers now have new vehicles, as they prefer to outfit new cars rather than retrofit older vehicles for K-9 use. The department has four K-9 units.

December 2025 Stats

2025 Year End Stats

Fire Department – Chief’s Report

Chief Shawn Gruber reported that call volume was on par with previous years. For 2025, structure fires were down, resulting in approximately \$1 million less in fire loss compared to an average year. There were no fire fatalities, though EMS run volume was up, which he noted is a trend everywhere. Chief Shawn Gruber also pointed out that mutual aid given and received was relatively balanced. Mutual aid is primarily provided to and received from Saybrook and Ashtabula townships with occasional calls to Kingsville. Chief Shawn Gruber stated that he would be working on the annual report for presentation at the February meeting. He also confirmed his retirement date would be March 18. Promotional exams for captains and lieutenants are scheduled. Official start dates for those being promoted will be closer to the retirement dates of those leaving. The promotional lists are valid for two years.

December 2025 Stats

City Manager's Report

City Manager James Timonere provided an update on a requested traffic study for Washington Avenue between Bunker Hill and 58th Street. A resident had requested the "No Parking" signs be relocated to the side of the street that the fire hydrants are on. The police department conducted the assessment and sent two rounds of letters to affected residents, receiving no responses both times. City Manager James Timonere explained that Aqua recently installed a new water line on Washington Avenue, moving fire hydrants from the west side to the east side. The police department is recommending moving the no-parking signs from the west side to the east side (the fire hydrant side) to avoid issues.

The committee also discussed parking violations when it snows. City Manager James Timonere stated that while courtesy knocks are attempted, some vehicles had to be ticketed and towed during recent snow events. The parking ban goes into effect when there are three inches of snow. City Manager James Timonere stated that once the road is plowed, residents can park on the street again.

City Solicitor's Report

Unfinished Business

Motion: Committee Vice Chair Kym Foglio moved to change the no-parking designation from the west side to the east side of Washington Avenue between Bunker Hill and 58th Street; President John Roskovics seconded. Motion unanimously approved.

Committee Chair Terence Guerriero asked if there was any update on the lifeguard situation for the spring. City Manager James Timonere stated the City has faced challenges securing lifeguards in the past. Lifeguards are typically contracted with the YMCA. He stated that the City is considering putting the service out to bid this year rather than just negotiating with the YMCA.

New Business

City Manager James Timonere informed the committee that the City is considering applying for a Safe Streets and Roads grant program in partnership with Saybrook Township. The federal program would analyze crash data for all City roads and recommend safety improvements to intersections and road segments. The study would take place over a two to three-year period and could cost the City approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000, but the data would be valuable for future grant applications. Partnering with Saybrook Township would both reduce costs and enhance the application by demonstrating regionalization.

There was a brief discussion about the Police Department's armored vehicle, which was received through a federal donation program (DRMO). City Manager James Timonere noted they had considered replacing it through grants but found timing issues with grant periods versus equipment delivery times. Future considerations include looking for a vehicle that could serve both police and EMS functions.

The committee also discussed potential weight limits for trucks on certain City streets, particularly Bridge Street. City Manager James Timonere explained that he has been working with ODOT and noted that restricting weight limits would not affect the City's funding for future paving projects. He clarified that any restrictions would only apply to pass-through trucks, not local deliveries, and would likely focus on the area from the bridge west toward the City. City Manager James Timonere stated he does not plan on doing anything until spring.

Next Meeting

February 12, 2026

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 a.m. by Committee Chair Terence Guerriero.