



City of Ashtabula

Ashtabula City Council

Public Works / Public Utilities / Cable / Schools Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 25, 2025 at 8:30 AM

Council Chambers

4230 Lake Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

Minutes

Opening of Committee Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting of the Ashtabula City Council Public Works / Public Utilities / Cable / Schools Committee was called to order at 8:43 a.m. by Committee Chair Jodi Mills.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair: Jodi Mills, Vice Chair: Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Member: Council President John Roskovichs

Absent: None

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, Finance Director Vladimir Kan, Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg

Department Heads Present: Public Services Superintendent John Melnik, Water Pollution Control Superintendent Mark Verzella

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

City Manager's Report

City Manager James Timonere presented three ordinances related to sanitation rate increases. The first would increase the residential curbside pickup fee from \$15.50 to \$18.50 per month, a \$3 increase. The current rate has been in place since 2018, and the increase is necessary due to budgetary challenges in the sanitation department.

The second ordinance would restructure dumpster rates, adding an option for three-times-per-week pickup, and increase costs by approximately \$20 per month for the smallest dumpster (from \$120 to \$140). Additionally, the ordinance would implement a late fee policy similar to residential service, with a \$50 reinstatement fee for dumpsters removed due to non-payment after 90 days.

The third ordinance would increase transfer station rates from 10 to 12 cents per pound. City Manager James Timonere noted that these rates are still competitive in the area.

The ordinances will be presented to Council for a first reading on December 1 and then presented for passage on December 15. If the ordinance passes, the new rates would go into effect January 1,

2026.

City Manager James Timonere reported ongoing negotiations with Waste Management, which had initially proposed an 8% annual increase over the next three to five years. He rejected this proposal as too high and noted that at such rates, it might be worth transporting waste to the next landfill in Lake County.

The sanitation department is currently without cash and will struggle to get through the next month. The dry weather this year negatively impacted sanitation by \$80,000 to \$100,000 because there was less leachate from the landfill to process at the water pollution control plant.

City Manager James Timonere provided an update on the recycling program. He discussed a pending EPA grant application for curbside recycling containers. Changes in grant requirements mean the refuse containers can no longer be counted as matching funds. The total project cost is estimated at \$300,000, with \$167,000 eligible for the grant. The city can apply for \$133,600 in grant funding with a required match of \$33,400, plus an additional \$133,000 needed for rubbish containers. The grant must be performed within two years if awarded. City Manager James Timonere expressed confidence in receiving the grant but noted that the City might need to build cash reserves before implementation or potentially borrow from the general fund. The plan is to move all garbage collection to Monday through Thursday and have recycling pickup on Fridays. He stated that the City will be notified early next year if we are awarded the grant. The grant agreements would be sent around April and presented to Council in May. The totes would then need to be ordered and hot-stamped with serial numbers and City logos, which could take several months. It will also take some time to deliver the totes to the residents.

City Manager James Timonere discussed staffing. He stated that after the first of the year, two people will be assigned to the new sewer jet truck so they can be familiar with it.

Water Pollution Control Report

Water Pollution Control Superintendent Mark Verzella provided the report. The outfall relocation project is complete with the line installed. The only outstanding item is the flow meter that needs to be installed to report to the state whenever the existing outfall reaches hydraulic capacity, and then is discharged over to the boat slip.

The disinfection season was completed without violations. The department received the \$37,000 in components through Xylem as authorized by Council. The centrifuge feed pump failed, but a backup pump was on the shelf. A new backup pump will be needed at approximately \$25,000. The generator is in good shape. It was just serviced again with fluid changes.

The department assisted the Port Authority with installing a new pump-out station that was grant-funded. It is now operable, winterized, and ready for next year's boating season.

All annual inspections for the 12 significant industrial users in the industrial pretreatment program have been completed. Permits are expiring for these industries at the end of the calendar year, so permit renewals and letters will go out around December 1.

Chemical bids will be opened on Monday, which could affect budget line items if prices come in higher than anticipated.

Water Pollution Control Report

Public Works Report

Public Service Superintendent John Melnik reported that the new jet truck had been delivered. The street sweeper has been having issues, believed to be related to air filters, and repairs are in process.

Leaf bag collection in the neighborhoods will conclude this week. A tree company is currently removing trees throughout the city, including on 42nd Street near Community Action.

The department has been making good use of the new track hoe that was purchased. Operators have been doing manhole repairs and street work. The new trailer came in last Friday, so the equipment can be transported around town.

The department is planning to transition to two shifts for winter operations starting around December 15th, with five employees on night shift (11 p.m. to 7 a.m.) and five on day shift (7 a.m. to 3 p.m.). This allows for 24-hour coverage during snow events. Night shift duties during non-snow periods include patching, replacing streetlights, and street sweeping.

The sanitation department is now fully staffed, with the final employee hired on November 17th. Three employees without CDLs are scheduled for training on December 8th and testing on December 15th.

The department is ready for snow events with most vehicles equipped for snow removal. The group discussed snow removal practices, particularly challenges with sidewalks on Bridge Street. The Lift Bridge Community Association is paying for sidewalk clearing when snow exceeds four inches.

There was also discussion about the 2026 road paving program. With approximately \$400,000 committed to Collins Boulevard, about \$600,000 will remain for other roads from the estimated \$2.3 million budget. This does not include GPD's fees for construction and administration. City Manager James Timonere noted that road costs continue to increase, and the City needs to maintain permanent improvement funds for other equipment needs, including police cars, sanitation trucks, and emergency vehicles.

City Manager James Timonere stated that two bids were received for the Walnut Boulevard outfall, and they were not favorable bids. GPD recommends not to perform those at this time. The project was estimated to cost around \$80,000 to \$90,000 and the lowest bid received was \$121,000. The high cost is due to the time of year, working in those conditions and then having to remobilize and come back in the spring to finish work in the backyards. He stated that GPD is looking into a temporary fix for the winter.

Committee Chair Jodi Mills asked for an update on the traffic lights at the West Avenue, Lake Avenue and W. 19th Street intersection. City Manager James Timonere stated that due to the expense, the project will need to be put out for bid. GPD is working on the bid documents. City Manager James Timonere stated that the traffic light at W. 8th Street and Lake Avenue will need to be replaced. The cost will be upwards of \$150,000 because new poles will need to be installed.

New Business

Next Meeting

NO DECEMBER MEETING

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 a.m. by Committee Chair Jodi Mills.