



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Safety Forces Committee
Thursday, February 12, 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 Roskovics

Absent: None

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, Assistant City Solicitor Catherine Colgan, 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 provided the report. Calls for service are tracking downward due to the colder weather, though they remain slightly high for this time of year. He attributed this partly to having many new police officers who tend to be more proactive than veteran officers. Nothing unusual was noted in the statistics. Chief Rob Stell discussed the state of police vehicles, noting they had received three new cars, with one needing minor repairs. He mentioned that five vehicles were currently out of service with rusted frames. The department is in the process of purchasing a couple of new cars.

January 2026 Stats

Fire Department – Chief’s Report

Chief Shawn Gruber presented the Fire Department's annual report for 2025. It was noted that fires and fire losses were down for the year. The report included statistics and information about the prevention bureau. Discussion included the department's roster and collateral assignments. It was mentioned that four retirements were expected this year, which would require reassignments of duties. Regarding equipment, the backup ambulance was reported to be out of service. New ambulances were noted to have a three-year wait unless a demonstration model could be found. The cost of a new ambulance would be close to \$400,000. An update was provided on the new fire truck, with the expected delivery now moved to August.

AFD Annual Report

City Manager’s Report

City Manager James Timonere reported that the lieutenant's test for the Police Department was progressing, with two officers having passed the written portion and moving on to oral testing. The department is considering hiring one additional officer due to upcoming retirements and two help alleviate overtime costs. Some candidates were still waiting for their Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy certification. City Manager James Timonere also discussed plans to purchase new police vehicles, noting a possible opportunity to acquire used vehicles from the Geauga County Sheriff's Office. If purchasing new vehicles, the lead time would be six to eight months for chassis delivery plus three to five months for upfitting.

City Solicitor's Report

Alley Address Display

Assistant City Solicitor Catherine Colgan presented draft legislation requiring addresses to be posted on buildings facing alleys. This request came from compliance officers and animal control who have difficulty identifying properties from alley, particularly on the east side of the City. The committee discussed implementation and decided to recommend the legislation move forward with a possible compliance date of July 1, 2026.

Motion: Vice Chair Kym Foglio moved to bring the alley address display legislation out of committee; President John Roskovics seconded.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Committee Chair Terence Guerriero, Vice Chair Kym Foglio, President John Roskovics

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Parking on Burroughs Place

Assistant City Solicitor Catherine Colgan reported receiving a letter from an attorney representing the owner of 218-220 Burroughs Place, requesting that Burroughs Place be designated as a no-parking street. The attorney claimed the street is not wide enough for on-street parking. Committee members discussed that the street currently has permitted parking on one side, primarily serving residents of an apartment building with no off-street parking. Fire officials confirmed they can access the street if needed, though it takes time to exit. There was concern that eliminating parking would negatively impact residents who have no alternative parking options.

Unfinished Business

Committee Chair Terence Guerriero asked if there was an update on implementing no parking from Lake Avenue to Ohio Avenue on W. 13th Street, which had been addressed at the previous month's meeting. City Manager James Timonere stated that no action had been taken, but they would begin the process soon.

New Business

City Parking Deck

Discussion took place regarding the downtown parking deck. The structure was built in 1974-1975 and now requires either significant renovation or demolition. Recent events have sparked safety concerns after an attempted purse snatching took place. Currently, only the first floor and half of the second floor are open for use, with the remainder gated off due to sealed stairwells and a non-functioning elevator.

City Manager James Timonere reported that on any given day about 60 cars use the facility, including Head Start staff and vehicles, as well as other downtown employees. If demolished, the property could accommodate 70 to 90 surface parking spaces, similar to what is currently being used.

City Manager James Timonere stated that the Ashtabula Downtown Development Association had expressed interest in potentially using the upper floors for events if the structure could be renovated and made secure. Any renovation would require significant upgrades, including new stairwells, elevator repairs, and bringing the structure up to current American Disabilities Act standards.

City Manager James Timonere stated that he will continue to evaluate options as part of the downtown streetscape process.

Speed Limit Sign on Southlane

Vice Chair Kym Foglio received a request for a speed limit sign on Southlane Drive due to concerns about children's safety. City Manager James Timonere agreed to look into the situation. The area is very small. The speed limit is 25mph.

Next Meeting

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 a.m. by Committee Chair Terence Guerriero.