



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council Pre-Council Agenda
Monday, February 2, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Council Chambers
4230 Lake Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

Minutes

Opening of a Pre-Council Meeting

Call to Order

The Pre-Council meeting of the Ashtabula City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President John Roskovics.

Roll Call

Members Present: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Absent: None

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

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors

President's Report and Regular Meeting Review

President John Roskovics noted Council would continue to use the new meeting format as it seemed to be working well.

Councilors' Concerns

Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero raised concerns about the intersection of 24th Street and Harbor Avenue. He noted that guardrail issues had previously been discussed at the Safety Forces Committee meeting, but a new concern had developed. He explained that when the flashing light was previously in place, there were two lights for southbound Harbor Avenue traffic, a yellow light meaning to proceed with caution around the curve, and a red light indicating to stop if proceeding straight to the Country Club Retirement campus. Currently, there is only a yield sign, which may be confusing for drivers who are unfamiliar with the area. He stressed the need to speed up reinstallation of the light, especially with current snow conditions making road lines difficult to see. City Manager James Timonere stated that he would check on the status of the equipment that needed to be ordered for the light, and noted that the Illuminating Company also needed to complete work at the intersection following a recent accident. He mentioned he would have the engineers review the intersection for possible improvements. City Manager James Timonere also noted that 90 percent of accidents at that location involved drunk drivers, typically coming up Mary Street Hill and trying to continue straight instead of turning.

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo raised the issue of two letters received by Council, one from Suzy Kist regarding safety on Main Avenue, and another from Betsy's Bees concerning ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). Regarding the ICE letter, City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper suggested referring residents to the American Civil Liberties Union website for guidance on what to do during encounters with immigration authorities. She noted the American Civil Liberties Union provides detailed guidance in multiple languages about rights and proper responses. She recommended that before taking any formal action, Council should consult with the police chief, as the City has agreements with federal agencies, including an FBI Safe Streets Task Force that provides funding and resources. She cautioned against potentially jeopardizing these relationships. President John Roskovics confirmed

he had responded to Betsy's Bees, informing them that Council meetings are open to the public with a five-minute speaking allowance. Regarding Suzy Kist's letter about safety on Main Avenue, City Manager James Timonere explained that the City has been discussing various improvements, noting that Ward 4/Main Avenue is the most heavily patrolled area in the City, with dedicated beat officers in the summer and regular door checks by patrol officers at night to ensure business owners have locked their businesses. He addressed concerns about the parking deck, stating he would like to see it removed and replaced with a well-lit parking lot, as the 50-year-old structure is beyond its useful life. The City is exploring options and potential funding for this project. City Manager James Timonere clarified that a recent incident labeled as an assault was actually an attempted purse snatching where, fortunately, no one was injured.

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo suggested that police officers could visit high schools to explain proper procedures to follow during a traffic stop. City Manager James Timonere stated that this was already occurring during career days, along with K-9 demonstrations, and noted that school resource officers maintain regular interaction with students. Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman mentioned historical issues between the police and young Black males, noting that some communities provide guidance cards to children of color regarding proper conduct during police encounters to prevent escalation. She referenced past findings from the Ad Hoc Committee: Exploring Racism as a Public Health Crisis that identified disproportionate police contact with children of color. City Manager James Timonere noted they had previously reviewed this data from the juvenile court, which did not show the disparity that had been claimed. He agreed it is good for everyone to know their rights, but emphasized the importance of not getting into trouble in the first place. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo clarified her suggestion was about building relationships, not criticism.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman raised concerns again about her private phone number being listed on the Council roster and asked about the status of providing city-issued phones. She also again requested institutionalizing a rotation for Council prayer to ensure fairness and to remove any impression of favoritism.

Administrative Reports

City Manager

The following legislation was formally requested:

An ordinance to amend the contract with Amendola Engineering for mixing zone studies related to the relocation of Outfall 001 at Kinder Morgan, increasing the total cost to not exceed \$116,000. This covers three seasons of studies to ensure proper mixing of effluent from the plant.

Motion: President John Roskovics moved to approve the City Manager's request; Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio seconded.

Discussion: None.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion passed.

An ordinance to vacate a portion of E. 5th Street between Lake Road and E. 6th Street.

Motion: Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero moved to approve the City Manager's request; Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills seconded.

Discussion: None.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion passed.

An ordinance to vacate an alley on Main Avenue between Shenanigans and the old Ecom Cafe.

Motion: Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo moved to approve the City Manager's request; Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills seconded.

Discussion: None.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo
Nays: None
Motion passed.

An ordinance to enter into an Appalachian Community Grant Program sub-recipient grant agreement with Eastgate Regional Council of Governments for Main Avenue streetscape improvements.

Motion: President John Roskovics moved to approve the City Manager's request; Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman seconded.

Discussion: None.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion passed.

An ordinance to enter into an agreement with Catts Construction for Main Avenue streetscape improvements in an amount not to exceed \$1,296,329.23.

Motion: Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo moved to approve the City Manager's request; Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman seconded.

Discussion: City Manager James Timonere explained that while bids came in higher than expected, they were able to secure additional funding through their relationship with Eastgate. The project will include sidewalks from West 44th Street to the railroad tracks on both sides of Main Avenue, with new decorative street lighting similar to what's in North Park. The project timeline requires completion by mid-August, with light poles having a 10-12 week lead time.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion passed.

An ordinance to accept a Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) Energized Community Grant in the amount of \$29,177.

Motion: President John Roskovics moved to approve the City Manager's request; Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo seconded.

Discussion: City Manager James Timonere explained that these funds can be used for energy efficiency projects such as HVAC upgrades, generators, and LED lighting conversions.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion passed.

An ordinance to purchase a diester re-circulation pump for the Wastewater Treatment Plant at a cost of \$32,418 from Fund 504.

Motion: Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio moved to approve the City Manager's request; Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills seconded.

Discussion: City Manager James Timonere clarified that this was to replace a backup pump with a lead time of 12-18 weeks.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion passed.

City Manager James Timonere provided additional updates. The scheduled meeting with the Surface Transportation Board regarding railroad underpasses had been canceled due to the partial government shutdown and would need to be rescheduled. He stated that the City is exploring a Safe Streets grant proposal focused on traffic safety, which would involve analyzing crash data and intersection designs to develop a plan for future funding. They are considering partnering with Saybrook Township to minimize costs. Winter operations continue with another storm expected, and several water main breaks have occurred as frost drives deeper. Aqua has been responsive, though permanent repairs will likely wait until spring. City Manager James Timonere stated that he has notified Aqua of plans to pave Lake Avenue in 2027, potentially as a joint project that would include replacing the aging water main. The paving list for the current year is still being finalized, with plans to present it by mid-February.

Finance Director

The following legislation was formally requested:

- Payment of two prior year invoices to Severe's Towing and Brown Sprinkler Services.
- An ordinance to make supplemental appropriations for 2026.
- An ordinance authorizing a memorandum of understanding amending the 2026-2028 collective bargaining agreement with AFSCME Local 1197 to restructure the Finance Department. This would create a new "Senior Finance Clerk" position to replace the current finance clerk grades 1–5 system, with senior finance clerks handling more advanced accounting assistance tasks.

Motion: Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio moved to approve the Finance Director's requests; Vice President Russell Simeone seconded.

Discussion: None.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion passed.

City Solicitor

City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper stated that she has 100 bicycle safety cards from the Ohio Department of Public Safety that she will bring to the next meeting. She also provided an update on the Harbor Ridge Situation, noting progress on the pending lawsuit despite new issues arising. She stated that Harbor Ridge now has an experienced team of attorneys working for them and productive discussions have taken place with the City's attorneys. Regarding current conditions, she confirmed that all residents currently have heat, as the property owners have been working on short-term fixes to the boiler systems. She noted that when the fire chief last inspected, industrial space heaters were replaced with residentially approved ones. She advised that residents without adequate heat should contact the City Planning and Community Development Department, who will then contact Harbor Ridge's attorneys.

Clerk of Council

Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg reported a clerical error in the first payroll ordinance of the year regarding a spacing issue on the rates for the Wastewater Treatment Plant solids operator. The Solicitor's Office advised that Council did not need to vote on it again, and corrected copies were distributed to Council members. She also noted two liquor permits on the agenda.

Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg confirmed that the Ohio Municipal League training seminar for councilors was scheduled for Saturday, March 7, 2026.

City Council Committee Reports

Community Development/Economic Development/Parks & Recreation

(1st Wednesday @ 5:30 p.m.)

Members: Chair DiGiacomo/Council Liaison to Parks and Recreation Board; Vice Chair Mills; Holman

February 4

March 4

April 1

May 6

Finance & Personnel

(3rd Friday @ 8:30 a.m.)

Members: Chair Foglio, Vice Chair DiGiacomo, Roskovics

February 20

March 20

April 17

May 15

Public Works/Public Utilities/Cable/Schools

(4th Tuesday @ 8:30 a.m.)

Members: Chair Mills, Vice Chair Guerriero, Roskovics

February 24

March 24

April 28

May 26

Committee Chair Jodi Mills provided the report.

Safety Forces

(2nd Thursday @ 8:30 a.m.)

Members: Chair Guerriero, Vice Chair Foglio, Roskovics

February 12

March 12

April 9

May 14

Planning Commission and Ashtabula Historic Preservation Commission

President John Roskovics stated that the Planning Commission had met the previous week and approved the West 41st Street warming house, which was the only agenda item. Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman inquired about tracking approvals for warming houses or recovery homes across the City to ensure fair distribution. City Manager James Timonere explained that there is currently a moratorium on boarding houses, and this was the only warming center that has been approved. He noted that the upcoming zoning revisions would address appropriate locations for such facilities, and confirmed they have data on existing facilities, which are inspected and monitored.

Discussion of New Business/Proposed Legislation

City Manager James Timonere requested a resolution honoring Christine Hill, the City Health Commissioner, on her retirement.

Motion: Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman moved to approve the City Manager's request; Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo seconded.

Discussion: None.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero requested a resolution honoring fire chief Shawn Gruber for his retirement in March.

Motion: Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero moved to honor Fire Chief Shawn Gruber with a resolution; Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio seconded.

Discussion: None.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor

Jane DiGiacomo
Nays: None
Motion carried.

President John Roskovics requested a resolution honoring Earl Tucker for his years of service on the Parks and Recreation Board.

Motion: President John Roskovics moved to honor Earl Tucker with a resolution; Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo seconded.

Discussion: None.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Discussion of Old Business/Legislation on for 2nd Reading

Discussion for the Good of the Order

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. by President John Roskovics.

Ashtabula City Council will meet again on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 in Council Chambers. The Pre-Council meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Regular Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

DATE APPROVED:

February 17, 2026

ATTESTED BY:

John S. Roskovics

John S. Roskovics, President of Council

ATTESTED BY:

Stacy L. Millberg

Stacy L. Millberg, Clerk of Council