



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council Pre-Council Agenda
Monday, March 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 Vice President Russell Simeone.

Roll Call

Members Present: 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: President John Roskovics

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

Administrative Reports

City Manager

City Manager James Timonere presented the following ordinances for consideration:

- An ordinance with GPD Group for engineering design and construction administration for the 2026 paving program, not to exceed \$110,000 and funded through the paving levy fund 212.
- A Memorandum of Understanding with Local 1197 was requested to clarify departmental seniority within the Public Works Department and remove obsolete supervisor positions from the collective bargaining agreement. City Manager James Timonere explained that this addresses seniority for bidding positions, as the Public Works foreman recently retired and the traffic foreman may retire soon. The MOU also removes outdated language for supervisors that no longer exist from when the City had an income tax department and when the Finance Department was called the Auditor's Office.
- An ordinance with Johnston Tree Service for tree removal throughout the City was requested for \$17,200 from the Public Works Fund 205.
- An ordinance to enter into an Appalachian Community Grant Program sub-recipient grant agreement for the Main Avenue facade project.
- An ordinance renewing life insurance policies for employees with group life insurance coverage at 26 cents per \$1,000 for basic life and 20 cents per \$1,000 for accidental death and dismemberment. The rate is guaranteed until May 2028, representing a 1.5 cent increase for basic life coverage.

Two future ordinances were also requested:

- An ordinance granting the Lift Bridge Community Association permission to hold the annual Ashtabula Wine and Walleye Festival July 24 through 26.
- An ordinance authorizing an agreement with Grand Finale Fireworks for the festival's fireworks display.

Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero raised concerns about road quality, specifically mentioning a pothole at First and Minnesota and the poor condition of East and West Lake Cliff Drive. He questioned whether asphalt grindings could provide temporary relief and requested clarification on the inspection process for paving projects. He expressed dissatisfaction with the condition of East 17th Street, which was paved last year but is already cracking. City Manager James Timonere confirmed that GPD's contract includes inspection services, with inspectors present during paving to probe asphalt depth and verify milling depths. He noted that cracking after a year is not uncommon.

Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio agreed with Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero's concerns, stating she cannot distinguish between the paved and unpaved portions of Columbus Avenue due to poor conditions on both sides.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman suggested that Council members should report issues directly, noting she had success when City Manager James Timonere inspected areas she questioned.

Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills requested clarification on the paving process timeline, as residents often call when roads appear to be left incomplete between different phases of work. She also asked about working hours specified in contracts.

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo raised questions about road cut procedures, asking about inspection requirements, responsible parties, compaction testing, sign-off procedures, and warranties. City Manager James Timonere explained that road cuts typically require "oops tickets" for notification, utility marking, and replacement with new materials. Winter repairs are temporary until asphalt plants reopen in the spring. The City has staff inspectors, though no formal sign-off procedure exists. Road cuts are warranted for one to two years under City ordinances.

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo also inquired about historical paving records, as a resident believed her road (54th between Washington and Adams) hadn't been paved in 40 years. City Manager James Timonere confirmed comprehensive records exist and agreed to share the paving history map with all Council members.

Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio reported a toilet sitting on a tree lawn on Walnut Boulevard near the tennis courts for about a week.

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo asked about zoning requirements for off-street parking for apartment residents, prompted by questions at an Ashtabula Downtown Development Association board meeting. City Manager James Timonere confirmed no such requirement exists for Main Avenue and Bridge Street due to their design and available on-street parking. He cautioned that requiring off-street parking could be problematic given the limited space available, noting other downtowns typically have parking garages or paid parking systems. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo requested this be explored in the new zoning code.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman asked whether GPD provides itemized cost breakdowns for their services, similar to other contractors. City Manager James Timonere, agreed to investigate their invoicing practices and provide the information to councilors.

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo asked if the City is prepared for a potential data center location, expressing concern about potential impacts on residents' electric rates. City Manager James Timonere explained that while electric rate increases affect entire grids rather than just local areas, state legislation is being considered to require data centers to pay their fair share. He noted the City lacks sufficient acreage for a data center, though surrounding townships might attract such facilities due to available freshwater. Some companies had previously shown interest in smaller "boutique" centers, but those discussions did not materialize.

Finance Director

Finance Director Vladimir Kan announced the tax season schedule, with the Finance Department open from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and income tax assistance available in Council Chambers April 1-10 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., April

13-15 from 8:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. and weekend dates April 4 and 11 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Finance Director Vladimir Kan requested an ordinance authorizing compensation, salaries, and wages for City and Health District employees due to Finance Department restructuring, requiring the repeal of ordinance 2026-04.

He also requested a supplemental appropriations ordinance was requested for \$91,555 covering the general fund and other funds for current expenses and expenditures.

Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills asked about the Health Department grant mentioned in the appropriations. Finance Director Vladimir Kan explained the Workforce 2023 grant provides 40 percent reimbursement for the health commissioner's salary and professional services. The budget originally covered only three months for Renee Powell's term, but it was extended through December 2026, requiring nine additional months of appropriations.

Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills also inquired about the MDT donation matching expense. City Manager James Timonere clarified that it relates to mobile data terminals (computers in police cars) donated by Molded Fiber Glass, requiring matching appropriation lines.

City Solicitor

City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper reported no pending civil litigation that could cost the City funding and no major criminal cases of import. She requested that future agendas identify who requested each piece of legislation (council members, city manager, or finance director) so citizens and reporters know whom to contact for questions. as they typically default to contacting the City Manager of Solicitor's Office who may not know the background.

Clerk of Council

Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg announced upcoming ribbon cutting ceremonies at Shenanigan's on Main Avenue on Wednesday, March 4 at noon, and at the Soiree Event Center on Main Avenue on Saturday, March 14 from noon to 3 p.m.

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

March 4

April 1

May 6

June 3

Finance & Personnel

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

Members: Chair Foglio, Vice Chair DiGiacomo, Roskovics

March 20

April 17

May 15

June 19

Committee Chair Kym Foglio provided the report. The committee discussed the possibility of the City providing cell phones for councilors.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman asked about the next steps regarding the issue. Committee Chair Kym Foglio stated that no motion was made to bring it out of committee and deferred to City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper for suggestions. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper stated that since there is nothing pending before Council, if a councilor wanted to have an ordinance drafted requiring the City to provide cell phones to City Council members, it would be up to the individual councilor to ask her office to prepare such legislation. Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman asked if this would be an all or nothing proposal, meaning it would be available to all councilors or simply the ones who request it. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper stated that the legislation could be drafted so it could be up to each individual counselor whether they wanted a City cell phone or not.

Public Works/Public Utilities/Cable/Schools

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

Members: Chair Mills, Vice Chair Guerriero, Roskovics

March 24

April 28

May 26

June 23

Safety Forces

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

Members: Chair Guerriero, Vice Chair Foglio, Roskovics

March 12

April 9

May 14

June 11

Planning Commission and Ashtabula Historic Preservation Commission

Discussion of New Business/Proposed Legislation

Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero asked for clarification on the legislation for the MOU with Local 1197 for the Public Works seniority change. City Manager James Timonere explained the MOU defines that traffic department seniority falls within Public Works rather than citywide, giving Public Works employees the first opportunity to bid for traffic positions before going citywide. He clarified that Public Works includes road crews, lawn mowing, and park maintenance staff, while Sanitation and Wastewater Treatment are separate departments.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman commented on the new agenda format, suggesting the legislation be labeled "for consideration" rather than "for passage" since all items may not pass. Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg explained that all legislation is being presented for consideration. The items labeled "for passage" are being presented for a vote, requiring a waiver of a second reading, while items under section "B" are being presented for a first reading only and will be presented again at the next meeting for a second reading and then a vote. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper confirmed that all items under section "A" for passage, would require waiving the second reading requirement to be passed at this meeting.

Discussion of Old Business/Legislation on for 2nd Reading

Discussion for the Good of the Order

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m. by Vice President Russell Simeone.

Ashtabula City Council will meet again on Monday, March 16, 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:

March 14, 2026

ATTESTED BY:

John S. Roskovics

John S. Roskovics, President of Council

ATTESTED BY:

Stacy L. Millberg

Stacy L. Millberg, Clerk of Council