



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting
Friday, March 20, 2026 at 8:30 AM
Council Chambers
4230 Lake Avenue

Minutes

Opening of Committee Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting of the Ashtabula City Council Finance and Personnel Committee was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Committee Chair Kym Foglio.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair: Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Vice Chair: Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo, Member: President John Roskovics

Absent: Finance Director Vladimir Kan,

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper, Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg, Chief Geoff Cannon

Visitors: Jessica Hampton

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

Finance Director's Report

City Manager James Timonere provided the report in Finance Director Vladimir Kan's absence. He explained the positive trend in delinquent income tax collections, attributing the increases in 2024 and 2025 to the City's decision to send delinquent accounts to the Attorney General's Office. He noted that when people received letters from the AG's office rather than the City, they took the matter more seriously and made payments either directly to the City or through the AG's office. This resulted in unexpected additional income that caused an upward trend in collections. City Manager James Timonere indicated that this trend is beginning to flatten as those initial collections have been processed. The Finance Department is preparing to pursue over 8,500 non-filing accounts after the tax season concludes. The process is expected to take approximately four years to complete.

City Manager James Timonere addressed irregularities in the Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) numbers, explaining that corporate businesses operating in multiple JEDDs had not been properly separating their withholding by location when submitting them to the City. This created confusion about which store's income should be attributed to which JEDD district. The City had previously brought in auditors to help resolve these issues and continues to work on ensuring proper attribution, particularly as new developments are planned in Ashtabula Township.

City Manager James Timonere stated that two funds showed negative balances: the sanitation fund and the wastewater treatment capital fund. He explained that these negative balances were temporary and related to billing cycle timing issues with the sanitation rate increases implemented at the beginning of the year. Additionally, the City has not yet received county property taxes, which typically arrive by the end of March after the county

completes its settlement process. City Manager James Timonere attributed the delay in property tax distribution to problems that began in December when files were not transferred on time from the Auditor's Office to the Treasurer's Office, causing delays in bill distribution and collection dates.

City Manager James Timonere noted that investment income would begin to decline as interest rates fall, though the City's investments were still performing at or above market averages. He explained that the City budgeted conservatively for 2026 in terms of investment income.

Statement of Cash Position

Statement of Cash Position with MTD Totals

Revenue Report

Expense Report

Expense Report with Encumbrance Detail

Income Tax Report

City Manager's Report

City Manager James Timonere reported that two new positions for the sewer jet would begin the following week. The Sanitation Department now has an almost entirely new crew due to retirements and these new additions. Two employees were currently in CDL training locally, with classroom instruction completed, and ride-along training scheduled, expecting completion within two weeks. City Manager James Timonere noted that the CDL training program requires the employees to sign a three-year employment agreement to ensure the City recovers its training investment. The police department is making a conditional offer to a new officer to restore staffing levels. Promotional testing will also take place in both the fire and police departments.

City Manager James Timonere stated that parks operations were scheduled to begin April 1st, with staffing assignments already determined. He expressed concern about balancing the Veterans Memorial Park and Lance Cpl. Kevin M. Cornelius Park projects with other ongoing projects, including the sidewalk repairs. He stated he would need to coordinate with Parks Board member Tim Dibble regarding the park projects.

President John Roskovics asked for a status update on a proposed human resources position that had been previously discussed. City Manager James Timonere explained that he is waiting to hear a definite retirement date for Assistant Finance Director Carolyn Sheldon, who currently assumes the human resources role, before moving forward with the position.

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo asked about the status of the Appalachian grant project. City Manager James Timonere stated that the project is moving forward. Sidewalk work would be handled by contractors once the schedule was finalized, and the City had three roofs ready for bidding and another three facades in preparation.

City Manager James Timonere noted concerns involving funding for repowering the City's boat, estimated at \$40,000. The City had requested twice to use Stone Garden grant funds for this purpose, most recently in November, but received no response until the order deadline approached. The sheriff's department, which administers the Stone Garden grant, disagreed with the City's interpretation of allowable expenses and denied the use of the funds. He explained that Stone Garden funds were used for border operations and inland operations but never for rescue or fire department activities. The fire department had actually spent over \$14,000 of its own funds on rescue-related activities without seeking reimbursement to maintain grant compliance. The sheriff disagreed and, since he is the fiduciary on the grant, he gets the final say on how the funds are spent.

Unfinished Business

New Business

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be April 17 at 8:30 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 a.m. by Committee Chair Kym Foglio.