



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Safety Forces Committee
Thursday, April 9, 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, Member: Council President John Roskovics

Absent: Vice Chair: Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg, Assistant City Solicitor Catherine Colgan

Ashtabula Department Heads Present: Police Chief Rob Stell, Fire Inspector Antonio Feralo

Visitors:

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 presented the March statistics, noting that overall numbers had not changed significantly from previous months. Included in the statistics for the first time were traffic citations, showing what types of tickets were being issued. Calls for service appeared to be somewhat high for this time of year, which Chief Rob Stell attributed to unusually warm weather during March and increased proactive policing by newer, younger officers in the department.

Chief Rob Stell discussed Safety Town preparations, with the event scheduled for June 8 through 19th. It will feature four sessions across two weeks with both morning and afternoon options. Information is available on the department's Facebook page and the City's website, with flyers being distributed to local schools and daycares. Officer Brown, one of the department's new hires with previous Safety Town experience from Geneva, will serve as the police department's representative, working alongside Fire Investigator Antonio Feralo, who has been involved with the program for the past four years.

Regarding staffing, the department is currently down two officers but has made a conditional offer of employment to one candidate who is completing the police academy. The candidate has nearly completed the pre-employment screening process. Upon graduation from the academy at the end of April and passing the state exam in the first week of May, he would be able to join the department. The department has also advertised for a lateral hire to fill the second vacant position.

Chief Rob Stell reported no serious issues with equipment, though several patrol cars are reaching the end of their

service life. The anticipated arrival of three vehicles purchased from another agency will significantly improve the department's fleet stability. The vehicles are awaiting approval from the other agency's meeting, expected the following week, after which an invoice will be issued. The selling agency has an additional five vehicles that might become available when they receive their new fleet, though another agency is ahead of Ashtabula in line for those vehicles.

President John Roskovics inquired about school resource officers, with Chief Rob Stell confirming coverage at Kent State and two officers at the elementary campus. Officer Jay Janek, who had retired and then been rehired, is assigned to Kent State and will handle downtown patrols on Main Avenue during summer months. The Mother of Sorrows campus is covered by a sheriff's deputy.

Committee Chair Terence Guerriero asked for an update on the parking situation on Burroughs that was discussed at the previous meeting. Chief Rob Stell had investigated the situation and created a video demonstration showing that while the street was tight with cars parked on one side, he was able to back out in his vehicle. He expressed concern that restricting parking would create hardship for the townhouse residents who relied on street parking, as the available parking lot could only accommodate about eight vehicles.

APD March Stats

Fire Department – Chief's Report

Fire Investigator Antonio Feralo presented the March statistics in Chief Geoff Cannon's absence. He reported that total call volume had increased to 593 incidents compared to the prior two years. Structure fires, fire loss, ambulance responses, and transports had all increased, which Chief Cannon indicated was consistent with recent trends. Both mutual aid given and received had decreased from the previous reporting period.

Regarding equipment, the department is considering new EKG monitors and has a bid out for this equipment. Staffing is currently at full capacity, though the department will be conducting an entrance examination soon as two firefighters are expected to retire this year.

Fire Inspector Antonio Feralo discussed his transition into his current role, which encompasses three main responsibilities: public education, inspections, and investigations. He highlighted a recent arson awareness art program conducted at local elementary schools in collaboration with three local fire departments. The program focused on lithium-ion battery safety, reflecting current fire prevention priorities, and attracted 105 entries. Winners will receive monetary awards, with a ceremony scheduled for May 4 at 3:30 p.m. at Huron Elementary School.

President John Roskovics asked about inspection activities, and Fire Inspector Antonio Feralo confirmed he had conducted multiple inspections at the recently approved warming shelter facility.

AFD March Stats

City Manager's Report

City Manager James Timonere reported preparations for summer are underway. Lateral hire advertisements for the police department are currently posted, though no applications have been received yet. The fire department entrance examination is being organized. He noted that a presentation from the drug task force regarding 2025 statistics would be included at the next meeting as part of the Police Chief's report, with representatives from the detective bureau and task force attending.

The task force has been highly productive, leading the county in activity and developing promising partnerships with federal agencies. Despite working with Conneaut Police Department and the FBI, a recent grant application was unsuccessful due to the program not being considered sufficiently multi-jurisdictional by the funding agency's standards. City Manager James Timonere expressed confidence that upcoming initiatives would strengthen future grant applications.

City Solicitor's Report

Assistant City Solicitor Catherine Colgan reported an extremely busy docket with jury trials scheduled every two weeks, alternating between herself and City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper. Despite the heavy workload, there were no unusual cases outside normal operations. She also mentioned obtaining an injunction against Harbor Ridge and expressed hope for beginning cleanup efforts at that location.

Unfinished Business

New Business

Next Meeting

May 14, 2026

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 a.m. by Committee Chair Terence Guerriero.