



**City of Ashtabula**  
Ashtabula City Council  
Safety Forces Committee  
Thursday, May 14, 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:**

**Officers Present:** City Manager James Timonere, Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg

**Ashtabula Department Heads Present:** Police Chief Rob Stell, Fire Chief Geoff Cannon

**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**

**Special Guest Presentation**

**Police Department – Chief’s Report**

**APD April Stats**

Chief Rob Stell reported that April statistics were consistent with expectations for this time of year. The department's newest officer, Orion Baker, was sworn in on May 13. Officer Baker is a civil service list hire who recently completed the police academy and came highly recommended by the former division commander who now teaches at the academy. The department is now near full staff. Chief Rob Stell noted that a lateral hire posting has been active, with several inquiries but no formal applications submitted to date. He indicated he would soon be requesting a new civil service entrance examination from the City Manager.

The department recently received three Ford SUVs that were purchased from the Geauga County Sheriff's Office. They were described as well-maintained despite high mileage. There is a possibility of purchasing additional vehicles from Geauga in the future. Chief Rob Stell acknowledged that while the fleet is not in dire condition, it remains an area requiring continued attention. City Manager James Timonere expressed a desire to establish a rotation of replacing approximately three vehicles per year, which would result in a full fleet turnover every eight to ten years.

Firearms and safety equipment were reported to be in good condition. Department-issued pistols were replaced several years ago, patrol rifles are well-maintained, and body armor was replaced through a grant approximately

two years ago. Body armor is replaced every five years. Funding for the firearms purchase came from proceeds from the sale of confiscated weapons.

## **Fire Department – Chief’s Report**

### **AFD April Stats**

Chief Geoff Cannon reported that total calls were up slightly from prior years. The elevated fire loss figures are attributed primarily to the recent boat fire, which was required to be classified as a structure fire under state reporting requirements due to its size. A civilian fire death associated with the accident at the Crow's Nest was also noted as being classified in accordance with stated reporting requirements.

Ambulance call volume and transports are up, and revenue was correspondingly up. The department is currently borrowing an ambulance from Ashtabula Township while one of its own units undergoes front-end repairs. The unit had been flagged during routine preventative maintenance at the City's motor maintenance, where front-end issues were identified that required a facility with a larger lift to complete the actual work.

Fire Chief Geoff Cannon reported that a civil service examination is scheduled for June, with several candidates already signed up. The test is being timed to allow a new hire to complete at least a few shifts before July 22, the date of a planned retirement, so that the incoming employee does not immediately count toward minimum manning requirements.

### **City Manager’s Report**

City Manager James Timonere reported that, in response to a request from Council, a study was conducted regarding the feasibility of eliminating parking on one side of West 13th Street between Lake Avenue and Ohio Avenue. The narrow roadway becomes hazardous when vehicles are parked on both sides. Mailings were sent to all affected residents, with eight residents responding. Five were in favor of the parking restriction and three were opposed. Based on both the survey results and the observations of staff and the Police Chief, the recommendation is to move forward with the restriction. The next steps would be to bring the matter out of committee and proceed with the creation of an ordinance, requiring a first and second reading.

Motion: Vice Chair Kym Foglio moved to move forward with an ordinance to eliminate parking on one side of West 13th Street between Lake Avenue and Ohio Avenue; President John Roskovics seconded.

VOICE VOTE

Motion carried.

City Manager James Timonere updated the committee on the new ladder truck, which has been on order for approximately three years. Chief Geoff Cannon noted that no VIN number has been assigned yet, which effectively starts the official clock for grant paperwork and construction. An August delivery was originally expected, though a fall delivery is considered more realistic.

City Manager James Timonere discussed the need to begin planning for an ambulance replacement. Now ambulances currently exceed \$400,000; however, a refurbished box on a new chassis can be obtained for approximately \$200,000. The primary concern is the condition of the backup ambulance and the extended lead times of up to three years for a brand-new unit. City Manager James Timonere indicated he would be reviewing the current debt service schedule before determining the financing approach. He emphasized that this is a nationwide challenge affecting all departments, not just Ashtabula.

City Manager James Timonere reported difficulty filling seasonal part-time positions across departments including parks, public works, and sanitation. Historically, approximately 20 applicants were received each summer, but only two have applied to date. Approximately six positions are available. City Manager James Timonere noted that a meeting was scheduled for that afternoon with the YMCA to discuss lifeguard services for Walnut Beach. Changes from the national YMCA organization regarding beach and pool guarding standards are expected to result in higher hourly rates, and staffing challenges persist.

City Manager James Timonere shared that Victory Cruise Line has been docking in Cleveland and has invited City law enforcement and fire department personnel to tour a vessel while passengers are off, in order to familiarize them with emergency response protocols aboard a cruise ship. The City is scheduled for at least two cruise ship stops in 2028 and is currently listed on a contingency basis for 2026 and 2027, meaning the ship could dock within 48 hours' notice if an emergency requires it. The current docking location would be Kinder Morgan, with other options within the river being explored. City Manager James Timonere noted that Cleveland hosted 68 cruise ship

dockings last summer and that small cities like Ashtabula tend to receive very favorable feedback from cruise passengers due to their authentic, non-commercialized character.

Chief Geoff Cannon provided an update on the City's police boat, which had new engines installed that week. The vessel will undergo a seaworthiness test at Roaming Shores, followed by a break-in period of approximately two hours at varying RPMs, with additional service intervals at eight and 20 hours. The 20-hour service can be performed locally.

Chief Geoff Cannon also shared that retired Captain Steve Chase received an award from the U.S. Coast Guard for his investigative work related to a fire aboard the Cuyahoga. The investigation contributed to changes in Coast Guard fire codes for ships. Additionally, Chief Geoff Cannon noted that three department personnel will be attending a free ship firefighting course in Chicago involving a simulated cruise ship scenario.

## **City Solicitor's Report**

### **Unfinished Business**

City Manager James Timonere informed the committee that the City's codified ordinances contain a comprehensive section addressing e-bikes, including classifications, permitted operating areas, and applicable rules, all mirroring the Ohio Revised Code. The only recommended change is the repeal of the subsection requiring bicycle licensing, as the requirement is not being utilized and serves no practical administrative purpose. It was suggested that the committee review the section.

Vice Chair Kym Foglio asked for an update on the speed signs for Bridge Street. City Manager James Timonere confirmed that the signs have been ordered with a lead time of 21 working days. The order was placed approximately two to three weeks ago, and delivery is expected soon.

### **New Business**

### **Next Meeting**

**June 11, 2026**

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 a.m. by Committee Chair Terence Guerriero.