



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council Pre-Council Agenda
Monday, June 1, 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 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Absent: Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman

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 reminded Council members that the next Regular Meeting on June 15 will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a public hearing on the 2027 tax budget. The vote on the budget is scheduled for the July 6 meeting.

Administrative Reports

City Manager

City Manager James Timonere presented the following ordinances for consideration:

- An ordinance to renew the employee group health, dental, and vision agreement with Jefferson Health Plan for the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. The renewal carries an increase of approximately 13 percent, attributed largely to an anomalous high-cost claim in the prior year. City Manager James Timonere noted that the City had experienced no rate increases for approximately three consecutive years and had also benefited from premium holidays during that period. He indicated that premium holidays are not anticipated in the coming year due to the elevated claims activity. Council was reassured that employee contributions, co-pays, and other contract terms remain unchanged.
- An ordinance to submit an application to the Ohio Department of Development for an Allocation Grant in the amount of \$150,000 for improvements to the public parking lot on Hulbert Avenue.

The following ordinances will be presented at a future meeting:

- A residential Community Reinvestment Area Tax Agreement with Lindsey Step at 1802 W. 10th Street.
- A residential Community Reinvestment Area Tax Agreement with Tamara Sellent at 1034 Ohio Avenue.

City Manager James Timonere clarified the parking plan for the upcoming Mount Carmel Festival, which is

scheduled for June 11 through June 14. The parish had originally requested that all parking along the west side of Columbus Avenue from E. 23rd Street to Massucci Field be eliminated, which the City did not feel was feasible. As a compromise, no parking will be permitted on the west side of Columbus Avenue between E. 21st Street and E. 23rd Street, and on the north side of E. 21st Street heading east from Columbus Avenue toward Route 11. City Manager James Timonere explained that these restrictions allow for safer pedestrian crossings and emergency vehicle access without unnecessarily eliminating a large volume of parking.

City Manager James Timonere reported on a significant policy finding by the Finance Director, Solicitor's Office, and himself: while enterprise fund monies cannot be transferred out for other purposes, general fund monies may lawfully support enterprise fund projects and expenses. Based on this finding, the administration would like to move forward on two pressing needs. First, the City intends to complete the citywide rollout of curbside recycling for the rest of the City not yet served, at an estimated cost of approximately \$270,000 for the carts plus an additional \$20,000 to \$30,000 for delivery and printed materials. City Manager James Timonere noted outreach to the county Solid Waste District, which previously contributed approximately \$20,000 for delivery and printed materials, with a request for similar support anticipated to be presented at their July meeting. Second, one of the City's oldest garbage trucks suffered a catastrophic computer failure, which City Manager James Timonere deemed uneconomical to repair given the truck's age and the cost of the necessary proprietary MAC dealer repair. A suitable used replacement truck has been identified locally at approximately \$63,500. The vehicle has been comprehensively overhauled, has approximately 60,000 miles on the chassis, and had its engine replaced approximately 23,000 miles ago. The truck will require modifications to accommodate the City's dumpster overhead retrieval system, which is included in the quoted price.

City Manager James Timonere stated that a formal ordinance authorizing the transfer of general fund monies to sanitation would be brought to the next meeting, as the truck purchase is time-sensitive. He also indicated that the administration intends to develop a formal policy establishing guardrails on the use of general fund transfers to enterprise funds in the future.

Vice President Russell Simeone asked if the funds would need to be paid back to the general fund. City Manager James Timonere confirmed that they would not be paid back in this situation due to the Sanitation Fund's inability to do so.

President John Roskovich expressed support for both items as practical necessities but voiced concern about the broader precedent, noting the City's vulnerability to future state revenue reductions and the potential future capital needs of other enterprise funds such as the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He urged that such transfers be made sparingly and for genuine operational needs rather than political considerations. City Manager James Timonere agreed, affirming that the City's prudent fiscal management, including maintaining reserves, is precisely what makes such emergency responses possible, and reiterated that political pressure plays no role in administrative decision-making.

Discussion continued on the matter, with Council members asking about the status of the previously denied grant for the recycling totes. City Manager James Timonere confirmed that re-application would be possible but that approval would not be until the following year, and that future grant applications would be directed toward new trucks given their higher cost. Questions were raised regarding the delivery timeline for the totes once ordered. City Manager James Timonere estimated a two-to-three month lead time based on prior experience, though current supply chain conditions may affect that.

Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio inquired about the operational plan for recycling route integration. City Manager James Timonere explained that existing recycling areas would be consolidated on one Friday and the newly serviced areas would be picked up on the alternate Friday. Once the City is able to purchase new trucks with 60/40 compartments for solid waste and recycling, routes would be redesigned to allow combined recycling and garbage collection on the same day.

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo asked when Highland Beach became City property. City Manager James Timonere stated that he did not have an exact date, but believed the City took ownership some time in the late 1980s when erosion control was being completed in that area. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo reported a road cut repair on W. 58th Street near Washington Avenue that had settled, and indicated she would follow up with City Manager James Timonere by email. She also inquired about contracting out street sweeping services. City Manager James Timonere noted that rental costs for a street sweeper are substantial, and that the current street sweeper is expected to return to service within one to two weeks following repairs. He also noted that new street

sweepers are priced between \$300,000 and \$400,000, and that the City had evaluated a vacuum-style unit as a potential future replacement. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo also raised the question of vacant property counts. City Manager James Timonere indicated that the City tracks vacant properties and has shared such reports with Council previously, noting that the 202 Census, which he acknowledged was impacted by COVID reported a 12 percent vacancy rate. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo relayed a constituent concern regarding an apparent overcrowding situation in a rental property. She was advised that the constituent should contact the Planning and Community Development Office directly so that a housing inspector could look into it.

Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills asked if any drainage improvements would be completed during the Hulbert Avenue parking lot project. City Manager James Timonere confirmed that drainage improvements were already completed. Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills also inquired about the speed signs for Bridge Street. City Manager James Timonere reported that the signs were delivered and staff was assembling them last Friday to prepare for installation this week. Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills asked for an update on the lifeguards for Walnut Beach. City Manager James Timonere stated that he reached out to the YMCA and requested their quote by June 10 so it can be reviewed prior to the June 15 meeting. He stated that to date he has not received the quote. Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills also asked for an update on the Welcome Home Ohio program. City Manager James Timonere stated that the project is going well with a few applicants submitting all the required documentation. The first house is up, and the other two are ordered. Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills noted that Food Truck Mondays are taking place at Smith Field and asked how food truck operators can participate. City Manager James Timonere stated that the event is sponsored by NEO Fund and food truck operators can reach out to NEO Fund for more information and to participate.

Finance Director

Finance Director Vladimir Kan presented the following ordinances for consideration:

- An ordinance to make supplemental changes to appropriations in various funds in the amount of \$435,082.
- An ordinance authorizing elected officials to delegate their certified public records training and certification to appropriate designees. This is a new requirement from the State Auditor's Office. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper noted that regardless of delegation, any public records request received by a Council member should be forwarded, along with the intended records, to the Solicitor's Office for review prior to release.
- An ordinance adopting utility billing write-off and abatement guidelines for the City. Key provisions include full residential trash abatement for vacant properties confirmed to have bimonthly water and sewer below 2 cubic feet (14.96 gallons), as well as adjustments for one-time events such as swimming pool fills and leak adjustments. Abatements require property owners to proactively request them, at which point the City verifies usage to confirm eligibility.
- An ordinance adopting a formal ACH and wire transfer policy for the City.

City Solicitor

City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper reported no litigation currently pending against the City that could result in a significant civil judgment, and no major forfeitures pending in local matters. Criminal asset forfeitures remain pending in federal court. On a previously raised Council inquiry regarding whether a variance on existing moratoriums was possible, the Solicitor advised that no variance mechanism exists. To permit construction on properties exceeding 200 square feet in a moratorium area, Council would need to repeal the relevant moratorium in its entirety.

City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper also provided an update on Harbor Ridge Apartments, which experienced a sanitation sewer failure over the Memorial Day weekend. She noted a marked improvement in the management's response compared to prior incidents, particularly the heating issues the previous fall. On this occasion, management promptly notified the City, retained licensed plumbers to work throughout the weekend, vacated uninhabitable units, and placed displaced residents in hotels at the property's expense. When notified the following Tuesday that repairs remained incomplete, management extended hotel accommodations for an additional week. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper acknowledged that the underlying issue, a lack of proactive maintenance, remains unresolved. Council members expressed concern about the ongoing hardship for residents, including logistical challenges such as school attendance and meal costs. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper confirmed that before residents can return, the building must be inspected and cleared by City building inspectors, the fire marshal, and the health department. She noted that the only remaining legal recourse if conditions do not improve would be to urge the Attorney General's Office to pursue closure, though that would itself create significant displacement issues.

Clerk of Council

Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg announced a ribbon cutting ceremony at Patina on the Lake, located at 1467 Bridge Street, on June 26 at 9:30 a.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

June 3

July 1

August 5

September 2

Finance & Personnel

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

Members: Chair Foglio, Vice Chair DiGiacomo, Roskovics

June 19 - CANCELLED

July 17

August 21

September 18

Public Works/Public Utilities/Cable/Schools

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

Members: Chair Mills, Vice Chair Guerriero, Roskovics

June 23

July 28

August 25

September 22

Safety Forces

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

Members: Chair Guerriero, Vice Chair Foglio, Roskovics

June 11

July 9

August 13

September 10

Planning Commission and Ashtabula Historic Preservation Commission

President John Roskovics reported that the Historic Preservation Commission noted ongoing improvements to a building on Bridge Street housing the antique and decor shop Patina on the Lake, which was described as harmonizing well with the district's architectural character. The Planning Commission, at its most recent meeting, approved the following items: an electronic sign for People's Church on West Avenue; an electronic sign for Guerriero Funeral Home on Carpenter Road; and a building project on 4th Street, conditioned on the applicant making progress on restoring the building prior to receiving permits for additional projects.

Discussion of New Business/Proposed Legislation

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo requested that the current bicycle and recreational vehicle regulations, including motorized bikes, e-bikes, and scooters of varying classifications, be reviewed by the Safety Forces Committee, noting that the regulations have evolved significantly. Committee Chair Terence Guerriero agreed to discuss the matter at the next meeting. City Manager James Timonere noted that Class 1,2 and 3 e-bike classifications are already addressed in the City's codified ordinances per state guidance, and that any modification would be at Council's discretion.

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo also proposed that the City consider a moratorium on data centers and referred the matter to the Community Development / Economic Development / Parks & Recreation Committee for discussion. City Manager James Timonere provided context, noting that data centers typically require in excess of 100 acres and that no formal inquiry for a large-scale data center has been received. He noted that the matter would naturally be addressed through the ongoing zoning update process and that many of the environmental concerns historically associated with data centers, particularly water consumption, have been significantly reduced

by industry changes. President John Roskovics suggested the state may also be developing policy on the issue and encouraged the committee to gather information from other communities.

Discussion of Old Business/Legislation on for 2nd Reading

Discussion for the Good of the Order

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo offered formal recognition of the individuals who contributed to the success of the 2026 Memorial Day Parade, which was organized by the Parks & Recreation Board.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m. by President John Roskovics. Ashtabula City Council will meet again on Monday, June 15, 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: June 15, 2026

ATTESTED BY: John S. Roskovics
John S. Roskovics, President of Council

ATTESTED BY: Stacy L. Millberg
Stacy L. Millberg, Clerk of Council