



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Safety Forces Committee
Thursday, July 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 8:31 a.m. by Committee Chair Terence Guerriero.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair: Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Vice Chair: 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 June Stats

Chief Rob Stell reported a high call volume of over 1,800 calls for service during the month of June, which he attributed to the summer season. Traffic arrests and drug-related arrests were noted as slightly above typical levels, consistent with the increased call volume. There were 51 adult traffic arrests recorded, though Chief Rob Stell noted that speeding citations specifically remained relatively low.

Chief Rob Stell discussed the formation of a new targeted traffic unit, made up of six officers, which will focus enforcement on identified problem areas throughout the City, with Bridge Street cited as a primary example. The unit is expected to become operational toward the end of summer or early fall, as current staffing constraints due to injuries and overtime demands have delayed the launch.

The department is currently operating short-staffed, with three officers on injury leave. Additionally, the department recently separated from two employees and saw the retirement of a school resource officer. Chief Rob Stell indicated that two replacement positions are actively being filled, and that one officer currently in field training is expected to move to full duty within approximately one month.

Chief Rob Stell reported significantly improved fireworks enforcement efforts over the Fourth of July holiday, with 18 individuals criminally charged and a substantial quantity of fireworks seized. This represented a marked improvement over prior years, when citations typically numbered only two or three.

Chief Rob Stell reported that approximately 20 golf cart permits have been issued to date, with no citations having been issued. Several verbal warnings have been given. City Manager James Timonere noted that golf carts operated by companies contracted by festivals are exempt from the City's individual permitting requirement under the current ordinance.

Committee Chair Terence Guerriero raised a concern about counterfeit money being passed at a convenience store on W. 19th Street. Chief Rob Stell indicated he was not aware of the specific report and agreed to follow up with detectives.

Chief Rob Stell announced that a civil service entrance exam for police officer candidates is scheduled for the end of July, with a sign-up deadline of July 17. Currently, only two applications have been received, and additional candidates are being encouraged to apply.

Fire Department – Chief's Report

AFD June Stats

Chief Geoff Cannon reported that overall call volume is at an all-time high and is expected to continue rising through the remainder of the year. Ambulance responses and corresponding revenue are also trending upward. Fire incidents are slightly down. Mutual aid activity is in line with expectations.

Chief Geoff Cannon reported that interviews have been completed for nine candidates who passed the physical agility test. Four or five candidates were described as strong prospects. The civil service list is scheduled to be certified next Thursday, with a job offer anticipated to be extended immediately to replace a firefighter retiring at the end of the month. Two promotional advancements are also planned for the beginning of next month; a lieutenant will be promoted to captain, and an engineer will be promoted to lieutenant, with a new hire at the entry level to backfill the vacancy created by the retirement.

President John Roskovics asked about the recent drowning at Walnut Beach. Chief Geoff Cannon provided an overview of the department's response. The exact circumstances of the incident were not fully determined. The victim had a boogie board, and the easterly winds creating unusual water conditions may have been a contributing factor. The victim was extracted by other swimmers before the rescue boat was deployed.

City Manager's Report

City Manager James Timonere reported on the planned installation of radar speed display signs. One sign will be mounted on a bracket affixed to an existing speed limit sign on the eastbound side of Bridge Street, near the public parking lot, to address speeding concerns in that corridor. A second sign will serve as a roving unit, repositioned around the City approximately weekly. The signs are battery-operated with a five-to-seven-day battery life. The City purchased a data package, a one-time cost with no annual subscription, enabling download of speed and timing data to identify patterns of speeding behavior. Installation of the Bridge Street sign is anticipated within the next week.

City Manager James Timonere also noted final preparations are underway for the Wine and Walleye Festival, including coordination of police coverage and logistics. He indicated that festival organizers have requested that bikes, scooters, and golf carts be restricted within the festival boundaries.

City Solicitor's Report

Unfinished Business

New Business

City Manager James Timonere also addressed the upcoming reconfiguration of the intersection at E. 24th Street and Harbor Avenue. He clarified that the change is limited in scope: the only modification is that southbound traffic on Harbor Avenue turning westbound onto E. 24th Street will now be required to make a full stop, rather than a yield. This change was not the result of a discretionary traffic study, but was instead identified as a code compliance requirement during the reconstruction of the intersection following a DUI incident that destroyed the existing signal equipment. The installation contractor and the City's engineering contact both flagged that the prior configuration, which combined a yield and a stop at the same corner without two lanes, does not conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). City Manager James Timonere noted that, having been made aware of the non-conformance, the City would bear liability if the intersection were rebuilt to the prior standard. All other traffic movements at the intersection remain unchanged.

Next Meeting**August 13, 2026****Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m. by Committee Chair Terence Guerriero.