



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council Pre-Council Agenda
Monday, July 6, 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 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo
Absent: None

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper, Finance Director Vladimir Kan and Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors

President's Report and Regular Meeting Review

President John Roskovics addressed the vacancy created by the resignation of Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio and reminded Council of the procedural implications of operating with six members: A 3-to-3 tie vote constitutes a failing vote, and any measure passing by a 4-to-2 margin is subject to a 30-day waiting period before implantation or action may be taken.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman questioned whether Mrs. Foglio's resignation and its timing warranted further investigation, specifically whether any votes she cast while potentially no longer residing in her ward should be considered valid. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper clarified that it is within Council's authority to conduct such an investigation and make a determination, but that the matter would be entirely Council's to pursue. She explained that residency for Council qualification purposes is not merely ownership of property, but is defined by where a member actually lives. President John Roskovics indicated he was not personally concerned about the matter, noting that Mrs. Foglio still owns the home on Walnut Boulevard, that she had consulted with both the City Solicitor and personal legal counsel, and that he was assuming her actions were within proper procedure.

Administrative Reports

City Manager

City Manager James Timonere presented the following ordinances for consideration:

- An ordinance authorizing the disposal of obsolete and unneeded vehicles. Approximately four vehicles are included, one of which is the old sewer jet. The vehicles will be set for auction or bid solicitation.
- An ordinance authorizing a renewal agreement with EPLS, LLC for prescription benefit consultant services. City Manager James Timonere explained that EPLS assists when employees require high-cost medications by shopping for more affordable options and compelling insurance carriers to cover those costs. The renewal would establish contract language not currently in place. The service does not affect access to drugs in emergency situations; it applies to ongoing prescription needs.

- A resolution to adopt the updated Ashtabula County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The plan was prepared by the County EMA and has been reviewed by City staff. City Manager James Timonere suggested inviting EMA staff to a future Community Development / Economic Development / Parks & Recreation Committee meeting to present the plan's highlights and address public questions. It was noted that some details would not be made public due to security reasons.
- An ordinance authorizing emergency repairs to the HVAC system at the Annex Building. City Manager James Timonere explained that during the recent heat wave, several stages of the HVAC units atop the Annex Building were found to be non-functional. Ziegler Heating and Cooling provided a quote for repairs in the amount not to exceed \$14,087, to be funded from Fund 412, with the intention of seeking reimbursement through the annual NOPEC grant. City Manager James Timonere noted that full rooftop unit replacements would exceed \$100,000 per unit, but it is something that needs to be considered. He explained that internal office reconfigurations over time have also impacted airflow and may require ductwork modifications.

The following ordinance will be presented at a future meeting:

- An ordinance authorizing a contract with Brobst Tree Service for Round 3 tree removal. City Manager James Timonere explained that Brobst Tree Service submitted the lowest and best bid of \$21,100 for the removal of 13 damaged, dead, or hazardous trees from City tree lawns. This will be funded from the Public Works fund.

City Manager James Timonere requested a voice vote to appoint Jacob Dinsmore to the Parks and Recreation Board, effective immediately, with a term expiring May 21, 2030. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo noted that Mr. Dinsmore has been a consistent attendee at both Parks Board and City Council meetings and has been an active participant in City government.

Motion: President John Roskovics asked for a voice vote on the appointment of Jacob Dinsmore to the Parks and Recreation Board.

Discussion: None

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion carried.

City Manager James Timonere informed Council that the replacement of the flashing lights at the Mary Street Hill intersection (E. 24th Street and Harbor Avenue) required a review of traffic flow to bring the intersection into compliance with the current Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices standards. Under the new configuration, traffic on E. 24th Street heading up the hill retains right of way when turning right or left onto Harbor Avenue. However, southbound Harbor Avenue traffic approaching the intersection will now be required to come to a full stop, rather than a caution/yield for the downhill turn. A stop bar and stop sign will be installed, accompanied by signage indicating that traffic from the right does not stop. The lights are currently bagged pending installation of all required equipment. A public notification is planned for the City's social media channels.

Additional items raised during discussion included:

- A downed tree trunk on E. 23rd Street was reported to be leaning on lower utility lines. City Manager James Timonere noted that lower lines are typically the responsibility of phone and cable providers, who are often slow to respond. He agreed to look into it to possibly expedite removal.
- Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero asked about Hometown Hero banners, which are displayed in surrounding communities including Conneaut, Ashtabula Township, and Painesville. City Manager James Timonere explained that this is a vendor-managed program where a company handles sales, installation, and coordination with the electric company as the banners are typically displayed on utility poles. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo noted that she has information on the program and that the Parks Board had

previously expressed interest as several of the members are veterans. She indicated a willingness to lead the effort. Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills agreed to work with her on it.

Motion: Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero moved to refer the Hometown Hero banner project to the Community Development / Economic Development / Parks and Recreation Committee; Vice President Russell Simeone seconded.

Discussion: None

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: President John Roskovics, Vice President Russell Simeone, Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills, Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills asked about the status of the speed sign for Bridge Street. City Manager James Timonere explained he is working with staff to determine a location for the sign as well as additional equipment that may be needed to download the data. Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills also asked about the status of lifeguard staffing at Walnut Beach in light of the recent drowning. City Manager James Timonere stated that they began guarding the beach the previous week and the YMCA has stated it is their priority to staff the beach. Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills thanked City Manager James Timonere and Planning and Community Development staff for their quick response to grass-cutting complaints. City Manager James Timonere mentioned that staff is working with the City Solicitor's office to potentially amend the grass-cutting notification ordinance to eliminate the mandatory first-notice mailing requirement, which is costly in both postage and staff time. A public notice posted annually in the newspaper would remain. Lastly, Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills inquired about the number of golf cart registrations the City has issued. City Manager James Timonere stated that he would have the police chief prepare a report for the Safety Forces Committee meeting later in the week.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman asked if the tree removal request is connected to the tree ordinance in the parks. City Manager James Timonere clarified that it is not connected. The removal request is for tree lawns. The ordinance pertaining to the parks is specific to trees removed in the parks. He explained that trees are being discussed as part of the new zoning and noted the preference for native, utility-friendly dwarf trees (approximately 8 to 10 feet in height) that would not conflict with overhead power lines.

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo stated that residents continue to express concerns about speeding in neighborhoods. City Manager James Timonere stated that he will have Chief Rob Stell discuss, at the Safety Forces Committee meeting, a group the police department has put together to address traffic. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo also said she is receiving ongoing complaints regarding bikes and scooters being operated on sidewalks. Residents are concerned about pedestrian safety. She also stated that several residents have asked about the moratorium on thrift stores as one recently opened on Main Avenue. City Manager James Timonere explained that he would look at the legislation; however, the City was not notified prior to the store opening. He agreed to follow up. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo also asked about the status of a plaza near Smith Field. City Manager James Timonere explained that the property owners have been working on it for approximately eight months and there is a tenant in one of the units. He stated that a lot of work has been done to the interior. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo also asked about the Bunker Hill Market property. City Manager James Timonere explained that code enforcement addresses the property several times a year. Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo also raised concerns about golf carts, specifically regarding excessive numbers of passengers, and the operation of unlicensed carts. President John Roskovics reminded Council and residents that when violations are observed, the appropriate response is to contact the police department directly. He noted that earlier in the summer he learned there had been 14 inspections conducted.

Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills raised concerns about conditions along the Park Avenue corridor, noting deteriorating properties including Park Haven and the former Carlisle's building, as well as properties listed for sale. City Manager James Timonere confirmed that Park Haven is in active litigation, and that JCI is regularly contacted regarding maintenance.

City Manager James Timonere noted that a nomination has been submitted for the Main Avenue census tract to be designated under the new round of the Opportunity Zone 2 federal program. The previous Opportunity Zone designation covered a largely residential tract with limited development potential. The new tract offers substantially greater development opportunities. Support has been sought from the county commissioners, Growth Partnership,

Lake to River, and Eastgate. Final designation will be made by the Governor.

City Manager James Timonere also provided an update on the Welcome Home Ohio project on Station Avenue. He explained that work is nearing completion, noting that the electrical work was completed the previous week. Twelve prospective buyers are in various stages of the approval process. Work on additional units has not begun yet.

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 \$802,685.75.
- An ordinance repealing and replacing Ordinance No. 2026-88, authorizing compensation, salaries, and wages for employees of the Ashtabula Municipal Court and Probation Divisions.
- An ordinance adopting the tax budget of the City of Ashtabula and submitting it to the Ashtabula County Budget Commission.

President John Roskovics asked for clarification on the Municipal Court payroll ordinance. City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper explained the background: the judge issued a court order making pay changes effective immediately; Council initially tabled the ordinance, but then approved it, but a 30-day waiting period applied due to the vote margin. As a result, at least one court employee has not been receiving the compensation ordered by the judge. The new ordinance corrects the effective date to May 4, 2026, and will allow for payment of back wages owed.

Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero raised concern about the significant amount of money being requested in the supplemental appropriation ordinance. Finance Director Vladimir Kan clarified that the figure appears inflated due to required accounting practices: the recycling tote purchase and the garbage truck purchase each must be reflected twice, once as a transfer out of the General Fund and again as an expenditure in the Sanitation Fund. The actual net impact on the General Fund is significantly less than the stated total. Additional line items include fuel cost increases attributable to market price changes and a health insurance line adjustment for a position reclassified from part-time to full-time.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman asked for clarification on how the carryover funds from the paving levy are used. City Manager James Timonere clarified that the 2026 funds have not been expended yet as the paving project has not started. He further explained that funds from the second half of the prior year and the first half of the current year are combined to pay for the current year's paving project. The carryover is typically the second half collected each year. He stated that if an emergency were to happen, there is that cushion, but that would lessen the funds available for the following year.

Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills also asked for clarification regarding a court intern stipend in the new payroll ordinance but not in the prior version. Finance Director Vladimir Kaan confirmed the stipend ranges from \$500 to \$2,500 depending on hours, and is paid from the Court's special fund. The stipend is structured as a non-ppensionable lump sum for a college intern.

City Solicitor

No report.

Clerk of Council

No report.

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

August 5

September 2

October 7

November 4

December 2

Committee Chair Jane DiGiacomo provided the report.

Finance & Personnel

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

Members: Chair Roskovics, Vice Chair DiGiacomo, Vacant

July 17

August 21

September 18

October 16

November 20

December 18

Public Works/Public Utilities/Cable/Schools

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

Members: Chair Mills, Vice Chair Guerriero, Roskovics

July 28

August 25

September 22

October 27

November 24

December 22

Committee Chair Jodi Mills provided the report.

Safety Forces

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

Members: Chair Guerriero, Vice Chair Roskovics, Vacant

July 9

August 13

September 10

October 8

November 12

December 10

Planning Commission and Ashtabula Historic Preservation Commission

Discussion of New Business/Proposed Legislation

Ward 5 Councilor Jane DiGiacomo led a discussion on the proposed ordinance that would authorize the purchase of recycling and rubbish containers and expand curbside recycling citywide. She advocated strongly for the expansion, framing it as a matter of equitable service delivery. She noted that residents in Wards 3, 4, and 5 have paid the same fees as the rest of the City for nine years, while only Wards 1, 2, and part of Ward 3 receive recycling services. She stated that it comes down to fairness, equal fees should mean equal services. She confirmed that she had consulted Finance Director Vladimir Kan, whose response indicated that the City could afford the purchase without jeopardizing financial stability.

Ward 3 Councilor RoLesia Holman expressed similar support, emphasizing the environmental and community benefit of citywide recycling.

President John Roskovics objected to characterizations of the disparity as favoritism, calling it offensive to Council and the administration. He noted that all residents receive the same core garbage collection service and pay the same fees. He stated his personal support for recycling but expressed reluctance to draw from the General Fund carryover given fiscal uncertainties at the state and federal levels, and in light of other outstanding capital needs including a new street sweeper, ambulance, and public works building.

City Manager James Timonere acknowledged that nine years is long enough and stated that he would not have proposed moving forward if he did not believe the City had the financial capacity. He noted that the total cost of the

containers is approximately \$296,030, with approximately \$60,000 already set aside in a recycling grant account, leaving approximately \$230,000 to be drawn from the General Fund carryover. He reported that the General Fund carryover currently stands at approximately \$6 million, up from just \$200,000 when he became City Manager. He noted prior experience with recycling showed a 20 to 25 percent reduction in landfill expenses and observed that the City pays significant tipping fees as the largest contributor to the county landfill. He confirmed that the Ashtabula County Solid Waste District has agreed to cover the cost of cart delivery and educational materials to residents, as they did during the original rollout. The operational rollout will involve a transition to Monday through Thursday garbage collection with alternating Friday recycling pickups by area, phased in before the new carts are delivered. He also clarified that residents will be constrained to one 64-gallon refuse cart and one 64-gallon recycling cart, whereas current non-recycling areas are permitted up to three 32-gallon containers or nine bags.

Ward 4 Councilor Jodi Mills shared the same mixed feelings, acknowledging her strong personal support for recycling while noting the City is currently deferring other large capital expenditures. She indicated she has faith in Finance Director Vladimir Kan but was still on the fence as far as her decision on the matter.

City Manager James Timonere also indicated he would like Council to consider adopting a formal policy framework governing the use of General Fund carryover for expenditures of this nature, noting Finance Director Vladimir Kan had drafted an example policy.

Vice President Russell Simeone raised a question regarding existing ordinances outlining when residents may place trash at the curb. City Manager James Timonere confirmed that the current rule is 6 p.m. the evening before pickup, and containers must be brought in by the end of the day on the day of pickup. He also indicated that placement and storage of containers is an area to be addressed in the forthcoming zoning update.

Discussion of Old Business/Legislation on for 2nd Reading

Discussion for the Good of the Order

City Manager James Timonere noted that he forgot to mention during his report that he is requesting that the moratorium on accessory structures over 200 square feet be repealed. He explained that the ordinance has created a bit of a hostile environment in the office. There have also been some issues with the County Building Department issuing building permits before the City issued the zoning permit.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m. by Council President Roskovics. Ashtabula City Council will meet again on Monday, July 20, 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:

July 20, 2026

ATTESTED BY:

John S. Roskovics
John S. Roskovics, President of Council

ATTESTED BY:

Stacy L. Millberg
Stacy L. Millberg, Clerk of Council