

President of Council
MICHAEL KLINE

Vice President of Council
TANYA TAYLOR DRAPER

Clerk of Council
NICHOLAS AIELLO

City of Willoughby Hills

Council
JULIE A. BELICH
JOE JARMUSZKIEWICZ
DANIEL KNECHT
VICKI MILLER
KATHLEEN SIVO

Regular Council Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2026

The Regular Council Meeting was called to order on Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 7:19 p.m. in Council Chambers. **Council President Kline** presided.

Call to Order 7:19 p.m. (0:10)

Cell Phone Reminder to Turn off Devices

Pledge of Allegiance (Audio: 0:15)

ROLL CALL (Audio: 0:40)

Members Present: Councilman Dan Knecht, Councilwoman Vicki Miller, Councilwoman Sivo, Council Vice President Tanya Taylor Draper, Councilwoman Julie A. Belich, Councilman Joe Jarmuszkiewicz, Council President Michael Kline

Also Present: Finance Director Bruce Scott and Law Director Michael A. Kenny Jr.

Absent: Mayor Hallum

DISPOSITION OF THE JOURNAL (Audio: 1:05)

Minutes of the February 12, 2026 Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation.
Minutes of the February 12, 2026 Regular Council Meeting.

Motion made by **Councilwoman Miller** seconded by **Councilman Knecht**, to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2026 Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation.

Discussion on the Motion:

No discussion

Roll Call: **AYES: Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Belich, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline**
NAYS: None
Vote: 7/0

Motion passed to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2026 Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation.

Motion made by **Councilwoman Miller**, seconded by **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz**, to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2026 Regular Council Meeting.

Discussion on the Motion:

No discussion.

Roll Call: **AYES: Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Belich, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline**
NAYS: None
Vote: 7/0

Motion passed to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2026 Regular Council Meeting.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE

- Email dated 02/18/2026 from Mehollin, Karen Lucas Resolution
- Email dated 02/18/2026 from Mehollin, Karen Fw: Mayor's Report - February 13, 2026
- Email dated 02/18/2026 from Nancy Erikson Re: SANCTIONING GROUP DRAFT LETTER
- Email dated 02/17/2026 from Lloyd, Katherine RE: WH PCABR Meeting 2/19/26 THURSDAY
- Email dated 02/17/2026 from Joe Lester Re: Housing Council 2026 Meeting
- Email dated 02/17/2026 from Forgy, Joleen Re: Sanctioning Groups
- Email dated 02/16/2026 from Brianna Tavares Law Director
- Email dated 02/16/2026 from Dave Walters Re: Nature Works 32nd Round Application Review
- Email dated 02/16/2026 from Grubiss, Mark Re: Key for Mailboxes
- Email dated 02/15/2026 from Willoughby Hills Re: FW: Special Meeting Monday, February 16, at 5:45 p.m.
- Email dated 02/13/2026 from Michney, Sharen OWNED PRINTERS - SUPPLIES
- Email dated 02/13/2026 from Ray Somich RE: Chipotle CRA
- Email dated 02/13/2026 from Forgy, Joleen Re: Sanctioning Groups
- Email dated 02/13/2026 from Hallum, Chris Mayor's Report - February 12, 2026
- Email dated 02/13/2026 from Scott, Bruce Elected Official Rate Increase
- Email dated 02/13/2026 from LiquorLicensingMailUnit@com.ohio.gov Automatic reply: Willoughby Hills Approval of Grocery Outlet Liquor License TFOI
- Email dated 02/12/2026 from Cleveland IronLeague Re: Housing Council Meeting Minutes
- Email dated 02/12/2026 from Joe Lester Re: Housing Council Meeting Minutes
- Email dated 02/12/2026 from Jarmuszkiewicz, Joe Re: Speed camera fines
- Email dated 02/12/2026 from Scott, Bruce RE: Finance questions
- Email dated 02/12/2026 from Lloyd, Katherine RE: News Herald Address update
- Email dated 02/12/2026 from Thomas Lobe Re: New hire Change
- Email dated 02/11/2026 from Stergar, Jeff Aflac Insurance Rep - Chris Murray
- Email dated 02/11/2026 from Lloyd, Katherine FW: WH PCABR Meeting 2/5/26 Thursday - 7:00 PM

Email dated 02/11/2026 from Scott, Bruce BUDGET QUESTIONS
Email dated 02/11/2026 from Scott, Bruce 2026 Proposed Budget Updates
Email dated 02/10/2026 from Jenna Bing Re: Police and Service Renovation Project Discussion Dates Discussion Continued
Email dated 02/09/2026 from Ray Somich RE: Chipotle CRA
Email dated 02/08/2026 from Gloria Majeski Ordinance 2026-008 Regarding Sanctioning Rules at WH Community Center
Email dated 02/06/2026 from Gandee, Robert RE: Finance Committee Meeting Questions
Email dated 02/06/2026 from Mehollin, Karen Re: Agenda, Legislation, and Minutes for Next Week
Email dated 02/05/2026 from Lloyd, Katherine 2 Reviews signed 250205 PCABR
Email dated 02/04/2026 from Mary Vicic Fwd: The Train Car Wine Bar @Spirits in Willoughby
Email dated 02/04/2026 from Lloyd, Katherine WH PCABR Meeting 2/5/26 - Thursday.
Email dated 02/04/2026 from Commission and Architectural Board of Review
Email dated 02/04/2026 from Jarmuszkiewicz, Joe Re: Recreation Report
Email dated 02/04/2026 from Grubiss, Mark RE: Limestone, Salt, and Asphalt
Email dated 02/03/2026 from Pietro DiFranco RE: Bowen Legislation for Next Week

PUBLIC PORTION #1 (Audio: 2:55)

An opportunity for the public to address Council concerning anything pertaining to tonight's agenda.

Public Portion #1 opened at 7:04 p.m.

Nobody spoke for Public Portion.

Public Portion #1 closed at 7:04 p.m.

MAYOR'S REPORT

- **No Mayor's report.**

LAW DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **No Law Director's report.**

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Audio: 3:40)

- **Finance Director Scott:** I am in support of Ordinance 2026-001-Amended which pertains to the budget. This is on third reading. I would like to move this along. I appreciate everyone's help and work in getting this accomplished.

CITY ENGINEER'S REPORT

- **City Engineer DiFranco:** The Chardon Rd. bridge over 271 will be closed starting Monday until approximately November.
- **Councilwoman Miller:** Any word on when the work will commence on River Rd?
- **City Engineer DiFranco:** It should be around May. They did award the project to Karvo Paving.

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS REPORTS / COMMITTEE REPORTS (Audio 4:40)

PC-ABR reported by Council Vice President Taylor Draper

- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** I would like to report on Planning and Zoning Commission Architectural Board of Review. The group met last Thursday, February 19. During the Architectural Board portion of the meeting, we approved:
 - A new restaurant at 29007 Chardon Rd. called Jardee and Moes. We approved the design plan of this restaurant. This is formally the Local Tavern. It is going to be a beautiful place.
 - We approved the Burlington sign at the Shoppes of Willoughby Hills at 28221 Chardon Rd. We approved the signage at the front and back of the building. Ray Somich gave us an update on some of the progress in that area. He predicts the AutoZone and the Grocery Outlet will be open at the end of April. They have already handed the building space over to the tenants and they are pulling in their supplies and equipment. He predicts the AutoZone will be a mega center and house administrative staff. There will be retail sale there. He also predicts mechanic shops will be coming to that area for supplies.
 - The Five Below and the Burlington have about six months to go with preparing the building for the tenants. He is predicting that Five Below will open at the end of April and the Burlington will open on Memorial Day. I am very happy to see this happen.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** For the Planning Commission portion of the meeting, there was a finding of fact from attorney Clark Rice who is involved in the Dollar General lawsuit. The finding of fact is a step by step account and record of all the residents', business', and Commission's questions and concerns, along with all records of drawings and everything that was discussed at those two sessions. This will be going down to the Lake County Court of Common Pleas. It will be heard by Judge Condon. It needed to be signed because we needed to verify that all the information was correct. Dollar General sued the City for that lot down the street. This is to be continued.

Recreation Commission reported by Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz

- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** The sanctioning letters have been sent out along with the applications. We would like to get them back as soon as possible.
- This Sunday, March 8, is the pancake breakfast. Presale tickets are \$9.00 and it is \$10.00 at the door. Everyone is welcome. There is no seating. As you come, you get served. It is all you can eat. There is a SignUpGenius on the City website.

Beautification Committee reported by Council Vice President Taylor Draper

- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** Beautification is currently composed of Vicki Miller, Councilwoman Belich, and myself. We have seen a need to include all of Council moving forward with all the projects going on around the campus. I just want to make sure everybody is okay with becoming a member of the Beautification Committee. Thank you.

No objections were stated. All members of Council agreed to be on the Beautification Committee.

Finance Committee Report by Council President Kline

No report.

WHISPER reported by Councilwoman Miller

No report.

Deer Management Committee reported by Councilwoman Belich

No report.

Business Subcommittee – reported by Councilwoman Sivo

No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: (Audio: 11:00)

- No unfinished business.

LEGISLATION: (Audio 11:05)

ORDINANCE 2026-001 – AMENDED – THIRD READING

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN CITY SERVICES FOR THE FISCAL PERIOD BEGINNING JANUARY 1ST THROUGH DECEMBER 31ST OF 2026; REPEALING ALL LEGISLATION INCONSISTENT HEREWITH.

Motion made by **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz**, seconded by **Councilman Knecht**, to adopt Ordinance 2026-001-Amended.

Discussion on the Motion:

- **Councilwoman Miller:** I appreciate the detail and the well put together budget that we got to examine over the last couple months.
- **Council President Kline:** I want to thank Chief Naegele, Chief Gandee, Road Superintendent Grubiss, Finance Director Scott, and everyone on Council for the time and effort they put into reviewing the budget. It is a daunting task to get through all of it. Looking back, the department heads showed incredibly detailed knowledge of their budgets. That always provides greater assurance. I want to also compliment Finance Director Scott for another year of surplus. That is seven years in a row. This is an indication of how well the financial record keeping of the City is being done.

Roll Call: AYES: Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Belich, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline

NAYS: None

Vote: 7/0

Ordinance 2026-001-Amended has been adopted.

ORDINANCE 2026-003 – AMENDED – THIRD READING

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS, OHIO AND RICHARD L. BOWEN + ASSOCIATES, INC. TO ACCEPT THE ARCHITECTURAL FEES PROPOSAL FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT RENOVATION AND EXPANSION PROJECT AND THE SERVICE GARAGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion made by Councilwoman Miller, seconded by Vice President Taylor Draper, to adopt Ordinance 2026-003-Amended.

Discussion on the Motion:

No discussion.

Roll Call: **AYES:** Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Belich, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline
NAYS: None
Vote: 7/0

Ordinance 2026-003-Amended has been adopted.

ORDINANCE 2026-007 – AMENDED – SECOND READING

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS, PART 1 ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, TITLE THREE-LEGISLATIVE, CHAPTER 121 COUNCIL BY ADDING SECTION 121.04 TITLED “CONSENT AGENDA” AUTHORIZING THE USE OF A CONSENT AGENDA FOR THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion made by Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz, seconded by Council Vice President Taylor Draper, to waive the Three Reading Rule on Ordinance 2026-007-Amended.

Discussion of Motion:

- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** The consent agenda will allow us to consolidate general ordinances without having to waive the three reading rule. They still have the option of being put on the regular agenda if members of Council would want to do so.

Roll Call: **AYES:** Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline
NAYS: Belich
Vote: 6/1

The Three Reading Rule on Ordinance 2026-009 has been waived.

Motion made by Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz, seconded by Council Vice President Taylor Draper, to adopt Ordinance 2026-007-Amended.

Discussion on the Motion:

No discussion.

Roll Call: **AYES:** Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline
NAYS: Belich
Vote: 6/1

Ordinance 2026-007-Amended has been adopted.

ORDINANCE 2026-008 – AMENDED FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING PART NINE - STREETS, UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES CODE, TITLE FIVE - OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES, CHAPTER 941 - USE OF PUBLIC PROPERTY, OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS, REPEALING CONFLICTING LEGISLATION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion made by Council Vice President Taylor Draper, seconded by Councilwoman Miller, to waive the Three Reading Rule on Ordinance 2026-008-Amended.

Discussion on the Motion:

- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** I understand that some of the sanctioning groups are signing up and I think it is important to get this passed. I do hope that we get reports. We can revisit this later in the year to make sure everything is working and see if there are any changes we need to make.

**Roll Call: AYES: Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Belich, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline
 NAYS: None
 Vote: 7/0**

The Three Reading Rule on Ordinance 2026-008-Amended has been waived.

Motion made by Council Vice President Taylor Draper, seconded by Councilwoman Miller, to adopt Ordinance 2026-008-Amended.

Discussion on the Motion:

No discussion.

**Roll Call: AYES: Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Belich, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline
 NAYS: None
 Vote: 7/0**

Ordinance 2026-008-Amended has been adopted.

ORDINANCE 2026-012 – FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE NEW SANITARY SEWERAGE RATE FOR THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2026, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- Ordinance 2026-012 will remain on first reading.

RESOLUTION 2026-003 – FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION HONORING MICHAEL LUCAS FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE AS LAW DIRECTOR FOR THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS AND COMMENDING HIM UPON HIS RETIREMENT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion made by Councilwoman Miller seconded by Councilwoman Belich, to waive the Three Reading Rule on Resolution 2026-003.

Discussion of Motion:

- **Councilwoman Miller:** I am in favor of passing this as we have Mike Lucas scheduled to be at our next council meeting for the presentation of this resolution.

Roll Call: **AYES: Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Belich, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline**
 NAYS: None
 Vote: 7/0

The Three Reading Rule on Resolution 2026-003 has been waived.

Motion made by Council Vice President Taylor Draper, seconded by Councilwoman Miller, to adopt Resolution 2026-003.

Discussion on the Motion:

- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** I would like to thank Mr. Lucas. When he started, we were all relatively new. He did a good job helping us out.

Roll Call: **AYES: Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Belich, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline**
 NAYS: None
 Vote: 7/0

Resolution 2026-003 has been adopted.

NEW BUSINESS (Audio 21:50)

- **No new business.**

PUBLIC PORTION #2 (Audio 22:00)

An opportunity for the public to address Council with any comments, issues or concerns.

Public Portion #2 opened at 7:23 p.m.

- **Jen Varro 2890 SOM Center Road:** I would like to address a serious issue that occurred on January 26. An innocent person who was simply trying to get to work was severely impacted by the reckless and negligent speed of a city snow plow when snow was thrown over the bridge and shattered their windshield while traveling on 271 South. While I appreciate the dedication of our city workers, this incident was unacceptable. Thank goodness we are not dealing with a wrongful death claim. This is clearly a negligence issue that we need to extinguish. I reached out to ODOT and they confirmed that the fence is solely a pedestrian fence. Thus, the excuse does not hold up for why snow was thrown over the bridge. In addition, speed was a clear factor. Per ODOT snow plows should always reduce speed when going over a bridge and push snow across it onto the roadway where it should be dumped safely. I spoke about the excessive speed of snow plows at a previous council meeting on January 22, where I was politely ignored. With the City's knowledge of this claim, we must mitigate our damages by reaching out to our own insurance company as that is our duty and responsibility to avoid further exposure and costs and report it immediately. I urge the mayor, who has the authority, to settle Mr. Schroeder's claim for \$1,200.00 without delay. Please do what is right before this minor costs escalates into a much bigger financial burden for the City.

- In addition, I am following up on an additional concern regarding a home at 34210 Giovanni Avenue. This property was administratively approved and shockingly never presented to the Planning and Zoning Review Commission. When I inquired, I was told the delay was due to holidays, an untrue claim as the meeting took place at the beginning of October last year. This decision was pushed through without proper review or transparency. Both the mayor and Pete should have openly discussed this at the next meeting. Instead, it was hidden from the public and the Planning and Zoning Commission. The purpose of Planning and Zoning is to have multiple sets of eyes review proposals, not a single person making unilateral decisions. This disregard for process is irresponsible and undermines the very foundation of oversight. We as taxpayers rely on purpose, process, and transparency. Violating this process erodes trust and raises serious questions. What else is being hidden or not disclosed? On behalf and all fellow residents, I feel this is a violation of our Charter. Accountability is demanded. Thank you.
- **Don Akins Dodd Hill:** I don't see the mayor. He was supposed to have an update on the cell tower meeting. Did that get passed on to anyone in the council? Thank you.

Public Portion #2 closed at 7:26 p.m.

- **City Engineer DiFranco:** Just for Council's information, I had already responded to Mrs. Varro at the Planning Commission. I did approve this house on Giovanni Avenue administratively. I forgot the dates, but I know one meeting was missed. When the applicant came to this meeting, we did not have a quorum. I asked the members at that meeting if they were comfortable with me approving this house administratively so we wouldn't delay the applicant any further. They said this was okay, so I approved this administratively based on the fact that this was the eighth or ninth home built in the Perrino subdivision. All of the homes are turning out nice. They all look similar. Perrino was aware of our standards with the trim around the windows and stone around the foundations. This was all shown on the drawings. There were no variances required. That is why I approved this administratively.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** Being a member of Planning and Zoning, I was there that night. We didn't want to delay the residents the joy of building their home. It was all unanimous. They felt comfortable allowing Pete to review and make the decision.
- **Councilwoman Belich:** Does the Charter allow for something like that? Is that's something that is allowed to happen?
- **City Engineer DiFranco:** The Zoning Administrator has the ability to make administrative approvals.
- **Councilwoman Belich:** So, this is allowed?
- **City Engineer DiFranco:** Yes.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** That question was asked just to be on the safe side. That was verified during the meeting.
- **Councilwoman Miller:** Just to clarify, this was all out and open in the public and was stated at this meeting. I did witness that.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER/FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMUNITY (Audio 28:30)

- **Councilwoman Miller:** I would like to invite everyone to come and join us on Sunday, March 8 for our pancake breakfast. As Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz has said, each of the council members do have tickets available for sale if you would like to get that presale rate of \$9.00. You can speak to us and we can get you set up. Come and join us.

ADJOURNMENT (Audio 30:00)

Motion made by **Councilwoman Belich**, seconded by **Councilwoman Miller** to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call: **AYES:** Knecht, Miller, Sivo, Taylor Draper, Belich, Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline
NAYS: None
Vote: 7/0

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

APPROVED: Mar 12, 2026
Date


Michael Kline
President of Council

ATTEST: Nick Aiello
Nicholas Aiello
Clerk of Council