

President of Council
MICHAEL KLINE

Vice President of Council
TANYA TAYLOR DRAPER

Council Clerk Pro Tem
NICHOLAS AIELLO

Council

JULIE A. BELICH

JOE JARMUSZKIEWICZ

DANIEL KNECHT

VICKI MILLER

KATHLEEN SIVO

City of Willoughby Hills

Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation

Minutes of February 26, 2026

The Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation was called to order on February 26, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers. **Council President Kline** presided.

Call to Order 6:30 p.m. (0:08)

ROLL CALL (Audio: 0:19)

Members Present: Councilman Knecht, Councilwoman Miller, Councilwoman Kathleen Sivo, Council Vice President Tanya Taylor Draper, Councilwoman Belich, Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz, and Council President Kline

Also Present: City Engineer Pete DiFranco, Finance Director Bruce Scott, and Law Director Michael A. Kenny Jr.

BEGINNING DISPOSITION: (Audio 0:50)

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.

- **Council President Kline:** This is our 2026 budget. We have completed our Finance Committee Meetings and have gotten input from our Finance Committee, Council, and the public. We have met with the department heads and I think we have done a very thorough review. I will open up for any additional questions or comments from anyone on Council.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** The two police and fire contracts are not settled yet, is that correct?
- **Finance Director Scott:** That is correct.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** When they do get settled, would that be something we would need to change later or do we have to wait to put that into this?

- **Finance Director Scott:** We would just have to amend the budget.

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.

- **Council President Kline:** At our first Finance Committee meeting, we did have Bowen and Associates representative Ken Emling come in to talk about this contract.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** I am comfortable with the need for both these projects. As I mentioned in my previous statement, I have seen the police and service department. There is a need to upgrade and make these areas more efficient. I am uncomfortable with the \$17,000,000.00 for the service garage. I am sure some of our residents are too. I have read through the contracts with Bowen. I understand that pricing can continue to go up. I want to make sure that we are doing our due diligence. For the comfort of our residents, we are making sure we are taking into account every contractor and finding other ways to lessen or reduce the price. I also would feel more comfortable with this if I knew that Council was involved in all phases of this. From what I understand, there is going to be three or four phases of this project. I think we need to get reports and be made aware so that when we are asked to defend it to our residents, they are able to know what we are talking about. From my standpoint, I would want to be updated with each phase of this project so that we can be more knowledgeable about what is happening.
- **Council President Kline:** When Mr. Emling was in, he talked about this project being done in phases. It is not just one contract that is approved and paid; it can be done through phases and there can be modifications as it goes along. I will ask Mr. Scott and City Engineer DiFranco if there will be various reports coming out at various phases.
- **Finance Director Scott:** Based on what Mr. Emling said when he was here, that was part of the agreement. I am going to turn this over to Pete because he is the expert on this.
- **City Engineer DiFranco:** There are several phases. These include schematic design, design development, construction drawings, etc. At the end of each phase, we will have drawings prepared as well as a cost estimate. This can be provided to Council. Ken or myself should be able to come in, make a presentation, and answer questions at a Council meeting.
- **Councilwoman Belich:** Just for clarity, there will be updates coming in from Bowen and Associates as we move through each of the phases? I would expect this at the end of each phase so that we can know where we stand monetarily with the outputs involved.
- **City Engineer DiFranco:** Yes. It hasn't been formalized yet, but we wouldn't have an issue with that.
- **Councilwoman Belich:** I would like to see that. Regarding the \$2,000,000.00, are there any

concerns that this cost could elevate? What is your thought process on this and do you see anything we need to be concerned about?

- **City Engineer DiFranco:** I don't think there is anything to be concerned about. We have included a lot of contingency. There are a lot of unknowns and I think the pricing reflects that. As we get further along, we should be able to narrow down the pricing, which should hopefully be lower. The police station might have unknowns because it is an existing building, but the service garage is completely new.
- **Council President Kline:** It is Council's position that we do want to have reports both via print and oral through representatives to keep us updated on what is going on throughout the project.

ORDINANCE 2026-007 – AMENDED –FIRST 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.

- **Council President Kline:** At our last meeting, I indicated that we were going to vote on this, but it was pointed out at the last minute that this was missing an emergency clause. If we would have passed it, it would not have gone into effect until thirty days. The emergency clause has been added so if this passes, it will go into effect as soon as it is signed.

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.

- **Council President Kline:** This is the sanctioning ordinance. From our last meeting until now, we had some proposals. This had gone back to Council asking everyone for their input, comments, suggestions, and changes. Those have been incorporated, but I wanted to make sure that everyone who had concerns and wanted changes has seen those changes put into this ordinance.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** The changes that I felt were needed acknowledging the requirement of the volunteer hours Monday through Friday were all made in this ordinance. As of last week, they sent out the applications and I hope to have them back by the beginning of March. It is in our best interest to get something passed now so that when they start accepting the sanctions at our next recreation meeting, we will know they are being sanctioned under an ordinance.
- **Councilwoman Belich:** Has there been any concern or feedback that has come back from these groups regarding this ordinance?

- **Council Clerk Nicholas Aiello:** That would be a question for Darlene, the Recreation Clerk, but we have been working together on this and I have not heard anything like that.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** I did hear back from the Quilt Guild in regard to the number of required hours. I explained to them that this year, we were trying to just set up a lower number to get started and keep track of the fulfillment of these requirements so that next year, we can review it and see how everything works. If we need to make any changes next year, we can make the changes to next year's sanctioning requirements.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** I know that this ordinance involves reports to Council and I just want to make sure that we get that. I don't know if that would come from Celia or yourself, but this would be reports of income, usage, etc.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** That would come from the mayor.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** We are hoping to get this.
- **Councilwoman Belich:** Are we okay with passing this on second reading?
- **Council President Kline:** I would think so. If everyone who wished to make changes and had input on this were satisfied, I see no reason not to.
- **Councilwoman Miller:** Our first event is March 8, which would be before our next Council meeting so I think we should go ahead and get this passed to make sure that these hours are accounted for for this event.

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.

- **Council President Kline:** This is an annual ordinance. I will ask Finance Director Scott if he has any comments regarding this.
- **Finance Director Scott:** As everyone knows, the rates that get charged to our residents for our sewers are comprised of two components. There is an in-house component that helps service supervisor Mark Grubiss maintain the systems and the necessary repairs. The larger rate is what we pay to Euclid. This ordinance essentially leaves the City's portion of the rate intact. This increase is based on what Euclid is passing on to us. I don't need this passed tonight. I was hoping that we could let this go to two readings because my office does get quite a few phone calls with people complaining about their sewer bill. Unfortunately, our sewer rates are very high. This is a pass-through. I would like to give residents ample time to come in and make comments if they wanted. We need to get the rates back to the county by the end of March so that they can update the billing to have the new rates on it when the next bills go out.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Does this increase effect individual's bills or the City?
- **Finance Director Scott:** It mainly effects the individual. It will effect this building.

- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** What percent raise is this?
- **Finance Director Scott:** I believe it is a six percent raise that Euclid is increasing this by.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Is this a normal amount?
- **Finance Director Scott:** It has been for the last couple of years.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Is there an alternative by going through Lake County?
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Not based on how the sewers are set up.

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.

- **Council President Kline:** This Resolution is to honor Mike for all his years of service here. We have gotten assurances from Mike that he will be here at our first Council meeting in March to receive this honor.

PUBLIC PORTION: (Audio 18:15)

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

Public Portion opened at 6:48 p.m.

- Nobody spoke for Public Portion.

Public Portion closed at 6:49 p.m.

LEGISLATION: (Audio 18:40)

- No comments were made.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Regarding Ordinance 2026-001-Amended pertaining to the budget, that does not need to have an emergency clause on, it does it?
- **Council Clerk Nicholas Aiello:** For ordinances like this, we base this on the previous year's ordinance. I don't believe this had an emergency clause last year so I would say no, we don't need one.
- **Finance Director Scott:** We have ninety days to submit the budget to the county. I would like to get this done now. We can submit this in plenty of time. I agree with the Council Clerk.
- **Councilman Knecht:** A couple meetings back, it was brought up that people were looking to do generational housing on lots. Since then, I have seen a couple articles that have come across the news regarding families whose parents are not able to live on their own anymore. Many of them are looking to redo a pool house so that they can live on the property with them. I just wanted to make

sure this does not fall off the radar. I know some residents have brought it up and I just want to make sure that we continue to talk about it and see if this is something we are looking to fit into our code.

- **Council President Kline:** Pete, this would involve a zoning change, correct?
- **City Engineer DiFranco:** Currently, our zoning code does not allow multiple dwelling units on one parcel, nor does it allow accessory units. The Planning Commission has started talking about it and they are going to be looking into this a little more. We will continue that discussion.
- **Council President Kline:** With referendum zoning repealed, the procedure now is that changes will go through Planning and Zoning and then to Council. It has been a long time since the last city-wide update on zoning. I believe there have been some preliminary talks that have started with Planning and Zoning looking into this. This change would fit into a city-wide update with zoning.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Wouldn't changing zoning like that open a can of worms? It is nice to want to build a home for in-laws or parents to live on your property, but then what stops people from allowing this for kids, aunts and uncles, etc. What if they pass on, and the house is still left there? What if they want to rent it out to somebody? These are the things we are going to have to look at further down the road.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** This is going to have to go through a lot of phases before this becomes an ordinance. The conversation had to start because a couple residents came to Planning and Zoning with that issue. According to Kevin, we do get calls concerning this but we do not bring it forward because it is not in our ordinances. Before anything would be finalized there would be a lot of discussion.
- **Councilwoman Belich:** I agree that it would require a lot of discussion, but it's a valid point. As much as we can, we should move this forward so that we can have these discussions early. To your point, there may be other family members who want to take up residence on a particular lot in addition to the main residence that may be there, for many different reasons. I am sure there can be some rules with how it would be written so that if a change were to occur within a family, something would have to happen in order to move forward with this regarding how it would be managed. It wouldn't necessarily become a short-term rental, but it could be utilized for something going forward that would make sense. All those conversations are necessary and I am hopeful they will happen quickly and not be drug on.
- **Council President Kline:** This is the third meeting under the new arrangement of the Thursday Working Committee meetings. This meeting is ending on time, whereas the other two ran over. What we are going to try to do is set Working Committee meetings with additional discussion items earlier so that it won't run into the Council meeting. I had discussed with Assistant Law Director Lobe about making the start of the Council meeting more flexible and he said that is not a good idea. The Council meeting needs to be set to start at a specific time.

ADJOURNMENT: (Audio 26:35)

- **Motion** made by **Councilwoman Belich**, seconded by **Councilwoman Miller** to adjourn the February 26, 2026 Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation.

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

The meeting was adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

APPROVED: Mar 12, 2026
Date


Michael Kline
President of Council

ATTEST: Nich Aiello
Nicholas Aiello
Clerk of Council