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Vice President of Council
TANYA TAYLOR DRAPER

Council Clerk
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 May 14, 2026

The Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation was called to order on **May 14, 2026 at 6:16 p.m.** in Council Chambers. **Council President Kline** presided.

Call to Order 6:16 p.m. (0:10)

ROLL CALL (Audio: 0:20)

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

Also Present: Mayor Christopher Hallum, Finance Director Bruce Scott, Law Director Michael A. Kenny Jr. City Engineer DiFranco, Police Chief Matthew Naegele and Sergeant Shannon Vachet

Absent: Councilwoman Kathleen Sivo

BEGINNING DISPOSITION: (Audio 0:30)

Council President Kline moved Ordinance 2026-036 to be the first discussion item (Audio 1:30-44:00)

ORDINANCE 2026-036-FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN ANY AND ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO SECURE THE PURCHASE OF A BALLISTIC ARMORED TACTICAL TRANSPORT (B.A.T.T.) ARMORED RESCUE VEHICLE FOR THE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT FROM THE ARMORED GROUP, 5221 N. SADDLE ROCK DRIVE, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85018 FOR THE ESTIMATED PURCHASE PRICE OF \$381,140.00 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Police Chief Naegele** introduced **Sergeant Shannon Vachet**, who is a trusted member of the Command Staff and also the Commander of the Western Lake County Emergency Response Team. Sergeant Shannon Vachet has a vast knowledge on vehicles like this, and how it will benefit our Police Department. He noted that they have discussed their readiness in the event of mass casualties, especially following the casualties that we have seen in the last two decades, specifically in relation to school type settings. He emphasized the fact that a vehicle like this is a necessity, also benefiting our regional partners, and felt that the City was in a position to make this purchase.

- **Police Chief Naegele** provided Council with a comprehensive packet that laid out the specifications for the vehicle and the voices of support from every school superintendent for the districts that our regional team serves. Other Police Chiefs have also endorsed this effort.
- *Police Chief Naegele opened up for questions.*
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz** asked how many instances there have been in the past few years that would have required these vehicles to be used. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded saying that while he did not have an exact number, there have been multiple incidences where they have required armor. There would have been more incidences that would have required the vehicle's use if they had the vehicle at their disposal.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz** asked how many of these vehicles are being used in the area. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded that there are two in the area. One is from the Lake County SWAT Team which consists of Lake County's own armor. Geauga County is providing a second piece of armor.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz** asked who would be responsible for the maintenance, storage, and upkeep of this vehicle. **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying this would be housed with the City of Willoughby Hills, and we would be responsible for the service of it. Police Chief Naegele met with Mayor Hallum, Sergeant Shannon Vachet, and the City mechanic Tom Abate. Tom had a chance to review the specs on that vehicle, and stated that it would not be an issue for him to handle the maintenance on. Police Chief Naegele added that the maintenance costs would most likely be minimal for the first couple of years. In addition to this, there would be a 24-month bumper to bumper unlimited milage warranty that comes with the vehicle.
- **Police Chief Naegele** followed up on Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz' initial questions stating that it only takes one incidence where you would need it, but don't have it, where you would face at minimum negative scrutiny. At worst, there is risk of injury or death not having a piece of equipment that could have helped prevent said event. This is a rescue vehicle that has the capability to breach walls and doors.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz** asked if this vehicle would be manned by the City of Willoughby Hills, or if the County SWAT Team would be in charge of it. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded saying the majority would be handled by the City of Willoughby Hills and our officers. Some members of the regional team would also be selected to be part of that. Nobody would use this vehicle without the authority of Chief Naegele and Sergeant Shannon Vachet.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz** asked if there is any liability of our officers being in another City. **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying both through the SWAT Team and the agency to agency relationships, they have mutual aid agreements that cover those types of concerns.
- **Councilwoman Miller** asked about the extensiveness of the training and what the cost would be. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded saying this is a training that will be done in house with the SWAT team and its members. A lot of this will be conducted monthly. We already conduct monthly trainings, so those monthly trainings would incorporate the vehicle. There would be no additional cost.

- **Councilwoman Miller** asked about the safety of this truck, in terms of accidentally hitting someone on the scene. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded saying it would be no different than utilizing other vehicles the police department has. This vehicle is no bigger than an SUV, it's just heavier.
- **Councilwoman Belich** asked if there would need to be more education that our mechanic would need to know for servicing this truck? **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying Tom Abate went over the specs on this and said it really wasn't a heavy lift for him. If need be, we could reach out to the Armored Group for such questions. The Armored Group does work with the Defense Department and the Department of Homeland Security.
- **Councilwoman Belich** asked about the insurance on this vehicle, and what impact it may have on the budget as this is an "irregular vehicle." **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying while he does not have a complete answer, the entire City fleet is covered under the same insurance through USI. This ranges from the smallest drone that they have all the way through the ladder truck. It is his understanding that this would not gravely increase the premium on that, but he noted he would check and report back. He concluded saying this is nothing that would greatly increase the expenses that go on the City insurance.
- **Councilwoman Belich** asked if this vehicle would require special storage, especially if there are pieces of equipment inside the vehicle. **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying that it would be stored on City property. With the expansions and renovations for the Service Garage and Police Department, there is an extension on the garage that fits this vehicle well. It would be stored where the new sally port will be.
- **Councilwoman Belich** followed up asking if this is allotted for with the expansion and renovation project upcoming without additional add-ons. **Police Chief Naegele** confirmed, but **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** interjected to clarify that there would be no weapons stored in this vehicle. This would be used as an armored protective vehicle. All weapons and ammunition would be stored with the individuals on the team because they need it more so than the vehicle would need it.
- **Councilwoman Belich** asked about potential damage and the money to fix said damage to the vehicle. She followed up asking what the giveback would be from the other communities, especially regarding money and ensuring the vehicle is properly taken care of.
- **Police Chief Naegele** pointed out that over the course of the SWAT team, many pieces of equipment have been purchased and collectively used, as many communities have contributed. Willoughby Hills has not contributed as much over the years. He clarified that Willoughby Hills does not owe anything to other communities, but there has always been cost sharing when issues have happened with equipment. Police Chiefs from other communities have come together to bring solutions. He emphasized that he did not see this as something that would solely fall on the shoulders of Willoughby Hills, especially as this is a regional team. He emphasized that he believed other communities would pitch in were need be in the event something were to come up.
- **Councilwoman Belich** asked if there would be a memorandum of understanding among other local communities to ensure that the cost sharing element would be established. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded saying that there was already something established with the contributing cities of the team.

- **Councilwoman Belich** asked where the money to purchase this vehicle is coming from, and the choices that were made with regard to how this vehicle was being built. **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying that Sergeant Shannon Vachet had been working directly with the representative from the Armor Group over the last several weeks on this. They had discussed best practice options that other SWAT teams are utilizing.
- **Police Chief Naegele** followed up saying he wanted to stay as reasonable as he can, but he does not want to shortcut something. Based upon comparables from other cities, he pointed out that this vehicle fell significantly shorter than its competitor, which is Lenco. They make the Lenco BearCat, and this would be \$40,000.00 more expensive.
- **Councilwoman Belich** followed up asking where the funding for this is coming from. **Police Chief Naegele** responded that he would prefer the Finance Director speak to this, but they are looking at the School Zone Enforcement. The Ohio Revised Code specifies that funds that are derived from school zone enforcement are to go toward school safety and public safety efforts. It is his feeling that this falls into this category, as this contributes directly to the safety of our officers, students, personnel, churches, etc. in the event of a mass casualty incident. This is not to say this vehicle would not be used in other incidents. It is more than fair to say that this piece of equipment does have a direct impact on school safety type matters. The school superintendents have agreed on that aspect of this.
- **Councilwoman Belich** pointed out that it appeared this could also be used for nature driven scenarios such as flooding. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded saying the major cost increase really revolves around the RAM system. This vehicle is the only vehicle in the market that allows you to move the RAM upwards and sideways. He noted this would entail having the ability to be able to introduce gas into the structure using the RAM itself without putting anybody in danger. They could puncture through doors, windows, sides of houses, or certain other structures. This is where the majority of the costs of the upgrades have gone. He continued, adding there would also be emergency lighting, radio features, intercom features, etc..
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** asked if our City utilizes equipment that was purchased by and belongs to other cities. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** confirmed. **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** followed up asking if this is not unusual for cities to do. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded saying there are certain items that are unique, and they may draw access to it. This would only pertain to specific and unique items that have been purchased that not everybody has, such as this vehicle or a search robot which Wickliffe has.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** asked if another city wanted to purchase this. She also asked how it was decided that Willoughby Hills would be the City purchasing this. **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying that this issue was brought forward by Willoughby Hills, and the financial capabilities of other cities aren't there at the moment. This does not negate the fact that it is a need. The Police Department felt that, given the circumstances and the funding that is available, our City is in a unique position to be able to make a significant and valuable contribution that will not only benefit our schools and residents, but also our regional partners.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** asked if all of our officers would be trained to use this vehicle or just some of them. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded saying that probably just some of the officers would be trained for this. **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** followed up asking what would happen if the trained officers were not on duty during a mass casualty event. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded saying a good number of officers would be trained.

- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** asked if it would be on us as a City to repair the vehicle if it is damaged in another city. **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying he couldn't foresee a situation where this vehicle would be damaged beyond repair. The vehicle is built for these types of situations, including withstanding fire and being shot at. This is a heavily armored vehicle up to the National Institute Standards. If there was something down the line, such as a lighting system repair, we would like to see if our regional partners can each kick in to get it fixed.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** asked how long they have been researching this vehicle, what type of vehicle they need, and what may need to be added onto the vehicle. **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying this has been a hot topic for Sergeant Shannon Vachet for years. He has done a fair amount of research on this.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** expressed that she wished Council could have been made aware of this and been presented with this information prior to last week, and had been involved in the process when this first was being looked into.
- **Police Chief Naegele** expressed his understanding towards **Council Vice President Taylor Draper's** position. He noted that he had conversations with the Mayor and the Finance Director regarding some good and positive ways to use the school zone enforcement funds, and this was one of the options that came up relatively recently. He emphasized that it was not their intention to give this to Council last minute, but this came about very quickly. He noted that this is an investment, and one that will last for decades.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** asked how much training the officers would need for this vehicle. **Sergeant Shannon Vachet** responded saying it would be very minimal because this is just a large SUV. They have maneuvered large, armored vehicles before, just not owned ones themselves. He concluded saying they have experience working with them and being around them.
- **Council President Kline** asked what the timing is on this purchase. **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying it depends. They work based on a queue, and there are a number of potential orders right now. Border Patrol is waiting for funding to purchase 50 of these vehicles. It depends on where we would fall into the queue. He stated that if an order were to be placed within the week, they could get on a build schedule as early as November. However, he noted that if the Department of Homeland Security were to purchase 50 of these, it could bump this back to a year or two. The reality of this is that it depends.
- **Councilwoman Belich** asked if this was a 50% down upon the order. **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying this is the preferred method, but this is not the route we are taking. It would be cash on delivery. **Councilwoman Belich** followed up asking how this is delivered. **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying they would travel and get it themselves.
- **Finance Director Scott** clarified that the way the photo enforcement works is that it is broken down into two: Handheld and Fixed Location. Fixed location, which is the school zones, is required by the State to be used for school safety purposes. We have a certain amount of money that has already been segregated within Safety Forces (approximately \$450,000.00) that will be in there at the end of this month. That number will continue to go up. By this time next year, it will be around \$525,000.00 conservatively. That money has to be spent for that specific purpose. He expressed that they felt this vehicle meets this purpose.

- **Councilwoman Belich** asked how quickly the turnaround on that money is. **Finance Director Scott** clarified there is no limitation that he is aware of.

Police Chief Naegele and Sergeant Shannon Vachet thanked the Council for their consideration.

ORDINANCE 2026-035-FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 1 OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-001 TO COMPLY WITH STATE BUDGETARY LAWS REQUIRING MUNICIPALITIES TO MAINTAIN POSITIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR; REPEALING CONFLICTING LEGISLATION AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Finance Director Scott** stated this is mainly in response to the Collective Bargaining Agreements and the raises that Council had gone through last meeting. Upon calculating initially, he had thought the number was going to be around \$578,000.00, but it is coming in under around \$538,000.00. This is just revising the budget to send to the County for approval.

RESOLUTION 2026-005-FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE MONTH OF MAY AS “OLDER OHIOANS MONTH” IN THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS.

- **President Kline** noted that this is annual, and each year has a different theme.

RESOLUTION 2026-006-FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ESTABLISH AN INSURED CASH SWEEP ACCOUNT WITH HUNTINGTON NATIONAL BANK, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Finance Director Scott** stated that this is a result of him trying to find better ways to utilize the City’s money that is sitting idle, and trying to get as best of a return as possible. He has talked with numerous banks, and is very limited in terms of what they can and cannot invest in.
- Huntington has a product where you can determine how much money you want in the base operating account, and then everything else above and beyond that will sweep into this overriding account. This would provide for significantly better interest on the sweep account, and pulling money out and moving it back and forth is very easy. He noted the City currently uses Star Ohio for better interest. That requires a transfer from Huntington to Star Ohio. He emphasized that he feels better doing this in-house rather than going across the internet. This will allow convenience, safety, and a better rate of return.

RESOLUTION 2026-007-FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ESTABLISH A CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT ACCOUNT REGISTRY SERVICE WITH HUNTINGTON NATIONAL BANK, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Finance Director Scott** stated this is the same concept as the sweep account. This is a traditional CD with Huntington. Everything is transferred from inside the bank. This would lock the money down for a longer period of time, but he noted they would get a better rate of return. His goal is to put the money that is in Star Ohio into these, so that way it is all within Huntington. It would mirror the rate of return that we are getting with Star Ohio, and it would allow flexibility with moving money back and forth.

RESOLUTION 2026-008-FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE OFFICIAL INTENT AND REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS ON BEHALF OF THE STATE OF OHIO (THE BORROWER) TO REIMBURSE ITS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS FUND FOR THE CG46AC / CG47AC, LAK-SR 174-00.00 RESURFACING WITH THE PROCEEDS OF TAX EXEMPT DEBT OF THE STATE OF OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Finance Director Scott** stated the City is getting money from the Ohio Public Works Commission. They are giving the City a \$150,000.00 grant and they are allowing the City a \$50,000.00 loan. If it is less than \$200,000.00, the City could still take the \$50,000.00 as the loan to apply against the cost. The reason for this is because it is zero interest. It essentially free money.

RESOLUTION 2026-009-FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF PAINESVILLE TO ALLOW PAINESVILLE TO BENEFIT FROM THE TRASH SERVICE CONTRACT THAT WILLOUGHBY HILLS HAS WITH MAJOR WASTE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Mayor Hallum** stated that Ohio law allows other municipalities to utilize an existing contract of a nearby municipality and abide by the same contract with a specific company, without having to go out to bid. In this case, Major Waste. Mayor Hallum emphasized that this is a complement regarding how our City completed the Major Waste contract. He noted that there have been no complaints about Major Waste, and anything that has been received had been immediately taken care of by Major Waste. Their customer service has been fantastic. This doesn't cost us anything, and Painesville has stated that this contract would save their residents more than what they currently have.
- **Law Director Kenny** stated this was a legislative enactment that would allow cities to bypass the bidding process and streamline some of their operations. This is a cost saving measure with neighboring communities so that they can get the benefit of the contract without the bidding process.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** asked if the residents of Painesville would be paying the same cost as the residents of Willoughby Hills. **Mayor Hallum** confirmed. **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** followed up asking if Major Waste is under any obligation to accept this. **Mayor Hallum** confirmed, stating Major Waste was happy about this, as it means they are expanding their business.

Discussion of Motion authorizing the Clerk of Council to confirm with the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of Liquor Control, that no objection and need for hearing is requested by the City regarding Persimmon Lane LTD 2749 B Som Center Road Willoughby Hills OH 44094 under transaction number OCT NEW 10015776-1.

- **Councilwoman Miller** asked what business this is. **City Engineer DiFranco** responded saying this is a new business. The owner is an interior designer and Willoughby Hills resident. This will be a vintage furniture resale shop. She will be offering her consulting services for interior design, and she wants to offer wine and mimosas as people shop.

PUBLIC PORTION: (Audio 55:30)

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

Public Portion opened at 7:11 p.m.

- **Jenna Bing 36951 Beech Hills Drive** stated that while she knows the Council wants to be transparent, it was not mentioned that every employee gets a \$3,000.00 bonus this year. She stated that this was around \$180,000.00 being spent, and questioned why Council did not talk about it or give a reason to why it was happening. She noted this was disturbing to her, and questioned why it is called a “signing bonus.”
- **Jenna Bing** states she liked the police vehicle, but noted that the purchase of the vehicle was justified by saying there are four schools in Willoughby Hills this could protect including: Cornerstone Christian, School of Innovation, Education Alternatives, and Commercial Academy. She noted when she looked up Commercial Academy Willoughby Hills, she found that it was Mr. Scheel’s training courses on how to do investment in commercial real estate. She noted that he doesn’t have a location.
- **Jenna Bing** thanked them for clarifying that the money is coming from school zone tickets.
- **Jenna Bing** stated she saw in the newsletter that the City was buying a motorcycle. She thinks this is a fine idea, but questioned if Council knew that a motorcycle was being purchased. She also questioned how this was approved, since the Mayor could approve \$25,000.00 purchases and that it doesn’t have to go to bid until it hits \$50-70K. She questioned who approved this purchase, and if people know about this purchase.
- **Jenna Bing** expressed her opinion that the City needs a Rainy Day fund, but that it needs to be a reasonable amount. She stated that upon her research, Ohio has a rule for school districts that they cannot carry more than 40% of the operating budget for a Rainy Day Fund. Our current Rainy Day Fund is at 67%. She noted that the City is above what they allow schools, and wanted to know why this was so high.
- **Jen Varro 2890 SOM Center Road** asked why Willoughby Hills is footing the bill for this vehicle as opposed to other cities. She noted that this should go out to bid, and pointed out maybe another manufacturer might be motivated to offer a better price if they knew it was a bidding system. She followed up asking if this vehicle could be used at an apartment complex if there is a mass casualty event there, or if it is strictly for school safety. She questioned whether it could be used for any other events other than school safety events, especially if the justification for the purchase is school safety. She urged Council to be careful in order to avoid violating the rights of the camera money, especially if the City is using the money in a way that isn’t justifiably spent the way it is intended.
- **Police Chief Naegele** responded saying there was a specification within the packet that was provided. Per the Ohio Revised Code, there is a sole source justification. This particular manufacturer is a sole source manufacturer of this piece of equipment, specific to the equipment that it provides and the specifications that are in the vehicle. Because of the sole source justification, it bypasses the necessity to have to go out to bid for it. With that said, this vehicle, based on the research conducted, still comes in at a significantly lower price point than its main competitor.
- **Finance Director Scott** stated that signing bonuses were given to all full-time staff members, not part-time staff members. The Collective Bargaining Agreements covered the majority of employees within the City. There were seven or eight employees that were not under the Collective Bargaining Agreements that did get a signing bonus. That number is around \$21,000.00.

- **Mayor Hallum** pointed out the fact that a school that was not included in the previous discussion of school safety was Little Light Learning Center. Therefore, there is another school that could be protected by the proposed police vehicle.
- He stated, regarding the motorcycle, the City did not have to go out to bid for this. He noted that it was over his spending limit, which is why the Finance Director and Council President handled this properly.
- **Police Chief Naegele** added to this by saying the motorcycle was also included in the budget for the year. It was also discussed at the Council meetings about the reintroduction of the motorcycle unit earlier in the year when he presented the budget to Council.
- **Councilwoman Miller** stated that she remembered seeing the signing bonus and reading about this, emphasizing that this was public knowledge.

Public Portion closed at 7:34 p.m.

LEGISLATION: (Audio 1:04:40)

- No discussion.

ADJOURNMENT: (Audio 1:05:00)

- **Motion** made by **Councilwoman Belich**, seconded by **Councilwoman Miller** to adjourn the May 14, 2026 Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation.

Roll Call: **AYES: Jarmuszkiewicz, Kline, Knecht, Miller, Taylor Draper, Belich**
 NAYS: None
 Vote: 6/0

The meeting was adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

APPROVED: 5/28/26
 Date



Michael Kline
President of Council

ATTEST: Nicholas Aiello
 Nicholas Aiello
 Clerk of Council