

President of Council
MICHAEL KLINE
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

Regular Council Meeting Minutes of January 23, 2025

The Regular Council Meeting was called to order on Thursday, January 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. **Council President Kline** presided.

Call to Order 7:00 p.m. (0:07)

Cell Phone Reminder to Turn off Devices

Pledge of Allegiance (Audio: 0:16)

ROLL CALL (Audio: 0:34)

- Members:** Council Vice President Tanya Taylor Draper, Councilwoman Julie A. Belich, Councilman Joe Jarmuszkiewicz, Council President Michael Kline, Councilman Dan Knecht, Councilwoman Vicki Miller, and Councilwoman Kathleen Sivo
- In Attendance:** Mayor Hallum, City Engineer Pete DiFranco, and Finance Director Bruce Scott
- Absent:** Law Director Michael Lucas

POLICE DEPARTMENT RECOGNITIONS

(Audio: 1:19)

- **Police Chief Naegele:** Good evening everyone. It is an honor to stand here tonight as we gather to recognize and celebrate the exceptional service and dedication of the fine officers that make up our department. Today is not just about awards but acknowledging the relentless commitment, the sacrifices and the tireless work of the officers who put the safety and well-being of our community above all else. Over the last several years, our professions faced many challenges, but it is through those challenges that our officers have shown their strength, resilience, and their unwavering dedication to serving with integrity. Each one of you has exemplified what it means to be a part of this department. The officers we recognize this evening represent the very best of what it means to serve. They have gone above and beyond, and it is my hope, and expectation their display professionalism and deep sense of duty inspires not only their peers, but the entire community. As we move through this ceremony, encourage everyone here to reflect on the significance of the work they do and the lives of the impact every day. These awards are a small token of appreciation, but they are a reflection of a much greater truth that the service and dedication of our officers are what makes the Willoughby Hills Police Department exceptional. To each officer receiving an award today I want to personally thank you for your outstanding performance and service throughout 2024. I ask you to keep it up in 2025. Your actions

remind us of the value of service, teamwork, and sacrifice and I am proud to stand alongside each one of you and our mission. Thank you to the families, friends, and community members who support our officers. Your contributions are invaluable. Together, we continue to build a safer and stronger community. Congratulations all of our honorees and thank you again.

- **Police Chief Naegele** recognized **Sergeant Henry Boepple, Sergeant Shannon Vachet, and Officer Seth Baldwin** for developing and implementing the Police Department’s in-service training program and their expertise to and commitment to excellence. They were awarded the Exceptional Service Medal.
- **Police Chief Naegele** recognized **Officer Seth Baldwin** for his proactive traffic enforcement efforts throughout 2024 and his effort to reduce accidents and enforce traffic laws.
- **Police Chief Naegele** recognized **Officer Richard Muir** for being instrumental in both DUI enforcement and arrests and investigations. You made an impact on our efforts to protect the public from impaired drivers.
- **Police Chief Naegele** recognized **Officer Garret Leonbruno** as Officer of the year in 2024 due to his selflessness, professionalism, service, and going above and beyond for others.
- **Police Chief Naegele:** I want to take a moment to celebrate the dedication and service of these incredible officers. It is their hard work, passion, and commitment that define this Department. Thank you for everything you do and for continued support from City Council and the Mayor.

DISPOSITION OF THE JOURNAL (Audio: 9:29)

- **Motion** made by **Councilwoman Miller**, seconded by **Council Vice President Taylor Draper** to approve the **January 6, 2025** Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation Minutes.

Discussion on the Motion:

No discussion.

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

Motion passed to approve the **January 6, 2025** Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation Minutes.

- **Motion** made by **Council Vice President Taylor Draper**, seconded by **Councilwoman Miller** to approve the **January 9, 2025** Regular Meeting of Council Minutes.

Discussion on the Motion:

No discussion.

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

Motion passed to approve the **January 9, 2025** Regular Meeting of Council Minutes.

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE (Audio 11:25)

Email dated 1/20/25 dated from Gloria Majeski Re: Ordinance 2025-005
Email dated 1/20/25 dated from Naegele, Matthew RE: Ordinance 2025-005
Email dated 1/20/25 dated from Dan Knecht January 20 Meeting
Email dated 1/18/25 dated from Julie Belich Working Committee Meeting
Email dated 1/18/25 dated from Ryan Caudill FW: USDA Forestry Grant Opportunity for Tractor and Boom Mower
Email dated 1/18/25 dated from Purchases – Deadline Approaching! Sat 01/18
Email dated 1/17/25 dated from Michael C. Lucas Ordinance No, 2025-xxx Amending Chapter 139. Section 130.02
Email dated 1/17/25 dated from Willoughby Hills Finance Dept. 1/17/25 MAIL HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED!!
Email dated 1/16/25 dated from Michael C. Lucas RE: Ordinance 2025-004
Email dated 1/16/25 dated from Stephanie Kellner VM Thu 01/16
Email dated 1/16/25 dated from Karen Mehollin RE: waste and recycling bid
Email dated 1/16/25 dated from Mayor Hallum FW: Airport meeting report 1/9/25
Email dated 1/15/25 dated from Crawford, Vince RE: waste and recycling bid
Email dated 1/15/25 dated from Karen Mehollin RE: Thursday Agenda
Email dated 1/15/25 dated from Karen Mehollin RE: Airport meeting report 1/9/25
Email dated 1/15/25 dated from Finance Director RE: Ordinance 2025-004
Email dated 1/15/25 dated from Assistant Finance Director RE: Equitable Lunch and Learn
Email dated 1/15/25 dated from Mehollin, Karen Re: PASSWORD RESET - THURSDAY, 8:30 A.M.
Email dated 1/15/25 dated from Assistant Finance Director RE: Equitable Lunch and Learn
Email dated 1/14/25 dated from Mike Kline Re: COUNCIL CHAMBER MICS
Email dated 1/14/25 dated from Karen Mehollin RE: Photo enforcement pay ordinance
Email dated 1/14/25 dated from Seth Stern Comments re: Republic Services
Email dated 1/14/25 dated from Cathleen Nagorski Photo enforcement pay ordinance
Email dated 1/14 /25 dated from Finance Director RE: COUNCIL CHAMBER MICS
Email dated 1/13/25 dated from Karen Mehollin RE: Emerald Glen Resolution
Email dated 1/13/25 dated from Karen Mehollin RE: Financial Disclosure Statement
Email dated 1/13/25 dated from Willoughby Hills Finance Dept. 1/13/25 MAIL HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED!!!
Email dated 1/13/25 dated from Karen Mehollin RE: Trash and Recycle Program
Email dated 1/13/25 dated from Assistant Finance Director Equitable Lunch and Learn
Email dated 1/12/25 dated from Bza PACKETS for BZA Mtg 1/4/25 Tuesday at 8:00 PM
Email dated 1/10/25 from Bob K Feedback on garbage recycling contract renewal
Email dated 1/10/25 Finance Director RE: Minute Audio
Email dated 1/10/25 from Mayor Hallum FW: Airport meeting report 1/9/25
Email dated 1/10/25 from Kathy Longo Re: Emerald Glen Resolution
Email dated 1/08/25 from Mayor Hallum Mayor's Report - 01-09-2025
Email dated 1/09/25 from Kathy Longo RE: Emerald Glen Resolution
Email dated 1/09/25 from Pietro DiFranco Willoughby Hills City Engineer Report 250109

Email dated 1/09/25 from Karen Mehollin RE: Emerald Glen
Email dated 1/09/25 from Karen Mehollin FW: Airport meeting report 1/9/25
Email dated 1/09/25 from Willoughby Hills Finance Dept. RE: APPRECIATION LUNCH - JOE CIRESI (New Owner of the Old Tavern)
Email dated 1/08/25 from pc-abr WH PCABR Meeting 1/16/25- THURSDAY 7:00 PM
Email dated 1/08/25 from Rick Gleeson Re: Dave Reichelt's Contact number
Email dated 1/08/25 from Willoughby Hills Finance Dept. RE: Walter Drane Co - 2024 update
Email dated 1/08/25 from Lenette Beasley Invoice from American Legal Publishing
Email dated 1/08/25 from Willoughby Hills Finance Dept. 1/8/25 MAIL HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED!!!
Email dated 1/08/25 from Tracy Simons Welcome Letter from OMCA President, OMCA Membership Application & NEOMCA Membership Application

PUBLIC PORTION #1 (Audio: 11:40)

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

Public Portion #1 opened at 7:11 p.m.

- **Jenna Bing 3695 Beech Hills Drive:** There is an ordinance about hiring a part-time police officer for traffic work and I'm very confused for two reasons. First, I think it's really weird that a part-time traffic policeman is going to make twice as much per hour than our regular highest level police officer that's part time. That just doesn't seem right to me. I don't care if it's being paid for because all the traffic bring in it just doesn't seem right. Then it was very confusing because I sure didn't see it in there, and maybe I'm wrong, but then there was discussion that it's going to be a pool of people, but I would think that we would want some bounds on that. Would we have 10 police officers coming in whenever we need them and how many hours? The fact that it's justified by being paid for by the money brought in is still not right.
- **Jenna Bing:** Regarding Council salaries, I am back again, this time the sheet of information. I know I could not get it in 2024. I don't know what you're proposing for council salaries. The annual salary in 2023 was \$10,140 and Mr. Scott can talk about what the percentage increase is going to be. I know it's what's in the Charter, but I think that the Charter needs to be changed and I will remind Mr. Hallum that I was probably, at one point maybe the only person who volunteered to be on the Charter Review Committee. This is an important one. In 2023, it was \$10,140 annually. In Willoughby, it's \$10,000 and it's been that way since 2018. In Willowick it's \$10,000 and they just moved to \$10,000. They've been at \$8,000 for a long time. In Wickliffe, it's at \$7,600. In Kirtland (They got a raise in 2022) the current one has been \$4,000 for an annual salary for council people basically forever. Eastlake finally, in 2020, said that we're going to have a \$300 raise annually and they're at \$8,657. I know it's in the Charter that this is what supposed to be given to you and how the raise improves. I honestly think you guys should start denying the raise because you're going to get a raise bigger than what you're paying the head of Fire, the Police Chief, and the top workers in the City. You are going to be getting a pay increase at a percentage basis higher than that. Now, I am sure you're making way more than anybody else in our surrounding area. No offense, but I don't think that's the right way to spend our money. Because last time, Mr. Kline could not verify any of the information I gave you. I am passing onto the clerk all of the information I got from foyer request that led to my chart. He now has a way to look and see where it was.

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

MAYOR'S REPORT (Audio: 15:46)

- Good Evening! This week has been especially busy for our Service Department. The extreme temperatures and snowfall have been a constant concern. This month alone, we have spread over 1,000 tons of salt on our roads. The Service Department has done a great job of keeping our roads clear and safe. Just a reminder that the priority is to get the primary roads cleared first. Once they are in good condition, they begin clearing side streets. When we have heavy snow fall, stay home, if you can, and if you need to go out, please drive carefully especially on the side streets and give the snow plows plenty of room. If you have a fire hydrant on your property, be sure that you are clearing around it.
- Last week, our Architectural Board of Review gave final approval to the new Chipotle. This will enable them to stay on track to open later this year. The new Chipotle will be just West of Sheets on Chardon Road. Final approval was also given to the shopping center where the old LaSalle Furniture and Marcs were located to move forward with construction. This will make it possible for the new Auto Zone, Five Below, Grocery Outlet, and Burlington stores to open later this year.
- Council President Kline is planning to hold Finance Committee meetings on February 11 and 18th at 6:00 PM. If you have any questions, please be sure to send them to the Council Clerk in advance so that the directors have time to prepare answers prior to the meeting. The law requires that the budget must be finalized and approved by Council by March 31. Residents are welcome to attend the meetings or listen on the cable channels or Facebook.
- This Sunday, January 26 at 1:00 P.M., the Fire Department is having a push-in ceremony for the new Fire Engine. Father Terry Grachanin from St. Noel will bless the new engine followed by the ceremonial push/pull-in of the engine into the bay. All residents are invited to join us for the event and cake immediately following.
- Have a great weekend.

LAW DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- No report.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Audio: 17:58)

- **Finance Director Scott:** The 2024 financials are unofficially closed. I'm holding things open in case there are any last minute material changes. They will be officially closed hopefully by next week and we will be moving on. The official budget documents are in front of you. The budget will be on the website hopefully tomorrow for public viewing. If anyone has any questions please let me know.

CITY ENGINEER'S REPORT (Audio: 18:41)

- **City Engineer DiFranco:** The next Planning Commission meeting is planned for February 6. A couple projects of interest will be on there. The Dollar General will be coming back. Also, a gentleman purchased a the former local tavern and wants to reopen it as a restaurant so we will

be starting to look at that.

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS REPORTS / COMMITTEE REPORTS (Audio: 19:13)

PC-ABR reported by Council Vice President Taylor Draper

- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** The Planning and Zoning Architectural Board of Review group met last Thursday, January 16. During the ABR portion of the meeting we approved a new house at 34165 Giovanni Avenue, Sub lot 7 which is West Pine. This is an HOA so please read and understand the terms of the Declaration before you go to the closing table. There are a lot of do's and don'ts, so it's fair that you understand what you will and will not be allowed to do. Second, we approved a garage in master suite edition at 30421 Meadowbrook Drive.
- During the Planning Commission segment, the Chipotle was approved at 28151 Chardon Road at the Shoppes. We also approved the Redevelopment Plaza that involves the Five Below, the Burlington, the bargain market Grocery Outlet, and the AutoZone. That concludes my report.

Beautification Committee reported by Council Vice President Taylor Draper

No report.

Recreation Commission reported by Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz

- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Baseball and softball registrations are ongoing right now. Their teams are filling up pretty quick. If you are interested in getting your kids on a team, I recommend getting them signed up soon.
- Sunday, March 8, we are having a pancake breakfast at the Community Center from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. More details will come soon and tickets will start to go on sale in the next couple of weeks for that.

Finance Committee Report by Council President Kline

- **Council President Kline:** I wanted to provide a bit more information on budget hearings. The Mayor indicated the dates February 11 and February 18. These are Tuesdays and the meetings will be starting at 6:00 p.m. On the 11th. The Police Chief and the Road and Service directors will be in to meet with Council and the public. Then on the 18th, the Fire Chief and the Administration will join us. The Administration, Mayor, and Finance Director will be at both meetings but the 18th is where the administrator's budget will go in to more detail. Everyone (Council and public) should try and get any comments or questions in before the meetings. We'd like to get the department heads these questions so that they can have the information for the meetings so that they won't drag out and go beyond the date where we want to be able to vote on the budget.

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: 22:50)

- **No unfinished business**

LEGISLATION: (Audio: 22:57)

ORDINANCE 2024-070- THIRD READING

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN CITY SERVICES FOR THE FISCAL PERIOD BEGINNING JANUARY 1ST THROUGH DECEMBER 31ST OF 2025; REPEALING ALL LEGISLATION INCONSISTENT HERewith.

- Ordinance 2024-070 remains on Third Reading.

ORDINANCE 2025-002- SECOND READING

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING PUBLICATION OF CERTAIN NOTICES ON THE CITY WEBSITE AND THEREBY AMEND CERTAIN PROVISION OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES REGARDING PUBLIC NOTICES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- Ordinance 2024-070 remains on Second Reading.

ORDINANCE 2025-004-FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE NEW SANITARY SEWERAGE RATE FOR THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2025, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- Ordinance 2025-004 remains on First Reading.

ORDINANCE 2025-005-FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE FIVE, “ADMINISTRATION,” CHAPTER 139 CAPTIONED “POLICE DEPARTMENT”; SPECIFICALLY, SECTION 139.02 TITLED “RULES, REGULATIONS, AND COMPENSATION,” TO ESTABLISH A PART-TIME PHOTO-ENFORCEMENT OFFICER POSITION AND RATE OF COMPENSATION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- Ordinance 2025-005 remains on First Reading.

NEW BUSINESS (Audio 24:56)

- **Motion** made by **Council Vice President Taylor Draper**, seconded by **Councilwoman Belich** to request Council Chambers to look for new microphones.

Discussion on the Motion:

- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** I think a lot of us have heard, including the Mayor, that our residents cannot hear us with these microphones. From what I understand, sometimes they work and sometimes they don't. I think it's important that residents can see and hear what we are discussing and if this is a problem, we need to look into fixing it. I

would like to see another quote or something, but I am understanding from our Council Clerk that he is researching it and has discovered that this is the best deal that we can get right now. Without delaying anything, I think it is important that our residents hear us now. That is why I believe we should move forward with this.

- **Mayor Hallum:** For everyone's reference, these microphones that are sitting in front of us now are approximately 25 years old. This is pretty old technology. And for the residents listening, while you can hear us in these chambers, the issue is online, specifically the cable channels. We do have several residents that do listen that way.
- **Council Clerk Nicholas Aiello:** I spoke with Rick today. He gave us the option of doing half the dais this year and maybe half next year. The way he worded it implied that this would cut the cost, but not quite directly in half. From my perspective, it wouldn't make sense to pay this cost this year and then again next year. I would make more sense to replace all of them at once. Rick said he spoke with an engineer and determined that it would be difficult to find any professional/commercial sound quality microphones for a cheaper price. It is a situation where we get what we pay for.
- **Mayor Hallum:** What is the motion? Is it to approve purchasing the one that is quoted? What is being voted on?
- **Council President Kline:** The motion is giving permission to go out and find new microphones.
- **Mayor Hallum:** You are not approving this purchase order, you are approving continued research, correct?
- **Council President Kline:** Correct.

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

- **Motion** has passed.

PUBLIC PORTION #2 (Audio: 28:47)

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

Public Portion #2 opened at 7:28 p.m.

- **Jen Varro, 2890 SOM Center Road:** I was at the Planning and Zoning Meeting as well last week. I shared with them, and I would like to share with you all. I suggested maybe looking into accessory dwelling units and consider them for our elderly in our City. We have a W.H.I.S.P.E.R. program, however, with our aging population in our City, it would be really nice for us to be able to have smaller dwelling units on premise and properties where people can stay in their homes longer and have family to help take care of them as opposed to going into assisted living or other expensive options. Cleveland Heights is my reference point if you guys could look that up. It

would be great because they have some really outstanding ideas and they have passed it there. They are a very tight-knit community with very small properties and if they can make it happen we can as well.

- Secondly, I am here because I am a little frustrated with our City and County building issues. I have been doing a lot of research and have confirmed, on multiple homes, no occupancy permits. And people are living in them. People have gotten approved through Planning and Zoning and they go through a rigorous discussion to get approved. Then, the idea is that you get your zoning permit here and then you go and responsibility get your permit with the County. And I have confirmed with four homes as of today, and I am still looking at others, where people either have a gate across their driveway or have decided that they are not responsible to have to hold a zoning permit and/or get permits to do the work on our properties. This ultimately affects our tax base because we're not collecting our monies. And our engineer as well as the County are not communicating. It is broken, it's dysfunctional, and it's not working. I really think we need a fulltime inspector here in the City that is going to be accountable and responsible for everything. Because we are paying a lot of money to see these people get away with breaking the rules and not paying their share. I built a home 5 years ago. I crossed ever "T" and dotted every "i" and had to pay the engineer a significant amount of money, as well as the County. I had all my inspections done and there are people that are not doing it. These homes are approved. You can go on the GIS. You can look at them. It's very clear they have done all the work. None of them have pulled zoning permits. None of them have pulled permits through the County. This is disturbing. At the end of the day, this is our tax base money and the appraisals are skewed. It's not fair that many of us are paying an exorbitant amount of taxes while others are not paying their share. I think this is something you need to look at. You are never going to find a part-time person here because it doesn't work. Meanwhile, it's costing us more money, time, and effort in the situation with the County and the City. I'm telling you, if you call one they will point you to the other. Then you call them and they point you back. I will have a meeting tomorrow with one of the Commissioners at the County about the auditor and the building dysfunctionalities that's going on because this is disturbing to me. I hope you would all be disturbed as well. It is a lot of money and it is wrong in every way, shape, and form. We all really need to take this seriously because it's not right. We all need to be equal with one another.

- **Jenna Bing 3695 Beech Hills Drive:** I want a second that. I have on multiple occasions gone down to the Auditor's Office and to the Building Department at the County and have asked "do you realize that this house was approved? Do you realize or know if they have pulled permits?" Their was responses were "we weren't told there was anything going on." I think it's imperative for the City to step up and have a discussion with the people that say the City hires Lake County Building Department to do the permits such as electric and plumbing. They feel that they are hired by the City so if there's an issue, take it up with the City. I'll take it up with the City. Please instruct the people that you've hired to look at all the zoning permits that you give. Every time there's a zoning permit for something, they need to check and make sure that a permit is pulled for electrical or plumbing or anything that is important and required for that because they don't have a way to know that if the City doesn't tell them. They view themselves having been employed by the City. The City needs to drive this, and she's exactly right. Taxes come off what the improvements are, and if the Auditor does not know that there are any improvements, then, it's not going to get taxed at a higher base. That's just wrong and I'm really tired of hearing "we can't go on people's property because they've got a gate or we can't see it from the street." That's what

police officers are for. I remember a long time ago that somebody went and knocked on somebody's door with the police officer, one of our zoning people, to tell somebody they had done something wrong at their house because they were a little worried about how the man would react. Well, I don't know why that police officer with someone from our City cannot go on and look at these and say "You don't have a permit here you got to shut down." This is the City's responsibility. That's our money that you need to be looking at to collect and it's broken. I have to say I was floored when the Building Department said they work for our City. It's not an independent thing over there. They don't care if I tell them somebody didn't an electric permit. They don't care. They care that the City didn't tell them. It's on us. Thank you.

- **John Wazney 3861 Dodds Landing Drive:** I was here about 6 months ago, and I am back here again for the same thing and I am very sorry that I am back. Things have gotten worse. I am talking about lack of cellular reception in my area. There are about 1,600 residents that do not get service in our area. It is a matter of public safety. That is all I am going to harp on. About a week or two after I spoke, we had mini tornado come through. I lost my power for five days. I had no phone reception, no cell phone reception, and no way to contact any way. I have fire protections in my house. I had no way to call the Fire Department or Police Department. If someone was injured I couldn't call anyway. The only way I could get in touch with anyone is to drive two miles to the grange where I can pick up reception and use my cell phone. I am a dentist, and I was not able to get any emergency calls from my patients. In this day and age, I think it's inexcusable. The day before the tornado one of our local neighbor's husband had a heart attack. He dropped in his driveway and she couldn't move him. Fortunately, she was able to call EMS. They came and picked him up and he was taken to the hospital and was stabilized and it had a good ending. I was going to bring my neighbor across the street from me. He spoke last time about the same problem and his concern. I called him today and he told me he was in the hospital and had a stroke. This happens. It happens. I am very nervous on a daily basis. My wife has some mobility issues and she fell. She has fallen a number of times. The last time she fell she was injured. But, that healed pretty quick. The brain bleed was not too serious. She had to go into care and spend a day in the hospital. She is still recovering from another injury. And this has been 6 weeks, with her dressing being changed twice a day. It happens. I was able to call 911. If this happened in my backyard and she was walking to get the mail, there would be no way to call. I bought this watch that has hard fall protection technology. If you fall down, it senses this. This was a couple hundred dollars. It will make three phone calls to family members and if they don't respond it will call 911. This is worthless on our street because we do not have a cell tower. This has been going on for 5 years. When I brought this up last time, you promised me. You said you were working on this every day. You said you had two screens up. One for City business and one to look at towers. There are places to put this tower up and they have been here for years and it's still not done. I was also told, even if you sign the papers tonight and do whatever needs to get done to get it built, it takes about a year to get it through anyway. All this time we are at risk. It's just scary, and I think it is inexcusable to allow this to happen in our City. I love our Police Department, but if there is a power outage, I can't call. Something went wrong, I don't understand.
- **Ron Gainar 2515 Red Fox Pass:** I am a 25-year telecom consultant. I also live in ground zero of the area with no coverage so I think I am uniquely qualified to provide information on this matter. It is my professional opinion that this is a very difficult problem for many

reasons. The topography of this area, and the coverage objective of the carriers to provide coverage down in the valley and ridge and the residential nature, makes it so there's only there's less than five possible candidates out there that are viable candidates in my opinion. What is frustrating is, I provided two viable candidates to the City, two deals, that were rejected out of hand without any discussion. That is very frustrating because there's a lot of candidates possible. The two main objections that I received was the 200-foot setback. One of my sites did not meet the 200 ft. setback variance. The other objection was the tower development must be put out for bid. I'd like to talk about that first. There's five sites in Willoughby Hills, that I know of, and not one of them were put out for bid. It is not in the Wireless Ordinance and I don't think that should've been a reason to kill that site. That site is dead. But, there is another site that is still very much alive. It is one that a couple of you have been out to. Across from the Grange, there is property that I'm willing to give to the City for a cell tower. It is the best location. It's closest to the ridge and provides coverage down in the valley. It's a wonderful site for many reasons. The main one is that the City doesn't have to reach into its pocket at all. It would be donated to the City. Because it would be so close to the ridge, the tower would be the shortest possible, which would be a good thing. The only thing is I would need to get a variance for the 200 ft. setback. There is criteria that you need to get a variance, I am a zoning attorney; I do it all the time. There is certain hardship and criteria you have to prove and we meet every one of them. We should be able to get a variance. If the City, fire, and safety all agree that we need a site, it is right here. It's ready to go. I have an FA done. I have federal approvals already for this site. We can hit the ground running and get a site up within about a year. It would be the honor of my life to provide coverage for Willoughby Hills residents, which, I am one of as I live down in the valley. It would be a great story and it is sitting here. It seems like a wasted opportunity. You can reach me at any time. You know where to find me thank you.

Public Portion #2 closed at 7:42 p.m.

- **Mayor Hallum:** With regard to the cell tower and regard to the location Mr. Gainar is speaking of, I actually found that location and made him aware of that location. Unfortunately, as he pointed out, it is right on the road. As I recall, this would be very close to the next-door neighbor's home. When we talked about that, there were zoning concerns with it being very close to the road. The other location required Mr. Gainar's tower company doing the work. Unfortunately, this is not how we have done things in the past. Typically, what we have always done, from my experience, is that we have the tower companies come in and present to us the terms of their tower build and then we select to tower company that is the best interest of the residents. That is how we have done it as long as I have been involved. Out to bid may not be the proper term, but what we really mean is that we've done this in the past, where companies provide us with their offerings and then we select the best one. Currently, to my knowledge, there are no locations that are approved or fit the current zoning code. If somebody is looking for a variance, anybody has the right to go in front of BZA and propose that and see if they can get it. I am still looking for a location, and there are some other locations out there that I think are potentials. A requirement is that it has to be on public property. While there may be locations, we have to get a resident who is willing to sell us what we need in order to do it and provide easements. There is a lot more work that goes into this. I am working on this, I meant what I said. If you have some locations that you know are already approved for the residents and are willing to provide those for us, I would love for you to get with me and let me know what those are.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** In regards to the grange, I remember years ago that was a

proposed site for a cell tower with a 200-ft. setback. With recent developments with technology and cell tower construction, would that be viable to look back at again as an alternative to not having anything?

- **Mayor Hallum:** This was not meet the zoning code. You would have to issue a variance or Council would have to change the rules with regard to that and consider if they want to forgo the 200 ft. fall area. That is certainly an option. As I recall, residents did not like that location because there is a historic cemetery right there, as well as a historic grange building.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** I have a whole layout of the property; I didn't know where they planned on putting it. I thought it was more back behind it.
- **Mayor Hallum:** It was right behind the grange.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Would that effect the grange?
- **Mayor Hallum:** If it falls, it could. Those were the concerns of the residents at the time.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER/FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMUNITY (Audio: 47:33)

- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** Congratulations to the Ohio State Buckeyes!
- **Council President Kline:** The Mayor mentioned about the push-in ceremony at the Fire Station on Sunday. This is a tradition and a unique event going back to the days when there where horse-drawn fire equipment. In order to get them back in every day, where they were returning to the station, they could have to pull them in. This is a unique opportunity. This is an almost generational event, buying an engine. I encourage everyone to come out to this celebration.
- **Council President Kline:** Tomorrow is our Communication's Supervisor's birthday, Happy Birthday Karen!
- **Council President Kline:** I would like to take this opportunity to commend Mayor Hallum. When the mayor was Council President, he was the driving force behind the change in how we conduct the public portion of our meetings. We switched to two public portions. Attendees for over five years now have had the opportunity to address items on the agenda at the beginning of our meetings and then the opportunity to speak on any topic near the end of the meetings.
- Unfortunately, some public bodies have gone in the opposite direction and cut back on public portion at their meetings.
- Most disturbing is what has occurred in Lake County Commissioners meetings. They have had a series of negative changes. In 2024 the commissioners reduced the allotted time from 5 minutes to 3 minutes, they eliminated a second unlimited public portion, at the commissioners' discretion they gave themselves the power to cancel, shorten or limit public comment whenever they felt it was appropriate, and they could limit or terminate comments that they felt were duplicative.

- This month the lake county commissioners made more public comment changes. The public comment period is now limited to items on the agenda. The commissioners did announce that following two of their meetings each month there would be a public meeting workshop where attendees could speak on any topic. These will be recorded. Seems to me, whenever you place limitations or restrictions on public participation, you end up reducing public participation.

ADJOURNMENT (Audio: 52:05)

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

APPROVED: FEBRUARY 13, 2025
Date


Michael Kline
President of Council

ATTEST: 
Nicholas Aiello
Clerk of Council