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Vice President of Council
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City of Willoughby Hills

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

Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation Meeting

Minutes of November 10, 2025

Working Committee of Council and Rules & Legislation Meeting was called to order on November 10, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. **Council President Kline** presided.

Call to Order 6:00 p.m. (0:01)

ROLL CALL (Audio: 0:25)

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

Also Present: Finance Director Bruce Scott, and Law Director Michael C. Lucas

Absent: Mayor Hallum and City Engineer Pete DiFranco

BEGINNING DISPOSITION: (Audio 0:55)

ORDINANCE 2025-052-AMENDED-SECOND 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. FOR CITY ENGINEERING SERVICES AND REPEALING CONFLICTING LEGISLATION.

- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Is this just renewing a four-year term for the engineering services Bowen provides for the City?
- **Council President Kline:** Correct. You will see on the agenda a second Bowen and Associates ordinance here for their zoning. These are two separate agreements.

ORDINANCE 2025-056-FIRST READING
AN ORDINANCE TO DECLARE POLICE COMPUTER EQUIPMENT AS SURPLUS PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZING ITS DONATION TO PCS FOR PEOPLE, A CLEVELAND-BASED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- No Comments were made.

ORDINANCE 2025-059-FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL AS SUBMITTED BY RICHARD L. BOWEN & ASSOCIATES, INC. TO PROVIDE ZONING ADMINISTRATION SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF WILLOUGHBY HILLS, FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** It looks like the total base fee for this has gone down \$80.00, which is surprising. It looks like when we passed this six months ago, it was \$41,880.00. I am surprised this went down with shipping and costs going up.
- **Council President Kline:** Were you aware of this, Mr. Scott?
- **Finance Director Scott:** I did see the slight change. I was looking more at the hourly rate, which did not change.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** This notes that this is the estimated anticipated hours. Do we know how many hours we actually used on the last one?
- **Finance Director Scott:** I don't have the exact number. I can get it for you. I know that they typically bill less than what this is.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** I would be interested to see if we are above or below the estimate.
- **Finance Director Scott:** I will email you the exact number tomorrow.

RESOLUTION 2025-016-FIRST READING

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE GULICK FAMILY FOR THEIR DONATIONS TO THE WILLOUGHBY HILLS ISOLATED SENIOR PROGRAMS FOR EVERY DAY RELIEF (W.H.I.S.P.E.R.).

- No comments were made.

Discussion of motion to forego the November 27 Regular Council Meeting

- **Council President Kline:** Thursday, we will need a motion to forego the November 27 Regular Council meeting. This falls on Thanksgiving. There is always a chance that something will come up that will require action by Council in which we can hold a special meeting.

Discussion of residents' traffic concerns

- **Council President Kline:** We had hoped that we would have more information by department heads and the Department of Transportation to prepare for this. We have not gotten that information in. However, we did not want to drop this conversation. I will ask if anyone on the dais has anything they would like to say regarding this topic before we move into public portion.

- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** After looking at the problems they had with the intersection at Bishop and Chardon Road, there were some ideas going out about changing lane destinations to be right turn only, left turn only, or straight only. We have that in some other areas of the City. I think that would alleviate some of the problems. I am not sure if the State has to be involved in that or if this is up to the City.
- **Council President Kline:** That is one of the areas where we were hoping to get more information and know whether or not ODOT has to get involved. Other agencies may have some input on it. Unfortunately, without having that information, we cannot say how viable that is at this point. Once we get this information and have a clear understanding of who is responsible for what, then we can go into detail on that.
- **Councilman Jarmuszkiewicz:** Who would be looking into that information? Would it be the engineer?
- **Council President Kline:** The engineer is probably the lead source of information on various traffic changes in the City and what has to be done. Years ago, when there were questions about the changes made at River and Chardon Road, I called the Department of Transportation director and was told that we need traffic studies and other analyses to be done. There are a lot of points that need to be addressed.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** I know the last time this came up, I had mentioned this to our City Engineer, Pete DiFranco. He had mentioned the last time we had a traffic study was around ten years ago. This was when there were thousands of less residents in our City compared to now. There are also more businesses that made it to that end. In my opinion, it is time to start discussing the need for it. It is only going to increase with the number of businesses that are going to come.

PUBLIC PORTION: (Audio 9:03)

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

- Public Portion opened at 6:11 p.m.
- **Brittany Matlock 2886 Bishop Road:** Hello. I come to you this evening to speak on the ongoing issues of safety on Bishop Road, southbound, specifically at the residential part where the four lanes converge to two lanes. This happens to be directly at my driveway and in a stretch that contains nearly 50 residential properties between Chardon and White Road. Those residents are the ones who are affected most chiefly, some of whose names I can submit to you today, as they were unable to attend.
- Nearly one year ago, we spoke up about this issue several times and received an email from our city engineer with data from ODOT, noting that the intersection of Chardon and Bishop had been constructed and widened around 2006. The stretch to where we're referring had approximately 9,578 vehicle trips per day, and only noting a record of 7 accidents between 2008-2023. I do want to note that an accident did occur just last week in this very stretch.
- After reviewing the information, we emailed a response, which had yielded no suggestions of tangible ways to move forward. And so, I say to you now, much as we responded to him, we understand that the data showed a seemingly insignificant number of traffic incidents; however, the data cannot accurately provide a snapshot of every instance where a crash has *nearly*

- occurred. It cannot capture every time brakes have screeched to a halt, every time cars have sped up to attempt to dangerously out-maneuver each other before the road narrows (including so many UPS trucks that remain unchecked), every time one of the residents whose homes line this stretch of the road has been nearly rear-ended when turning into their own driveway or side street (Evergreen), or every time a school bus has been stopped and cars have sped around or blown passed it because there is a little bit of extra roadway.
- It was communicated that the issue was believed to be an enforcement problem revolving around speeding and reckless driving. And while we realize that individuals are indeed speeding and driving recklessly, we argue that the design of the current traffic pattern for that stretch of Bishop crossing over Chardon Rd. *creates* the perfect set of circumstances to encourage it. As previously stated in our reply, having two lines of side-by-side traffic on that side of Bishop may as well include a flag and starter pistol to see who can cross and merge first; the 25 and even 35 mile speed limit sign is completely disregarded. We have heard the police chief say numerous times that there are only so many police officers; they cannot always be monitoring traffic everywhere in our city. You would have to station an officer there at all times for any change to occur in its current state. That's impossible and unfair to expect of our enforcement officers.
- We are not asking for the entire intersection to be reworked; we are asking the City to consider a change to one part of the intersection that greatly affects those of us who deal with a very specific set of daily circumstances where our safety to enter and exit our driveways is often compromised. Further, this section impacts not only our own residents, but, to the data's point, the nearly 10,000 motorists who pass through this stretch of roadway in our city every single day. While we are excited to see new businesses come to our part of the City, this number will surely increase.
- With the utmost respect, we are the ones who live here and have to deal with so much more than a now-dated chart can articulate. As confirmed with ODOT, the City has the right to make changes in the roads of their borders as they see fit. If there is any question about the validity of our situation before money is invested by the city as a means to protect its residents, there is always a seat at our table.
- Just as a side note I did call ODOT and file a report. I did this just last week. I asked where the jurisdiction lied and outlined a potential solution for them to change the lanes. ODOT said that a lane change is a city issue. I spoke with two different people at ODOT and they said the City has jurisdiction there. Maybe a traffic light is different, but according to what I submitted, it is the City's right to make changes as they see fit. That may still yield a study needing to be done but that is the data I received from calling ODOT directly. Thank you.
- **Anthony Camino 2972 Lynn Drive:** I drive this intersection every day. While there are not a lot of accidents, I can concur that it can be a little harrowing. It has been relieved a little bit without CVS there. That created another problem, because some people would try to cross from the middle lane to turn left into CVS. That is another reason I would be in support of left turns only, right turns only, or going straight only at that intersection. I don't really know what the reasoning is for having it the way it is right now. It could be that there is a concern that the middle lane would back up all the way down Bishop Road. I have not experienced that.

- Because Sheetz is there, people who want to come in or out of that exit are trapped there. People who want to turn right are backed up and can't because someone is up there at the front. Just like here. At the corner of Chardon Road and S.O.M. Center Road, nobody will sit in the right lane and go forward onto Chardon Road. If they are in that lane, they are turning right onto S.O.M. Center Road. I worked at St. Noel's for twenty-three years, and I don't understand why we have the lanes set up like this at the corner of Chardon and S.O.M. as well. But for the intersection at Chardon Road and Bishop Road, I would really be in support of whatever study has to be done and having it go either left, right, or straight.
- Public Portion closed at 6:17 p.m.
- **Councilwoman Belich:** I appreciate that all of you have come out today to give your account as to what you are experiencing. I think it is important for us all to hear this. I myself have gone over, sat, and watched some of the flow of the traffic. I can tell you that I was in the car when we were the first ones there ready to cross over and there was a lineup of traffic in the center lane that can go straight as well. You feel as though you have to hurry and step on the gas to get by those who are in the center lane. I get it. I can see how that happens and I can't imagine trying to get to the bus and trying to cross over.
- Seeing this for myself, I would say that we do need to take a look at it. I understand there are traffic studies that are costly. I am still trying to understand whether or not the City would have that cost since ODOT has stated that this is a City decision. That is what we have to better understand. I think after hearing all of what you had to say and hearing from other residents that live over in that area who share your experiences and concerns shows that we should certainly move forward with this and look into this with more depth. We need to make the right decision as a Council and as a City and figure out the best course of action in that area.
- **Councilwoman Miller:** Over the last couple of months, I did traverse that road. That was after work during the rush hour traffic. There are people who seem to think that they have to hurry and get ahead of all the cars lined up. I did see some of that. I would slow down so that they can go ahead of me just to let them pass. We should do whatever is necessary to find the information we need to solve this. We need to be very aware that this could result in a disaster.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** I agree with what has been said. I think in the meantime, we have a police force and a photo enforcement program that generates funds. We need to use that to ask if a police officer could be there for at least thirty days just to check it out and see what is going on there. As Councilwoman Miller said, I would hate for something to happen tragically here and we are going back and forth with phone calls. I think we need to do something in the meantime until there is some resolve with what we can do and how we can do it. That is my opinion.
- **Council President Kline:** We will gather the information we were hoping to have this evening and will respond accordingly. If there isn't a response coming out from Council in a reasonable period of time, please feel free to contact us. We will get back to you on what can be done after we confer with everyone and we will act accordingly.

LEGISLATION: (Audio 23:20)

- **No comments were made.**
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** We had a few amendments that had passed from this past election. I would like to understand the process from the residents passing these amendments to them being applied to our Charter. What is this process?
- **Law Director Lucas:** There are two charter amendments. We would pass legislation based on the electorate vote to amend under the codified sections those particular provisions in the Charter. Those will be before Council to pass. And similarly, for the road levy, it will be the same process. We usually do that in December and send it off. That is actually the law that is implemented from the electorate vote. So, we would need three separate pieces of legislation on that.
- **Council Vice President Taylor Draper:** And these should be passed before the end of the year?
- **Law Director Lucas:** I have seen these done in January too.

ADJOURNMENT: (Audio 25:15)

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

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

NAYS: None

Vote: 7/0

The meeting was adjourned the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

APPROVED: Dec 11, 2025
Date


Michael Kline
President of Council

ATTEST: Nicholas Aiello
Nicholas Aiello
Clerk of Council