REGULAR SESSION

January 8, 2026

The Council of the City of Chardon met in Regular Session Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Chardon Municipal Center.

Christopher Grau, Mayor & President of Council presiding.

The meeting opened with the pledge of allegiance and roll call.

Members of Council present: Andrew Blackley, Deborah Chuha, Christopher Grau, David Lelko, Kyle Martin, Heather Means, Daniel Meleski.

Members of Council absent: none.

Others Present: City Manager Benjamin Young, Finance Director Mark Iacofano, Clerk of Council Amy Day, Law Director Benjamin Chojnacki, Community Development Administrator Jonathan Holody, Police Chief Scott Niehus, City Engineer Doug Courtney, Public Service Director Justin Czekaj, Allison Wilson, Steve Yaney, Robert Rein, Ginney Rein, Elisabeth Giedt.

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL VICE MAYOR

Mayor Grau moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to appoint Heather Means as Vice Mayor of Council. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

Mayor Grau read his appointments to Council Committees.

Mayor Grau moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to approve the proposed appointments to the Council Committees as follows:

Legislative Committee
Kyle Martin- Chair
Andrew Blackley

Service Committee
Deborah Chuha – Chair
Heather Means

Safety Committee
Daniel Meleski - Chair
Kyle Martin

Water & Sewer Committee
Andrew Blackley- Chair
David Lelko

Finance Committee
David Lelko – Chair
Daniel Meleski

Economic Development
Heather Means – Chair
Deborah Chuha

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Chuha moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2025 Regular Session as presented.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 1-26

A RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR DEAN PESKA was read for the first time in its entirety.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded the rules be suspended and the Resolution be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 1-26 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 1-26.

The Mayor and members of Council thanked Mr. Peska for his years of service on the Planning Commission.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 2-26

A RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR COLIN WANTZ was read for the first time in its entirety.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Blackley seconded the rules be suspended and the Resolution be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 2-26 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 2-26.

The Mayor and members of Council thanked Mr. Wantz for his years of service on the Planning Commission.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Young reported on staffing, noting that the City has pending offers for both part-time openings for property maintenance workers in parks and recreation. When these are filled, all regular staff positions will be currently occupied. He added that job postings have been published for seasonal positions with parks and recreation.

Mr. Young thanked the City’s Street Department crews for their excellent snow removal efforts over the holidays.

Mr. Young reported on the status of capital projects.

Mr. Young reported that the City received a request for filming of a second movie in the Square on public property.

Mr. Young reported that the spring/summer recreation brochure is being finalized and is expected to be published at the end of January.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission met in Regular Session and approved a variance to allow for two-family dwelling use of the property at 107 Center Street.

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission also discussed variances for Willow Tree Development Inc. and variances and final development plan approval for Sheetz; however, both cases were tabled due to inadequate public notice.

Jonathan Holody, Community Development Administrator, reviewed the Economic Development report that highlighted business openings and renovations during the 4th quarter of 2025.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Economic Development Committee

Mr. Lelko reported that the Committee met and received an update on Retail Strategies' activities. Representatives are present to review this information with all of Council.

HEARING OF PERSONS BEFORE COUNCIL

Those Persons on the Agenda

Michael Warsaw, representing Retail Strategies, provided a partnership update that included their progress in 2025, plans for 2026 and a review of their strategic goals.

Mr. Warsaw reviewed the status of retail nationwide that includes a low supply of existing vacant retail space which benefits smaller towns like Chardon because it draws people to places they would not have ordinarily looked.

Mr. Warsaw reviewed the 2025 figures of their outreach to retailers, and reviewed the status of various retailers that have expressed interest in the City.

Mr. Meleski asked what services they offer to existing businesses.

Mr. Warsaw stated that they support businesses by offering demographics and metrics.

Mayor Grau asked what the City can do to help assist with brands that are lacking franchisees.

Mr. Warsaw stated that the City can offer franchise interest workshops, or small business grants.

Mr. Blackley asked if available labor is a challenge.

Mr. Warsaw stated that available labor is a challenge nationally.

Discussion occurred regarding up and coming retail establishments.

General Public

Robert Rein, 331 Karen Drive, addressed Council to request the City's assistance in addressing an issue with his neighbor whose ATV routinely splashes mud on the sidewalk, and vehicles that are unlawfully parked on the street in his neighborhood.

Mr. Young stated that a citation for property maintenance or keeping the sidewalk clear may be possibilities. He stated that staff would look at the area and see what the City can do to address the issue.

Mr. Blackley asked if the City has legislation about grass having to be planted.

Mr. Young stated that he would have to look.

Steve Yaney, 912 Lost Pond Pkwy, spoke in support of Retail Strategies and asked the Council to continue their partnership with them.

OLD BUSINESS – none.

NEW BUSINESS - none.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCE NO. 3336
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT/AGREEMENT WITH INSURANCE PARTNERS AGENCY, LLC. FOR THE PROPERTY, INLAND MARINE, EDP, CRIME, BOILER AND MACHINERY, AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY, COMPREHENSIVE MUNICIPAL LIABILITY, LAW ENFORCEMENT LIABILITY, PUBLIC OFFICIALS LIABILITY, AND UMBRELLA EXCESS LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERAGES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded the rules be suspended and the Ordinance be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance No. 3336 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3336.

Aaron Joslin, representing Insurance Partners Agency, reviewed his recommendations for property and casualty coverages with Tokyo Marine that included a 7% premium annual increase, and cyber liability and crime coverages that had a 1% premium increase.

Mr. Meleski noted that the City had a claim in 2025 with Tokyo Marine that took a significant amount of time to resolve, resulting in a significant loss of use of the theater.

Mr. Joslin stated that much of the reason for the delay in resolution was their vendors who provided recommendations and cost estimates of the equipment, questioned whether the equipment should be replaced vs. repaired.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3337
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT/AGREEMENT WITH INSURANCE PARTNERS AGENCY, LLC. FOR CYBER AND PRIVACY LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERAGES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded the rules be suspended and the Ordinance be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance No. 3337 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3337.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3338

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPROPRIATIONS IN THE CITY OF CHARDON TREASURY FOR 2025 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded the rules be suspended and the Ordinance be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance No. 3338 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mrs. Chuha moved and Mr. Meleski seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3338.

Mark Iacofano, Finance Director, stated that appropriations for the Police Pension and Probation Services Fund are requested to be amended to reflect an additional pay period that was not budgeted for.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 3-26

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY UNNEEDED, OBSOLETE OR UNFIT FOR MUNICIPAL PURPOSES BY INTERNET AUCTION SALE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded the rules be suspended and the Resolution be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 3-26 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 3-26.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that the O.R.C requires annual legislation authorizing the City’s disposition of property that is not needed, obsolete or unfit for municipal purposes by internet sale.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 4-26

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A PICKLEBALL COURT CONSTRUCTION AND USE AGREEMENT WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CHARDON LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded the rules be suspended and the Resolution be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 4-26 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 4-26.

Mr. Young stated that the Chardon Local School District is building new tennis courts in a different location, and they inquired about the City's interest in working with them to repurpose the tennis courts as pickleball courts. He added that the City's Capital Plan includes a pickleball court project in 2027, but working collaboratively with the school would be a more economical option.

Mr. Young highlighted some details of the partnership including: the cost would be split and the City's portion would be capped at $35,000, the school would be responsible for any maintenance, and 5% of the City's program fees would be paid to the school for any City recreational programs run on the courts.

Mr. Blackley asked about availability of the courts for the general public.

Mr. Young stated that the courts will be available on a first-come, first-served basis for the general public when they are not in use by the school for gym classes or the City's programs.

Mr. Blackley asked about policing the area.

Mr. Meleski stated that he thinks there should be a robust set of rules.

Mr. Blackley said the City should be prepared to come up with rules and regulations on how the use of the courts should be administered.

Ms. Means agreed that rules should be posted and any issues that arise can be addressed at that time.

Mr. Lelko suggested the contract allow for the City to schedule special pickleball events during the timeframe that the school has exclusive rights.

Mr. Young stated that the City has access to the scheduling software and can seek school approval to use the courts.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 5-26

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A HIGHWAY EASEMENT OVER 0.0003 ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 209 NORTH STREET FOR THE INSTALLATION OF THE TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT THE INTERSECTION OF NORTH STREET AND FIFTH AVENUE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Blackley seconded the rules be suspended and the Resolution be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 5-26 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 5-26.

City Engineer, Doug Courtney, stated that the small highway easement is necessary to properly construct curb ramps as part of the North Street Rehabilitation Project.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 6-26

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO ALL NECESSARY EASEMENT AGREEMENTS FOR THE INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF WATER LINES IN THE MAPLE TRACE SUBDIVISION, PHASE 2B, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded the rules be suspended and the Resolution be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 6-26 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 6-26.

Mr. Courtney stated that it was discovered that when the Maple Trace Phase 2B plat was approved, a water main easement was missing from the plat. The legislation authorizes the City Manager to enter into 2 easement agreements which are between the owners of 2 entities, FLG Land Group and Maple Trace HOA.

Mr. Blackley asked who is paying for the cost of the water line.

Mr. Courtney stated that the developer is paying for the cost of the water line.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Meleski moved and Ms. Means seconded to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:58 p.m. to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, promotion, demotion, discipline or compensation of a public employee or official, to prepare for conducting or reviewing negotiations for bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment, to consider the purchase of public property for a public purpose or the sale of public property at competitive bidding and invite Ben Chojnacki, Ben Young, Justin Czekaj, Scott Niehus and Amy Day into the session. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion occurred regarding the purchase of public property for a public purpose or the sale of public property at competitive bidding.

Discussion occurred regarding preparing for conducting or reviewing negotiations for bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment.

Discussion occurred regarding the appointment, employment, dismissal, promotion, demotion, discipline or compensation of a public employee or official.

Meeting reconvened at 8:54 p.m.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The clerk read the proposed appointments to boards and commissions as follows:

PLANNING COMMISSION - 4-year term citizens/2-year term council

Andrew Blackley	1/1/26-12/31/27
Daniel Meleski	1/1/26-12/31/27
Mary Jo Stark	1/1/26-12/31/29
Randy Sharpe	1/1/26-12/31/29
Richard Dietz	1/1/26-12/31/27

SHADE TREE COMMISSION - 3-year term

Jason Collette	1/1/26-12/31/28

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION - 3-year term

Michael Ostovic	1/1/26-12/31/28

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD – 4-year term citizens/2-year term council

Deb Chuha	1/1/26-12/31/27
Kyle Martin	1/1/26-12/31/27
Barb Simkoff	1/1/26-12/31/29

HOUSING COUNCIL - 3-year term

Mark Burr	1/1/26-12/31/28
Wayne Gould	1/1/26-12/31/28
Jeffrey Kooyman	1/1/26-12/31/28
Edward Lawrence	1/1/26-12/31/28
Andrew Blackley	1/1/26-12/31/28
Gail Roussey	1/1/26-12/31/28

ADA Compliance Committee – 2-year terms

Mayor Grau	1/1/26-12/31/27
Legislative Committee Chair – Kyle Martin	1/1/26-12/31/27
Safety Committee Chair – Danield Meleski	1/1/26-12/31/27

GEAUGA COUNTY COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION – 1-year term

Mayor Grau	1/1/26-12/31/26

GEAUGA COUNTY FAMILY FIRST COUNCIL – 1-year term

Robert Faehnle	1/1/26-12/31/26

Mayor Grau moved and Ms. Means seconded to approve the appointments as presented. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE COUNCIL

ADJOURN

Mr. Lelko moved and Mr. Grau seconded to adjourn. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Attest:

____
CHRISTOPHER GRAU, Mayor
President of Council

____
AMY DAY
Clerk of Council