

SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

February 18, 2026

The Safety Committee of Chardon City Council met on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 6:00 PM in Conference Room A of the Municipal Center.

Daniel Meleski, Chairman of the Safety Committee presiding.

Members of Service Development Committee present: Daniel Meleski, Kyle Martin.

Others present: City Manager Benjamin Young, Clerk of Council Amy Day, Police Chief Scott Niehus.

Mr. Meleski called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Martin moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to accept the minutes of the Safety Committee meeting from April 16, 2025 as presented. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS - none.

NEW BUSINESS

Regarding the City Manager Goals and Priorities (Goals 3 & 10), City Manager Ben Young stated that he has composed action steps to the broad goals he had previously presented to Council. He is requesting that each Council Committee review the goals and action steps that pertain to their respective committees, and make comments, add, remove or amend the strategies or initiatives presented.

Goal 3 Public Safety

Mr. Young stated that the strategies for public safety include:

- appropriate police staffing and operational efficiency
- long-term fire company stability
- maintaining the City's emergency operations plan

Mr. Young reviewed initiatives to appropriate police staffing and operational efficiency including: improved scheduling, streamlined civil service process, evaluating the need for a dedicated detective and remodeling of the Police Department.

Mr. Young explained that there are modern tools that the City has as part of its existing software that can be utilized for an improved scheduling system.

The Police Chief reviewed the Department's current scheduling process that utilizes an Excel spreadsheet.

Mr. Meleski asked who does the scheduling.

Chief Niehus stated that the lieutenant prepares the schedule and he approves it.

Chief Niehus added that changing the process will allow for better efficiency and reporting.

Mr. Young reviewed the ways he would like to improve the civil service test, including offering an online and physical agility test at an individual's preferred date and time. The test score would be good for a period of time, and when the City has staffing needs, there are potential candidates who are qualified.

Chief Niehus reviewed the current process for civil service testing, noting that the City did not have any applicants the last time it held a civil service test.

Mr. Meleski asked if the Police Chief had any concerns about going in a new direction.

Chief Niehus stated that he has no concerns and is hopeful that a new process will bring in some initial candidates.

Mr. Young explained his initiative of evaluating the need for a police detective, adding that he now has a deeper concern about the staffing of patrolmen instead.

Mr. Young stated that the staffing goal is 3 officers 24/7, yet there are not enough full-time staff to cover the hours needed.

Chief Niehus stated that there is not enough relief coverage to allow for officers to take time off.

Mr. Young stated that his proposal is to hire another officer or two.

Mr. Meleski stated that he supports looking into this for officer wellness as well as to reduce overtime.

Mr. Meleski asked how the detective work is currently being handled.

Chief Niehus stated that currently, patrolmen are responsible for their investigation through adjudication.

Discussion occurred regarding not creating a hybrid detective/patrolman position because it causes burnout.

Committee members requested that the initiative be changed to evaluate overall police department staffing rather than evaluating the need for a detective.

Mr. Young explained the desire for remodeling of the Police Department that was included in the Capital Improvement Plan for 2027 for a more efficient use of the space.

Mr. Young reviewed initiatives to long-term fire company stability including exploring the potential for a formal fire district.

Mr. Young stated that the initiative was suggested in the event that the City decides they want to investigate a more formal fire district instead of a contractual relationship as currently exists.

Mr. Meleski stated that it is definitely worth exploring.

Mr. Young reviewed initiatives to maintain the City's emergency operations plan including holding a tabletop exercise.

Mr. Meleski asked if this would be a City tabletop exercise or a county tabletop exercise.

Chief Niehus stated that the tabletop exercise would be a local initiative.

Goal 10 Strong Municipal Court

Mr. Young stated that the strategies for a strong Municipal Court include:

- Supporting operational efficiency and fiscal sustainability
- reinforcing the Court's role in regional public safety.

Mr. Meleski stated that he is grateful that the County took over the prosecutor functions previously done by the City. The hardship to the City is the requirements associated with Marci's Law. He added that it is something to look at, but there are only so many places that funds can come from.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - none.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS - none.

ADJOURN

Mr. Martin moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to adjourn. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 PM.

Attest:

AMY DAY
Clerk of Council