

REGULAR SESSION

April 9, 2026

The Council of the City of Chardon met in Regular Session Thursday, April 9, 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, Police Chief Scott Niehus, City Engineer Doug Courtney, Community Development Administrator Jonathan Holody, Public Service Director Justin Czekaj, Randy Sharpe, Steve Yaney, Susan Parker, Don Rice, A. Birovsek, Sarah Perry, Dave Carlson, Allison Wilson, Abigale Blashinsky, Ed Slusarski, Jack Bennett, Rebecca Bennett.

RESOLUTION NO. 11-26

A RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR JACK BENNETT was read for the first time in its entirety.

Ms. Means 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. 11-26 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Ms. Means moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 11-26. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Grau thanked Jack Bennett for all of his work to re-construct the Chardon Living Memorial Trail and congratulated him on achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Chuha moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2026 Regular Session as presented.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Young reported that he has been in discussions with County representatives regarding their facilities planning and will update Council as plans progress.

Mr. Young reported on the status of capital projects.

Mr. Young reported on a ribbon-cutting event for DBC contracting at 500 Center Street.

Mr. Young reported that summer recreation program registration is open and pool memberships are available.

Mr. Young reported that the police department jail passed its accreditation.

Mr. Young reported that the street striping on the State Routes is fading more quickly than expected, most likely due to the different paint used for the project. As a result, Public Service is looking into quotes for restriping the areas around the Square and the major intersections on the State Routes.

Mr. Blackley inquired about the material that was used for the striping.

Mr. Courtney stated that the City specified its standard traffic paint for the project due to budgetary reasons.

Mr. Young reported on upcoming community events.

Mr. Young asked Council if it was their wish to suspend the DORA during the Maple Festival.

No Council member spoke in support of allowing the DORA during the Maple Festival.

Ms. Means requested letters be sent out to the affected businesses informing them that the DORA would be suspended during the Maple Festival.

Mr. Young reported that now that the County courthouse project is complete, parking enforcement on the Square will commence. The Police Department will issue warnings for parking violations throughout April and will begin issuing citations in May.

Mayor Grau reflected on the ribbon-cutting and grand opening of the courthouse addition and thanked the individuals who were instrumental in bringing the project to completion: Randy Sharpe, Majeed Makhoulf, Daniel Meleski, Jeffrey Smock, Council members, Judge Pashke, Judge Ondrey, and Steve Yaney, and thanked the County and the community at large for their cooperation on this project.

Members of Council expressed their appreciation to the Mayor for his contributions to the project.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission met in Regular Session and approved the final development plan and conditional use certificate for a Conrad's Tire Store at 240 Meadowlands Drive. He added that Planning Commission did not have any issues with the site plan; however, members did have issues with the architecture of the building, specifically the concrete block. Conrad's agreed to change the block to brick to match the surrounding area.

Mr. Blackley reported that the Commission also heard about the plans to convert tennis courts to pickleball courts and made the recommendation to change the operating hours to 8 AM - 10 PM.

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission also met in a Special Session and discussed the Geauga County Public Library's request for Final Development Plan approval to allow for the construction of a public library and administrative center at 345 Park Avenue. He added that the library took into account Planning Commission's feedback regarding the site plan and they provided space for a potential driveway that would give access to the remaining acreage of the property.

Mr. Blackley noted that he would like the City's architectural review regulations to be reviewed in the future since the Planning Commission has more authority over the architecture of a commercial building than it does over the library's building.

Mr. Lelko suggested that the revisions to the City's regulations be brought to the forefront.

Mr. Blackley agreed that the topic should be addressed soon, however, he emphasized that it will likely involve an extensive review process.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Committee

Mr. Martin reported that the Committee met and discussed a resident's request for the City to enact a flag policy so that only certain flags may be flown on City property. He noted that the Committee discussed the request and is recommending it.

Mr. Blackley added that the flags would be limited to: The United States, Prisoners of War MIA, State of Ohio, military branches, County, and City.

Mr. Martin stated that any future changes to the list of flags would have to be approved by Council.

Ms. Means asked what flags were of concern to the resident.

Mr. Blackley stated that polarizing flags such as political or rainbow flags might be examples.

Ms. Means asked what this would be changing in the City's code.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that the City does not have any existing code restrictions on flags on City property.

Mr. Blackley stated that this would not affect flags flown on private property, and added that he supported the request in order to avoid political polarization that may occur when certain flags are flown.

Ms. Means asked if there have been complaints about flags the City has flown.

Mr. Young stated that he is not aware of any complaints.

Mr. Meleski stated that the proposal is so that the City continues to follow what it has been doing, which is not flying political flags.

Ms. Means stated that she has an issue with the City being told that legislation needs created as to which flags should be flown.

Mr. Blackley noted that the Committee heard the request and did not have any issue with it.

Mr. Martin moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to authorize the Law Director to draft legislation for the authorizing of flags on City property.

Mayor Grau stated that he appreciates the request and thanked the Committee for considering it; however, he also appreciates the comments offered by Council and believes the City is already in a strong position on this issue.

Results of the roll call vote:

Blackley: Yes
Chuha: Yes
Grau: No
Lelko: Yes
Martin: Yes
Means: No
Meleski: Yes

Motion passed.

HEARING OF PERSONS BEFORE COUNCIL

Those Persons on the Agenda

David Carlson, Asst. Superintendent of the Geauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, informed the public of the past, present and future plans of the Metzenbaum Center.

Mr. Blackley asked if the Geauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities has a plan if the initiative to eliminate property taxes is successful.

Mr. Carlson stated that the agency does not have a plan for alternate funding sources and would be forced to close in the event that the initiative to eliminate property taxes is successful.

General Public - none.

OLD BUSINESS - none.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Means moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to move agenda item 11B to agenda item 11A. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the acceptance of a \$50,000 gift from Chardon Rotary for the Pocket Park, Susan Parker presented the City with a check from Chardon Rotary for the Chardon Pocket Park project. She provided a history of Rotary member's involvement in the project.

Mayor Grau moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to accept the \$50,000 gift from Chardon Rotary for the Chardon Pocket Park project. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding a demonstration from ADP of cemetery software, Sarah Perry introduced herself and colleagues from Geauga County ADP, and provided a PowerPoint about the cemetery management app they are offering the City. She added that ADP is offering the service at no cost to the City because of the City's current agreement with ADP for its phone system. Ms. Perry explained that they are able to combine the mapping aspect from County GIS Department with the information about the gravesite. Ms. Perry demonstrated the functionality of the app which will allow the City to share burial and grave site information with the public.

Mr. Young stated that City staff has expressed frustration with the lack of mapping capabilities of the City's cemetery, adding that the app will allow for better communication with people who are looking for burial information at the cemetery.

Mayor Grau asked how the City's information is imported into the app.

Mr. Young stated that ADP can import information from the City's cemetery software; adding that the City's software does not have the mapping capabilities that the ADP app has.

Mayor Grau asked how the cemetery information be updated.

Ms. Perry stated that the City will manage the data once ADP creates the database and map.

Mayor Grau asked when ADP would complete the City's cemetery app.

Ms. Perry stated that it should be able to be completed in the 3rd quarter of 2026.

Mayor Grau stated that he sees no downside to authorizing ADP to create the cemetery program for the City.

Mr. Grau moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to accept the cemetery software from Geauga ADP. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding EPA Grant funding for condition assessment updates, Mr. Czekaj stated that the Public Service Department applied for a grant to update the asset management plan for the City's water system. The City of Chardon was awarded \$20,000 from the Ohio EPA to perform this work with no local match, and Council's acceptance of the grant award is a necessary first step to accepting the grant award.

Ms. Means moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to accept the \$20,000 EPA grant award. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding EPA Grant funding for source water protection strategies, Mr. Czekaj reported that the Public Service Department applied for an Ohio EPA grant for source water protection strategies. The City was awarded a \$47,792.00 grant from the Ohio EPA to perform this work with no local match.

Mr. Blackley acknowledged and thanked Mr. Czekaj for his efforts in applying for and obtaining the grants.

Mr. Blackley moved and Ms. Means seconded to accept the \$47,792 EPA grant award. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCE NO. 3346

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY, AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES, OHIO COUNCIL 8, AFL/CIO, LOCAL 3824 ("AFSCME"), 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. 3346 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. 3346.

Mr. Young reported on the next 5 pieces of legislation that are related to the full-time collective bargaining units resulting from union negotiations. He reviewed proposed changes to the contracts involving: various types of leave time, wages, clothing allowances, longevity, fitness, and licensures. He stated that in addition, there is proposed legislation to amend Chapter 137, personnel regulations, to clarify the wages and benefits of employees, create clear authority to pay wages and benefits and incorporate the changes recommended by the compensation study.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3347

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH THE OHIO PATROLMEN'S BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION, FULL-TIME ("OPBA-FT"), 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. 3347 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. 3347. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3348

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH THE OHIO PATROLMEN'S BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION, SERGEANTS ("OPBA-SGT"), AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Ms. Means 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. 3348 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mrs. Chuha moved and Ms. Means seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3348. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3349

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 137, PERSONNEL REGULATIONS, OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF CHARDON, OHIO TO CLARIFY EMPLOYEE WAGES AND BENEFITS AND ESTABLISH CLEAR AUTHORITY TO PAY PERSONNEL COSTS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mrs. Chuha 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. 3349 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3349. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3350

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CITY'S LEASE AGREEMENT WITH CHARDON FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC., FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 108-111 SOUTH HAMB DEN STREET TO ALLOW AN ANNUAL RENT CREDIT TO OFFSET COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF GYM FACILITIES, 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 Ordinance be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance No. 3350 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. 3350. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3351

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN ODOT COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM 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 Ordinance be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance No. 3351 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Blackley seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3351.

Mr. Czeka j reported that the legislation will allow the City to participate in ODOT's purchasing program to purchase salt.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3352

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A LPA FEDERAL ODOT-LET PROJECT AGREEMENT WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO BE USED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CITYWIDE TRAFFIC SIGNAL UPGRADES AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Blackley 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. 3352 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3352.

Mr. Czekaj stated that the legislation is necessary for the City to move forward and financially commit to the project.

Mayor Grau asked what the public will see when the project is complete.

Mr. Courtney stated that traffic will move more efficiently through the City. He added that technology has significantly improved since the City's last signal upgrade.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3353

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPROPRIATIONS IN THE CITY OF CHARDON TREASURY FOR 2026 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. 3353 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. 3353.

Mr. Iacofano reviewed the amended appropriations to cover the Clearwell Project design work and the purchase of land at 105 South Street for a future parking lot project.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 12-26

A RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING FUNDS IN THE CITY OF CHARDON TREASURY FOR 2026 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. 12-26 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. 12-26.

Mr. Iacofano reviewed the requested transfers which are needed to maintain positive fund balances and were included in the budget.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 13-26

A RESOLUTION APPROVING A WINTER MARKET COMMUNITY EVENT AGREEMENT WITH THE CHARDON SQUARE ASSOCIATION 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. 13-26 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Grau moved and Ms. Means seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 13-26.

Mr. Young reported that the legislation would authorize him to enter into an agreement with Chardon Square Association for a new event, the Chardon Winter Market. He highlighted the terms of major significance in the agreement.

Mayor Grau asked how the vendor huts for the market will be powered.

Abbey Blashinsky, representing the Chardon Winter Market, explained that after reviewing the area with City staff, it was determined that the huts could be positioned near existing City electrical outlets which would power the huts.

Mr. Young added that the City would be providing the electricity for the event.

Results of the roll call vote:

Blackley: Yes
Chuha: No
Grau: Yes
Lelko: No
Martin: Yes
Means: Yes
Meleski: Yes

Motion passed.

REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES

Mr. Meleski reported that expenditures were in order.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - none.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE COUNCIL -

Mr. Young asked if Council objected to staff investigating possible procedural adjustments to the reading of legislation so the Clerk of Council does not have to read the titles 3 separate times.

No member of Council had any objections.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that he would examine the City's Charter.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Attest:

CHRISTOPHER GRAU, Mayor
President of Council

AMY DAY
Clerk of Council