

REGULAR SESSION

May 14, 2026

The Council of the City of Chardon met in Regular Session Thursday, May 14, 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, Daniel Meleski.

Members of Council absent: Heather Means.

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, Dean Carlo, Bill Hess, Allison Wilson, Gordon Landies, Rollin Cooke III, Bob Landies, Ben Carpenter, Mark Miloro, Steve Oluic.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Meleski noted that the April 9, 2026 minutes should be amended to reflect the correct vote on the Winter Market and adding Council member Chuha who seconded the motion to suspend the rules on Ordinance No. 3352.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2026 Regular Session as amended.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Young reported on the City's single trash hauler transition and reviewed the timeline for bin delivery and pickup.

Mr. Young reported on his intent to issue an RFP for the City Architect contract which has not been re-evaluated since 2012, noting that he would like to simplify the billing structure of the contract.

Mr. Young reported on a meeting he attended with the County regarding the Building Department and their proposal for increased fees. The Department is proposing an average 25% fee increase for building permits which will need to be approved by the County Commissioners.

Mr. Young reported that the GMHA Director has resigned and the Board is in the process of finding her replacement.

Mr. Young reported on the status of parking on the Square and the enforcement of the City's parking ordinances that resumed on May 1. He noted that he received several inquiries and has met with some concerned stakeholders, including County officials and business owners, about parking on the Square. He explained that he has been monitoring the parking on the Square and anticipates presenting Council with some changes to the City's parking ordinances in June or July so that the parking is functioning as intended.

Mr. Young reported on the status of capital projects.

Mr. Young reported on activities happening in City Departments.

Chief Niehus reported that Lieutenant Matthew DeLisa was named the Geauga County Law Enforcement Officer of the Year by the Geauga County Bar Association and was recognized at the Association's Law Day event on April 24, 2026.

Mayor Grau offered Council's congratulations to Lt. Delisa.

Mr. Young reported on upcoming City events.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission met in Regular Session and approved a variance and the final development plan for an indoor parking facility at 171 Wilson Mills Road. He noted that residents had concerns regarding traffic, and he requested the City consider a speed study in the area of Wilson Mills Road so that the speed can be reduced to 25 MPH.

Mr. Young noted that when a light is added at Park Ave/Wilson Mills Rd., this will trigger State law to lower the speed to 25 MPH.

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission approved the final development plan approval for an industrial/warehousing building to be constructed at 490 Center Street.

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission approved the record documents for Phase I of the Willo Tree Planned Residential Development which Council will be considering during Legislation.

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission also approved the roofing material for 106 Water Street as presented by the City's Public Service Director Justin Czekaj.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Water/Sewer Committee

Mr. Blackley reported that the Committee met and toured the City's water and wastewater treatment plants.

Parks and Recreation Board

Mr. Martin reported that the Board met and were introduced to 2 new Board members.

Mr. Martin reported that the Board discussed program registrations and facility maintenance and improvements.

Safety Committee

Mr. Meleski reported that the Committee met and discussed an alternative method of funding the Fire Department which would require a statutory amendment from the Ohio General Assembly to grant joint fire districts the same income-taxing authority that currently exists for JEDD districts. He added that a typical household would be paying less in this manner than through property taxes.

Mr. Young stated that he is looking for Council's support to lobby for a State law change.

Mayor Grau moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to request the Law Director prepare a resolution that accurately describes Council's thoughts on a different Fire Department funding mechanism.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

HEARING OF PERSONS BEFORE COUNCIL

Those Persons on the Agenda

Mayor Grau reported that Marci King was scheduled to appear before Council to discuss Main Street parking, but had a conflict and may be returning to speak in June.

General Public

Dean Carlo, 10524 Parkwood Drive, spoke in support of the legislation before Council that would designate the type of flags the City may display on City-owned property.

Commissioner-elect Steve Oluic, spoke in support of the legislation before Council that would designate the type of flags the City may display on City-owned property.

OLD BUSINESS - none.

NEW BUSINESS

Regarding any objections to the transfer of C-1 and C-2 liquor permits from Sines Inc., DBA Chardon Marathon to JNJ Painesville Inc., no member of Council had any objections.

Regarding Council's procedure for the adoption of legislation, Mr. Young reported that staff has proposed a more simplified voting procedure for legislation to reduce the time it takes to pass a single motion. Instead of doing all three readings one after the other, City Council could just vote to forgo the second and third reading by making a motion to suspend the rules requiring three readings.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mayor Grau seconded to adopt the procedure for reading legislation.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the designating the Clerk of Council to attend public records training on behalf of all members of Council, Amy Day explained that members of Council are required to attend public records training at least once during their elected term or they may appoint a designee in their place.

Mayor Grau moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to appoint Clerk of Council Amy Day to attend public records training on behalf of all members of Council. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCE NO. 3354

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A POLICY DESIGNATING THE TYPES OF FLAGS THE CITY OF CHARDON MAY DISPLAY ON CITY-OWNED PROPERTY AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Blackley reported that this ordinance will limit the flags flown on City-owned property to:

- US Flag
- Ohio Flag
- County Flag
- City Flag
- Flags of the US armed forces
- POW/MIA flag

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Ordinance No. 3354. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3354. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3355

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 RESURFACING OF NORTH STREET FROM CENTER STREET TO THE NORTH CORPORATION LIMIT IN THE CITY OF CHARDON AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Young reported that the Ordinance is the first piece of participatory legislation for the North Street repaving project. He added that the project cost is estimated at \$1,232,169.00, which will be funded in part by a \$600,700.00 NOACA grant.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Ordinance No. 3355. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3355. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3356

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A COOPERATIVE FUNDING INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN COUNTY OF GEAUGA AND CITY OF CHARDON FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT REIMBURSEMENTS ON BASS LAKE ROAD AND NORTH STREET was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Young reported that the legislation would authorize the City and Geauga County to reimburse each other for costs incurred for the City paving a portion of North Street that is located in Chardon Township, and the County's paving of a portion of Bass Lake located in the City.

Mrs. Chuha moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Ordinance No. 3356. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3356. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3357

AN ORDINANCE AWARDDING THE ENGINEERING AND DESIGN WORK FOR THE FOR THE WILSON MILLS AND PARK AVENUE INTERSECTION RE-ALIGNMENT PROJECT TO THE MOST QUALIFIED RESPONDENT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Young reported that staff reviewed engineering qualifications, as required by State law for design services for the Wilson Mills and Park Avenue Realignment Project, and recommend C.W. Courtney to perform this work as the most qualified respondent.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Ordinance No. 3357. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3357.

Mr. Blackley stated that the intersection realignment of Wilson Mills and Park Avenue is a much-needed project to provide safety that has been discussed for many years.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3359

AN ORDINANCE AWARDING THE 2026 SIDEWALK REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE PROJECT TO THE LOWEST AND BEST BIDDER AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

City Engineer Doug Courtney reported that after reviewing the bids, he recommends the contract for the 2026 sidewalk repair and maintenance project be awarded to CMG Contracting.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Ordinance No. 3359. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3359. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3360

AN ORDINANCE AWARDING THE 2026 STREET REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE PROJECT TO THE LOWEST AND BEST BIDDER AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Courtney reported that after reviewing the bids, he recommends the contract for the 2026 street repair and maintenance project be awarded to Ronyak Paving Inc.

Mr. Meleski asked what streets will be repaved.

Mr. Courtney stated that Tilden Ave. and portions of Allynd Blvd. are included in the scope of the project.

Mr. Martin moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Ordinance No. 3360. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3360. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3361

AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING CERTAIN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS DEDICATED BY WILLO TREE DEVELOPMENT, INC FOR PUBLIC USE, AUTHORIZING THE RECORDING OF A SUBDIVISION AND DEDICATION PLAT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Community Development Administrator Jonathan Holody reported that this Ordinance approves the Willo Tree Planned Residential Development (PRD) Phase I Plat of Record and accepts the easements, utilities, street lighting and other improvements and lands offered for dedication to public use.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Ordinance No. 3361. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Blackley seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3361. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3362

AN ORDINANCE ENACTING THE DECEMBER 2025 REPLACEMENT PAGES TO THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF CHARDON AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Clerk of Council Amy Day reported that the City's codifier, Walter H. Drane provides updates to certain portions of the City's codified ordinances so that they are consistent with State law and the legislation the City has passed. This legislation will accept the replacement pages they have generated so that the City's codified ordinances are current.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Ordinance No. 3362. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Chuha moved and Mr. Meleski seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3362. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3363

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.

Finance Director Mark Iacofano reported that amended appropriations are being requested to cover operating expenses that will be reimbursed by the EPA Grant discussed at the April 2026 regular meeting, to cover capital equipment purchases that will be reimbursed by the EPA Grant discussed at the April 2026 regular meeting, and to account for the Chardon Rotary's donation related to the Pocket Park project.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Ordinance No. 3363. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3363. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 14-26

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE 2026 CHARDON COMMUNITY SURVEY TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER FOR THE PURPOSE OF GAINING INPUT FROM THE RESIDENTS, BUSINESS PEOPLE AND VISITORS OF THE CITY OF CHARDON ON THE FUNCTIONS OF CITY GOVERNMENT AND THE ISSUES FACING THE SAME AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Young reported that he is proposing to conduct a community survey program, which was included in the budget. He explained that conducting the survey every two years would give the City a clearer understanding of whether its services are improving or declining for those who live, work, or visit Chardon. He noted that if Council has no changes to the proposed survey, it will be mailed with the June water bills.

Mr. Lelko suggested that the survey be conducted after the fall newsletter is printed so that the survey information can be conveyed to residents in that edition.

Mr. Young stated that he was hoping to obtain survey results before the next budget cycle.

Mr. Meleski stated that information about the survey can be provided through social media.

Mayor Grau stated that he supported moving forward with the survey in June.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mayor Grau seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Resolution No. 14-26. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 14-26. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES

Mr. Meleski reported that expenditures were in order.

Mr. Meleski reported on the status of the process to review expenditures through the City's financial software.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to amend the agenda to move agenda item # 14 Any Other Business to agenda item # 13. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Regarding the future of the Geauga Theater, Mr. Young reported that for the theater to run properly, it requires significant time and resources, and given current, and potential future, budget constraints and other outstanding capital priorities, staff is requesting permission to issue an RFP for offers to buy the theater from the City. He reviewed a draft RFP that included conditions provided by various members of Council.

Mayor Grau spoke in support of the terms contained in the RFP.

Mr. Young stated that his intent is to publish the RFP on June 1, adding that Council will have the final authority to accept any bid.

Regarding the discussion of property taxes, Mr. Young reported that a proposed amendment to the Ohio Constitution to abolish property taxes is currently being circulated, and he would like to begin preparing for the impacts this will have on the City. He stated that if passed at the November election, the City would lose approximately \$3 million in annual revenue which is 14% of the City's budget. He reviewed the areas that this lost revenue would affect including: Capital Funding from TIFs/RIDs, General Programs, and the Fire/EMS Operating Levy.

Mr. Young reviewed his suggestions for potential cost reductions and revenue enhancements that would fill the funding gap with minimal impact to residents and businesses. Capital improvements funded through the TIFs and RIDs would not be completed, sidewalks and shade tree special assessment programs would end, various outside contracts could be cut, create a storm water utility, and departmental cuts, increase rates and fees. Additional cuts would result in visible reductions in service for the community.

Mr. Young stated that in order to fund the Fire Department with \$1.4 million necessary, he believes the most logical solution is an income tax increase. RITA has projected that for each .25% increase with 0% reciprocity, \$1 million in revenue would be generated. He noted however, that in order to partner with the townships to fund the Fire Department with income tax, a State law change would be necessary. However, this option would not allow for reciprocity.

He noted that this is the best long-term, stable option to fund the Fire Department. He is suggesting that despite what happens with the property tax initiative, that this funding option be pursued because it is a stable way to fund the Fire Department and save residents money at the same time.

Mr. Blackley stated that while he does not like having to raise income taxes, he appreciates the City Manager's analysis of the costs and the savings.

Mr. Blackley stated that proponents of the abolishment of property taxes propose that police and fire departments can charge a service fee. He asked the Law Director for his comments.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that he does not think that this can be done.

Mr. Young stated that without additional revenue coming in, there will be real service impacts to the community.

Mr. Young stated that he going to start communicating this information to the public if Council has no objection.

Mayor Grau stated that there is a lot of data and doesn't feel it should all go out at one time.

Mr. Blackley stated that for the public and City's protection, he does not want to eliminate the shade tree assessment.

Mr. Meleski stated that if property taxes are abolished, it will have significant impact to residents.

Mayor Grau moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to amend the agenda to move agenda item #15 Resolution of Appreciation to agenda item #14. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 15-26

A RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR DAVID LELKO was read for the first time in its entirety.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to suspend the rules requiring 3 readings of Resolution No. 15-26. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 15-26.

Mayor Grau and members of Council thanked Mr. Lelko for his service as a member of Council.

Results of the roll call vote:

Blackley:	Yes
Chuha:	Yes
Grau:	Yes
Lelko:	Abstain
Martin:	Yes
Means:	Absent
Meleski:	Yes

Motion passed.

Mayor Grau presented Mr. Lelko the Resolution.

Mr. Lelko thanked Council for the Resolution and reflected on his time as a member of staff and City Council.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:43 p.m. to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, promotion, demotion, discipline or compensation of a public employee or official, the consider the purchase of public property for a public purpose or the sale of public property at competitive bidding, conferences with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action, to consider confidential information related to the marketing plan, specific business strategy, production techniques, trade secrets or personal financial statements of an applicant for economic development assistance, or for negotiations with other political subdivisions respecting requests for economic development assistance providing that both of the following conditions apply:

- A. The information is directly related to a request for economic development assistance or that involves public infrastructure improvements or the extension of utility services directly related to an economic development project.
- B. Unanimous quorum of the public body as determined by a roll call vote that the executive session is necessary to protect the interests of the applicant or possible investment or

expenditure of public funds to be made in connection with economic development project.

Invited into the Session: Jonathan Holody, Ben Chojnacki, Ben Young, and Amy Day. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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

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

Discussion occurred regarding conferences with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action.

Discussion occurred regarding confidential information related to the marketing plan, specific business strategy, production techniques, trade secrets or personal financial statements of an applicant for economic development assistance.

Meeting reconvened at 9:23 p.m.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE COUNCIL

A Special Session was set for June 18, 2026 at 6:30 PM to conduct interviews for the vacant Council seat.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Attest:

CHRISTOPHER GRAU, Mayor
President of Council

AMY DAY
Clerk of Council