REGULAR SESSION

April 10, 2025

The Council of the City of Chardon met in Regular Session Thursday, April 10, 2025 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 Randy Sharpe, Finance Director Mark Iacofano, Clerk of Council Amy Day, Law Director Benjamin Chojnacki, Police Lieutenant Matt Delisa, City Engineer Doug Courtney, Community Development Administrator Steve Yaney, Public Service Director Paul Hornyak, Bill Hess, Marian Devoe, Brian Deming, Allison Wilson, Elisabeth Giedt, Cameron Bennett, Jack Bennett, Peter Byrnes, Rebecca Bennett.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2025 Special Session and March 13, 2025 Regular Session as presented.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Sharpe reported that the 2024 sidewalk infill and maintenance program work began on March 31, 2025.

Mr. Sharpe reported on the status of public works projects.

Public Service Director, Paul Hornyak, reported on the repair and insurance claim of the Geauga Theater HVAC system.

Chief Niehus reported on the status of the John Bohl memorial, noting that completion is anticipated for the fall.

Mr. Hornyak reported that brush collection was suspended briefly due to a breakdown of the City’s chipper; however, a rental has been secured and the collection program has resumed.

Mr. Meleski asked when the State Route resurfacing will begin.

Mr. Hornyak stated that the project will begin the second week of May.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission met in Special Session and considered a final development plan and architectural review for Chardon Custom Polymers. He stated that they were approved with 2 conditions: consolidation of 2 driveways and sidewalk installation on Fifth Avenue. The sidewalk topic will be discussed further during legislation.

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission also approved a final development plan for a lot consolidation of 12 parcels for Chardon Custom Polymers at 373 Washington Street, and final development plan approval and architectural review for Crepes in the Country, located at 546 Water Street.

Economic Development Administrator, Steve Yaney, reviewed the Economic Development report that highlighted business openings and renovations during the 1st quarter of 2025.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Service Committee

Mr. Martin reported that the Committee met and discussed staff's removal of sheppard staffs at the cemetery which will occur after Mother's Day.

Mr. Martin reported that the Committee heard a request for a pet food pantry on City property to be constructed and maintained by a private entity.

Mr. Hornyak noted that the requester suggested the pet pantry be located next to the food pantry at 106 Water Street. She will forward information to his office for future consideration by Council.

Mr. Martin stated that the Committee discussed the scope of the 2025 street maintenance program.

Mr. Martin reported that the Committee also discussed the 2025 sidewalk maintenance budget, noting that the cost is expected to exceed the budgeted amount. The Committee recommended that the General Fund loan the sidewalk levy fund the difference with a 5-year payback.

Mr. Lelko asked if there were any Council objections to the General Fund loaning money to the sidewalk fund for the 2025 sidewalk project.

Mr. Sharpe noted that an amended appropriation ordinance would be necessary for the next Council meeting.

Mr. Lelko moved and Mayor Grau seconded to authorize the General Fund loaning the sidewalk fund $75,000 with a 5-year payback. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Martin stated that the Committee discussed the rising costs associated with construction which they felt should be considered when discussing the budget in future years.

Mr. Lelko added that due to rising construction costs, either the amount of annual sidewalk work needs to be reduced or the levy needs to be increased.

Mr. Sharpe stated that a Service Committee recommendation would be needed before August when the assessment amount is approved by Council.

Mr. Martin stated that the intersection of Irma Drive and South Hambden was discussed by the Committee who recommended the installation of a flashing "Do Not Block the Intersection" sign.

Mr. Lelko stated that the Committee recommended the sign be purchased at a cost of $1,950. He added that it will not eliminate the problem, but should help.

Ms. Means asked if there have been multiple complaints regarding this intersection.

Mr. Lelko stated that a couple residents have complained.

Mr. Hornyak stated that he has observed traffic blocking the intersection.

Council members spoke in support of also adding a stop bar painted on the street.

Mr. Lelko moved and Mayor Grau seconded to authorize the purchase of a flashing traffic sign to be installed by staff at the intersection of Irma Drive and S. Hambden Street. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

HEARING OF PERSONS BEFORE COUNCIL

Those Persons on the Agenda

Jack Bennett addressed Council to request approval for an Eagle Scout Project.

Mr. Bennett reviewed his proposed project aimed at rehabilitating the walking trail at Chardon Living Memorial Park so that it is more accessible and sustainable. He described the scope of the project that includes the restoration of 3 areas on the park trails, installing a boardwalk, installing drainage and general trail clearance.

Mr. Sharpe thanked Mr. Bennett for offering to do the project which will significantly improve the trails. He noted that this project has been needed for some time, but the resources and time have not been available.

Mayor Grau commended Mr. Bennett for taking on this challenging Project.

General Public

Molly Nikkila, 146 Chardon Avenue, announced that a special election will take place on May 6th . Ballot issues include: Geauga County Department on Aging, Geauga County Jobs and Family Services, and State Issue 2 to fund public infrastructure capital improvements.

Bill Hess, 115 North Street, stated that he does not think adding a sign to S. Hambden will make a difference in the blocking of the intersection, since traffic still blocks the drive of the fire station.

OLD BUSINESS – none.

NEW BUSINESS

Regarding any objections to new C-1 liquor permit for Ohio Spring Inc., DBA Sheetz at the corner of Water & Wilson Mills, Mr. Chojnacki stated that the City received a liquor permit request for 501 Water Street (former Rite Aid building), and noted that that there is no basis for the City to object to the C-1 liquor permit request.

Ms. Means asked if a permit may be applied for if the applicant does not own the property or is not under contract to rent the property.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that and the City does not know the status of the relationship between the property and the entity, but an applicant may apply for a liquor permit even if they do not own the property.

No member of Council had any objection to the new C-1 liquor permit for Ohio Spring Inc., DBA Sheetz at the corner of Water & Wilson Mills.

Regarding revisions to the Heritage House rental agreement and pricing, Mr. Sharpe reported that since opening in 2016, the popularity and use of the Heritage House has increased. The proposed revisions are recommended to clarify requirements for the use of the building including if the Heritage House is used for a public event on the Square, the event needs to be sponsored by a Chardon-based non-profit organization for the fee to be waived. Additionally, the fees have been increased for both resident and non-resident individuals and businesses.

Ms. Means moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to accept revisions to the Heritage House reservation form and rental rates as proposed by the City Manager.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding changes to the Employee Manual pertaining to the flexible work schedule, Councilman Lelko addressed Council and stated that he believes there was an unintentional consequence to the flexible work schedule approved by Council in November, 2024 which is the potential loss of income tax revenue. He suggested that the existing policy be amended to limit the number of days to 19 in a calendar year so that the City does not lose income tax revenue but still allows for some flexibility in work schedules.

Mr. Meleski asked how much income tax would be lost.

Mr. Lelko stated that an employee earning $100,000 per year and working from home 2 days per week, would cost the City $800 per year.

Ms. Means stated that it is a small amount of money that is not worth changing the policy for.

Mr. Meleski stated that he was aware of the potential loss of income tax revenue, but did not believe that it would be a substantial amount.

Mr. Martin concurred.

Mr. Blackley asked if the Manager can report on the impact to the City.

Mr. Sharpe stated that there has not been any impact to the City.

Mayor Grau stated that he appreciated Mr. Lelko’s efforts, but feels that the advantage of providing this to employees that are capable of doing this outweighs the potential loss of income.

LEGISLATION

A RESOLUTION TEMPORARILY WAIVING THE OBLIGATION TO INSTALL SIDEWALKS ALONG CERTAIN PROPERTIES WITH FRONTAGE LOCATED ON FIFTH AVENUE AND WASHINGTON STREET 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.

The Resolution was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Ms. Means moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of the Resolution.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that Council has the authority to waive the requirement that a property owner install sidwalks. Council has an application from Chardon Custom Polymers for the waiver of the installation of sidewalks on Fifth Avenue and Washington Street.

Brian Deming, general contractor to Chardon Custom Polymers, stated that they are requesting the waiver of sidewalks along Fifth Avenue and Washington street due to the cost of installation which is not included in their expansion budget and weighs heavily on the viability to move ahead with the expansion.

Mr. Blackley stated that Planning Commission recognized the challenges on Washington Street but not on Fifth Avenue which does not have the same issues.

Mr. Blackley stated that historically Council has waived the sidewalk requirement where there are no connecting sidewalks, which is not the case in this instance. However, he could see granting a temporary waiver on Washington with no fixed time frame, and a 2-year waiver for the installation of sidewalk on Fifth Avenue to allow them time to budget for this project.

Mr. Yaney recommended the waiver be granted through December 2027.

Members of Council spoke in support of granting a waiver for Fifth Avenue sidewalk through December 2027.

The Resolution will be amended for Council’s consideration at the next regular meeting.

RESOLUTION NO. 8-25
A RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING FUNDS 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 Resolution be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 8-25 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. 8-25.

Mr. Iacofano stated that the proposed transfers are necessary to maintain positive fund balances in all of the funds listed and were included in the budget.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3306

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPROPRIATIONS IN THE CITY OF CHARDON TREASURY FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING 2025 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. 3306 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Ms. Means moved and Mr. Meleski seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3306.

Mr. Iacofano stated that the amended appropriations are being requested to renew the contract with Retail Strategies and to cover recruitment-related expenses for the City Manager's position.

Mrs. Chuha stated that the City has spent $160,000 since being with Retail Strategies and only one business has resulted, which has now closed. She asked Mr. Yaney if he is happy with the amount of information they have provided.

Mr. Yaney stated that there are a number of other services Retail Strategies provides besides retail recruitment and it takes time for retail recruitment to develop.

Mr. Meleski stated that Retail Strategies provides more than just business openings, and they are providing economic development services that the City would have to hire an individual to do.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3307

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN ODOT COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM 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. 3307 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Martin seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3307.

Mr. Hornyak stated that the Ordinance will allow the City to participate in ODOT's salt purchasing program and other cooperative purchasing opportunities for items such as vehicles and equipment.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES

Mrs. Chuha reported that expenditures were in order.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:06 p.m. to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, promotion, demotion, discipline, or compensation of a public employee or official, and to consider the purchase of public property for a public purpose or the sale of public property at competitive bidding and invite Amy Day, Benjamin Chojnacki, Mark Iacofano and Randy Sharpe into the session.

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.

Meeting reconvened at 9:31 p.m.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE COUNCIL

Mr. Sharpe reviewed proposed changes to the City's classification and pay plan for City department heads and administrators that changes the pay bands to a 6-step system. The changes would give the employees the opportunity to move up a step annually upon favorable evaluations.

Mr. Lelko asked if the employees are hourly or salaried.

Mr. Sharpe stated that the employees are paid an hourly rate, but they are exempt positions.

Mr. Lelko asked that the table be incorporated into the minutes.

RULE 3. CLASSIFICATION AND PAY

PLAN SECTION 3. PAY PLAN

PAY RATES IN EXHIBIT "A" REPRESENT MAXIMUM AMOUNTS FOR EACH PAY BAND, PAY GRADE AND CORRESPONDING STEPS. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE POSITION OF CITY MANAGER / PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR AND THOSE POSITIONS PROVIDED FOR IN SECTIONS 1901.31 AND 1901.32 OF THE OHIO REVISED CODE, THE CITY MANAGER HAS THE FINAL AUTHORITY AND DISCRETION TO SET THE RATE OF PAY FOR EACH EMPLOYEE UP TO THE MAXIMUMS ESTABLISHED IN THE PAY PLAN.

EXHIBIT A

CLASSIFICATION BY LEVEL

FULL-TIME

PAY BAND	
1	CITY MANAGER / PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR
2	PUBLIC SERVICE DIRECTOR FINANCE DIRECTOR POLICE CHIEF
3	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATOR SUPERINTENDENT - WATER & SEWER LIEUTENANT
4	SUPERINTENDENT - STREETS, CEMETERIES & PARKS DEPUTY HUMAN RESOURCES / FINANCE DIRECTOR
5	PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

PAY BAND	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
1	$59.64	$62.62	$65.75	$69.04	$72.49	$76.11
	$124,051.20	$130,249.60	$136,760.00	$143,603.20	$150,779.20	$158,308.80
2	$51.50	$54.08	$56.78	$59.62	$62.60	$65.73
	$107,120.00	$112,486.40	$118,102.40	$124,009.60	$130,208.00	$136,718.40
3	$43.05	$45.20	$47.46	$49.83	$52.32	$54.94
	$89,544.00	$94,016.00	$98,716.80	$103,646.40	$108,825.60	$114,275.20
4	$38.71	$40.65	$42.68	$44.81	$47.05	$49.40
	$80,516.80	$84,552.00	$88,774.40	$93,204.80	$97,864.00	$102,752.00
	$30.10	$31.60	$33.18	$34.84	$36.58	$38.41
	$62,608.00	$65,728.00	$69,014.40	$72,467.20	$76,086.40	$79,892.80

Ms. Means moved and Mayor Grau seconded to accept the classification and pay plan as presented by the City Manager. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Members of Council reported on upcoming events.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Attest:

CHRISTOPHER GRAU, Mayor
President of Council

AMY DAY
Clerk of Council