

REGULAR SESSION

June 12, 2025

The Council of the City of Chardon met in Regular Session Thursday, June 12, 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, Heather Means, Daniel Meleski.

Members of Council absent: Kyle Martin.

Others Present: City Manager Randy Sharpe, Finance Director Mark Iacofano, Clerk of Council Amy Day, Law Director Benjamin Chojnacki, Police Chief Scott Niehus, City Engineer Doug Courtney, Community Development Administrator Steve Yaney, Public Service Director Paul Hornyak, Molly Nikkila, Bill Hess, Deb Armbruster, Todd Albright, Karen Blankenship, Allison Wilson, Mike Hanlon, Elisabeth Gietz, Victoria Dailey, Justin Geiss, Mike Butt.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2025 Regular Session as presented.

Results of the roll call vote:

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

Motion passed.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Director of Public Service, Paul Hornyak, reported on the status of public works projects.

Mr. Blackley asked the status of the 2024 sidewalk infill project.

Mr. Hornyak stated that it is complete, but some restoration areas have been identified.

Mr. Blackley stated that he has observed numerous areas that have problems, adding that it does not look like quality work.

Mr. Hornyak stated that the problem sections will be identified in the punch list walkthrough.

Discussion occurred regarding the status of the theater.

Mayor Grau reported on the fireworks activities planned on July 5th.

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PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission met in Regular Session and granted a use variance for a new Sheetz gas station at 501 Water Street.

Mr. Blackley reviewed the conditions that were set on the approval.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Economic Development Committee

Ms. Means reported that the Committee met and received an update from Retail Strategies on their recent activities. She explained that Retail Strategies is actively promoting Chardon and shared some recent interest in Chardon by retailers. She added that they updated the market guide which can be updated on the City's website.

HEARING OF PERSONS BEFORE COUNCIL

Those Persons on the Agenda

Fire Chief Justin Geiss reported on the ladder truck purchase. He explained that the ladder truck has historically been owned by the City, but the City Manager discussed the Fire Department taking ownership. The cost for a new ladder truck is \$2,229,772. Reductions in the cost include a \$1 million grant the department received, as well as a \$215,544.63 prepayment discount. He has estimated that City's initial investment would be \$800,000. Townships will also be contributing to the cost at amounts based on the last contract percentages between the entities. The City is also being asked to cover the difference with a repayment schedule from the Fire Department.

Mr. Lelko asked if anything has to go back to Council.

Mr. Sharpe stated that Council will have to approve the agreement between the City and the Fire Department.

Mr. Iacofano stated that Council will also see an amended appropriation ordinance.

Mr. Lelko asked when the Fire Department wants to order the truck.

Chief Geiss stated that he would like to order it by November 1.

General Public

Dr. Michael Hanlon, representing Chardon Local School District, addressed Council to discuss the impacts of HB335 which was recently introduced in the State as a property tax reform that will have some serious implications for schools and other taxing authorities that rely on property taxes to support their services.

Deb Armbruster, Treasurer, reviewed the school's past and future financial history, noting that 68% of the school's revenue comes from property taxes of some sort.

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Dr. Hanlon stated that HB335 removes the ability of schools, villages and cities to levy taxes, adding that the annual implication of HB335 to the schools is \$4.3 million with no alternative, and an annual reduction of \$624,000 annually to the City.

Ms. Armbruster showed the effect of HB 335 on the schools. She reviewed the amount of cuts that would need to be made in order to balance their budget.

Mr. Blackley asked what is driving HB 335.

Dr. Hanlon stated that there are some districts that are feeling the impact of the larger property tax increases because they are not subject to the 920 reduction factors.

Mr. Blackley asked how HB 335 would affect the City.

Mr. Iacofano stated that the City's inside millage includes police and General Fund and would expect to lose \$625,000 in 2026.

Mayor Grau stated that without an option to replace the funds that would be lost with HB 335, he cannot support it. He inquired about drafting a resolution to oppose HB 335.

No member of Council expressed opposition to a resolution being considered at an upcoming meeting.

Todd Albright, School Board Member, strongly encouraged Council to reach out to the governor to veto these house bills that are detrimental to the schools.

OLD BUSINESS

Lands and Buildings Supervisor, Mike Butt, reported on the status of the arbor and swing and gathering set location on the Square. He stated that a mock-up was created and it was determined that the boxwood hedges should be removed from the southeast corner of the Square. Additional buffers can be added at a later date if necessary.

Mrs. Chuha asked if concrete pads will be added under the furniture.

Mr. Butt stated that concrete pads will be placed under the swing and gathering sets.

No member of Council had any objection to the proposed layout of the furniture at the southeastern end of the Square.

NEW BUSINESS

A public hearing was set for July 10, 2025 at 6:15 p.m. to provide the public an opportunity to comment regarding the 2026 tax budget.

Regarding a request by Chardon Municipal Court for an additional court employee, Victoria Dailey, Clerk, explained that the court is asking for an additional employee to assist in the Civil Division that would put staffing to the level it was in 2019. She stated that she will be retiring in the next year to year

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1/2 and needs her replacement (Janess Heiden) to work on other technology projects and to train with her.

Mr. Lelko asked why this request was not made during the budget process.

Mrs. Dailey stated that there were some unexpected Supreme Court mandates which made the need for an additional employee more urgent. After discussing the situation with the Finance Director, she was instructed to wait until after the budget was approved because the budget was already prepared by that time.

Mr. Iacofano stated that an amended appropriation ordinance can be done at the next meeting if Council wishes to approve the Municipal Court's request for an additional staff member.

No member of Council had any objections.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCE NO. 3312

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT/AGREEMENT WITH GEAUGA HIGHWAY COMPANY FOR 2025 STREET MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR 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.

Ordinance No. 3312 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. 3312.

City Engineer, Doug Courtney, stated that after reviewing the bids he is recommending awarding the project to Geauga Highway Co.

Mr. Blackley asked if consideration has been given to adding additional work to take advantage of the favorable pricing.

Mr. Courtney stated that they have not reviewed adding any additional areas, but he can do some cost analysis.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3313

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A LEASE WITH HILLTOP RETRO, LLC. AN OHIO LIMITED LIABILITY CORPORATION, FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 105-B SOUTH STREET, CITY OF CHARDON, OHIO, 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.

Ordinance No. 3313 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

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Mrs. Chuha moved and Mr. Meleski seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3313.

Mr. Yaney stated that the lease for the unit is for 1 year with 4 successive 1-year options.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 12-25

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICE INSTALLATION COST SHARING AGREEMENT WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF CHARDON LOCAL SCHOOLS 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. 12-25 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. 12-25.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that one of the Planning Commission's conditions of the school's bus garage facility is the installation of a traffic control device. The school and City are sharing in the cost and the installation of the traffic control device at North Street and Fifth Avenue. If the legislation is approved, the City and Schools will equally pay \$150,000, and the School will be responsible for remaining costs up to a total expense of \$200,000.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES

Mrs. Chuha reported that expenditures were in order.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - none.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE COUNCIL

Members of Council and staff made announcements regarding upcoming events.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Attest:

CHRISTOPHER GRAU, Mayor
President of Council

AMY DAY
Clerk of Council