REGULAR SESSION

August 14, 2025

The Council of the City of Chardon met in Regular Session Thursday , August 14, 2025 at 6:21 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, City Manager Benjamin Young, Finance Director Mark Iacofano, Law Director Benjamin Chojnacki, Clerk of Council Amy Day, Police Chief Scott Niehus, Public Service Director Paul Hornyak, Community Development Administrator Steve Yaney, John Slayter, Loudan Klein, Rad Schneider, Richard Dietz, Jody Byler, Ryan Sommers, Susan Parker, Michelle Urban, Nancy Sharpe, Noah Chadwick, Allison Wilson, Melissa Ricco, David Allen, John Eltzroth, Peter Byrnes, Elisabeth Giedt, Matt Wilson, Rebecca Bennett, Cameron Bennett, Jack Bennett, Don Powers, Michael Jones, Jack Straka.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Chuha moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2025 public hearing (6:15 p.m.), July 10, 2025 public hearing (6:20 p.m.) and July 10, 2025 Regular Session as presented.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 15-25_
A RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR RANDAL B. SHARPE was read for the first time in its entirety.

Mr. Meleski moved and Ms. Means 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. 15-25 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 15-25.

Members of Council spoke about Mr. Sharpe’s contributions to the community and thanked him for his service.

Mr. Sharpe thanked Council, City staff and his family for their support over his career, and reflected on his time working for the City.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Sharpe reported that the 2025 Sidewalk Infill and Maintenance Program is temporarily on hold pending Karvo finishing the concrete work on North Hambden Street as part of the State Route Resurfacing Project.

Mr. Sharpe reported that the pre-construction meeting for the 2025 Street Maintenance Program was held on 8/6/2025. The start date for the work is tentatively 8/18/25 and should conclude within a week.

Mr. Sharpe reported that the proposal for the concept design of the Chardon Pocket Park with OHM has been signed. The project kick-off meeting has been scheduled, followed by a topographic survey.

Mr. Sharpe reported that McGrath Human Resources Group was contracted to perform a compensation and benefit study for the City. Employees have completed position description q uestionnaires and Department Heads have reviewed and provided feedback on those questionnaires. Concurrently with the questionnaires being completed, McGrath HR Group has been compiling market data from comparable communities for the compensation analysis.

Mr. Sharpe reported that the .gov Domain Migration Project has been completed by ISSQUARED. Everything is functioning smoothly with the transition from the domain chardon.cc to cityofchardon.gov.

Mr. Sharpe reported that the 8th annual Employee Appreciation Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, 8/21/2025.

Mr. Sharpe reported that the fall newsletter is complete and is expected to be delivered the week of 9/8/2025.

Mr. Sharpe reported that the flock camera on Wilson Mills Road & Hidden Glen Trail has been installed. The installation of the remaining six cameras have not yet been scheduled.

Mr. Sharpe reported that the Columbarium at the Chardon Municipal Cemetery has been installed. Niches are expected to be available for purchase in the near future. The price per niche is $1,000 (Resident) and $1,500 (Non-Resident).

Mr. Sharpe reported that Brody Betz, Maintenance Worker, and Public Service Director, Paul Hornyak, tendered their resignations, and he wished them well in their future endeavors.

Mr. Sharpe reported on Capital Improvement Projects.

Ms. Means asked if the sidewalk infill program restoration areas have been finalized.

Doug Courtney, City Engineer, stated that a walk-through has been done, and there are restoration areas that will be completed in cooler weather.

Ms. Means asked if the cosmetic sidewalk issues will also be addressed.

Mr. Courtney stated that there are cosmetic sidewalk issues on the list that the contractor is going to try to address.

Mr. Lelko asked when Council will see any of the results from the compensation and benefit study being done by McGrath Human Resources Group, and asked if Council will have input while it is still being developed.

Mr. Sharpe stated that he envisions McGrath providing staff with different iterations and comparisons. Staff would be picking from those and bringing Council a recommendation.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission met in Regular Session and granted final development plan approval and architectural review for Cold Harbor Building Co. for Chardon Family Eyecare at 223 Center Street.

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission discussed the rezoning of the property at 464 Center Street from "I-WTTO" Industrial – Wireless Telecommunications Overlay District to "C-4" General Commercial District which Council will be discussing in more detail during Legislation.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Service Committee

Mr. Martin reported that the Committee met and discussed an increase to the sidewalk assessment. The Committee recommended an assessment increase of $50,000 from the current $100,000 assessment due to the increases in construction costs.

Mr. Martin reported that the Committee also discussed a drainage issue on Cedar Glen. It was determined that the issue is outside of the right-of-way which the Service Department has communicated to the resident.

Mr. Martin reported that the Committee heard from a Hidden Glen resident who requested the City's assistance with missing sidewalks in the subdivision.

Ms. Means asked the next course of action to address the missing sidewalks.

Law Director, Benjamin Chojnacki, stated that the City can pass legislation requiring the property owners to install the sidewalks.

Mr. Sharpe noted that the request was for sidewalks at 319 Hidden Glen Trail, Block C Hidden Glen Trail and 102 Fern Way, but not at the end of Hidden Glen Trail as those sidewalks do not lead to anywhere.

Mr. Lelko moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to authorize the Law Director to take the necessary action to have the missing sidewalk installed at 319 Hidden Glen Trail, Block C Hidden Glen Trail and 102 Fern Way.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

HEARING OF PERSONS BEFORE COUNCIL

Those Persons on the Agenda

Michelle Urban, representing the Keystone Program, addressed Council to request use of the Square as part of a Lunchtime Lifeline event on August 24, 2025. She explained that the event will have donated food and refreshments from local businesses, and tables from local non-profit mental health organizations. She added that there will not be sales or cash exchanges at the event.

Ms. Urban also expressed her frustration with being asked to provide a certificate of liability insurance, naming the City as an additional insured, and asked why the insurance document she provided was not sufficient. She added that the City's process is unorganized with regards to authorizing events on the Square and causes frustration for event organizers.

Ms. Means asked how many vendors there will be.

Ms. Urban stated that Nami, Keystone and Ravenwood are the vendors.

Ms. Means suggested that the health department be contacted before food is served.

Ms. Urban requested the new City Manager provide a list of rules and requirements for all events that request use of the Square.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to authorize a Lunch Lifeline event on August 24, 2025 as presented by Michelle Urban.

Mr. Blackley asked when a gathering on the Square becomes an event rather than a private gathering.

Ms. Means stated that an event is a gathering that is advertised and open to the public.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that the City needs to organize the Square in an appropriate manner that is safe and everyone has access to. The purpose of the application is if someone wants a guaranteed spot and activity on the Square, they will be able to do so. The purpose of the additional insured is if something happens during an event, the City wants to be covered.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Jack Bennett addressed Council and provided an update on his Eagle Scout Project, the Chardon Living Memorial Trail Improvements. Mr. Bennett reported that the project was recently completed and reviewed all of the improvements made to the trail, including clearing trees and brush, relocating the trail and adding drainage, gravel and a boardwalk. He noted that he still needs funds to break even on the project.

Ms. Means suggested a ribbon-cutting in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce may bring awareness and garner donations.

General Public

Rebecca Bennett, gave a brief history about how the Chardon Living Memorial Trail Improvements Project came to fruition through her son's efforts.

Michael Jones, 10135 Ravenna Road, inquired if there has been any study results regarding Redwood's request to rezone property on North Street.

Mayor Grau stated that the City has not taken any action on the topic and the Law Director will report additional information under New Business.

OLD BUSINESS – none.

NEW BUSINESS

Regarding Committee assignments, Mr. Lelko stated that he had to temporarily step down from his Committee assignments in April and requested that he be placed back on the Committees.

Mr. Blackley moved and Ms. Means seconded to assign Councilman David Lelko as Chair of the Economic Development Committee and Member of the Service Committee.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding any objections to all Class C and D retail liquor permits expiring on October 1, 2025, no member of Council had any objections.

Regarding a review of the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan key assumptions and recommendations, Finance Director Mark Iacofano reviewed the key changes in the 2026-2030 CIP and reviewed key assumptions. He noted that Council will consider adoption of the 2026-2030 plan at the September Council meeting.

Regarding discussion of the annexation process, Mr. Chojnacki explained that the City received an inquiry from Redwood Chardon about the annexation process contained in the City’s Charter because the City’s Charter appeared to be in conflict with itself. One provision of the Charter states that annexation must go to the voters, and another provision states that annexation follows the Ohio Revised Code (O.R.C.). After review by legal counsel, it was determined that the City cannot adopt and enforce local annexation laws. Annexation laws are governed by the laws of the State of Ohio.

Mr. Blackley stated that the provision in the City’s Charter was enacted by referendum vote. He asked if the provisions in the O.R.C. existed at that time.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that the annexation process has changed since then, and additional provisions have been added by which annexation can occur; however, the legal authority that says that annexation is a process governed by the State and not local government has been in effect before the City’s Charter change.

Mr. Blackley asked what the annexation process should be, noting that the City did not initiate the annexation.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that there are a number of annexation processes the property owner could choose from.

John Slater, Attorney with Tucker Ellis, spoke on behalf of Redwood and provided a brief history of how the question arose regarding the City’s annexation process. He stated that the annexation process is just beginning, but wants to address any concerns the community has. He stated that the majority of the property for the project is already in the City, with only 10 acres being in the township that they are looking to annex.

Rad Schneider, VP of Acquisitions for Redwood, explained that they are looking at 2 parcels at the north end of the City, one in the City and the other in Chardon Township, to construct 117 apartment homes. To this point, they have begun reviewing the City’s annexation process and utilities.

Ms. Means asked about the steps to annexation.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that Redwood first needs to select an annexation method they wish to follow. He briefly reviewed the most common methods and briefly reviewed the steps of each.

Ms. Means asked if Council would have to accept or reject the annexation.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that Council would have to accept or reject the annexation.

Ms. Means stated that the demand on City’s services, such as police and fire, needs to be assessed.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that the purpose of the discussion is because he wanted Council to know that the annexations do not go on the ballot.

Discussion occurred regarding the annexation process and the development approval which are independent of each other.

Members of Council questioned if Council can deny an annexation if an applicant has met all necessary criteria and zoning.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that it is Council’s discretion if they wish to approve a request for a property to be annexed into the City.

Discussion occurred regarding what zoning classification the property would be zoned under.

Mr. Yaney stated that the property would default to R3 zoning unless Planning Commission and Council rezone it differently.

Mr. Blackley asked if the Chardon Township Trustees have a say in the annexation.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that it depends on which process is chosen.

Mrs. Chuha asked if there is any other property that Redwood is looking at.

Mr. Schneider stated that they are looking at an additional property on which to put the force main.

Mayor Grau stated that it is early in the process, but noted that his concern is the impact on water, sewer, police, and fire. He asked what Redwood’s position would be if after Council reviews the project in more depth and determines they are not in favor of the annexation.

Mr. Slater stated that they would want to try to work through the objections with Council, but would like to find out sooner rather than later if Council was not in favor of the annexation.

Mayor Grau asked Redwood’s timeline.

Mr. Slater stated that it took some time to get through the annexation process, and so they would like to move forward sooner rather than later.

Mr. Schneider stated that they would prefer to run the annexation process and the rezoning process concurrently.

Mr. Yaney stated that Planning Commission could hear the issue informally.

Mr. Blackley stated that until the property is annexed into the City, he does not see a reason to discuss any plan development.

Discussion occurred regarding the process to move forward.

Mr. Slater stated that they are not looking for a decision immediately, but they would like to find out what objections are so that they can address them.

Jack Straka, expressed concern about the effect the development will have on traffic and the safety of school children crossing the street.

Mayor Grau stated that there will be more opportunity for public comment if the topic goes to Planning Commission.

Courtney Hudson, 308 E. King Street, stated that a presentation by Redwood would be helpful and thought a buffer zone as part of the development would be received better.

Mr. Meleski stated that Council needs to be cognizant of the impact of a higher density on water and sewer buildout.

Mr. Blackley concurred with Mr. Meleski and stated that the current wastewater treatment plant is constrained against further enlargement due to the discharge permit with the EPA.

LEGISLATION

RESOLUTION NO. 16-25

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE CONTROL OF BLIGHT AND DISEASE OF SHADE TREES WITHIN PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND FOR PLANTING, MAINTAINING, TRIMMING AND REMOVING SHADE TREES IN AND ALONG THE STREETS OF THE CITY OF CHARDON; AUTHORIZING THE SHADE TREE COMMISSION TO SO PROVIDE DURING THE YEAR OF 2025; ESTABLISHING A SINGLE DISTRICT FOR SAID PURPOSE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 727.011, OHIO REVISED CODE; PROVIDING THE ASSESSMENT OF THE COST AND EXPENSE OF SUCH PLANTING, MAINTAINING, TRIMMING AND REMOVING UPON BENEFITTING PROPERTY IN SAID DISTRICT, 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. 16-25 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. 16-25.

David Allen, Urban Forester, reported on his current activities and plans relative to shade trees in the City.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 17-25

A RESOLUTION OF NECESSITY FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF STREET LIGHTING AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Ms. Means 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. 17-25 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. 17-25.

Finance Director Mark Iacofano stated that the assessment will cover the operating costs for street lighting with no recommended change in the assessment amount of $130,000.

Mr. Blackley asked how the revenue from the assessment compares to the expenses the City is charged by the Illuminating Company.

Mr. Iacofano stated that the expenses are starting to exceed the revenue from the assessment, but the City has a carryover balance that should cover the difference for the next couple of years.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 18-25
A RESOLUTION OF NECESSITY FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF SIDEWALKS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Martin 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. 18-25 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mrs. Chuha moved and Ms. Means seconded for the adoption of Resolution No. 18-25.

Mr. Martin stated that the Service Committee reviewed sidewalk assessment rates and recommended an increase of $50,000 due to increasing construction costs.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO._3317
AN ORDINANCE REZONING THE REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 464 CENTER STREET FROM INDUSTRIAL-WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATION TOWER (I-WTTO) TO GENERAL COMMERCIAL (C-4) 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. 3317 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. 3317.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that the ordinance will rezone the property at 464 Center Street from I-WTTO to C-4.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO._3318
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 1519.04 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES TO CLARIFY AND REINSTATE THE CITY’S PROHIBITION ON THE DISCHARGE OF FIREWORKS WITHIN THE CITY 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. 3318 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Blackley moved and Ms. Means seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3318.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that State law changed in 2022, allowing for fireworks to be discharged on certain dates. At that time, the City's codifier updated the City's Codified Ordinances to incorporate the new State law, however, in doing so, unintentionally removed the prohibition on the discharge of fireworks from the Codified Ordinances. He stated that passage of the legislation will reinstate the City's prohibition on the discharge of fireworks and clarifies that it has always been the intent for fireworks to be banned in the City.

Chief Niehus explained the process for contacting the police department in instances when fireworks are discharged.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3319
AN ORDINANCE ENACTING THE MAY 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.

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. 3319 was then read for the second and third time by title only.

Mr. Meleski moved and Ms. Means seconded for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3319.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that the City's codifier 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 so that the City's codified ordinances are current.

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 reported on recent events in the City.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Attest:

CHRISTOPHER GRAU, Mayor
President of Council

AMY DAY
Clerk of Council