REGULAR SESSION

October 9, 2025

The Council of the City of Chardon met in Regular Session Thursday, October 9, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Chardon Municipal Center.

Heather Means, Vice Mayor & Vice President of Council presiding.

The meeting opened with the pledge of allegiance and roll call.

Members of Council present: Andrew Blackley, Deborah Chuha, David Lelko, Kyle Martin, Heather Means, Daniel Meleski.

Members of Council absent: Christopher Grau.

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, Justin Czekaj, Bobby & Susan Pryor, Ken Ovark, Paul Ovark, Walter Jones, Nick Dybo, Allison Wilson, Kathryn Gentile, Marrion Beers, Jennifer Myers, Peter Byrnes, Kristi Ellerson, Scott Barna, Bobbie Barna, Sarah Gage, Aegis Sherwood, Terry Hegner, Michael Brown, Jeremy Rosen, Elizabeth Bolander.

Vice Mayor Means reported that a Facebook page incorrectly posted that City Council would be discussing a Redwood Chardon apartment project, however the topic is not being discussed by Council at this meeting. She explained that for the public to be notified when an item is being discussed, the public may sign up to receive the City's public notices.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Meleski moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2025 Regular Session as presented.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Benjamin Young, City Manager, reported that his former community, North Canton, had an act of gun violence and asked that the community be kept in everyone's thoughts and prayers.

Mr. Young reported on the status of recent resignations in the Public Service Department, noting that the replacement position in the Street Division will be titled Cemetery Sexton.

Mr. Lelko asked if Council had eliminated the Cemetery Sexton position.

Mr. Young stated that the Cemetery Sexton is a special assignment for Street Division maintenance workers that includes a stipend. However, it has been difficult to find willing maintenance workers that are interested in doing the Cemetery Sexton duties. Therefore, it was requested that the position be posted as a Cemetery Sexton so that the duties are known upfront.

Mr. Young reported on the hiring process for the Community Development Administrator position.

Mr. Young reported that large item pickup was held on 9/27/25.

Mr. Meleski asked Mr. Young to inform Council about how many loads of trash were collected.

Mr. Young reported that the website content refresh is approximately 50% completed. A presentation of the revised content is expected to be ready at the November Council meeting.

Mr. Young reported that the Pocket Park Project will begin its preliminary design phase.

Mr. Blackley asked if the Pocket Park design will go to Planning Commission for their input prior to construction.

Mr. Young stated that Planning Commission will review it at the time of approval.

Mr. Blackley requested that Planning Commission have input during the design phase.

No member of Council had any objection to Planning Commission reviewing the plan and providing input during the design phase.

Mr. Young reported on the State Route Resurfacing Project, noting that pavement is complete and striping is in progress.

Mr. Meleski inquired about the cleanup from the State Route Resurfacing Project since he has seen pavement debris in lawns and on the shoulder of the road.

City Engineer Doug Courtney stated that the cleanup process is still incomplete, but he will make the contractor aware of the issue.

Mr. Young reported that the 2024 and 2025 sidewalk programs have been completed with some punch list items still remaining.

Mr. Young reported on upcoming events.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission met in Regular Session and granted record document approval for Phase 3 of Maple Trace, approved the vertical lot split for 135 Main Street, approved the final development plan and architectural review for a new industrial addition at the Chardon Metal Coatings complex at 345 Industrial Parkway, and approved an amendment to the approved landscape plan for the Cider Mill Townhomes development at 329 Park Avenue.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Committee

Mr. Meleski reported that the Committee met and discussed the City’s animal regulations that address revised definitions and setback requirements for structures. He stated that the Committee recommended moving forward with presenting the legislation before Planning Commission and Council.

Ms. Means added that the legislation was prepared in response to residents’ complaints in the community.

HEARING OF PERSONS BEFORE COUNCIL

Those Persons on the Agenda – none.

General Public – none.

OLD BUSINESS – none.

NEW BUSINESS

A Public Hearing was set for November 13, 2025 at 6:20 PM to allow the public to comment regarding a proposed text amendment to the Planning & Zoning Code, specifically Section 1133.11 Accessory Uses and Structures to allow for the expansion and clarification of rules regarding accessory structures and uses related to the harboring of animals, and Section 1103.03 to amend the definition of "Livestock".

Regarding confirmation of the City Manager's recommendation to hire a new Public Service Director, Mr. Young presented Justin Czekaj for appointment as Public Service Director.

Mrs. Chuha moved and Mr. Blackley seconded to approve the City Manager's recommendation to hire Justin Czekaj as Public Service Director. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Justin Czekaj thanked Council for their appointment and stated that he is looking forward to serving the City residents and enhancing the lives of staff members.

Regarding the appointment of the City's representation on the OPWC District 7 Integrating Committee, Mr. Young stated that the previous appointments to the Committee were the former City Manager and Public Service Director and the Service Committee members. In order to fill the vacancies, he requested Council appoint Justin Czekaj and Mr. Martin to the primary seats and Mr. Young and Mr. Lelko as their respective alternates.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to appoint Justin Czekaj and Mr. Martin to the primary seats and Mr. Young and Mr. Lelko as their respective alternates. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding an Announcement of Decision for Maple Trace PRD Phase III, Subdivision Plat of Record and Dedication of Subdivision, Law Director Benjamin Chojnacki stated that the announcement of decision is a requirement and the first step in the dedication of Maple Trace Subdivision Phase III. He added that everything has been reviewed and inspected by the City Engineer and is up to municipal specifications.

Mr. Blackley moved and Mr. Meleski seconded to approve the Announcement of Decision for Maple Trace PRD Phase III, Subdivision Plat of Record and Dedication of Subdivision. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCE NO. 3323

AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING CERTAIN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS DEDICATED BY FLG-CHARDON, LLC FOR PUBLIC USE, AUTHORIZING THE RECORDING OF A DEDICATION PLAT, 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. 3323 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. 3323.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that the legislation is the last step in the process to dedicate the public improvements for Phase III of Maple Trace PRD.

Mr. Blackley asked how many lots are in the phase.

Jeremy Rosen, representing Frontier Land Group, stated that there are 35 lots in Phase III.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3324
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CHARDON FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC. FOR THE PURCHASE AND REPAYMENT OF A LADDER TRUCK 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 Ordinance be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance No. 3324 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. 3324.

Mr. Young reviewed highlights of the agreement with the Fire Department for the purchase of a ladder truck, noting that the City will pay $785,000 towards the purchase of the truck.

Mr. Meleski asked what will happen with the current ladder truck.

Chief Geiss stated that he anticipates it going to bid.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3325
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A THEATER USE AGREEMENT WITH CURTAIN 440, LLC FOR THE USE OF THE GEAUGA THEATER 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. 3325 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. 3325.

Mr. Young stated that the legislation would authorize a 2026 agreement for the Geauga Theater. The rent is the same amount as was authorized for 2025.

Mr. Lelko suggested that the agreement language be changed to state that the theater use *may* be cancelled in the event of a snow day rather than *shall* be cancelled. He felt that this would be limiting its use.

No member of Council had any objections.

Mr. Lelko questioned if the City wants the ability to refuse to allow a show which Curtain 440 would want to present.

Mr. Chojnacki recommended that if Council wanted this language, the legislation be adopted with the direction that he and the City Manager include this language in the contract.

No member of Council had any objections.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3326
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A LEASE WITH THE FAIRMOUNT CENTER FOR CREATIVE & PERFORMING ARTS, INC. FOR THE USE OF 106 WATER STREET 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. 3326 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. 3326.

Mr. Young stated that in the interest of having a committed tenant, Fairmount will be permitted to occupy the space, but will not need to begin paying rent until their current lease on Main Street ends.

Elizabeth Bolander, Executive Director for Fairmount, discussed how they plan to use the space at 106 Water Street for an arts center.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3327
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A LEASE WITH COMPANY 119, LTD. FOR THE USE OF 103 SOUTH STREET, SUITE 3, 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. 3327 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. 3327.

Mr. Young stated that the lease is for Company 119 to continue leasing their current space at 103 South Street, Suite 3.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 3328
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPROPRIATIONS 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 Ordinance be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance No. 3328 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. 3328.

Finance Director Mark Iacofano reviewed the nature of the various proposed amendments to appropriations.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 21-25
A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CHARDON LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TO CONTINUE THE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER 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 Resolution be read for the second and third time by title only. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 21-25 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. 21-25.

Chief Niehus stated that a memorandum of understanding is required by H.B. 318, and it documents the relationship between the school and the City with respect to the purpose of the SRO program, roles and responsibilities. He noted that there are no substantive changes to how the SRO has been operating and no changes to the funding.

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 Mr. Blackley seconded to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:26 p.m. for conferences with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action and invite Ben Chojnacki, Ben Young, Chief Scott Niehus, and Amy Day into the session. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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.

Meeting reconvened at 7:58 p.m.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE COUNCIL –

Members of Council and staff made announcements regarding upcoming events.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Attest:

____
CHRISTOPHER GRAU, Mayor
President of Council

____
AMY DAY
Clerk of Council