REGULAR SESSION

December 11, 2025

The Council of the City of Chardon met in Regular Session Thursday , December 11, 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 Benjamin Young, Finance Director Mark Iacofano, Clerk of Council Amy Day, Law Director Benjamin Chojnacki, Community Development Administrator Jonathan Holody, Police Chief Scott Niehus, City Engineer Doug Courtney, Parks & Recreation Director Adam Rogers, Allison Wilson, Molly Nikkila, Dave Jevnikar.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2025 Public Hearing, November 13, 2025 Regular Session and December 2, 2025 Special Session as presented.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Young reported on current job openings, noting that Robert Rondini has been hired in public works as the new maintenance worker/cemetery sexton, and Kenneth Holcomb has been hired as the new property maintenance worker in lands and buildings.

Mr. Young reported that the City’s current single trash hauler contract bid packet was posted December 1, 2025 with submissions due January 23, 2026.

Mr. Young reported that he attended the first meeting of the County Property Tax Abolishment Response Taskforce (PART) hosted by the County to work towards preparing for the potential total repeal of property taxes in 2026/2027. For next steps, PART requested participating communities submit to them a description of the services the City offers that are reliant on property taxes.

Ms. Means asked what the effect will be on the City’s finances if the initiative passes.

Mr. Young stated that it is estimated that the City would lose $3 million in tax revenue if the initiative passes.

Ms. Means asked what the expectation is for the City to make up for the revenue loss.

Mr. Young stated that the ballot proposal does not provide for any alternative funding so the City would very likely have to consider an income tax increase.

Mr. Young reported on the status of capital projects.

Mr. Lelko asked if Council will be approving the streets in the 2026 street maintenance program.

Mr. Courtney stated that staff can present this information if Council would like them to, and he also reviewed the streets that are included in the 2026 program.

Mr. Young reported on upcoming events.

Mr. Young reported on various activities happening in City Departments.

Chief Niehus reported on the criteria used in AAA's platinum award for traffic safety, which the Police Department was recently awarded. He also reported on the successful Shop with a Cop event held on November 30, 2025.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Blackley reported that Planning Commission met in Regular Session and heard a request from Abruzzo Investments for a use variance to allow for two-family dwelling use of the property at 107 Center Street. A number of residents were present and expressed concern regarding parking and noise. Planning Commission concluded to table the issue to allow time for staff to prepare answers to a number of questions that were raised.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS – none.

HEARING OF PERSONS BEFORE COUNCIL

Those Persons on the Agenda – none.

General Public - none.

OLD BUSINESS – none.

NEW BUSINESS
Regarding the acceptance of a monetary donation for the Police Department, Chief Niehus reported that the Department was presented with a $10,000 check from a victim of a crime that occurred in the City.

Mayor Grau moved and Ms. Means seconded to accept the $10,000 monetary donation for the Police Department.

Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCE NO._3334
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH GEAUGA LOCAL ACCESS CABLE CORPORATION FOR CABLE TELEVISION LOCAL ACCESS PROGRAMMING, 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. 3334 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. 3334.

Mr. Young reviewed options he prepared for Council to consider related to the contract with G-TV that is expiring December 31, 2025.

Option 1: Renew the G-TV Contract Under Current Terms

Option 2: End the G-TV contract and transition to City-provided programming that would live-stream meetings on YouTube while retaining the cable franchise fees to assist in this effort.

Option 3: End the G-TV contract and redirect cable fees to support some other effort such as arts and culture to provide public programming in a different way.

Option 4: End the G-TV contract and eliminate the cable franchise fee for residents.

Mrs. Chuha asked if the money the City retained from the cable franchise fees has been spent.

Mr. Iacofano stated that some money was spent on new cameras.

Ms. Means concurred that money was spent on cameras.

Mr. Meleski stated that G-TV provides a value to those that pay the franchise fee beyond coverage of municipal meetings.

Mrs. Chuha suggested that G-TV be given all of the cable franchise fees.

Ms. Means stated that she is not in favor of giving all of the franchise fees to G-TV, because some of those fees could be used for the community in a broader sense. The sound system on the Square is an example of how the money could be used. She stated that if it isn’t palatable for Council to withhold all the franchise fees, she would like to withhold 50% and use the money for other projects.

Dave Jevnikar, representing G-TV, stated that he provided Council with G-TV website viewership data, adding that the new chaptering of the Council meeting is a nice feature that may encourage people to watch parts of the meetings. He noted that sports and community events are what interest viewers, adding that he would like more communication from the City to cover different community events.

Mr. Young noted that the theater building will need some significant repairs in the near future.

Mayor Grau stated that with the nearing theater expenses, he is more inclined to renew the contract with the current terms and retain 25% of the franchise fees to use for something consistently used in security or arts and culture for the betterment of the community.

Mr. Jevnikar stated that he would like to continue providing service to the City of Chardon, and if the City withdrew, it would make it difficult for them to continue.

Mr. Meleski spoke in support of renewing the contract with the current terms.

Mr. Blackley spoke in support of renewing the contract with the current terms for one more year, but would like the alternatives provided by the City Manager to be explored in more detail.

Mr. Lelko concurred with Mr. Blackley and asked that the theater issues and the issues raised with the square sound system be explored further.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO._26-25
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 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. 26-25 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. 26-25.

Mr. Iacofano stated that the transfers are necessary to keep a positive fund balance in the Permissive Tax Fund.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO._3335
AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF CHARDON, STATE OF OHIO DURING THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2026, 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. 3335 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. 3335.

Mr. Iacofano stated that the Ordinance is intended to cover personnel and certain operating costs for the first quarter of 2026, other routine and known operating costs for the entire year, and the projects approved by City Council in the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan. He noted that a few changes have been made to the projects in the Capital Improvement Plan for 2026 since its adoption which he specified in his memo to Council. He noted that the appropriation being requested is $15,279,414.00.

Mayor Grau inquired about the $40,000 cost to replace the boiler at the pool.

Adam Rogers, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that the boiler is an original piece of equipment that is no longer repairable and is needed to heat the pool.

Mayor Grau asked if not purchasing the heater would be a deterrent to pool participation.

Mr. Rogers stated that when the pool is not heated, patrons will be able to tell.

Mr. Lelko inquired about the purchase of diving blocks for the pool.

Mr. Rogers stated that the diving blocks are used by the Swim Team.

Mr. Lelko asked if the Swim Team raises funds.

Mr. Rogers stated that the Swim Team does not raise funds but has considered sponsorships to help raise funds for the starting blocks.

Mr. Young stated that the Swim Team is one of the largest revenue sources at the pool.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO._27-25
A RESOLUTION APPOINTING BENJAMIN GRANT CHOJNACKI AS LAW DIRECTOR, AUTHORIZING THE MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH BENJAMIN GRANT CHOJNACKI AND THE LAW FIRM OF ROETZEL & ANDRESS LPA FOR PROFESSIONAL LEGAL SERVICES FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2028, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY was read for the first time by title only.

Ms. Means moved and Mr. Blackley 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. 27-25 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. 27-25.

Mr. Young stated that the legislation would authorize him to enter into a contract with Benjamin Chojnacki as Law Director for a 3-year term.

Mayor Grau and members of Council spoke in support of Mr. Chojnacki , noting that he is accessible and an asset to the Council and the City.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – none.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE COUNCIL

Brief discussion occurred regarding the vacancies on Planning Commission.

Mr. Lelko asked if the annexation provision in the City’s Charter should be considered for a ballot issue before the next Charter review since it is not enforceable, or if it should be an issue left for the Charter Review Commission in 2028.

Mr. Chojnacki stated that putting the issue on the ballot may cause more confusion for the public.

Mr. Meleski spoke in support of it being a recommendation by the Charter Review Commission.

Mayor Grau asked the City Manager to report on the progress being made regarding property maintenance on Huntington Street.

Mr. Young stated that the property owner of 114 Huntington Street is working diligently at cleaning up the property and will be reviewing outstanding items that need attention at their next pretrial on December 12th.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Attest:

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CHRISTOPHER GRAU, Mayor
President of Council

____
AMY DAY
Clerk of Council