



**RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES  
July 24, 2023, at 6:00pm**

**The public meeting was held in person in Council Chambers.**

**The Committee of the Whole Meeting was called to order at 6:04 P.M. by Council President, Andrew Kluge.**

**Council present:** Council President Andrew Kluge, Amy Michael, Rob Kairis, Tim Calfee, Christina West, Cheryl Wood, Paul Moskun and Matt Harper.

**Also in attendance:** Mayor Frank Seman; Law Director, Frank Cimino; Police Chief, Jeff Wallis; Fire Chief, Mark Chapple; Kay Dubinsky; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Finance Director, Brian Huff; Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor; John Moore, Larry Silenius, Cliff Soudil, Ralph Morehead, Sherri Kotouc

Mayor Seman stated that he wanted to respond in reaction to the prior meeting. He explained that he did not want to disparage any Council members, the public who spoke or any employees. Mayor Seman stated that a group of people came in unexpectedly to speak on a topic that should have been addressed administratively in his office and regretted that it went on longer than it should have. He stated that matters relating to programs or employees should be handled administratively or in an executive session. Mayor Seman stated that publicly speaking about elected officials versus employees is different and that he felt that he let people and employees down and that he should have stopped it for it to be resolved in his office. He apologized to the Parks and Recreation Department Director, Judy Watkins, and to her staff and stated that there has been a lot of time spent working things out. Mayor Seman thanked Council for allowing him to speak on the subject and stated that he wanted his comment to be in a public meeting since the previous meetings comments happened in a public meeting.

Mr. Kluge stated that there are some action items that Council is working on in response to the previous meeting, including public comment forms that include a time limit and comment instructions.

**The first item on the agenda was to approve the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes from June 20, 2023**

- Motion to approve the June 20, 2023, Committee of the Whole minutes by Ms. Michael, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Moskun- **All Ayes**

**The second item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to send out RFP's for the street tree inventory.**

Mr. Harper stated that the item is a request for proposals and that the tree inventory is done every seven years and overseen by the Shade Tree Commission.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

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**The third item was an ordinance authorizing a payment to ODOT for the Main Street paving project.**

Mr. Harper stated that the item is to authorize the payment of the City's portion of the project in the sum of \$626,556.00.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

**The fourth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with Ohio Paving.**

Mr. Harper stated that the project is to pave the police parking lot on Spruce St. and the main entrance into Maple Grove Cemetery.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

**The fifth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with Karvo Companies.**

Mr. Harper stated that the item is for the N. Chestnut and S. Prospect St. resurfacing project.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

**The sixth item was an ordinance authorizing the certification of 2023 tax assessments.**

Mr. Moskun stated that the item is for delinquent water bills and nuisance mowing violations. He said that if the amounts are not paid by the cut off date, they will be turned into the county tax department.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

**The seventh item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to sign a two-year contract with Agri-Sludge.**

Mr. Moskun stated that the item is a two-year contract for the hauling of sludge at the wastewater treatment plant and that the cost of services has gone up by \$ 0.34 per wet ton.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

**The eighth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to accept the grant award for the water tank.**

Mr. Moskun stated that the City was awarded a grant to be used for the refurbishment of the water tank on Rt. 14.

Mr. Finney stated that they have decided to remove the old standpipe and install an elevated water tank similar to the one at City Park.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

**The ninth item was an ordinance amending Section 283.03- Settlement of small claims.**

Mr. Moskun stated that the item is to increase the authorized settlement amount of a small claims from \$1,000 to \$2,000, which is approved at the discretion of the Service Director.

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- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

### **The tenth item was an ordinance to accept the CLG grant award for a Design Review Consultant.**

Mr. Kairis stated that the City applied for and was awarded a 60/40 grant in the sum of \$18,000 with the City's share being \$12,000. He stated that the item is to accept the grant and that the contract with Perspectus was contingent on the award of the grant.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

### **The eleventh item was an ordinance approving the creation of a JEDD with Rootstown Township.**

Ms. Wood stated that the item is to approve the creation of a JEDD and there will be a public hearing on August 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

### **The twelfth item was an ordinance appropriating \$7,500 for the City's portion of JEDD start-up capital.**

Ms. Wood stated that the item is to approve the \$7,500 start-up capital which both parties will be contributing to, and the funds will assist with legal fees.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

### **The thirteenth item was an ordinance approving a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Grant to repair the brick wall at 214 W. Main St.**

Ms. Wood stated the item is to approve funds from the RLF grant to be utilized by Neighborhood Development Services (NDS) to repair and correct Guido's exterior wall adjacent to the new civic space at 218 W. Main St. She clarified that Guido's would pick the contractor since it is their building and NDS will have to follow the state guidelines when repairing the brick wall.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.

The Law Director addressed Council to comment on the previous committee meeting. He explained that members of the public that addressed Council to express some issues they had did not use the proper forum and stated that any personnel matters relating to the City or its employees should be held in an executive session. Mr. Cimino stated that a Council meeting is a forum to listen to the public in general, but it is not an appropriate forum to listen to or address issues with an employee of the City.

Mr. Kluge stated that he did not agree with the use of an individual's name in the prior meeting, but that the public who spoke were utilizing their First Amendment right to free speech, adding that anyone could have interjected during the meeting to stop or redirect the conversation.

Mr. Cimino clarified that the Council President has authority over meetings, regardless of if they are committee meetings that have separate committee chairs.

Mr. Kluge stated that he does not want to discourage the First Amendment right and that Council is going to be taking a hard look at meetings, how they are run and referred to a draft public comment form that he had created.

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Ms. Michael asked if there will be a legal opinion once the form is finished.

Mr. Kluge stated that Council can have the Law Director review it and stated that many other municipalities have similar forms that must be filed out for public comment. He also stated that a time limit to speak will be reviewed with an option to allow the speaker more time.

Mr. Kairis stated that there is some regret that there hasn't been a more structured understanding of how the public should present and said that Council recognizes the need and that it should be the focus moving forward.

The Law Director requested to go into executive session to discuss an ongoing legal matter.

- Motion to go into Executive Session at 6:35 pm by Ms. West, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Calfee - All Ayes

Council went into Executive Session to discuss an ongoing legal matter.

- Motion to come out of Executive Session at 6:40 pm by Ms. West, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Wood- All Ayes
- Motion to adjourn at 6:40 pm

**There being no further business before Council, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm**

**ATTEST:**

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**Clerk of Council**

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**Council President**