



**Ravenna City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 4, 2025, at 6:00 pm**

The Regular Council Meeting was held in person in Council Chambers.

The Regular Council Meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. August 4, 2025, by Council President, Rob Kairis

Moment of Meditation & Silence

President Kairis called a moment of meditation and silence.

Pledge to Flag

President Kairis then led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

The following Council Members were present: President Rob Kairis, Amy Michael, Paul Moskun, Christina West, Tyler Marovich, Tim Calfee, Matt Harper, Cheryl Wood

Also in attendance: Mayor Frank Seman; Law Director, Frank Cimino; Police Sergeant, Craig Wilmington; Fire Chief, Mark Chapple; Service Director, Tim Contant; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Finance Director, Tami Lorence; Council Clerk; Chelsea Gregor, Cliff Soudil, Greg Francis, Eve Francis, Cynthia Miller, Barbara Niemiller

Delegations from the Public: Eve Francis addressed Council to express concerns about the city's high percentage of rental properties. She shared that while Dennis West's presentation had been encouraging, he also noted that large businesses like Starbucks would not locate in Ravenna due to lack of community support. Ms. Eve suggested placing a cap on converting single-family homes into rentals and offering tax incentives for owner-occupied residences. She warned that if rental properties exceeded 80%, the city risked decline similar to her parents' hometown of Coshocton.

Mr. Kairis acknowledged her concerns, clarifying that while her statistics were slightly inflated, they were trending in the wrong direction. He noted that the comprehensive plan addressed many of these issues.

Cliff Soudil then spoke about a troubling video with negative comments calling Ravenna derogatory names. He said the issue was less about the video itself and more about the hundreds of comments criticizing the city's appearance. Mr. Soudil, a lifelong resident, believed deteriorating neighborhoods contributed to these negative perceptions and urged stricter enforcement of ordinances to address chronic property violations.

Ms. Francis spoke again to support Mr. Soudil's remarks, noting her frustration with inconsistent zoning and code enforcement. She shared her personal experience with strict requirements for adding a shed while pointing out multiple properties with infractions. Ms. Francis described neglected rental homes, including one she found particularly disheartening, and emphasized that while the city has made improvements with flowers and beautification, more proactive monitoring was needed to keep neighborhoods attractive.

Approval of the Agenda:

- Motion to approve the agenda by Ms. Wood, 2nd by Mr. Moskun- **All Ayes**
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Consent Agenda:

Communications: A letter from the Division of Liquor Control explaining objections to liquor permit renewals and an invitation to the 21st Annual Northeast Hub Public Officials Breakfast Reception.

Approval of the Minutes:

- Regular City Council Meeting of July 7, 2025
- Special City Council Meeting of July 21, 2025

Report of Officials:

Ordinances:

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-074 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ACCEPT THE STATE OF OHIO, DIVISION OF EMS GRANT AWARD IN THE SUM OF \$2,915.48, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-075 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE STREET DEPARTMENT TO PURCHASE A NEW 2025 VOLVO LARGE WHEEL LOADER IN THE SUM OF \$225,219.00, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-076 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO APPLY FOR THE 2025 URBAN FORESTRY GRANT.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-077 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CERTIFICATION OF DELINQUENT NUISANCE MOWING, NUISANCE GARBAGE REMOVAL, RENTAL INSPECTIONS, PROPERTY MAINTENANCE, AND WATER AND SEWER COLLECTION BILLS TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR THE PLACEMENT OF THE CERTIFIED AMOUNT ON THE REAL PROPERTY TAX LIST AND DUPLICATE AGAINST THE PROPERTY SERVED BY THE MOWING, GARBAGE REMOVAL, RENTAL INSPECTIONS, PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND/OR WATER AND SEWER CONNECTION COLLECTION SERVICES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-078 A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE OFFICIAL INTENT AND REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF THE CITY OF RAVENNA, OHIO ON BEHALF OF THE STATE OF OHIO (THE BORROWER) TO REIMBURSE ITS WATER FUND FOR THE PROSPECT AND CENTRAL WATER AND ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT WITH THE PROCEEDS OF TAX EXEMPT DEBT OF THE STATE OF OHIO.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-080 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE FINANCE DIRECTOR, UPON THE ISSUANCE OF A CERTIFICATE OF AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, TO PAY CERTAIN PURCHASE ORDERS MADE THAT EXCEED \$3,000.00, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- Motion to dispense with the requirements of the City Charter in the Revised Code of Ohio with reference to reading on three separate days and adopting emergency clauses and approving the consent agenda by Mr. Calfee, 2nd by Ms. West- **All Ayes**

Invited City Officials: The presentation by City Engineer, Bob Finney, was delayed until next month.

Report of Committees: **Committee meetings start at 6:00 PM 8/11/2025.**

Utilities: Mr. Moskun stated that there is one item on the agenda.

Information Systems: Mr. Marovich stated that there will be a meeting with a few items.

Planning: Ms. West said that there will be a meeting.

Committee of the Whole: Mr. Kairis stated that the next Committee of the Whole meeting is Monday, August 18, 2025, at 6:00 pm. There will be no special Council meeting prior.

Public Health & Safety: Ms. Michael stated that there will be a joint meeting with the Streets & Sidewalks Committee.

Streets & Sidewalks: Mr. Harper stated that there will be a meeting.

Personnel: Mr. Calfee stated that no meeting is scheduled.

Community & Economic Development: Ms. Wood said that a meeting is to be determined.

Cemetery: Mr. Moskun reported that the bridge renovation and safety improvements are expected to be completed in September, with funds already set aside for the project. Ms. West added that the bridge was part of Jack Shaffer's vision to enhance and beautify the cemetery for events like Memorial Day. The project will include railings and cost no more than \$30,000.

Regarding the chapel, Ms. West said they are waiting to hear from the Portage County Historical Society about assisting with fundraising. If approved, donations could be made through the historical society to support the chapel restoration.

Parks & Recreation: Mr. Marovich reported collaborations with Upward City Church for Emerald Lake cleanup and with Hudson Springs Rehab on upcoming programs for adults and seniors that include wellness days, technology education on devices, internet safety, and avoiding scams. He noted that T-ball has concluded, the second summer camp session has begun, and the department partnered with Portage County Gardeners for a "Learn to Garden" program. The first "Try It" archery demo for kids and adults was held on July 29 and he announced the completion of the City Park resurfacing project, which is already in use for pickleball.

First Reading of Ordinances:

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-079 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH GARLAND COMPANY TO REPLACE THE ROOF AT 530 N. FREEDOM STREET, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

The City Engineer was still working on quotes for the project and so Council chose to table the ordinance.

- Motion to table Ordinance 2025-079 by Ms. West, 2nd by Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**

Second Reading of Ordinances: None

Third Reading of Ordinances: None

Old Business- Safety Buildings

The committee to discuss safety buildings reported back to Council on several points. The committee reached a consensus to recommend pursuing an income tax increase of about a quarter percent, rather than a property tax levy, to fund the project. According to RITA, 88% of Ravenna's income tax revenue comes from non-residents, making this option less burdensome on local homeowners. Property taxes have already risen significantly, and Social Security and pension income are exempt from income tax.

The committee is considering placing the levy on the ballot in either May or November of next year, with time allocated for public education on the need and use of funds. They also discussed hiring a marketing firm—preferably one with local experience—to assist with outreach and possibly modeling efforts after other communities that recently built safety buildings.

Another topic was exploring the inclusion of a multi-story City Hall in the safety building project, positioned between the police and fire departments to share infrastructure and reduce construction costs. Funds remain in the architectural budget to develop new design options.

While some members saw value in investigating this approach, Mayor Seman and others expressed concern that adding City Hall could make the levy harder to pass and raised questions about affordability.

Additional concerns were raised about balancing this project with other infrastructure needs, such as fire department upgrades, wastewater treatment plant renovations, and SCADA system improvements. Council members agreed to continue research, gauge costs, and seek feedback before moving forward.

New Business- None

President of Council Remarks- Mr. Kairis updated Council on the comprehensive plan, noting the steering committee has completed a final draft after two years of work. The plan covers broad topics such as housing and includes numerous action items, some assigned to City Council. The steering committee will finalize comments on August 21st, with

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Planning and Zoning expected to review it by month's end. It will be introduced to Council on September 8th. Mr. Kairis recommended a public hearing and public access to the final version before approval, with hopes of adopting it by year's end. He stressed that the plan should be treated as a "living" document, with priorities identified and action steps initiated early next year.

Mr. Kairis also announced the August 17th premiere of the locally filmed movie *Divorcing the Mob*

0, which has sold out, though Ravenna 7 will show it afterward at regular ticket prices.

Additionally, he invited residents to a free outdoor performance by Back Alley Relics at the library pavilion on Sunday, August 10th, from 2pm to 4 p.m.

Council Member Remarks

Mr. Harper- No Comment

Ms. Wood- Ms. Wood noted that the *Divorcing the Mob* premiere will feature a Hollywood-style red carpet event with guest arrivals and actors, open for public viewing even without tickets. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the film begins at 7 p.m. She also reminded everyone of upcoming events: *Ravenna Rocks* on August 9th, which will debut the *Voice of Ravenna* contest, and *Octane Nights* on August 6th.

Ms. West- Ms. West reported that she and several others received a call about a short-term rental property hosting a large party. She went to the scene and witnessed the police breaking it up, describing it as overcrowded, disruptive, and unsafe. Ms. West stressed the need for the City to address short-term rentals by tightening regulations to ensure they are safe, well-managed, and beneficial for economic development, rather than disruptive to neighbors. She encouraged affected residents to attend the Planning Committee meeting on the 11th to share their concerns. The discussion expanded to include comments from Council members and Administration about legal limitations, property owner rights, and potential measures such as permitting, increased enforcement, and staffing to manage compliance. It was noted that while municipalities cannot prohibit rentals outright, they can impose restrictions, taxes, and safety requirements. The specific party in question was not booked through Airbnb but was hosted privately by the property owner, highlighting the need to address both platform-based rentals and private short-term arrangements.

Several participants emphasized the importance of balancing property rights, safety, and neighborhood quality of life, while also maintaining short-term rentals as a lodging option. The conversation concluded with agreement to continue exploring tighter regulations and better enforcement mechanisms.

Mr. Calfee- Mr. Calfee asked if the Crystal Lake tour scheduled for Wednesday at 6 p.m. would be rescheduled since it conflicts with Octane Night. Mr. Kairis replied that the tour will proceed as planned to accommodate board members' schedules, but an alternative date is being considered, and an email update will be sent.

Mr. Moskun- Mr. Moskun reported receiving several compliments on the exceptional appearance and upkeep of the flowers. He also noted positive feedback from residents about the new pickleball courts, with some expressing great anticipation for their completion. He mentioned that certain individuals are using the courts frequently and that, despite being new, they have already proven to be a valuable asset, reflecting the growing popularity of pickleball.

Mr. Marovich- No Comment

Ms. Michael- Ms. Michael reminded residents to report ATVs and motorized mopeds operating unsafely in neighborhoods, stressing that police are aware of the issue but enforcement is challenging. She said the City is exploring ways to strengthen local codes in coordination with the Ohio Revised Code to address safety concerns.

Ms. Michael also thanked the building department for its work on problem rental properties, noting progress in building relationships with landlords, including one previously known for ongoing issues. She acknowledged that many of these problems have developed over years and take time to resolve but expressed optimism about stronger cooperation between Council, the Building Department, and property owners. Ms. Michael emphasized the need for continued

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communication, better tracking tools such as ticketing, and consistent enforcement to protect neighborhood quality of life.

Mayor's Remarks- Mayor Seman reported that he confirmed with Christine Craycroft of the Portage Park District that her board still plans to attend on the scheduled date despite it coinciding with Octane Night. Ms. Craycroft is open to scheduling another date if needed, and the Council Clerk has been working on arrangements. The walk-through will proceed on August 6th, with Mayor Seman and Tim Contant arriving early to manage traffic and assess the site, though access is currently limited due to incomplete railroad work. Ms. Craycroft is also considering purchasing private property connected to the lake, contingent on securing a grant within a tight deadline.

Mayor Seman noted a recent two-hour meeting with Coleman, where concerns about high staff turnover were discussed. He also expressed concern over potential state policy changes that could reduce funding for organizations like Coleman while taking a stricter approach to homelessness.

Looking ahead to Wednesday's major annual event, Mayor Seman warned that the Highway Patrol will be present to issue tickets for reckless behavior such as burning rubber, not just to make appearances. He urged caution, noting the increased enforcement stems from issues in Cleveland with illegal street takeovers. He emphasized that the Police and Fire Departments are aligned on responsibilities to ensure the event runs smoothly and safely.

Executive Session- Pending Legal Matters

The Law Director requested to go into executive session to discuss legal matters.

- Motion to go into Executive Session at 7:14 pm by Ms. Michael, 2nd by Ms. West - All Ayes

Council went into Executive Session to discuss legal matters.

- Motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:54 pm by Ms. Wood, 2nd by Ms. West- All Ayes

Adjourn to Tuesday, September 2, 2025

- Motion to adjourn at 7:55 pm by Mr. Marovich, 2nd Mr. Moskun- **All Ayes**

The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 2, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Council President