



**Ravenna City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 2, 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. September 2, 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; 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, Larry Selinius, Mike Robert, Heather Richkowski

Delegations from the Public: Mike Robert, a recent retiree with 34 years in education, which included five years as superintendent of Aurora City Schools, addressed Council to inform them that he is running for the open State Senate seat in District 27, which covers all of Portage County and portions of Summit and Geauga counties. He said he seeks to continue his public service and is particularly concerned about the erosion of support for public education in Columbus, affordable housing and property taxes, and access to health care. Mr. Robert plans to attend future Ravenna meetings to learn more about local concerns and will share his contact information after the meeting. He also noted he was born and raised locally and is a proud graduate of public schools.

Approval of the Agenda:

Mr. Kairis asked if anything would like to be taken out of the consent agenda. It was stated that Ordinance 2025-083 did not have the updated insurance renewal agreement, so the ordinance was taken out of the consent agenda and put onto the regular agenda.

- Motion to approve the agenda by Mr. Calfee, 2nd by Ms. West- **All Ayes**

Consent Agenda:

Communications: An invitation to celebrate 70 years of the Junior Thursday Literary Club at Reed Memorial Library.

Approval of the Minutes:

- Regular City Council Meeting of August 4, 2025
- Special City Council Meeting of August 18, 2025
- Special City Council Meeting of August 22, 2025
- Special City Council Meeting of August 28, 2025

Report of Officials:

Ordinances:

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-081 AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING A DONATION TO THE RAVENNA POLICE DEPARTMENT IN THE SUM OF \$192.75; RECORDING ESTIMATED REVENUES IN THE SUM OF \$192.75 AND APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$192.75, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-082 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS, ACCORDING TO LAW, FOR THE 2025 STORM INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT, ACCORDING TO SPECIFICATIONS NOW ON FILE IN THE MAYORS OFFICE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-084 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.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-085 A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE PORTAGE COUNTY BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR.

- 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. Michael- **All Ayes**

Invited City Officials: Mr. Kairis introduced City Engineer Bob Finney as the invited city official to provide an update on his department.

Mr. Finney reported that in 2025, project valuation totaled just under \$8 million, with more than \$3 million funded by grants. Over the past 15 years, his department secured nearly \$12.5 million in grants and oversaw approximately \$39 million in engineering projects. Mr. Finney noted that the water tank project should be completed around Thanksgiving, the Chestnut Street lift station project is underway, and SCADA system bids are being finalized at a reduced cost. The storm sewer project will be bid in mid-September, and waterline improvements are ongoing, including reestablishing railroad crossings to ensure reliable service.

Mr. Finney highlighted completion of the cemetery bridge, though handrail design is still under discussion. He shared plans for a new safety building floor plan, estimated at \$5 million, and noted ongoing work on the annex roof, VA clinic foundation, and coordination with Norfolk Southern on potential property acquisition.

On property maintenance, Mr. Finney explained the difficulties of enforcement, citing delays in court processes, limited homeowner resources, and challenges with compliance. He suggested Council consider creating a small assistance fund to help residents with basic repairs, since fines often go unpaid.

Looking ahead, Mr. Finney outlined goals for 2026, including widening West Main Street pending utility relocation, completing the Chestnut lift station project, advancing wastewater treatment plant upgrades, addressing façade improvements at the Street Department, and pursuing downtown streetscape enhancements.

Council members asked questions regarding project details, property maintenance challenges, and bid specifications.

Ms. Michael raised concerns about homeowners with mental health struggles and thanked Mr. Finney for coordinating with the Ravenna Police Department on chronic nuisance enforcement. Council expressed appreciation for Mr. Finney's thorough updates and commitment to improving city infrastructure.

Mr. Kairis then invited Human Resources Director Heather Richkowski to provide an update to City Council.

Ms. Richkowski, who has served as HR Director for eight years, outlined her responsibilities, which include personnel issues, contract interpretation, recruitment, retention, benefits, employee development, and training initiatives. She highlighted recent efforts in leadership and communication training, as well as major updates to the City's policies and procedures handbook. She described several healthcare initiatives, including a Smart Shopper program that allows employees to compare medical costs through an app, and a wellness program that provides cost savings for employees who participate in preventative care. Both programs are designed to improve employee health and reduce city costs. Ms. Richkowski also manages workers' compensation and noted that healthcare benefits would be a central issue in upcoming

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collective bargaining negotiations, with all five union contracts set to expire at the end of the year. She further detailed her role as secretary of the Civil Service Commission, which has been revising home rule civil service rules to better fit the city's needs. Ms. Richkowski explained the shift from in-person testing to the National Testing Network, which has improved candidate recruitment for police and fire positions, adding that promotional testing continues through outside providers. She also announced the hiring of a new Parks and Recreation Director, Chris Bundy, to replace the retiring of Ms. Watkins.

Council members asked questions about participation rates in the wellness program, open positions across departments, and civil service testing sites. Ms. Richkowski confirmed that about 35–40% of employees currently participate in wellness efforts, most City positions are filled with only a few openings, and testing is conducted at various proctored locations such as police departments and schools.

Mr. Kairis acknowledged the challenges of HR work and praised Ms. Richkowski's initiatives in professional development and employee support. He encouraged her to continue reaching out to Council whenever assistance is needed. Ms. Richkowski expressed appreciation, noting that Council members had always been helpful and supportive when she sought guidance.

Report of Committees: Committee meetings start at 6:00 PM 9/8/2025.

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

Information Systems: Mr. Marovich stated that there will not be a meeting.

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, September 22, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

Public Health & Safety: Ms. Michael stated that there is one item on the agenda and a meeting will be determined.

Streets & Sidewalks: Mr. Harper stated that there are no items that evening and 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 stated that Mr. Finney already covered the bridge update and that there was no board meeting in August.

Parks & Recreation: Mr. Marovich announced that Chris Bundy has accepted the director's position and will begin on September 8th, while Judy's last day will be the 5th. Facility updates included carpet cleaning throughout the building and roof work on both the Annex and garage. Repairs are also needed on the bike and hike trail near the S-curve between Chestnut and Freedom Streets, with costs estimated at \$31,936 and assistance from the engineering department.

Mr. Marovich explained that a conditional land appraisal has been scheduled for parcels adjacent to Emerald Lake, and that tree maintenance is planned along Beech Street. On programming, a pickleball demonstration was held August 22–23, fall programs are open for registration, and some gymnastics classes are already full.

Grant applications have been submitted to the Ravenna United Fund for safety town floor coverings and to the Ohio Public Works Commission for Emerald Lake Phase II land acquisition.

Mr. Marovich also shared a farewell note from Ms. Watkins, who thanked City Council and Mayor Seman for their support over her seven years of service. She highlighted achievements such as doubling land acquisitions, increasing revenue, and expanding events and programming. She expressed confidence in the department's future under new leadership and extended her best wishes for continued success.

First Reading of Ordinances:

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-083 AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING A PROPOSAL PROVIDED BY LOVE INSURANCE AGENCY, A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED HERETO AND MARKED EXHIBIT “A” FOR THE RENEWAL OF INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR THE PERIOD OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2025 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 14, 2026, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Ms. Lorence explained that a meeting is scheduled for Thursday, and the contract was not ready in time for the Council meeting. She said that the matter must be approved before the 14th, since the renewal year begins on the 15th, and that she is coordinating with Mr. Kairis to schedule accordingly.

Mr. Kairis noted the item would remain on first reading until the contract is available and that it would be addressed at a Special Council meeting.

Ordinance 2025-083 was kept on for second reading.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-086 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT THE OHIO PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION CLEAN OHIO CONSERVATION GRANT FUND AND TO ACCEPT THE GRANT IF AWARDED, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Kairis explained that the ordinance had not gone through the committee process and was instead being sponsored by Council. Council members had received the related ordinances in their packets, which concerned purchasing land through a grant. Mr. Kairis noted the purchase would not cost the city money, as it was contingent on receiving the grant. Because of an upcoming deadline, the matter was brought forward quickly rather than following the usual planning process. The same issue had appeared a year earlier but could not be pursued at that time.

- Motion to waive three separate readings by Ms. Micheal, 2nd by Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**
- Motion to adopt emergency clause by Ms. Michael, 2nd by Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**
- Motion to pass Ordinance No. 2025-086 by Mr. Marovich, 2nd Ms. Michael- **All Ayes**

Ordinance 2025-086 was adopted.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-087 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN A NON-BINDING AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL PROPERTIES ADJACENT TO EMERALD LAKE THROUGH THE CLEAN OHIO GRANT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Kairis explained that the second ordinance for the project authorizes the Mayor to sign a non-binding agreement, contingent upon receiving the grant to purchase the property.

There being no further comments or questions.

- Motion to waive three separate readings by Ms. Michael, 2nd by Ms. West- **All Ayes**
- Motion to adopt emergency clause by Ms. Michael, 2nd by Ms. West- **All Ayes**
- Motion to pass Ordinance No. 2025-087 by Mr. Marovich, 2nd Mr. Moskun- **All Ayes**

Ordinance 2025-087 was adopted.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-088 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH NEIL HESS AS THE DUAL AGENT IN THE SALE OF PROPERTIES THROUGH A LAND ACQUISITION GRANT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Kairis introduced the final ordinance for the Emerald Lake property project, explaining that Neil Hess, acting as agent for both the City and the seller, required Council acknowledgment of his dual role.

Mr. Wood clarified that Mr. Hess primarily represents the seller’s interests while facilitating the City’s paperwork. Kairis thanked her for the clarification.

There being no further comments or questions.

- Motion to waive three separate readings by Ms. West, 2nd by Mr. Moskun- **All Ayes**
- Motion to adopt emergency clause by Ms. West, 2nd by Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**
- Motion to pass Ordinance No. 2025-088 by Ms. West, 2nd Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**

Ordinance 2025-088 was adopted.

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ORDINANCE NO. 2025-090 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN A CERTIFICATE OF RELEASE OF JUDGMENT LIEN FOR THE CITY OF RAVENNA AS IT RELATES TO THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 323 NORTH PROSPECT STREET, RAVENNA, OHIO 44266 FOR THE SUM OF \$5,000.00, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Kairis noted that this late-arriving item, endorsed by Council members, relates to Mr. Finney's earlier report on property maintenance fines. The property had a lien placed due to unpaid fines, which has now been paid, and the ordinance serves to release or "satisfy" the lien. There being no further comments or questions.

- Motion to waive three separate readings by Ms. West, 2nd by Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**
- Motion to adopt emergency clause by Ms. Michael, 2nd by Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**
- Motion to pass Ordinance No. 2025-090 by Ms. West, 2nd Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**

Ordinance 2025-090 was adopted.

Second Reading of Ordinances: None

Third Reading of Ordinances: None

Old Business- Ms. Michael raised a concern regarding the City's policy for past-due water bills that are placed as liens on property. She noted that homeowners who owe large amounts can have their water service restored once the balance is transferred to a lien, effectively allowing them to resume service without paying the full amount immediately. She questioned whether this system encourages habitual nonpayment and suggested it may need policy changes.

Mr. Finney explained that liens are submitted to the county in August and service cannot be restored until the lien is settled. Changing the process would require a modification to the utility ordinance, though protections for residents are also a consideration.

Mr. Kairis noted that while balances may be cleared temporarily, the city eventually collects the funds, either from the homeowner or a future property buyer, though liens can be wiped out in sheriff's sales.

Ms. Wood highlighted concerns about high delinquency totals—typically \$75,000–\$85,000 for accounts 120+ days overdue—and requested a detailed breakdown of these delinquencies by property type and owner to understand how amounts reached such levels.

Mr. Kairis noted the policy can create a "moral hazard," effectively providing an interest-free loan to those who delay payment.

Ms. Michael added a specific example of a problematic homeowner running a boarding house while delinquent, illustrating risks to public safety and city operations.

Mr. Moskun noted that bankruptcy protections limit city recourse on utilities.

Mr. Kairis suggested the issue be reviewed by the appropriate committee to explore potential policy changes, and Moskun agreed to follow up.

New Business- Mr. Kairis addressed new business regarding the Love Insurance Agency contract, noting that the contract was not yet available for approval but would be by Monday. He proposed holding a special meeting on Monday, September 8, at 6:00 p.m., before the committee meetings, to vote on Ordinance 2025-83, which concerns renewing the city's insurance coverage with Love Insurance Agency. A motion was made and approved by roll call vote.

- Motion to go hold a Special Council meeting on September 8th at 6:00 pm by Mr. Calfee, 2nd by Ms. West - **All Ayes**

President of Council Remarks- Mr. Kairis

Mr. Kairis expressed encouragement that Ms. Wood was able to join the meeting virtually, acknowledging the occasional technical difficulties but appreciating the opportunity for remote participation when in-person attendance is not possible.

Council Member Remarks

Ms. West- No Comment

Mr. Calfee- No Comment

Mr. Moskun- No Comment

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Ms. Wood- Ms. Wood expressed gratitude to the city’s fire and police departments for their exemplary care and support following the recent passing of her father. She also thanked fellow Council members, the Mayor, local residents, and businesses—including Guidos, Ravenna Sip and Social, West Main Street Winery, and the Big Dog—for supporting the movie premiere of *Divorcing the Mob*, noting it was a positive experience for the community.

Mr. Kairis offered his condolences on the passing of her father.

Mr. Marovich- No Comment

Ms. Michael- Ms. Michael reported that she and Mr. Harper had a productive meeting with the Police Chief, dispatch, and Officer Wilmington, discussing council and resident concerns, including electric scooter safety. They noted that riders must be at least 16 years old, and plans were made to inform schools and parents. The police department will monitor compliance and explore solutions to address safety hazards and neighborhood concerns. They also discussed potential areas for departmental growth and collaboration with the building department to improve community safety.

Ms. Michael additionally praised the community and local businesses for supporting the movie premiere of *Divorcing the Mob*, emphasizing the pride and cohesion it demonstrated. She encouraged residents to actively support small businesses, highlighting new downtown establishments, including a bookstore and the surrounding pocket park area, as examples of successful community initiatives.

Mr. Kairis asked Ms. Michael for clarification regarding scooters, confirming she was referring to electric scooters rather than e-bikes.

Ms. Michael explained that motorized scooters cannot be used by anyone under 16.

Mr. Kairis noted this regulation relates to House Bill 291, which introduced community guidelines for scooter usage.

Mr. Harper- No Comment

Mayor's Remarks- Mayor Seman offered brief remarks, thanking Mr. Finney and Ms. Richkowski for their dedication and highlighting them as examples of the city’s committed employees. He emphasized his goal of fostering a positive and respectful workplace. Mayor Seman shared a letter he received from a Florida resident praising the prompt and professional assistance Mr. Finney and Mr. Rose provided regarding her daughter’s housing issue, noting that such commendations are less common than complaints. He expressed appreciation for their efforts.

Adjourn to Monday, October 6, 2025

- Motion to adjourn at 7:16 pm by Mr. Marovich, 2nd Mr. Moskun- **All Ayes**

The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 6, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Council President