



Ravenna City Council
Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2025

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

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

Also attending the meeting: Mayor Frank Seman; Police Chief, Jake Smallfield; Fire Chief, Mark Chapple; Service Director, Tim Contant; City Engineer; Bob Finney; Finance Director, Tami Lorence; Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor; Larry Silenius, Cliff Soudil, Greg Francis, Eve Francis, Cynthia Miller, Carmen Laudato, Peter Martin, Matt Ferrell, Mike Reynolds, Alan Frygier, Julie Herold

The Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:39 P.M. by Chairperson, Amy Michael.

The first item was Civil Service Commission updates.

Ms. Michael noted that Mr. Marovich was absent and asked Ms. Wood to assist, given the importance of the topics on the agenda. She explained that Ms. Richkowski had distributed the updated regulations and that Attorney Tim Thomas was present to discuss the extensive revisions.

Mr. Thomas outlined the long history of the project, noting that draft regulations had existed since 2008 but lacked consensus until the current commission—now working effectively together—took on the revisions. He highlighted the significant effort invested by members Larry Silenus and Heather Richkoski, as well as input from expert civil service attorney Jonathan Downs. Mr. Thomas described the purpose of civil service regulations and emphasized the need for updates to reflect modern hiring challenges. He then summarized the major changes: provisions for lateral transfers to address declining applicant numbers, new promotional seniority credits to treat police and fire equally, and additional education and residency credits that balance existing veteran credits without exceeding state-mandated limits.

Ms. Michael asked about testing requirements, and Mr. Thomas confirmed that written tests and assessments would continue. He and the commission expressed confidence in the final product and thanked Council for its consideration.

Ms. Michael confirmed the major highlights and moved the regulations forward for further Council review.

- The item was moved forward.

The second item was an ordinance for dispatch services.

Ms. Michael introduced the ordinances for dispatch services with Paris and Palmyra Townships, noting the contracts would continue under existing terms while the city awaited a response from Charleston Township's renewal.

- The item was moved forward.

The third item was an addition of 4 full-time police staff.

Police Chief Smallfield presented the request for four full-time police officers.

Ms. Michael emphasized recent high activity and the need to maintain public safety.

Chief Smallfield thanked Mr. Thomas and acknowledged the value of new education-based credit provisions before outlining the department's staffing challenges. He explained that the patrol operates with 22 officers on paper but only 20 in practice, creating frequent shifts staffed at the minimum of three officers. Chief Smallfield detailed the safety risks, rising calls for service, increasing violent crime, and the impact of two officer-involved shootings in the past year, which temporarily depressed enforcement numbers as officers processed the emotional toll. He compared Ravenna's staffing levels to state and national benchmarks, demonstrating that the department falls below recommended officer-to-population ratios. Chief Smallfield reported high overtime usage simply to maintain shift minimums and described the workload of the detective bureau, which, despite a strong record of successful prosecutions, is managing 88 open cases, including numerous serious offenses.

Ms. Michael thanked him for the presentation and confirmed that the request would move forward, encouraging Council members to review materials and direct any further questions to Ms. Richkowski before the next meeting. She also reported that teachers, particularly at Brown Middle School, are increasingly overwhelmed and have expressed the need for an additional school resource officer. Ms. Michael noted that many challenges stem from transient families who move in and out of the district quickly, making it difficult to create lasting impact. She was grateful that a grant—expected to last at least a year—could help support the additional position. Chief Smallfield explained ongoing staffing shortages and the difficulty of recruiting officers. He described how few cadets remain available after other departments sponsor candidates, and how competition from higher-paying departments like Solon makes hiring even harder. Chief Smallfield emphasized that the department's strong workplace culture keeps officers once they arrive, but attracting them remains the challenge. He said immediate hiring is necessary to avoid significant staffing gaps by 2027–2028, especially with upcoming retirements.

Ms. Michael opened the floor for questions, thanking Chief Smallfield for the extensive information and praising both police and fire departments for their service. She stressed that community standards and safety require proactive action.

Mr. Moskun shared observations from recent ride-alongs, noting the demanding workload and unseen tasks officers perform.

Ms. Wood and Mr. Harper each voiced full support for moving the request forward to protect both residents and officers.

Ms. Michael added that voters approved a safety levy and Council must show responsible use of those funds.

- The item was moved forward.

The fourth item was to adjust ambulance billing charges.

Ms. Michael introduced an adjustment to ambulance billing charges.

Chief Chapple described significant proposed increases for basic and advanced life support transports, non-transport calls, and mileage—changes that would primarily affect private and

auto insurance payers. He explained that Medicare and Medicaid reimburse far below billed amounts and that thorough documentation is necessary to justify charges and recoup costs. Ms. Michael and several other council members expressed concern about the financial impact on residents with private insurance and sought clarification on soft billing practices and collection procedures. They also discussed exploring ways to bill nursing homes for frequent non-emergency transports.

Ms. Lorence recommended gathering more information from LifeForce Management and reviewing the ordinance before moving it forward.

Council members agreed that more details were needed before making final decisions.

- The item was moved forward.

Management Update

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

**Amy Michael, Chairperson
Public Health and Safety Committee**