



Ravenna City Council
Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2026

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

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

Also attending the meeting: Mayor Frank Seman; Police Chief, Jake Smallfield; Service Director, Tim Contant; City Engineer; Bob Finney; Finance Director, Tami Lorence; Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor; Larry Silenius, Barbara Niemiller, Mark Hartburg, Trevor Martin, Amy Young, Eric Schlaubach, Barb Springer, William Barber, Justin Barber, Joseph Osborne, Iris Meltzer, Cheryl Wood, Todd Peetz, Ryann Cline, Kristy Huhn, Cynthia Miller, Lou Dudek, Alexander Zavertink, Susie Kohl, David Fosnight, Jen Kinney, Cliff Soudil, Tiffany Jones, Cathy Klein, Molly Halliday, Chester Halliday

The Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting was called to order at 7:21 P.M. by Chairperson, Christina West.

The first item was a presentation by the Ravenna Area Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. West explained that some agenda items would be addressed that evening, while others would be discussed at a later meeting before the Committee of the Whole. She introduced a presentation from the Ravenna Area Chamber of Commerce, led by Ryann Cline, who thanked Council for the opportunity to present and provided an overview of the Chamber's recent initiatives, updates, and future plans.

Ms. Cline highlighted the organization's mission to support the economic and community well-being of Ravenna.

Tiffany Jones, vice president of the Chamber, presented the Youth Leadership Ravenna program, which was inspired by the comprehensive plan. The program engages local high school students in community education, leadership development, and volunteerism, culminating in a capstone project addressing community needs. She noted that the Chamber hopes to expand scholarship funding tied to the program so that more participating seniors can be rewarded for their involvement.

Ms. Cline also outlined the Ravenna Business Launchpad program, a small-scale business incubator designed to help entrepreneurs test and grow their businesses. She reported early success, with participants such as Mark Hartford and Rod Flauhaus transitioning from the Chamber space into permanent storefronts. Additional initiatives included monthly "Coffee Talks" networking events, a successful murder mystery dinner, and a planned Community Cup Challenge in collaboration with Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Jones emphasized that while the Chamber is requesting increased financial support from the City, it is also working to strengthen its own financial sustainability through strategic planning, increased membership engagement, and diversified revenue streams.

Ms. West asked about the Chamber's role in political advocacy, to which Ms. Jones clarified that while the organization is permitted to engage in lobbying, it has not been a current priority based on member feedback.

Mr. Calfee inquired about the Chamber's budget, the cost of programs, and the proposed funding increase from \$30,000 to \$40,000, noting that part of the increase would support expanded scholarships.

Ms. Cline agreed to provide additional financial documentation.

Mr. Marovich asked about data collection related to business success and failure, encouraging the Chamber to develop more structured data tracking to better understand challenges facing local businesses.

Mr. Ferrell acknowledged the importance of data but noted that much of their current insight is based on experience and direct communication with business owners.

Ms. Laudato commended the Chamber's efforts, particularly its community engagement and business support initiatives, while also asking about membership structure and fees.

Rod Flauhaus praised the Business Launchpad program for offering meaningful support to entrepreneurs and helping attract visitors to Ravenna.

Ms. Laudato also highlighted Mr. Flauhaus's professional background and welcomed his contributions to the community.

Ms. West requested that the Chamber provide additional financial information before the next meeting. She stated that further discussion and a decision on funding would take place at the upcoming session.

The additional agenda items were postponed until the next meeting scheduled for March 23, 2026, at 5:30pm.

- The item was for discussion only.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

**Christina West, Chairperson
Community & Economic Development**