



**RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES  
April 20, 2026**

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

**The Committee of the Whole Meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Council President, Rob Kairis.**

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

**Also in attendance:** Mayor Frank Seman, Police Chief, Jake Smallfield; Fire Chief, Mark Chapple; Service Director, Tim Contant, Finance Director, Tami Lorence, City Engineer, Bob Finney; Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor, Larry Silenius, Barb Niemiller, Cynthia Miller, Cliff Soudil, M. Burner, Ray McDaniel, Will Hollingsworth, Cheryl Wood, Lucy Ribelin, Bill Barber, Rachael M. Coleman-Dean, Tabitha Monroe, Carolyn Chambers, Joe Bica, Marinin, Rod F., Logan Alexander Colait, Lee Moore, Angel Tarter, Ron Tarter, Michael J. Cyphert, Michelle Walczak, Antonio Walzak, Rob S., Kali Roberts, Holly Brunswick, Cole Collins, Kelley Alger

**The first item on the agenda was to approve the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes from March 23, 2026.**

- Motion to approve the March 23, 2026, Committee of the Whole minutes by Mr. Marovich, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. West- **All Ayes**

**The second item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a dispatch contract with NEOMED Police Dept.**

Council discussed an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a dispatch contract with the NEOMED Police Department.

Ms. Michael explained that the agreement would allow the City of Ravenna to provide dispatch services to NEOMED and that they do not have a high call volume.

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

**The third item was an ordinance to apply for and accept the Safety Intervention grant with a 25% match.**

Ms. Michael presented an ordinance authorizing the City to apply for and accept a Safety Intervention Grant requiring a 25% match, estimated at approximately \$15,000. She said the grant funds would be used to purchase fire department rescue equipment for cutting open vehicles during accident responses. Council members agreed the funding opportunity would provide much needed equipment.

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

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**The fourth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with JBL Roofing & Construction.**

Ms. Michael introduced an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with JBL Roofing and Construction for repairs to the Police Department roof. She explained that ongoing flooding and roof deterioration at the police station had become severe enough to threaten sensitive electrical and IT equipment, noting the roof warranty had expired.

Ms. Laudato described visible water intrusions and buckets collecting leaks inside the police station, particularly near the IT room.

Mr. Marovich added that the equipment at risk was “expensive sensitive equipment.”

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

**The fifth item was an ordinance to adopt the 2026 Portage County Hazard Mitigation Plan.**

Ms. Michael presented an ordinance adopting the 2026 Portage County Hazard Mitigation Plan. She described the measure as routine housekeeping completed every five years to maintain eligibility for FEMA funding.

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

**The sixth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with Perrin Asphalt Company**

Mr. Harper discussed an ordinance authorizing a contract with Perrin Asphalt Company for the City’s annual summer paving program. He stated the company submitted the lowest bid at just over \$1.1 million for street and sidewalk repairs funded through the City’s paving levy.

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

**The seventh item was an ordinance authorizing the purchase of a 2026 Chevrolet Silverado for the Water Plant.**

Mr. Moskun explained the three-quarter-ton truck would replace a 2009 vehicle that had become too costly to maintain safely. The new truck would include a plow for snow removal at multiple facilities and would be capable of towing large trailers as needed.

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

**The eighth item was an ordinance authorizing a moratorium on Data Centers within the city limits.**

Ms. Laudato said extensive discussion had already taken place, particularly during the April 10 meeting, where community members overwhelmingly opposed the possibility of data centers in Ravenna. She explained that the proposed moratorium ordinance was intentionally broad in its definitions to prevent facilities from bypassing regulations under alternative labels such as server

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farms, cloud computing facilities, co-location centers, cryptocurrency mining operations, or other high-density computing facilities. Ms. Laudato said the legislation directs the Planning Commission to study impacts on utilities, zoning, and classifications while prohibiting approval of zoning permits, conditional use permits, variances, site plans, or building permits for any new data center projects during the moratorium period. She explained the moratorium would last one year to allow the City time to evaluate regulations and protections, and said the City chose a moratorium rather than an outright ban because it is more legally defensible and less vulnerable to court challenges. Ms. Laudato added that communities nationwide are facing rapid proposals for data centers and Ravenna needed time to respond carefully and avoid litigation.

Mr. Calfee noted the ordinance already includes provisions allowing the moratorium to be extended if additional study time is necessary, or ended early if new regulations are adopted.

Mr. Kairis added that such language is standard for moratorium ordinances.

Ms. Laudato said Ravenna had extended moratoriums in the past and emphasized the importance of acting quickly but prudently in response to strong community engagement and public education on the issue.

Mr. Kairis thanked residents for voicing their concerns and said Council respected the will of the public.

Ms. Michael expressed support for the ordinance and thanked Council members for their quick work on the issue.

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

**The ninth item was an ordinance amending the City Charter to make the Law Director an appointed position.**

Ms. Laudato explained the proposal was prompted by the Law Director not seeking re-election. She argued that making the position appointed would give the City greater flexibility to select qualified candidates rather than relying on who chooses to run for office. Ms. Laudato noted Ravenna likely has a limited pool of resident attorneys willing to campaign for the position and said the City's growing legal demands justified a more flexible structure. She pointed to the earlier change from an elected to appointed finance director as a successful precedent.

Mr. Kairis responded that the proposal had procedural issues because no tracking sheet accompanied the request. He reviewed the City's 2019 process for changing the Finance Director position, explaining that Council first waited to see whether anyone would file to run for office before moving toward a Charter amendment after no candidates emerged. He said the issue was handled through the Personnel Committee with substantial consultation, public hearings, and multiple readings before reaching voters. Mr. Kairis argued the current proposal had moved too quickly and should be referred to the Personnel Committee for deeper discussion. He also raised concerns about losing the independence of an elected law director, noting that an appointed official could face perceived pressure from the Mayor or Council.

Mr. Marovich agreed that an appointed Law Director could reduce voter oversight and independence.

Ms. Laudato responded that discussions had included financial considerations and practical concerns about ensuring qualified legal representation for the city.

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Ms. Michael argued that changing the structure now would allow the City to improve its legal services and potentially secure a more available and experienced Law Director. She emphasized the importance of acting within ballot deadlines and not delaying the process unnecessarily.

Ms. Laudato added that moving forward now would avoid the confusion of simultaneously electing a Law Director while also asking voters to eliminate the elected position.

Mr. Kairis maintained that the issue deserved broader discussion and suggested it should instead be considered by the upcoming Charter Review Commission. He stressed that Charter changes are ultimately for voters to decide and warned against assuming public approval.

Ms. Laudato disagreed, saying Council had a responsibility to act proactively and ensure the City could secure the most qualified legal representation possible. She argued the Law Director role is too important to leave solely to the election process and said waiting for Charter Review would unnecessarily delay the issue.

Mr. Marovich countered that the Charter Review Commission exists specifically to evaluate the structure and function of city government and argued the issue should be referred there with supporting research and recommendations from Council.

Ms. Michael responded that Council had firsthand experience with the operational demands of city government and should act while there was an opportunity to improve the system.

Additional Council members supported further review.

Ms. West, Mr. Marovich, and Mr. Moskun all expressed support for referring the issue to the Personnel Committee for additional discussion.

Mr. Harper, a member of the Personnel Committee, said he was willing to take a deeper look at the matter.

Mr. Kairis concluded that there appeared to be consensus to reassign the proposal to the Personnel Committee for further consideration.

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

**The tenth item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to accept the Northeast Ohio Disc Golf Grant award.**

Ms. Laudato described the item as straightforward, explaining the City would receive a \$1,000 grant to install signage at the disc golf course tee locations.

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

**The eleventh item was an ordinance approving the Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) appointed board members.**

Ms. West described the measure as housekeeping to approve the board members listed in the Council packet.

Ms. Laudato noted there was still an open resident position and said several candidates had expressed interest, though no final selection had been made.

Council agreed to move the ordinance forward for a vote at the May meeting once the resident appointment is finalized.

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

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**The twelfth item was an ordinance approving the Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) meeting minutes.**

Ms. West presented an ordinance approving the Tax Incentive Review Council meeting minutes. She explained the approval is required annually in order for the process to move forward.

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

**The thirteenth item was an ordinance extending a moratorium on storage facilities within the city limits.**

Ms. West explained that after previous discussions, Council members appeared more interested in limiting or banning additional storage facilities rather than simply extending the moratorium. She emphasized the need for a clear legal definition of “self-storage” before drafting any legislation and noted that Ravenna and surrounding communities already have numerous storage facilities with existing vacancies, though exact vacancy data is difficult to obtain.

Mr. Kairis clarified that the item remained under discussion because no formal tracking sheet or draft legislation had yet been submitted.

Council agreed to keep the matter in committee for further review and possible code revisions.

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

**The fourteenth item was an ordinance amending Ordinance 2025-130.**

Mr. Calfee presented an ordinance amending the payroll ordinance related to the Fraternal Order of Police contract. He explained that during recent negotiations, Council approved an increase in afternoon and night shift differential pay for full-time patrol officers from .50 cents to \$1, but inadvertently failed to include part-time patrol officers in the adjustment. The amendment corrected the oversight by raising the part-time differential to match the full-time officers.

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

**The fifteenth item was an ordinance authorizing the execution of Then and Now Certificates**

Ms. Laudato explained that three certificates required approval this month as part of state audit requirements for purchases exceeding \$3,000 that had not been approved beforehand.

Mr. Calfee remarked that the items represented a relatively low number compared to previous months.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.
- Motion to adjourn at 6:42 pm by Ms. West, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**

**There being no further business before Council, the meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm**

**ATTEST:**

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**Clerk of Council**

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**Council President**