Ravenna City Council
Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
April 13, 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: Police Chief, Jake Smallfield; Service Director, Tim Contant; City Engineer; Bob Finney; Finance Director, Tami Lorence; Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor; Cynthia Miller, William Barber, Eve Francis, Dirk Remley, Cliff Soudil, Cheryl Wood, Amy Young, Ramy Mansour, Barb Niemiller, Joni Halloway, Ryann Cline, Susie Kohl, Larry Selinius, Mark Pantalone, Valerie Pantalone, Peter Martin, Greg Francis

The Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:18 P.M. by Chairperson, Christina West.

The first item was the approval of TIRC appointed board members.
Ms. West explained that some agenda items would be addressed that evening, while others were for discussion only.
Ms. Lorence explained that one current member no longer resides in Ravenna, creating a need to comply with statutory requirements that two members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by Council be City residents. She noted that Brian Huff, who currently serves as a Portage County Commissioner appointee and resides in Ravenna, could fulfill one of the resident positions pending Council approval.
The Mayor is also seeking an additional resident to serve on the board.
The committee agreed to move the item forward in anticipation of identifying a second resident appointee before the annual meeting.

- The item was moved forward

The second item was the approval of Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) Minutes.
Ms. West explained that the item is to review and approve the annual Tax Incentive Review Council minutes.
Ms. Lorence reported that all Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) and Enterprise Zone agreements remain in good standing. She noted that the proposed Menards project remains inactive but that the company continues to own the property and has indicated plans to proceed with development in the future.

- The item was moved forward

The third item was self-storage.
Ms. West led a discussion regarding the City's ongoing moratorium on self-storage facilities. She stated that she has been reviewing regulations adopted by other communities and is developing recommendations addressing issues such as overconcentration, land use, building design, location requirements, and consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan.
Mr. Finney emphasized the importance of defining the various forms of storage uses, including enclosed facilities, open-air storage, vehicle storage, and temporary storage arrangements.
Mr. Kairis suggested that future regulations could include conditional use requirements, zoning restrictions, and evaluations of community need and facility capacity.
Ms. Michael, Mr. Marovich, and Ms. Laudato expressed concerns regarding the limited economic development value of self-storage facilities, their low employment impact, and the potential loss of developable land that could support higher value uses.
Mr. Calfee noted that Council may wish to distinguish between traditional self-storage facilities and fully enclosed indoor storage uses that repurpose existing commercial buildings.
Mr. West stated that she would continue developing proposed regulations for future discussion by the Committee of the Whole.

- The item was for discussion only.

The fourth item was Main Street Ravenna and the fifth item was the Ravenna Area Chamber of Commerce.
Ms. West continued discussion regarding funding requests from Main Street Ravenna and the Ravenna Area Chamber of Commerce. She clarified that $60,000 has already been allocated in the City's budget for the two organizations and that the committee was considering an additional $40,000 appropriation. She noted that the proposed increase represents approximately 0.011% of the overall City budget.
Ms. Lorence addressed concerns regarding projected deficit spending, explaining that the City is not overspending its revenues. She stated that the City budgets with available cash carryover balances in mind and continues to maintain a positive cash position and comply with county certification requirements. Ms. Lorence noted that the General Fund currently has an approximate $7.5 million carryover balance and explained that multi-year capital projects, including the water tower project, can create the appearance of deficit spending.
Mr. Kairis emphasized that funding requests for Main Street Ravenna and the Chamber should be viewed as investments rather than expenditures, citing their roles in community events, economic development initiatives, and implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan. He also noted that similar budget projections had occurred in prior years due to multi-year projects and labor agreements.
Ms. Laudato expressed concern regarding the City's projected deficit and the long-term impact of multi-year funding commitments, particularly given uncertainty surrounding future state property tax proposals.
Ms. Michael stated that while she supports both organizations, she remains cautious about increasing funding during an active public safety levy campaign and emphasized the importance of prioritizing public safety services.
Ms. West reported that she met with representatives from both organizations to discuss funding options and accountability measures. She stated that both organizations are agreeable to a one-

year funding commitment and to providing regular updates to Council through designated liaisons.
Mr. Calfee expressed support for funding both organizations at the proposed amounts for one year.
Mr. Harper emphasized the importance of increasing fundraising efforts and diversifying revenue sources.
Mr. Marovich stated that the organizations contribute intangible community benefits and supported full funding with additional accountability measures.
Mr. Moskun requested additional financial reporting regarding fundraising activities and organizational finances.
Ms. West noted that future quarterly reports to Council would include information on events, participation, fundraising efforts, volunteer hours, and other measurable outcomes.
Representatives from both organizations addressed the committee.
Main Street Ravenna Board President Bill Barber and Chamber Executive Director Ryann Cline stated that the organizations are collaborating more closely through regular meetings and joint initiatives.
Mr. Barber highlighted the value of volunteer contributions and explained that changing economic conditions have increased the need for City support.
Ms. Cline reported that Chamber event revenues have increased significantly compared to the previous year and outlined plans to continue expanding fundraising efforts.
Following discussion, Ms. West indicated her intention to amend the proposed ordinances to provide one year of funding rather than two years. The committee agreed to place the ordinances on the agenda for the special meeting scheduled for April 20.

- The items were moved forward

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council	**Christina West, Chairperson** **Community & Economic Development**