Ravenna City Council
Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
May 11, 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: Fire Chief, Mark Chapple; Service Director, Tim Contant; City Engineer; Bob Finney; Finance Director, Tami Lorence; Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor; Human Resource Director, Heather Richkowski; Larry Silenius, Barbara Niemiller, Cliff Soudil, Cynthia Miller, Jen Davis

The Community & Economic Development Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:40 P.M. by Chairperson, Christina West.

The first item was the CHIP partnership agreement.
Ms. West introduced Jen Davis of Neighborhood Development Services (NDS) to present two agenda items, beginning with the CHIP Partnership Agreement. Ms. West noted that the committee routinely works with NDS on the program and invited Ms. Davis to explain its structure and purpose.
Ms. Davis explained that the CHIP program is now administered through a partnership between Portage County, the City of Streetsboro, and the City of Ravenna, with Ravenna serving as the lead agency. She outlined the proposed funding allocations, noting that Portage County could apply for up to $400,000, Streetsboro up to $350,000, and Ravenna up to $300,000, with Ravenna planning to pursue its full allocation. Ms. Davis described the expected outcomes for Ravenna as two full home rehabilitations and three home repair projects. She further explained the distinction between full rehabs, which bring entire homes up to residential rehabilitation standards, and home repairs, which address major individual systems such as roofs or furnaces. Assistance limits are generally $85,000 for full rehabs and $30,000 for home repairs, though exceptions have occasionally been requested due to rising costs.
Mr. Calfee confirmed that prior CHIP funding cycles were fully utilized and that demand had exceeded available funding.
Ms. Davis agreed that past allocations had been fully expended and are expected to be again.
Ms. West asked why only certain jurisdictions participate, and Ms. Davis explained eligibility is based on federal and state criteria, including population and income levels.
Ms. Davis noted that some communities, such as Kent, operate separate entitlement programs.
Council discussion then turned to how CHIP funds are allocated.
Mr. Finney questioned whether spreading funds across more households might have a broader community impact.
Ms. Michael supported exploring alternatives that would allow more residents to benefit, particularly low-income seniors and homeowners in poor housing conditions.

Ms. Davis explained that the current structure is driven by state requirements, cost thresholds, and administrative constraints, and noted that full rehabs often consume most of the funding due to compliance with state standards.
Mr. Calfee and others asked clarifying questions about program limits, repayment structures, and eligibility requirements.
Mr. Davis explained that home repair grants are typically up to $30,000, while full rehab assistance may reach $85,000 and is structured as a forgivable mortgage if occupancy requirements are met. She also described income verification requirements and noted that some applicants decline participation due to the detailed financial documentation required.
Council members discussed the possibility of reallocating CHIP funds to focus more heavily on home repair projects instead of full rehabs to serve a greater number of households.
Mr. Marovich and others explored whether prioritization criteria could maximize community impact based on severity of housing conditions.
Ms. Davis indicated that any program changes would need to comply with state guidelines and grant requirements, but she agreed to confirm allowable adjustments and report back quickly due to upcoming application deadlines.
Mr. Kairis clarified that Council needed to confirm the structure of the application before submission, as the number of units and funding breakdown must be included in the grant.
After further discussion, Christina West proposed moving forward with the current structure for the present cycle while continuing to evaluate potential adjustments for future years.
Council members generally agreed, with the understanding that modifications could be explored if allowable under program rules.

- The item was moved forward.

The second item was to authorize $200,000 in RLF for Down Payment Assistance.
Ms. Davis explained that the program would provide up to $40,000 per household in assistance for down payments and closing costs, targeting first-time homebuyers at or below 80% of area median income. The assistance would be structured as a 1% loan amortized over 15 years, with payments deferred until year three. The goal is to improve homeownership opportunities and address affordability challenges in the local housing market.
Council members discussed how the program would be administered.
Ms. Davis confirmed that assistance amounts would vary based on actual need and that liens would be placed on assisted properties.
Council members generally expressed support for the concept, noting its potential to increase homeownership and stabilize neighborhoods.
Mr. Calfee and others voiced support for the initiative as a way to expand housing access.
Ms. West indicated she was comfortable moving the proposal forward.

- The item was moved forward.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:01 P.M.
ATTEST:

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