



**RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
September 21, 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, 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, City Engineer, Bob Finney; Council Clerk, Chelsea Gregor, Larry Silenius, Cynthia Miller, Cliff Soudil, Eve Francis, Barb Neimiller, Rich Edmiston, Joni Holloway, Peter Martin, Herman Minor

The first item on the agenda was to approve the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes from August 24, 2026.

- Motion to approve the August 24, 2026, Committee of the Whole minutes by Ms. Michael, 2nd by Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**

The second item was an resolution of support in becoming an Age Friendly Community.

Ms. Michael presented a resolution to begin the process of making Ravenna an Age-Friendly Community. She explained that there is no cost to participate and that the process will involve a study to identify improvements and services for the aging population. Once the resolution is passed, Ravenna can begin identifying itself as an Age-Friendly Community while working toward its goals. Ms. Michael noted that Ravenna would be the first community in Portage County to pursue this designation, following similar efforts by Portage County, Summit County, and Akron.

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

The third item was an ordinance authorizing the donation of 2 Life Pak 15's.

Ms. Michael presented an ordinance authorizing the donation of two LifePak 15 monitors to the Hiram Township Fire Department and University Hospital Portage for training purposes. She explained that the equipment was no longer useful to Ravenna because the department had upgraded its equipment. Ms. Michael added that University Hospitals had provided assistance to Ravenna in the past, making the donation an opportunity to give back.

- 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 purchase of a new Vermeer brush chipper. Mr. Moskun presented an ordinance authorizing the purchase of a new Vermeer brush chipper for the Street Department. He explained that the equipment would replace a chipper approximately 20 years old.

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

The fifth item was an ordinance authorizing the City of Ravenna to become a member of Ohio 811.

Mr. Moskun presented an ordinance authorizing Ravenna to join Ohio 811, the utility-locating notification service.

Mr. Kairis explained that the service helps ensure underground utilities are identified before excavation begins.

Mr. Finney clarified that membership would allow Ravenna to receive notifications when digging is planned near city utilities, after which the City would be responsible for marking its underground lines.

- 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 Burgess & Niple consultants.

The committee discussed an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with Burgess & Niple Consultants.

Mr. Finney explained that negotiations with the firm had not yet occurred. The committee agreed to postpone consideration until the following month, allowing time for negotiations to proceed.

- The item was not moved forward.

The seventh item was an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to apply for WPCLF & appropriating funds.

Mr. Moskun presented an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to apply for funding through the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF). Mr. Finney explained that the initial nomination form would be submitted to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for consideration. If the project were accepted, the City would proceed with a full application requiring additional information. Mr. Finney noted that he had distributed information about the application process to Council members.

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

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The eighth item was an ordinance to accept two checks in the sum of \$1,000 for the Parks and Rec Dept.

Ms. Laudato presented an ordinance accepting two \$500 donations, totaling \$1,000, for the Parks and Recreation Department. The donations would help fund concrete tee pads for the disc golf course.

Mr. Calfee explained that the concrete pads would provide a stable, dry surface for players to throw from, preventing the starting areas from becoming muddy and worn.

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

The ninth item was an Ordinance authorizing an agreement with Horn & King & appropriating \$22,000.

Ms. Laudato presented an ordinance authorizing an agreement with Horn and King and appropriating \$22,000 for a feasibility study examining options for City Hall, the police station, and the fire station. She explained that the City was working with construction estimates that were at least two and a half years old. Ms. Laudato emphasized that updated information was necessary regardless of the outcome of the safety facilities levy. The study would provide a range of options for locations, renovations, new construction, and potential phased improvements. If the levy failed, the study could help the City identify practical next steps and prioritize projects. Ms. Laudato described the \$22,000 cost as reasonable compared with the \$60,000 previously considered for marketing services through Triad.

Ms. Michael stated that she initially questioned the timing of the study but changed her position after recognizing that the City's facility problems would remain whether the levy passed or failed. She supported obtaining information to determine which improvements were most important and how they could be accomplished.

Mr. Kairis expressed concerns about repeating work that had already been performed. He recalled that in July 2016, Council approved a \$10,000 feasibility study by Horn and King examining the police, fire, and annex buildings. The study was completed in January 2017. He questioned whether the City was returning to the beginning of a process after a decade of planning and expressed concern that the new study suggested a lack of confidence in the levy. He also questioned how the City could fund significant renovations or new construction without additional taxpayer support.

Ms. Laudato responded that the City needed current information rather than relying on outdated estimates and assumptions. She suggested that updated options might reduce the amount ultimately requested from taxpayers or allow certain improvements to be completed in phases.

Mr. Marovich supported the study, explaining that Council needed reliable information to clearly communicate the City's needs and justify its proposed approach to the public.

Ms. Michael added that conditions at the fire and police departments continued to deteriorate, including building leaks, limited space, and ongoing repair needs. She emphasized the importance of demonstrating that the City was pursuing fiscally responsible solutions.

The committee reached a consensus to move the ordinance forward, while allowing further discussion at the regular meeting if necessary.

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

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The tenth item was an ordinance authorizing a position change & pay increase in the Parks & Recreation Dept.

Mr. Calfee presented two ordinances concerning staffing changes and compensation adjustments within the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Calfee explained that the first ordinance would amend the City's payroll ordinance by eliminating the existing Program Supervisor position and establishing a Recreation Manager position. The new position would have increased responsibilities and workload, and would be assigned to non-union pay range 16.

Mr. Kairis noted that the matter had been discussed during an executive session and at the previous committee meeting.

Mr. Moskun stated that the proposal had been sufficiently clarified.

Ms. Laudato expressed the opinion that the ordinance should not be placed on the consent agenda because it establishes a new City position. The committee agreed to advance the ordinance but keep it off the consent agenda for further consideration at the regular Council meeting.

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

The eleventh item was an ordinance authorizing a pay increase for the Parks & Rec Program Coordinator

Mr. Calfee presented a second item addressing compensation for the existing Program Coordinator position. He explained that the position would remain unchanged, but the salary would increase from Step 11E to Step 12E to recognize the position's increased responsibilities and workload. Following discussion, the committee agreed to advance the ordinance and place it on the consent agenda.

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

The twelfth item was an ordinance approving a donation of \$200 to the Portage County Historical Society.

Mr. Kairis presented an ordinance authorizing a \$200 donation to the Portage County Historical Society to support the Benjamin Tappan historical sign.

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

The thirteenth item was an ordinance approving adjustments to the estimated revenues and appropriations.

Ms. Lorence presented an ordinance adjusting the City's estimated revenues and appropriations. She explained that revenue adjustments included additional funds received and grant reimbursements that were not included when the budget was adopted. Appropriation adjustments primarily reflected payroll increases, property and casualty insurance, rising health insurance premiums, and increased healthcare claims.

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Ms. Lorence also noted that approximately \$875,000 involved an allocation between two funds. Additional adjustments accounted for donations and funding commitments to Main Street Ravenna and the Ravenna Area Chamber of Commerce that occurred after the permanent budget was prepared.

Ms. Laudato asked how much of the approximately \$568,000 in increased expenses might carry into the 2027 budget.

Ms. Lorence explained that the amount was difficult to determine because healthcare costs could change. She hoped the City could identify more cost-effective health insurance options during the upcoming renewal process to reduce future expenses.

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

The fourteenth item was an ordinance authorizing the execution of Then and Now Certificates.

Ms. Lorence reported that only two then-and-now certificates required authorization.

Mr. Kairis noted that the number had decreased.

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

The fifteenth item was a Council workshop with Bricker, Graydon and Wyatt.

Mr. Kairis reminded Council that a workshop with representatives from Bricker Graydon LLP was scheduled for October 20 at 6:00 p.m. The workshop would be held as an open Special Council meeting at City Hall and recorded for later viewing.

Mr. Kairis explained that the law firm would provide a customized workshop addressing topics relevant to Council and other City boards and commissions subject to Ohio's open meetings requirements. Council members were encouraged to submit questions in advance.

Representatives of City boards and commissions would also be invited to attend, with the recording available to those unable to participate.

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

The sixteenth item was an ordinance Charter Review Commission Secretary Salary.

Mr. Kairis discussed establishing compensation for the Charter Review Commission secretary.

He explained that the City Charter requires Council to set the secretary's fee by ordinance before November 1, with compensation based on the Council Clerk's hourly rate.

Based on two meetings per month and the work required to prepare agendas and minutes, communicate with commission members, conduct research, and handle other administrative duties, Mr. Kairis estimated approximately 30 hours of work per month over seven months. He stated that the exact amount would be calculated using the anticipated hours and the Clerk's hourly rate before the regular Council meeting.

Mr. Kairis also explained that the Council Clerk would have the first right of refusal to perform the work. If the Clerk declined, the City would need to identify another person to serve as

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secretary. The committee agreed to advance the ordinance but keep it off the consent agenda until the compensation figures were available.

- All Council present responded in favor to move the item forward for legislation.
- Motion to adjourn at 7:27 pm by Ms. Laudato, 2nd by Mr. Marovich- **All Ayes**

There being no further business before Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:27 pm

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Council President