



Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting
 Held August 18, 2025
 7:00 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Oberlin City Council was held on August 18, 2025, in the Council Chambers of the Oberlin City Hall, located at 85 S. Main Street, Oberlin, Ohio. President of Council Eboni Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Roll Call was taken as follows:

1. COUNCIL BUSINESS

(a) Call Regular City Council Meeting to Order and Roll Call – 7:05 p.m.

Council Members:	Present	Absent
Joseph Waltzer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jessa D. New	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael McFarlin, Vice President	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ray English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Libni Lopez	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kristin Peterson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eboni A. Johnson, President	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appointees:

Jon Clark, Interim City Manager/Law Director
 Marin Fowler, Finance Director
 Belinda Anderson, Clerk of Council

(b) Approval of Minutes:

- Regular City Council Meetings: June 16, 2025, and July 7, 2025
- Special City Council Meeting: June 24, 2025, June 27, 2025, and August 4, 2025

Minutes were approved as submitted.

(c) Discuss and Consider not Requesting a Hearing Relating to the Renewal of Alcoholic Beverage Permits.

Peterson, Waltzer, and New recused themselves.

Clark explained the reasons members of Council had to recuse themselves. Two members of Council recused themselves because they operate liquor establishments downtown Oberlin, and one member recused herself because there is a family member who operates a restaurant that serves alcohol.

Clark explained that each year, class C and D liquor permits issued in the City of Oberlin are automatically renewed. The City can object and, for specific reasons, request a hearing. In the absence of a request for a hearing, nothing needs to be done. The Police Chief has issued a memo, indicating that there's no history of any events that warrant requesting a hearing or otherwise objecting to the renewals. Therefore, he would recommend that the Council not recommend a hearing.

English, seconded by Lopez, moved not to request a hearing relating to the renewal of Alcoholic Beverage Permits.

Roll Call: 4 Ayes

0 Nays

Motion Carried

Peterson, Waltzer, and New returned to Council Chambers.

2. ANY CONCERNS NOT ON THE AGENDA MAY BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL AT THIS TIME

Mark Chesler, Oberlin Citizens for Responsible Development, read a prepared statement during the public comment period. He urged Council members not to enter into a business relationship with Skyview Development LLC or an individual that he described as a "convicted fraudster" in connection with the Green Acres Development project. Chesler expressed concern that proceeding with such a partnership could jeopardize a proposed amendment to the City of Oberlin's 2025 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocation. If approved, this amendment would establish a fund offering four \$20,000 down payment assistance grants for moderate-income homebuyers in the Green Acres development. He further stated his belief that selecting this developer would raise concerns with the Ohio Auditor of State's office.

New, remarked that she could not understand Mr. Chesler's statement and asked if he wished to clarify his remarks in his own words. Chesler responded that the statement he read was his own words. New noted that she was certain his point was both relevant and valid, but explained that it was difficult to follow because he read it so quickly.

Chesler began to read a second prepared statement, emphasizing best practices outlined by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership and the Citizens Housing and Planning Association. He noted that these practices were not adequately reflected in the May 6, 2025, Request for Proposal issued by the City of Oberlin. Chesler recommended that the Green Acres subcommittee consider reissuing the RFP for the Green Acres development with tighter qualification requirements, greater requisite disclosures, and increased due diligence.

Following his remarks, Chesler handed his prepared statements to the Clerk of Council.

Tyrone Wicks, Vice President of OCIC, responded that OCIC had received a concerning message regarding the individual referenced in Mr. Chesler's remarks. He stated that Council has no control over whom OCIC chooses to do business with; anyone may approach OCIC regardless of their situation, and OCIC is not obligated to conduct business with them. Based on the information received, Mr. Wicks affirmed that OCIC has no intention of doing business with the individual in question. He emphasized that this decision rests solely with OCIC and is not a matter for the City Council.

Janet Reno, 12 Hawthorne Drive, addressed the Council regarding a specific concern in her neighborhood. She reported that a nearby resident is heating their home eight months out of the year

by burning firewood due to a broken furnace. Given the proximity of homes, she expressed concern about the constant smoke affecting the air quality for the surrounding properties. Ms. Reno cited health risks associated with prolonged exposure to wood smoke, including its systemic effects on the body and its contribution to environmental pollution. She referenced Ohio Administrative Code Section 3745-15-07 as potentially applicable and urged Council to investigate the matter. She requested that the City take appropriate action to address the ongoing residential burning at that property and to encourage or require the use of a cleaner, energy-efficient heating method.

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR A REPORT FROM A CITY BOARD OR COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE

4. OPPORTUNITY FOR A REPORT FROM AN ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Baumann announced that an Open House will be held at the Oberlin Activity and Enrichment Center on Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. to discuss potential future uses of the building. He also provided a status report on the multi-use path that will be installed on the west side of SR 58. The next step will be for Environmental Design Group to present an update and overview at the September 2, 2025, meeting. Baumann stated that the project will be bid out later this year, with construction anticipated to begin in the spring. He noted that the delay in progress was due to difficulties in acquiring the necessary easements.

Waltzer remarked that this project has been a high priority for City Council and questioned what could be done to ensure its completion this year. Baumann explained the challenges he has faced in communicating with property owners who appear either uninterested or do not consider the project a priority. Waltzer then asked about the process of using eminent domain in this case. Baumann remarked that pursuing eminent domain would not speed up the process in the short term and noted that the matter would ultimately be a question for the Law Director.

Clark noted that there are different processes for exercising eminent domain. There is a process called a “quick take,” which allows a political subdivision to take possession of the property first and then settle the issue of appropriate compensation later. He offered to look into whether a quick take would be permissible in this scenario to ensure all options have been considered.

Members of the Council discussed scheduling a future meeting with the expectation that EDG will include potential grant opportunities as part of its presentation to fund the project.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Ordinance No. 25-41 AC CMS: An Ordinance Authorizing Participation in a New Opioid Settlement with Purdue Pharma and its Owners to Go into Immediate Effect

The Clerk read the Ordinance by number, title, and substantive portions.

English seconded by McFarlin, moved for passage on the first reading of the Ordinance.

Background and overview were provided by Clark.

Clark explained that the proposed Ordinance would authorize the City to participate in a new National Opioid Litigation settlement with Purdue Pharma and its owners, the Sackler Family. He reported that the settlement would result in a \$198 million distribution to the State of Ohio, to be divided between the state and its political subdivisions. Approximately \$60 million would be allocated to local state governments if the settlement is approved.

Clark noted that the settlement remains pending in bankruptcy court, with final approval expected in December. The City must decide by September to opt in and participate. He further explained that this is not a one-time payout, but instead will be distributed over 15 years. Funds may generally be used for remediation efforts, addressing opioid-related issues, law enforcement initiatives, and similar purposes. While the specific permitted uses of this settlement have not yet been determined, Council has been provided with a summary referencing allowable uses from prior settlements. Mr. Clark expressed his belief that the Council should approve participation so the City can be included in the settlement.

English, seconded by Peterson, moved to waive the three-reading rule for Ordinance No. 25-41 AC CMS.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes 0 Nays Motion Carried
(Suspension of Rules)

English seconded by Lopez, moved that Ordinance No. 25-41 AC CMS go into immediate effect to ensure timely participation in the settlement of claims.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes 0 Nays Motion Carried
(1st, Effective Immediately)

- B. Ordinance No. 25-42 AC CMS: An Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Submit an Application to the District 9 Public Works Integrating Committee for Ohio Public Works Commission Funding for the Industrial Park Streets Resurfacing Project to Go into Immediate Effect.

The Clerk read the Ordinance by number, title, and substantive portions.

New seconded by McFarlin, moved for passage on the first Reading of the Ordinance.

Baumann recalled that last spring, the Council adopted a resolution encouraging the electorate to support the most recent Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) Issue II levy on the statewide ballot. The levy passed with 58% of the vote, thereby authorizing the state to issue bonds that fund this program.

He explained that Oberlin is part of Ohio Public Works District 9, which includes Lorain, Medina, and Huron counties. This year, approximately \$16 million is available across the district, with Lorain County receiving just over 50% of the total based on population. Although \$16 million sounds substantial, it goes quickly, as the district typically receives around 70 applications each year, of which about 45 are funded.

Mr. Baumann emphasized the importance of being strategic in selecting projects that have a broader community impact and reasonable local costs. Based on the criteria outlined in his memorandum, including the goal of targeting a project with a local price of approximately \$300,000 or less in

order not to take up too much of the City’s income tax budget, he selected the Industrial Park Streets Resurfacing Project.

He thought this project would appeal because it’s got a broader than a neighborhood impact. According to Planning Director Carrie Porter, more than 800 people work along these streets, representing approximately one-tenth of Oberlin’s population. Mr. Baumann added that the underground utilities in these areas are in good condition, reducing the need for significant investment in water, sanitary, or stormwater infrastructure.

The proposed project would involve the reconstruction of the concrete portions of Artino Street, Creekside Drive, Hillcreek Drive, and Stern Street. Mr. Baumann recommended applying for \$398,000 in Ohio Public Works Commission(OPWC) funding, consisting of a \$318,400 grant with the balance as a loan. He noted that OPWC loans are provided at 0 % interest for the life of the project. The City’s local match of \$285,587 would come from the Income Tax Capital Improvement Fund.

He requested that City Council adopt the authorizing legislation with immediate effect so the application can be submitted by the September 5, 2025, deadline.

New, seconded by Lopez, moved to waive the three-reading rule for Ordinance No. 25-42 AC CMS.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes 0 Nays Motion Carried
(Suspension of Rules)

New seconded by Peterson moved that Ordinance No. 25-42 AC CMS go into immediate effect to submit an application for funding within applicable time limits.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes 0 Nays Motion Carried
(Effective Immediately)

- C. Ordinance No. 25-43 AC CMS: An Ordinance to Adopt the Recommendation of the Planning Commission to Rezone Properties Located at 45918 Maple Street, 321 North Main Street, 329 North Main Street, 316 North Pleasant Street and 318 North Pleasant Street from the “R-1”/ Single Family Dwelling District and the “R-1A”/Single -Family Dwelling District to the “PDOD”/Planned Development Overlay District

The Clerk read the Ordinance by number, title, and substantive portions.

English seconded by Peterson moved for passage on the first reading of the Ordinance.

Porter summarized the purpose of the rezoning request as discussed during the public hearing held before the meeting. She explained that Kendal proposes to construct multi-family residential Senior housing on two sites. At this time, the concept plan shows 24 units on the property on the north side of Maple Street and 126 units on the South side of Maple Street.

The purpose of tonight’s meeting is to consider a rezoning request. If approved, there will be more steps to get the Development plan approved. The new Comprehensive Plan designates these areas for traditional neighborhood development and mixed-use neighborhood development, which would both allow for multi-use family. Porter concluded her remarks by asking if there were any questions that might not have been addressed in the public hearing from the Council or the public.

English commented that it was important for everyone to understand what can be approved under the current process. He explained that the City is in the process of developing a new zoning code, which is still under staff review and has not yet been presented to the Planning Commission or City Council. Once the new zoning code is adopted, the area in question could be rezoned to Neighborhood Mixed Use, which would simplify the approval process because it would not require all the steps currently required. He encouraged attendees to keep this in mind, noting that under the existing code, the PDOD requires the multi-step process that he had described earlier.

Lopez added that the public is welcome to attend the Planning Commission meetings, which are open to the public. He noted that public comments may be heard throughout that process and emphasized that residents do not need to wait until a matter comes before City Council to provide input.

McFarlin noted that this is the first of three readings to consider the rezoning request.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes 0 Nays Motion Carried
(1st. Final)

- D. Ordinance No. 25-44 AC CMS: An Ordinance Accepting the Bid of the Ruhlin Company for the East Lorain Street Traffic Signals Project for the City of Oberlin, Ohio to Go into Immediate Effect

The Clerk read the Resolution by number, title, and substantive portions.

McFarlin, seconded by Peterson, moved for passage on the first reading of the Ordinance.

Skolnicki explained that they have been talking about this project since 2021. The project scope will involve rebuilding the two traffic signals at the intersections of Lorain and Pleasant and Lorain and Park Street. Following a bid opening prepared with the assistance of GPD Group, the City received six bids with highly competitive pricing. Staff recommends accepting the bid of Ruhlin Company for \$539,358, which is significantly below the \$700,000 budgeted for the project.

New, seconded by Lopez, moved to waive the three-reading rule for Ordinance No. 25-44 AC CMS.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes 0 Nays Motion Carried
(Suspension of Rules)

New seconded by English moved that Ordinance No. 25-44 AC CMS go into immediate effect to accept a bid within the time provided by law.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes 0 Nays Motion Carried
(1st, Effective Immediately)

7. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS:

(A) Referrals

(B) Advocacy

(C) Correspondence

(D) Reports

