



Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting

Held September 2, 2025

7:00 pm.

A regular meeting of the Oberlin City Council was held on September 2, 2025, in the Council Chambers of the Oberlin City Hall, located at 85 S. Main Street, Oberlin, Ohio. President Eboni Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll Call was taken as follows:

1. COUNCIL BUSINESS

- (a) Call Regular City Council Meeting to Order and Roll Call – 7:00 pm.

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, Interim Finance Director

Belinda Anderson, Clerk of Council

- (b) Approval of Minutes – Special City Council Meeting – June 2, 2025; Public Hearing – August 18, 2025; Regular City Council Meeting – August 18, 2025

The minutes were approved as submitted.

- (c) State Route 58 Multi-Use Path Presentation and Discussion

A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.

Members of Council heard Jeff Baumann, Public Works Director, Randall Roberts, City Engineer, and Kyle Lukes and Renee Whittenberger from Environmental Design Group (EDG) as they gave a presentation on the State Route 58 Multi-Use Path.

During the presentation, there was an opportunity for the Council to ask questions. New asked how much it would be to remove the island located at the entrance of Reserve Avenue. Roberts responded that he would not want to remove the island by itself and would rather narrow it. The cost of removing the island would be the cost of removing it, plus the curb work that accompanies it. Baumann noted that the cost would be around \$40,000 to \$50,000.

McFarlin asked if the new configuration leading into Reserve Avenue would accommodate snowplows. Roberts responded that even though it's been shortened, there will still be the same issue with snow removal. Baumann added that the department will be responsible for snow removal from the path, so we will have smaller equipment in the vicinity that we will use to clear some of the snow that gets stranded at the front end of the island.

Lopez asked about lowering the speed limit on State Route 58. Robert said it was considered for the Aldi project to allow a shorter turn lane, but a speed study showed most drivers already travel within a narrow speed range. Even with bike lanes and vulnerable users, the data likely wouldn't support lowering the limit.

Peterson asked about the speed decision and whether it was up to Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) or the City to determine the speed limit. Robert said Oberlin can request a speed study, and the findings would be that the posted speed limit is accurate. Peterson asked if the option to change the speed limit is up to ODOT. Roberts said the speed study has to show that the speed would be different than what is in the Ohio Revised Code because otherwise, the fifty-mile-per-hour speed is set up in the Ohio Revised Code unless you can show that most people are going slower than that, and therefore, you would want to lower the speed limit.

During another opportunity for questions about pedestrian hybrid beacons, Baumann noted that ODOT has an abbreviated safety grant, and we are developing an application to submit. The multi-use path is a \$350,000 to \$400,000 project to add the pedestrian hybrid beacons. ODOT's grant-making cycle is on a quarterly basis, and we have been in touch with the District 3 Safety Coordinator. We will be sending them all the information we have, in the hope that we can secure funding for this improvement.

After the presentation, council members voiced their concerns about the lack of lighting on the multi-use path, which could be hazardous for drivers and individuals using it at night, especially for those who live on Reserve Avenue. Baumann noted that they have been working with OMLPS on installing additional streetlights on the north corner of the intersection at Reserve Avenue.

- (d) Consider a Motion to Adopt the Recommendation of the Planning Commission to Approve the Preliminary Development for the Proposed Oberlin Place Senior Housing Project to be Located at 450 West College Street

Members of the Council heard from Carrie Porter, Planning and Development Director, as she reviewed the proposed senior housing project. At its August meeting, the Planning Commission made a recommendation to Council to approve the preliminary development for the proposed senior housing project at 450 West College Street. The applicant proposes to construct a three-story apartment building with forty-eight units. On the other side of the development, there would be two duplexes and two fourplexes, which would be one story.

English asked if Porter wants a motion adopting the recommendation from the Planning Commission, but with the understanding that the final development plan should address all concerns expressed by staff. Porter responded in the affirmative. She remarked that this is the first preliminary development plan to have progressed this far in the process since the Ordinance was revised a couple of years ago to change the way the process operates.

Lopez asked if the fourplexes are rentals and not being sold to individuals. Porter responded in the affirmative. Lopez asked what the definition of affordability in terms of rentals is. Porter responded that it is a tax credit project, and they have received a low-income tax credit, which means that the average income of the residents living there would be approximately 60% of the area's median income.

New asked what in the plan would address the concerns that residents had about lighting and noise pollution. Porter remarked that landscaping would be used as a screen for the ODOT salt building on the north side of the development. From the planning staff's perspective, the landscaping plan should address the treatment of two property lines to ensure we are addressing the residents' concerns. There has not been a proper lighting plan submitted yet, but as part of the final development plan, the developer can submit it and ensure that the light levels are what they are intended to be and that there is no light pollution beyond the property line. The developer commented that.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes 0 Nays Motion Carried

(e) Hear an Update and Consider a Recommendation from the Green Acres Development Committee

Clark remarked that the committee interviewed two builders but found neither suitable for a number of reasons. While there isn't a recommendation to select a builder, the committee commends that Council move forward with site infrastructure, which is nearly ready to go out to bid. The committee discussed having one of the builders construct one or two spec homes on site to gauge public interest. One of the concerns raised is that by opting for a single builder for the entire site, we would be limiting people's choices. We also discussed offering incentives in the form of Sustainable Reserve Funds to individuals who choose to go all-electric. The committee felt that the choice between all-electric and gas should be up to the homeowner, but we could provide some incentives.

English commented that the committee would love to see this move forward as quickly as possible. In terms of infrastructure, there was some discussion about focusing first on the utility connection to the properties and not undertaking any groundwork before building actually begins. He didn't see any reason to discuss this at the retreat, but he would be very happy to have a discussion about the overall plan for the site.

Johnson remarked that she will add this to the retreat agenda.

Waltzer remarked that he felt they could discuss everything about this project at the retreat and didn't think they should limit it.

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

Eric Rooks, the new director of campus safety and security for Oberlin College, was introduced. Rooks remarked that he had recently retired from a 31-year career in law enforcement. He thanked the Council

for the invitation to attend and expressed his appreciation and excitement about joining the Oberlin College community.

Frieda Fuchs, 263 Elm Street, read a prepared statement expressing her concerns on the treatment of Mark Chesler at the August 18th City Council meeting. She felt that the situation could have been handled better, and the Council should model the behavior they expect from the public. She submitted a copy of her prepared statements to the Clerk and asked that they be included in the minutes.

Mark Chesler, P.O. Box 342, delivered a prepared statement at the Oberlin City Council meeting on August 18, 2025, expressing his concerns about his treatment during the meeting. He accused Tyrone Wicks of physically assaulting him while he was speaking, criticized the Council for its lack of response, and requested a formal apology along with Mr. Wicks' removal from public appointments. He submitted a copy of his prepared statement to the Clerk and requested that it be included in the meeting minutes.

Kary Gray, 255 North Pleasant Street, wants to bring awareness to the North Park Street and State Route 511 intersection, as it has become unsafe for pedestrians. The traffic on 511 heading east and west has different traffic patterns, and pedestrians are unable to see which lights are changing.

Marc Davidson, 171 West College Street, commented that he witnessed the incident Mr. Chesler described and felt that everyone could have conducted themselves better. He then inquired about the EDL plant issue and whether there had been any communication.

Aliza Weidenbaum, 99 South Cedar Street, commented that the City should find other ways to direct traffic outside the downtown area. It would help keep pedestrians and bicyclists safe.

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

Members of Council heard from Porter as she gave an update on the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee and what they have been working on.

A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.

Questions were asked about whether the priorities that have been completed would offer the opportunity for others to move on the list of things to accomplish. Porter responded in the affirmative. Another question was asked whether the public would be able to view the progress that the committee has made. Porter responded that there is a comprehensive plan website that was created during the planning process, and the OHM advisors left the website up.

4. OPPORTUNITY FOR A REPORT FROM AN ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE

N/A

5. OLD BUSINESS:

A. 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 "R-1"/Single-Family

Dwelling District and “R-1A”/Single-Family Dwelling District to “PDOD”/Planned Development Overlay District

The Clerk read the Ordinance by number and title only.

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

Members of the Council heard from Porter, who reiterated the Planning Commission's recommendation to rezone properties from a single-family dwelling district to a planned development overlay district.

Members of the public commented on their opposition to the rezoning.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes 0 Nays Motion Carried

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. ORDINANCE No. 25-45 AC CMS: An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 24-74 AC CMS, the 2025 Annual Appropriation Ordinance, to Provide for the Appropriation of Funds, to Go into Immediate Effect.

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.

Members of the Council heard from Marin Fowler, Finance Director, as she provided a brief summary of the appropriation of funds.

English, seconded by Lopez, moved to waive the three-reading rule for Ordinance No. 25-45 AC CMS.

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

English, seconded by Lopez, moved that Ordinance No. 25-45 AC CMS goes into immediate effect to ensure that the annual appropriation ordinance of the City of Oberlin, Ohio, is timely amended in order to provide for the usual daily operation of the municipality.

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

- B. ORDINANCE No. 25-46 AC CMS: An Ordinance Amending Ordinance 24-31 AC CMS, to Extend the Compensation for the Interim City Manager to Go into Immediate Effect.

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

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

Clark stated that with the departure of the previous city manager, the Council appointed an interim city manager and provided for temporary compensation until that position was filled. The request is that the current compensation for the interim city manager be continued until the end of the year to help facilitate the transition of the new city manager into the position.

Lopez, seconded by McFarlin, moved to waive the three-reading rule for Ordinance No. 25-46 AC CMS.

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

Lopez, seconded by McFarlin, moved that Ordinance No. 25-46 AC CMS go into immediate effect to facilitate the transition from the Interim City Manager to a new City Manager to ensure the orderly operation of the day-to-day activities of the City.

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

- C. ORDINANCE No. 25-47 AC CMS: An Ordinance Appointing Greg Holcomb as the City Manager and Approving an Employment Agreement to Go into Immediate Effect.

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

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

New, seconded by McFarlin, moved to amend Ordinance 25-47, section IV, to read *“to appoint a City Manager as provided in Section V(A) of the Oberlin City Charter without delay.”*

English, seconded by Peterson, moved to waive the three-reading rule for Ordinance No. 25-47 AC CMS.

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

English, seconded by Lopez, moved that Ordinance No. 25-47 AC CMS go into immediate effect to appoint a City Manager as provided in Section V(A) of the Oberlin City Charter without delay.

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

Clark noted that, in light of the action the Council just concluded, he would suggest that Mr. Holcomb execute the employment agreement, and then Clark could swear him in so that he may start first thing in the morning.

Greg Holcomb, the newly hired City Manager for the City, remarked that he is grateful to the Council, staff, and residents of the City for giving him the opportunity.

- D. ORDINANCE No. 25-48 AC CMS: An Ordinance Authorizing Participation in Opioids Settlements with ALVOGEN, AMNEAL, APOTEX, HIKMA, INDIVIOR, MYLAN, SUN, and ZYDUS to Go into Immediate Effect.

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

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

Clark stated that this settlement involves eight pharmaceuticals, and the amount of the settlement is \$720 million, which will be distributed throughout the United States. This is an opt-in settlement, so we must take affirmative action if the City wishes to join. It would authorize Mr. Holcomb to execute the necessary documents to enable us to participate. Clark noted that at the next meeting, the Council will establish a fund for all opioid settlements, allowing them to be tracked and expended for approved purposes.

New, seconded by McFarlin, moved to waive the three-reading rule for Ordinance No. 25-48 AC CMS.

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

New, seconded by English, moved that Ordinance No. 25-48 AC CMS go into immediate effect to ensure timely participation in the settlement of claims.

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

5. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS:

(A). Referrals

(B). Advocacy

(C). Correspondence

(D). Reports

Council members provided updates on board and commission meetings, initiatives, community events, and announced upcoming meeting dates.

6. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

N/A

7. OPPORTUNITY FOR OTHER APPOINTEES TO REPORT:

N/A


8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Elizabeth Meadows, 343 South Pleasant Street, commented Lorain County has a lot of resources available for residents. She noted that the police departments in Lorain County were providing information and distributing resources, including Narcan Kits, in front of Burlington Coat Factory in Sheffield, Ohio.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Being that there was no additional business before Council, the regular meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Prepared by:



Briana Reynolds
Clerk of Council's Assistant

Attest:



BELINDA B. ANDERSON, MMC
CLERK OF COUNCIL



EBONI A. JOHNSON
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

APPROVED: 10/06/2025

POSTED: 10/07/2025