



MINUTES

Regular City Council Meeting

February 2, 2026, 7:00 p.m. | Meeting Location, Oberlin City Hall Council Chambers
85 South Main Street, Oberlin, Ohio 44074

1. COUNCIL BUSINESS

A. Call regular City Council Meetings to Order and Roll Call – 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Council President Eboni Johnson at 7:00 p.m. Followed by the Roll call. All members of Council were present.

Council Members:

	Present	Absent
Eboni Johnson, President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael McFarlin, Vice President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sondra Miller (<i>arrived late</i>)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Libni Lopez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jessa New	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joseph Waltzer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kristin Peterson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appointees Present

Greg Holcomb, City Manager
Belinda Anderson, Clerk of Council
Jon Clark, Law Director
Marin Fowler, Finance Director

B. Approval of Minutes – Public Hearing and Regular City Council Meeting – January 20, 2026

Members of Council approved the minutes as submitted.

C. Proclamation: Black History Month

A proclamation was read by Council Member Sondra Miller and presented to representatives of the Oberlin High School Black Student Union.

D. Proclamation: Six Triple Eight Margaret E. Barnes Jones Day –

A proclamation was read by President Eboni Johnson and presented to Randy Smith, CEO and representative of the Margaret E. Barnes Jones Foundation.

E. Presentation by Yossi Levy of Y.U. Properties, LLC Regarding the Redevelopment of the Former Eastwood School Property at 198 East College Street.

Mr. Levy presented a proposed redevelopment plan for the former Eastwood School property, describing the project as the next step in an ongoing process conducted over several months in collaboration with Planning and Development Director Carrie Porter and Superintendent Dr. Hall.

Levy noted that after visiting the school, he was drawn to the project upon learning that there was a significant need for additional housing in Oberlin for Seniors seeking to downsize, young professionals, families and couples. He noted that this need existed because limited residential development had been done in the community since 2009.

He then outlined his proposed plan, which included the following:

- It would be a multi-generational residential community intended to "bridge generations."
- It would preserve the existing school building and its character.
- They see this as a young, vibrant community living in an industrial-style facility that would attract and support younger communities.
- The goal is to maintain the "feel" of a school while adapting it for residential use.
- The project would be done in two phases.
 - Phase 1- Adaptive Reuse of Existing School Building.
 - Conversion of the existing structure into residential units, including:
 - Utilization of 17 existing classrooms as primarily one-bedroom, industrial-style units.
 - Additional studio and two-bedroom-units were feasible.
 - Units will only be created in spaces with exterior windows.
 - Proposed amenities include:
 - Lounge areas
 - Coffee shop (repurposed cafeteria)
 - Auditorium space
 - Co-working/ live-work space (former computer room)
 - Gym and basketball court (to be retained)
 - Yoga room
 - Laundry Facilities
 - Artist gallery
 - Phase 2- Rear Site Development
 - Exploration of new construction on the rear portion of the property.
 - Potential inclusion of:
 - Senior housing
 - Affordable or subsidized housing
 - Voucher-based housing options
- Described phase 2 as important to the overall financial feasibility of the project
- Would require appropriate zoning approvals and regulatory processes

Developer Experience and Local Commitment

- Y.U. Properties was founded in Philadelphia in 2010.
- Owns and manages properties with in-house management and maintenance divisions.

- Purchased Concord Manor (52-unit senior housing property on Vine Street in Oberlin) approximately one year ago:
 - Property is stabilized and fully occupied
 - Major renovations planned while maintaining occupancy
- Under contract for an additional 56- unit occupied property in Lorain County
- Has not previously converted a school building to residential use.
- There are many unknowns about this project at this time, but they believe they can make it work.
- Extensive experience with ground-up development and full rehabilitation projects.
- Commitment to using local labor, architects, engineers, and contractors whenever possible and noted that an open house was hosted at Eastwood for Local professionals.

Following the presentation Council deliberated.

McFarlin asked Mr. Levy to explain more about the Lorain County Property that he is currently working on. Levy explained that the additional 56-unit occupied property in Lorain County is an existing, occupied structure that will be refurbished. They will know more about that soon. They are also in the process of updating the Concord Manor property, which will take about a year to complete.

Lopez asked whether he had worked on a conversion project like this in the past. Levy reiterated that while he has not converted a school building to residential use, his background in development and rehabilitation provides relevant experience, and he is confident in applying that expertise to the Eastwood project.

New asked Mr. Levy to lay out the timeline for the proposed project. Levy explained that the project is contingent upon obtaining required approvals from the City Council. That will start the 80-day due diligence period. This includes engineering, architectural, zoning, and cost reviews to assess the projects feasibility. After this has been done, based on his experience, the estimated construction period for Phase 1 will be at least six months, depending on infrastructure conditions.

Waltzer asked if the due diligence period started after the vote. Levy replied that the 80-day due diligence period begins after the required votes and agreements are executed. The project involves a multi-party disposition process between the City, School District, and Y. U. Properties. The construction timeline depends on the results of the due diligence and infrastructure evaluation.

Council members expressed concern about being asked to approve this item with immediate effect. They raised questions about whether additional readings could occur without jeopardizing the project timeline. Mr. Levy explained that the due diligence period would not begin until formal approval is granted by Council and the School Board, and the agreements are fully executed.

New asked whether they would hear from a representative of the School Board to add further insight to this process. Johnson called on Oberlin School District Superintendent, Dr. David Hall, next.

Dr. Hall addressed Council and provided the following information:

- Y.U. Properties has been in discussions with the school district for approximately five to six months.
- The District has also worked over several years with the City, Oberlin College, and the land trusts regarding potential reuse of the Eastwood property.
- Y.U.'s vision aligns with prior discussions regarding senior living and the appropriate use of the Eastwood facility.
- The School Board is scheduled to vote on this matter at its meeting the following day.
- Clarified that all three parties (City, School Board, and developer) must approve the request for the agreement to proceed.
- Noted that the due diligence period begins only after all required approvals are secured.
- Stated he could not speak for the Board's final decision but described the proposal as appearing to be an appropriate use of the facility.

Wrap up and Next Steps

- City Council consideration of legislation regarding the disposition process and developer agreement
- School Board vote scheduled for the following day.
- If the proposal is approved by all required parties, there will be an execution of agreements followed by the commencement of an approximately 80- day due diligence period
- Completion of zoning review and other regulatory approvals
- Determination of project feasibility based on due diligence findings.
- If feasible, commencement of Phase 1 construction (estimated minimum six months)
- Further planning and approvals related to phase 2 rear-site development.

F. Boards and Commission Appointments

Anderson remarked that there are three vacancies on City boards and commissions. Two are on the Historic Preservation Commission, and one is on the Public Utilities Commission. She remarked that they will continue to follow the recruitment process until all seats are filled.

2. ANY CONCERNS THAT ARE NOT ON THE AGENDA MAY BE BROUGHT TO COUNCIL'S ATTENTION AT THIS TIME

Aliza Weidenbaum, 99 South Cedar Street, called on Council to keep Oberlin's long-term interest at the forefront when considering development projects at the Eastwood School location. She cited various instances in which Council chose a different direction when development projects at this site were offered. She asked that Council table this item or at least have three readings so that more public input could be heard before a decision was made.

Nancy Wall, 325 North Pleasant Street, expressed concern about losing the grocery store on the east side of Oberlin and asked that Council not lose sight of how important it is to have a grocery store in this area of town as they focus on growing this community through housing development projects.

Eboni Johnson, Oberlin City Council President, read a prepared statement on behalf of the Oberlin City Council condemning the actions by the Federal administration's Federal Immigration Enforcement Authorities that operate outside of legal boundaries and ethical standards.

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

None

4. OPPORTUNITY FOR A REPORT FROM AN ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Holcomb informed Council that Terri Richardson Sanders will be at the next meeting to provide an update.

5. OLD BUSINESS

None

6. NEW BUSINESS

(Clerk Note: Although Ordinance No. 26-07 AC CMS was taken up by the Council prior to Ordinance No. 26-03 during the meeting, it is recorded herein in its published agenda sequence to preserve the chronological structure and continuity of the minutes)

- A. Ordinance No. 26-03 AC CMS: An Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Purchase Agreement with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy for a Conservation Easement to be Located on Lorain County Auditor's Permanent Parcel No. 09-00-078-000-032 for a Gross Purchase Price of Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars

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

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

The Council considered Ordinance No. 26-03 authorizing a purchase agreement with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy for a Conservation easement in the amount of \$75,000.

McFarlin, seconded by Lopez, moved to amend the ordinance by striking the second *WHEREAS* clause from the document as follows:

"WHEREAS, the Property is not needed for any current municipal purposes and is not desirable for future commercial, industrial or residential development due to wetland, topography and access limitations; and"

Roll Call: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays. **Motion Carried (Amended)**

New, seconded by Lopez, moved to waive the rule requiring three readings.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays. **Motion Carried**

Roll Call: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays. **Ordinance Adopted (Effective in 30 days)**

- B. Ordinance No. 26-04 AC CMS: An Ordinance Amending Sections 1501.101 and 1501.02 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Oberlin, Ohio, in Order to Adopt the 2021 Edition of the International Fire Code and the 2025 Edition of the Ohio Fire Code

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

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

The Council considered Ordinance No. 26-04 Amending Sections 1501 of the City Code and adopting the 2021 Edition of the International Fire Code and the 2025 Edition of the Ohio Fire Code to update the City's fire prevention and safety regulations.

McFarlin, seconded by Lopez, moved to waive the rule requiring three readings.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays. **Motion Carried**

Roll Call: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays. **Ordinance Adopted (Effective in 30 days)**

- C. Ordinance No. 26-05 AC CMS: An Ordinance Accepting the Renewal Proposal of the Public Entities Pool of Ohio Through USI Insurance Services LLC for Various Liability, and Excess Liability Insurance Coverage, and Property and Equipment Breakdown Coverage for the City of Oberlin to Go into Immediate Effect

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

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

The Council considered Ordinance No. 26-05 accepting the PEP Renewal Proposal through USI Insurance Services LLC for various liability and excess liability insurance coverage, as well as property and equipment breakdown coverage for the City of Oberlin. The proposal reflects an overall premium increase of 11%.

McFarlin, seconded by Lopez, moved to waive the rule requiring three readings.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays. **Motion Carried**

Lopez, seconded by Peterson, moved that Ordinance No. 26-05 AC CMS go into immediate effect in order to ensure the placement of certain insurance coverage for the City of Oberlin prior to its expiration date of February 15, 2026.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays. **Ordinance Adopted (Effective Immediately)**

- D. Ordinance No. 26-06 AC CMS: An Ordinance Declaring 8. 6994 Acres of Real Property Located on U.S. Route 20 to Be Surplus and Authorizing the City Manager to Sell Said Property to GPH Holdings, LLC to Go into Immediate Effect

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

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

The Council considered Ordinance No. 26-06 authorizing the sale of 8.6994 acres of land to GPH holdings LLC., the owner and operator of the Game Day Soccer Facility. The company plans to expand the existing soccer complex by adding soccer fields and other related infrastructure. They plan to host national and international events, that will generate revenue for the City. The Pittsfield Township Trustees have also expressed their support for this agreement. The ordinance authorizes the agreement and ratifies the contract, which required the City Manager's signature prior to formal approval by Council.

Waltzer, seconded by New, moved to waive the rule requiring three readings for ordinance 26-06 AC CMS.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays. **Motion Carried**

Lopez, seconded by Peterson, moved that Ordinance No. 26-06 AC CMS go into immediate effect in order to facilitate the productive use of land not currently needed for municipal purposes.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays. **Ordinance Adopted (Effective Immediately)**

- E. Ordinance No. 26-07 AC CMS: An Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute Documents and Instruments Necessary to Facilitate the Transfer of Property Located at 198 East College Street to Y.U. Properties LLC for Residential and other Mixed-Used Development to Go into Immediate Effect

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

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

Clark remarked that the Council has heard the presentation from Mr. Levy to rehab Eastwood School. Accomplishing his goal is a little more complicated because three entities are involved. The district would like to convey this property directly to Y.U. Properties, but because of the constraints of the provisions of the Revised Code, it cannot do so because Y.U. is a private organization as opposed to a political subdivision.

We have been in discussions with the School District and Y.U. Properties for some time to work out an agreement under which the City would essentially act as an intermediary in this transaction. So, the mechanics would be that the title would transfer to the City, then to Y.U. Properties. This would all happen through an escrow, so it would happen simultaneously. The City would be in title for approximately one minute, while the escrow agent immediately files the next deed in the sequence. There would be no cost to the City associated with this

transaction, and the City would not be responsible for making any improvements to the properties.

As proposed we will act as an intermediary to facilitate the transfer. That is two agreements, one is the disposition agreement, which is attached as Exhibit A, and that is an agreement between the City and school district whereby the School District agrees to convey the property to the City, and then Exhibit B is the real estate purchase agreement, and under that agreement, the property would transfer from the City to Y.U. Properties. They are interdependent and conditioned contingent on the closing of the related agreements. The closing is scheduled to be in 80-days from the passage of both political subdivisions' authorization. There is a 60-day due diligence with an additional 30-day option if Y.U. Properties feels it needs additional time. If Y.U. Properties feel it is not a feasible property, and for some reason they don't want to proceed with it, they are free to cancel the contracts. This will only work if all three parties to the agreement work together to make it happen.

Since this is newer to Council than to the administration, an additional reading would be appropriate. The district is eager to move on from this facility, and we have had two or three instances where we thought it was going to be developed in a manner very similar to what Mr. Levy proposed, but for one reason or another, those opportunities slipped away. He pointed out that even if it goes to a second reading, that doesn't prevent it from taking effect immediately.

City Manager Holcomb asked the Law Director to explain how this could also have been done through the Land Bank. Clark explained that the County Land Bank could also have acted as an intermediary. However, because of our relationship with the School District and Mr. Levy's ownership of a facility in Oberlin, we thought it might be a much warmer transaction if we filled that role. Holcomb remarked that he brings that up for clarification, that this could have gone down a route that Council would not have had any say at all of what happens at this property, and that when the School District reached out to us to help facilitate this, it was done with the intention of helping them transfer the property given the uncertainty around how long the Land Bank's process might take. Ultimately, it's up to Council to decide how much authority it wishes to exercise over another subdivision when approached for assistance.

Roll Call: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays. **Motion Carried (First Reading)**

7. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

Council members provided reports from recent board and commission meetings and shared updates, current initiatives, projects, community events, and feedback received on the boards and commissions' orientation and one-on-one sessions held with local residents. They also announced upcoming meeting dates and summarized their participation in recent trainings and conferences.

Council members reflected on the impact of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities on communities, citing residents' concerns about recent federal enforcement actions and incidents in Minnesota that have drawn national attention and local unease. They encouraged residents to attend the "What to do When ICE Shows Up" training on February 4 and February 12 at the Oberlin Public Library and to stay informed about proposed legislation that could pre-empt local authority, urging residents to reach out to their State representatives to ensure their voices are heard.

Additionally, Council sought clarification on public comment procedures and noted community feedback on snow removal in designated accessible spots in downtown Oberlin, as well as the need for improvements to ensure safe and equitable access for all residents.

8. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Holcomb thanked Council and residents for their patience as City staff worked to clear snow following the recent heavy storm and overcome challenges posed by a temporary salt shortage. He reminded residents to clear their sidewalks after heavy snowfall to keep sidewalks safe and accessible for everyone, particularly students who are trying to get to school.

9. OPPORTUNITY FOR OTHER APPOINTEES TO REPORT

Anderson remarked that they currently have one application on file for the Historic Preservation Commission and have heard from another person of interest.

10. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Janet Garret, School Board member said she was surprised to hear that council was blindsided by the Eastwood School proposal, since they had been talking about this for over 5 years. They are anxious not to have the expense of maintaining and securing the building.

Melissa George, 26 1/2 South Main Street, and School Board member. Stated that she has heard mixed reviews from the public. She feels they will be doing a disservice to the residents if they do not have input from the surrounding community, and would like to see that happen before a decision is made.

Aliza Weidenbaum, 99 South Cedar Street, expressed her surprise that the asking price for Eastwood was only \$103,000. She felt this was way too cheap.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Being that there was no further action to take the meeting adjourn at 8:48 PM

ATTEST:



BELINDA B. ANDERSON, MMC
CLERK OF COUNCIL



EBONI A. JOHNSON
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

APPROVED: 02/17/2026

POSTED: 02/18/2026