

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Mayor swore in a new Police Patrolman, Ryan T. Krempa; he welcomed the new Police Patrolman to Wickliffe.

A regular meeting of Wickliffe City Council was called to order by Council President Ed Levon on Monday, March 24th, 2025 at 7:03 PM in Council Chambers at Wickliffe City Hall.

The following were present at **Roll Call**:

Council President	Edward Levon
Council Members	Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Salotto, Thielman
Mayor	Joseph Sakacs
Law Director	Jeremy D. Iosue
Finance Director	Chlondra Hunter
Engineer	Peter J. Formica
Service Director	Ron Strauser
Building Commissioner	Raymond Sack
Recreation Director	Timothy Stopp
Police Chief	Jonathon Bush
Fire Chief	Captain Michalak for Chief Grossman

Excused: Fire Chief Christopher Grossman

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Salotto, that the minutes of the Wickliffe City Council Meeting of March 10, 2025 be approved as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **March 10, 2025 meeting minutes approved.**

Reports and Communications from Mayor/Safety Director

Mayor Sakacs read his written report.

Reports and Communications from Director of Law

Law Director Iosue noted that the Executive Session scheduled for tonight's meeting has been cancelled. The attorney who was scheduled to speak to Council was unable to attend due to a family commitment. This will be rescheduled for the next regular meeting of Council.

Reports and Communications from Council President

Council President Levon had no report.

Additions or Amendments to Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda, and Mr. Levon removed the Executive Session from the agenda.

Administrators

A. *Police Chief (Bush) Written Report Submitted*

Chief Bush reported there was an issue with the SRO reimbursement. Chief Bush noted he met with WCSD Superintendent Speccia and they will put together a payment plan for repayment of the 2023-2024 contract that was underpaid.

Chief Bush also thanked the Civil Service Commission for their work to assist with getting this last officer hired (Patrolman Krempa).

Councilperson Bala inquired where we are with regard to staffing numbers. The Chief noted we are “one short”, and the plan is to hold off until the end of the year to hire in order to save some money. Mr. Bala asked if there were any retirements this year. Chief Bush noted one dispatcher will be retiring, but the effective date will be 2026. They will begin to look for a new full-time dispatcher at the end of 2025.

There were no further questions or comments for the Police Chief.

B. *Fire Chief (Grossman) Written Report Submitted*

Captain Michalak sat in for Chief Grossman. He wished to bring to attention a few recent incidents. First, there was a hazardous materials incident at High Tech Metals, 28910 Lakeland Blvd. on March 15th. Six other agencies and the County HazMat Team were called in to assist. Anhydrous ammonia was leaking. It was handled well and the incident was mitigated with no evacuations.

The second incident was in a backyard at 2484 Delaware. A resident was open burning yard waste in the backyard and, due to wind and dry conditions, a brush fire was ignited that spanned several backyards and took out a neighbor's barn. A few other agencies were called in for assistance. The resident was given a second warning, and is fully aware that if this happens again, he will be cited and taken to Willoughby Court.

Councilperson Koski asked why, if this was a significant incident, the person wasn't cited immediately. Capt. Michalak noted OR 1521 designates the procedure. Warnings are placed into the CAD system and dispatchers are alerted to the status. The ordinance designates a citation after 2 warnings. Ms. Koski believes since there was an incident, there should have been a disciplinary action. Captain Michalak noted in his experience, it has never gone to a third incident. Council President Levon noted this can be looked into, and Ms. Koski asked for the chapter number, which is 1521.

There were no additional questions or comments for the Fire Chief.

C. *Finance Director (Hunter)*

Finance Director Hunter stated she had nothing to add.

There were no questions or comments for the Finance Director.

D. *Engineer (Formica) Written Report Submitted*

Engineer Formica reported the Coulby Pond dredging is complete. Ms. Koski and Mr. Levon corrected him, stating Green Ridge Pond. Mr. Formica noted the grading work will be completed once it dries out.

He noted in his report there were applications submitted for congressional funding for replacement of traffic controllers. We are requesting funds to replace half of them totaling approximately half a million dollars. The other request for funding was for sewer lining work. He noted with the recent sewer lining work performed in the City, he has noticed we are making progress in the exfiltration and infiltration problem.

Councilperson Gerhardstein believed there was a previous discussion asking that the construction at the Old School Way development be discouraged from using Silver Street, as this street was just resurfaced. He wanted to know why they are on a brand-new street and not Euclid Avenue, which will be replaced next year. Mr. Formica noted it is a public street. The staging is in the old bank drive thru, but it will be necessary to use Silver Street for certain parts of the project. It will be “clean” once the road is stoned in. He noted he did not recall that Council asked not to use Silver Street. Mr. Sack noted he has instructed the contractor to use Silver for access.

Councilperson Jaworski asked Mr. Formica to remind the audience of the streets that are scheduled for this year's road program if the budget passes. Mr. Formica noted Parkwood and Kerry for waterline replacement and repaving (joint project with LCWD), 2025 slab replacement which is predominantly East 300th Street, and the Euclid Avenue re-pavement plans and specs with ODOT. Ridge Road is already encumbered and final plans were sent to ODOT. There is legislation on tonight's agenda regarding Ridge Road.

Motion by Jaworski, seconded by Gerhardstein, to authorize the City Engineer to prepare plans and specs for the Euclid Avenue pavement and streetscaping project, for the 2025 Concrete Slab Replacement Program, and for the Parkwood and Kerry Lane water line replacement/sewer repair and pavement resurfacing projects.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

There were no further questions or comments for the Engineer.

E. *Service Director (Krofcheck)*

Service Director Krofcheck noted he will be meeting with an inspector from Verdantas to mark out items from the 2024 road program, beginning on Rush Road. He will also meet with Geauga Highway to work on the punch-list to wrap up last year's projects.

Councilperson Jaworski asked if yard waste pick up by Kimble has begun. It was noted this began March 1st.

There were no additional questions or comments for the Service Director.

F. *Building Commissioner (Sack)*

Building Commissioner Sack noted Mr. Gerhardstein will be calling for a meeting of the Legislation and Welfare Committee. He would like to add increase zoning fees in Chapter 1341 to the Legislation & Welfare Committee for discussion. Council President Levon added this item to the Legislation and Welfare Committee.

Councilperson Jaworski asked for confirmation that the upcoming Planning Commission meeting will be held at the Community/Senior Center. Mr. Sack noted that is correct.

Councilperson Koski asked for the date of the meeting. The meeting will be April 3rd at 7:00 PM.

Council President Levon asked that Mr. Sack speak with the developer for the Old School Way project and instruct them to avoid using Silver Street as much as possible.

There were no additional questions or comments for the Building Commissioner.

G. *Recreation Director (Stopp)*

Recreation Director Stopp

Councilperson Koski inquired regarding pavilion rentals. Mr. Stopp noted he did not have specific numbers, but noted there are quite a few, and we are in a good spot.

Council President Levon asked if we had defined pool pass prices for next year. Mr. Stopp noted they will be the same [as least year].

There were no further questions or comments for the Recreation Director.

Audience Participation

Council President Levon opened Audience Participation to those in attendance at 7:21 PM.

He noted this portion of the meeting is intended for the audience to address the Council and Mayor, not the directors. Anyone wishing to address Council must use the microphone as the meetings are being streamed on YouTube; they must be acknowledged and give their name and address for the clerk's record and will be given a five-minute maximum for their comments.

State Representative Daniel Troy noted he was here to offer a few updates. On the May 6th ballot will be State Issue 2. He noted there will not be a State Issue 1 this time – people were getting too confused with a new state issue one each time, so a law was passed which now requires sequential numbering of state ballot issues. Issue 2 is regarding the Ohio Public Works Program which was created in the late 80's. It has been renewed four times and needs authorization from the voters for renewal. It expires July 1st. He encouraged all to support this program, as it has been a very good program that has been helpful to Wickliffe. He had a list with him of all the projects that Wickliffe has received which totals approximately \$9.8 million in grants, about \$2.5 million in zero percent interest loans from the STIP (state) program, about \$3.9 million in LTIP (local) funds. This has recently been for Lakeland Boulevard and East 296th Street, Rush Road

concrete slab replacement and Ridge Road. He noted this is a state bond issue that involves no taxes. Previously it has been about \$2 billion over a ten-year period and it will be increased to \$2.5 billion over the next ten years, which makes available about \$250 million a year. The State's existing revenues pay the debt service, so it does not require any additional participation from taxpayers. The decisions on which projects are funded are all made on a local basis – not in Columbus, but at the county level first through the Engineer's Lake County Committee, then a district integrating committee which includes Lake, Portage, Ashtabula, and Geauga Counties. They are scored, and Wickliffe's projects have scored well. He again asked all to support this issue, as it is not a regular primary, but rather a special election. He noted it will benefit local communities like Wickliffe for the next ten years. Early voting will likely begin mid-April.

Mr. Troy noted he has been questioned regarding the governor's budget and the possible change in the marijuana taxes. He noted the statute was written by citizens – it was a citizen-initiated statute. It was noted host communities with a dispensary would get a portion of the tax revenues. He believes that this may not change, as many of his colleagues have listened to those who have spoken up and do not wish to make changes to what the people have decided. He noted the budget needs to be in place by July 1st. It will go through the House in April, then the Senate, then passed by July and he hopes that money will be protected.

Another topic is the Local Government Fund, which is currently 1.7 percent of all state revenue. He noted the governor had proposed increasing it to 1.75 percent, which is a step in the right direction. He doesn't believe we will get back to the share that was there previously, but they will continue to look at it.

Finally, Mr. Troy noted he received the resolution we sent regarding assistance with the sewer fund situation and requesting flexibility with EPA mandates. He noted that, unfortunately, EPA mandates on wastewater come from the federal government. He believes there may be less federal regulations, but he did speak to the EPA Division Chief of Financial Assistance. He noted there may be grants and low interest options available to deal with sewer issues. He will leave the name and number of the gentleman for us to contact him directly.

Dan Thomier, 29232 Ridge Road, Wickliffe City School District School Board President, noted he is here to extend an invitation to all to tour the Campus of Wickliffe. He noted tours were offered when the building was completed, but many did not get a chance to take advantage of the opportunity. Since the building isn't open on weekends and daytime tours with students in school pose safety issues, the school has decided to come for a free tour on Saturday, April 5th from 9:00 AM until Noon. They are still working out the details. He requested that this information be advertised on the two electronic signs and on the City's website. Guests will have the opportunity to see the entire beautiful facility. Mayor Sakacs noted that should not be a problem.

After multiple calls inquiring if anyone would like to address Wickliffe City Council and there being no reply, Council President Levon closed Audience Participation at 7:33PM.

Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

Commission Reports

Board of Zoning Appeals February 27th, 2025 Meeting Report presented by Councilperson Gerhardstein (see attached report)

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business

A. Appoint New KWB Commission Member

Mayor Sakacs noted he would like to appoint Ms. Jane Hemmelgarn to fill one of the open positions on the Keep Wickliffe Beautiful Commission. Her term would expire December 31, 2026.

Motion by Levon, seconded by Bala, to affirm Mayor Sakacs' appointment of Ms. Jane Hemmelgarn – term to expire 12/31/2026 - to the Keep Wickliffe Beautiful Commission.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

Ordinances

OR2025-07 AMENDED *By Title Only* An ordinance providing appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio for the period beginning January 1, 2025 and ending December 31, 2025 **THIRD READING**

Motion by Thielman, seconded by Salotto, that Ordinance 2025-07 AMENDED be adopted as presented.

Discussion: Councilperson Gerhardstein noted he will be voting no, as the proposed budget is a \$1.4 million deficit.

Councilperson Bala noted there have been a lot of meetings on this budget and a lot of time was spent on it. He asked of those who are voting no, "What have you done?" He asked if they have brought anything to the table to increase revenue, noting \$1.4 million is people: Police, Fire, Service. It's not cutting one job out to make up the \$1.4 million. He believes by the end of the year we will be good since there is a \$6.6 million carry-over. He asked if one votes no, what have you done to increase revenue or help the City increase revenue or cut down the price of the deficit.

Councilperson Salotto noted this was well-put and she planned to say something similar. She stated they have been through the budget quite a bit and have looked for every way to eliminate some of the expense. She feels there is not much of choice at this point and also believes we will be okay by the end of the year. She thinks voting no to vote no to say that you voted no is not helping the City since we are trying to move forward. She stated we need to spend this money and this is how it panned out this year. She didn't think they are being frivolous with the City's funds. She noted it is something they need to do.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted he finds the comment funny that if one votes no, what have they done. He noted if one looked at the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes, the ones who might vote no are the only ones who asked questions during those meetings. He suggested re-reading those minutes to see who was asking questions regarding revenue and expenses at those meetings before a comment like that is made.

Councilperson Salotto noted in many cases, the questions were asked, but there was not necessarily anything that could be done. There were no resolutions or ways to get around necessary expenses. She stated asking questions is a great idea, but if there are no solutions, then the questions really don't mean that much.

Councilperson Thielman noted Council has only been presented with one budget, noting no one else has presented any other budget. He noted the questions asked would not have added up to \$1.4 million as \$900,000.00 of it is the net profit refund. He noted we are pretty much in line with our past. He added it doesn't feel as good as we will not be doing as many roads this year, but we have a huge chunk to pay for Euclid Avenue design and engineering which came right on the backside, as this was not discussed in committee. He believes it is in line with past budgets.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Koski, Salotto, Thielman

No: Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Levon

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-07 AMENDED adopted.**

OR2025-08 *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation of Appointed Officials of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **THIRD READING**

Motion by Thielman, seconded by Bala, that Ordinance 2025-08 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: Councilperson Gerhardstein noted this is one of his problems. He does not believe giving two people twelve percent raises when you have a deficit of \$1.4 million. In comparison with the surrounding areas, they're now the highest paid chiefs. Even Eastlake who has a higher per capita ratio and whose chief has been there way more than two years. This ordinance is part of his issue with the budget.

Mayor Sakacs noted the twelve percent raises for the police and fire chiefs comes to only \$5,000.00. Also, it is good to stay competitive, and though we may be the highest, there are reasons behind it – so the chiefs are not passed up by the lieutenants. We got them on level ground. He noted he hates giving raises, but it's the way of the times and is necessary to retain talent and keep the services for the people. He noted it wasn't higher than \$5,000.00, so it wasn't drastic, like \$100,000.00.

Councilperson Thielman noted, with regard to chief salaries, we had a false sense of what chiefs made due to retire/rehire with no raises, so we got into a pickle. He also noted there is a common practice of differential between lieutenants and chiefs, noting we are correcting a past problem. He has no problem with this.

Council President Levon asked the Mayor if, when the new chiefs were hired, there was any discussion with them regarding limits of increases for the first few years. The Mayor noted they were fine with the salary they were offered, and there would be the normal increases. Mr. Levon clarified noting, if the unions got five percent, then they would get five percent. The Mayor noted that was correct. Mr. Levon noted they then proposed a different increase and this Council didn't reject it, they just said okay as that was what was proposed. The Mayor confirmed that was a correct assessment, but they explained that they were being passed up and then who would take the chief's job at some point; that was their "pitch". Mr. Levon wanted to be sure that everyone understood this.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Koski, Salotto, Thielman

No: Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Levon

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-08 adopted.**

OR2025-09 *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation of Certain Salaried and Hourly Employees of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **THIRD READING**

Motion by Thielman, seconded by Salotto, that Ordinance 2025-09 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-09 adopted.**

OR2025-10 *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation of Certain Employees of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **THIRD READING**

Motion by Thielman, seconded by Bala, that Ordinance 2025-10 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-10 adopted.**

OR2025-11 AMENDED *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation and other employment provisions for Part-Time Firefighters of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **THIRD READING**

Motion by Thielman, seconded by Salotto, that Ordinance 2025-11 AMENDED be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-11 AMENDED adopted.**

OR2025-12 *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation and other employment provisions for Special Police Officers of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **THIRD READING**

Motion by Salotto, seconded by Thielman, that Ordinance 2025-12 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-12 adopted.**

OR2025-13 *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation and other employment provisions for the Part-Time Public Safety Dispatchers of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **THIRD READING**

Motion by Bala, seconded by Salotto, that Ordinance 2025-13 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-13 adopted.**

OR2025-16 *By Title Only* An ordinance authorizing the Mayor of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio to enter into a LPA Federal ODOT LET Project Preliminary Agreement (PID No. 112506) for Resurfacing of Bishop Road/Ridge Road (SR-84) in the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and declaring an emergency

Motion by Thielman, seconded by Gerhardstein: the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Ordinance 2025-16 be placed on third and final reading.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Salotto, that Ordinance 2025-16 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-16 adopted.**

Resolutions

RES 2025-02 A resolution authorizing the Director of Finance of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio to issue payment of Community Reinvestment Area Compensation Agreement to the Board of Education of the Wickliffe City School District for Tax Year 2024 pursuant to Resolution No. 2020-08; and declaring an emergency

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Bala, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and

Resolution 2025-02 be placed on third and final reading.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Bala, that Resolution 2025-02 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Resolution 2025-02 adopted.**

RES 2025-03 A resolution proclaiming April 2025 Child Abuse Prevention Month in the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and declaring an emergency

Motion by Salotto, seconded by Gerhardstein, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Resolution 2025-03 be placed on third and final reading.

Discussion: Councilperson Gerhardstein asked the Law Director to read the portions of the Resolution that deals with the number of children who are affected in Lake County. Law Director Iosue read the first three sections of the Resolution.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Bala, that Resolution 2025-03 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Resolution 2025-03 adopted.**

RES 2025-04 A resolution authorizing the Mayor of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding between the Cities of Wickliffe and Willoughby for the LAK-SR-84-01.00 Project, PID 112506; and declaring an emergency

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Resolution 2025-04 be placed on third and final reading.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, that Resolution 2025-04 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Resolution 2025-04 adopted.**

Other Legislation

There was no Other Legislation.

Miscellaneous

Councilperson Bala noted that over the past two weeks we have lost two longtime residents of Wickliffe, Marilyn Powell and Tom Rosneck who he considers icons of the City. Tom Rosneck was a teacher, coach, mentor. He wanted to send prayers out to both families. Mr. Levon added that Mr. Rosneck was also a school board member. Mr. Bala added they will both be dearly missed.

Councilperson Jaworski requested to call a meeting of the Improvement Committee for March 31st, 2025 at Wickliffe City Hall in Council Chambers at 7:00 PM to discuss Lincoln Landings (now Old School Way) Street Dedication.

Councilperson Gerhardstein requested a meeting of the Legislation & Welfare Committee to immediately follow the Improvement Committee Meeting of March 31st to discuss: Incomplete Building Projects, CH 1303.70 Occupancy, and CH 1341 Zoning Fees. He asked for confirmation from Mr. Sack that he was ready for all those topics, and Mr. Sack noted he was ready.

Council President Levon called for both of these meetings on March 31st, 2025 at Wickliffe City Hall in Council Chambers beginning at 7:00 PM.

Adjournment

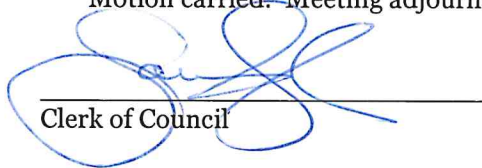
Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.


Clerk of Council
Council President and Presiding Officer