



Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Mayor swore in a new, full time Firefighter, Nicholas Haller. The Mayor welcomed Mr. Haller to Wickliffe.

A regular meeting of Wickliffe City Council was called to order by Council President Ed Levon on Monday, September 22nd, 2025 at 7:02 PM in Council Chambers at Wickliffe City Hall.

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

Council President
Council Members
Mayor
Law Director
Finance Director
Engineer
Service Director
Building Commissioner
Recreation Director
Police Chief
Fire Chief

Edward Levon
Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Salotto, Thielman
Joseph Sakacs
Jeremy Iosue
Michael Matas
Peter J. Formica
Dave Krofcheck
Dino Capra
Timothy Stopp
Jonathon Bush
Christopher Grossman

Excused: None

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Koski that the minutes of the Wickliffe City Council regular meeting of September 8th, 2025 be approved as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **September 8th, 2025 regular meeting minutes approved.**

Reports and Communications from Mayor/Safety Director

Mayor Sakacs read his written report.

He also spoke about a new scam, where the perpetrator calls pretending to be the Chief of Police of your city and requests personal information. He noted that the Police Chief will not be making personal calls to residents. He noted if this occurs, residents should immediately call the non-emergency police number and report the incident. Like any phone scam, the scammers are getting even more convincing.

Mayor Sakacs also noted a resident spoke about the spraying of mosquitos at the last meeting. He noted that he looked into this and discovered that the City does not pay for the spraying, rather, it is a service of the Lake County General Health District. He contacted the Health Department and they noted that without the spraying we would be doing more harm than good.

There were no questions for the Mayor.

Reports and Communications from Director of Law

Law Director Iosue had no report.

Reports and Communications from Council President

Council President Levon had no Reports or Communications.

Additions or Amendments to Agenda

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda.

Administrators

A. *Police Chief (Bush)*

Chief Bush noted he October 9th at 10:00 AM at the Senior Center, Officer DiDona will be offering a presentation about some of the recent scams and general police activity. They are hoping for a good turnout.

Councilperson Gerhardstein wanted to thank everyone who participated in the 9/11 ceremony. Chief Bush noted it was a very nice ceremony and is needed.

There were no questions or comments for the Police Chief.

B. *Fire Chief (Grossman)*

Chief Grossman thanked the Mayor and the Civil Service Commission with regard to an unexpected retirement this summer. He wished Firefighter Ken Stout the best after thirty-three years of service to the community. He noted the new person who was just sworn in may seem familiar. Nick lives here and his dad was a full-time police officer and a part time firefighter for many years. Nick served in the Army reserves and has been deployed twice in the last six years. He started in Wickliffe and took a job in another City, but when this position opened up he was happy to return and we are happy to have him back.

Councilperson Koski asked how many are currently in the Fire Department. Chief Grossman noted there are twenty-three full time and approximately fourteen to eighteen part time persons.

Councilperson Salotto thinks it is great that he was interested in returning, noting "that's what we hope for". Chief Grossman noted the part-time program is a lot of hours and dedication, noting the majority we cannot keep, but we do rely on them for staffing and it is great when we can get them back.

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

C. *Finance Director (Matas) Written Report Submitted*

Finance Director Matas offered comments regarding the Federal Reserve lowering interest rates and how this could affect the City. We need to be prepared, as this will likely cause a loss of interest earnings. He noted he watches our investment account daily and has not noticed any significant decreases at this time. He again stated it is something to be conscious of moving forward into the 2026 budget.

Councilperson Jaworski asked for more details regarding the staggering number of delinquencies in our City. Mr. Matas noted he has been in contact with the Lake County Department of Utilities who did not certify delinquencies in 2024 causing our number to be down. The County department changed software; this affected every City. He is in contact with a few other cities to determine the best way to handle the situation. Finance Director Matas noted he is also concerned regarding our cash position. He has reached out to other cities to see how they are handling this as well. He is aware that Council has approved cash transfers from the General Fund to the Sewer Fund, and expects this to be needed in the last quarter of the year. Mr. Jaworski asked how this affects moving forward. Mr. Matas noted the County does the collection on our behalf, sending us a form each year. He noted there were eight hundred five delinquent accounts, and in the past, it had been approximately four hundred. He noted he did not have last year's numbers for comparison. He has requested them and will email them to Council.

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

D. *Engineer (Formica) Written Report Submitted*

Engineer Formica reported he had nothing to report.

Councilperson Gerhardstein asked where we are with regard to the punch list for Geauga Highway. Mr. Formica noted he received a call on this Friday asking when it can be closed, to which he responded, "when the punch list is done". He is aware of the need to finish the end of the cul-de-sac on Luxona. Mr. Gerhardstein asked if the catch basin had been repaired. Mr. Formica noted repairing the crown of the road will fix that problem. Mr. Gerhardstein noted it has been over a year and Mr. Formica noted we are still holding their money.

Councilperson Koski asked for an update on Route 84. The Engineer noted the Service Director will be addressing this in his report.

Councilperson Jaworski inquired regarding the status of the pond dredging and asked when they will be returning to complete the work. Mr. Formica noted they just texted asking if it was dry enough, after a whole day of rain. He noted he will check to see and if it is still relatively dry, he will let them know they can return to finish. Mr. Jaworski asked how long the final work should take, and Mr. Formica noted approximately two weeks.

There were no additional questions or comments for the Engineer.

E. *Service Director (Krofcheck)*

Service Director Krofcheck reported he has received emails from both ODOT and the City of Willoughby regarding the Ridge Road paving project. Willoughby has suggested night paving for the intersection at Rt. 91 and will waive their noise ordinance to allow the paving company to complete the final course of paving since that intersection has been horrible during the project. Since it is a "Wickliffe" project, they are asking permission and also that we also waive our noise ordinance for one night while the final course of paving is completed to alleviate the traffic and accidents in that area. It would likely be mid-October.

The Service Director noted there are new pillars being installed at the entrance to the driveway. The new style is similar to the signage at the Cemetery, and will be used moving forward to be consistent throughout the City.

Council President Levon agreed to the waiving of the noise ordinance and noted he is looking forward to the completion of the project. He would be fine if they even go to Rush Road, as the traffic has been terrible in this area.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted he would motion to waive the noise ordinance, however Mr. Levon noted he believed a motion is not necessary. He stated if everyone on Council agreed, the ordinance could not be enforced that day.

Councilperson Bala asked how far Mr. Levon suggests they go, to which he replied, "as far as they can go".

Councilperson Salotto noted it would not be so terrible if it took two days to complete that area – she would support night work.

Councilperson Jaworski noted, whatever the decision, would we please be sure to notify the residents in the area. Mr. Krofcheck noted he would be certain this is taken care of.

Councilperson Koski stated she noticed that the mulch at the playgrounds seems to be larger chunks and asked where it came from. Mr. Krofcheck noted it is a soft wood and that is how it comes. It is from an outside company, not anything we created "in house".

Councilperson Jaworski noted he hesitated to inquire as it is only the first day of fall, but with the changing color of the leaves, wondered when Leaf Pick-Up would begin. Mr. Krofcheck noted it will begin mid-October. Mr. Krofcheck also noted residents have already begun to call and have been told to use the Kimble bins until then.

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

F. *Building Commissioner (Capra)*

Building Commissioner Capra stated he would like to offer updates on a few projects around the City.

He noted he spoke to the owner of the new Circle K who stated fuel tank storage installation has begun as well as interior rough-ins. The parking lot should be complete in October with a target opening date of December this year.

Mr. Capra noted he also spoke to Premier regarding the old ABB building. He noted that demolition had to stop as, additional asbestos was discovered during interior destruction. They have called back the asbestos abatement team, then, once it is complete, they will restart the exterior demolition soon, likely around the end of October.

Ryan Homes broke ground on two new homes in the Old School Village development. He suggested all take a moment to drive by the new entrance to the area off Silver Street, noting it looks amazing.

There were no questions or comments for the Building Commissioner.

G. *Recreation Director (Stopp)*

Recreation Director Stopp noting he had nothing to add to his previously submitted written report.

Councilperson Bala asked if the workers at Green Ridge could get additional training regarding course-related topics. Mr. Stopp noted he is in favor of that and will look into this.

Councilperson Salotto was curious regarding the fungus, asking if it is gone. Mr. Stopp noted it is gone, but what was “left in it’s path was destruction”. He noted cooler nights and some rain are what is needed to facilitate new growth.

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

Audience Participation

Council President Levon opened Audience Participation to those in attendance at 7:24 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.

Dan Thomier, *School Board President*, who resides at 29232 Ridge Road wanted to introduce the new School Superintendent Mr. Michael Choksi who has been with them since August. Mr. Thomier noted he is off to a great start and is ready for the challenges ahead. His background includes administration as an Assistant Principal and Principal in the Willoughby Eastlake School District as well as the Assistant Superintendent at Painesville City School District. He noted he is here to announce that the property tax levy that was on the ballot in May failed. Since then, the board and administration have been working to develop a strategy to address financial difficulties. The district has to have their five-year financial plan prepared, which has delayed the announcement of the plan moving forward. They wish to be accurate and transparent regarding information. In June, the State budget was finalized resulting in a net loss to the district. He mentioned the suggestion throughout the state regarding the removal of property taxes, which is a problem as schools rely on property taxes.

This is a system that cannot be changed at the local level. After careful consideration, the School Board voted to put an earned income tax levy on the ballot in November. He noted this is not common in our area and described what this is to the audience. He stated it is one of three levy options. He noted this tax only applies to income earned through wages and net self-employment income. He listed the many topics it does not include (see handout attached). They are asking for one percent which should generate what a property tax levy would have generated (approximately \$3,000,000.00). He noted this will not affect property tax. He stated they have no other way to raise funds other than income tax or property tax. He noted the people who will pay the tax are those who live within the city’s boundaries and have earned income will pay the tax. Those who work in Wickliffe but reside outside of it’s boundaries will not pay this tax. Employers will deduct the tax directly from resident’s paychecks and those who are self-employed will make payments directly to the Ohio Department of Taxation. The school made over \$500,000 in cuts over the last five years and recently made another \$500,000.00 in cuts. He stated, “We have reached a critical and watershed moment for the long-term viability of our district”, adding that, “If this levy does not pass, our schools will be decimated in regard to how we operate and the quality of education students will be able to receive on a daily basis.” He noted it will be bad. He stated they are aware that the income tax levy is how the City gets it’s revenue.

Mr. Levon noted Mr. Thomier was over the five minute limit and requested he wrap up his comments. He noted we all want to see the schools survive. He noted the City and the Schools are not separate silos adding that success rises and falls together. He hopes all can realize this. He will have a handout for all to review. It is a rough draft, but something for everyone to take with them.

Katie Ball, *School Board Vice President*, of 28815 Coulby Court noted everyone here wants what is best for Wickliffe – it is the reason we are all here. She noted that when young families are deciding where to live, one of the first questions is, “How are the schools?”, as this is a driving force. She noted we want to keep attracting businesses and families and retain them. She noted the district has made monetary sacrifices in recent years through tax abatements and other agreements to benefit the City’s growth and development, granting them with the understanding that the City strengthens the schools. They do this to insure that Wickliffe continues to grow, though it has had a temporary negative effect on their tax base knowing it affects the long term benefit of the community. She stated that police and fire levies were supported by individuals as they understand the value of strong safety services which serve the entire community. She noted the schools are committed to being good partners, but need the City’s help to sustain the district and continue to grow the recent momentum. If the levy does not pass, it will force the schools to make catastrophic

cuts. She is not attempting to be dramatic, but noted they have already trimmed as much as possible to minimize impact to students. She then read a list of items that would be cut if the levy does not pass (see handout). She stated they need City leadership to stand with them in support of the schools, as it is not just support of the students, but supporting Wickliffe's long-term health. They would like to show that the City and Schools are aligned. They are also asking that city leaders help to communicate to residents that the levy is not just about education, but about protecting Wickliffe's future. They are committed to being a good partner and ask for the same in return; helping to make Wickliffe a place where people want to live, work, and raise their families. She noted Mr. Chokshi is here is people have additional questions.

Nick Lattanzio of 1585 Rush Road and **Chad Gorley** of 584 Lloyd Road following up on the short term rental topic. They asked if Council had a chance to review the document they passed out when they were at the last meeting. They seemed to believe that many preferred an AirBnB over a hotel. He would like to see AirBnBs remain with responsible rules in place. They noted they lived here all their life, but if they moved away, they'd like to be able to come back and stay. They noted that almost all in the area hold at 4.9 or above rating, which is difficult to accomplish. They stated this means that all [owners] respect rules and do not want parties. They asked if there was a specific location that consistently has parties. Mayor Sakacs noted there was one that the police had to visit several times. They asked the audience how many attended a house party when they were teenagers, but noted people did not have to admit to this. They noted owners do not want this, as the house "gets trashed" and is unable to be used as designed. They asked that all keep an open mind to consider that they have guests planned to be here all through next year who are coming to visit family, for work, etc. and will be spending money in Wickliffe. They asked [if the legislation was voted down] that a variance be granted to fulfill the reservations they currently have, since this is extremely detrimental to their business. They understand this is not Council's issue, but wanted all to know the negative impact it will have. They also noted that, as the homeowner, if there ever was an issue, they would like to be notified. They noted they have had only one instance where there was a party in three years. They have cameras and detected this early. They went to the location and told the guests that this "was over" or they would call the police, and the guests immediately vacated the house. They noted this is the responsibility of an owner, and if owners are not responsible, then they should be held accountable. This can be done through fees as suggested in the handout they distributed at the last meeting. They noted most do not have the money to pay these fees/fines and ensures responsibility for those who are interested in offering this service to the community.

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 7:43 PM.

Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

Commission Reports

There were no Commission Reports.

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business

A. Bid Acceptance for 2025 Parkwood Drive/ Kerry Lane Waterline and Pavement Improvement Project

Engineer Formica noted bids were opened at City Hall on Friday, September 12th, 2025 for this project. Seven bids were received. The lowest bid was received from Fabrizi Trucking & Paving Co., Inc. of 20389 First Avenue, Middleburg Heights, Ohio, 44130 in the amount of One Million Thirty-Three Thousand Nine Hundred Six Dollars and Forty Cents (\$1,033,906.40) which was lower than the Engineer's estimate of Probable Construction Cost of One Million Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$1,050,000.00). Mr. Formica recommends

acceptance of this bid as the lowest and best. He noted this project is an OPWC funded project, with the Lake County Department of Utilities also sharing in the cost.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Salotto, to accept the bid of Fabrizi Trucking & Paving Co., Inc. of 20389 First Avenue, Middleburg Heights, Ohio, 44130 for the 2025 Parkwood Drive/Kerry Lane Waterline and Pavement Improvement Project in an amount not to exceed One Million Thirty-Three Thousand Nine Hundred Six Dollars and Forty Cents (\$1,033,906.40) as the lowest and best bid and to reject all other bids.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion passed.

Ordinances

OR2025-35 *By Title Only* An ordinance amending Chapter 769 Tourist Homes and Motels of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio to include Section 769.04 Short Term Rental Prohibition in a Residential District and amending Section 769.99 Penalty; and declaring an emergency (E) **THIRD READING**

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Bala, that Ordinance 2025-35 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: Councilperson Gerhardstein asked if this item could be tabled until there could be a committee meeting called to discuss this legislation and possible modifications with the approval of the Law Director. He stated he would not have a problem with short term rentals if there were rules. He asked if it should be tabled or voted on and put back into committee for discussion.

Council President Levon suggested voting it down, then put it back into committee for discussion. He noted tabling it would put it back on first reading. He would prefer logical legislation, as this makes sense, as opposed to prohibiting it.

Councilperson Gerhardstein removed his suggestion for tabling the legislation.

Councilperson Jaworski noted the other issue is the occupancy portion and believes the Building Department should participate in the discussion.

Councilperson Thielman suggested moving on this as quickly as possible, since this topic is being considered by the State and if we do not have legislation in place, we will be "stuck" with their rules as opposed to being able to create our own [rules].

Roll Call:

Yes: None

No: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

Motion failed. **Ordinance 2025-35 rejected.**

OR2025-41 AMENDED *By Title Only* An ordinance authorizing the Mayor of the City of Wickliffe to enter into a settlement agreement with the Vitantonio Corporation, et al **SECOND READING**

OR2025-43 *By Title Only* An ordinance authorizing the execution of a Then & Now Certificate by the Finance Director to make payment on an invoice to Love Insurance Agency; and declaring an emergency (E)

Motion by Thielman, seconded by Gerhardstein, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Ordinance 2025-43 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 Thielman, seconded by Gerhardstein, that Ordinance 2025-43 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-43 adopted.**

OR2025-44 *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; and declaring an emergency (E)

Motion by Salotto, seconded by Bala, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Ordinance 2025-44 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 2025-44 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-44 adopted.**

OR2025-45 *By Title Only* An ordinance authorizing the Mayor of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio to enter into a contract with Fabrizi Trucking & Paving Co., Inc. for the Parkwood Drive and Kerry Lane Waterline and Pavement Improvements OPWC funded Project No. CG44AC/CG45AC; and declaring an emergency (E)

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Salotto, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Ordinance 2025-45 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 Koski, seconded by Gerhardstein, that Ordinance 2025-45 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-45 adopted.**

OR2025-46 *By Title Only* An ordinance repealing Chapter 1151 – Fire Limits, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio **FIRST READING**

Resolutions

RES2025-13 *By Title Only* A resolution requesting the Lake County, Ohio Auditor to make advance payments of taxes **SECOND READING**

RES2025-14 *By Title Only* A resolution proclaiming October 2025 SUDEP Awareness Month in the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and declaring an emergency (E)

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Bala, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Resolution 2025-12 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 Resolution 2025-12 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: Council President Levon wished to offer some background on this Resolution. He noted he received an email from the Council President of the City of North Olmstead, Lou Brassard. Mr. Brassard reached out to thirty-five communities in northeast Ohio requesting all to pass a resolution to increase awareness of SUDEP. He lost his daughter at the young age of twenty-five to a seizure in the middle of the night. She had been living with epilepsy for over ten years which was controlled by medication. Mr. Levon asked that council support this legislation.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman
No: None

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

Other Legislation

There was no Other Legislation.

Miscellaneous

Council President Levon added *AirBnBs* to the Committee of the Whole.

He noted there was a committee of the Whole meeting called for Monday September 29th, 2025 at 7:00 PM to discuss the topics of *CRA applications* and the *review of a Residential CRA*. He added *AirBnBs* and *Truck Trailer Parking* as additional topics for discussion at this meeting.

Adjournment

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Bala, to adjourn the meeting to Executive Session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(3) *Conferences with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action* following a five minute break.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, to reconvene the meeting from Executive Session.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman
No: None

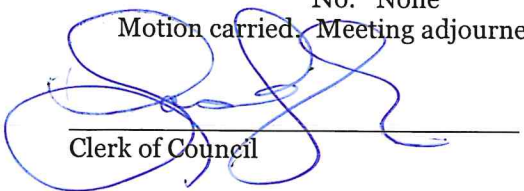

Motion carried. Meeting reconvened at 8:18 PM.

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 8:19 PM.


Clerk of Council
Council President and Presiding Officer