



Following the Pledge of Allegiance, a regular meeting of Wickliffe City Council was called to order by Council President Ed Levon on Monday, October 27th, 2025 at 7:00 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
Law Director	Jeremy Iosue
Finance Director	Michael Matas
Engineer	Peter J. Formica
Service Director	Dave Kroccheck
Building Commissioner	Dino Capra
Recreation Director	Timothy Stopp
Police Chief	Jonathon Bush
Fire Chief	Christopher Grossman

Excused: Mayor Joseph Sakacs

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Salotto, that the minutes of the Wickliffe City Council regular meeting of October 13th, 2025 be approved as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **October 13th, 2025 regular meeting minutes approved.**

Reports and Communications from Mayor/Safety Director

Mayor Sakacs was excused. Council President Levon read the Mayor's written report.

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) Written Report Submitted

Chief Bush noted patrol officer testing ended on Friday. There are twenty-six who sat for the test, and the chief noted he will now review the list to be sure he has all the necessary information for each candidate. Once the list has been certified by the Civil Service Commission, he will begin interviewing candidates. When they hire someone for this position, they will be back at fully staffed.

Councilperson Bala asked if there are any laterals. Chief Bush noted that he has to look at the list before he can consider any lateral transfers.

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

B. Fire Chief (Grossman)

Chief Grossman had nothing to add to his previously submitted report.

There were no questions or comments for the Fire Chief.

C. *Finance Director (Matas)*

Finance Director Matas noted he and the Assistant Finance Director attended a meeting in Willoughby Hills today concerning Property Tax Reform which was put on by Commissioner Beverage. Commissioner Regovich, Senator Jerry Cirino, and State Representative Dan Troy were also in attendance. Information was requested of each community regarding Property Tax, Sales Tax, and Income Tax over the last few months prior to the meeting, which we provided. Mr. Matas noted Property Tax Reform is a hot topic everywhere. He stated the legislature made some rule changes which allow county commissioners to make certain changes. He reported the Lake County Commissioners are considering doubling Homestead and Owner Occupancy amounts for current taxpayers, however all entities (cities, townships, etc.) would not be held harmless. This means Wickliffe would lose revenue. Currently the City receives approximately \$128,000. This would double for residents, but the City would have to "eat" the \$128,000.00. The Commissioners have to act by 10.31.25 and are considering acting on 10.30.25 since this could impact Tax Year 25 and Collection Year 26. Although this is a significant amount of money, some school districts are facing the loss of funding; Wickliffe City School District stands to lose over \$575,000.00. Councilperson Thielman was also in attendance. The schools were the most outspoken as they stand to lose significant funding. Finance Director Matas is unclear regarding what the Commissioners will do. Mr. Matas noted he talked to both Cirino and Troy who both noted they receive new information on this topic every day. All are hoping to have new information by Thanksgiving. He noted the amount the City will lose is smaller than most other cities.

Councilperson Thielman noted the group meetings are typically regarding cuts. Our school system is trying to raise \$3 million and there are about to be cuts of over \$500,000.00.

Finance Director Matas noted that some people who were grandfathered in with regard to the Homestead Act will no longer be grandfathered in.

Councilperson Gerhardstein asked when Council will see a draft of the temporary budget. Mr. Matas noted he is working on it right now and it is his hope to have it ready for Council for the first meeting in November, then ask for a committee meeting for the following week so that it can be on first of three readings by the second November meeting. He has met (and is meeting) with the directors this week.

Councilperson Gerhardstein asked if the property tax will be lowered for residents. It will be, but the school district will have to bear that.

Councilperson Salotto asked Mr. Matas to explain the date portion. Mr. Matas noted the state made some rule changes - and the commissioners have ninety days after the changes passed to make a decision that will go into effect in January 2026. If they do not act before October 31st, they will have to wait until next year. This will be done on a yearly basis in June. It was changed to try to encompass Tax Year 2025/Collection Year 2026. Ms. Salotto asked if anyone was planning to take part in this. Mr. Matas noted he believes the Commissioners are considering it. He noted they would not have held the meeting if they were not considering it.

Mr. Thielman noted it is approximately a 2.7% decrease for everyone with regard to tax valuation. He noted it is small, but the taxing authorities that rely on levies are hurt the greatest. This will affect schools, parks (Metroparks), libraries, etc.

Councilperson Gerhardstein asked if there have been any updates on whether the state will be releasing the funds they have been collecting on the marijuana tax. Finance Director Matas noted he has not heard anything yet, nor did State Rep Troy. He believes it is going to stay at the state level. Mr. Gerhardstein noted they persuaded cities to vote for this with the promise of the return, and now we will likely never see the money. He thanked Mr. Matas for his honesty. Mr. Matas noted, based on individuals he has conversed with, it doesn't seem like we will see that money.

Councilperson Thielman noted the Ohio House passed a bill that included the funds the cities are supposed to get from the marijuana, and now it will go back to the Senate. The bill highly regulates hemp products and vape shops, with a large fee for vape shops. It seems to be pro-marijuana, anti-vape. Mr. Matas noted we had budgeted \$125,000.00 for this year. It was noted the bill is now up to the Senate to pass it.

Councilperson Jaworski turned the focus back to the decision of the commissioners; he understands this will affect the General Fund, but asked how it will affect the Safety Services levy. Mr. Matas noted it will affect every levy. It will not affect the safety levy as much, since it has a low millage; every levy we have will be affected. The aggregate of this is the \$128,000.00 which is relatively low, and was a relief with regard to our budget. Some of the schools were losing upwards of \$2 million; WCSD stands to lose \$578,000.00. He noted he attempted to get the email with the attached spreadsheet to Council prior to the meeting, but they didn't return from the meeting with the commissioners until after 5.

Councilperson Gerhardstein is frustrated with the County. Last year they cut the Local Government Fund by approximately \$200,000.00, they are raising the Route 2 maintenance fees, and now this. He wondered how we are supposed to keep to our budget. Mr. Matas noted that when he was at the County, he used to say that the State balanced their budget on the backs of the counties. He noted now the county is doing the same to the other entities (townships, villages, cities, etc.). Mr. Gerhardstein noted the County spent \$25 million to pre-pay for the new jail. He is not upset with Mr. Matas, but rather that the county continues to take more money as we attempt to balance our budget. Mr. Matas is currently working on the budget and is also frustrated that we will need to make additional cuts. He believes Troy and Cirino want to reform property tax, but they want to do it the right way. He isn't convinced "the juice is worth the squeeze" on this. He noted the commissioners at the time he worked at the County wanted as much money put away as possible for the jail. He wasn't worried about construction costs, rather he was concerned regarding operating costs.

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

D. *Engineer (Formica) Written Report Submitted*

Engineer Formica noted the developer Loreto Iafelice would like to move forward regarding the dedication of the street at Old School Village. He noted he believes it will take an ordinance to dedicate Old School Way. He stated in the past there has been a "walk thru" for Council, and they are happy to do so if Council would like to do this. He asked that this item be put into committee for discussion to "get the ball rolling" on this.

Engineer Formica received an email from ODOT late this afternoon regarding night paving. The regular finish coat paving was scheduled to begin today, but a subcontractor was missing a crucial part of the the process – it will begin tomorrow on the west end of the project. As far as the night paving, there are a few issues, mainly the temperatures. He noted the night paving will cost \$28,000.00, and ODOT needs to know if we are willing to proceed. He believes that we will be able to divide the cost with the City of Willoughby, as much of this portion is in Willoughby. They will need an answer in the next day or so.

Councilperson Salotto asked how many days it would take if they do not do the night paving. Mr. Formica noted the night paving is not a time saving, rather a traffic relief. Ms. Salotto asked how long the paving will take. Mr. Formica believes it should take about a week if there is good weather and no other obstacles. It is a surface coat and everything is ready to go. Ms. Salotto asked for clarification that the \$28,000.00 is for the "entire night paving extravaganza".

Councilperson Bala asked if the \$28,000.00 would be split between the two cities. Mr. Formica noted this will need to be worked out, but could be around half and half or 60-40. Mr. Bala also mentioned it is supposed to rain this week, and Mr. Formica noted this will push back the timeline.

Councilperson Thielman asked if the night paving is in lieu of day paving, or in addition to day paving. Mr. Formica noted the only section that will be paved at night is the last portion: from Pine Ridge Golf Course to SR 91. Mr. Thielman noted that little section at the end is \$28,000.00 extra in order to do it at night, split between the two cities.

Councilperson Jaworski asked how far they will be going – if it's to Fairway or Rush. All believed it would be to Fairway. Mr. Kroccheck noted they did ask to go to Rush – actually to go as far as they could – but they did not give an answer to the request. Mr. Jaworski asked if we could at least get assurance that they will not be at Rockefeller during drop off or dismissal. Mr. Formica stated he and the Service Director met with ODOT last week and made similar requests, but does not have faith they will be able to control this. He could not make any guarantees.

Councilperson Gerhardstein asked where we are at currently with regard to the finances on this job. Mr. Formica noted he believes we are "right at budget". He is aware there is change order with regard to LEO officers; one hundred hours were budgeted, however they are currently at three hundred hours due to the number of intersections. Mr. Gerhardstein noted he has no issues with this to be able to ease the traffic and the safety value to the residents.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, to approve a change order for approximately fifty percent of the cost of \$28,000.00 with the City of Willoughby to allow for night paving of SR 84 from SOM Center Road to Fairway Drive.

Discussion: Councilperson Bala asked when they will do the night paving. He is concerned if the weather causes delays, we will be wasting the money. He thought the night paving was to reduce the timeline. Council President Levon noted the night paving is not to reduce the timeline, rather to reduce traffic issues. Mr. Formica noted they will pave to Rush or Fairway, then stop and complete the remainder at night. He does not

believe it will be the same night as daytime paving. He is unaware of the timeline, but it will not be affected by the weather. Councilperson Gerhardstein reiterated that the \$28,000.00 is for the additive that is needed for the asphalt to keep it at temperature (hot in the colder nights). Mr. Formica noted that it is more than just the additive; a different asphalt plant will have to be used as the current plant will not open at night, the crews (labor, trucking, etc.) charge a premium to work at night. Councilperson Koski asked if notification of neighbors regarding the night paving is a priority. Mr. Korfcheck will draft a letter once they are informed.

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

Mr. Formica noted he will contact Willoughby and will work this out. He stated that, at the bid price of the project, Wickliffe did not have a significant portion of the cost. He thanked Council for this.

Council person Jaworski asked if the developers of Old School Village met the criteria for street dedication per our ordinance. Mr. Formica noted they have. He has completed the inspection of the sewers and utilities. The road looks good and as far as he is aware, there are no punch list items.

Council President Levon added "Old School Way Street Dedication into the Committee of the Whole.

There were no additional questions or comments for the Engineer.

E. Service Director (Korfcheck)

Service Director Korfcheck noted he had nothing to add to his written report.

Councilperson Koski asked about Mark Court. She noted there are no current problems, however there are still issues with flooding here. She stated there was the possibility of a company coming in to do smoke testing and asked if that was completed. Mr. Formica added there was a study done in 1998 of that quadrant of the City. Sewer linings have been completed on Drenik and Empire and whatever else they can get funding for. Service Department workers will pop open a manhole during storms and have noted that it is getting better. We know the areas that need work, we just need to have the funding to do it. We applied to Congressman Joyce for approximately \$2 million to complete Empire, Harrison, Franklin, and Grant which are all part of the same tributary. It has been mapped out, we just need to find the funds. Ms. Koski asked if smoke testing could be done to determine if the need is still present. The Engineer and Service Director noted that could be done. Ms. Koski noted it would help to be able to tell the residents, as several people have had this issue, and they spend a lot to remodel after a flood, only to have it happen again. She noted the Service Department was able to help one resident as they located a problem on the city side. She asked that we continue to look at this.

Councilperson Bala asked if we will be will be salting Old School Way. Engineer Formica asked Service Director Korfcheck if there was an additive added to the concrete. Mr. Korfcheck wasn't certain, and Mr. Formica noted will look into this. The street will be plowed, but possibly not salted.

There were no questions or comments for the Service Director.

F. Building Commissioner (Capra)

Building Commissioner Capra had nothing to report.

There were no questions or comments for the Building Commissioner.

G. Recreation Director (Stopp)

Recreation Director Stopp noted there will be a Christmas Craft Show at the Community/Senior Center on Sunday, November 16th from 10 am - 2 pm. All are invited to attend.

Councilperson Koski asked if the Golf Course was closed; Mr. Stopp noted there is still one more weekend.

Councilperson Koski asked if it will reopen after that. Mr. Stopp noted it will be closed, but not indefinitely. Ms. Koski hoped it would be open before spring. Mr. Stopp noted it will be open as soon as possible.

There were no questions or comments for the Recreation Director.

Audience Participation

Council President Levon opened Audience Participation to those in attendance at 7:37 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.

Pat Jewell of 2162 Rockefeller Road asked Finance Director Matas what citizens could do. She asked if citizens could attend the Commissioner's Meeting on Thursday. She asked who she could contact at the County as she is very concerned. Mr. Matas noted she could contact Jason Boyd, the County Administrator, and could attend the meeting. He wasn't certain if anyone would be permitted to speak. Ms. Jewell asked what time the meeting would be held, and Mr. Matas noted the meetings are at 10:00 am on Thursdays. Ms. Jewell noted residents should be aware so they can say that they can't take money from our schools nor our city. Mr. Matas noted residents will pay less taxes, however others (cities, schools, etc.) will be handicapped. He noted this is not our decision, which is what he doesn't like. Ms. Jewell thanked Mr. Matas for the information. Mr. Matas noted it is frustrating that they can, with the motion of a pen, wipe out \$128,000.00. Ms. Jewell noted the schools are part of our future and we want young families with children to move here and have a school system that works for those families. Mr. Matas was shocked at the numbers relating to the schools. Ms. Jewell thanked Mr. Matas for sharing this information.

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 7:40PM.

Committee Reports

The minutes of the October 20th, 2025 meeting of the Finance Committee were presented by Council President Levon.

The minutes of the October 20th, 2025 meeting of the Legislation & Welfare Committee were presented by Councilperson Gerhardstein.

Council President Levon motioned, Gerhardstein seconded, to authorize the Law Director and Finance to create legislation to increase the Sewer Rates approximately fifteen percent (15%) including commercial, residential as well as Willowick and Willoughby Hills sanitary sewer rates based on recommendations made at the Committee meeting on this topic.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

Commission Reports

There were no Commission Reports.

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business

A. Recommendations from the Parks & Recreation Commission (see attached)

Councilperson Bala read the letter from the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding their annual recommendations from the Park Tour.

Councilperson Bala wanted to thank the Service Department for all they do. They take care of a number of little things all year with a small crew in seven parks. If anyone sees anything, they should contact him or Service Director Korfcheck.

Council President Levon added this item into the Parks and Properties Commission for discussion at a later meeting.

Ordinances

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

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Koski, that Ordinance 2025-46 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2025-46 adopted.**

OR2025-47 *By Title Only* An ordinance amending the City of Wickliffe Zone Map referred to in Section 1341.80 of the Wickliffe Codified Ordinances rezoning one parcel owned by the Rabbinical College of Telshe Yeshiva in Wickliffe, Ohio **SECOND READING**

OR2025-49 *By Title Only* An ordinance amending sections of Chapter 1315 Commercial-Manufacturing and Industrial Districts of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio **SECOND READING**

OR2025-50 AMENDED *By Title Only* An ordinance adopting a cybersecurity policy for the City of Wickliffe, Ohio **SECOND READING**

Resolutions

There were no Resolutions.

Other Legislation

There was no Other Legislation.

Miscellaneous

Councilperson Salotto noted she has received a number of opinions regarding the deer population and the safety concerns for the residents. She asked if this could be put into a committee for discussion.

Council President Levon added this item, Deer Population & Control, to the Committee of the Whole for additional discussion.

Councilperson Thielman noticed that recently Beechwood has an agreement with South Euclid and either Cleveland Heights or University Heights regarding deer culling. He found this unusual due to the population (closeness of homes). They are doing culling and sterilization. He noted they have had great success in South Euclid. A third party is hired to handle this, and it is possibly something we could look into.

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 7:57 PM.

Clerk of Council


Ray Thielman
Council President and Presiding Officer