



Following the Pledge of Allegiance, a regular meeting of Wickliffe City Council was called to order by Council President Levon on Monday, December 8th, 2025 at 7:00 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 A. Levon
Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Thielman
Joseph Sakacs
Jeremy Iosue
Michael Matas
Peter J. Formica
Dave Krofcheck
Dino Capra
Timothy Stopp
Jonathon Bush
Christopher Grossman

Excused: Councilperson Salotto

Adjustment of Agenda

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Jaworski, that the agenda be adjusted to move item #15 on tonight's agenda (Resolutions), specifically item 15.1 Resolution 2025-17, to the next item on the agenda (Item #3) and all other items be moved down one space.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

Resolutions

RES 2025-17 A resolution paying tribute to Christopher Mlachak and recognizing his many years of service to the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and declaring an emergency (E)

Motion by Jaworski, seconded by Koski, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Resolution 2025-17 be placed on third and final reading.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Jaworski, seconded by Koski, that Resolution 2025-17 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: Mayor Sakacs noted that this resolution was created in memory of Chris Mlachak who was an outstanding citizen. He asked Mr. Iosue to read the text of the resolution into the record.

Mr. Iosue read aloud the text of Resolution 2025-17.

The Mayor presented the ceremonial copy of the resolution to Chris' father and brother who were present at the meeting. He noted Chris was a neighbor of his, whom he's known most of his life, adding that this was an absolute tragedy. Mr. Mlachak thanked the Mayor and everyone present and all those who had a hand in creating this ordinance for his son. He noted that Chris would have been really proud of this.

Councilperson Jaworski noted Chris was one of the ultimate residents of the City. His dedication was exemplary and he will be sorely missed. He will be remembered for caring

and for showing up. He didn't speak at meetings, but did offer his opinion after meetings, which Mr. Jaworski appreciated as Chris was always well informed.

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **Resolution 2025-17 adopted.**

Council President Levon mentioned to all in the audience who were present for the reading of the Resolution for Chris Mlachak were welcome to stay if they would like, but were also permitted to exit if they preferred to do so.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, that the minutes of the Wickliffe City Council regular meeting of November 24th, 2025 be approved as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. **November 24th, 2025 regular meeting minutes approved.**

Reports and Communications from Mayor/Safety Director

Mayor Sakacs read his written report.

Councilperson Gerhardstein asked if there was any update on the progress at the Premier Development site. The Mayor noted that he spoke to a Premier representative a few weeks ago. According to the construction company, there was more asbestos that expected. The building will be coming down soon, and the company will inform the Mayor regarding when this will occur; the Mayor will then relate the information to Council.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted that often during the holidays, the overnight parking ban is lifted temporarily in the City. Mr. Gerhardstein asked if this would occur over the holidays this year. Chief Bush noted he has not discussed this with the Mayor, but it is possible. Mr. Gerhardstein noted if this were to occur, he suggests getting this information out to the public. Chief Bush noted that it always occurs for Thanksgiving and New Year's, but it could also be extended to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Mayor Sakacs agreed, and noted social media will be updated to reflect this.

Councilperson Koski asked if the Mayor has seen any designs for the proposed spec building at the Premier Property. He noted he has not, but it will be "generic" and smaller than the current building, particularly geared toward office space. He noted there are interested companies. He also noted the parcels have been split; they are now two separate parcels.

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 he was notified last week that one of the current officers will be resigning, so the department will be one short again, but they have begun the process of hiring to fill this position.

Councilperson Jaworski inquired regarding the rank of the person who resigned. Chief Bush noted Patrolman Megan Blair Watson, a lateral transfer from Brooklyn Heights will be transferring back to Brooklyn Heights. She was recently married and purchased a house farther away. The hour and forty-minute commute to and from work each day is becoming an issue, and she will be returning to her former employer.

Mayor Sakacs noted he is unhappy with this information, as during her tenure here she has been fantastic, and her attention to detail was an asset to the department.

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

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

Chief Grossman reported there was a residential structure fire today on the north end of town that originated with cooking in the kitchen and spread to the unfinished attic space. The fire caused significant damage, as did the damage from the water to extinguish the fire. The resident was evacuated safely with assistance of the next door neighbors. All are safe and arrangements have been made for shelter with family for the owner of the home. The result is a mess to be cleaned up and the loss of property, but all are safe.

There were no questions or comments for the Fire Chief.

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

Finance Director Matas noted the unencumbered cash carry over balance of the General Fund for November 2025 was \$8.89 million compared to \$7.8 million for the same time period last year. This is an increase of approximately \$1 million from last year at this time.

Councilperson Jaworski inquired regarding the Finance Director's prediction for the end of the year. Mr. Matas noted he is expecting to close the year at approximately \$8.5 million. He noted RITA is a little behind currently. Mr. Jaworski asked if Mr. Matas' prediction takes into account the action of the Commissioners. Mr. Matas noted this does not go into effect until 2026, and is expected to be approximately \$135,000.00 in aggregate over a number of funds, including the General Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, Safety Forces Fund, and Fire and Police Pension Funds.

Councilperson Gerhardstein inquired regarding and information on the County's plan to raise the rates on the maintenance fees for SR2. Mr. Matas noted he speaks with Service Director Krofcheck almost daily and neither of them has received any updates with regard to this topic.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted the 2025 budget was passed with the expectation of a \$1.5 million deficit. He asked where Mr. Matas expects to end the year. Mr. Matas noted he believes our revenues should exceed our expenditures. He noted much of this has to do with RITA and approximately \$537,000.00 from the General Fund. Mr. Gerhardstein clarified that at the beginning of the year, the budget was a deficit, and we are currently running at an excess. He noted there were a number of items that Council removed from it's To Do list based on an expected deficit. He is expecting this be "tightened up" in the 2026 Budget. Mr. Matas noted he has spoken to three of the seven council members so far with regard to their expectations for the 2026 Budget and the majority believe the topics that are priority are roads and park equipment. Mr. Gerhardstein noted he hopes this discrepancy will be cleaned up with regard to the 2026 Budget.

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

D. *Engineer (Formica) Written Report Submitted*

Engineer Formica reported he had nothing to report.

Councilperson Koski asked if there was an update regarding the pond at Green Ridge Golf Course. Mr. Formica noted he left another message last Thursday. He noted he plans to give the contractor another week, then will begin pursuing a different contractor to complete the work. Ms. Koski asked if it has been refilled, and Mr. Formica noted it has; it needs re-grading around the edges. She asked about the mound, and Mr. Formica noted it needs to be moved a bit.

There were no further questions or comments for the Engineer.

E. *Service Director (Krofcheck) Written Report Submitted*

Service Director Krofcheck noted the irrigation at the golf course is finished. Approximately four sprinkler heads were installed per green and approximately two per tee box. A pump will be needed in the future.

Councilperson Koski asked if the water from the pond will be used for the irrigation of the entire course and Mr. Krofcheck noted it will. Mr. Krofcheck added that a new suction system that uses the water from the surface of the pond has been added, which should work out well. It has been winterized and will be restarted in the spring.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted the Snow Removal line item in the budget has been maxed out; he asked if additional funds will be needed for snow removal this year. Mr. Krofcheck noted he spoke with Finance Director Matas about this before purchasing another order of salt in order to not run out. They are aware it is at one hundred percent.

Councilperson Gerhardstein also inquired regarding the hiring of another full time person in the Service Department. Mr. Krofcheck noted they did hire one person who started a few weeks ago and is being trained on all the equipment. It was noted the Service Department is now fully staffed.

Councilperson Bala noted he noticed that there are some valves that are above ground at the golf course. He requested that something be added to protect these from damage by golf carts. Mr. Krofcheck noted he will look into this.

Councilperson Jaworski inquired regarding remaining leaf piles due to the early snow, and if there is a plan to address this. Mr. Krofcheck noted that crews have not ceased leaf pick up, noting it has been ongoing. There are two crews out, but if there is another big snow, leaf pick up may have to be suspended. He intends to complete this season's pick up hopefully before the end of the month.

Councilperson Koski reminded all that Kimble yard waste pick up will be suspended next week and resume March 1st. It was questioned whether it ceases on December 15th or if it will continue through the end of the week of December 15th. An inquiry will be made to Kimble and the information sent to Council. It was noted it is believed service will be continued through the week.

Councilperson Jaworski asked if the recent order of road salt was the first order on the new contract, and Mr. Krofcheck noted he has already placed a previous order. Currently he has ordered approximately seven hundred tons and has twenty-one hundred tons remaining, and can order slightly more than that if necessary. Mr. Jaworski asked how much has been used thus far this year. Mr. Krofcheck estimated that approximately four hundred tons has been used this year. It was noted it has been icier than normal.

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

F. *Building Commissioner (Capra) Written Report Submitted*

Building Commissioner Capra noted he spoke with a representative from Premier last week and spoke to the contractor today who noted they will be there to begin demolition on December 15th.

Councilperson Gerhardstein asked if the gaming facilities are current in the payment if their fees and applications/licenses. Mr. Capra noted he believes they are.

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

G. *Recreation Director (Stopp) Written Report Submitted*

Recreation Director noted the Recreation Department works with the schools to identify families in need of assistance over the holidays and thirty-two (32) families have been identified, representing one hundred eight (108) children. Truline and Lubrizol are the primary donors with the help of the City Club who assist with delivery.

Councilperson Koski stated she was at the Family Resource Center today. They are in need of adult winter coats. Donations can be taken to the FRC, or dropped off at the bins located in the Library and here at City Hall.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted Mr. Stopp could reach out the City Club to request assistance for the family of the victims of today's house fire.

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

Audience Participation

Council President Levon opened Audience Participation to those in attendance at 7:26 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.

Cheryl Lawrenson of Weber Avenue wished to have an answer to the question: Is the Wickliffe City Finance Department planning to raise the water/sewer rates by fifteen percent (15%) in 2026? She noted all were hit last January. She is aware that we are tied into Euclid, and also that Willowick residents also recently experienced a significant increase. Council President Levon answered that the costs have been increased based on the cost of Euclid passing along the increase to all the cites using the treatment plant. Ms. Lawrenson asked for confirmation that there will be an increase of fifteen percent after last year's increase. She asked what the approximate amount that residents can expect. Mr. Levon noted it is dependent on usage. Mr. Matas noted the average that was determined was calculated to be approximately \$18 per quarter based on average usage by residential consumers. He noted Euclid did increase their rates for the upcoming year. It was also determined at a recent Committee of Council meeting that the General Fund was subsidizing the sewer rates with approximately \$400,000 - \$450,000 per year. Mr. Matas noted the Euclid increase was one of the biggest he's seen in over a five-year period. At the committee meeting, Council discussed this topic at length, and determined that this would no longer be subsidized by the General Fund. Working with the Service Director, it was determined that a \$1.00 per thousand cubic feet would open up the ability of the Service Department to perform some rehabilitation of the sewer systems in the City. These directives were determined by Council.

Ms. Lawrenson also inquired why Service trucks are driving with their plows down when there appears to be no snow on the ground. She believes this is destroying the street. The Service Director noted this has been brought to his attention and addressed with the individuals who were assigned to the route. He did explain that occasionally there may look to be no snow, but often ice and slush are being moved to the curb.

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 7:30PM.

Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

Commission Reports

A. Planning Commission - Councilperson Jaworski

Councilperson Jaworski reported that the Architectural Review Board (ARB) met December 4th and approved two dwelling and landscape plans at 1501 and 1598 Old School Way.

Immediately following the ARB meeting, the Planning Commission met for the purpose of a workshop on Senior Zoning. Mr. Jaworski noted this topic will remain with the Planning Commission and will be discussed further at upcoming meeting(s).

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business

A. Announce Organizational Meeting Date

Council President Levon noted Council President elect Gerhardstein wished to announce that Council will hold its annual Organizational Meeting on Monday, January 5th, 2026 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers at Wickliffe City Hall.

Ordinances

(next page)

OR2025-56 *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, 2026 and ending March 31, 2026 **SECOND READING**

OR2025-58 *By Title Only* An ordinance amending and revising Chapter 769 Tourist Homes and Motels related to Short-Term Rentals of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe **SECOND READING**

Resolutions

See page one of these minutes for the Resolution considered at this meeting.

Other Legislation

There was no Other Legislation.

Miscellaneous

Council President Levon reminded all that the final Council Meeting of 2025 will be held next Monday, December 15th, 2025 at Wickliffe City Hall in Council Chambers at 7:00 PM.

Immediately following the Council Meeting, the newly elected Council and Mayor will be sworn into office for 2026 in the Victorian Room at Wickliffe City Hall by Judge Robert Patton.

Adjournment

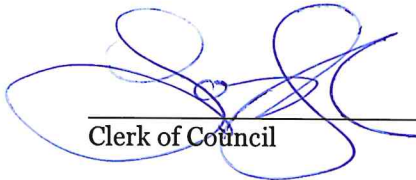
Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Bala, to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call:

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

No: None

Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:33 PM.


Clerk of Council
Council President and Presiding Officer