RITTMAN CITY COUNCIL Met in a
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, September 14, 2026
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Don Sweigert, Sonya Hayward, Amanda Nelson, Rich Schumacher, Missy Shows and Nick Huff
Members Absent: None
Presiding: Mayor Rudy Arnold

The invocation was given by Pastor Clark Genet followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

a. **August 10, 2026**. Council discussed corrections to the draft, including name spelling, the placement of a motion to table, and references to C&J, a fire department sign, and an educational lab. The minutes were approved as amended. Huff moved to approve, upon roll call Schumacher – Yes, Huff – Yes, Shows – Yes, Nelson – Abstain, Sweigert – Yes, Hayward - Yes and **motion carried**.

b. **August 24, 2026 Special Meeting**. Huff moved to approve, upon roll call Shows – Abstain, Huff – Yes, Sweigert – Abstain, Schumacher – Yes, Hayward – Yes, Nelson - Yes and **motion carried.**

Workshop

a. **Discussion of the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan**. The Finance Director presented the proposed five-year capital improvement plan and explained that it is a planning roadmap rather than an appropriation of funds or a guarantee that projects will occur in the listed time frames. The plan is intended to identify needs, support budgeting and grant planning, prioritize projects according to safety, urgency, impact, ongoing costs, and city goals, and remain subject to annual budget, purchasing, and Council approval requirements.

The Finance Director reported that 2027 requests total approximately $2.6 million, with approximately $405,000 in anticipated grant funding and $138,000 in debt service. City Manager corrected this that the N. Main Street infrastructure is receiving an AMATS grant for $1,033,000. Department directors were asked to identify the problem addressed by each request, timing, measurable benefits, alternatives, ongoing costs, and alignment with city goals. Council discussed the general capital threshold of $5,000 and the consideration of a project's total cost when determining whether it should be included in the capital plan.

For Administration, the City Manager reviewed the 2027 downtown revitalization grant, a possible future replacement of a 2018 administrative vehicle, and a $100,000 grant for asbestos removal and demolition of City Hall. Council discussed deferring replacement of the administrative vehicle while it remains operational. The City Manager also noted that technology to assist with transcription of minutes may be considered in a future capital plan.

The cemetery foundation program was reviewed as an ongoing $5,000 annual program funded through the cemetery endowment capital line. Cemetery receipts are divided equally between the General Fund and cemetery endowment fund. Staff reported that foundation costs and the number of orders vary by year, and that approximately ten foundation orders had been received during the preceding two months.

Under street maintenance, staff clarified that North Main Street resurfacing is planned for 2027 and is supported by an 85 percent grant. Council discussed the asphalt rehabilitation program, concrete micro-grinding, replacement of aging traffic signal equipment, and an Ohio

Public Works Commission grant application for traffic lights at Main Street and Ohio Avenue and Main Street and Sunset Drive. The Service Director described a proposed street sweeper that could sweep streets and clean catch basins, as well as the availability and cost considerations of rented sweepers.

Council also discussed fleet replacement, leasing, vehicle reliability, maintenance capacity, and the proposed service garage. The Service Director reported that the existing garage experiences flooding, has continuing leaks and deteriorated siding, and lacks appropriate work and security conditions. A smaller new building behind the existing garage was discussed as a potential future facility, while retaining the existing structure for storage. No capital funding was appropriated during the workshop.

Fire and EMS capital needs included apparatus replacement planning, radio replacement, building maintenance, and repairs. The Fire/EMS Chief reported continuing mechanical issues with the ladder truck and stated that a future replacement would require a multiyear funding strategy. Council discussed coordinating radio purchases with the Police Department to pursue favorable pricing and grant opportunities. The Finance Director and Fire/EMS Chief discussed establishing future reserves for major apparatus replacement.

Parks and Recreation projects discussed included recreation equipment, First Street Park pavilion and restroom concepts, recreation center roof work, pool maintenance, and community garden irrigation. Staff reported that an outdoor pool was researched but was not included in the plan because estimated installation costs were approximately $5 million, with annual maintenance costs exceeding $100,000 before staffing. Council discussed continued maintenance of the indoor pool and recreation facilities.

Police fleet planning included discussion of damaged vehicles, insurance proceeds, the potential purchase of a Ford Explorer and a Silverado, replacement of older vehicles, K-9 equipment, and the use of available donation and K-9 association funds. The Police Chief reported that available insurance proceeds would cover damaged equipment for an Explorer replacement and that the proposed vehicle purchases would be considered separately through the appropriation process.

Utilities capital items included the sewer jet lease, lead-service-line replacement planning, well inspections, and a proposed waste dump station. Utilities staff reported that homeowner-side lead service line work may be eligible for grant funding when available and that the Ohio EPA expects lead to be removed from municipal systems by 2037. A waste dump station is planned for 2028 to support compliant disposal of material from utility and maintenance operations. Staff reported that the wastewater treatment plant project was approximately 85 percent complete and was expected to be completed in approximately two months.

b. Discussion of Sign Ordinance. Council reviewed proposed revisions to Chapter 1325, Sign Regulations, and their coordination with the Downtown Main Street Overlay District. Discussion included proposals concerning storefront window transparency, window signs and seasonal displays, storefront identification, vacant storefront notices, temporary and community-event signs, nonconforming signs, enforcement, and appeals.

Council discussed a proposed standard allowing window signs to occupy up to 25 percent of storefront area while maintaining at least 50 percent storefront transparency. The discussion distinguished signs from ordinary merchandise displays, artwork, flowers, and seasonal decorations. Council also discussed allowing city-authorized temporary displays associated with festivals, markets, civic or nonprofit activities, and other community events.

Further discussion addressed potential time limits and definitions for temporary signs, treatment of flags and political signs, existing church and bulletin-board signs, sign-size standards, illumination, and nonconforming-sign provisions. Council noted the need to

coordinate the proposed sign regulations with the overlay district and to obtain further review from the Law Director before the next reading. No action was taken during the workshop.

Citizens Forum

Teresa McAvinew – 80 Bellevue Street - Ms. McAvinew thanked those who had offered condolences following her husband's death. She reported a deep hole on Industrial Street near Bellevue Street and deterioration at the west-side bridge abutment near Industrial and Seneca Streets. The City stated that Chuck would inspect the reported locations.

Timothy Slavings – 130 Wright Street - Mr. Slavings reported concerns regarding a dead tree near a city building, potholes and limited width on his street, and a sunken drain at Salt Street and Wright Street.

Old Business

a. Ordinance No. 8531, An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, to enact the Downtown Main Street Overlay District ("DMSOD") which is to preserve and enhance the safety, visual character, economic vitality, pedestrian experience, and overall appearance of the traditional downtown commercial corridor of the City of Rittman and declaring an emergency. Third Reading. Res. No. 8531 was read on third reading. Nelson moved to adopt.

Nelson moved to remove Res. No. 8531 from the table, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**.

Council discussed the overlay district's property-maintenance, storefront, pedestrian-safety, vacancy, enforcement, hardship-extension, and appeal provisions. Discussion included the distinction between enforceable regulations and the voluntary design and beautification guide, coordination with the sign ordinance, and the responsibility of property owners for compliance.

Schumacher moved to amend the designation of Res. No. 8531 from a resolution to an ordinance. All Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**. Nelson then moved to adopt Ordinance No. 8531. All Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**.

b. Ord. No. 8536 An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, amending Chapter 1325 Sign Regulation of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Rittman. Second Reading. Huff moved to remove Ordinance No. 8536 from the table, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**. Council discussed the proposed treatment of sign sizes, temporary signs, flags, and the need for further revisions before final consideration.

Huff moved to place on third, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**.

Communications

The Mayor reported that a written communication matter was transmitted to Council and Clerk and referred to the Ohio Auditor State's Office. The Mayor stated that underlying communications were available to Council members upon request and that any Council discussion of the personnel matter should occur at a properly noticed meeting in executive session.

New Business

a. Motion to Approve the 5-Year Capital Plan. Huff moved to approve the Five-Year Capital Plan, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**.

b. **Ord. No. 8540 An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio amending the Annual Appropriation Ordinance No. 8492, as amended according to the attached sheet(s) and declaring an emergency. Three Readings**. Ord. No. 8540 was read on first reading. Schumacher moved to suspend the rules, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.** Huff moved to adopt, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

c. **Res. No. 8541 A Resolution accepting the amounts and rates as determined by the Budget Commission and authorizing the necessary tax levies and certifying them to the County Auditor. Three Readings**. Res. No. 8541 was read on first reading. Sweigert moved to suspend the rules, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.** Schumacher moved to adopt. Council discussed that the resolution concerns the annual tax levy allocation. All Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

d. **Res. No. 8542 A Resolution of the Council of the City of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio, authorizing the Municipal Manager to prepare and submit an application to participate in the Ohio Public Works Commission State Capital Improvement and/or Local Transportation Improvement Program(s) and to execute contracts as required and declaring an emergency. Three Readings**. Res. No. 8542 was read on first reading. Nelson moved to suspend the rules, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.** Shows moved to adopt. Council was advised that the application deadline was Friday and that the application concerns replacement of traffic lights at Main Street and Ohio Avenue and Main Street and Sunset Drive. All Yeas on roll call and **motion carried**.

e. **Ord. No. 8543 An Ordinance of the Council of the city of Rittman, Wayne and Medina Counties and State of Ohio amending the Annual Appropriation Ordinance No. 8492, as amended according to the attached sheet(s) and declaring an emergency. Three Readings**. Ord. No. 8543 was read on first reading. Nelson moved to suspend the rules, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.** Huff moved to adopt.

Council discussed proposed police fleet appropriation alternatives following cancellation of the prior vehicle agreement. The discussion included the potential purchase of a Ford Explorer and a Silverado, use of insurance proceeds, the status of a damaged Tahoe, and the availability of previously appropriated police capital funds.

Schumacher made the motion select Appropriation Amendment No. 9.3, adding $15,358.14 to Capital/Police for a change in the fleet plan. Upon roll call Huff – Yes, Shows – No, Schumacher – Yes, Hayward – No, Nelson – Yes, Sweigert, No. Motion tied. Mayor Arnold – No and **motion fails**. The motion did not carry. No adoption of Ordinance No. 8543.

City Manager's Remarks

The City Manager welcomed newly sworn full-time Police Officer Parker Shilliday and reported that trick-or-treat in Rittman will be held Saturday, October 31, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Main Street Waterline: The South Main Street Waterline is underway. This project will impact S Main Street for the next 60-90 days, weather dependent. There will be lane closures, at times, but we do expect the road to remain open. We appreciate everyone's understanding as this important infrastructure improvement is made in the area.

Rate Study: As Council is aware, the city had a rate study conducted for sewer and water rates. The study is complete and Eric Pietras, of the Great Lakes Action Partnership (GLCAP) will present their findings to Council on Monday, October 12th.

GLO (Get the Lead Out): We continue to work with GLO (Get the Lead Out), an initiative by the EPA which assists communities with service line inventories, public outreach plans, lead service line replacement plans and funding opportunities. GLO is also reviewing our rate study. GLO continues to attend events such as Sleepwalker and National Night Out to speak with our residents about informing the city of what their water lines are made of whether, galvanized, plastic, lead, etc. It has been a great partnership, and we look forward to the next event they attend which is the Ricky Horton Car Show on Sunday, September 20th.

Data Centers: I continue to gather information about the pros and cons of data centers in Rittman. Data Centers continue to be a growing hot commodity in Ohio and across the country. I am still against them in Rittman for a variety of reasons as I believe they will not benefit Rittman but will be a drain on our water usage, unless a loop system is used plus the amount of electricity usage has grown over the last several years. Also, there are very few jobs associated with data centers which will bring very little economic development to our area. One important point regarding data centers is that when a data center is no longer functional or needed, in about 15 years because something new will come along, now the city will have a very large empty building. I am not an expert but as I stated, I am listening to experts and asking questions plus reading up on them. Our moratorium legislation will expire in October, and I would advise that we extend it another six (6) months to give Council more time to digest additional information on data centers.

Hickin Street: Hickin Street resurfacing is to begin soon; however, I do not have an exact date. Typically, this work is completed in approximately two weeks, from start to finish, weather permitting. This is an OPWC (Ohio Public Works Project) of which the city received a substantial grant for this infrastructure project.

New Police Officer: Welcome to our newest full-time police officer, Parker Shilliday. Officer Shilliday was sworn in last week by Mayor Arnold here at City Hall. Officer Shilliday lives in Wayne County and has worked for the Wayne County Sherrif's Department and most recently was full time with Crestline PD and part-time with Dalton.

Halloween: October 31st falls on the perfect day this year, so Trick or Treat will take place in Rittman on Saturday, October 31st from 5-7 pm.

Finance Director's Remarks

No remarks.

Second Citizens Forum

None.

Council Remarks

Huff – Thanked those remaining at the meeting.

Shows – Thanked attendees.

Sweigert – Requested that future special-meeting notices, when practicable, provide meeting times that accommodate members with daytime employment obligations. The member also requested that meeting materials be provided before meetings whenever possible and commended the Finance Director for the capital plan presentation.

Hayward – Thanked attendees and the Finance Director for providing an amended copy of the capital plan. She asked about city participation in an upcoming Reading Under the Lights event and was advised that the City is involved.

Amanda Nelson – Requested that Council members submit specific sign-ordinance revisions to the administration before the next meeting. She reported that the Chamber plans a Trick-or-Treat Trail at the Nature Preserve on the Friday preceding Halloween, with craft and treat activities for children.

Schumacher – Reported that the Lions will hold a Boo at the School event at Heritage Hall on October 31 following trick-or-treat. The event is scheduled from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and is planned to include food trucks and haunted displays.

Mayor Arnold – Thanked attendees and noted the importance of civil discussion during government proceedings.

Executive Session

a. Motion to go into Executive Session in accordance with ORC 121.22 for Hiring, Firing and Discipline of a public employee and invite the Finance Director, the City Manager, Law Director and Michael Zhelesnik – 10:28 p.m. Schumacher so moved. Nelson seconded the motion. Council had discussions about whether the individual had been informed and if they had the right to be present if they were discussing that individual. Upon roll call Sweigert – Yes, Hayward – Yes, Nelson – Yes, Schumacher – Yes, Shows – Recuse, Huff - Yes and **motion carried**.

b. Motion to Come Out of Executive Session – 11:22 pm Hayward so moved, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

Adjourn: 11:22 p.m. Nelson moved to adjourn, all Yeas on roll call and **motion carried.**

Mayor

Joan Challenor

Clerk of Council