

President Chad Doll called the meeting to order at 7:30pm on July 6, 2026 at 701 Parlette Court with the following members present: Alex Stinebaugh, Jessica Muhlenkamp, Charity Behr, Alex Greve, John Shepline, Jacob Parsons and Chad Dunlap. Mayor Dan Lee and Safety Service Director Tyler Price were also present. There were 21 visitors present. Law Director Grant Neal was absent.

Motion by Shepline, second by Parsons to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2026 council meeting as submitted. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Streets & Alleys Committee – a meeting was held on 6-22-2026 and the following was discussed:

Item 1: Veteran Banner Project

The committee held a detailed discussion regarding the history of the Veteran Banner Project, concerns raised by the VVA, and the ongoing maintenance challenges faced by the City.

After thorough discussion, the following plan was established:

1. The City Electric Department will assume responsibility for banners installed along the proposed route. Levi Cecil will conduct a field count to determine the exact number of available poles and identify which poles can accommodate two banners. This will establish a firm quantity the City will maintain.

The route includes: West Auglaize Street, a portion of East Auglaize and merging into Bellefontaine Street to I-75.

Defiance Street from the intersections of Auglaize and the 501/198 intersection.

2. The VVA will determine the maximum number of banners they currently have assigned.

3. The VVA and City staff will meet to calculate the remaining banner quantity and identify suitable locations. This information will be used to prepare a bid package for release to preferred contractors.

4. The goal is to have all necessary information compiled and sent to contractors by June 29, 2026. This will allow the committee to review quoting progress during the City Council meeting on July 6, 2026.

In addition, the VVA will research and recommend potential hardware upgrades to improve banner installation and durability.

Item 2: Alley Closure Behind Downtown

The committee discussed the best long-term approach for the alleyway behind downtown. Key concerns included citizen safety, especially during large events such as Party in the Park and Moonfest, as well as challenges with patrolling the area. The alley functions partially as a parking lot, with ownership split between the City and private businesses.

The following actions were agreed upon:

1. Complete the current two-week closure trial period to gather public feedback.

2. Proceed with the installation of speed bumps and improved signage. All new signage will include lighting for enhanced visibility and safety.

3. Close the alley lane during special events, including Party in the Park, Moonfest, and other significant gatherings. An advance public notification will be provided prior to each closure.

SSD Price stated he has received four quotes for banner installation. Mr. Greve will schedule a follow-up Streets & Alleys Committee meeting to proceed with next steps.

Parks Committee – a meeting was held on 6-22-2026 and the following was discussed:

The meeting was called to discuss the suggestion at the previous Council meeting to utilize funds from the Lodging Tax to help the Parks budget because of the number of events that draw out of town guests to the Parks.

Tyler Price was able to provide data about the amount of Lodging Tax from previous years: 2025: \$103,000

2024: \$121,000

2023: \$106,000

2022: \$99,000

2021: \$102,000

2020: \$89,000

2019: \$133,000

Carryover and expected 2026 earnings: \$138,000.

There was then a discussion about items that are already coming out of the Lodging Tax budget including \$10,000 for a 4-6 year period for a striper for the ball fields, approximately \$25,000 each year for chargebacks going back to City departments doing work for public events, \$10,000 per year for fireworks, annual giving to Children's Hometown Holiday and the Performing Arts Center, etc. It was estimated that the Lodging Tax had \$70,000 left after expenses.

There was then a discussion about storytelling and finding better ways to tell the story of what's happening in the Parks and what's happening in our parks vs other parks in neighboring communities. For example, a majority of Waterpark memberships come from Allen County, there are currently not fees for organizations to host tournaments at the fields.

The Lodging Tax is designed as "Non-locals paying money to make Wapakoneta better" and that perhaps the money would be better spent on the Parks rather than on smaller non-profit grants that did not seem to be needed before the Lodging Tax came into effect. It was also pointed out that there was already a precedent of the Lodging Tax paying for things for the Parks with both the Striper and items for the Waterpark.

There was then a conversation about whether an ordinance was necessary if we wanted this spending to happen each year versus a one-time Council approval. The suggestion was to create an ordinance that took a percentage of Lodging Tax funds each month (when receipts are received from the County) to give the Parks a small regular income.

Based on an average \$106,000 Annual Lodging Tax receipts: 12% would be \$12,720
15% would be \$15,900 20% would be \$21,200

There was discussion about the pros and cons of different amounts and the group landed on 12%. Tyler Price was asked to write an ordinance to recommend this to Council at their next meeting. It was recommended that this would be given 3 readings to give Citizens ample time for public comment.

There was then some discussion of Parks expenses. Currently there is \$145,000 in wages for the Parks which is paid for with around \$200,000 in General Fund revenue each year. There is currently a working document making a list of capital improvements needed which added up to approximately \$3.9 million.

There was some question about how is doing the grant writing for the City and whether there were opportunities for businesses to contribute as well as matching funds with current funds rather than increasing the levy.

Mr. Dunlap asked if the city employs a grant writer. SSD Price answered that Jaime Nelson in the Parks Department assists with these efforts. Mrs. Muhlenkamp asked if the city would consider hiring a full-time grant writer. SSD Price answered that this may not be financially viable. Mr. Dunlap asked for clarification on the suggestion of passing an ordinance versus seeking council approval for lodging tax fund allocations. Mrs. Muhlenkamp explained that rather than bring the parks funding request to council repeatedly, there would instead be an ordinance drafted for the approval of an on-going, flat-rate of 12% of the total lodging tax funds going into the parks department every year. Mr. Dunlap asked if council will still be presented with all other lodging tax fund requests for approval. Mrs. Muhlenkamp replied yes, this is correct.

Lodging Tax Committee – a meeting was held on 7-1-2026 and the following was discussed:

Current balance in the Lodging Tax is \$105,000. There was a brief discussion about a new item coming before Council at the next meeting where 12% of receipts from the Lodging Tax would be diverted to the Parks Fund to cover tournaments and other instances where the Parks are used by visitors. The Council will also need to approve the "chargebacks" or instances where the City Services want to be reimbursed for work done for City events.

The Committee returned to the application from Children's Hometown Holiday where more information on attendance had been requested. CHH had provided numbers about the attendance to specific events but had been unable to quantify how many of those attendees were visitors versus residents of the community. Eric Ireland called the project part of the "identity of Wapakoneta." The project scored a 21 on the rubric and is therefore eligible for funding. Eric Ireland made a motion to recommend fully funding the project at \$8300 with a second by John Rausch. The motion was passed.

The Committee then returned to the application from the Performing Arts Center. Their Executive Director, Nikki Barger, sent a new application with much more data indicating the amount of reach last year's PAC event had received. This year the Wapakoneta Area Community Foundation is paying the Director's salary and this request is for marketing of the Neil Diamond Experience Event. The project

scored a 23 on the rubric. Eric Ireland made a motion to recommend \$10,000 to fund the project with a second by Marlene Graf. The motion was approved.

Next, was the Application from the United Way of Auglaize County for the Astronaut Visit during the Run to the Moon event. This year, Astronaut Don Thomas will be in attendance. The application indicated that along with across the State of Ohio people come from several states away to be part of this event. The project scored a 23.25 on the rubric. Marlene Graf made a motion to recommend the project to be funded for \$4150 with a second by John Rausch, the motion passed.

The Auglaize County Historical Society's application for additional murals on the NAPA building was considered next. This is part of a series of images where residents can see themselves in historical moments in Auglaize County history with additional images being erected in St. Marys. Jessica Muhlenkamp noted there was also an image on the side of the Glow Lounge building with a historical photo and that IC Signs has experience in this kind of work. The project scored a 22.5 on the rubric. The committee specifically mentioned positively how the project had already raised funds from other avenues. Marlene Graf made a motion to recommend the funding for \$3500 in funding with a second by Eric Ireland. The motion was passed.

Finally, the Committee reviewed an application for First on the Moon for an additional wrapped utility box on Auglaize Street. They mentioned the large traction they have on Facebook to show how people from all over the State interact with their online content. They also received additional funding from a sponsor. The Project scored a 20.75 on the Rubric. Eric Ireland made a motion to recommend the project for funding of \$815 with a second by John Rausch. The motion was passed.

Motion by Muhlenkamp, second by Dunlap to approve \$8300 of lodging tax funds for the Children's Hometown Holiday. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Motion by Muhlenkamp, second by Dunlap to approve \$10,000 of lodging tax funds for the Performing Arts Center. Performing Arts Center Executive Director Nikki Barger explained to council that last year's event was a sold-out show, and this year efforts will be made to survey local businesses to determine revenue increases in relation to PAC show attendance. Ms. Barger added that the PAC hopes to ultimately become self-sustaining financially, but reminded council this is only their second year hosting such events. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Motion by Muhlenkamp, second by Parsons to approve \$4150 for the United Way Run to the Moon event. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Motion by Muhlenkamp, second by Dunlap to approve \$3500 for the Auglaize County Historical Society mural project. Mrs. Muhlenkamp clarified the mural will be a permanent installation on the NAPA building that faces the courthouse. Auglaize County Historical Society Administrator Rachel Barber explained that the framed vinyl mural, similar to the one at Park & Auglaize Streets, will be large enough for photo opportunities allowing visitors to 'step into history'. Ms. Barber noted the mural could be removed or replaced in the future without damage to the building. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Motion by Muhlenkamp, second by Sheipline to approve \$815 of lodging tax funds for the First on the Moon utility box wrap. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Motion by Muhlenkamp, second by Dunlap to approve a lodging tax expenditure of \$1908.90 for the invoice from the Wapak Public Works Department for their work in setup and teardown of the performance stage for this year's Party in the Park concert series. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Guest Petitions –

Auglaize County Historical Society Administrator Rachel Barber addressed Council to invite the community to a public reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 8th, 6pm, on the north side of the Auglaize County Courthouse.

Ms. Barber also shared that she recently learned of Wapakoneta resident and Western Ohio Electric Railway lineman Jeremiah Cronin, who was responsible for inventing some of the first safety equipment for this job. Mr. Cronin patented devices that saved linemen's lives, and he will be posthumously inducted into the National Linemen's Hall of Fame in October.

Unfinished Business –

President Doll noted the two parks levy resolution options being presented to Council: a 2 mill levy for 5 years, or a 1.5 mill levy for 3 years. Election board deadlines are fast approaching to get one of these options on November's ballot. Mrs. Muhlenkamp explained that just the basic park necessities in Wapakoneta, such as parking lot expansion & repair, fixing play fields and making playground improvements for safety will require 3.9 million dollars to achieve. Neither the 2 mill nor the 1.5 mill levy options will be able to reach these goals. Mr. Dunlap added that citizens need the data presented to them so they can understand these specific needs and costs involved, and suggested utilizing 'The Informer' newsletter to reach voters. SSD Price added that monies have been moved from the General Fund to the Parks Fund every year in order to cover personnel costs for that department. The current parks levy will expire at the end of 2026. President Doll encouraged Council to consider passage of either Res 2026-32 or Res 2026-35 this evening.

President Doll asked administration to continue any efforts possible to help with bike and scooter safety.

New Business –

Mr. Parsons summarized the city's parking enforcement procedures, noting the current process appears outdated and not aligned with ORC 4521. Mr. Parsons noted that currently, a citizen's failure to pay a parking violation ticket could result in a criminal citation, and he asked that this process be reconsidered. Further points that may need updated include: proper procedure for payment of fines, ability to contest a parking violation, verbiage listed on tickets, and thorough review of Wapakoneta Code Chapter 452. Mr. Parsons has made contact with Wapakoneta Police Chief and Law Director on these items and asked for their input. President Doll put the matter to the Streets & Alleys Committee for consideration.

Mr. Dunlap shared sentiments he received regarding the parks levy discussion, including citizens' request to see the list of needed improvements and costs associated with each, as well as a suggestion to hold a parks fundraiser event.

SSD Price summarized a request submitted by 'First on the Moon, Inc.' for an honorary street designation for three blocks of Bellefontaine Street to be named 'First on the Moon Street'. Three smaller, red signs would be installed beneath the current Bellefontaine Street signs and it would not cause change to any addresses or legal descriptions of the street. Mrs. Muhlenkamp noted that the organization applying for the designation would be the one responsible for paying for the signage, not the City of Wapakoneta. SSD Price explained that every honorary street designation application must be approved by council to proceed. Motion by Muhlenkamp, second by Dunlap to allow for the addition of honorary street signs listing 'First on the Moon Street' to Bellefontaine Street as submitted. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Ord 2026-31 for the second time re: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA (CRA) AGREEMENT WITH DAVID SCHLENKER AND AMY SCHLENKER AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Sheipline, second by Greve to suspend the rules for Ord 2026-31. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

Motion by Dunlap, second by Behr to adopt Ord 2026-31. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Res 2026-32 for the second time re: A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE NECESSITY OF LEVYING AN ADDITIONAL TAX IN EXCESS OF THE TEN-MILL LIMITATION FOR PARKS AND RECREATION PURPOSES AND REQUESTING THE COUNTY AUDITOR TO CERTIFY THE TOTAL CURRENT TAX VALUATION OF THE CITY OF WAPAKONETA AND THE REVENUE THAT WOULD BE GENERATED BY A TWO-MILL LEVY.

Motion by Parsons, second by Stinebaugh to suspend the rules for Res 2026-32. Vote – 6 yeas, 1 nay (Behr). Motion passed.

Motion by Dunlap, second by Stinebaugh to adopt Res 2026-32. Vote – 5 yeas, 2 nays (Behr, Sheipline). Motion passed. Mr. Greve asked administration to provide Council with a summary of park improvement projects needed, costs for same, and a breakdown of two-mill levy cost to average homeowners.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Ord 2026-34 for the first time re: AN ORDINANCE MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Res 2026-35 for the first time re: A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE NECESSITY OF LEVYING AN ADDITIONAL TAX IN EXCESS OF THE TEN-MILL LIMITATION FOR PARKS AND RECREATION PURPOSES AND REQUESTING THE COUNTY AUDITOR TO CERTIFY THE TOTAL CURRENT TAX VALUATION OF THE CITY OF WAPAKONETA AND THE REVENUE THAT WOULD BE GENERATED BY A ONE AND A HALF MILL LEVY.

Motion by Greve, second by Parsons to suspend the rules for Res 2026-35. SSD Price pointed out that Res 2026-32 and Res 2026-35 could both be submitted to the County Auditor to determine valuations for each scenario, if council so chooses. Thereafter, another resolution would be needed to officially place the matter on the ballot for November. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed. Motion by Dunlap, second by Parsons to adopt Res 2026-35. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Res 2026-36 for the first time re: A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE GENERATION FEE ABOLISHMENT/REPEAL FOR THE AUGLAIZE SOLID WASTE DISTRICT.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Ord 2026-37 for the first time re: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND SAFETY TO PURCHASE TWO NEW WAY SIDEWINDER ASL REFUSE TRUCKS FROM ISER EQUIPMENT, LLC AND TO ENTER INTO A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH DAIMLER TRUCK FINANCIAL SERVICES USA LLC FOR THE PURCHASE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mrs. Muhlenkamp asked why an ordinance has been brought before council rather than having committee review or a public hearing on the matter. SSD Price answered that the ordinance may be read three times, thus allowing for public input at each reading. Mr. Dunlap pointed out the truck purchase will eliminate the injuries sustained by employees having to physically lift bags of refuse. Public Works Superintendent Anthony Drexler addressed Council about the need to transition to automated refuse trucks and the logistics of department staffing during this change. Mr. Greve asked how the trash totes will be picked up if a car is blocking the needed space. Mr. Drexler explained that the department will need to spend a few weeks initially to communicate with residents about proper placement for their trash tote pickup, ensuring that they avoid parking areas, mailboxes, trees, etc. Three sizes of wheeled trash totes were provided on-site for council to examine, the smallest being 35 gallon. Ms. Behr asked if residents will still be required to use the white Wapak trash bags once they have totes in place. Mr. Drexler answered that any trash bag would be acceptable and the use of white Wapak trash bags would no longer be required. SSD Price stated that residents who currently use a 65 gallon tote pay \$32 per month on their utility bill and no longer need to purchase Wapak bags.

Mr. Tom Vehorn of 911 Fieldstone Ct. spoke at length about the benefits of keeping the Wapak trash bag system and his concern about the increased cost of having wheeled totes. Mr. Vehorn expressed that moving to the totes will de-incentivize recycling efforts and increase tipping fees. He also stated that many citizens leave their totes on the curbside long after the refuse trucks have collected the garbage. Mr. Vehorn suggested if citizens overfill the bags past the 40 pound limit, the refuse department should not pick up their trash until they distribute the weight properly. Mr. Greve asked administration to provide Council with data comparison of costs to residents for the bag system versus moving to the tote system, further pointing out that the matter was considered and similar data provided a few years ago. Mr. Vehorn stated the tote system takes longer, in seconds per pickup, than the bag system takes, and is therefore less efficient. Ms. Behr asked for the amount of requests for totes thus far. SSD Price answered approximately 700 totes are being used now versus about 3000 other households still using Wapak trash bags, The city continues to receive requests for totes, but there are no more to distribute at this time. Mrs. Muhlenkamp asked what fund line the truck purchase will be made from. SSD Price answered, Refuse Fund. President Doll noted there will be two more readings of the ordinances, providing time for public comment on the matter.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Ord 2026-38 for the first time re: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING \$30,000.00 PER YEAR FOR THE DOWNTOWN WAPAKONETA PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM FOR YEARS 2026-2028.

Mr. Shepline requested the wording within section one of the ordinance be clarified to reflect how much funding will be directed to façade improvement versus how much towards 'Ohio Main Street Program'. President Doll asked that administration provide a revision to said Ordinance reflecting this item for the next council meeting. Rachel Barber addressed Council on this item, stating that the funds are needed to pay the salary of the director position for the 'Ohio Main Street Program', as volunteer efforts would not be enough to attain desired goals in the program. Ms. Barber stated that the intention is not take anything away from the façade improvement program.

President Doll asked Clerk to read Ord 2026-39 for the first time re: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND SAFETY TO PURCHASE REFUSE COLLECTION TOTES FROM ISER EQUIPMENT, LLC AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Dunlap received a suggestion from a resident stating that the city ought to do a social media survey on this item.

Mayor Report:

Attended Airtow groundbreaking.

Attended the Ohio Municipal League annual meeting.

Water tower timeline finish date is July 2027.

Expect street closures for Summer Moon Festival July 14th – July 19th.

Safety Service Director Report:

Concessionaires must obtain permits from the city to operate unless they have preapproval from Council. SSD Price will develop a list of the repetitive community events for council to review and consider for preapproval.

SSD Price suggested providing residents with data on cost of the city's recycling program in addition to any refuse data.

Mrs. Muhlenkamp asked if there is a start date for the 198/501 intersection project. SSD Price replied, no.

Scheduling Committee Meetings:

Communications Committee will meet on July 20th at 6:30pm at City Hall.

Parks Levy Committee will meet on July 9th at 4:30pm at Harmon Park Gazebo.

Streets & Alleys Committee will meet on July 13th at 5:30pm at City Hall.

Miscellaneous Business:

Mr. Dunlap assured the VVA members in attendance that the City is actively working towards a plan for the proper care of the town's veterans banners and promised they will receive better care moving forward. Mr. Greve added that the goal is to determine which contract bid to select from the four bids received, then present council with an ordinance containing emergency language on July 20th in order to quickly proceed with resolving the matter.

Motion by Dunlap, second by Parsons to adjourn the meeting at 9:02pm. Vote – 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion passed.

President

Clerk of Council