

CIRCLEVILLE FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 11/12/2025

Circleville City Finance Committee convened in City Council Chambers, 127 South Court St. 2nd floor, Circleville, OH. on Tuesday November 12, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. Members Present: Chair Katie Logan Hedges, Committee Member Jeff Hallinin, and Clerk Melissa Burns. Absent Committee member: Tom Duvall. Other Council Members present: President Barry Keller and Audrey Lukasak. Invited guests present: Mayor Michelle Blanton, Auditor Mark Bidwell, and Safety Director Paul Pride.

Hedges called the Meeting to Order at 6:30 p.m.

Hallinin motioned to approve the Finance Committee minutes from October 7, 2025. Hedges seconded. Motion carried.

New Business:

a) AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE RAILROAD OVERPASS GRADE SEPARATION FUND TO ACCUMULATE REVENUE AND DISBURSE EXPENDITURES FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RAILROAD OVERPASS GRADE SEPARATION.

Discussion: Bidwell explained that the City requires \$2.5 million in matching funds for the railroad overpass grade separation project. This ordinance establishes a dedicated Overpass Grade Separation Fund, into which \$1 million will be transferred from General Fund 101 in 2025, followed by \$500,000 annually in 2026, 2027, and 2028.

MOTION-ROLL CALL-VOTE: Hallinin motioned to forward the Ordinance to the Council meeting on November 18, 2025, with a recommendation for passage. Hedges seconded. (2 Yeas - 0 Nays) Motion carried.

b) AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE IN THE GENERAL FUND 101 INCOME TAX REVENUE FUND 202 CITY PERMISSIVE MOTOR VEHICLE TAX FUND 205 SAFETY FORCES .5% TAX FUND 212 SAFETY FORCES .5% TAX FUND 227 WATERWORKS GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND RETIREMENT FUND 821 AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL WORKS DEBT SERVICE FUND 933 OF THE CITY OF CIRCLEVILLE

Discussion: Hedges noted that the net effect of this Housekeeping Ordinance is an increase of \$8,934.81. Bidwell pointed out that the largest transfers are coming out of General Fund 101, including an allocation for parks improvements that will not occur this year and has been deferred to next year's budget. He added that the fire pension contribution was originally placed in Fund 101 due to uncertainty about available balances in Fund 227; with remaining funds now identified in 227, they are being reallocated to cover pension obligations through year-end. Hedges inquired about the four Utility Department loans, and Bidwell clarified that they are being repaid early to ensure timely payment.

MOTION-ROLL CALL-VOTE: Hallinin motioned to forward the Ordinance to the Council meeting on October 21, 2025, with a recommendation for passage. Hedges seconded. (2 Yeas - 0 Nays) Motion carried.

c) AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF CIRCLEVILLE, STATE OF OHIO, DURING THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2026

Discussion: Bidwell explained that this ordinance funds all anticipated expenses through 2026. He noted that last year's budget totaled approximately \$52 million, while the proposed 2026 budget is \$39 million, a \$13 million reduction, with \$10 million attributable to the completion of wastewater treatment plant

expenditures. General Fund expenses are projected to decrease by \$1.7 million in 2026, largely due to several loans being paid off this year.

Keller sought clarification on hiring for 2026. Bidwell confirmed the proposed budget maintains current staffing levels and includes no new positions. Keller emphasized that any future positions must go through committee review to justify the need and secure funding.

Lukasak inquired about Contract Services budgets for both the Mayor and Council. Mayor Blanton stated her allocation mirrors last year's and covers ongoing contracts, such as with the Montrose Group. Keller explained that Council's Contract Services primarily fund two items: Phase 2 of the document scanning project and legal fees for Bricker Graydon. He directed the Auditor to budget 2026 legal expenses based on 2025 actuals, anticipating sustained NCA-related work. The Mayor added that any NCA funds received could reimburse the City for those costs.

Tom Springs asked whether the new fire levy would increase existing fire appropriations. Bidwell replied that it does not affect this budget.

MOTION-ROLL CALL-VOTE: Hallinin motioned to forward the Ordinance to the Council meeting on November 18, 2025, for a first reading. Hedges seconded. (2 Yeas - 0 Nays) Motion carried.

d) Safer Grant updates.

Discussion: Hedges explained that the SAFER grant, which funded six firefighters, expired in early July. The City elected to retain the positions without grant support. Mayor Blanton noted the funding depleted earlier than anticipated and did not cover the full term. Hedges added that the grant's terms were poorly communicated; it excluded union-mandated raises, overtime, or costs from post-hire negotiations.

Keller asked about the next application cycle. Mayor Blanton confirmed her intent to pursue a Retention Grant in the upcoming cycle, typically opening in May or June, with awards announced between late August and early September. Safety Director Pride clarified that the current award was for hiring, whereas a retention grant is now needed. He acknowledged the City missed this year's deadline but is implementing processes with leadership to track all future grant opportunities.

e) Levy budget discussions.

Discussion: Mayor Blanton stated that levy funds are not expected until late 2026 or early 2027. Bidwell noted this will ease pressure on General Fund 101 and enable greater investment in street projects. Keller added that, due to wage increases and population growth, the levy's full benefits will likely not materialize for 5–10 years.

Old/Other Business: None

Hallinin motioned to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 7:13 p.m. Hedges seconded. Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by: Melissa Burns, Clerk of Council.