

The FINANCE COMMITTEE held a MEETING on Monday, June 9th, 2025 beginning at 6:13 P.M.

FINANCE PRESENT: Chair Tollett, Cerra, Schneider, Siwierka

COM DEV PRESENT: Chair Schneider, Mitchell, Callahan, Lipian

OTHERS: Armstrong

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Davis, Stewart, *Medical Excuse*-Oswald

OTHERS PRESENT: Law Dir Deery, Safety Svc Dir Pyanowski, Mayor Brubaker, Finance Dir Pileski, Fin Dir Farrell, Planning Dir Schoenig, Parks Dir Reardon

1. The matter of approval of meeting minutes from the Finance Committee Meeting, on May 27th, 2025, as circulated.

Motion made by Mr. Cerra and seconded by Mr. Schneider to approve the 'said' meeting minutes as circulated.

MOTION CARRIES

2. The matter of the transfer of parcels; 06-26-056-000-017, 06-24-085-102-018, 06-24-085-102-019, 06-24-085-102-020 from the City of Elyria to the Elyria Community Improvement Corporation.

Referred By: Admin Legal Counsel Craig on behalf of Mayor Brubaker

Mayor Brubaker said the three parcels that end in 18, 19 and 20 are 3 small parcels on Lowell Street. They are the old weigh station. A gentleman that owns property adjacent who is interested in purchasing those parcels for his business. The parcel that ends in 017 is the property that used to house the old Palm Crest East Nursing Home at the corner of 3rd & West. There is an individual who would like to purchase that property. He will be at the CIC meeting on Thursday. He's done research on the house that was on that property prior to it being the nursing home and he wants to build a replica of that and make it a four- or five-unit apartment complex. He has done similar projects in Mansfield and Hazeville. He will not need any money from the City but they are working with him on the purchase of that property. He is asking for this to pass as an emergency.

Mr. Schneider asked if the property owner who wants to buy the parcels on Lowell is for residential or business. Mayor Brubaker said business.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if Waverly is vacated? She thought the back half of Waverly was vacated. She thought maybe the City can vacate the front half.

Mayor Brubaker said, not that he's aware of, it's the old weights & measures station.

Mrs. Siwierka also asked about West & Third and she thought there is an alley there. Mayor Brubaker said there is an alley that runs from behind Lifecare to Third St.

Mrs. Mitchell asked where the parking would be for a four- or five-unit apartment building? Mr. Armstrong said parking for those homes over there are off through the alley.

Mayor Brubaker said the design of the house would be closer to West Ave and there may be parking behind the unit. It will resemble the historic area.

There were no further questions and Chair Tollett read the committee report and asked for a motion.

Motion made by Mr. Cerra, second by Mr. Schneider to authorize an ordinance to authorize the transfer of the 'said' parcels. Emergency Clause.

MOTION CARRIES

COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

3. The matter of a funding request by Lorain County Transit for the continuation of the VIA Transportation Program in the City.

Referred By: Mayor Brubaker

Mayor Brubaker said the City worked with Lorain County Transit a year ago and Commissioner Moore and in July they kicked off the VIA Transportation Program in Elyria. This program has been well received and it was paid for with a grant and it was a pilot program for Elyria and Lorain. We are now at the end of that grant period and Commissioner Moore asked for a contribution for this program to be continued. Originally \$300,000 was requested but that will be reduced. The contract period is July 1st, 2025 thru June 30th, 2026. If this is passed this evening, it could be paid for over the course of two budget cycles splitting in half and out of different funds.

Commissioner David Moore, LC Commissioner, 226 Middle Ave., Elyria. The Mayor had asked the Transportation Director and Karen Perkins to be here this evening, but, they were not available. He said this concept of transportation has been a disaster for 25 years, discussions began in 2001 and they continued 20 years later. It was a failed system of fixed routes. The county has twice tried to put a tax on the ballot in order to support transit, which succeeded in Lorain and Elyria. Mayor Bradley was trying to create a micro similar to Sandusky and then VIA came to town. It was embraced and a grant was awarded. There were access funds in the ARPA account and they had extra money in grant accounts and they executed this in 90 days and used a lot of marketing dollars to promote and when they ran those ads, numbers increased, it was a success in 90 days. Communities are saying we have to participate. They're looking at partnerships. Elyria and Lorain have formed some very great partnerships; the land bank and the vacant lots that the county and city have been working on together. And the Mall, great things are coming. At the same time, they're working with NOACA and are expanding Route 2 to 3 lanes from Rt 611 to the Turnpike which will make our area boom. And it's moving fast. Also, the Port Authority working with the City in regards to DBR. Lorain came up with money and they have \$250,000. Elyria will pay the same, \$250,000. Lorain is working with Mercy Hospital to get them to be a partnership.

LCCC has also stepped up and would like to be a partner. They, as a commission, is to try to bring everything to the table because it's all about getting things done for the people they represent. He appreciates the committee allowing him to speak. He feels this could be a success program that City Council can be proud of.

Commissioner Moore went on to say that they (the Commissioners) are going to go to the public to ask for an increase in the LC sales tax for funding for the Sheriff's office. They found out there are 7 other counties in the State that have sales tax just for transportation and Lorain County does not. We operate using grant money only. We don't want to lose VIA. The fixed routes are empty and VIA is not. VIA is being used during the school year by students to go back and forth to school.

Chair Tollett thanked Commissioner Moore and said he wholeheartedly supports this. The funds for this program can come out of 2 budgets; \$125,000 from 2025 budget and \$125,000 from 2026 budget.

Dir Pileski said it could come out of the General Fund, though, his concern is that we're already spending more than we're bringing in. The other fund is the ½ percent Income Tax, but, we didn't sell that tax as part of this, he will scour the General Fund Budget and see if he can move or add \$125,000.

Mr. Schneider asked for the logistics on how the VIA program works? If you live in Elyria, do you stay within Elyria?

Commissioner Moore said there is a route that is already determined and a rider may have to walk a block unless they're disabled. There is a transition for fixed routes where a rider can hop on one to go to another and that is being worked on now. How do they connect to Cleveland, how to connect to LCCC in N Ridgeville? They're working with RTA. And trying to connect with our system and use VIA to connect with the fixed routes and to re-evaluate that system. The main thing is to connect to hospitals and groceries and doctors. The routes can be shifted and moved as the need arises.

Mrs. Mitchell said she has heard, that people take it to the grocery store and they shop and does it come back to pick them up to return them back home?

Commissioner Moore said that the rider would have to call when they're finished shopping and would pay \$2 and they can watch it on an app on your phone to see when they would arrive to pick you up. The problem would be those folks who don't have that technology. There is going to be a wait, his goal was a 10-minute wait, but, the average time increased to 18 minutes, which is much better than a 2 hour wait on the fixed route system. And they do have to walk to a designated area to be picked up.

Mrs. Mitchell understands that disabled do not have to walk to that designated area, but she asked, what about elderly, who are not disabled but would have difficulty walking to that designated area?

Commissioner Moore said if a rider is elderly and have difficulty walking, they can say that and the driver will pick them up at there area they are at. The vehicles also have ramps.

They are looking on installing bike racks on the vans for bikers.

Mr. Armstrong said he fought for this and is proud and supportive of this. From July 15, 2024 through yesterday, June 8th, 2025 there were 31,878 rides have been accomplished. There are almost 2,000 active ride users that actively use this service in Elyria alone. The seniors use it for free and students use it for one dollar. This is very needed and he sees it being used more.

Mrs. Siwierka thanked Commissioner Moore and she is in support of this. She sees the vehicle all around. She wants to put a bug in for the commissioners. She would love for them to consider the Greyhound drop off and pick-up. She has watched folks get off the bus in the middle of downtown and there is nothing for them. Maybe have the Greyhound be shifted to the mall area once the mall is settled. To have riders dropped off in the downtown area without any shelter, it's unsettling and she asks for alternatives to be considered.

There were no more questions and Chair Tollett read the committee report and asked for a motion.

Motion made by Mr. Cerra, second by Mrs. Siwierka to authorize the 'said' funding request in the amount of \$250,000. Emergency Clause.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

4. The matter of a applying for an Urban Forestry Grant.

Referred By: Parks & Rec Dir Reardon

Parks Dir Reardon said this is a grant through the Ohio Dept of Natural Resources. They would like to use this for the salary of the City's Arborist which is one of the target types for this grant. The ceiling is \$100,000 which would cover salary and matching benefits. There is no matching requirement by the city. The deadline is Aug 27th and the award date is around mid-October and they would have 2 years to use the funds which would be up to the administration and the Mayor if it would be used in one or two years.

Mayor Brubaker said these grants have been initiated by McCauley & Co. This money will not be used to hire an additional person, it's paying for Scott Hennigan who is the current Forestry Dir. Previously it was Scott Payne who was paid thru this grant money. An emergency clause is requested.

Mr. Schneider asked if this is new or have we received funding from this grant in the past? Dir Reardon said we have received other ODNR grants, but never this one.

Mrs. Mitchell said she had a neighbor had an issue with tree lawn tree branches and he asked her how it could be taken care of. Mrs. Mitchell called Mr. Hennigan and he went out to that address a few days later and took care of it and the resident was very happy. This service is very much needed.

There were no more questions and Chair Tollett read the committee report and asked for a motion.

Motion made by Mr. Schneider, second by Mr. Cerra to authorize the Mayor to apply for and accept the 'said' grant and emergency clause applies due to deadline.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

5. The matter of a applying for a Norfolk Southern 'Thriving Communities' Grant.

Referred By: Parks & Rec Dir Reardon

Dir Reardon said this grant opportunity came up with one of the weekly meetings with McCauley & Co and we meet the criteria as far as being located within their network and 30 minutes of a line. They will use this toward the pocket park. The ceiling is \$50,000. They could not find anywhere on the application where there would be matching dollars. It must be a non-matching grant. Deadline is Sept 1st. It doesn't saw when it's awarded.

There were no questions and Chair Tollett read the committee report and asked for a motion.

Motion made by Mr. Schneider, second by Mr. Cerra to authorize the Mayor to apply for and accept the 'said' grant and emergency clause applies due to deadline.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

6. The matter of delinquent and final utility accounts approved by the Utility Resolution Board and to be certified to the Lorain County Auditor's Office.

Referred By: Public Works Supt Conner

Dir Conner is not in attendance and Safety Dir Pyanowski spoke on this. This list was approved by the Utilities Resolution Board and to be referred to the County Auditor's Office for tax liens.

Mr. Schneider asked if these lists are all multi family? And typical that some are sewer and sanitary only, he 's making a note of that.

Dir Pyanowski this list is mainly multi family and it just came out that way this month.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if there is a problem with the account on which owes \$29,240, which is Elyria UM Village on West Ave.? She also asked about the Golden Corral.

Dir Pyanowski said he's not sure if they've had an issue with them. They are having conversations with the company on this issue.

Dir Pyanowski said the Golden Corral is going through a transition at this time. They've been in contact with the attorney overseeing this property on getting the grass cut and they did not follow thru and the City had to cut it.

There were no further questions and Chair Tollett read the committee report and asked for a motion.

Motion made by Mr. Cerra, second by Mr. Schneider to authorize a resolution to authorize the 'said' delinquent accounts to be certified to the County Auditor.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

7. The matter of City property (2010 Ford F150 Truck – Water Distribution Dept.) which is unfit for use and to be taken out of service and to be disposed of.

Referred By: Public Works Supervisor R. Eye

Dir Pyanowski said this is a 2010 F150 truck and it's covered in rust and it needs a few thousand in repairs which is not economical. They would like to sell on gov deals.

There were no questions and Chair Tollett read the committee report and asked for a motion.

Motion made by Mr. Cerra, second by Mrs. Siwierka to authorize a resolution declaring the 'said' vehicle unfit for City use and an ordinance to dispose of the 'said' vehicle by the best means possible in accordance with the law.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

8. The matter of City property (2001 Forklift – Waste Water Dept.) which is unfit for use and to be taken out of service and to be disposed of.

Referred By: Public Works Supervisor R. Eye

Dir Pyanowski said this is the same as the previous, the cost to repair exceeds the value. They have already replaced this with a new forklift and they would like to recoup what they can and to funnel it back into the budget into the general fund.

There were no questions and Chair Tollett read the committee report and asked for a motion.

Motion made by Mr. Cerra, second by Mr. Schneider to authorize a resolution declaring the 'said' vehicle unfit for City use and an ordinance to dispose of the 'said' vehicle by the best means possible in accordance with the law.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

9. The matter of Amendments to the 2025 Permanent Appropriations Ordinance.

Referred By: Finance Directors Pileski and Farrell *[Standing Referral]*.

Dir Pileski said he has 2 appropriation changes this evening for the Parks & Rec Dept/ The first is General Fund, P&R Dept, Operating & Maintenance \$3,995.00 for NOPEC Grant monies that for Ely Square Improvements.

The second, the Findley Trust Fund, Operating & Maintenance \$5,900.00 for the same reason, NOPEC Grant monies for the Ely Square Improvements.

Also, the discussion earlier for \$125,000 will show up as an addition in misc. general fund miscellaneous government or if he may find somewhere within the budget, and it would be a negative to correspond with moving \$125,000 into that fund.

Mr. Schneider asked if there is a certain time frame to use the NOPEC Grant money?

Mayor Brubaker said there was about \$190,000 that was left in that fund when they came into office. They used that to replace some of the City Hall windows. They are caught up and are up to date. The next allotment that they have to spend is the end of this year and will be some monies in 2026 and 2027. They expect to see this in two to three weeks and deposited directly back to us. He also just submitted for the work that was done at Brookdale Cemetery for the windows and the HVAC and another \$40,000 to NOPEC.

Dir Pileski said the 2026 Tax Budget will be due July 17th and they can address it at the Strategic Planning Meeting on July 30th. Everyone agreed with that.

Motion made by Mr. Cerra, second by Mr. Schneider to authorize an ordinance to amend the 'said' permanent appropriations.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

Chair Tollett went over some housekeeping items that have been in pending. He went over the list and the items that he wanted removed from the pending list. Those items were number's 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13,

Chair Tollett asked for a motion to adjourn the Finance Meeting:

Motion made by Mr. Schneider and second by Mr. Cerra to adjourn this evening's Finance committee meeting at 6:55 P.M.

MOTION CARRIES

Respectfully Submitted by,
Colleen Rosado, Clerk Secretary/Administrative Assistant

Next Finance Meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 14th, 2025 at 6:00 P.M.