

The FINANCE COMMITTEE held a meeting on Monday, October 27th, 2025 beginning at 6:15 P.M

FINANCE PRESENT: Chair Tollett, Cerra, Schneider, Siwierka, Davis
COM DEV PRESENT: Chair Schneider, Mitchell, Oswald, Lipian, Callahan
OTHERS: Armstrong, Stewart
EXCUSED ABSENCE: none

OTHERS PRESENT: Law Dir Deery, Safety Svc Dir Pyanowski, Mayor Brubaker, Finance Directors Pileski and Farrell, Engineer Schneider, WWPC Supt. Stewart, HR Dir Yousefi, Legal Counsel Craig

1.The matter of approval of meeting minutes from the Finance Committee Meeting, from October 14th, 2025 as circulated.

Motion made by Mr. Cerra and seconded by Mr. Schneider to approve the 'said' Meeting Minutes.

MOTION CARRIES

2. The matter of Water Pumping Plant property, (one upright man lifts), which is unfit for use and to be taken out of service and disposed of by the best means possible.

Referred By: Public Works Supervisor R. Eye

Dir Pyanowski said this equipment is like an electric ladder. The person stands on it and it lifts you straight up. This equipment has already been replaced. This is just to get rid of the older obsolete one which has already been taken out of service.

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 and an ordinance for the said item(s) to be removed from service and disposed of.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

3. The matter of the City of Elyria 2025 Employee Compensation Plan Study.

Referred By: HR Dir Yousefi

[This matter was tabled on October 14th].

Chair Tollett said he asked this to be tabled on Oct. 14 so that everyone could understand what was being asked and to be able to protect the General Fund the best way we can and by taking care of the employees. The Fire Chief did not request a salary increase last year, when the Police Chief got his increase. Fire Chief Pronesti maintained his current rate which affected him personally. He will be retiring early next year and he is asking that he be moved to what the salary study recommended and which would mirror to what the Police Chief earns.

HR Dir Yousefi went back to the reason why this salary study was done. At the end of 2024 and looking at the current system, which was already 5 to 6 years old.

Compensation Guidance says that we need to look at market data every five to six years. And jobs where there is a shortage of labor need to be looked at more often. The current system was adjusted using non-market data so, it was time to look at the market data. In last few years, it was indicated that the rates were a little low in the market. We had to use the personal placement committee a few times to make sure we were making good offers and fair adjustments. We've also had longer hiring times due to low applicant interest. Replacing one experienced employee can cost thousands of dollars in lost productivity and training.

It was clear at the end of 2024 that the idea of a 6% across the board increase for Ch 165 was not really payable. It was not the best use of resources. So, this salary study was necessary. In the middle of this year, Ch 165 employee's rec'd a 3% increase. If we would have followed along with AFSCME, we would still owe a 3% retro for '25 plus a 5% increase starting in 2026.

We lacked the data to make focus and cost-effective decisions. This salary study gives real objective data-based info about where we stand in the market. It's not about giving automatic increases, it's about knowing what's fair and competitive. These recommendations are to be used as a road map for our future.

When employees are paid fairly and competitively they are happy and more productive. There's a reduced legal risk when there's a reduced number of complaints and grievances and an investment in good management. Our pay practices need to be defensible, transparent and fair. This study does that. Implementing the salary study does confirm our commitment to employees and residents. By paying employees fair and competitive wages, is the way to show their work is valued.

We have been telling the Ch 165 employees to be patient for almost a year, while we waited on this study and recommendations and we now have this information and if we fail to implement this study, it would be huge to employee morale. We now have the information that tells us this is where employees should be. There is a plan moving forward as to how to adjust those scales and ranges.

Dir Pyanowski said he agrees with HR, that we went out for this study to find out where these pay scales should be. It's not about the particular employees, it's the positions which were graded against the market. Now we have an idea as to what those numbers are and he would ask that this be adopted as circulated with the revisions that have been made.

Mayor Brubaker said he echoes HR Dir and Safety Svc Dir's comments and he reiterates what was said by Chair Tollett about Chief Pronesti and his willingness to equal with what the Police Chief receives to help with the General Fund costs. Some of the Ch 165 employees have had to waiver due to a lot of reasons and went about 6 years without any increase. He would ask council to support this.

Finance Dir Pileski gave an estimated breakdown per fund; total cost for 2026 including pension and benefits estimated at \$504,902.00, of that amount \$181,980 would come from the General Fund, \$25,759 would come from the Street Construction M&R fund.

\$838.00 from the Block Grant and CHIP Grant Funds, \$115,646 from the Water Fund, \$54,991 from Sanitation Fund, \$113,789 from Wastewater Pollution Control Fund and \$11,062 from the Storm Water Fund, total of \$504,902.00. This amount is about \$70,000 lower than previously discussed because they took that 30% increase out, which would've been for the Fire Chief position.

Mrs. Siwierka asked what is the difference in the Fire Chief pay?

HR Dir Yousefi said when they make this adjustment, the percentage of increase to bring the Fire Chief to the salary as the Police Chief is about 5%.

Mrs. Siwierka said this study was needed and she's glad it's been done and it's a barometer of where we're at in the market. She's glad we'll follow thru with it. And it's good that we will start to do annual performance reviews and this is a good move forward. She explained that the reason the Police Chief's salary was adjusted was because there's a rank differential in the collective bargaining agreement and if they didn't up the Chief's salary when the Captains got their increases, because they're in the union, the Chief would have been making less than the Captains.

Law Dir Deery asked where the current Fire Chief will be placed as a one-time thing, as where the salary structure is, which will remain intact.

HR Dir said moving forward, the Police Chief and Fire Chief will stay at the same rates.

Dir Pyanowski said the salary study will put the Police Chief and the Fire Chief both on pay grade 16 and then within whatever steps and expand the steps. Currently there is only one step for the Chief and the new scale would expand the steps from zero to 12, but, they would both move to the same pay grade. And when a new employee comes in or gets promoted to Chief, they would be placed appropriately.

Mrs. Siwierka said this has happened before where a supervisor did not take an increase, which was Terry Korzan of the WWPC Plant.

Chair Tollett said the City promotes from within and that makes Elyria great as a community.

Dir Deery asked for an effective date for these increases.

Mayor Brubaker said none of these funds are appropriated in the '25 budget and could be appropriated in the temporary budget for 2026. So, the effective date would be the first pay period of 2026, which is the last two weeks of 2025, but, the pay comes out in January 2026.

Mr. Lipian asked if PERS is still at 14%?

Fin Dir Pileski said yes and PERS is already factored into the total and that estimate is \$20,565.

Mr. Lipian said he agrees with Mrs. Siwierka, that merit-based considerations are important and are about growth and positive teams. And we shouldn't be afraid to encourage performance evaluations, where the leaders are able to get feedback on their leadership and strengthening each other and for teamwork.

Mrs. Mitchell said Muni Court may come back and they will want these increases as well. Where will that put the budget?

Dir Pileski said Muni Court is doing the salary study now and if it's not completed by the first of the year, they want the 5% that AFSCME will get, that will be up to council.

The effective date for pay period #1 of 2026 would be December 21st, 2025.

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

Motion made by Mr. Cerra, seconded by Mr. Schneider to authorize an ordinance to accept the compensation study and to be effective the first pay period of 2026.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

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

Referred By: Finance Directors Pileski and Farrell

[Standing Referral].

Finance Dir Pileski listed the Appropriation changes. He said we're getting down to the end of the year and they want to start cleaning up a few items.

1st is adding \$10,000 to Gen Fund Parks & Rec for additional monies needed for the electricity bills.

2nd is adding \$470,000 to Gen Fund, TLCI Grant NOACA Dept for Safe Routes to School Project.

3rd adding \$45,000 to Misc. Gen Gov, Operating & Maintenance for additional legal costs associated with DBR Litigation.

4th is moving \$130,000 in Opioid Settlement Fund, EPD from Operating to Capital for the purchase 2 new F150 Interceptor Vehicles. We have to keep records because we have to report what the opioid monies are spent on.

5th is in Street Construction Maintenance repair fund adding \$40,000 to operating & maintenance for higher repair costs for the equipment. We're currently at a total of \$426,959 vs. a total of \$372,360 in 2024, those are up about \$50,000 from last year. The last four are clean-up; transfer and appropriations to make sure we get thru some of these accounts through the end of the year.

6th Water Fund, Miscellaneous moving \$110,000 from Capital to salary & wages

7th Special P&R fund moving \$22,000 from operating, \$18,000 to salary & wages, \$4000 to benefits & pension

8th Sanitation Fund, moving \$10,000 from salary & wages, Sanitation Dept to salary & wages, Sanitation Misc.

9th WWPC, misc. Dept., \$150,000 from operating & maintenance to Salary & Wages.

Mrs. Siwierka asked if the department is proceeding with marking the police vehicles?

Dir Pyanowski said yes, the marking of the EPD vehicles has been approved.

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 authorizing to amend the 'said' permanent appropriation changes.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

***5. The matter of an agreement for shared stairway access at 340 Broad St. to 338 Broad St., (upstairs from the Elyria Arts Council).**

Referred By: Mayor Brubaker [Standing Referral]

Mayor Brubaker said he met with Eric Bowens several months ago. He was looking for space for his organization's new youth mentorship program. The mayor thought of the space on the 2nd floor of the Elyria Arts Council. There was an issue with the HVAC in the Arts Council and they used NOPEC Funding to reimburse the City for the new HVAC on both floors. So now the upstairs is available and in usable condition. Attorney Craig and the Law Dept have been working on a lease agreement. The first part is to allow to use the stairwell that goes from Broad St upstairs.

Legal Counsel Craig said the first part of this is for an agreement for a mutual grant of easement for a shared stairwell. The two buildings are connected together, 336 Broad (Arts Council) and 338 is upstairs and 340 is next to 336 and there is only one way upstairs and that stairwell is on both property lines. The owner of 340 had prevented access, but, they have now reached an agreement of how to maintain that stairwell. We will have joint access and that way the tenant will be able to use that stairwell.

Chair Tollett said this is an important program for this community.

Mr. Schneider said we must be limited as to what could go on the second floor since there is no elevator.

Mr. Craig said that is correct. There is an internal stairwell from the first floor, which is the Arts Council space and we can't have people wandering thru there to go upstairs.

Mrs. Siwierka said that space used to be Household Finance, but they won't be using the fire escape, is that correct?

Mayor Brubaker said, hopefully they won't have to use the fire escape. The EFD inspected it recently and said it's the best fire escape in the city and it can be used only if needed.

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

Motion made by Mr. Cerra, seconded by Mr. Schneider to authorize an ordinance authorizing the 'said' mutual easement agreement. Emergency clause requested.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

***6. The matter of a lease agreement with Elyria Youth Sports for the use of 338 Broad St. (upstairs from the Elyria Arts Council) and to use as a meeting place.**
Referred By: Mayor Brubaker [Standing Referral]

Legal Counsel Craig said this is the Elyria Youth Sports Club and is a nonprofit association. It's a nice use of this space that will be put into use.

Chair Tollett asked if the organization will provide their own insurance?
Mr. Craig said yes.

Mr. Armstrong asked how long is the lease for?

Attorney Craig said it's a one-year lease and they'll renew it month to month after that. The first year is \$200 and as they renew it every year the cost will go up 5%. And the lease will go into effect after approved by council at the November 3rd council meeting.

Mr. Schneider asked if the utilities are shared?
Attorney Craig said the gas and electric are separately metered. The City provides water.

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

Motion made by Mr. Cerra, seconded by Mrs. Davis to authorize an ordinance authorizing the 'said' Lease agreement. Emergency clause requested.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

Chair Tollett asked Chair Mitchell to call The Utilities Committee to Order for a JOINT Meeting of Utilities and Finance.

The evening's meeting continued with that Joint Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

Motion made by Mr. Cerra and second by Mr. Schneider to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 7:07 P.M.

MOTION CARRIES

That concluded this evening's meetings.

The Next Finance Meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 10th, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Colleen Rosado, Secretary/Administrative Assistant