

Minutes of the FINANCE COMMITTEE which held a meeting on Monday, July 13th, 2026 beginning at 6:45 P.M. *Circulated 7/30/2026*

FINANCE PRESENT: Chair Tollett, Cerra, Schneider, Van Wormer, Davis
COM DEV PRESENT: Chair Schneider, Mitchell, Doehne, Lipian, Rothgery
UTILITIES PRESENT: Chair Mitchell, Davis, Armstrong, Oswald, Rothgery
EXCUSED ABSENCE: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Brubaker, Law Dir Deery, Safety Svc Dir Pyanowski, Finance Dir Pileski, Building Official Farkas, Planning Dir Schoenig, Engineer Schneider, Public Works Supt. Conner, CD Mgr. Almabayyed, CD Dir Scott, Reclamation Supt Stewart, Public Works Supt. Smallwood, Asst Dir Loesch

1. The matter of approval of meeting minutes from the Finance Committee Meeting, which took place on June 8th, 2026, as circulated on 6/26/2026.

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

MOTION CARRIES

2. 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

Supt Conner said this list is large and equals a total amount due of \$129,825.40. the first 13 accounts on this list are accounts that were delinquent under \$100.00. in the past, we have not brought those accounts forward, since the amount was low. But, those account holders were given lean letters and the resolution board decided that it was best to include all accounts that are over \$25 that have not been paid.

Over \$70,000 of the total is for the Methodist Village accounts. They have leaned \$134,000 against the Methodist Village and this list adds \$72,684. She checked with the county auditor's office to see if they have received any payments as of today and they have not.

Chair Tollett said this will pass as an emergency.

Dir Pyanowski added some clarity, there was an unwritten rule that any balance less than \$100 wouldn't be leaned and they didn't have that in writing and they voted to reduce that to anything more than \$25 will now be leaned. He reached out to the Methodist Village and he was provided contact information to the local operations manager and he reached out and got no response and he reached out again and his emailed was forwarded onto the board and he has not heard anything back. They have tried to reach out multiple times with no avail and will continue to lean the property until they can get some kind of response.

The property tax due date has been pushed back to July 31st and that may impact why some payment haven't been made yet, because they are not due yet.

That is worth monitoring because we have collected from this property in the past.

And we still need to get to the bottom of this so we have clarity as to what's going on.

Chair Tollett asked Supt Conner if she can bring the committee up to date on how the late fee collection is going and what has been collected year to date?

Supt Conner said she has that information. Through the end of last month's billing cycle, they've billed about \$260,000 in late fees.

President Mitchell asked why do we allow some of these bills to get so high? There is one on this list for \$2,883.53, one for \$6,386 and they are private residences.

Law Dir Deery said some of these are leaks where maybe the resident didn't know there was a leak and didn't apply for a credit, so even if it's a single-family residence, over a months' time the water consumption can add up. They are dealing with one right now where pipes were stolen and in a matter of one week, the water added up to \$5,000.

Supt Conner said the account balance of \$2,883 was a leak and it was a vacant home and something broke and they never heard from the owner.

Dir Pyanowski said they believe that's a leak, but, they're only looking at the usage, if we haven't heard from the property owner and they haven't filed a leak credit, we wouldn't know that. That's an assumption we're making based on the usage. We try to work with residents who have leaks, a letter goes out letting them know, based on their usage, that they could have some kind of leak.

Chair Tollett said that with the equipment we have, the meter can track the water usage and at what time of the day the usage spikes.

Pres Mitchell asked if the department hears from a resident when they get large bills?

Supt Conner said, yes, they get calls and even if the usage goes from a 1 to a 2. The billing system is now set up that we are able to bill on the same day each month, which equates to 30-day cycles.

Mrs. Rothgery said she noticed about 8 or 9 accounts in the new developments which are just sewer and sanitary.

Supt Conner said council approved the habitual late fee and after 3 consecutive months of not paying, they can charge an additional \$250 and a lot of residents in those areas have rec'd letters to alert them that the \$250 has also been assessed.

Mrs. Rothgery said she has noticed over the last 6 months we have repeat offenders who may be contractors or flipping homes and how do we keep signing them in for water if they have, say, 6 other properties that are delinquent?

Supt Conner said each property stands alone, they don't group those together by owners, it goes by the property and not the owner.

Mr. Oswald asked if these new meters can tell when a water line breaks, does the person ever get notified?

Supt Conner said they do get reports and they watch those and if it's a big spike, they will send a service worker to shut it off.

Mr. Tollett asked how much should the City take to alert residents when we have a heat wave and most residents use more water and if they have a garden and kids it's going to really increase the water usage.

Dir Pyanowski said the habitual late fee is three times in a 12-month calendar and doesn't have to be 3 consecutive months and some accounts will be avoided because they will lean the account before it gets to that point. But they are still getting a 5% late fee on every bill that has any amount that delinquent. He wants to remind everyone, this is a business and there will never be a 100% collection, so we're doing pretty good. Supt Conner said we're between 4% and 5% delinquent over 60 days.

Dir Pyanowski said the residents that have only sanitation and sewer with us and water with Rural Water and do they not realize that they receive two different bills, so the department sent those residents letters to explain that to them and we rec'd some payments after that.

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

Motion made by Mr. Cerra, second by Mr. Van Wormer to authorize a resolution to certify said charges as liens to the LC Auditor's Office. Emergency clause.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

3. The matter of a demolition lien for the property of 360 S. Maple St. to be certified to the Lorain County Auditor's Office.

Referred By: Building Official Farkas

Building Official Farkas said this is a demo lien for 360 S Maple. They've completed an asbestos evaluation of \$750 and it came back positive and the asbestos removal costs were \$10,542 and the demolition itself was \$16,400 for a total of \$27,692.00.

They sent certified letters to all known recipients and no response was received.

Chari Tollett said this will pass as an emergency.

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 to certify said charges as liens to the LC Auditor's Office. Emergency clause.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

4. The matter of selling a vacant City owned parcel on Ford Rd. to the adjoining property owners at 2001 Ford Rd.

Referred By: Legal Counsel Craig

This matter was tabled for this evening's meeting.

5. The matter of amending Elyria Codified Ordinance 109.05 for charging fees for processing public records requests for body-worn cameras and dash cam footage.

Referred By: Law Director Deery

Law Dir Deery said this proposed change to the fee ordinance addresses fees, records requests for body-worn and dash cam footage in accordance with State Law. The proposed language and the amounts being proposed to be charged are based on State Law, a maximum of \$750 per video and \$75.00 per hour as an incremental amount. They have found that since the City has instituted body cam and dash cam footage, this is labor intense and it not only involves time of watch and reviewing and a great deal of legal analysis, which is even with the software that they have that includes AI to do automatic redacting. For every hour of footage can take upwards of four hours. If you have a traffic stop where 3 officers arrive on-scene, which took one hour, you now have a one-hour of footage times three, that's three hours. She has one attorney who reviews these requests, up to 80% of her time and she has an administrative support staff that is utilizing the bulk of her time to go thru these. They receive thousand of requests per year and they process in the order they receive. The discovery requests that are a part of a court case is a separate issue. Many requests they receive are bloggers from out-of-state and some are anonymous. They have a particular blogger, from California who has a preference for young women who drive drunk. They make records request and place them on YouTube. She assumes they will gladly pay these costs. Oberlin and Lorain already have such policies in place. There are some exceptions; for a victim, if there is a pending court case. This is simply for public records requests in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code. The General Assembly specifically saw the burden and recognized that the process is very labor intensive. This amendment will update the fee ordinance to add this at \$75.00 per hour with a maximum per record request of \$750.00. An estimate will need to be given, pursuant to State Law before the request to say to move forward with processing the request.

Chair Tollett asked how this will affect the media?

Law Dir Deery said if it's paper, which is a total different thing, but, if it's for a video, body cam or dash cam, they would be quoted that same amount.

Mr. Schneider thanked Dir Deery. He asked where the fees which would be collected, where would they go?

Dir Deery said State Law says the Police Dept may charge these fees. There would be a separate fund set up in the General Fund specifically for those fees.

There has been some discussion as to whether they would go back to personnel because they foresee that between EPD and her office, that there would be a need to increase personnel, this isn't going to slow down. There is currently one officer at EPD that handles Axon, the body and dash cam footage software and hardware. Brian Perez in the IT Dept is the point person in IT.

Mrs. Davis said she never thought about bloggers out there requesting these things, she guesses these people are making money because you see these things on the internet and Facebook all the time. She is glad that this matter has been brought before them for consideration and making them aware of it.

Law Dir Deery said it is not something that she knew of before of either.

Mr. Van Wormer asked if this is in the scope of someone's current job description?

Law Dir Deery said this has been going on since the public records review and as part of that since the city has obtained this technology. It's been within the last 18 months or so, that the State passed a law that said that municipalities and police departments could charge for these requests.

Mr. Van Wormer said he's torn because transparency is something we talk about and for some people, who may really need this footage, financial issues could be a fact. Chair Tollett reminded that this does not affect pending court cases.

Mr. Van Wormer asked if there will be a change in staffing so there is someone that will be dedicated to something like this?

Chair Tollett said that an employee in the Law Office does this 80% of their time.

Law Dir said her staff that does this does it as needed, some days it can be 100% and some days it can be less. There are times when it wouldn't just be the administrative specialist, there may be times when it would be an assistant law dir., or multiple staff from her office, if the request is for a major event where there were many officers that responded to it. They don't currently have a specific title and person doing this job.

Mr. Schneider see's how this is creating a strain on positions that there are not positions for. He asked when they are not part of a subpoena or a court request, is there a turn-around time that that need to get to the requested parties when they are bloggers?

Law Dir Deery said the legal requirement is that is has to be done promptly and for fairness, they do log them and they are dealt in the order they are received. Something that is a 15-minute video could still take time because certain things need to be removed, such as ss numbers or phone numbers or addresses.

But, others could take much longer and include correspondence back and forth with the EPD detectives or other agencies or if there is a confidential informant involved. There isn't a set time to complete the request, but the sooner, the better.

Mrs. Mitchell thanked the Law Dir for explaining. She originally had the same concerns that Mr. Van Wormer had in the interest of transparency. She agrees that the bloggers who post these on Facebook should absolutely pay. She appreciates the explanation.

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

Motion made by Mr. Van Wormer second by Mr. Schneider to authorize to amend the 'said' Chapter of the Codified Ordinances for the fee schedule, Division of Police. Emergency clause applies.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

6. The matter of a transfer of funds.

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

Finance Dir Pileski said this involves the cemetery trust fund, maintenance and improvement fund. The trust fund is a permanent fund, the only money that can be spent from the fund is interest earnings.

To be able to spend those funds, the funds have to be transferred to the cemetery maintenance and improvement fund. He has been accumulating some interest over the last few years and there are large projects that need to be done at the Brookdale Cemetery and he's asking to transfer \$84,748 to the M&I fund and he will come back to committee when they decide how to appropriate that amount of money for the projects.

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

Motion made by Mr. Van Wormer second by Mr. Schneider to authorize the Finance Director to transfer the 'said' funds.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

7. The matter of amendments to the 2026 Permanent Appropriations.

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

Dir Pileski said there are two this evening, with the first being what was just discussed, appropriating \$84,748 to the Cemetery maintenance & improvement fund. And the second one is that for whatever reason the Sanitation Dept did not request monies for PERS, FICA Medicare and Workers Comp which is tied to payroll. As they advanced the budget, payroll didn't catch it, so at this time, they need to add \$400,000 to benefits & pension in the Sanitation Fund and those funds are available to appropriate.

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. Van Wormer to authorize approval of the 'said' appropriation changes per the attached list.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

Chair Tollett said that is all the business for this evening's Finance Meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Van Wormer and second by Mr. Cerra to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 7:20 P.M.

MOTION CARRIES

The Next Finance Meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 10th, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Colleen Rosado, Secretary/Administrative Assistant