

Minutes of the FINANCE COMMITTEE which held a meeting on Monday, September 28th, 2026 at 6:30 P.M. *Circulated 10/1/2026*

FINANCE PRESENT: Chair Tollett, Cerra, Schneider, Van Wormer, Davis
COM DEV PRESENT: Chair Schneider, Mitchell, Doehne, Rothgery, Lipian
UTILITIES PRESENT: Chair Mitchell, Davis, Armstrong, Oswald, Rothgery
ABSENT: None
OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Brubaker, Dir Loesch, Law Dir Deery, Finance Dir Pileski, CD Dir. Scott, Planning Dir Schoenig, Police Capt. Palmer

1. The matter of approval of meeting minutes from the Finance Committee Meeting, which took place on September 14th, 2026, as circulated on 9/25/2026.

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

MOTION CARRIES

2. The matter of finding (2) Police Dept. vehicles which are no longer fit for municipal use and to be disposed of by the best means possible.

Referred By: Police Capt. Palmer

Capt. Palmer said these vehicles are part of the fleet management and are no longer being used and should be taken out of service; 2009 Ford Explorer and a 2016 Impala. These vehicles could be sold on gov deals so they can maximize profit for the city.

Mrs. Davis asked for the mileage for these vehicles?

Capt. Palmer said he did not have the exact mileage but they are both over 100,000 miles and he would forward it to the committee. (Updated mileage; 2009 Explorer = 123,857 miles, 2016 Impala = 65,384 miles). Capt. Palmer said these vehicles have not been used for a couple of years. They had been used as unmarked vehicles.

There were no more 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' vehicles are unfit for city use and an ordinance authorizing the 'said' vehicles to be disposed by the best means possible.

MOTION CARRIES COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN

3. The matter of a 2-year Agreement with LC Transit for VIA Transportation Program for services in Elyria.

Referred By: Mayor Brubaker

Mayor Brubaker said Kirt Conrad, Lorain County Transit Manager is here this evening to give an update on these services and the VIA program which has been going on for the last few years. The City entered into a two-year contract in July 2024 to help provide thru their grant, our portion of \$125,000 per year for those two years and that contract has expired. Being presented this evening is the next phase, another 2-year contract, \$250,000 for year 2027 and \$250,000 for year 2028.

Kirt Conrad, Transit Manager, Lorain County Transit is here to update the committee on the services that VIA LC Transit has provided the residents of Elyria. This program has been one of the most successful public transportation programs they have seen in Lorain County. Between Elyria and Lorain over 150,000 trips have been made since July 2024 and of that 88,000 in Elyria and about 4,200 per month. There is a monthly download of the rider app of about 530 and maxed at 645 in August. This program operates like Uber. You request a ride thru the app and they will pick you up and take you to your destination within the city. They don't allow rides to cross city lines, but they do have a transfer at the job & family services building to allow for transfers. LC Transit also has a program called dial-a-ride and that averages about 2 riders per hour. They found a local match is closer to \$800,000 between the two cities and they've asked for an increase to help cover that. Lorain County doesn't use general fund money to support this. It's subsidized with a match of local and state money and contracted services. They have also asked other cities to partner with them and they will expand service to N Ridgeville and Avon Lake. They did just receive a \$900,000 grant from the State of Ohio to look at services in the western part of the county. They are also setting up a brokerage system where they will have another layer of services on top of what they have now. This is a base to move forward to address the transportation needs of the citizens of the county. That concluded Mr. Conrad's update.

Chair Tollett asked how many rides have they done in Elyria?

Mr. Conrad said it would be approximately 3,300.

Chair Tollett said that comes to \$75 per ride at \$250,000 per year. He wants the committee to consider that this is a 100% increase in cost. This is something we would have to pull out of Issue 6 dollars.

Law Dir Deery said looking at the ordinance from 2025, the amount was for \$250,000 for a year and it indicated that the funds would be paid for by funds to be determined by the finance director.

Fin Dir Pileski said they've been paying this through the general fund. As of today, expenditures have exceeded revenues in the General Fund this year by 1.6 million.

Mrs. Davis asked how much do the riders pay?

Mr. Conrad said it's \$2.50 per ride.

Mrs. Davis asked if this provides rides for students?

Mr. Conrad said it's first come/first served and EHS and LCCC are the largest destination and students also pay \$2.50 per ride. There is a discount on the fixed route. But they don't offer a discount on this fare because they felt everyone should have equal access. The first couple years have been a demonstration project. They are turning down about 25% of the demand, more need than what they can provide. They are trying to put efficiencies in place to make the service more efficient. They are looking to change the fixed route structure over the next couple years. The fixed route and the via need to work together to make sure everyone can reach their destination. Chair Tollett said again, the cost of this ride is \$75.75 per ride plus \$2.50.

Mr. Schneider asked since the school district spans into some townships, he asked do they a process for that?

Mr. Conrad said they do not transport outside of the city and do not go into any townships.

Mr. Oswald said this is a great program, but dollars are tight. He would like to say yes and this is something they will have to think about.

Mrs. Mitchell asked what the hours are?

Mr. Conrad said it's 6AM to 6PM. No evening services. He also said he would like to provide with some better numbers on finances. He said the cost is actually closer to \$20 per trip, it's actually cheaper than the fixed routes and demand response. He will forward those numbers to the Mayor.

Mr. Van Wormer asked which communities are currently using the VIA system?

Mr. Conrad said it's just Elyria and Lorain.

Mr. Van Wormer asked if those communities will continue to use this?

Mr. Conrad said they have put out a public notice to terminate the service because due to federal requirements there has to have public notice and timelines. That is not the intent but, the contract with VIA ends the end of this year. They have to receive the match or they have to end it and that is where they are at now. They are also negotiating with the city of Lorain on their share, which is the same as Elyria.

Mr. Van Wormer asked about the other cities that are looking to span into?

Mr. Conrad said they have a contract with Oberlin and they contribute their local match. They are looking to have discussions with other cities including Vermilion. The business model they are looking at in moving Lorain County forward is a partnership model. They have a budget of 5 or 6 million dollars per year. They are trying to leverage contracts with Job & Family Services to supplement the local match to be able to expand service. He went through the history of Lorain County Transit and in 2008 they transported about 700,000 rides, last year, without VIA, they did 70,000, those transit needs don't go away. There are companies and non-profits that need transportation. They are working with non-profits and philanthropic organizations to meet the needs of this county. He appreciates the support of the city and it's going to take a collaboration to try to have this for the county.

Mr. Van Wormer asked where does the cost of the ride go, to VIA?

Mr. Conrad said they have a contract with VIA and they are paid about \$74 per hour. The City's contribution goes to VIA, but the total cost they are spending is about 2 million dollars a year.

Federal funds contributed to this program is about a million and a half dollars.

Mr. Van Wormer asked if the county is not providing any funding?

Mr. Conrad said that is correct, it doesn't come out of the general fund. There is not general fund money from the county that goes into transit. On the county level, Jobs & Family Services provides Medicaid money for the local match so they can have contracts with the county that allows that. There are also some in-kind services that they do track of staff time and can allocate towards it.

Mr. Doehne said he when he looked for info on VIA, he had a hard time finding info. He did find that there was just a 2.7 million dollar grant to expand. With that 2.7 million plus Elyria's \$250,000, plus Lorain's \$250,000 and funds from ODOT, it seems like there is a lot on money going into this. He knows it's in partnership with Lorain County Transit, is this program a part of that?

Mr. Conrad said Lorain County Transit is a department of the county. The grant he is referring to is a grant from NOACA which the city of Lorain applied for, it was under the Federal Highway Administration to expand fixed routes within the city of Lorain. VIA is the grantee for that grant because that is how the government requires transit money to be spent, they will help facilitate those funds. Oberlin is also a sub-grantee and they set up the program the way Oberlin wanted it. the model they are using is working community by community and try to solve mobility needs the way each community wants those needs to happen. There long-range plans include additional services that they want to provide to Elyria, including additional fixed route services that they would like to put together within the next two years and consolidate those services to allow to provide that match. There is 20% local match on capital and 50/50 for operations.

Mr. Doehne said his biggest concern is with the finances. With the budget of 5 million and that only comes to \$20 per ride, seems low. There is so much money being put into this program, he would want the city's money being spent efficiently. He's wondering if they could get some financial numbers and maybe an annual report.

Mr. Conrad said this program is a public service and it's subsidized.

Mrs. Mitchell said the thing that concerns her is that the money comes out of the General Fund. She asked if Lorain is on board with this? In the past Lorain was a partner.

Mr. Conrad said they are still negotiating with Lorain.

Mrs. Mitchell asked what happens if Lorain doesn't want to be a part of this.

Mr. Conrad said then they will continue the scope the contract and services the way it is for Elyria and not for Lorain.

Chair Tollett says he looks at this that each ride to EHS or to LCCC is \$78.25 which is extremely excessive.

Chair Tollett made a motion to table this.

Motion made by Chair Tollett to TABLE this matter and that motion was seconded by Mr. Van Wormer to table this matter at this time.

ALL AYES MOTION CARRIES

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

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

Dir Pileski said there are a number of clean up items for this meeting.

- 1.) Cemetery Dept, salary & wages and benefits & pension and they are dangerously close to using all their appropriations, he recommends to add \$60,000 to salary & wages and \$24,000 to benefits & pension and taking that money appropriation as follows: \$7,500 from summer camp salary & wages, \$1200 summer camp benefits & pension, \$38,500 from IT salary & wages, \$36,000 buildings & land, salary & wages. The total of \$84,000 that is going to cemeteries is coming from other departments in the general fund, so, it's a wash.
- 2.) Muni Motor Vehicle Fund, adding \$17,635 from Capital Outlay to Debt Services (we pay the loans on the state infrastructure bank loan projects), we had to cover the interest & principle.
- 3.) Block Grant Fund, adding \$14,125 to Block Grant Administration, benefits & pension.
- 4.) Cemetery, maintenance & improvement fund, adding \$9000 to salary & wages and \$1,390 to benefits & pension.
- 5.) Safer Grant fund, (paying for 3 firefighters), adding \$64,000 for salary & wages.
- 6.) State Issue 2 Capital Projects fund, Leona St. repair & resurfacing from Midway to Griswold for the final payment on that project which is \$9,685, most of that being paid by OPWC.

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. Schneider and second by Mrs. Davis to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

MOTION CARRIES

The Next Finance Meeting is scheduled for *Tuesday, October 13th, 2026.

**Monday, October 12th is the Columbus Day Holiday*

Respectfully Submitted by,
Colleen Rosado, Secretary/Administrative Assistant