

CITY OF ROCKY RIVER

December 5, 2025

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meeting was called to order by Mr. Furry, Chairman of the Finance Committee at 8:15 a.m.

Finance Committee Members Present: Mr. Furry, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Shipp

Finance Committee Member Absent: Mr. Sindelar

Council Members Present: Mrs. Gallagher, Mrs. Morris, Mr. O'Boyle, Mrs. Havemann (Council Elect), Mr. Moran (Council Elect)

Administration: Mayor Bobst, Director Thomas, Director Snyder, Director Holub, Chief Lichman, Chief Lenart, Superintendent Barille, Ms. Sheena Wright, Assistant Director Lindow

Also Present: Judge Burke, Clerk Comery, Mr. Kelly (Judge Elect), Ms. Hemann (Clerk Elect)

The meeting was opened with a Pledge of Allegiance.

OPENING REMARKS

The Mayor said this will surprise Council but she'll make her remarks somewhat brief because she doesn't want to be redundant. Thank you again for gathering on the first Friday of December to review the budget. A big thank you of course to all of you for the work and preparation you've already done with reviewing the budget with the directors. This is Director Thomas's last budget so there is a big crescendo today. It is the Mayor's 30th budget for the City of Rocky River so we acknowledge a couple of things. Mike thank you for your leadership when it comes to the city finances. We are an award-winning Finance Department and that is due to your leadership. The city was very fortunate many years ago to have you come and join the city and we thank you for everything that you have done for us and the preparation of the 2026 budget before you leave and finding Jonathan. The budget is something you know because you receive detail every month. We are monitoring it every day and the directors are monitoring it every day. The new ERP system MUNIS, allows us at any time to look at the financial condition including the fund balances, the financial condition of the city. Mike is monitoring that along with the finance department and Jonathan and so are the directors and all of you. The Mayor applauds Mike for it's something that started about 20 years ago and that is the Financial Summary and the Financial Narrative. Hopefully you find that as helpful as all of the directors. Sometimes it is difficult just to see the numbers and what those numbers mean and what did they spend that money on especially when it is significant dollars. Those have been important tools as we manage the budget. The budget is an important tool as it defines all of our priorities, our programming, where we are going to spend money, but it's also a very flexible document. The Mayor knows Council President has said that in the past that we always need flexibility for something we might not have anticipated and certainly that is built into this budget. For the Mayor the budget is the greatest communication tool that we have. It communicates to our residents what the city's priorities are going to be and there are many and in this budget you will see the capital. This year we are very heavy on capital. It has to do with some of the grant funding and outside funding that we have received which is always a positive but also how you move from planning to engineering to biddable

plans until finally we are constructing something and that is all coming together in 2026. The beginning of many things, not the least of which is the new fire station. That puts unique pressures or can put unique pressures on the budget during budget hearings. This budget begins developing in July. Back in July of this year, the Mayor started with mid-year budget reviews and discussions begin. There are a lot of projections and this year you will see in your budget behind tab 4 the projections that Jonathan has done. Those projections are from a month ago. He has them up to date every day. Projections can be done every day to see how we are doing and checking on various fund balances, et cetera. Thank you for that work and it is very instructive so again a communication tool to our community but also to our directors who manage this budget. During those budget meetings, one of the things the Mayor heard is that more personnel is needed. The city has been a lean mean fighting machine and new personnel is needed and there are some indicators of that. The Mayor can look at metrics and say yes we are doing more than we have ever done probably and the one the Mayor would point to that is most obvious, is the fire department. The Mayor had said there will be no new hiring as we begin the year but over the next two years we do anticipate hiring four additional firefighters, three to go on shift and one to have an eight-hour shift that will work with the fire prevention officer. These are things that will be monitored as the city realizes revenue as the budget proceeds. The Mayor said that the city can deliver a budget like this because of past practices including taking care of equipment. The Mayor always appreciates when a new piece of equipment is in front of Council that the mechanics are applauded along with those that operate this expensive equipment, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars. Again, past practices, always thinking about today's needs but whatever our future needs and certainly the city has a group of directors that serve this city that think about those things.

FINANCE

President Furry said he has distributed the Finance Budget Review and as discussed at council the operating costs are basically for the cost of living adjustments based on some known things with CBAs and for non CBA employees, for salary adjustments and other things and obviously as Mr. Furry stated the capital was very intensive which we are going to hear more about in the next few hours of how every department is getting a piece of the pie or wanting more. Mr. Furry thanked Director Thomas for his many years of service here and the final swan song for the budget. Mr. Furry turned it over to Director Thomas for his input and final leadership thoughts.

Director Thomas thanked Mr. Furry. Mr. Thomas said he appreciates the kind words and he would say that the themes over the years and they have been really firmed up are conservative budgets being presented to council with the opportunity to make revisions. The mayor mentioned a couple of times this flexibility and again Mr. Thomas' theme has been to have it in the budget and then do it operationally and when there are some decisions made they are right in the financials that are presented, it is all black and white in reports. When Mr. Thomas applies the flexibility that is built into the budget, the sun is shining on it, they get in the reports they get to you they get in reports that get to the departments and the website for residents. In regard to the finance department and syncing up the budget with the wage ordinance, Jon and I talked and the decision is to leave some flexibility in the wage ordinance with positions in finance so they can make some decisions about headcount and needed hands in finance. Director Thomas said if you see the list of personnel in the wage ordinance for finance in particular, it is a little extensive. There are unfilled positions, there will be some operational decisions upcoming in 2026-2027 about how that will play out. That will firm up and thin out as they decide what the headcount in finance should be. Again for 2026, overall the big number and projection for income tax is \$23,256,000. It is just some math and that is how we got to that number. It is a conservative number with a distribution earlier this month for 2025, the total income tax so far is \$24,015,000. The budget for 2025 was \$22,000,800 so we're above the budget projection and as you've heard the projection for 23 is conservative to what we've achieved this year. Again, just the approach and subject to ongoing monitoring and can be changed during the year. There has been more discussion about the 2026 budget with the department heads about making supplementals for next year. Council has had a couple this year. They are tweaks and we don't anticipate

that we're going to have to come back to council for \$5-8,000,000. They are just refinements and some changes that departments might need as their purchasing decisions develop during the year. We had debt roll off in 2024, we have some new debt coming on so the amortization right now is just over \$1,000,000 and of course we are going to add the fire department. There is going to be some demand coming up in the future there is no associated revenue source with that amortization payment so they will come out of the income tax allocation for the capital and there are resources there. That has been looked at and what that generates. It may squeeze the capital projects and other projects once the facilities are built in place. New this year is the special assessment that is running through related to the Hilliard apartments and that is in Fund 315. It has a big number and that is operationally how that takes place. There is an assessment put on by City Council, the taxpayer pays it to the County just like any other special assessment and the city's obligation is to pay it to the designated lender for that facility. That is in the budget. It is public money and it is an assessment that was made by City Council so that is why it flows through the budget. It is not an off-book activity and it is within the budget. Mr. Thomas said he gave Council the big numbers for income tax. Mr. Thomas asked what Council's feeling is on that. Council is in the city as much as he is to see what your tax base looks like in your particular ward in the business corridors. What do commercial properties look like in terms of occupancy. That is what is driving the income tax. What is the occupancy in the office buildings, what the storefronts look like, what the residential housing stock looks like and Director Thomas thinks it looks good. There have been eras where a lot of for lease signs in the strip centers and everything is well filled with small businesses that are contributing to the tax basin. There is lots of property upgrades in both commercial and residential and so he thinks this budget is achievable in 2026 as the mayor mentioned. Director Thomas always looks at each year's budget as a slice in the long-term planning and that is what we have to do to achieve goals over many years is one year at a time and that he thinks it is achievable. Council may hear from department heads and some hand wringing. Jon and I are confident in what this looks like going forward and if there are some needs the department heads articulate in the year that they can be accommodated. Thank you.

The Mayor commented that on the income tax and property tax front there are a number of bills going through the state legislature, potentially a ballot issue on removing property tax. That would be significant for the city. We are mindful of that and aware of that. There is some traction but already in some of the larger more detailed bills they have rolled back and are more impactful to schools than to municipalities especially the way that we have carried some of our debt and how we place ballot issues on the ballot. So, there are some pressures with property tax and we will monitor that. Also with income tax, this is just an annual. There are always a couple of legislators that want to look closely at income tax and how to eliminate it. The state has eliminated a lot of state income taxes but they are also mindful that cities need those locally and have had the opportunity to increase ours slightly by half a percent for capital which is meaningful. As we apply for grants, we use that to leverage the 80/20 split or to pay debt service it's been very meaningful in the budget. We keep reminding them of home rule and we will continue to do that. Mike and the Mayor both mentioned that as recently as Monday's meeting, the Mayor gave Council some of the added valuation for the city. \$72,000,000 in added valuation with no projects of scale, that shows you a lot of investment is occurring. Rocky River is still worthy of people's investment in their homes and in their businesses so that is very exciting. The Mayor would say on the income tax the city has benefited slightly. That is maybe moderating a little bit, but the legislation that came out during COVID, the work from home and that you pay taxes where you actually sit. That was meaningful as about 6% increase has somewhat continued. There is a lot of stability and a lot of diversity in our business sectors which is really important so no highs or lows. We don't have to worry about one large employer leaving the city. We would care about any of the top 25 leaving the city and we monitor that but we have great diversity. There are obviously pressures for any budget depending on what the state legislature may do. The Mayor does not know if it would be effective in this coming year so we know that this budget is hopefully safe from those direct pressures. Thank you.

Personnel Overview:

Full-time:5

Part-time:0

Personnel Changes: Yes, going into 2026, the Department will look at assigned roles and tasks for efficiency and sufficiency.

Anticipated Replacement:

Financial Overview:

2026 Revenue Projections: 27,868,873

2026 Expense Projections: 18,100,991

2024 Revenue: 26,993,125

2024 Expense: 12,121,895

YTD 2025 Revenue: as of 09/30: 24,283,616

YTD 2025 Expense: as of 09/30: 8,234,989

2026 Operating Budget Highlights: Managing turnover in the Director's office and the accompanying process scrutiny and analysis. Attention will also be given to the BAN transaction and contractor payments for the new Fire Department Facility.

Impacts on 2026 Budget:

Cost Savings? Increased Revenue in 2026: If the City engages an investment advisor, improved returns are expected.

2025 Capital Expenditures: The demands in Finance are not met by capital investment but by computer hardware and software. The sewer billing software conversion and online payment portal went live in September 2025. Also, Finance pivoted from the Tyler Technologies provided scheduling and timekeeping software. The agreement with provider Right Stuff is planned to expand to City Hall and Service Division employees in mid-2026.

Municipal Court

Mrs. Gallagher began by thanking Director Thomas for his years of service. She has only been here a short time but you are awesome. I'm just going to talk a little bit about the Court, very little because I didn't get much information. Mrs. Gallagher gave a little background. Rocky River Municipal Court serves the cities of Bay Village, Fairview Park, North Olmsted, Rocky River and Westlake as well as the Metropolitan Park District and Ohio State Highway Patrol post 18. The operating costs are shared among the five cities in the Court's jurisdiction. This is limited to the total amount of fine money received by each of the other four cities in the year before the current deficit year. The balance of the deficit that is left to be paid is born by the City of Rocky River. During the preceding calendar year, any deficit is the responsibility of Rocky River as a host city. The Clerk of Court pays all costs collected to the city treasurer. The judges and the clerk meet with the Finance Directors of these communities once or twice yearly.

To date, any capital improvements to the Courthouse, not to mention the cost to construct said Courthouse, have been born by the Rocky River Municipal Court through its Special Projects Fund and the Probation Fund (for the Probation Office upgrade), therefore, at NO cost to the City nor any taxpayer funds. Utilities, such as heat and electricity are, per Ohio Revised Code, the responsibility of the host city, the City of Rocky River.. The personnel overview consists of 26 full-time employees, 14 part-time employees increasing from 25 and 13 at this time last year. The personnel changes are two and replacements are estimated at five to six for fiscal year 2026. Mrs. Gallagher met with Clerk Comery and Judge Burke on the 24th of November and Clerk Comery indicated her staff would receive a 5% pay increase. The financial overview revenue projections for 2026 are unknown at this time. The Clerk

indicated Mrs. Gallagher should speak to the five city police departments for this information. In 2024 the court estimated a deficit in 2025 of \$350,000 to \$400,000. At that time, they indicated there would be a reduction in operating costs, yet it is projected that the judge's operating expenses are up 17.6% and the Clerk's operating expenses are up 17.5% from the prior year. When Mrs. Gallagher met with the courts last year Clerk Comery stated the capital expenditure for 2025 would be \$484,770.63 for a new case management system being paid with \$150,000 grant in computer funds. Mrs. Gallagher met with Judge Burke and Clerk Comery and spoke about the new case management system which has turned into a fiasco. Clerk Comery trusted a vendor JWorks that turned out to not be the right choice. They awarded over half a million dollars to JWorks and now they are looking to sue the spender to recoup the loss. They are having such issues with this vendor that they will require funds to pay for a new Case Management System. Clerk Comery stated that in April 2026 the court will contract with Pension and Associates for a new case management agreement. No known cost or how this vendor was chosen. Mrs. Gallagher asked for the budget review form and any justifications, I'm going to have Mike Thomas fill you all in on that since I didn't receive it, late last night I sent this in. Judge Burke is concerned for the future of the court and has hired a new court administrator, Monica Argenti to help navigate operations with the new staff. Welcome. Long term capital needs are nothing at this time.

Director Thomas said there are some changes at the court. We know it is going to be a Municipal Court as the jurisdiction is not changing. Director Thomas does populate revenue for the budget year. Of course as was conveyed we don't know what is going to come but there is sort of a floor and that is the base so there's some numbers populated for revenue for the court and Mr. Thomas will put it on the summary. Mr. Thomas said that as we are doing right now and he thinks of it on our financial report, is that that we are working on the budget column of the financial report as opposed to the actuals right now. For 2025 there is a budget column and that projected deficit is measured and it is about \$548,000 and that is presented in the budget book. \$350 is not registering with him as what the projection is for this year. The current deficit for 2025 is about \$1.2. \$548,000 was budgeted \$548,000 and at the end of October it is about \$1.2. It is related to the revenue that's being collected and distributed by the court. Thank you.

President Furry welcomed Judge Burke. Judge Burke said good morning and introduced himself as the Administrative / Presiding Judge of the Rocky River Court commencing in January. Judge Burke wants to make some general remarks so the council has some proper perspective for what the court is about to embark upon. As many of you know I have practiced in the Rocky River Court for over 30 years as a defense attorney, served as a magistrate for five years, been on the bench for two years and the last ten years of his practice was concentrating complex business litigation and he has a MBA from Cleveland State, just as my new bench mate Judge Kelly does as well. Judge Burke is familiar with finances and budgets but serving as AJPI is a new role which carries with it great responsibility. He would like to introduce Judge elect Tom Kelly and said he is looking forward to serving with him and Clerk elect Mary Ellen Hemann who is also here today. Judge Burke looks forward to working with them both as co-collaborators for this Court. Judge Burke stated that these are the best of times and these are the worst of times. That's a quote from Dickens the "Tale of Two Cities". The best of times is that we have new collaborators Judge Kelly and Clerk Hemann. We have new input and he is very excited about implementing some of those ideas and moving forward. But they are also the worst of times because the court is facing unique challenge never seen before in its recent history. We are losing our incumbent Clerk of Court who has served at the Clerk's office for 30 years in Rocky River and we are losing Judge Hagan who has served with distinction for 18 years. Never before has this court collectively lost so much institutional knowledge in one transition. However, challenging this will be, Judge Burke looks at it as an opportunity for the court to evolve just like our communities have evolved and changed. He views this as a great opportunity for the court moving forward and he is excited and said everything that has occurred in his career has led him to this very moment. Since the election he has reached out to neighboring Muni Courts to see how they operate and how they have evolved with the times. What he has learned is that most municipal courts have a court administrator to supervise the judicial staff, assist with budgets, the annual report, the Ohio Supreme Court reporting payments of bills and to serve as a defecto HR for the

judicial staff. This position allows judges like myself and Judge Kelly to do what we are elected to do, to serve as judges and it promotes efficiency and accountability throughout the court. In his budget he has respectfully budgeted a new position as court administrator commencing next year. He believes that the court requires a court administrator to supervise the judicial side of the court and he believes it will help the court become more efficient and enhance its ability to serve the communities. He has a candidate in mind, Monica Argenti who currently serves as his bailiff. Monica has worked at the Avon Lake Municipal Court, North Olmsted Mayors Court, Lorain County Common Pleas Court and has a background in finance and budgeting. She would make an outstanding court administrator, so please say hello to Monica.

With the assistance of the court administrator, Judge Burke pledges that his tenure as AJPJ will be to promote transparency of the court, its finances and all case filings. He intends to scrutinize and monitor this budget going forward in 2026, make necessary updates and provide all finance chairs of the cities with quarterly updates on our finances. He also intends to utilize the resources of our sponsoring city Rocky River more than ever to achieve that transparency. The majority of the budget increases on the judicial side are based on percentage cost of living increases to keep up with inflation as it relates to the Clerk's budget, which was prepared by Clerk Comery, who is here. As many are aware, the court invested money on a new case management software position over the past several years, which did not perform as promised. As a result, the court was forced to revert to its old case management system when that new system failed. Judge Burke invites the Clerk of Court-elect to review with him the potential of litigation to recoup these monies. However, going forward the court will need a new case management software licensing agreement in the clerk's office. Judge Kelly checked with several municipal courts and has selected a new vendor at an initial cost of \$300,000 with Henschen which is scheduled to be implemented in May of next year. Judge Burke invites the Clerk of Court-elect to determine if any of this investment can be deferred over time.

As Council is aware the court has operated as a deficit since COVID which drastically caused the case filings to plummet. The court has not recovered. Case filings both criminal and civil are down approximately 15% from 2024 to 2025. That means less felony and misdemeanor cases are being filed although our civil filings are. This court has no control over these filings. Part of the reason for this drop is the societal trend whereby police departments view their function differently than 20 years ago, part of it is due to a younger police force. In any event this is become an ongoing trend. Judge Burke will reiterate as AJPJ that the North Olmsted mayor's court continues to impair the court. Mayor's court is a pay to play system of justice where by the wealthy are able to pay for OVI and traffic reductions. Mayor's court has no probation department and therefore lacks the accountability or justice that our court offers. Since he has taken the bench what he has observed is that mayor's court retains all low lying fruit cases, traffic cases, first time OVI cases and council is almost always retained as opposed to court appointed defendants like our court offers. As a defense attorney we love mayors court because if our client was willing to pay, they could get the necessary reduction. As a judge he views it differently, as it is little more than a money-making proposition whereby justice serves the wealthy, not the poor and justice is obtuse. Consequently, the cases that we do handle from the city of North Olmsted are most certainly more difficult and onerous second and third time offenders, plethora of theft offenders from the Great Northern Mall and retail shops in the city. More importantly the majority of criminal cases we see from North Olmsted are not from their citizens but from a transient population who do not live in the city, but come to the mall and offend. They are generally poor and homeless and have no ability to pay court costs much less court fines. Our work at the court has become much more difficult. The cases are much more complicated, usually involving dual diagnosis of mental health and addiction this results in the court paying more for services. The other issue he has observed that has exploded in the past five years since COVID is mental health. Resources have been cut drastically throughout the county such that judges like me attempt to cobble together a treatment plan that the court can subsidize. He has taken it upon himself to raise awareness to this issue in terms of what the court is facing on a daily basis. Last year he organized a day long CLE in conjunction with the CMBA on competency and restoration to let the public know the

issues that we are facing with less resources than ever before. We're all aware of the Bianca Ellis case which changed how every court addresses mental health crisis. He would like to share a story that highlights the issue and challenges that are facing our court and our local police departments. He had a young woman recently in her 20s with the history of schizophrenia who was charged with domestic violence against her mother in Bay Village. The defendant had an 18-month-old daughter and has a history of serious mental health issues and was not taking her prescribed medications. The defendant's mother is a retired City of Cleveland homicide police officer. Judge Burke had the defendant evaluated for competency and was determined that she was incompetent but restorable. The only treatment facility, North Coast Behavioral Center, has a bed for her but there is a six-month waiting list. The issue is what to do with the defendant in the interim. Considering the Bianca Ellis case he had reservations of releasing the defendant because she could potentially harm her daughter, her mother or herself. The local police departments can only house a defendant for up to 12 days. Fortunately, Bay Village was able to convince the county to house the defendant in the county jail until a bed opened. The mother was very upset that her daughter was sent to county jail. The probation department communicated with her that any available options were limited and could not risk her harming anyone including herself. Luckily she was in the County jail for only thirty days until a bed became available. These are the decisions that the media will not report but these are the issues that he faces every day with cuts in resources. When we do a competency evaluation it is \$1,000. The court pays for it and we never get that money back. We are trying to cobble together as best we can to deal with this mental health explosion that every trial court in the State of Ohio has faced. He will get in the budget and he thought however as a matter of respect since Deb Comery is retiring and she has a little more perspective on it, he'd like her to make some brief remarks before he gets into it.

Clerk Comery wished everyone a good morning. It has been a pleasure to be able to serve in the Court for all these years. She wants to thank everyone for all that you have done. Mayor, as always, and Michael as well, could not have existed without you. Every one of you have been very kind and very thoughtful with decisions and she appreciates that. We have been in this situation for a while now. Clerk Comery wanted to take this opportunity to explain a little bit about how we got to our budget and why. Because she has always felt that Council has enough to do without worrying too terribly much about what we are doing over at the court. So, when a budget is made she has tried to have a little bit of input as to what are the possibilities for expenditure and where can those monies come from. Because the court does have a number of funds that are under the auspices most of them of the AJPJ in this case Judge Burke going forward, we have been able to do quite a bit to help defray deficits in the past. Actually, COVID was cute but the North Olmsted mayor's court was the killer as to how we were able to run the court. You all must understand something and she is not sure that you do and she is not sure that the other four cities do. A Municipal Court has an increasing budgetary requirement to exist. There are approximately 160 municipal and county courts in the state of Ohio. If there are 5% of those courts that run in the black, that is a lot. The Rocky River Municipal Court was able to do several things over the years that she has been there. Number one we lived in an era back in the 90s where the police were out every day doing everything they could on the street bringing in what she believes Judge Burke called the low-lying fruit with traffic citations that normally are paid. There was a time back in the late 90s, where we had at the end of the year somewhere between one and two million, that was an amazing year. When we realized that, we realized that maybe we were charging too much. This is not a money-making endeavor we are not designed to sell widgets and bring back a profit. We are here to put forth justice. Only that is the court's job. The years went by and we got to 2013 when the North Olmsted Mayor's Court began. North Olmsted at that time was 1/2 of the income of the Rocky River Municipal Court. They took with them 1/2 of the money that we had to work with. For the next number of years from that time to about the COVID era, we were able to defray our deficits because of those funds that we had. Now those funds that we have are not all able to be dedicated to the operations of the court. There's the Idad fund and the idiom fund and those are specifically for treatment of OVI offenders. The Idad is the treatment portion idiom is the monitoring portion. That's all they can be used for. But the computer fund, the special projects fund and the probation fund can be utilized because they will allow us to pay for salaries and benefits for certain

people within the court structure. From 2013 to 2020's, the court was able to defray the deficits that were incurred because of the creation of the North Olmsted Mayor's Court. I don't think that that's ever really been delivered to you totally, frankly and honestly as Clerk Comery has just done. What happened when COVID hit, the double whammy was that our funds were pretty much depleted. We didn't have the money that we had to help defray the costs. But 95% of those 160 municipal and county courts, we then joined the larger percentage. And we have operated in a deficit much to my regret since then. If there was anything that could be done believe me when I say it would have been. We never know what we're going to have for income to operate. We can only depend upon filings and they come from all kinds of sources depending on what case type it is. But we all know that the police departments have changed a lot since COVID. COVID required that the police not be quite as interactive with the general public because of the disease. A lot of what we had seen as far as our numbers on the road diminished. We're not about to tell the police department what to do not in anybody's world. There's just no way to do that and it's not something that we would want to do because we are not designed to be a money-making operation. We are here to supply justice to the communities that we serve. When it comes to this awkward and difficult discussion with you as to the budget that we're looking toward for a year please understand where we are coming from as well. We don't want to be a burden to you. We have tried everything in our power to try to find ways to cut back to curtail but we also have to operate. In order to operate in the manner that we have knowing that the Rocky River Municipal Court has garnered a reputation of being the court to ask when another court has a question. You don't get that by not being one of the best courts in the state. Nobody knows where Rocky River is for the majority of us all. She will say we're up by Cleveland and then all of a sudden they know where you are. But it's not because Rocky River has some kind of a standing out reputation as a jurisdiction, as a city as or whatever throughout the state, but it's amazing how many phone calls she gets in a given day or a given week from every court around the state. The same goes for the judges. Clerk Comery just wants Council to truly understand the history as she knows it for the last 30 years and where we are today. My appreciation for all that you have done to support us and I know it's difficult but that's pretty much it. Does anybody have any questions?

- Mr. Furry said first of all thank you for your service Deborah. Any likelihood that Bay or Westlake would say you know what we're going to start our own mayor's court. I know it can't happen overnight. But any likelihood of that, any clamoring. Judge Burke responded saying this is exactly why as AJPJ he is taking the position he is taking. He will fight any attempt by any other city to do that. It is not justice and it's just about money. so There has been rumblings for years. He hasn't seen any real action in Westlake, but he will take an active opposition to that.
- The Mayor said that it is important to note that there are only two states that allow a Mayor's Court, Louisiana and the State of Ohio. That should tell you something. We've lived with this for a long time, more than a decade and it's what is the court's reaction. Certainly, what the judges said is we have to prevent any more of it from happening to the court and the court is a separate entity, as seen in the budget but it does come through this City Council. It's the reaction now and the Mayor knows you had a quick reaction at the time, but looking at staffing and those kinds of things and being able to explain to the communities why is staffing the way it is considering that there is a mayor's court that is impacting and I do think as budgets get tight for all communities there will be discussion. I give you that as an opportunity to discuss why is personnel not commensurate with the decrease in cases. We know there is less activity in the court so why isn't there. These judges and this new clerk will have to have conversations about that with our other community partners so I'll let you answer that question.

Clerk Comery said that the Mayors Courts are not a part of the judicial branch of government. They are under the executive branch which means you have a mayor who is interval within. The mayor is the mayor. Underneath the mayor is his cooperation with their City Council and then who hires the Police Department, the mayor. So you have the police who work for the mayor going out and doing their job. Comes back it goes to the Mayor's court. Where is it, under the mayor? You have the titular head of the

city of North Olmsted overseeing City Council the Police Department more or less and the Mayor 's Court. That is why there is only two states in the union that have them because it's a farce. To be perfectly honest it's exactly what it's representing. There you have that, that's Ms. Comery's opinion on that. Where we are with the court today is the low hanging fruit that has been referred to as the traffic tickets, is because it takes very little staff work to process those cases. Whereas the cases that we have that we have maintained basically at the same number per year are the criminal misdemeanors and they are as the judge has so aptly put, taking up a whole lot of our time and assets. The people that are in this category have no money therefore they pay no fines, pay very little court costs and so yes the staff that we have because those cases take time and energy not only on the part of the of the judges staff including probation but also the time that it takes for the clerk 's office to process all that we have to process on a continuous basis it's not like it happens it's adjudicated it's paid. These puppies last for and can up to a year depending on what's being continued, what's being required, et cetera. So all of the work that is put in has not changed a bit before or after the Mayor 's Court. She's been working with in her opinion a small staff. These girls work their buns off if I may be so pointed and this staff will work beyond the normal work day in order to get their work done. They are a devoted group and for that devotion she has made the budget that she's made as far as their salaries for next year.

- Mr. Shipp said that he thinks it's without a doubt that the departments whose cases feed into our court are writing less tickets. He saw stats last year from the court report that in 2024 moving violations, parking tickets, OVIs were about half of what they were in 2018. That's obviously going to have a huge impact, no doubt about it. The mayor 's court is also having a huge impact. But what he wants to say is that it is unacceptable to show up here for all of us and not have a completed form. Why wasn't there cooperation with Councilwoman Gallagher to prepare this for our review and we have nothing.

Judge Burke asked to address that. When we made the transition last year from Courtview to JWorks, the court used JWorks for 3 months. It was a colossal mess. They've done a number of courts but not Muni courts. We had training going on forever and it was not working. The Clerk made a decision with judge Hagan to revert back to Courtview. The reason why you don't have projections is because the 3 months of data that we used JWorks had to be transferred. Mr. Shipp said lets communicate because going forward it is unacceptable to come to a budget meeting without numbers in it. That is not going to work going forward.

- Mr. O'Boyle shares those sentiments and he has questions. It may be time to see if one of the other communities are going to form a Mayor's Court. Overall, he agrees with Councilman Shipp that this is a negative report. He does not hear anything positive about the court system and only hearing what they can't do and Mrs. Gallagher didn't receive the information needed. Hearing that the system is a fiasco is a red light to him. Questioning the overall impression given to Council or the residents is something that is positive.

Judge Burke said the court has one of the best probation departments in Ohio. They change lives. They are about justice and have remarkable success stories. We are successful. He will be transparent with this Council. The problem is the JWorks has shut the court down in terms of doing business and they still have not recovered. They do not have all the information as the data hasn't been transferred back to Courtview. He has been involved with this court and loves this court. He wants to change lives and do a better job and will be transparent going forward.

- Mr. Furry asked if they have done a little more due diligence on the new system. Ms. Comery said that there are not that many case management companies that dedicate themselves to the complexity of a court. JWorks was created for Common Pleas. This was the same company she worked with since 1980. She trusted them. Up until this point they had been the perfect provider for a case management system. The new one is an Ohio Company. Judge Burke is going to do

everything he can and revisit this.

- The Mayor has met with the Judge and Deb and she is not sure how they can deliver a budget to this Council when you have two new elected officials who have to be a part of this process. The budget is populated with numbers and projections as Mike and Jon feel are comfortable to get the court started. The new judge and the new clerk along with Judge Burke need to finalize a budget for 2026 going forward. The conversations have started. This is going to be a work in progress. With the stroke of a pen you can say this is your judicial order and this is the way it is going to be with the budget. From the Executive Branch and being with the Legislative Branch at one time, we always appreciated that you would come to these meetings and provide Council with detail about the court and the court's efficiency and it has been a source of pride. You have never heard the City of Rocky River say we don't want to be the host community. We want to be the host community but just like every other department in the city and the way we are known through the county and the state, we know how to do this and we know how to do it well. There are major transitions and stated it in the opening remarks so there needs to be a little bit of grace here while the three of them are able to develop a final budget for 2026 and present it back to finance. The Mayor thanked them for the time spent with the Mayor. She knows there have been a lot of frustrations and starts and stops because of the things you are dealing with but now is the time.
- Director Thomas added that it's been the routine in Finance to prepare a budget book for the potential incoming elected official. The incoming Council members have a budget book. Mr. Thomas provided Mr. Kelly with a budget book this morning. Mr. Thomas will provide one to the incoming Clerk as well. Mr. Thomas wanted Council to know that the Court has this material in the same form that Council has received it.

WasteWater Treatment Plant

President Furry introduced Mrs. Morris and Superintendent Barille. As Superintendent Barille will tell you the biggest changes for the WWTP is the debt service that begins this year even as a previous loan falls off a new one is substantial. There are bright sides to the WWTP budget too and surprises since our meeting a few weeks ago where in the finance office and Superintendent Barille have trimmed a little more off the original and approved budget. In the past year chemical prices have stabilized since COVID and as we have seen there has been leftover money in the WWTP budget that allowed for the purchase of a new truck. I think the WWTP budget speaks not only to the Finance Department and the city's commitment to fiscal responsibility, but also to Superintendent Barille's passion for his job and using money and resources wisely.

Mr. Barille said he knows he's usually a fast talker and you got a lot of information but this one will be a little slower pace and not too much so I think we should be able to get caught up unless there are any pressing questions. Staffing for the WWTP since I started in 2019 there has been a turnover of 16 of 19 employees and that includes our full management staff. That is not only common with Rocky River right now mostly due to retirements but it's also common across the industry. There has been a huge turnover. The reason why I bring that up is if you think about it Clean Water Act went into in 1972. Government put a bunch of money into the economy to clean up all the WWTP's and expand them. They hired a bunch of employees in the 1980's. Fast forward to 40 years everybody's retiring. There isn't too much turnover necessarily in that industry so now you have a ton of turnover. With that turnover comes the opportunity to get some new ideas. Get people that are a lot more willing to integrate technology into refining and becoming more efficient in the process and not only are we able to treat it better we're also able to do it cheaper. Obviously prices go up but in a more cost effective manner. This year alone we have six changes in position for new employees. Mr. Barille has an operating staff of eight operators that man the plant 24/7. Four of them are brand new within the last seven months. It is a very young, somewhat inexperienced group, but a lot of that inexperience can get changed with the fact that there are standard

operating procedures, O&Ms and then also employees that have been there that can be a mentoring program to bridge that gap to reduce some of the errors. The good thing is Mr. Barille has a lot of people willing to learn and willing and caring about wastewater and caring about the environment. That is one of the reasons he came into this position alone were those specific factors and that driving factor is what allows somebody to challenge what was necessarily a norm prior to coming in. If you asked the previous guys they would say we just did it because that is what we did all the time. Mr. Barille now has people asking those questions and it is really challenged our reasons why. It has enabled the WWTP to lean out the process significantly in finding out waste, also building in redundancy. In wastewater there are going to be a lot of big numbers. We talk about a \$60,000 truck which is a significant capital expense but one mixer on a digester is \$175,000. When we talk about vehicles in all reality it's like a drop in the bucket compared to the amount of assets that we have at the WWTP. The WWTP puts significant time and resources into preserving our large assets, which we feel will save significantly in future capital projects. The WWTP is more of a long term over all savings midframe. The first half of the plant was built in 1968 and most of it's still going. The plant doubled the size in 1982 and then we expanded again 2000. In 40 years most of your large assets have met their useful life. Building structures still stand but the assets need resources to continue. But at that time there were significant expansions so all of these assets, half of the plant is going to come to fruition and reach its useful life at the same time. Which means we need to make significant investments now. Throughout this process studies are being done, we are taking engineering consultant to refurbish, to maintain, to do maintenance on all of these assets to let them ride out as long as possible. The biggest thing coming up which is part of the NFA which was in 2017 finalized in 2022 was projecting towards this 15 year plan. This 15 year plan, is what are you going to do with these key assets in the next 15 years in order to keep compliance and if not adjust to changes in compliance which are which are coming. Things are not getting any less stringent. So things are getting a little bit less which involves change to take the opportunity when refurbishing an asset, you are making sure you are not doing it to something that is going to be obsolete in 15 years. That is the name of the game. Mr. Barille does not want to put \$25,000,000 into refurbishing an asset and then 15 years later say it needs another \$30,000,000 to refurbish or replace. Maybe it's worth it to do \$40,000,000 at that time but it'll set us up for the future in savings. It is easy to look at day-to-day operations and ask are you saving and get focused on these things, but in the long term with the amount of assets in terms of value that are at the WWTP the ultimate savings is in managing long term assets to save overtime. Mr. Barille prefaces that because that is going a study the WWTP is going to have as part of the capital budget. It's going to be one of the biggest capital expenses this year. This study will project the long term. The cities of Rocky River, Bay Village, Westlake and Fairview know that every time he is asking for an asset or investment it is a well thought out, well planned investment to set us up for the future of savings. It costs a lot and you're going to see big numbers and when they produce this study there will be big numbers that will be for the future. But understand that it is a well thought out well, well spent plan that is going to set the WWTP up for future savings. That is the biggest thing. In regards to our employees we are fully staffed for the first time and since he's been here which is great. We have a lot of inexperienced people but they are all willing. We've had internal positions, promotions but we are fully staffed and things look very promising. The WWTP has had an 84% turnover in seven years and that includes our full management staff. For the budget there isn't too much to talk about with the biggest thing is Mr. Barille is presenting a 2.4% increase overall to the utility budget. There is a capital loan which is going to hit this year with the first payment in January, second payment will be in July and is a thirty year loan. That loan is for \$1.4 million annually in total debt service which is split up between the four communities, Rocky River is somewhere around 25% of that. That is part of this \$30,000,000 project that has been going on for the last 2.5 years. The good news is when we talk about the future of assets we just refurbished about a third of the plant. Those assets are going to last forty years which is what they are projected to do. Keep in mind that there is still 2/3 of the plane left so 30,000,000 for 1/3 of it, so it is pretty significant. The loan is at a very reduced interest rate at 2.48% interest over thirty years. The good news is the other large loan for debt service came off the books this year in 2025. That means we don't have a debt service of \$836,000 a year but we added \$1.4 million. It's common to borrow as we are always looking for funding, always applying for loans and applying for grants. Historically, Rocky River has been very fortunate and may be even to

speaking to the skill of the previous employees, council, whoever have acquired a lot of the no interest loans. In Mr. Barille's time here it's been a little bit more difficult to acquire those due to the fact that Rocky River and the communities the WWTP serves are doing well so it's been a little bit more difficult. Regardless we borrow every three years and putting the money into these assets. We are making sure that we are doing studies, build or invest, that is something that is going to be a fixed asset for the foreseeable future that will either help us be a requirement to keep compliance but also hopefully save us from future adjustments and unnecessary spending. In 2020, all of the chemicals basically tripled but that has somewhat leveled out. Some of them have long term rates. Every year Mr. Barille checks with all the surrounding WWTP, also the industry standard in order to evaluate whether or not we are getting a good bargain for what we are paying per unit process. All of those are very good except for one of them, sodium hypochlorite. It went out to bid and came back at a 13% reduction. There are a couple of chemicals that we use a lot of and there are a couple of chemicals we don't use as much of but sodium hypochlorite is one the plant uses a lot of. Seeing a 13% reduction will be significant. Mr. Barille is presenting a 2.4% increase, of that the whole thing is the debt that we're absorbing. If all that debt was taken away that we are absorbing, he is actually proposing a -1.8% savings. Mr. Barille appreciates the committees, he appreciates your faith in him and trusting him with making the decisions that he has because every decision he makes is well thought out and every decision he makes is driven off data. He invested a loan this year around \$30,000 in additional data monitoring points which is level sensors, temperature sensors, things like that, that can help us. We are able to cut down our chemical dosage based on those but that's not the biggest savings. The biggest savings is going to be that we have this data and when the engineers perform a long term study on how can we treat more wastewater through your facility they are going to have this data of what it looks like when flow comes in. There is definitely a difference between theoretical application and what is actually occurring out there in the field. You learn engineering in a classroom but in all reality there is obviously some differences that come across. There are applications that come across that there is a difference and what we are doing is we are calibrating that data that is what is occurring into the field to what they believe were the design standards back in 1968 when they constructed it and we're giving that data to the engineers in order to focus on long term spending and savings. Providing that data is something that might say in as opposed to the EPA says you need to expand WWTP. This might be the difference between adding one tank as opposed to two tanks which is a \$30,000,000 savings. The data might also say you do have to add two tanks but at least we'll know that we have to add two tanks and we aren't adding two tanks based on ambiguous uncertain muggy waters that have been initially provided to the engineers. They are basing their information on what they are told or read in a book which was designed in 1960. There's things that are lost there's things that are changed throughout the plant and one of the things that we do and that we've put a big effort in is asset management which is you'll see as it comes this year. We are going to probably integrate a new program which will enable us to track these assets which will also set us up for loan approval as well to show we have sunk this much into an asset and it is time to replace it. This is when the asset was installed, this is the frequency of failures. All of this is huge in future savings. We talk about the annual budget on a daily basis and it is an \$8,000,000 budget, a significant budget. We are managing the WWTP extremely lean. But when you manage lean understand that you need to put in those capital investments when it's time to put in capital investment. The committee and Council has always been willing to do that. It is a lot easier to do it when the capital projects are \$3,000,000 than when they are \$40, \$50 or \$60 million.

The Mayor explained that Nick goes back and forth between counseling committee and certainly his thanks to this council but the management committee is made-up of the four communities and if you ever want to attend those meetings they are very instructive. Nick gets to, in great detail, explain about these projects and some of the data collection and grantsmanship and strategic planning that that he is doing along with our engineers that serve the plant. Nick is highly, highly respected by four communities and their engineers and you can see why he gets really excited about where are we going to save a couple of pennies but then plan for those big savings. It's one thing to save a few cents on the chemicals that Christina has been talking about. But when you know you're going to save millions because you've

strategically planned for reinvestment and so publicly Nick the Mayor wants to thank you for all the work that you've done with the management committee and what you've built in terms of staffing. The Mayor also has to give a thanks and I've done this before we talked about it the other day. You've just had two presentations one from a multi-jurisdictional Municipal Court and now a Regional WWTP and you're to all be applauded. This rests with you. The court can be a journal entry and they can do what they but it all comes here that is added responsibility for all of you. History has shown that our Councils take it very seriously. Thank you and thanks to Nick for the important work that he does with four communities and four sets of engineers. Nick agreed that he does enjoy coming to work. He loves my job. Nick said he had a new daughter and was like trying to find a photo of her. He has to go through like thirty pictures of the WWTP before he can find a photo. His wife said you have get more pictures of your kids and less random pictures of the WWTP.

The Management Committee has recommended the approval of this budget and actually one that was a little more than the budget being seen now, as it was trimmed before this meeting. It was Mike Thomas' going away present to the WWTP, a budget trim.

Mr. Barille said he can wrap it up here. Long story short is the budget being proposed is \$8,028,000, a 2.4% increase. Utilities, chemicals, landfill, capital are basically the largest accounts. The utilities will have some work to do this year with Director Snyder and Jonathan in securing the long-term rates. The electrical which is a \$400,000 line item is expiring that we have had for four or five years at 3.4 cents per kilowatt hour. We are working with a consultant who's been able to hedge portions of it so we're not going to take a full hit of the change in rates but we're continuously monitoring it and we're hedging different portions and working on securing demand and things like that so there's a portion of the demand we secured it an all-time low, which will be locked in for the next four years. Now we have this second section to secure so there will be an increase in total electricity. Gas is also going to increase and it's \$100,000.00 line item but it is used only in the winters. We have been recapturing the methane and reuse that in order to see savings in gas. Annual contributions stayed the same but in the future which Mr. Barille will be contributing more to capital because the assets and things cost more. There's a rule of thumb that you should be at least sending in the capital to cover inflation or at least a percentage of what your asset costs are. That's just something you in the future. Mr. Barille didn't raise capital this year because we have a debt service hit. There's a ton of money you can always put into the WWTP, it needs it but you just want to make sure you are not overburdening the ratepayers with abrupt changes. The name of the game is over time give people time to adjust and invest wisely. People do not want to hear that they owe \$40 per MCF and next year you owe \$90. It's not realistic that's why these long-term planning things are huge. Mr. Barille is going to provide this information; it will have numbers the council can see that and you can kind of build that into your rates throughout the course of time. We have agreed to the collective bargaining agreement which pretty much lines up with services collective bargaining agreement that is included in this budget, so to see a 2.4% increase that's inclusive of the collective bargaining agreement which has been ratified and currently under council for approval.

Other than that, the WWTP does have one vacancy as we are losing our administrative assistant to finance next year so I believe that I'll probably move that position to part-time because we've been able to manage some of the responsibilities through MUNIS the software that we're using now. Things have gotten more streamlined but we're still working through that. Other than that, there are no other large capitals that I really need to touch on. Half of the debt service is absorbed in the capital budget so of that \$1.4 million \$700,000 of it is put into the capital budget in order to mitigate some cash flow from year to year.

- Mrs. Morris asked when he began capturing methane and is that new. Mr. Barille said they started capturing the methane in 2010. The recent study revealed that it was not worth it to capture more. In Northeast Ohio, the assets would have depreciated in the time it gained the recoup on it. Mr. Barille thinks the return on investment was like 30 years the capital investments. We would lose money. If people want to want me to do it I can do it but it's economically it did not

make sense. We evaluate that every handful of years. To put that into perspective, when we did that study Nick was trying to take advantage of half off on the investment of the capital assets which were given by the inflation reduction act and it still wasn't worth it. It feels expensive to have these utilities here in northeast Ohio but the prices here are cheap compared to the rest of the nation. We capture about 15% as and burn the remainder off as part of our air permit. When we are redoing assets and we maybe invest in that building to do that that might be an opportunity to say how we can efficiently spend that money in order to regain more assets while we're already spending to refurbish assets. That is a reality which could happen that will bring our return on investment. We are already upgrading assets that are required to be updated.

Personnel Changes: None, the WWTP is fully staffed. The staff is on the young side, though so there is training planned.

Anticipated Replacement: In three years.

Financial Overview:

2026 Expense Projections: \$ 8,369,413.69

2024 Expense: \$ 6,469,855.27

YTD 2025 Expense as of 10/01: \$ 5,339,737.39

2025 Projected Expense: \$ 7,516,885.51

2025 Proposed Expense: \$ 7,842,042.27

2026 Operating Budget Highlights: The biggest change this year is the debt service that pays off the 30 million dollar capital project, CEPT and Final Clarifier Improvement, that we been working on for the past few years. Some debt falls off this year, but the new debt service is double that. On the bright side, there is still over 1 million left in the contingency for that capital project. The Rocky River responsibility for that is 23% and will remain at that level for the life of the 30 year loan.

Impacts on 2026 Budget: Significant and expected, about \$1.326 million per year.

Cost Savings: Chemical prices and usage per gallon is down overall. Our landfill cost is also a bright side because we contract with local suppliers. Most treatment facilities need to budget 12% to cover that expense, we budget 5%. In addition, Superintendent Barille credits our finance dept for helping trim 100k off the WWTP budget.

2025 Capital Expenditures: Continuation of the CEPT and Final Clarifier Improvement project. Project will be all encumbered in February 2026. Final completion was in mid-October.

2026 Capital Expenditures: On the budget for 2025 but didn't get to it is the study that will be a roadmap for the next 15 - 20 years specifically The Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan – at a cost of 600K. There are other various upgrades in the budget as well including HVAC and the continuation of the consulting agreement with Hazen and Sawyer.

Recreation Department

Mr. Shipp said he sits as the City Council representative on the Parks and Rec Commission, which also has a designee or representative from the Rocky River City School Board, a member of the public, the Mayor's appointee and also Joe Roszak from the MetroParks and he has been appointed by the School Board so we have a good committee. We work with Mr. Holub throughout the year. Bob Holub is the Director and has thirteen full-time employees and approximately 250 seasonal or regular part-time employees. Mr. Shipp emphasizes that number because that's where most of the cost comes from as you'll

see is the cost of people. The big personnel change is Brad Wisniewski as our new Fitness and Community Programs Coordinator who replaced Ryan Schuler. Anticipated replacements is always good to see that there are none and not expecting any major turnover at this time. Bob and our Parks and Rec Department are responsible for facilities that our residents enjoy including the outdoor pool the rec center which has a large gymnasium indoor pool and soon to be larger workout area. Our parks have all our sports facilities like basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball, tennis and pickleball and our ice arena. There are a lot of indoor and outdoor facilities that Bob has to be responsible for so I'll turn it over to him to talk about the numbers.

Mr. Holub said good morning and thank you. Not a day goes by that someone doesn't bring up pickle ball, it doesn't matter where or when or how some way shape or form pickleball comes up every single day in his life. Thanks everybody, thanks Councilman Shipp for the introduction. Mr. Holub said a lot has stayed consistent within the budget for 2026 for recreation. Everyone has the form in front of you as well as the presentation that will be on 2 of the 3 screens. Mr. Holub will jump into actual data. We are looking at a marginal increase in our overall revenues and expenses with a 2.9% increase in revenues and a 2.7% increase in expenses. As we look at the budget some of the main things he wants to focus on are speculative revenue. Things that we generate like memberships, programs and rentals, things of that nature, our part-time wages as well as some operational changes and getting into capital. So budgetarily you can see the top 3 blocks are our revenue projections staying relatively consistent from where we are today where we budgeted as well as where we are looking for next year. The actuals are from November 5th so it is consistent with where we expected to be with revenues. Most exciting in this slide are the expenses. That very bottom block are our actuals so we are well underspent for calendar year 2025, with a marginal increase looking in 2026. So, all things are staying the same and we're pretty confident in where we are with regards to revenues and expenses moving into next year. Some of the things that I like to look at are where our revenues come from. If you break it down city support comes from taxes, general funds, things of that nature 35.5%. Everything else comes from membership, rentals, programs and services. We do what we can to cover our costs without asking for city support any more than we need to. Mr. Shipp said Mr. Holub mentioned and he thought it'd be great for rest of Council to hear that there's an industry standard on what that percentage should be that the city is subsidizing of our rec department. Mr. Holub responded saying generally speaking NRPA, the National Recreation Park Association says a little over 58% to 60% is generally contributed by the city, so we are significantly in a better spot with the money we generate and Mr. Holub contributes that to the team. Our team does a great job of finding creative, innovative ways to generate income, managing budgets. He couldn't ask for a better staff that really does focus on that. They are involved in this process from now and then every month forward. They all are looking at numbers almost every day. If you ask them they'll tell you more than every day. This gives you an idea of the revenue breakdown and where the funds come from for recreation.

- Mrs. Morris asked what the dark purple is on the slide. Mr. Holub said it would have been services, small things, Kids Cove. It is a very small percentage of things. It's a small sliver.

Mr. Holub continued with expense breakdowns and as you'd somewhat assume it is 76%. That includes everything from payroll to insurance and benefits and it also takes into account professional development funds and memberships. The great majority of the budget goes to full and part-time staff either for payroll purposes or for professional development purposes. Utilities make up a significant portion also. Services is \$61,000 but it gives you an idea of the breakdown where the money we're asking for today goes and it goes in recreation. The biggest revenue line that is speculative wise is through membership. We have significantly overachieved in the budgeted revenue amount at \$100,000 over our projection for 2025 in memberships this year. Our membership staff has done a phenomenal job. We've gotten more creative annually with our membership drive. We made over \$211,000 in memberships in one week. Easily a record for us and a great portion of our overall membership budget comes from that. The membership costs have not increased in a few years so Council passed the ordinance a few weeks ago for that increase that won't hit until January so these numbers are consistent with 2024 numbers if you were

to benchmark. Theoretically, all things stay the same. That number will increase next year because of that increase in rates so that our members will be paying.

- Mr. O'Boyle said you are actually doing a good job bringing new members in. Mr. Holub said yes, we are absolutely seeing more income from additional membership being sold. One of the things that Mr. Holub is most excited about and Councilman Shipp had noted is the new expansion in the fitness center. We feel very strongly that we will generate more interest and more income to the space because we'll have an expanded space and be able to offer more program services in general informal recreation. It's exciting. Mr. O'Boyle continued by saying he's a senior himself and he uses silver sneakers whenever possible and we have that arrangement between our Senior Center and the Rec Center. Is that factored in at all. Mr. Holub said yes it is. These numbers also include \$3.50 for every swipe of a silver sneakers member. The Rec Department bills back to silver sneakers through their insurance up to ten swipes. Once you hit ten swipes that's the cap no matter if you come thirty times we still get \$3.50 per swipe up to ten. There's a cap that is shared between the Senior Center and Rec Center. One thing that Mr. Holub has not noted in the presentation is we've negotiated that up to \$4.50 an additional dollar per swipe next year with a cap of nine. We've done some research and found that majority of our silver sneaker visits are coming less than ten times so we felt that was a better number, a dollar more per person per swipe could add up pretty significantly over the course of a year. The Senior Center will also be the beneficiary of that that increase.
- Mr. Furry asked if we used to get reimbursed twenty swipes in silver sneakers. Mr. Holub said not since he's been here. Mr. Holub has never heard of silver sneakers doing a twenty swipe and usually it's nine to ten everywhere. The Mayor added that there are some different programs. Silver Sneakers is one branded in that way but there are others.

Mr. Holub said looking at program revenue the two highlights are aquatics surpassing the 2025 budget. The most surprising although strategic was the Fitness and Wellness Program. It's jumped big in the last few months. We have brought personal training under our own umbrella rather than outsourcing it. We used to charge a rental fee for two or three trainers and they would pay us on a monthly basis. Whatever their client load was didn't matter we got our rental fee. Those trainers are now under our umbrella and they're generating some significant income for us. So Fitness and Wellness has made over \$100,000 this year where in past years we may have been under \$60,000. So that that includes group fitness and PT- Personal Training and that with that new space we expect to continue to increase. Fitness and Wellness has surpassed next year revenue goal with still having twenty some days left in this year. That's a big part of what Ryan Schuler did before he left and what Brad 's doing currently, both fantastic professionals that have some good ideas and are moving us forward in those program areas.

Part time wages is something Mr. Holub has talked about every year I've presented to you all, part time wages are something we continue to monitor, we continue to understand that it drives our budget. Mr. Holub has said a number of times whatever Aquatics does and lifeguards do, that's what drives our part-time wages. We had 100 lifeguards last year and a huge kudos to Michelle Eibel who has a 90 percent retention rate in lifeguards, somewhat unheard of in Aquatics. The kids that come back come back. The kids that don't graduate generally speaking and they move on to real jobs so Michelle has done a phenomenal job at recruitment and at retention. One hundred lifeguards is not easy to manage between the two pools and she's done a phenomenal job. One of the things that we're looking at is how to how to manage the expectations of aquatic increases and several of you've heard me share there's a market value on part-time wages and recreation just in any industry. One of the things we are somewhat combating right now is our neighbors to the south in Fairview opening their new pool in May, they say. They want 50 lifeguards and with a starting rate of \$17.00 an hour. Ours are \$14 to \$14.50 so we're really trying to look at how to combat that without losing our guards. We know some are Fairview kids that are working for us and are likely going to jump and we understand that. We are trying to do all we can to make sure we are

offering whatever incentive; we're offering whatever scheduling incentive while also bumping some increases into the overall part-time wages and recreation. Some of those things we're going to have to continue to work with over the next 12 months to make sure we can stay within that number. We are going to do what we can to make sure we keep the pools open specifically. The aquatic line drives our entire wage budget.

- Mr. Furry asked the Director for the 2025 actual numbers and part-time through November 30th or through December 4th. Mr. Holub said that it would have been through November 15th payroll. We are going to come in right at where we had proposed for part-time wages for 2025 with no supplemental this year it looks because last year was.

Operationally, there are some changes we are going to be making or look to be making with the expansion of the fitness center. The Cleveland Clinic space is vacated so though you can see some of the dollars that the contract was worth in 2024 it was worth about \$39,000. Upon them vacating the space we have capped 2025 at \$26,771 and we know we won't bring anything. So there's a loss in revenue of what would have been expected to be about \$40,000. Mr. Holub is confident in the membership increases that it will be made up. The general fund transfer as Nick alluded to, a little trimming also in recreation so the transfer went down slightly, which will impact us to some degree at the end of the year, but some of the manageable things we're looking at is a credit card processing fee. We talked about that last year you can see what recreation with the city spent on processing credit card fees. In 2024, we spent \$112,300 on bringing in \$2.1 million. We brought in a lot but we also spent a lot. This year through October we're at \$58,000 on \$1.7 made. Those are big dollars. We're pushing six figures again this year but we won't be quite that as it was a renegotiated fee. Since we met last, Mr. Holub was able to talk with the company and bring the fee down. Mr. Holub shared one company's proposal with our current vendor and they honored it. That was good. We were able to save a few bucks in 2025. One of the things we're looking at and will be proposed to the Parks and Rec Commission next week is a revenue offset that would be a pass through. If you pay with a credit card and Rec, you will pay the credit card fee that we are paying. If you pay with cash or check, nobody pays a fee so it's a win-win at that point. That's what we will be proposing to the Parks and Rec Commission on Tuesday and then ideally launching in January which will be a significant savings.

- Mr. Shipp asked if it's a flat fee correct. Mr. Holub responded that it's a 2.87% fee for any credit card, debit card used. Mr. Shipp said because when you get into the weeds on these things some credit cards are this percentage and if it's a different bank card it's this percentage which makes it hard to pass through. If it's a set fee then everybody's treated the same and it's nice and legal and everybody's equally unhappy. It's become so much more common over the years because these are so expensive they're so high. Mr. Shipp said kudos to you for getting that number down as we had to do a supplemental appropriation in 2024 because of those credit card fees and we didn't have to this year and in large part because Bob went after it to get the number.

Mr. Holub said that what we've done this year and what we're working on we've talked about the fitness center expansion and gave the notice to proceed this week. They have 2 to 3 months they'll be they should be completing that project which will include the placement of new equipment. The rooftop unit, the dehumidification project for the pool, that project is moving forward. Director Balla is taking lead on the overall of that and then we're obviously involved with regard to the shutdowns and things like that that are coming. With regard to how that looks budgetarily, some of the things we're considering are the timelines of that pool project. The pool right now we're planning on a summer closure which helps because we have the outdoor pool to absorb some of that. We've also gotten the go ahead in the agreement from Fairview Park for reciprocity. We would not pay them as we did not charge Fairview residents for the first 2 years. Then there was a small fee of \$2.00 and then they ended up at North Olmsted where they are still going. That reciprocity is what we're expecting and anticipating if their pool opens in May. Also Westlake is doing a major renovation of their pool at the same time. They were

supposed to do it in 2024, the bids came in 20% their original engineers estimate so they're closing their indoor pool at the same time as well. We are going from three communities that had three pools to three communities that hopefully have one, is the hope. All three communities are going to work together as best we can to make sure we're able to offer aquatic opportunities for all of our residents.

Looking at next year's relatively shrunk down list of what we typically would look at doing. But you can see the pool is some general slide maintenance we need to get done. One of the biggest things in the picture to the right is a new playground for Linden Park. That playground, like many of the ones that have not been done in recent years, is 20-21 years old, somewhere in the neighborhood. It's at end of life or near end of life so we're looking at a renovation to that space. Elmwood Cabin needs to have some work done on the roof and the chimney. The Morley Park Gazebo is at its end of life, many don't even know it exists, then continuing the fitness spaces. We are currently putting in fitness equipment at the outside of the Rec Center, we're going to do the same at Martin Park is our plan after we see how this goes. Something I've talked about for a number of years and have kind of kicked the can, the ceiling in the gymnasium at the Civic Center. If you haven't checked it out it the paint has not stuck to it since its opening. We've been looking and investigating different opportunities to correct that. It's really aesthetic, not dangerous, it's just unsightly. This year we took the opportunity to do a fix in the lobby that had the same problem but a significantly smaller square footage. We did spray, a paneling and a foam spray. It looks great and by that you would never notice which is what you want in a ceiling. You don't want people to notice it and that's held up really well so it's something we're looking at doing in the gymnasium now that we understand it will work. One of the most exciting things that we're considering and looking at doing next year is a Master Plan for recreation, specifically the facilities on this side of campus. What do we need, what do we do, some stakeholder meetings that sort of thing. Something that I think our users would really appreciate and that we need as the Rec Department to understand how to move forward, what we have, what we're missing and how to better utilize some of our spaces. That's in the budget for next. Additionally, the ice rink, continual, structural updates, repairs that need to be made to that space. We had an assessment done this year that came back and gave us what we already knew which was somewhat refreshing. Mr. Holub was less than pleased with them at one point but they did come back and refreshed their initial report. Their initial report had pictures of facility that wasn't in Rocky River so we had a conversation and they came back and re-presented it. Mr. Holub took with a grain of salt but they did reaffirm some of the things we knew. We've got some structural repairs to make to that space and that building moving forward. That is our major capital planning for next year. That's what we have and that's how we've gotten to where we are this year and hopefully with no supplemental in the next 25 days.

- Mrs. Gallagher asked if Council when they do the master plan can you talk about a steam room. Mr. Holub said yes. Our new fitness manager, he is continually asking for a sauna. Mr. Holub's office is like a sauna sometimes. Mr. Holub hears that almost as often as he hears pickle ball, not quite. Mr. Shipp said if we get one we'll name it the Gallagher. Mrs. Gallagher said the Owen J. Gallagher. The Mayor said there are sponsorship opportunities here.
- Mr. O'Boyle is impressed that they are able to keep the utilities budget in good line with the prices going up so rapidly today. Mr. Holub said that they have done all they can with utilities. A lot of that has to do with the ice rink operation. We've done some things over the years to kind of shift the season if you will. Usage isn't up as early in the fall as maybe it used to be so we're kind of shrinking even a couple weeks here and there with no major impact to our programs or participants. Mr. O'Boyle thought maybe Mr. Holub was following people around turning lights off. He does that like he does at his house.

Department Staffing: Full-time: 13
Part-time: ~250 seasonal/regular part-time

Personnel Changes: Brad Wisniewski– Fitness & Community Programs Manager (replaced Ryan Schuhler)

Anticipated Replacement Positions: None

Financial Overview:

2026 Revenue Projections \$4,103,623.00

2026 Expense Projections \$4,419,071.00

\$1,098,857.94 Fund Balance as of 09/30/2025 Financial Report

Revised 2025 Budget

2025 Revenue \$3,986,226.00

2025 Expense \$4,299,561.43

Actuals (11/25/2025)

2025 Actual Revenue \$3,970,774.76

2025 Actual Expense \$3,373,585.34

2026 Operating Budget Highlights:

- Revenues projected to increase by 2.9%
- Expenses budgeted to increase by 2.7%.

Impacts on 2026 Budget:

- Local market competition and minimum wage – part-time wage increases.
- General expense increases for supplies, products & services.
- Transfer reduction from 2025 to 2026.
- Loss of Cleveland Clinic lease revenue.

Areas of Cost Savings/ Increased Revenue in 2026:

- Increased fees for all programs, services, memberships, and rentals (~10%).
- Modification and negotiation of credit card processing fees.
- Innovative membership options & increases.
- Expanded fitness center space.

Future Considerations

- Continual evaluation of pricing based on wages & product/supply costs.
- Continual review of fees charged for programs, memberships, and services.
- Aging facilities continue to need attention:
 - o Ice Rink structural and system concerns
 - o Park facilities & storage buildings

2025 Major Expenditures:

- Outdoor Pool Feature & Surface Replacement
- Elmwood Ballfield Spaces
- Civic Center Fitness Center Expansion (in-progress)
- Indoor Pool HVAC/Dehumidification (in-progress)

2026 Capital Budget Highlights:

Outdoor Pool/Slide Upgrades/Repairs \$100,000.00

Total \$100,000.00

Parks

Morley Park Gazebo \$15,000.00

Martin Park Fitness Path \$40,000.00

Linden Park Playground Replacement \$350,000.00

Elmwood Park Cabin Roof \$50,000.00

Total \$455,000.00

Civic Center

Gym Ceiling \$250,000.00

Department Master Plan \$200,000.00.

Total \$450,000.00

Ice Rink

Structural Repairs \$230,000.00

Replacement Front Doors \$70,000.00

Total \$300,000.00

Senior Center

Mr. O'Boyle was impressed at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the Senior Center. It is very impressive. Councilman O'Boyle introduced Sheena Wright of the Senior Center who is filling in for Director Huff who couldn't be here today. Ms. Wright began in March. Her title is Volunteer and Marketing Coordinator. Mr. O'Boyle had a nice conversation with her earlier this week and he is impressed that Ms. Wright has come to us with twenty years of experience from the City of Strongsville. She had a variety of roles at the Senior Center with the last four years being in the role of managing the Senior Center. Ms. Wright has her bachelors degree from Bowling Green in Gerontology, which is an appropriate degree considering the job she is in.

Ms. Wright thanked Mr. O'Boyle and Council for having her. Deb Huff did prepare the budget and Ms. Wright is presenting it for her as she is on vacation. Ms. Wright went over the budget for the Senior Center.

Personnel Overview:

Full-time: 7

Part-time: 10

Personnel Changes:

- Restructure 2 Positions: Admin/Trip Coordinator to Grounds/Excursions Coordinator (Greenhouse & Garden), Volunteer/Marketing Coordinator to Assistant Director- add administrative duties in preparation for transition of Director
- Creation of a Part-time Community Nurse in collaboration with the Cleveland Clinic, looking to the Cleveland Clinic and grant funding for this position

Anticipated retirement with succession planning: Deb Huff (June 2027)

Financial Overview:

2026 Revenue Projections: \$1,124,500

2026 Expense Projections: \$1,826,784
2025 Revenue: \$1,126,426
2025 Expense: \$1,763,385.83
YTD 2025 Revenue: \$982,767.25 (9/30/25)
YTD 2025 Expense: \$928,537.66 (9/30/25)

2026 Operating Budget Highlights:

- Increase full-time wages corresponding with position description
- Increase utilities & postage slightly due to doubling the footprint of the Senior Center and cost of postage
- Increase Land Maintenance & Supplies to support Gardening Program, also supplemented with grants and donations
- Increase in Professional Services to accommodate increased programming, Revenue for Class Fees will also increase accordingly/3 new dance classes have been added on beginning in January along with new programming
- Decrease in Social Services due to generous grants and donations received
- Slight increase in Education for staff credentialing

Impacts on 2026 Budget: Minimal

Cost Savings? Increased Revenue in 2026:

Anticipate increased revenue with increased class offerings and programming

2025 Capital Expenditures: Opened up new spaces:

- Restrooms
- Dance Studio
- Gym/Fitness
- Storage
- 100 Seat Lecture Hall
- Silver Linings Café
- Employee Restroom
- Exterior Refresh (Front of building)
- Landscaping along Lecture Hall Side
- Exterior Lighting
- Ceiling Tiles

2026 Capital Expenditures: Phase 2 of the Renovation Project

- Renovation of pre-existing restrooms
- Flex Space anticipated opening in April
- Dining Room Floor and Furniture (Renaming it to the Garden View Grille)

Long Term Capital Needs/Wish List: *Only one thing left!*

- Generator (grant purchase)

To touch back on a couple of things previously mentioned, the Community Nurse Program is modeled after the Parish Nursing Program where the Cleveland Clinic places nurses in various churches. The Senior Center will coordinate their efforts with the Cleveland Clinic to have a part-time nurse available as an expansion to the REACH Program. This will assist residents in communication with their doctors regarding diagnosis, treatments and care of medical conditions. It will help in transporting them from their home to the hospital, stays and general wellness. We are hoping that this program is a go because it will help a lot of senior residents who don't have family nearby. This will be a good place to feel

comfortable talking about health issues. The Mayor added that when the Mayor and Ms. Huff met in July and September, Ms. Huff talked about this which arises from a need the seniors have, almost like a navigator to assist with nomenclature that can be overwhelming and it can be confusing at times and that can relate to compliance for taking medications and following up on treatments. In September, the Mayor gave Dr. Smith a call, who is the head of Regional Hospitals for the Cleveland Clinic. He is a resident of Rocky River. He was so excited to be a part of this program and got some of his staff involved and we are looking potentially to the Community West Foundation to provide the funding to have this position. It will not be an additional staff member on the city's payroll but actually the Cleveland Clinic. We always look at these very effective partnerships but ones that we have some control over. This is a perfect opportunity. Dr. Smith thanked us for this opportunity. A big thank you to Dr. Smith and to Ms. Huff and Ms. Wright for being forward thinking of our need as it relates to that.

Ms. Wright also mentioned the greenhouse and garden. Next to the Community Garden is a greenhouse located and was utilized and created by a group called River Sprouts ten years ago. It was a group of students and turned it into a non-profit and grew things in there for Meals on Wheels and such. These girls are now in college and they haven't found anyone else to take it over. The Senior Center is happy to take it off their hands with the idea of growing fresh produce to use for the Pineapple Pantry, which is the food pantry at the Senior Center, continue to donate it to the Meals on Wheels Program and also use for the Garden View Grille. One of River Sprouts' goals and the Senior Center's goal is to continue with doing an intergenerational programs and classes. Inviting kids to come over and garden with the seniors and hold different programs and workshops and promote volunteerism within the community amongst the seniors and the kids. The Mayor added that there is a physical facility which was gifted to the City of Rocky River. They were leasing the city's land for a dollar. Rick Manaloff's daughter wrote the Mayor the first letter about growing food for people that need healthy food. With that she had a Board of Directors and they would meet with the Mayor regularly. They also had close to \$10,000 that these young ladies had raised through various fundraisers. It was the most incredible learning experience for them in addition to growing a number of things for the Assistance Program and Meals on Wheels. The Community Garden was the benefactor originally of that approximately \$10,000. They went to Deb then to the Mayor, they cannot honor this intergenerational piece that is at the core of that 501 C3 and needed to be continued and honored. Recently, those dollars were transferred to the City of Rocky River to support electricity, new beds and all kinds of things at the Community Garden. It is a win, win, win. Rick Manaloff and his daughter are really pleased. A big thank you to Deb and Michelle Dool and others at the Senior Center. Michelle will be leading that initiative.

In addition to the Senior Sprouts Program the Senior Players who put on two productions a year will be inviting children ages 12-18 this summer to join the Players for a six-week theater camp concluding with a summer production. This is very exciting and it hasn't been done before.

With the new dance studio, children will be invited to do a Granny and me ballet and along with a variety of art classes there is a Granny and me art class.

This concludes the budget at Sheena's end but she does understand that Deb always gives a holiday shopping tip. Sheena distributed a fitness pass to try one exercise class offered in the Fitness Studio or Dance Studio and a cookie coupon to use at the Silver Linings Café. You can pass it on to a neighbor or use it yourself to check out our age amazing Senior Center. The Rocky River Senior Center is keeping you happy, healthy and connected.

- President Furry has one question. He was at the Ribbon Cutting and the facility is fantastic obviously and has a little ways to go, but in the dance floor, are they looking at noise reduction panels. It was borderline deafening in there. Ms. Wright isn't sure if they have been ordered yet, but the Senior Center has been working with the manufacturer. He came out and did a sound test and chose how many to put on. It will be in the gym and Lecture Hall as well.

The Mayor added and Director Thomas is well aware of this, the Senior Center is so highly thought of when it comes to people making donations or remembering them in their will, et cetera. Just this year Social Services received \$10,000; Transportation received more than \$130,000 – these are single donors; for the Director's Discretion \$300,000 plus an additional \$100,000 for Deb to use at her discretion; and finally a \$6,700 contribution for the Director's discretion. Some of these are in estates, some are just contributions because of the valued services that the Senior Center does. This is all included in their donation accounts.

Ms. Wright has been her for nine months now and she is very impressed by how much the city supports the Senior Center and the residents. It makes the employees want to do better. It is great to see.

- Mr. Furry asked about the transportation, which is obviously a big thing. In his eighteen years it seems to go back and forth for larger vehicles or smaller vehicles. What is the latest segue for that or trend. Sheena thinks that what is here in Rocky River is perfect with a whole mixture of that. She believes the minivan and car are used the most, which is the most responsible way but then on hand the handicapped accessible van when someone needs that. Sheena loves that there is a little bit of everything and Michelle does a great job at getting people where and when they want to go. People call and schedule three months in advance but someone might call needing a ride in a couple of days and Michelle always makes it work. Sheena used to oversee the transportation program in Strongsville and it was fun to watch how people can stay in their home because of this program. It's truly making them more independent and Council does a great job in offering it to the residents. The transportation is fully staffed for drivers. They just hired two new drivers a couple of months ago. The Mayor said that grants have purchased most of the vehicles. The Giant Eagle grant is for the ongoing operations of the program. NOACA has a senior transportation program and the city has applied for those vehicles to have diversity within the vehicles so everyone's need can be met.
- Mr. O'Boyle added that one of the reasons for that generosity is because the Senior Center does a lot of little things like the blood pressure testing program every Monday along with a Glee Club and Ukulele Orchestra. It is little things like that which aren't in the report but are appreciated. The Mayor said it is a lifeline for many seniors like the nurse partnering with the Cleveland Clinic that become essential services that seniors and their families deeply value. All those details are listed in the Annual Report.

Fire Department

Mr. Hunt does not think the chief needs an introduction but just a brief statement before we dive in. The chief has a lot of duties that are not being a tour director, but Mr. Hunt encourages Council to go see the new temporary staging down at the service garage. It's actually very impressive and when the Chief and I met, a number of firefighters were complimentary as to how it was working with no complaints and that is huge. Mr. Hunt's big take away amongst the numbers and things that we talked about and what you have planned for staffing was that the morale is good down there and that is huge. That could be somewhat daunting to be in temporary quarters. Correct me if I'm wrong, but it seemed like everything was going really well.

The Chief thanked City Council for everything to get the department to this point. The Chief will give credit to whoever designed that back in 1954. That fire station flows. Everything flowed very well in that fire station. But again thank you for this opportunity to build the new fire station. 1954 though served us very well, it finally hit a point where it was not serving us so well anymore. We packed a lot in a small facility. The new station, although it will be roughly three times bigger, it will allow us to better serve the citizens better, deploy our personnel and better serve our personnel. In the fire service, cancer and suicide

are very big topics and we've tried to help regulate some of those for our personnel with the new building. Personal spaces, downtime spaces, workout facilities, but all of that being built into it to allow us to have faster response times to get to the citizens faster in their moment of need. It's going to be interesting to see how it goes. The Chief said that after department was moved out of this current station, it is amazing how quickly it became an old musty building when it's not getting the transfer of air and if the doors aren't going up 3000 times a year, it's a process. It is a process that the Chief thinks we undertook involving all the firefighters. We have their input from all of it. The committee that was very well represented including Mike Bala the Facilities Director, Ray Reich, Rich Snyder was involved, the Fire Prevention Officer, the firefighter community so that we were building a project that was going to be right from the beginning. That is what our hope is and Council saw some value in it and funded it for us so now we're ready to break some dirt, as soon as we get a little fiber line figured out and then we're going to break some dirt.

Mr. Hunt said the Chief mentioned briefly about it the doors going up and down 3000 times. The response time has not been affected and obviously there was a study before we moved temporary quarters and we want to touch on some of these issues/questions before we get into the figures. That was a very legitimate and primary concern with how the move would affect and that is not the case. The department is as sufficient as ever. The Chief responded saying people questioned. We did have residents call question about what our response would be especially up to the Story Road area. We found out that through some mapping that Lake Road to Wooster gives us a decent response time up there and not losing many seconds on that route. Up to West River Estates and Christiansen Estates we use Clague Road a lot. It gets us from coming up the heart of Rocky River and those roads give us direct access up to Center Ridge versus moving around. We do use Wagar Road a lot but some of the residents have called because they don't understand that they are seeing different routes now. Elmwood is getting used to it a little more so residents are asking why are they hearing sirens on Elmwood all the time. They understand once we talk to them and we try to put their mind at ease. When we do have major medical or we have a fire alarm with a report of smoke or whatever, Fairview Park fire department is dispatched with us at the same time, so we do try to get people on scene more quickly to make sure we can start taking care of their problem during their time of need. So far so good. We are making it work and the personnel are making it work. We have some hiccups here and there but try to minimize those, but we try to take care of them when we do have them.

Mr. Hunt said we are anticipating a delivery in the spring. The Chief said he is anticipating one delivery in the spring and one is a winter delivery. The new ambulance that was funded for us in 2023 will be delivered at the end of January. We're looking forward to having that hit the roads. It is amazing that doing almost 4000 calls a year we are piling miles onto vehicles. We've gone to heavier duty more truck vehicles to try to increase our lifespan with them but the newest ambulance, the 2021 ambulance has almost 80,000 miles on it already. The backup ambulance has almost 90,000 on it and there is still the reserve ambulance but it's completely out of service and parked waiting for disposal. That ambulance is a 2000 ambulance that was in an accident in 2004 and re-chassied. Through the good work of the Mayor and Rich Snyder we are rotating these on a little more user-friendly basis so we don't have a lot of old equipment that is difficult to get parts for. The 1996 fire engine that's being replaced by the delivery in April of next year is the order placed in 2022. The 1996 is taking months sometimes to source parts to go back on that truck. We will have a new vehicle hopefully again within the next 7 to 10 years if Council sees fit to replace it and we try to get these things into a 20-year rotation versus getting them out towards 30 years. There will be a little bit of value then for trade in where we are not going to get much trade in or sell out right on the old fire truck. But those are the basis of our business, fire trucks and ambulances are what we have to make our job go around. The people are as important as their tools. Mr. Hunt said he can still hear former Safety Service Director Linden talking about redundancy that the ambulances and make sure that we have back up and have the ability to provide those services to our residents. Thank you chief any questions about that before I turn it over to go through your report.

- Mrs. Gallagher asked if the department will use the lead mechanic for the fire equipment as well. Chief Lenart said yes. Will Carroll and Frank Sinito are both certified emergency vehicle technicians and they do probably 95% of the work. If it gets into something that needs pump work or whatever, they don't have the time to commit to it because they have to take care of so many other big trucks so we will farm that out, but it's a very rare occurrence. We are pretty fortunate for that because they turn the vehicles around quickly and we're not waiting on a repair shop schedule to get us in. They keep our trucks in great shape and on the roads. If you come down you see our trucks you'll say these things look brand new. We work hard to keep them looking that way.
- Mr. Furry asked where we take them if they have to have pump work? The Chief said that for quite a while we were using Ohio CAT in Broadview Heights but they closed their emergency services division and all their mechanics went to Fallsway Equipment. The Chief followed their mechanics because of what they were doing for our vehicles. When he first became chief back in 2015, the ladder truck was having an issue and we were paying mechanics out of Pierce Machinery at their dealership in Ohio to come and they told us there's nothing left we can do for these trucks. You need to replace it or do a complete rebuild. We knew we were going to be replacing it in several years but I talked to another mechanic and he says let me see the books and let's take a look at it. They fixed that ladder truck at that time and then I was sold because we were spending \$4,800 to have it looked at and telling us they can't do anything with it. We sent it down and they repaired it as it was just the adjustment of some valves and such. Now I started to trust the mechanics I know.

The mechanic shop that we do use chauffeurs our vehicles for us, we don't have personnel going out of the city to drop them off. They send me a chauffeur to pick them up and then take them to the repair shops.

Mr. Hunt asked the Chief to jump into his outline. It is in front of everyone today and he sees Captain Bednarski is retiring. The Chief said that Captain Bednarski will be retiring in 2026. We are to add four additional personnel to the department. It is very needed with our run increases. The Chief is very thankful that we are getting to a point where we will be adding personnel to the department. Mr. Hunt stopped the Chief for one second and said it is hitting home because the Mayor in her introductory remarks talked about personnel and firefighters specifically. The Chief said it's going to be a needed increase that we have that the fire department has grown and evolved and the runs have gone up. We need to keep making sure we are providing the service to the residents that they need. You will see hopefully in 2027 a more streamlined fire department with some different ideas and some different processes coming down the road but we're finalizing those plans as in the few months as we go ahead here and see what the new look may be. I will be good and better serve our residents and the department all the way around. Because personnel is a big topic, we did have an ISO review which is the Insured Services Organization. We are currently a rated a number 2 department now and I expect we will maintain that. The Chief does not see us crossing into a number one and he doesn't see us falling back to a 3 so that that will be good news for all of our citizens as we go forward. We'll see that report roughly in 4 or 5 months.

- Mr. Furry asked what exactly is that? The Chief said that on homeowners' insurance you'll see your public protection class rating and that's where they come in and they review our fire department for response times, our water system, our dispatching system, our fire inspection program, our equipment and our training. It's a pretty comprehensive. We've upped our fire protection and the Chief thinks it shows our fires are down in the city, our squad runs are down a little bit this year so we'll be happy with that. It does pay back if you look my revenues down a little bit but it's all indicative with what the run numbers are.
- Mr. Shipp asked if its runs that are down or if its collections that are down, like payments. The

Chief responded that it falls in there too. What insurance companies are holding their money the longer period do we have anything. The Chief does not know with the shutdown with the federal government if they were reimbursing for Medicare/Medicaid. We usually see that a couple months behind. Mr. Shipp asked if the runs are about the same. The Chief said we are down about 200 runs from the year before. With that being said, he hasn't broken out what those runs are to quantify. The department has been trying to knock down the lift assist calls. We go a lot to pick people up, especially in the facilities. We've been working with the facilities to try to limit these lift assist calls and we're doing the good work with that. The Senior Centers has done great work, Mary Hildebrandt and Deb Huff of helping us real in our facilities. It's a nationwide problem and we're not exempt to. Mrs. Morris asked if the Chief could explain lift assists. A patient will fall on the floor and the facility will call us to come help them get them off the floor because they'll have a policy that says we don't pick people up. The Mayor added or they don't have trained staff and then they'll call the fire department.

- Mr. Shipp has two questions on that topic. When it's just a lift assist do we bill them. The Chief said we do not bill currently. We bill for a lift assist their insurance company but he believes Anthem is the only one paying for a lift assist and but Medicare/Medicaid do not pay for lift assist and most people that are in a facility already either are on Medicare or Medicaid. Mr. Shipp asked if we otherwise have a run to a facility to a nursing home facility that's not just a lift assist, we do bill those, don't we? The Chief said yes. We bill a patient, we don't bill a facility. Medicare pays on a rate of \$1,200 for an ALS 2, \$1,100 for ALS run and \$900 for a BLS run. That is the medicare rate. We bill that rate to Medicaid and we don't get that amount of money but we don't do a lot of Medicaid runs either. Mr. Furry said that if you've seen the CAD reports there's a lot of lift assists. I don't know how on the assisted living one, but if it's a resident we don't get any money we don't continue to bill the individual, correct. The Chief said we do not hard bill any resident. Somebody from out of the city in a car accident say we have a car accident on I 90, we will bill them what their insurance pays then hard bill them the rest through our billing company. Life Forces, the billing company have been very, very good to us. They do a very nice job and they're very responsive. It's a family-owned operation and she's been handling us since we started.
- Mr. Shipp verified that the Chief said it was only Anthem was the only one paying us for lift assist. The Chief said currently. Mr. Shipp wonders what the other insurance companies what it would cost them if the fire department didn't lift their people off the floor. The Chief said he doesn't know on that. Mr. Shipp said that's ridiculous to him but that's just my opinion. The Mayor said there's a bigger issue here. The bigger issue is that nursing homes are having staffing issues and credentialed staffing issues. For liability purposes someone ends up on the floor, there may not be someone who can evaluate that well who has the ability. They have some Hoyer lifts and things like that, but the immediate response is to call the department. Deb Huff along with the Chief has met with the leadership of a number of nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the city, working with them on the correct protocols because many of these in the past would have been handled by their internal staffing models and. Mr. Furry remember Westlake putting on a moratorium on lifts because it was taxing on their fire department and other things.

The Chief shared a fun assisted living fact that assisted living only has to have somebody there to dial 911 if there is a problem. They do not have to provide any nursing services or health services. You pay what you choose for. We do a lot of assisted living work. Actually our two skilled facilities are very good, the Welsh Home and Normandy Care Center are very good for us. We get called to those facilities but it's generally a true emergency when we get called to those facilities. Mr. Furry added that the fire department has dramatically improved the response time to the Normandy. The Chief said the Normandy has to love that we're living practically there.

The Mayor asked the Chief to describe if there are departments that charge the facility for lift assists. The

Chief said that currently that's a discussion that's going on. There are places around the United States that are just starting to charge the facilities and I think the City of Cincinnati just instituted charging the facilities \$1,000 for every time they come to do a lift assist. One of the things the mayor and I have had a discussion on and worry about is we may be cheaper than them hiring personnel so they just keep banging us for a lift assist because it's cheaper to pay us \$1,000 to come once a day than to hire somebody for a year. Mr. Shipp asked if we know what a run generally cost us when we make a run? The Chief said he could extrapolate because if we use the FEMA rates and that's what I can charge, he believes an ambulance is \$75.00 an hour on a FEMA rate and if I look at what my personnel per hour are so take an average of three of them at \$40.00 an hour comes to \$120. Plus what our vehicle so we make a little bit of money with each run to help back with our operation but over the course of the year he thinks he's trying to get into that range of I don't cover a 5th of my expenses but I'm trying to get to where we cover about a 6th of all of our expense. The Mayor said the indirect is high. Mrs. Morris said but you're doing something when you might have an emergency elsewhere. The Chief said that is one of the biggest issues. When we had our ISO review that's one of the things that's come up is we're very lucky in the city that we don't have a lot of fires because ISO don't really care about EMS, they want to know for the insurance industry what's our bottom loss line if you have a fire. In today's world fires add up very quickly. You think it's just a little room and contents fire in the bedroom but that room and contents fire is going to smoke damage everything in that house. If it melted a little bit of siding it's going to require the entire siding on the house to be replaced because everybody wants everything to match which is what you pay for insurance for, it should. The ISO looks at the bottom line is where we are providing fire service and are we leaving any gaps in our service. When we're doing a lot of squad runs all the time, we're leaving gaps in our fire service even though we have mutual aid. They want that fire truck to be on scene within 4 – 4.5 minutes. They don't want that fire truck waiting 8 minutes to get here from Westlake because you know whoever else is tied up. Mr. Shipp added that trend of the shortage of staff at these facilities is probably not changing anytime soon. The Chief doesn't see it changing anytime soon because one of the other things we battle, not only with the facilities but the private ambulances. We will get dispatched for bad lab values. Someone has their blood drawn at 6:00 in the morning, the blood comes back at 9:30 and now it becomes an emergency because there's a bad lab value in it. They will call a private ambulance to come transport that person, the private ambulance doesn't have any staff so 8 hours later, 4 hours later or 2 hours later the private ambulance hasn't shown up, we become the default and they call us for that. We've talked to our medical direction about this we've talked to our doctors about this and what happens is now it becomes a log jam in the ERs. The hospitals are having trouble staffing on the floors, patients get log jammed in the ERs and we keep piling patients into the ERs. So there's days, they call them wall time, how much wall time are we having today. Wall time is when we get to the hospital and we might be waiting for 45 minutes with a Rescue Squad crew because we've got a patient that had something that isn't really a critical emergency function. Do they need to be seen by a doctor, yes, but did they need to be in the ER for that problem and now we're hanging on the wall for 45 minutes waiting for that patient to actually get either a triage area or a room to be seen. The West side of Cleveland is in a lot better shape than the east side and the Akron area. Our wall times don't get much over 20 minutes. It's nothing out at Hillcrest in Mayfield Heights to have an hour – an hour and a half wall time. We have plans in place for that. We have extra ambulance cots from our reserve ambulance and we will leave one person with that cot and then bring that ambulance back and put a new ambulance cot into it so we can get back to providing service.

Mr. Hunt asked out of X number of 1,000 what the percentage is the facility run for a lift assist or something else. The Chief said he doesn't have that breakdown right now Councilman. It varies all the time because for the last month our facilities haven't really beat us up. But now we're going to come in the flu season and we may be running through a facility you know six times a day. Flu seasons are hard on us when they hit a facility because they pass it to everybody within the facility. Mr. Hunt said it is significant chunk of the runs. The Chief said he knows we go to the big five. The Normandy is probably 200 + 300 times a year. Bickford Senior Living and Rockport are regular stops. Rocky River Villages, their staff does a great job. They've taken everything we've said to them to heart. We have not been going

there nearly as much. When the Welsh Home calls, the department knows it is a true emergency. They rarely ever call us unless it is a true emergency and then Sarah Cook who is the administrator there, calls me up and apologize for having to call us. Our facilities keep us busy. Chief Lenart thanked everyone for their time. He appreciates the support over all the years.

Personnel Overview:

Full-time: 30

Part-time: 0

Personnel Changes:

- Retired
 - Lt. Steve Golobic
 - FF. Jerry Cahill
 - FF. Paul Murray
- Resigned
 - FF. Austin Bruckman
- Hired
 - FF. Cade Bonds
 - FF. Jake Morad
 - FF. Dan Nurnberg
 - FF. Wayne Gerbasi
- June 2026
 - Retiring
 - Cpt. Kevin Bednarski

Financial Overview:

2026 Revenue Projections:

- \$605,000.00
 - Ambulance Billing

2026 Expense Projections:

- \$5,698,094.00

2025 Revenue:

- \$743,477.00

2025 Expense:

- \$5,573,000.00

YTD 2025 Revenue:

- \$557,609.87

YTD 2025 Expense:

- \$4,365,966.16

2025 Operating Budget Highlights:

- Fire Station Approval
 - Replacement Fire station was approved and is moving forward.
- Temporary Fire Station
 - Personnel moved out of the old fire station to the temporary quarters located in the sewer department division of the Service Department.

- Rescue Swimmers
 - 9 personnel have completed the rescue swimmer program
 - Outfitted with needed equipment
 - Awaiting delivery of two Seabobs

Impacts on 2026 Budget:

- Vehicles
 - Expenses related to the outfitting of the new vehicles.
 - Most equipment transfers over to the new vehicle

Cost Savings?

- Our lone revenue in the fire department is ambulance billing
 - Runs are down in 2025
 - This translates to a decrease in revenue for the fire department
 - However, the FD remains extremely busy.
 - Projected to be down about 250 from 2024

2025 Capital Expenditures:

- Seabobs
- Temporary Fire Station outfitting

2026 Capital Expenditures:

- Lucas Machines
 - CPR device
 - Ours have aged out, no longer supported by the manufacturer
- With the fire station construction I do not have a list of capital needs for 2026.

Long Term Capital Need

- Personnel
 - In 2026, the fire department is requesting 4 additional personnel.
 - Current needs and future predictions will still drive the need for increased personnel numbers.

Police Department

Mr. Hunt welcomed Chief Lichman and said Chief Lichman does not need an introduction. Mr. Hunt appreciates the Chief for being here. Mr. Hunt met with the Chief earlier this year and spent some time going over the budget review outline. The police department is always dealing with personnel, not unlike the fire department and getting the appropriate staffing and done that. We have worked out some of the wrinkles with the jail and is operating as it should. If you would like to start with personnel and go from there.

Chief Lichman said that actually staffing for five years he's been chief, we are in the best shape we've been in. Maybe the first year we were about the same as we are now but we are only one full-time police officer short since September. There is an open Civil Service Testing right now through the National Testing Network and accepting lateral applications to fill that one spot. There is one anticipated retirement in 2026. There are five or six people eligible to retire, but nobody at the moment other than Lieutenant Bunner. We would like to hire some part-time dispatchers with interviews scheduled for next week. We just hired a part time jailer anticipating the full-time jailer to retire February 1, 2026 and if this part time jailer does well, they will slide into that position. All the crossing guard posts are filled at the moment. We could use some substitute crossing guards. If one of the guards calls off or goes on

vacation, which is typical, many are retirees and like to vacation, it needs to be filled with one of the community service officers or animal control officer. We are still looking into the privatization of that service for 2026 or the 2026-2027 school year. Four of our officers were blessed with children in 2025 which meant we had four of them gone for weeks at a time. We have two out, one on duty injury broken wrist from chasing someone through the woods; and one out non-duty related but had to have back surgery. This is difficult to keep shifts filled.

Last year Lieutenant Flowers retired in April. We hired two laterals from Lakewood, Michael Lipsey and Donald Flowers, who is Ronald Flowers son. Don was born the Chief's first year working in Rocky River while his father was training him. He would have tested to work here four years ago, except the Chief was a new chief and didn't think it would be wise to have his son working here while he was a lieutenant. As soon as his dad put in to retire, he put in to come here laterally. We hired Ashley Knippen from Harding County where she was an investigator and a patrol officer in Kenton, OH. All three of them are solo patrol officers and are working out wonderfully.

In 2026, the Chief would like the 34th policeman hired. We have asked for one police car and it has been budgeted for and still working on the crossing guard. We have reduced the budget for the Professional Services for that with the intention of if we end up going with the privatization we will transfer the money from payroll into the Professional Services in order to cover that expense.

The computer expense continues. They had to beef up the computer hardware and software. We pay a bit of money as everything is subscription based and is an annual expense. We are up to \$200,000 a year in annual computer software expenses to do everything that needs done in the police department.

Chief Lichman applied for a 2026 Drone is a First Responder Program through ODOT. It is going to be very competitive because DFR is the next way things are going to be happening. It is going to be the next big leap in law enforcement technology. Westlake put in for it too and probably every other agency in Northeast Ohio and the rest of the state. That may be worth \$150,000, maybe more. That would be really good for the department if they could implement that program.

It is budgeted now to add a Detective Sergeant to the ranks. It would not be a new body, it would be taking one of the officers now from a rank of patrolman assigned detective to a sergeant's position. The only budget expense would be the differential in pay, which is presently at 14%. The detective bureau could use some supervisory assistance which would free up one of the lieutenants who would still have supervisory authority over the detectives but would free the day-to-day first line supervision.

Unfortunately, the Marine Patrol Grant has been eliminated by the state. It has to do with the trickle down of federal funding that has been cut. There has been talk at the state level as they didn't realize the impact on the Great Lakes but there's been no action from the state to replace that. We are looking for alternatives. This does reduce some of the obligations of the number of hours, weekends and holidays that we are obligated to be on the lake. We could make up for some of that by reducing the number of hours on the lake to cut some of those expenses. He would rather find alternative funding than reduce hours, that does remain a possible way to mitigate the loss of that grant in the amount of \$30,000. Mr. Hunt said that they talked about that being very valuable in terms of community benefit. The need is still going to be there, so have to figure out how to make it work. Mrs. Morris asked if the Coast Guard can help in any way. The Chief said the Coast Guard does surprising little for the city. They will do nothing for the community outreach which is huge for the boat. Every year that boat is pulling people out of the water, legitimate bonafide rescues every year. The coast guard takes time to mobilize. The city can mobilize much faster. Then you add the community resource, the safety inspections, the search and rescue. The coast guard will only rescue. They do not search or recovery. If there is someone who is suspected to have drowned, once it has become a recovery they are done. That barge that capsized, once the personnel was safe, the coast guard was done. That relies on the city's resources and ODNR's

resources. It is important to find a way to keep the boat even if it's not on the water as often to keep it operational and ready. The boat is ten years old and just finished its tenth season. It needs two new engines. We are going forward with the engines it has for the 2026 season. The mechanics think there is one more fix in them. The manufacturer sent a kit that they can seal them up one more time. But for 2027 we are going to have to replace both engines. That is about an \$80,000 expense. They are twin 300 horse power engines. One of them is leaking oil worse than the other. The leak is contained in the engine housing. They have done a series of fixes on the one that is worse and the manufacturer sent another way they hope will seal it up.

For Revenue Juvenile Diversion, D.A.R.E., SRO from the schools. The schools do want a fourth officer, but the city is not in a position to do that at this time. It would allow the officer that currently works between the lower schools could be at one school with the new SRO at the other schools. Currently it is one officer that goes between Kensington, Goldwood and Beach pre-school. The CBA has allowed part time SRO's for private schools, but the expense seems to be too high for them and they are working on an alternate solution and use our officers on off duty basis as needed. The Chief did not put on his report that the department is reimbursed from the state for their continued professional training by the police officers, up to 40 hours a year per officer at their hourly rate. The minimum is 24 hours a year per officer, that is what the state says they have to do and the most they can get is 40 hours a year.

- Mr. Shipp asked if the school district contributes funds to the SRO positions. The Mayor said the schools pay 181 days depending on the school calendar, but they pay wages and all compensation in their package including healthcare. All their benefits, all of that for 181 days. The Chief said we would have to hire a 35th policeman to be able to supply another SRO.

The Mayor said that at some point we will be presenting to Council a new composition ordinance that hasn't been updated in sometime. Once this issue is addressed, the new ordinance will come in front of Council which will have the full complement of officers including the SRO's and our own department.

- Mr. O'Boyle asked about the extra training they have to through, for someone being bumped up from patrolman to sergeant or sergeant to lieutenant, is there supervisory training involved in that. The chief said the training he referred to that the state reimburses us for is continued professional training that is required for all police officers in the State of Ohio to maintain their certification. Similar to what a teacher or nurse or someone else may have to do in order to maintain their professional certification. The state does not require, with exception of the position of Chief, they have to go for 40 hours to what they call New Chief School, but the state does not require additional training for supervisors. That would be what the City of Rocky River requires and what we require is that every supervisor when they are promoted have to go to a crash course of supervisory training from three days to a week and then the Ohio Law Enforcement Foundation Training, which is a trilogy of courses. The first is STEP taken in Columbus and in the interim they have homework and papers to write. Once they complete STEP they have to apply for the Police Executive Leadership College, which is PELC and that is similar where they go a week at a time for over three months. After that, once they are promoted to Lieutenant, they do the Certified Law Enforcement Executive Program which is 14 months. They go to Columbus 6 or 7 times and that is where they learn executive leadership skills. The Chief did it 6 years ago and a second officer did it two years ago. If you have to be a Lieutenant or higher or if you are a sergeant with administrative responsibilities and a four-year degree, then you are eligible to go to the Law Enforcement Executive Program. They are always welcome to take additional leadership training as it comes up. One of our officers did the FBI training. They have a six-month probationary period that they spend on the day shift where they are with another a supervisor and monitored. The Mayor added that the leadership staff meets in the Police Department on a regular basis with the Chief to talk about the common challenges and opportunities.

- Mrs. Gallagher verified that the Marine Grant only goes for a year. The Chief said he has submitted the final report for the 2025 season. Mr. Furry said the city has received this grant for years.

The Police Division is currently staffed as follows:

Full-Time/Sworn

Chief 1

Lieutenants 3

Sergeants 4

Patrol Officers 19 (20)

School Resource Officers 3

Detectives 3

Sub Total 33 (34)

Full-Time/Non-Sworn

Police Coordinator 1

Records Coordinator 1

Dispatchers (Full-Time) 3

Jailer (Full-Time) 2

Animal Control Officer 1

Sub Total 8

Part-Time/Seasonal

Marine Patrol Officer (PT, Sworn) 1

Administrative Assistant (Chief) 1

Dispatchers (Part-time) 2 (6)

Jailer (Part-time) 1 (2)

Community Service Officers (Part-time) 2

Crossing Guards (Part-time/Seasonal) 13 (16)

Auxiliary Officers (Unpaid, non-sworn) 10

Sub Total 30 (38)

Grand Total 71 (80) 1

As of 11/28/2025, with historical context from 11/20/2021; parenthesis indicate full staff.

One FT jailer is out on FMLA and is expected to retire in February 2026.

The Division is currently one patrol officer short of authorized strength, several part-time dispatchers, one part-time jailers, and several substitute crossing guards. We have two officers out on leave. One suffered an on-duty injury during a foot pursuit; he is expected back before the end of 2025. The second is out for a personal medical issue; his return is unknown. One jailer is off for off-duty medical leave; his return is scheduled for late January but with an anticipated retirement of February 2026.

SWORN PERSONNEL CHANGES IN 2025

The following personnel changes were made in 2025:

- Lt. Ronald Flowers retired in April.
- Three lateral transfer officers were hired.
 - o Michael Lipsey was hired as a Patrol Officer in July. He was previously employed as a police officer in Lakewood, Ohio.
 - o Ashley Knippen was hired as a Patrol Officer in August. She was previously employed as an Investigator in Harding County and as a Patrol Officer in Kenton, Ohio.
 - o Donald Flowers was hired as Patrol Officer in August. He was previously a Patrol Officer in Lakewood, Ohio.

- A Patrol Officer was terminated in September for misconduct.

There is one anticipated retirement in 2026, and five officers are pensionable, but have not given notice of an intention to retire. One Jailer has indicated he will separate in February 2026.

MAJOR REQUESTS/EXPENDITURES (Capital & Equipment) 2026

- Full staffing by the end of 2026 in all areas, with primary focus on sworn personnel.
- One Ford Police Utility Interceptors to maintain the patrol fleet.
- RFP is ready for the privatization of Crossing Guards services in 2026. Staffing the crossing guard position has been a significant challenge for the last three years. The RFP would include staffing, training, supervising, insuring, and equipping the guards. Current guards would be offered positions with the private company at no loss of pay. This was discussed for 2025 but not implemented.
- Ongoing computer expenses including replacement of outdated systems and maintenance of annual user agreements.
- Budgeting for the start-up of a tactical drone program to aid in search, rescue, and tracking abilities.
- Addition of a Detective Sergeant.
- Additional funding for the Marine Patrol will be necessary as the State Department of Natural Resources has canceled their long running grant program. Additional sources of funding are being sought, but nothing has yet been discovered.

FUTURE HORIZON (1-5-10-20 year)

- Marine Patrol Boat Argus V needs new engines, an estimated \$80,000.00 expense. Deferring the decision until 2027 may be feasible, but it is unlikely to be delayed beyond that.
- Restructure and update supervision to delineate administrative staff (Lieutenants) from first-line supervision staff (Sergeants) to ensure accountability and define responsibilities for personnel.
- Addition of full-time dispatcher to get closer to 24/7/365 dispatch coverage OR retrain staff to manage jail and other needs if dispatching responsibilities are relocated.
- Additional SRO to accommodate requests from the Rocky River City School District of an SRO in each building, if desired by the District and staffing levels can accommodate the request. • Drone as First Responder Program, likely as a multiagency and/or grant funded effort.
- Full implementation of an enhanced traffic enforcement program, including the addition of a Traffic Enforcement Officer to coordinate traffic safety and enforcement efforts.

REVENUE PROJECTED 2026

- Continued receipt of Juvenile Diversion grant from Cuyahoga County.
- Continued receipt of DARE grant from Ohio Attorney General.
- Continued reimbursement for SRO assignments at the RRCSD, with the expected increase if a fourth SRO is added.
- Revenue is expected for billing of part-time SRO to private schools, if one is desired.
- Ensuring revenue from false alarms is being collected.
- Seek alternative to canceled ODNR Marine Patrol grant.
- Applied for ODOT DFR Pilot Program grant.

Mr. Hunt thanked Chief Lichman for his report.

Safety Services

Mr. Snyder said he hopes everyone has a copy of his budget review. The first part will be about Service followed by capital purchases and projects. Mr. Snyder significantly thanked City Council and Finance Director Thomas and Assistant Finance Director Jonathan Lindow for everything they have done in helping us facilitate all the work that we do. The Safety Service Department has four employees this year. Things would not get done without this staff. As he sits in budget meetings he realizes that Safety

Service has their hands in every single department in this entire city. Whether it is contracts, projects, fielding calls it is the receptionists Becky Taylor and Cathy Galla who are the front line of this city every day. Beyond them is Maureen Nakonek who handles everything. Mr. Snyder could not do half the things he accomplishes without Maureen. Mark Filipic is the Public Works Coordinator and this year we added Chris Vasco, who we were lucky enough to steal from Soil and Water. Chris is the Sewer Program Coordinator. When we talk about the different things these departments do, we look at Nick Barille fixing or processing all of the sanitary, we are on the back end of that trying to reduce the amount that gets there. That helps the city as a whole. Everything we do on a daily basis is to try to bring some of the capital costs down and bring some of the operating costs down through evaluating contracts and RFP's. Mr. Snyder touches on the high level of all these projects but we do so much more than he even realizes. Maureen, Mark, Chris, Becky and Cathy are the ones that spearhead a lot of this and he comes in and just helps facilitate. Safety Service is the glue that helps try to hold everything together and keep things going.

Personnel in the Service Division is up to 52 full-time staff members this year. We were at 48 in 2024. There have been very good personnel additions including adding two non CDL full time staff members. They are floaters that help work everywhere including refuse or streets and things like that. Part of the reason that position was added to that within service, is we were having trouble finding candidates who have CDLs. The city can no longer train individuals ourselves to get a CDL. You have to go to Great Lakes Truck Driving School and it is cost-prohibited for a lot of people. Adding the non CDLs helps fill a spot whether it is driving a refuse scooter or whatever. These positions are reduced labor cost. That was important to add that. Up until this year, employees had to have a CDL to work at the Service Department. The city made it a requirement. We need redundancy in personnel whether they need to hop in a refuse scooter, plow truck or take a load of stone to a job site. You don't know what you are going to do on a given day so it is important to be able to drop somebody in the spot needing filled. Sam Rosario, the new Service Commission took over a year ago. He has four full seasons under his belt which is really important. Everything at the Service Garage is seasonal from leaves to snow to yard waste to streets and then boom we are back into leaves. There are some lead supervisors that are stepping up to the plate including Ken Shuster who puts out the leaf updates every day on Facebook. Overall the Service Garage is in good place personnel wise. We have two current vacancies in the Sewer Division that they are looking to actively fill and beyond that we are tempering expectations for new personnel and going through and evaluating the need and making sure we plug those in properly before filling a position.

- Mr. Shipp asked how many employees there are in the Sewer Division. Mr. Snyder has about 10 in total. That changed when we added the Camera Truck making that a special equipment operator position. We ended up having one less general labor position and one more operator position. That operator can also operate the backhoe or the jet truck or whatever.

The Sewer Division is out all the time. His two priorities for new positions would be the Sewer Division and Mechanics. We have heard how important our mechanics are for the police, fire and the city. Adding a person that could do heavy equipment for fire and help with the general fleet. They feel very confident that they can manage what they have now.

There were no retirements in 2025 and there are no planned retirements for 2026. He has heard the potential for Steve Elek retiring at some point but doesn't know if anything is set in stone.

Major Requests—Capital Expenditures-Equipment

Mr. Snyder said this was reduced from the initial request to try to catch up on some of the capital budget, but some of the things he is hoping to purchase are below. This will be evaluated throughout the course of the year. Not everything needs to be done in the first quarter. Mr. Snyder worked very closely with the

Lead Supervisors and the Service Commissioner to prioritize these purchases. These are in no particular order.

Service:

- **Mechanics:** Utility Truck with Crane and Lift Gate (\$230,000; Replaces 2008 Van in Fair Condition)
- **Parks:** (2) F-550 Dump Trucks (One with Stainless Dump Bed (\$160,000), One with Chip Box for Urban Forestry (\$120,000); Replaces (2) 2015 Trucks in Fair Condition)
- **Refuse:** (2) Kubota UTVs (\$35,000 each; Replaces 2015 and 2017 in Poor Condition)
- **Sewers:** Camera Truck (\$99,111.92/3rd year of lease for 4-years)
 - o Mr. Furry asked if there was a dollar buy out on the lease. Mr. Snyder said it is set in stone in the agreement.
- **Sewers:** Utility Truck (\$150,000; Replaces 2008 Van in Fair Condition)
- **Streets:** F-350 Truck with Dump Insert (\$70,000; Replaces 2019 in Fair Condition)
- **Streets:** Avant (\$100,000; Replaces 1992 Bombardier in Poor Condition)
- **Streets:** Asphalt Roller (\$90,000; Replaces 1996 in Poor Condition)

TOTAL: \$1,089,111.92

Major Expenditures - Capital

- *See Attached Capital Project Schedule for complete information*

Capital Projects (Highlights):

Capital Sewer Rehabilitation

- Buckingham/Argyle Oval/Arundel- Water Main/Sewer Rehab/Pavement (Engineering 2022-2024; Construction 2025-2026) Should be completed in Spring of 2026
- Westmoor/Orchard Grove/Glendale- Water Main/Sewer Rehab/Pavement (Engineering 2023-2025; Construct 2026-2027) This is before Council currently and came in under budget by \$580,000. Construction begins in early spring of 2026 substantially completed in 2026 with punch list items in 2027. Mr. Snyder will have a public meeting on this project in the spring. Clear accurate communication is very important to the residents with the contractor, engineers, himself to understand the scope of the projects and have a better understanding.
- Lake Rd (Bay Village to Parklawn)- Water Main/Sewer Rehabilitation/Pavement/Bradstreet's Landing Auxiliary Lot/Multi-Use Trail (Engineering 2023-2025; Construct 2026-2027) There will be a public meeting on this too. These are informational sessions to get the information out to residents.
- Rockcliff- Water Main/Sewer Rehab/Pavement/Multi-use Trail (Engineering 2023-2025; Construct 2026-2027) This will begin in late 2026 and roll it into 2027.
- Beachcliff/Cornwall- Water Main/Sewer Rehab/Pavement/Traffic Calming Improvements (Engineering 2025-2026; Construct 2026-2027) The city received OPWC funding for \$2.223 million loan for this project. This has to start in 2026 due to the funding requirements. Mr. Snyder intends to make improvements for neighborhood traffic calming with this project. By narrowing the roadway and reducing the radii at intersections it will improve by reducing the pedestrian crossing distance and it makes drivers more inclined to come to a complete stop before the turn. This will also increase green space.
- Addington/Kings Mill Run - Storm Sewer Culvert Replacement (Engineering 2024-2025; Construct 2026)
- Story Rd/Eldorado- Culvert (Replace Culvert Outlet; 2026) Mr. Snyder has been working with the City of Fairview Park and they will be increasing their contribution to \$120,000.

Other

- Private Inflow/Infiltration Testing (Buckingham/Arundel/Argyle Oval and Westmoor/Glendale/Orchard Grove Follow-up) Mr. Snyder is circling back on this area because the city did their dye testing prior to the public improvements. Over time he has found that can give false positives. He wants to be 100% certain that the problem persists on private property and not public property.
- Point Repairs and Relining Sewers (Glendale)
- Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study (Recreate 2012 Study)
- E. coli Dry Weather Screening Investigations

Capital Pavement

- 2025 Streets Program
 - o Wagar Road (Hilliard to Detroit) and Westway (Wagar to Bridge) – Major Rehabilitation (Full Depth Repairs, Curbs, ADA Curb Ramps, Striping)
 - o Dorothy Ave – Corrective Milling/Asphalt Overlay. Mr. Snyder said the asphalt recycling program did not work. It will be fixed and the city received money back from Benedetti on this.
- Center Ridge Gateway Project w/ Resurfacing from Spencer to Wooster (Engineering 2024-2025; Construct 2026)
- Goldwood School Intersection – Signal and Crosswalk – Bid opening for this today at 1:00.
- Lake/Clifton Bridge and Multi-Use Trail Project. Mr. Snyder said it is on schedule for 2026 per the County. The city's maximum contribution is \$540,000. That bid came in about 20% over the engineer's estimate.
- Striping (Lakeview Ave and Various Other Streets)
- Reclamite/Titanium Dioxide – Center Ridge Road, Prospect, Wright
- Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) Crosswalks- Detroit at RRHS, Detroit at St. Christopher

Capital Sidewalk

- Sidewalk Improvement Program has come full circle.
 - o North of Lake Road

Capital Land Improvement

- Tree Lawn Trees/Public Land Improvements
 - o **Post Construction Tree Replacement (Higley, Buckingham, Arundel, Argyle Oval plus additional)**
- Service Garage – Front Hill Geotechnical Evaluation to see if the city can put structures out there.

Capital Parks Improvement

- Wooster/Shoreland Neighborhood Park (Encumbered in 2025)
- Spencer Creek Rehabilitation at Bradstreet's Landing

Capital Building

- Fire Station

Miscellaneous Capital

- Crack and Joint Sealing
- Sewer Televising
- Emergency Sewer Repairs

Outside Funding for 2026 - Projected:

Grants/Funding Awarded:

- Buckingham/Argyle Oval/Arundel (Federal Earmark, CWD \$2,639,931)

- Westmoor/Orchard Grove/Glendale (CWD; \$655,034.90)
- Lake Rd Water Line (CWD; \$1,048,680)
- Rockcliff/Wooster Sewer/Water Line/Resurfacing (CWD \$353,389; \$1,000,000 Federal)
- Beachcliff/Cornwall (OPWC Loan \$2,223,300; CWD \$197,750)
- Story Rd Culvert (Fairview Park; \$120,000)
- Wagar Road Resurfacing (Cuyahoga County 50/50 Grant; \$250,000)
- Center Ridge Gateway Project (State Capital \$196,000; TLCI \$369,650; CMAQ \$450,000, ODOT Urban Paving \$1,232,000; Fairview Park \$118,000)
- Bradstreet's Landing - Spencer Creek Rehabilitation (\$300,000 OEPA; \$200,000 HB 2)
- Fire Station (OTSCIP \$500,000)

Total: \$11,853,734

Mr. Snyder is happy to report that outside funding is almost \$12 million. We will continue doing that going forward. He wants to be more surgical when applying for grants so they will be impactful for the plan of what we are actively trying to accomplish.

In light of all these construction projects, feel free to grab an orange barrel cookie that he brought in. He appreciates everything that Council does.

- Mrs. Morris asked if the city offers CDL training. Sam Rosario has been working with the City of Lorain to look at having a joined class. In addition to having Class Bs a lot of time we have trailers so there is an opportunity to train people to get a B and also take the Bs and upgrade that to a Class A with a pintle so they can pull a trailer with a piece of equipment. Sam Rosario use to work for Great Lakes Truck Driving.
- Mr. Furry asked about the possible accreditation issues for the CDL schools. He saw about 30% might not be fully accredited to be doing CDLs. Mr. Snyder said that something the city can do is bring in an instructor and have this program set up and share with other municipalities to get individuals certified to be able to do what we need them to do.

The Mayor wondered when negotiating with teamsters, it is in their best interest to have more trained in As or Bs and would there be a scholarship program or some partnership that we could forge with teamsters. There may be an opportunity or at least a path through them.

- Mrs. Morris asked if at the Public Meetings Mr. Snyder is planning to take ideas under consideration like the Rockcliff project. Mr. Snyder understands that at the end of the day when we leave a project, we aren't the ones looking outside the door every day. We always try to factor this in. The Mayor said these are quality of life issues. Residents learn from us and residents share with the administration what their concerns are and what their needs are. It helps with the project. The Safety Service Office captures email addresses and phone numbers so we can do continual updates directly to that group of residents who are directly impacted by the project. That is one of the most valuable parts of the public meetings. They will know what their responsibilities are if we are doing I & I along with the project. Mr. Snyder is always looking at ways to make the process better. In the past year he has started having constructability reviews meeting with the engineers to try to reduce some of these surprises we see. Have field team look at a project, look at the plans, walk the project, do some constructability reviews and even after it is over, there is a follow up meeting. What went well for us and what can we do differently. There is nothing worse than doing the same thing the wrong way every project. By getting ahead of those, it is checks and balances on our projects. Always look for ways to improve.

- Mr. O'Boyle absolutely marvels at what Mr. Snyder is doing. He wonders if Rich is related to the equalizer bunny by chance because you are always moving. When Mr. O'Boyle receives a phone call from a resident it is usually under Mr. Snyder's jurisdiction. Have you ever thought you are doing too much? Mr. Snyder said he is built this way. His office does a lot and it's these people in the back of the room that do the work. Maureen keeps me on track and he always wants to do things better. He's invested in Rocky River and he loves the feeling of completing a project through the hurdles and valleys and look at a project and it is awesome and he has contributed to that. For instance, Bradstreet's Landing Pier, he walks out there and hears residents say this is really cool and it makes it all worthwhile.

The Mayor said Rich has a big job especially being in public safety and service and public works. We have had very important conversations if this is the right structure. In the Charter and Codified Ordinances, this role is all over those documents. For us to change that position would be difficult. Do you pull away the safety part, do you have a Safety Director separate. There is something to be said about equipping Rich with the human resources that he needs. We have a city consulting engineer that has been with us for years and knows the city. There are some projects that have unique attributes that there may be other engineering firms better suited for those projects and can more efficiently or effectively look the lakefront, Center Ridge Road or the stream restoration. That is an opportunity for Rich to say who can I bring alongside me that has the expertise to do this project. We are working to do that in the future. But having one person next to me that has their hands in all this, helping public facilities, recreation and parks, we need that continuity. It's a lot and it is a big job and the Mayor worries about him. Rich said he will say that we have an amazing team of directors and most of the time they call, Rich says to do this and they will do the majority of it and send it back to Rich for some tweaks. The best part of this is the directors learn along the way and it takes a lot off Rich. It gives him the opportunity to come up with these cool ideas for things that he loves to do. He adores his job and he thanks all of Council for the opportunity for him to do it.

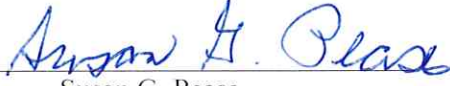
President Furry said we covered a lot of ground today, some things he liked, some things he didn't like. There is a lot to digest here and he is not looking for passage on this ordinance this Monday, but it will be possible on December 15th.

Mrs. Gallagher said that she appreciates Director Thomas so much and wanted to say how much she appreciates Sue, Mrs. Morris and Mr. Furry concurred.

The Mayor said she and the directors are always available for any questions or anything you need.

Mr. Furry adjourned the Finance Committee Meeting at 12:28 p.m.


David W. Furry, Chairman
Finance Committee


Susan G. Pease
Clerk of Council