NORTH RIDGEVILLE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 5, 2026

CALL TO ORDER:

President Swenk called the Council meeting on Monday, January 5, 2026, to order at 7:00 p.m.

INVOCATION:

Led by President Swenk.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Led by President Swenk.

ROLL CALL:

Present were Council members President Holly A. Swenk, Kathryn Rogerson, Bruce F. Abens, Clifford Winkel, Paul Wolanski, and Cali Zingale.

Others Present: Mayor Kevin Corcoran, Law Director Brian Moriarty, Finance Director April Wilkerson, City Project Engineer Eric Brown, Clerk of Council Nicholas Ciofani, and Assistant Clerk of Council Fijabi Gallam.

MINUTES - Corrections (if any) and approval:

President Swenk asked if there were any corrections to the Regular City Council Meeting Minutes dated December 15, 2025, City Council Public Hearing Minutes dated December 15, 2025, for Name Change, City Council Public Hearing Minutes dated December 15, 2025, for Zoning Change, and City Council Public Hearing Minutes dated December 15, 2025, for Vacate Request. No discussion was offered. The meeting minutes stand approved as submitted.

President Swenk noted the following:

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes dated December 9, 2025.
Board of Zoning and Building Appeals Meeting Minutes dated December 18, 2025.

LOBBY:

President Swenk opened the lobby session. He reminded everyone that the lobby session was not meant to be an interactive question-and-answer session. However, it was an opportunity for the public to address City Council and its administration. He asked anyone

who would like to speak to come to the podium and state their name and address. He further added that each person was allowed three minutes to speak.

Legislative Concerns

Rudy Ringwall of 31966 Center Ridge Road addressed City Council and urged, particularly the newly elected members, to think independently. He reminded City Council that they have the authority to propose their own legislation and encouraged them to use the emergency clause judiciously, stating that most matters before Council were not true emergencies and should have three readings to allow citizens adequate time to review and ask questions.

Mr. Ringwall advised City Council to explore both government and private-sector grants, suggesting that potential funding sources may exist for projects such as improvements to the Old Town Hall.

Mr. Ringwall also reiterated his previous comments regarding cannabis regulation, encouraging City Council to prepare for potential dispensaries or cultivation facilities as other cities were lifting moratoriums.

Mr. Ringwall raised concerns about Fabrizi Trucking & Paving and observations about the sewer laterals on Center Ridge Road were sinking due to improper base installation and noted that even the repair in front of his son's house was sinking again.

Truth

Robert Baumgardner of 6327 Stoney Ridge Road addressed City Council addressed Council and stated that the actions taken at the first meeting of the new Council would define the body. He described what he believed to be a longstanding lack of transparency and reported that he had sought public records on spending and contractor selection for over a month but encountered obstruction that forced him to pursue legal action against the City. He stated that the City had identified 10,000 responsive emails involving campaign donors but stopped searching due to the volume, which he argued reflected an extensive relationship rather than an absence of records. He also reported obtaining an internal email in which engineering firms that were also donors received advance project updates, noting that one donor thanked the City for "keeping us in the loop." He asserted that no bid scoring sheets existed for the City. Mr. Baumgardner further stated that public records from the Lorain County Auditor showed the City paid $375,000 on March 15, 2023, for a 0.06-acre parcel previously purchased by the seller one year and one day earlier. He said he had formally requested appraisal, negotiation, and deed records tied to the Ordinance Number 6037-2023, but had not yet received them, leaving taxpayers unable to assess the justification for the valuation. He then called for three actions: an independent forensic audit with subpoena

authority; a charter amendment establishing financial oversight by having the Finance Director report directly to Council.

Moved by Winkel and seconded by Wolanski, an additional three minutes for Mr. Baumgardner to continue to speak.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried.
Yes – 5 No – 1 (Abens)

Mr. Baumgardner continued to explain that City Council needs to limit the executive authority by establishing additional structural safeguards for financial oversight. He added that these actions were corrective rather than radical and that the new Council now has the responsibility for addressing the issues he identified.

President Swenk closed the lobby session.

Law Director Moriarty addressed City Council regarding the City's public records process. He stated that the City receives approximately 600 to 650 public records requests each year, all of which are sent to the Law Department, logged with the requester's name and date, and reviewed for response. He explained that the City often responds immediately but may request clarification or a narrowed scope to ensure the search is reasonable. He noted that the City also informs requesters when records do not exist; therefore, that nonexistence is not a denial of access. Mr. Moriarty stated that the City has followed this process for years and strives to respond in a timely manner despite the volume of requests. He added that the State Auditor reviews all public records requests and all financial transactions during its audits. Mr. Moriarty concluded by reiterating that the City is responding appropriately and invited everyone to contact him with any further questions.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORTS:

1. **Mayor:**

Mayor Corcoran remarked the following:

- Welcomed the new Council members and wished them well as they begin their terms.

- A housing chart was displayed. - Reported that the new dwelling permit numbers in 2025 were the lowest in 26 years because of slow housing growth.

- Announced that North Ridgeville is one of only two America 250 Ohio communities in Lorain County, and that this month marks the official launch of programs leading

into the 2026 milestone year. Explained that throughout 2026, the City will partner with community groups to celebrate local history, highlight progress, and offer resident activities. The America 250 banners have been installed at Center Ridge Road and Route 83, and at Stony Ridge Road and Lear Nagle Road. January 2026's theme is "Ohio's Firsts and Originals," and highlights North Ridgeville's role as the birthplace of Ridge Tool. He encouraged residents to visit the Historical Society's monthly displays at the library featuring items and books tied to each theme, with updates available on the City's website and social media.

- Announced a Coffee and Conversation event on Monday, January 12, 2026, from 8:30–9:30 a.m. in Council Chambers, featuring members of the North Ridgeville Historical Society discussing their America 250 kickoff display and other community topics.

- Reminded everyone that City Hall offices will be closed Monday, January 19, 2026, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

- Noted that the next Regular City Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, due to the holiday closure.

Moved by Mayor Corcoran and seconded by Winkel to go into an Executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official (discuss City Council Ward 2 opening).

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.
Yes – 5 No – 1 (Zingale)

Adjourned into Executive Session at 7:18 p.m.
Reconvened into the Regular City Council meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Moved by Winkel and seconded by Wolanski to adjourn from executive session and return to the regular City Council session.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried.
Yes – 6 No – 0

Mayor Corcoran concluded his report.

2. Engineer:

City Program Engineer Eric Brown provided the following:

- Sugar Ridge Road rehab and Sugar Ridge/Bender roundabout projects are in early design; preliminary fieldwork underway; construction planned for 2028.

- Taylor Parkway rehabilitation is out for bid; bids open January 15, 2026; contract expected within a month.

- Cypress Avenue extension has begun; DiGioia Suburban Excavating, LLC is completing stripping and grading; utilities and culvert work starting this week; project expected to finish early to mid-July; traffic signal will remain bagged until a later date.

- Root Road parking improvements are underway; earthwork started; park closed for winter; project expected to finish June 12, 2026.

- City is finalizing an agreement with Windstream Communications for a large utility project involving six miles of aerial cable replacement and 30 miles of underground work.

- Windstream construction areas include Mills Creek, Meadow Lakes, Avalon Estates, Case Road, Bender Road, and parts of Waterbury.

City Program Engineer Brown concluded his report.

3. **Director of Finance:**

Finance Director April Wilkerson had no report.

4. **Other Reports:**

President Swenk noted the following.:

November 2025 Fire Department Report
November 2025 Water Distribution and EPA Report

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT(S):

There were none.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Clerk of Council Nicholas Ciofani:

CORRESPONDENCE dated December 17, 2025, from Project Engineer Eric Brown – Effective January 1, 2026, the Stormwater Utility (SWU) Fee for all property owners will be increased by 3.6%. The City of North Ridgeville Codified Ordinance 1058.07 states that the SWU base rate will be adjusted annually by the Engineering News Record Construction Cost Index Annual Inflation Rate. The supporting information is attached. The 2025 base rate for one (1) equivalent residential unit will be increased from $4.73 to $4.90 per month.

Councilman Wolanski clarified that this is not a tax increase; it has already been an annual increase for years.

OLD BUSINESS:

There were none.

NEW BUSINESS:

<u>Appointment of Ward 2:</u>

President Swenk opened the floor for nominations for the Ward 2 seat.

Councilwoman Zingale nominated Robert Holub. She stated that the candidate brings strong municipal experience, demonstrates independence, would honor voter trust following the recent election, and is an excellent choice to serve Ward 2 at this time.

Councilman Wolanski nominated Delbert Robinson. He stated that although many candidates were qualified, he narrowed his consideration to one Democrat, one Republican, and the independents he did not personally know. He added that all applicants deserved consideration, but City Council had to make selections. He said that if Robert Holub did not receive a majority vote, he believed Mr. Robinson would be an excellent representative for Ward 2. Mr. Wolanski noted Mr. Robinson's military service, 23 years of banking experience, and work as a small business owner. He remarked that he had interacted with Mr. Robinson at several candidate events and found him thoughtful and well-prepared. He concluded that Mr. Robinson understood the city was at a crossroads and would serve Ward 2 well.

Councilwoman Abens nominated Jason Jacobs. He stated that he is a man of integrity and honesty and that the City Council can definitely leverage his experience on this council.

There were no other nominations.

The roll call vote began with Robert Holub, in the order of nomination.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.
Yes – 4 No – 2 (Winkel and Abens)

Robert Holub was appointed to Ward 2.

RECESS:

Moved by Winkel and seconded by Wolanski to dispense with recess.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried.
Yes – 6 No – 0

Ordinance and Resolution submittal(s)
FIRST READINGS:

Clerk of Council Nicholas Ciofani:

R 2025-1 A Resolution authorizing the Director of Planning and Development to apply on behalf of the City of North Ridgeville for funding from ODOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program for systemic pedestrian safety improvements along Lorain Road; authorizing funds for the required local match; and authorizing the Mayor to accept the funding, if awarded, and to execute a contract with the State of Ohio.
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran)

Councilman Winkel asked whether there was a deadline for this legislation.

Engineer Brown explained that he would have to get back to City Council with the answer.

President Swenk noted that this allows the Director of Planning and Development to apply on North Ridgeville's behalf for funding from ODOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program. She believed some issues require emergency clauses and the skipping of second and third readings, and that this is one of those cases. City Council should accept this authority to proceed.

Moved by President Swenk and seconded by Winkel to dispense with the second and third readings for 2026-1.

Councilman Winkel asked whether the application had a deadline.

Mayor Corcoran explained that ODOT District 3 requested that it complete its review by January 30, 2026, while the formal application to ODOT's central office was not due until March 31, 2026, because there was sufficient time and no need to expedite readings. He added that although safety improvements along Lorain Road were important, expediting readings would not accelerate ODOT's process.

Councilwoman Zingale then asked for confirmation that the resolution authorized only the submission of an application and did not commit the City to any construction costs.

Mayor Corcoran clarified that passage of the resolution obligated the City to provide the required 10% local match if funding were awarded.

Councilwoman Zingale asked whether those costs would be available before the next reading.

Mayor Corcoran stated that design work had not yet begun and that no estimates were available, though the project was expected to be expensive.

Finance Director Wilkerson added that Council would later see an appropriation amendment once the award amount and required match were known, as the item was not budgeted.

Mayor Corcoran further noted that accepting grant funds and then declining them would harm the City's ability to receive future ODOT funding.

Councilman Wolanski raised the question of whether to include an emergency clause or to dispense with second and third readings.

President Swenk stated that she was not requesting an emergency clause, and that the motion before City Council was solely to dispose of the additional readings.

Councilman Wolanski expressed concern about the unnecessary use of expedited procedures, noting that additional readings provide more time for public comment.

President Swenk acknowledged the concerns and proceeded to a vote on the pending motion.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion failed.
Yes – 3 No – 3 (Abens, Wolanski, and Zingale)

Resolution Number 2025-1 moved to Second Readings.

SECOND READINGS:

Clerk of Council Nicholas Ciofani:

O 2025-147 An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a new ground lease agreement with TowerCo VI, LLC for the installation of a wireless communications facility at the Shady Drive Complex.
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran; First Reading on 11-03-2025; Utilities Committee Meeting on 12-01-2025; Committee Report to City Council on 12-15-2025)

Ordinance Number 2025-147 moved to Third Readings.

Clerk of Council Nicholas Ciofani:

O 2025-162 An Ordinance amending Ordinance 6109-2023, which authorized the Mayor to enter into a contract with a consulting engineering firm for additional design services for the Mills Creek Conservation and Flood Control Project by increasing the prior approved amount of $507,500.00 to $665,200.00.
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran; First Reading on 12-15-2025)

Ordinance Number 2025-162 moved to Third Readings.

Clerk of Council Nicholas Ciofani:

R 2025-163 A Resolution giving consent and cooperating with the Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation for preventative bridge maintenance of structures on Interstate 480.
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran; First Reading on 12-15-2025)

Resolution Number 2025-163 moved to Third Reading.

THIRD READINGS:

There were none.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Swenk noted the following:

1. The next Regular City Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT:

President Swenk adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Approval of minutes on January 20, 2026:

Holly A. Swenk
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

Nicholas Ciofani
CLERK OF COUNCIL