

**NORTH RIDGEVILLE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER:

President Swenk called the Council meeting to order on Monday, May 18, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

INVOCATION:

The invocation was led by President Swenk.

Memorial Remembrance — Jeffrey Armbruster: President Swenk paused to honor the memory of Jeffrey Armbruster, who passed away on Friday, May 15, 2026. President Swenk recognized Mr. Armbruster’s many years of dedicated service to the City of North Ridgeville as a former council member and former mayor, and extended prayers of comfort to his family, friends, and colleagues. A moment of silence was observed in his memory.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Swenk.

ROLL CALL:

Present: President Holly A. Swenk, Councilwoman Kathryn Rogerson, Councilman Robert Holub, Councilman Bruce F. Abens, Councilman Clifford Winkel, Councilman Paul Wolanski, and Councilwoman Cali Zingale.

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

Absent: None

MINUTES - Corrections (if any) and approval:

President Swenk stated that Council had received the Regular City Council Meeting Minutes dated May 4, 2026, and asked if there were any changes or corrections. No changes or corrections were offered. The minutes stood approved as submitted.

President Swenk noted that Council had also received the following minutes:

- Planning Commission Meeting Minutes dated May 12, 2026.

LOBBY:

President Swenk opened the lobby session and explained that the Lobby was for members of the public to address City Council. She asked speakers to state their name and address for the record at the podium and noted that each speaker would have three minutes to discuss any topic of their choice.

Transparency and Accountability Concern

Robert Baumgardner, 6327 Stoney Ridge Road, argued that the City's government suffers from a dangerous erosion of checks and balances. He contended that the executive branch controls the finance department, the law department, legislative committees, and promotions within the police and fire departments.

Mr. Baumgardner stated that the Law Director had recently released an April 2023 police workplace climate survey, which had been shared with Council via email, but argued that the administration had spent five months in the Court of Claims attempting to keep that document from him, only releasing it after mediation was officially terminated. He noted that morale was fractured three years ago, and the current state of affairs was unknown. He urged Council to mandate a new, independent workplace survey for both the police and fire departments.

Mr. Baumgardner also criticized legislation recently passed by the Council regarding tone during public comments, alleging it was drafted specifically in response to his performance at the podium. He noted a comment from a council member—We are not here to police tone. He believed City Council was convinced to pass speech restrictions by claiming that, because these meetings are broadcast on YouTube, the city can override the First Amendment.

Moved by Rogerson and seconded by Winkel to give Mr. Baumgardner up to an additional three minutes to speak.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Yes – 6

No – 1 (Abens)

Mr. Baumgardner noted that in 2001, the Ohio ACLU sued the City of North Ridgeville over a nearly identical public comment rule, and the City lost. He alleged that Council was led into significant legal liability.

Mr. Baumgardner also addressed Ordinance 2026-57 on the moratorium for data centers and crypto-mining facilities, regarding how the emergency was invoked due to poor planning. He concluded by calling on Council members to serve as legislative checks on executive power.

Truck Routes Concerns

Albert Krage, 37903 Sugar Ridge Road, expressed that while he understood the rationale for creating a business or industrial district at the end of Sugar Ridge Road, his primary concern was the impact of additional truck traffic on Sugar Ridge Road from Route 57 to Route 83. He stated that the road is already heavily impacted by truck traffic, that complaints to the city have gone unanswered, and that nothing gets done. He noted that a neighbor had counted fifteen trucks passing his house between 9:00 a.m. and noon on a single day the previous week. Mr. Krage also raised concerns about speeding on Sugar Ridge Road.

Mr. Krage then commented on the roundabout project at Route 83 and Chestnut Ridge Road, questioning whether the expenditure was the best use of funds and suggesting that a simple adjustment to the existing traffic signal timing would have resolved the issue at a fraction of the cost. He expressed similar skepticism about the proposed roundabout at Sugar Ridge and Bender Road.

Legislation and Civic Engagement Concerns

Bernard Garcia, 7324 Root Road, addressed Council specifically regarding Ordinance 2026-57, the moratorium on data centers and crypto mining facilities. Mr. Garcia thanked City Council for giving the matter serious consideration. He noted that data centers can be very polluting of water, air, and soil, in addition to generating noise and light pollution. He expressed his support for the moratorium, stating that he hoped City Council would vote to put it into motion.

Mr. Garcia also offered broader remarks on civic engagement, urging Council members to remain open to all forms of public feedback—both positive and negative. He stated that in his own professional experience, sometimes the person who has the most uncomfortable opinion can come up with something that's truly great. He encouraged City Council to ensure that all voices are heard in a polite and professional manner.

Leadership Concerns

Ellis Stevens, 5674 Ridgeview Boulevard, expressed that if a person does not like how the city is being run, his suggestion is to run for office.

No additional public comments were offered. President Swenk closed the lobby session.

ADMINISTRATORS' REPORTS:

1. Mayor:

Mayor Corcoran reported the following:

- Offered personal remarks on the passing of Jeffrey Armbruster. The Mayor spoke warmly of Mr. Armbruster's career in public service, noting that he had served as a city councilman, mayor, state senator, and Lorain County Administrator, as well as safety service director under both the current and previous mayoral administrations. The Mayor described him as "a true public servant" who "dedicated his life to making things better no matter who he was serving at the time," and stated that Mr. Armbruster had a lasting impact on the city, the county, and the state. The Mayor extended his heart and prayers to Mr. Armbruster's family.
- Mayor Corcoran reported that three ordinances under first readings would be requested for passage that evening with the emergency clause.
 - Under First Readings:
 - Ordinance 2026-57 – Intended to move to dispense with the second and third readings and add an emergency clause. He explained that data centers have become a widespread topic of conversation at the national, state, and local levels. While the City has not been contacted by any entity seeking to site such a facility, the Mayor stated that there are significant infrastructure concerns, particularly regarding water and wastewater services. He noted that the city owns its wastewater treatment plant and that substantial changes would be necessary to accommodate the demands of a data center. The Mayor remarked that passing the moratorium on an emergency basis was the right course of action to remove data centers from consideration while the City conducts its broader rezoning effort, rather than leaving a window open for a rushed application.
- Recognized Director of Finance Wilkerson and her staff for receiving the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024. He described this as "the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting."

- Chalk the Walk – Friday, May 22, 2026, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at South Central Park, as part of America’s 250th Anniversary celebration. Residents of all ages are invited to bring sidewalk chalk and help decorate the multipurpose trail.
- Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony – Monday, May 25, 2026, departing at 9:45 a.m. from the senior center parking lot, traveling east on Bainbridge Road, and concluding at Ranger Stadium. The event is sponsored by the Lions Club. A memorial ceremony in association with VFW Post 9871 will follow at Ranger Stadium.
- Wreath Laying Ceremony – Monday, May 25, at 9:00 a.m. at the Veterans Memorial, with the Mayor and VFW participating.
- Taps Across America – Monday, May 25, at 3:00 p.m. The Historical Society is organizing a community performance at Old Town Hall. Musicians and vocalists of all instruments and experience levels are welcome.
- Chamber of Commerce Citywide Garage Sale – Garage sale registrations will be accepted May 28, 2026, through May 30, 2026, at KLT Insurance. The garage sale event runs from June 3, 2026, through June 6, 2026. Registration information is available at nrchamber.com. No garage sale permit from the Mayor’s office is required for this event.

Moved by Mayor Corcoran and seconded by Abens to go into an Executive session to confer with the City’s legal counsel concerning pending court action, specifically public records requests and a recently filed developer lawsuit.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Yes – 7 No – 0

Adjourned into Executive Session at 7:22 p.m.

Reconvened into the Regular City Council meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Moved by Rogerson and seconded by Holub to adjourn from executive session and return to the regular City Council session.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Yes – 7 No – 0

Mayor Corcoran concluded his report.

2. Engineer:

City Engineer Eavenson reported on Ordinance 2026-56, which appears under first readings and constitutes an amendment to Ordinance 2024-44, the previously authorized contract for the State Route 83 (Avon Belden Road) and Chestnut Ridge Road roundabout project (LOR-83-11.19, ODOT PID No. 114797). City Engineer Eavenson explained that the 2024 ordinance was based on a 2023 engineer's estimate of approximately \$1,400,000. During the intervening period, while land acquisitions were being finalized, the decision was made to include water main replacement work in the project scope. Two sections of asbestos-cement water main—one on Route 83 and one on Chestnut Ridge Road, both located beneath the planned roundabout footprint—are over 60 years old and are logical candidates for replacement given the timing of the project. She noted that ODOT does not fund water main replacement that is not a direct necessity of a transportation project, meaning the estimated \$500,000 in water main replacement costs are 100% local share. With a 10% contingency provision, the total project cost is estimated at approximately \$2,300,000. This amount had been anticipated and accounted for in the 2026 Capital Improvement Budget, and the additional costs do not exceed what was approved in that budget. City Engineer Eavenson cautioned that the engineer's estimates are just that—estimates—and that competitive bidding outcomes are influenced by several variables, including the time of year, contractor availability, and market costs. Following discussions with the Finance Director, the decision was made to reallocate funds after bids are received rather than in advance.

City Engineer Eavenson noted that a reimbursement check of \$202,000 was recently received from ODOT's safety funds for right-of-way costs and noted that an additional approximately \$100,000 in safety funds may also be available, though that figure would not be confirmed until after bids are received and costs are reassessed. On active projects, the Engineer reported that paving and lighting installation on the Cypress Avenue project is nearing completion; paving operations at the Root Road Soccer Complex have been completed, and incidental work is wrapping up; and the contractor for Taylor Parkway has completed asphalt operations and is finishing incidental concrete work, with full project completion anticipated within the coming week.

City Engineer Eavenson concluded her report.

3. Director of Finance:

The Director of Finance, Wilkerson, offered additional context on the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. She described the process as a seven-month undertaking that runs concurrently with the department's regular duties and involves extensive collaboration with the City's external auditors, who review financial data in detail to verify compliance with applicable law and GFOA standards. She thanked her staff for their dedication, noting that the workload associated with the annual financial report is

significant and layered on top of ongoing responsibilities. She offered particular recognition to Assistant Finance Director Fabrice Dongo, whom she described as intimately involved in this process, and also thanked all city departments and their staff for their cooperation and responsiveness throughout the audit and reporting process.

Finance Director Wilkerson concluded her report.

4. Other Reports:

President Swenk noted that City Council had received the following reports:

- Fire Department 2025 Annual Report
- December 2025 Fire Department Report
- January 2026 Fire Department Report
- April 2026 Building Division Report
- April 2026 Water Distribution and EPA Report
- March 2026 Financial Statements

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT(S):

There were none.

CORRESPONDENCE:

There were none.

OLD BUSINESS:

There were none.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Clerk of Council read the Planning Commission's action into the record—The North Ridgeville Planning Commission took action on the following items at their Regular Meeting of May 12, 2026:

1. MDP-26-0003 - Devin Daughtery, Pulte Homes, LLC, Ridgefield Subdivision, PPN: 07-00-001-000-473
Owner: Bob Schmitt Homes, Inc, 9095 Gatestone Rd, North Ridgeville OH 44039. Proposal consists of entrance signage and landscape plan for Ridgefield Subdivision. Property is zoned R-1 Residence District (Chapter 1282).
PC ACTION: Approved by a vote of 5-0 with the following conditions

1. All sign placements shall maintain a minimum 5-foot setback from known utilities.
2. Proposed landscaping shall be located and designed so as not to impede access to stormwater and utility infrastructure.
3. A landscape easement with vesting language shall be included on the plat cover sheet for any phase where required landscaping is located on private sublots. The easement shall define maintenance and replacement responsibilities of the HOA and shall prohibit homeowner disturbance of the landscaped areas.
4. Final street tree locations and any changes to proposed street trees shall be approved by the City Arborist.
5. City Arborist shall review plant/tree list to make sure they are appropriate and not invasive.

Councilman Winkle explained that this item concerns only the entrance signage and landscape plan for the subdivision and confirmed that the proposal was found to be in compliance with all applicable code requirements. He noted that the Planning Commission provided conditions specifically regarding language to ensure proper maintenance of the landscaped areas.

Moved by Winkel and seconded by Abens to approve the Planning Commission's action on May 12, 2026, for the MDP-26-0003 project.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Yes – 7

No – 0

2. O 2026-45 An Ordinance amending the zoning map of the City of North Ridgeville such that a ±12.5 acre portion of a parcel owned by the City of North Ridgeville, as more fully described in Exhibit A and depicted in Exhibit B, be rezoned from R-1 Residence District to I-2 Light Industrial District.

(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran)

PC ACTION: Approved by a vote of 5-0.

Councilman Winkle clarified for the record that this item is a Planning Commission recommendation and does not require a separate vote of approval at this stage, as it also appears under second readings on the evening's agenda. He explained that the parcel in question is located at the edge of Sugar Ridge Road and Route 83, and that the rezoning—from R-1 to I-2—would align this parcel with the zoning of an adjacent previously rezoned parcel. The effect of the rezoning would be to remove the ability to develop the land as housing and enable the development of a business district.

RECESS:

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

A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Yes – 7

No – 0

Ordinance and Resolution submittal(s)

FIRST READINGS:

Clerk of Council Nicholas Ciofani Read Ordinance by Title:

- O 2026-56 An Ordinance amending Ordinance 2024-44, which authorized the Mayor to advertise for bids and enter into contract(s) according to law and in a manner prescribed by law with the lowest and best bidder(s) for the Avon Belden Road (SR 83) and Chestnut Ridge Road roundabout, also known as LOR-83-11.19 ODOT PID 114797, for construction, inspection services and associated work.
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran)

Ordinance Number 2026-56 moved to second reading.

Clerk of Council Nicholas Ciofani Read Ordinance by Title:

- O 2026-57 An Ordinance placing a temporary moratorium on the issuance of Planning, Zoning and Building Permits, approvals and certificates relating to data centers, crypto mining facilities and substantially similar uses.
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran)

Councilwoman Rogerson noted that she has spoken with several residents about data centers since the beginning of her term, has independently researched the issue, and has consulted with various city departments. She expressed that, because data centers are a relatively new type of land use at the city, state, and national levels, the moratorium is the right step before making a long-term decision. She remarked that the City needs to fully understand the impact, and that the moratorium provides a necessary pause for due diligence. She concluded that she is in favor of the ordinance.

Moved by Mayor Corcoran and seconded by Winkel to dispense with the second and third readings for 2026-57.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Yes – 5

No – 2 (Wolanski and Zingale)

Moved by Mayor Corcoran and seconded by Winkel to add the emergency clause in order to provide the Planning Commission and City Council time to review and consider reasonable regulations or prohibitions of the construction and operation of these facilities in the City.

A voice vote was taken on the emergency clause, and the motion was carried.

Yes – 7 No – 0

Moved by Mayor Corcoran and seconded by Winkel to adopt 2026-57 with the emergency clause.

Mayor Corcoran understood the purpose of the data centers, but he did not know what was going on in people’s minds or when they might be applying for things. He remarked he would rather impose a moratorium under an emergency to avoid leaving the City exposed.

Councilwoman Zingale acknowledged the mayor’s point and noted she had reached out and spoken with the Mayor earlier. She had also spoken with Director Kim Leieber about the planning aspects after a constituent contacted her with concerns. She stated that he had been assured the proposed data center did not fit within the current zoning plan. Therefore, any such proposal would have needed to go through both the planning commission and the council. She explained that there had been no expression of interest or formal proposal, which is why she voted no on dispensing with readings.

Mayor Corcoran acknowledged the point made. He reiterated that it was not always possible to know what others were planning or when applications might be submitted. He referenced a previous situation in which a residential developer, aware that changes to cluster subdivision rules were being considered, had submitted an application early in order to remain subject to the old rules rather than the revised ones. While in that instance the City had been aware of the developer’s actions behind the scenes, he emphasized that such awareness was not always guaranteed. He explained that delaying action could expose the city to liability. He added that, in matters of development, arguments could often be made that existing ordinances applied, particularly when regulations were not explicitly defined. The goal is to protect the City and its residents.

A roll call vote was taken on the adoption, with the emergency, and the motion carried for **Ordinance Number 2026-57.**

Yes – 7 No – 0

SECOND READINGS:

Clerk of Council Nicholas Ciofani Read Ordinance by Title:

- O 2026-45 An Ordinance amending the Zoning Map of the City of North Ridgeville such that a ± 12.5 acre portion of a parcel owned by the City of North Ridgeville, as more fully described in Exhibit A and depicted in Exhibit B, be rezoned from R-1 Residence District to I-2 Light Industrial District.
(Introduced by Mayor Corcoran; Planning Commission meeting on 05-12-2026; Public Hearing on 05-18-2026)

Ordinance Number 2026-45 moved to third reading.

THIRD READINGS:

There were none.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Swenk announced the following dates:

1. The Finance Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers (rescheduled).
2. A Regular City Council Meeting will be held on Monday, June 1, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT:

President Swenk adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Approval of minutes on June 1, 2026:



Holly A. Swenk
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL



Nicholas Ciofani
CLERK OF COUNCIL