



Finance Committee

Tuesday, January 20th, 8:00 A.M.

**Virtual meeting pursuant to Chapters 113 and 115 of the Codified Ordinances
(as amended in Ordinance 22-28), and Resolution 22-29, enacted on March 22, 2022).**

Members present: Council Member, Carmela Williams, Chair
Council Member, Kim Bixenstine
Council Member, Nancy Moore
Council Member, Sean Malone
Citizen Member, Martin Kolb
Citizen Member, Anthony Moore
Citizen Member, Ketan Patel

Others present: Mayor, David E. Weiss
Chief Administrative Officer, Matt Carroll
Chief of Fire, Patrick Sweeney
Chief of Police, Wayne Hudson
Director of Finance, John Potts
Director of Law, William Gruber
Director of Public Works, Ramona Lowery-Ferrell
Director of Economic Development, Laura Englehart
Director of Building & Housing, Kyle Krewson
Assistant Director of Infrastructure, Christian Maier
Building Superintendent, Shannon Marlin
Lisa Vahey, League of Women Voters

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APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING FROM DECEMBER 8TH, 2025.

The minutes of the December 8th, 2025 meeting, amended with a few minor changes, were unanimously approved.

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REQUEST TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH PARTNERS TO PERFORM A CITY SAFETY ASSESSMENT.

Director of Public Works, Ramona Lowery-Ferrell presented a request to enter into an agreement with Partners in the amount of \$45,250 to perform a comprehensive safety assessment of nine City facilities. The assessment aims to proactively identify potential hazards, develop standard operating procedures (SOPs), and provide biannual inspections.

Director Ferrell explained that the consultant was selected through a qualifications-based selection (QBS) process, independent of price, and that Partners scored the highest. The assessment will cover all major City buildings to identify issues related to general housekeeping, repairs, equipment, and operational "blind spots." This item was previously approved by the Safety and Public Works Committee on January 9, 2026.

Council Member Kim Bixenstine thanked Director Ferrell for the initiative, noting it was an excellent idea given the age of the City's buildings. She asked for clarification on whether all City buildings were included in the assessment and inquired about the specific deliverables from Partners.

Director Ferrell responded that the primary deliverable would be the identification of safety issues or "blind spots," referencing recent accidents at a fire facility and another City facility. She explained the assessment could lead to recommendations on general housekeeping, repairs, or equipment. Director Ferrell confirmed that the list in the memo included all applicable buildings, which Public Works Superintendent Shannon Marlin verified.

Chair Carmela Williams asked if the assessment would also evaluate how City staff utilize buildings and equipment.

Director Ferrell clarified that while the focus is primarily on building safety and operational setup—such as identifying unsafe practices in a mechanics bay—the assessment may encompass some equipment evaluation. She noted the goal is to be proactive, especially as the City, being self-insured, no longer has access to free safety audits previously provided by the state (PERP).

The request to enter into an agreement with Partners to perform a city safety assessment was unanimously approved.

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REQUEST TO ENTER INTO AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH CHAGRIN VALLEY DISPATCH (CVD) FOR THE FIRST CALL PROGRAM.

Law Director William Gruber, with support from CAO Matt Carroll and Director of Finance John Potts, presented a request to enter into an agreement with Chagrin Valley Dispatch (CVD) to provide payroll and employment services for the multi-city First CALL Program. This transition is necessary because the current service provider, Recovery Resources, is concluding its services.

The agreement is intended as a temporary solution, with the long-term goal of CVD potentially taking over full administration of the regional First CALL Program. Annette Wallace, the Shaker Heights employee who coordinates the program, will continue to oversee the social workers and peer specialists, as she holds the proper certifications and has been managing the day-to-day operations. The CVD Executive Committee was scheduled to consider the proposal on January 14, with the full CVD Council to follow on January 27, 2026.

Council Member Nancy Moore asked if there was a Plan B should CVD's board decide not to take on the agreement.

CAO Matt Carroll responded that other options had been considered, but this was the best path forward as a pre-transition step toward the ultimate goal of CVD managing the regional program. He confirmed the administration had other possibilities to pursue if necessary.

Council Member Kim Bixenstine sought clarification on the division of responsibilities, asking if Ms. Wallace would be exclusively responsible for training without clinical oversight from a mental health entity.

Director Gruber clarified that Ms. Wallace would handle the majority of training, though there might be co-training with CVD for dispatch integration. He affirmed her administrative oversight falls under the Police Chief, Fire Chief, CAO, and Mayor.

CAO Carroll added that Ms. Wallace holds the highest certification level to supervise staff and did not rely on Recovery Resources for clinical oversight, as they were not involved in that capacity.

Council Member Bixenstine followed up, asking if Ms. Wallace had access to external resources for advice on complex situations.

CAO Carroll and Mayor David Weiss confirmed she is well-connected to community resources and has full access to City support systems, including regular meetings with the police and fire chiefs and an advisory board.

Citizen Member Ketan Patel questioned the structure, suggesting it would be more logical to bring the employees directly onto City staff. He noted the arrangement seemed like an imperfect transitional step.

Director Gruber explained that the term "contentious" referred to initial questions from some CVD members unfamiliar with the program, not to operational staff objections. The concerns were resolved once it was clarified that CVD would not assume financial obligations.

CAO Carroll and Director Potts elaborated that the structure is a necessary short-term bridge due to the sudden dissolution of Recovery Resources. The original partnership made sense for a single-City pilot, but as the program expanded regionally, a regional entity like CVD became the logical long-term home. They emphasized that Recovery Resources primarily handled payroll, while Ms. Wallace managed hiring and oversight.

Mayor Weiss provided historical context, noting the program began as a Shaker Heights pilot with Recovery Resources providing a pipeline for social work staff. The regional growth made the current structure seem odd, but the transition to CVD is the intended outcome.

Council Member Sean Malone asked for more detail on objections at CVD and what is needed for a full takeover.

Director Potts stated that CVD's executive leadership supports the agreement. The delay in a full takeover relates to the remaining grant funding cycle (approximately one more year) and the future need for CVD to secure its own sustainable funding.

Fire Chief Patrick Sweeney affirmed that transitioning to CVD was the vision from the program's onset. He cited strong operational support from CVD leadership and noted their role as the region's largest dispatch center makes them the ideal long-term partner.

The request to recommend that Council authorize an agreement with CVD was unanimously approved.

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REQUEST TO INCREASE CONTRACT WITH BRAKEFIRE INC. FOR BACKFLOW PREVENTER MAINTENANCE

Director of Public Works Ramona Lowery-Ferrell presented a request to increase the contract with Brakefire Inc. from \$43,259 to \$62,188 for the 2025 Backflow Preventer Inspection and Maintenance Program.

Director Ferrell explained that annual inspections of backflow prevention devices at City facilities are required by law to protect the water supply. Due to the aging infrastructure, more devices failed in 2024 and 2025 than anticipated, requiring repairs and replacements that exceeded the original contract amount. Funds are needed to complete the identified repairs from 2025. This item was previously approved by the Safety and Public Works Committee.

The request to recommend the contract increase was unanimously approved.

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REQUEST TO DONATE TWO FIRE RESCUE SQUADS

Fire Chief Patrick Sweeney requested approval to donate two surplus fire rescue squads (a 2009 and a 2014 model) to the City of Maple Heights and the Village of Oakwood. Both communities are experiencing critical apparatus shortages due to mechanical failures and accidents involving their own vehicles.

Chief Sweeney explained that the department recently took delivery of a new squad and has another on order, leaving these two older units as a surplus to operational needs. While the vehicles have high mileage, they provide immediate relief to the neighboring departments. Donating them supports regional mutual aid and continues the City's practice of assisting other communities. This item was previously approved by the Safety and Public Works Committee on January 9, 2026.

The request to recommend the donation to Council was unanimously approved.

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REQUEST TO APPROVE THE FOURTH AMENDMENT TO THE VAN AKEN DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT AND USE AGREEMENT.

Director of Economic Development Laura Englehart presented a request to approve the Fourth Amendment to the Development and Use Agreement (D&U) with the Van Aken District developer, The Max Collaborative (formerly RMS).

The amendment primarily concerns the northwest "Corner Property" at Chagrin Boulevard and Warrensville Center Road. It would extend the developer's exclusive purchase option for the site through August 10, 2029, and in doing so, remove the existing Right of First Refusal (ROFR) clause. The purchase price would be adjusted to \$140,420.81, enabling the City to recover half of its costs for relocating a CEI (FirstEnergy) utility line on the property. Finally, the amendment extends the timeline for the developer to submit a reinvestment plan for Shaker Plaza to August 10, 2030.

Director Englehart stated the amendment is needed due to changed market conditions (specifically the office market), to align timing with other district construction phases, and to maintain the positive partnership with the developer. This item was previously approved by the Neighborhood and Economic Development Committee on January 14, 2026.

Citizen Member Anthony Moore asked Director Englehart to explain the reason for eliminating the Right of First Refusal.

Director Englehart responded that the Right of First Refusal period currently ends in August 2029. The proposed amendment extends the exclusive purchase option to that same date, which effectively replaces the Right of First Refusal and renders it unnecessary.

The request to recommend approval of the Fourth Amendment was unanimously approved.

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REQUEST TO AMEND CONTRACT WITH SMCI FOR PROTECTIVE FENCING AT 3756 LEE ROAD

Director of Building & Housing Kyle Krewson presented a request to amend the existing contract with Suburban Maintenance & Construction, Inc. (SMCI) to allow for the ongoing rental of protective perimeter fencing at the Lee-Scottsdale Building (3756 Lee Rd.). The fencing was installed as a public safety measure after masonry fell from the facade.

A previous amendment authorized the purchase of a protective pedestrian canopy, which is now complete and owned by the city. This new amendment is necessary because additional canopy rental costs accrued before the prior amendment was finalized, reducing funds available for the ongoing fence rental. The amendment would establish an ongoing six-month rental structure at the existing rate of \$3,500 per period. The need for the fencing is expected to continue for several years due to the complexity of repairing the facade, which is complicated by high-voltage power lines on Lee Road. All costs are billed to the property owner from the Nuisance Abatement Fund (223).

Council Member Nancy Moore asked for clarification on the canopy costs and the expected duration for the fencing.

Director Krewson explained that the City now owns the canopy, as the prior amendment authorized its purchase. The payback period for that investment was approximately five months. Regarding the fencing, he stated it is difficult to provide an exact end date. The City's structural engineer has advised that the fencing must remain in place, and bricks have been found loose on the facade. FirstEnergy requires approximately six months for design work just to consider relocating the power lines, and no facade maintenance can occur within ten feet of those lines. He confirmed this will likely be a multi-year need.

Council Member Nancy Moore noted that the similar line relocation at Van Aken took two and a half years and asked whether a contract with FirstEnergy would be required.

Director Krewson responded that the City is still working through the process and who bears responsibility, but it is anticipated the relocation can be addressed through planned infrastructure improvements along Lee Road.

Council Member Sean Malone added a note of optimism, highlighting that the Shaker Heights Development Corporation's new Executive Director, Callie Cripps, has made inroads with the property owner. Director Englehart confirmed the owner has signed a letter supporting an application for National Register designation, which would make federal historic tax credits available for future rehabilitation. The Planning Department is spearheading that application.

The request to amend the contract with SMCI to allow for an ongoing six-month fencing rental structure was unanimously approved.

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REQUEST FOR "THEN AND NOW" CERTIFICATION OF INVOICES.

Director of Finance John Potts requested approval for the "then and now" certification of invoices listed on Exhibit A, as required by Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(D)(1) for obligations of \$3,000 or more that were incurred before proper certification. These are normal, budgeted expenditures for which purchase orders could not be issued in a timely manner due to system timing or late invoice receipt.

The request was unanimously approved.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 a.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

John J. Potts, Finance Director
Finance Committee