



WHITEHALL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026

CALL TO ORDER:

7:00 p.m., Council Chamber at City Hall, by President Thomas Potter

MOMENT OF SILENCE

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL:

Devin Brown Lori Elmore Larry Morrison Amy Harcar Mike Adkins
Brian McCann Gerald Dixon

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

April 7, 2026 Agenda & Regular Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2026 Special Meeting minutes
April 14, 2026 Committee Meeting Minutes
April 21, 2026 Agenda & Regular Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2026 Committee Meeting Minutes

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

Mayor Michael T. Bivens
Motorcycle Awareness Month Proclamation
Municipal Clerks Week Proclamation

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Administration and Financial Management – Chairperson Elmore
Community and Elder Advocacy – Chairperson Harcar
Community Standards and Enforcement – Chairperson McCann
Economic Development – Chairperson Dixon
Infrastructure, Maintenance, and Services – Chairperson Brown
Public Safety – Chairperson Morrison
Parks and Recreation – Chairperson Adkins

OFFICIALS' REPORTS:

Mayor Michael T. Bivens

City Auditor Shaquille Alexander

City Attorney Bradley S. Nicodemus

Treasurer Trevel Balse

Director of Public Service Casey Rowlands

Director of Economic Development Jackie Russell

Director of Public Safety Van Gregg

Director of Neighborhoods Gerald Wright

President Thomas M. Potter

COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS AND CLAIMS:

POLL PUBLIC:

VERIFICATION OF COPIES:

Roll call on whether each member of the Council was given a copy of each item of legislation listed on the agenda prior to the meeting and including any add-on legislation.

THIRD READING:

SECOND READING:

FIRST READING:

ORDINANCE NO. 034-2026

ALLOWING A SPECIAL PERMIT UNDER 1125.04 TO ALLOW DRIVE-THROUGH FACILITIES ON THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4600 E BROAD STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 090-008427-00 and 090-008249-00, PROPERTY OWNED BY MEYER FOODS MANAGEMENT COMPANY, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. 035-2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL 161 TABLE OF AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. 036-2026

AMENDING ORDINANCE 129-2025; AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO 161.38 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. 037-2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING AN ADVANCE OF UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE AMOUNT OF SIXTY-ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-EIGHT AND 60/100 DOLLARS (\$61,228.60) FROM THE GENERAL FUND (101) TO THE ENERGY PROJECT FUND (810): AND AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN THE SAME AMOUNT FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE ENERGY PROJECT FUND (810) TO THE ENERGY PROJECT FUND EXPENSE ACCOUNT (810.000.50000).

ORDINANCE NO. 038-2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$55,000.00) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE GENERAL FUND (101) TO THE ACCRUED BENEFIT RESERVE FUND (505); AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$55,000.00) TO THE ACCRUED BENEFIT RESERVE EXPENSE ACCOUNT 505.000.51000.

ORDINANCE NO. 039-2026

APPROVING AND MAKING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY-FOUR THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTEEN AND 07/100 DOLLARS (\$284,417.07) FROM VARIOUS ACCOUNTS IN THE WMPITIE FUND (279) TO THE DEBT SERVICE FUND (401).

ORDINANCE NO. 040-2026

APPROVING AND MAKING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF SEVENTY SEVEN THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED FORTY EIGHT AND 86/100 DOLLARS (\$77,648.86) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE GENERAL FUND (101) TO THE DEBT SERVICE FUND (401).

ORDINANCE NO. 041-2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF TWO HUNDRED THREE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED FIFTY-ONE AND 75/100 DOLLARS (\$203,651.75) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE GENERAL FUND (101) TO THE

DEBT SERVICE FUND (401).

ORDINANCE NO. 042-2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF SIX THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND NO/100 DOLLARS (\$6,500.00) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE GENERAL FUND TO THE 101.900.55100 RECORDS MAINTENANCE EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

ORDINANCE NO. 043-2026

APPROVING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY-SIX THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED TWENTY-THREE DOLLARS AND 33/100 (\$456,623.33) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE WATER UTILITY FUND (841) TO THE DEBT SERVICE FUND (401).

ORDINANCE NO. 044-2026

APPROVING AND MAKING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY-THREE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-EIGHT AND 75/100 DOLLARS (\$423,368.75) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE GENERAL FUND (101) TO THE DEBT SERVICE FUND (401).

POLL PUBLIC:

COMMUNITY DATE BOARD:

POLL COUNCIL:

ADJOURN

Whitehall City Council Meeting

April 7, 2026 Meeting minutes

President Potter ordered the Tuesday, April 7, 2026, agenda meeting at 6:30 p.m. All members were present except for Councilor Harcar.

President Potter reviewed the agenda and confirmed who would handle the required motions this evening.

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Submitted by,

Julie A. Ogg, Clerk of Council

APPROVED: May 6, 2026

Thomas M. Potter, Council President

Whitehall City Council Meeting

April 7, 2026 Meeting minutes

Call to Order

President Potter called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, in the Council Chamber at City Hall. He began with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Clerk Ogg conducted roll call. All members were present with the exception of Councilor Harcar. Councilors Adkins, McCann, Dixon, Brown, Elmore, Morrison, and President Potter. Councilor Elmore moved to excuse Councilor Harcar, seconded by Councilor McCann. The motion passed unanimously.

President Potter addressed the gallery, noting the full meeting and requesting that attendees refrain from side conversations to ensure everyone could hear proceedings. He explained the warning system: disruptions would result in a first warning, a second warning, and then expulsion from the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Councilor Dixon moved to approve the March 17, 2026 agenda and regular meeting minutes, as well as the March 24, 2026 committee meeting minutes. Councilor Morrison seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation

Mayor Michael T. Bivens – National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Mayor Bivens presented a proclamation declaring April 2026 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in the city of Whitehall. He read the full proclamation, emphasizing the theme "powered by hope, strengthened by prevention" and highlighting the city's commitment to child safety and family support. He also referenced human trafficking as a serious public health crisis.

Standing Committee Reports

Administration and Financial Management – Chairperson Elmore

Councilor Elmore reported that the committee met two Tuesdays ago; the minutes are on file, they have several pieces of legislation for the evening, and will meet next Tuesday again at 6:30.

Community and Elder Advocacy – Chairperson Harcar

Councilor Harcar was not present. Councilor Adkins filled in, reporting that the committee met two Tuesdays ago, the minutes are on file, and will meet next Tuesday again.

Community Standards and Enforcement – Chairperson McCann

Councilor McCann reported that the committee met two weeks ago, the minutes are on file, and they have no legislation on the agenda this evening. They will meet next Tuesday again at 6:30.

Economic Development – Chairperson Dixon

Councilor Dixon reported that the committee met two weeks ago, minutes are on file, and they have nothing on the agenda this evening. They intend to meet next week in chambers at 6:30.

Infrastructure, Maintenance, and Services – Chairperson Brown

Councilor Brown reported that the committee met two weeks ago, minutes are on file, and they plan to meet next Tuesday again at 6:30.

Public Safety – Chairperson Morrison

Councilor Morrison reported that the committee met two weeks ago, minutes are on file, and they will meet again next week sometime after 6:30.

Parks and Recreation – Chairperson Adkins

Councilor Adkins reported that the committee met two Tuesdays ago, minutes are on file, and they will meet next Tuesday again.

Officials' Reports

Mayor Michael T. Bivens

Mayor Bivens delivered an extensive personal statement reflecting on his 15 years in public service. He spoke emotionally about his mother's influence on his commitment to public service, describing how she taught him to "don't be a glad hander" and "be a man of your word." He said his time in office has been "a love letter to my mother."

Mayor Bivens outlined his administration's accomplishments, including creating the first budget stabilization fund, transforming the city administration to make it more diverse and welcoming, welcoming 35 new businesses in 2025, celebrating the opening of new developments, modernizing city operations, creating the Department of Neighborhoods, restoring the home reinvestment program, and securing grants. He specifically mentioned working with the Defense Logistics Agency, noting that it would bring strategic materials valued at over \$18 billion to the city.

The Mayor then addressed the recall efforts, stating he received a phone call early in his term warning him to stop the Fairway Cliffs development because "it's going to be really bad for you politically." He described being given what he characterized as an ultimatum four months into his term regarding personnel decisions at the police department, specifically being told to terminate Chief Crispen. He said he was told if he didn't comply, "it would be or else," and stated, "today, I'm living in the or else."

Mayor Bivens revealed that Chief Crispen had offered his resignation, saying he felt responsible for the situation, but the Mayor refused to accept it. He declared he would not "relent to special interest groups" and characterized the recall as politically motivated rather than based on neglecting residents.

The Mayor spoke passionately about Councilmembers Elmore and Harcar, describing Councilmember Elmore as a "grieving widow" who sits in her seat because of her late husband, Clint, and praising Councilmember Harcars advocacy for new American citizens and trafficking victims.

He noted that the three of them were "making history in the city of Whitehall and in Franklin County for all the wrong reasons," as this represents the first recall of three elected officials in Franklin County's 200-plus-year history. He criticized the process as disruptive and politically motivated, mentioning that residents had told him they were misled about what they were signing.

At this point, disruptions from the audience led Mayor Bivens to invite media and supporters to meet him outside to continue his statement. He left the council chambers with a group of attendees.

City Auditor Shaquille Alexander

Auditor Alexander was not present. Councilor Brown delivered his report, stating that independent auditors are on-site through Wednesday with an audit report expected in June. They hired Terry Spencer as an income tax clerk starting April 13th and extended an offer to Kendra Gilliam as the new payroll clerk. Tax filings are due April 15th, with the office open Monday through Thursday, 7 AM to 6 PM, closed Friday, and available Saturday, April 11th, from 8 AM to 12 PM. All residents must file regardless of where they work.

City Attorney Bradley S. Nicodemus

City Attorney Nicodemus reported on his meeting two weeks ago with the Ohio Municipal League regarding upcoming changes in state administration. As president of the Ohio Municipal Attorneys Association, he discussed anticipated legislation changes with the new governor and speaker. He assured the council he would keep them apprised of any direct effects on Whitehall.

Treasurer Trevel Balse

Treasurer Balse reported making daily deposits and catching up on treasurer reports, noting several months of complex spreadsheets to complete. He hopes to have them caught up by the next meeting and plans to make the information more digestible with charts, graphs, and visuals.

Director of Public Service Casey Rowlands

Director Rowlands reported that Fabrizi Construction and their subs returned to Yearling Road yesterday, with the project expected to be completed by August 1st. She requested favorable consideration for ordinances 24, 25, and 30.

Director of Economic Development Jackie Russell

Director Russell noted this was her first report since the council rule changes. She promised to send a survey discussed in the last education session by the end of the week, open for one week, asking council members to contact her if they don't receive it by Friday.

Director of Public Safety Van Gregg

Director Van Gregg was not present.

Director of the Department of Neighborhoods Gerald Wright

Director Wright reported beginning promotion for four planned meet and greet events across the city, with the first tomorrow afternoon at Lamby Lane Park. The intention is to reach all four wards of Whitehall.

President Thomas M. Potter

President Potter noted no official reports had been filed in the council office since the last meeting.

Communications, Petitions, and Claims

Four items were listed:

- Agenda for April 13, 2026 Board of Zoning and Building Appeals meeting
- Minutes of February 9, 2026 Board of Zoning and Building Appeals meeting
- Agenda for April 20, 2026, Whitehall Planning Commission meeting
- Minutes of February 5, 2026, Whitehall Planning Commission meeting

Poll Public

President Potter explained the rules requiring sign-in, stating names, and a three-minute time limit. He emphasized no side conversations and warned about the removal process.

Micole Spicer addressed several points: she found it "interesting" that the first black mayor, the first black city council member, and the white council member who works with black and brown people are being targeted for recall. She stated there is racism in Whitehall and believes it's fueling the recall. She said she has seen no factual evidence from the "recall crew" regarding their allegations. She noted the recall group wants a city manager, which would remove voters' choice. She concluded they will "show up and show out" at the special election.

Marie Long spoke emotionally, saying her heart breaks for Mayor Bivens, Councilmembers Elmore and Harcar, because "you don't deserve this." She criticized some council members for thinking about personal wants rather than the community, suggesting those who are "old and grayed" should step aside for people who care about the city's future.

John Gregory spoke as a grandfather and uncle of Whitehall residents, invoking religious language and saying, "No weapon formed against you will prosper." He criticized what he sees as racism "clothed in Christianity" and noted Mayor Bivens ran unopposed but now faces opposition, calling for a campaign saying "we are winning in Whitehall with Mayor Mike."

Cecil Hart directly challenged the recall motivations, stating, "If you're really serious about getting rid of this man and these other people, just be for real on how you really feel and the reason why." He specifically called out Councilmember McCann, accusing him of racism and asking him to "prove me wrong." President Potter warned about calling out specific council members.

At this point, a disruptive audience member was removed from chambers by police.

Dion Washington, who identified Keyon Washington, the gentleman who was removed, as his blood brother, attempted to continue along similar themes but was also removed for calling someone a "pedophile."

Kahassai Tafese spoke as a representative of the Ethiopian community, describing himself as a 30-year resident, homeowner, and US citizen. He praised Mayor Bivens as "a great man" and noted the support from the immigrant community. He recalled being "kicked out of the parking lot" when campaigning for the Mayor initially, but emphasized the community's continued support.

Jacob Amare, a small business owner and Ethiopian community member, described coming to America as an immigrant and now standing as an American citizen. He praised Mayor Bivens, Councilmember Elmore, and Councilmember Harcar for creating an environment where new Americans and entrepreneurs feel welcomed and supported. He announced plans to bring the Damascus celebration to Whitehall.

Tanya Hudson identified herself as a 30-year Whitehall resident whose parents built one of the first houses in Langport. As a foster parent for challenging children, she spoke about "transparency" and stated this isn't just about skin color but about financial challenges, language differences, and cultural identity. She expressed concern about the "mindset" that hasn't changed and noted the demographic changes in Whitehall schools.

Diane Peters spoke at this time. Rise up, Whitehall! Keep Mayor Bivens, Councilor Harcar, and Councilor Elmore. Rise-up, show-up, and vote, Whitehall.

Antonio Wilborn, a 7-year resident, praised the progress under Mayor Bivens' leadership and the work of Councilmembers Elmore and Harcar. He emphasized Mayor Bivens bringing Whitehall's funding up to \$5.7 million and urged respecting those in authority while holding them accountable.

Tamara Alsada, identifying herself as a 64-year lifelong Franklin County resident and founding member of the People's Justice Project, spoke about organizing around such causes. She said when you come for one of them, you come for all of us." She criticized those fighting against change and called for a proper investigation rather than different standards for different people.

Perry Gregory, a workforce practitioner, described Mayor Bivens calling their organization about a year ago, wanting to change the economic prosperity of Whitehall residents "at no cost." He detailed going door-to-door and getting about 200 people jobs in one day, with another 100 later. He warned that the city's reputation is being damaged by the current council leadership and promised to unleash an outreach campaign.

An Ethiopian-American Whitehall High School graduate (class of 2020) with a full ride to Ohio State spoke about knowing Mayor Bivens personally as "an upstanding man of God" and urged people to "respect thy neighbor" and not have hate in their hearts.

Michael Shannon, a former city attorney and council member, shared his 51-year history in Whitehall and six decades of public service. He noted seeing demonstrators calling for both his and Mayor Bivens' removal, which motivated him to speak. He called the recall an "abomination" that violates the charter and usurps voters' will. He argued the opposition should wait until next January to file petitions for a regular election. Shannon announced he is filing a taxpayer lawsuit challenging the petition's validity, claiming they miscalculated signatures by being 150 signatures short.

Tina Matthews spoke as "a strong black woman" wearing multiple hats as a matriarch and faithful believer from a multicultural family. She argued this isn't about color but about "the hard posture of the people," stating "The clan no longer has to wear sheets" since the president "unleashed a division." She criticized prioritizing the removal of "paradigm-shifting people" over addressing more serious issues like pedophiles.

Shawn Walton, an attorney and candidate for Columbus NAACP president, expressed concern about the precedent being set. He noted the first black mayor, the first black council member, and a white ally are being recalled, while a council member with "robust allegations" is not. He identified the recall as an "FOP shadow campaign" with the address being an FOP address and noted the city attorney's request for council members to join an FOP lawsuit against the city.

Danielle Sydnor, speaking as a member of the NAACP State Executive Committee and National Board of Directors, read statements that were actually about former Mayor Maggard to illustrate that criticism of leadership isn't new in Whitehall. She emphasized that "what is new is this level of escalation" and the coordinated effort to remove elected leadership mid-term, noting this coincides with having the first black mayor and first black woman council member.

Joel Harcar spoke on behalf of his wife, Councilmember Amy Harcar, explaining her absence for an end violence against women's international conference. He detailed her extensive training, education, and advocacy work, emphasizing her commitment to helping all community members, not just immigrants. He listed her 15,000+ hours of service to victims and her recent suicide prevention certification.

Tasha Simmons, a 30-year Whitehall citizen and civil service commissioner, spoke about serving on economic development committees. She noted the negativity during former Mayor Maggard's tenure and praised the current administration's transparency, direct action plans, and fiscal responsibility. She emphasized the inclusive nature of current leadership and asked the community to think objectively about Whitehall's future.

Jason Thomas, a 25-year resident and HOA president, shared a detailed story about Mayor Bivens helping his community approximately 10 years ago when they faced significant debt to the city. He described months of meetings where then-City Attorney Bivens worked to resolve their financial issues, ultimately "erasing all of our debt" and saving the community. He also praised Councilmember Elmore's consistent involvement in their block watch program over 15 years.

Nahari Luke, a 3-year resident with five children, expressed frustration that people are trying to remove the person who helped his family get established in Whitehall. He praised Mayor Bivens for bringing over \$6 million to the community and supporting all community events.

Verification of Copies

Roll call confirmed all council members received copies of the legislation prior to the meeting.

Third Reading

Ordinance No. 011-2026

Councilor Morrison introduced and moved for the adoption of Ordinance 011-2026, authorizing the adoption of May 2026 replacement pages to the codified ordinances and declaring an emergency. Councilor Adkins seconded. The ordinance was adopted unanimously.

Second Reading

Ordinance No. 022-2026

Ordinance 022-2026 amending the planning and zoning code to require special permits for detention facilities was read by title only. It will be referred to the planning commission for the April 20, 2026 meeting with a public hearing set at the council on April 21, 2026.

First Reading

Ordinance No. 024-2026

Councilor Elmore introduced Ordinance 024-2026 and moved to suspend the rules. Councilor Adkins seconded. Rules were suspended unanimously. Councilor Elmore moved to adopt. Councilor Adkins seconded. The ordinance authorizing an appropriation transfer of \$24,000 was adopted unanimously.

Ordinance No. 025-2026

Councilor Elmore introduced Ordinance 025-2026 and moved to suspend the rules. Councilor Brown seconded. Rules were suspended unanimously. Councilor Elmore moved to adopt. Councilor Brown seconded. The ordinance authorizing a supplemental appropriation of \$260,000 was adopted unanimously.

Ordinance No. 026-2026

Councilor Elmore introduced Ordinance 026-2026 and moved to suspend the rules. Councilor Brown seconded. Rules were suspended unanimously. Councilor Elmore moved to adopt. Councilor Brown seconded. The ordinance authorizing a supplemental appropriation of \$25,000 was adopted unanimously.

Ordinance No. 027-2026

Ordinance 027-2026 was read by title only, authorizing an amendment to the codified ordinances regarding the table of authorized personnel.

Ordinance No. 028-2026

Ordinance 028-2026 was read by title only, amending Ordinance 129-2025 regarding changes to section 161.38.

Ordinance No. 029-2026

Councilor Morrison introduced Ordinance 029-2026 and moved to suspend the rules. Councilor McCann seconded. Rules were suspended unanimously. Councilor Morrison moved to adopt. Councilor McCann seconded. Councilor Elmore voted no on the ordinance authorizing \$40,000 for election expenses. The ordinance was adopted 5-1.

Ordinance No. 030-2026

Councilor Elmore introduced Ordinance 030-2026 and moved to suspend the rules. Councilor McCann seconded. Rules were suspended with Councilmember Brown voting no. Councilor Elmore moved to adopt. Councilor McCann seconded. Councilor Brown voted no on the ordinance reclassifying a fund advance as a fund transfer. The ordinance was adopted 5-1.

Ordinance No. 031-2026

Councilor Elmore introduced Ordinance 031-2026 and moved to suspend the rules. Councilor Brown seconded. Rules were suspended unanimously. Councilor Elmore moved to adopt. Councilor Brown seconded. The ordinance authorizing a supplemental appropriation of \$75,000 was adopted unanimously.

Ordinance No. 032-2026

Councilor Elmore introduced Ordinance 032-2026 and moved to suspend the rules. Councilor Morrison seconded. Rules were suspended unanimously. Councilmember Elmore moved to adopt. Councilor Morrison seconded. The ordinance appropriating \$17,500 from the police department grant fund was adopted unanimously.

Resolution No. 011-2026

Councilor Elmore introduced Resolution 011-2026 and moved to suspend the rules. Councilor Adkins seconded. Rules were suspended unanimously. Councilor Elmore moved to adopt. Councilor Adkins seconded. The resolution approving "then and now" certificates was adopted unanimously.

Resolution No. 012-2026

City Attorney Nicodemus explained that resolutions 012, 013, and 014 regarding recall elections are ministerial acts required by the charter, similar to referendum and initiative petitions. Council has no discretion - the charter commands the action. The date in the resolutions was set at Tuesday, May 26th, based on the board of elections' input, as the May 5th primary timing wasn't feasible due to statewide election timelines.

Nicodemus explained the board of elections will be conducting the May 5th primary with subsequent canvassing duties, making the last week of May optimal. May 26th was proposed as a Tuesday, though it follows Memorial Day. Council can change the date, but earlier dates might require additional staff and cost. The latest possible date per charter would be Saturday, May 30th.

Councilor Morrison noted citizen requests to move the date due to the Monday holiday, suggesting Thursday, May 28th, since this is a special election that doesn't have to be on Tuesday.

Councilor Morrison introduced Resolution 012-2026 and moved to amend the date from Tuesday, May 26th, to Thursday, May 28th. Councilor Adkins seconded. The amendment was approved 4-2, with Councilor Brown and Councilor Elmore voting no.

Councilor Elmore praised Mayor Bivens as "a visionary" who has "moved this city forward" and created "unprecedented" engagement. She stated there is "no evidence," or "data or facts to substantiate a recall," and called it "shameful" that people are "entrenched in their own feelings."

Councilor Brown noted that during the Fairway Cliffs controversy, the mayor connected opponents to his administration and the economic development director, who reached out individually to work with them and invited them to economic development meetings, but none showed up. He emphasized they're "not interested in dialogue" but in "chaos and politics." He detailed the mayor's investments in workforce development, youth advisory council, and door-to-door outreach during public health emergencies.

Councilor Morrison introduced Resolution 012-2026 and moved to suspend the rules. Councilor Adkins seconded. The motion to suspend the rules failed 4-2, with Councilor Brown and Councilor Elmore voting no.

City Attorney Nicodemus warned that this is time-sensitive, and if rules aren't suspended, it could require special meetings or potential litigation against the council to meet charter requirements.

Councilor Brown moved to amend back to Tuesday, May 26th. Councilor Elmore seconded. The amendment failed 4-2.

Since the motion to suspend rules failed, the resolution cannot proceed tonight and will require additional readings.

Resolution No. 013-2026

Councilor Morrison introduced and moved to amend Resolution 013-2026 to change the date from Tuesday, May 26th, to Thursday, May 28th. Councilor Dixon seconded. The amendment passed 4-2, with Councilor Brown and Councilor Elmore voting no.

Councilor Morrison moved to suspend rules on Resolution 013-2026. Councilor Dixon seconded.

Councilor Dixon argued that since the city attorney said this must proceed according to law as a ministerial function, it makes no sense to slow it down, especially when it will move forward through other means anyway.

Councilor Elmore argued that if the date was originally the 26th and it's a Tuesday, it should stay the 26th and not be changed for "convenience." She stated they are "playing with Mayor Bivens' life, my life, and Councilor Harcars life."

Councilor Elmore then read a lengthy statement detailing her electoral history, platform consistency, and achievements. She emphasized her spiritual resilience and stated the accusations are "unfounded" and show "lack of character and integrity." She noted making history as the first black African American elected to the Whitehall city council and stated, "My works speak for me."

Councilor Brown again praised Councilor Elmore's willingness to meet with anyone who disagrees with her and noted that she and Councilor Harcar have "put together more legislation than all of us combined."

The motion to suspend the rules failed 4-2.

Councilor Brown moved to amend back to Tuesday, May 26th. Councilor Elmore seconded. The amendment failed 4-2.

Resolution No. 014-2026

Councilor Morrison introduced and moved to amend Resolution 014-2026 to change the date from May 26th to Thursday, May 28th. Councilor McCann seconded. The amendment passed 4-2, with Councilor Brown and Councilor Elmore voting no.

Councilor Morrison moved to suspend rules on Resolution 014-2026. Councilor McCann seconded.

Councilor Brown praised Councilor Harcar as "incredible" and noted that people who are "interested in building community" and "getting to know people and working together" would have nothing but positive things to say about her. He detailed her investments in education, her advocacy work, and their ability to disagree constructively. He emphasized having "somebody who is literally a full-time advocate for people, not just new Americans, not just victims of domestic violence and trafficking and trauma, but an advocate for all people, veterans."

Mayor Bivens read Councilor Harcars' statement into the record. The statement emphasized her commitment to serve those who trusted her with 1,700+ votes and criticized using recall as a political tool rather than for serious misconduct. She noted the fiscal irresponsibility of the recall process itself, costing tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars, and pledged to continue advocating for equality and transparency.

Councilor Elmore spoke about knowing Councilor Harcar for 10 years as someone "always ready to lend a hand" with "pure heart" who "manages conflict well." She noted their joint legislative achievements and stated, "There's never been a time where I've seen her or heard her say that she is not going to work with anybody."

The motion to suspend rules failed 4-2.

Councilor Brown moved to amend back to Tuesday, May 26th. Councilor Elmore seconded. The amendment failed 4-2.

Poll Public

Shawn Walton returned to emphasize that the arguments about "what the people want are really arguments about what the FOP wants" with FOP-endorsed candidates on council and a city attorney who encouraged joining an FOP lawsuit against the mayor. He detailed the connection between Brian Steel and the recall effort, noting Steel's \$50,000 commitment to a "smear campaign" if Chief Crispen isn't removed.

City Attorney Nicodemus interrupted to ask if Mayor Bivens wanted him to finalize a report on his findings regarding the intimidation case with Mr. Van Gregg and why charges weren't filed, stating he has video, police reports, and other information that "will not be pretty." Mayor Bivens said he would take that under advisement for discussion at a different time.

Diane Peters asked about early voting for the election.

Community Date Board

Councilor McCann encouraged support for Rosemore girls' softball, noting many new players who could use community support.

Director Russell reminded everyone about the Department of Neighborhoods meet and greet tomorrow from 4:30-6 PM at Lamby Lane Park.

Poll Council

Councilor Adkins thanked everyone for attending and staying through the late meeting.

Councilor McCann read a statement expressing frustration at being called a racist, "with nothing to substantiate it except that you think some don't fall in line with your way of thinking." He criticized what he sees as using race to "attempt to belittle and bully" people into conformity and stated he won't be intimidated. He expressed sadness that the city will continue to be divided, with no one prepared to change that.

Councilor Dixon thanked everyone for attending and sharing their feelings. He noted that accusations without determining truth characterize "a mob." As a historian, he took exception to the White hall name suggestion, explaining the city was named after Whitehall, England, by Robert Brotherton in the 1800s, having nothing to do with skin color. He emphasized loving and caring about people while finding the hate "disgusting."

Councilor Brown thanked attendees and viewers, noting his efforts to engage with Fairway Cliffs opponents by giving out his phone number and hosting community conversations, though they ultimately weren't interested in dialogue. He asked people to "watch what people do and not what they say" and emphasized Whitehall's opportunity to build something special through community collaboration.

Councilor Elmore thanked attendees and acknowledged Mayor Bivens' Child Abuse Prevention Month presentation. She responded to terms like "homegrown smear campaign," "brass and abrasive," and "mob" by stating "that's exactly what has happened to us" without evidence. She emphasized her pre-council community work and stated, "My works speak for me" and "my name is Googleable." She pledged to continue working to make Whitehall better than when she found it.

Councilor Morrison thanked everyone for enduring the lengthy meeting and emphasized that "the bottom line is the community got the referendum," which will go on the ballot according to charter rules. He noted that regardless of the evening's delays, the city attorney will get it done "one way or another" and emphasized that "the community is going to decide" who's right or wrong through the election process.

President Potter thanked everyone for attending the marathon meeting and appreciated those who spoke to the council.

Adjourn

President Potter adjourned the meeting at 9:56 PM.

Submitted by,

Julie A. Ogg, Clerk of Council

APPROVED: May 6, 2026

Thomas M. Potter, Council President

City of Whitehall

City Council Special Meeting

April 14, 2026 meeting minutes

President Potter called the special meeting to order at 6:31 PM, welcoming everyone to the Whitehall City Council special meeting for Tuesday, April 14, 2026. Clerk Ogg conducted roll call, confirming all council members were present: Councilors McCann, Dixon, Brown, Elmore, Morrison, Harcar, Adkins, and President Potter.

Presentation

President Potter introduced the evening's presentation, noting that Antone White, Director of the Franklin County Board of Elections, was present at the request of Councilor Harcar. President Potter invited Councilor Harcar to explain the invitation and ask questions of other council members.

Councilor Harcar thanked Director White for attending on short notice, explaining that there had been questions the previous day regarding the date of the special recall election. She noted that the board of elections had suggested May 26th and wanted to hear his reasoning for that date and any potential impact of changing it.

Director White thanked Councilor Harcar for the invitation and addressed the council members and President Potter. He explained that his office had advised through the Whitehall city attorney, Mr. Nicodemus that the best date for the special election would be May 26th because it aligns with normal state election schedules. "Voters are used to voting on a Tuesday, and we felt that we should keep the natural Tuesday date for voters to vote," Director White stated. He acknowledged it was a day after a holiday, but felt it was necessary to maintain the Tuesday voting tradition, as it was already an unusual special election.

Director White further explained that the May 26th date also aligns naturally with state election schedules for early voting, requesting absentee ballots by mail, and curing ballots if necessary after the election. He noted that due to the timing of the filings, they were unable to get these questions on the May 5th primary ballot, as the filing occurred on March 11th, while military overseas ballots went out on March 20th, making it logistically impossible to include the recall questions on the primary ballot.

Councilor Harcar asked about the impact of changing the date and pushing it back, specifically whether it would affect early voting. Director White confirmed that early voters would lose 2 days of early voting if the date were moved from May 26th to May 28th. He explained that while they could have had the normal early vote schedule with May 26th, moving it two days later would result in the loss of two early voting days. However, he assured that voters would still have the opportunity to request absentee ballots by mail up until 7 days before the election, with May 21st being the deadline for mail ballots. Early voting would be available at their center at 1700 Morse Road, with the last day being Sunday, May 24th.

Councilor Harcar clarified that by doing the election on the 28th instead of the 26th, they would actually lose 2 days of early voting, which Director White confirmed was correct.

Councilor Morrison asked about the number of early voting days available. Director White responded that typically it is 28 days after the close of registration, but in this instance, it would be about 26 days. Councilor Morrison also inquired about voter registration opportunities, and Director White explained that there was not an opportunity to register new voters specifically for this special election because they were currently in a hold period for voter registration due to the primary election. Registration was closed and would not reopen until after they certify the May 5th primary election and receive approval from the Ohio Secretary of State.

President Potter thanked Director White for coming on such short notice, and Director White expressed his appreciation for being invited.

Verification of Copies

Clerk Ogg called the roll to verify whether each member of council was given a copy of each item of legislation listed on the agenda prior to the meeting, including any add-on legislation. All council members responded affirmatively: Councilors McCann, Dixon, Brown, Elmore, Morrison, Harcar, and Adkins.

Third Reading

Resolution No. 012-2026 (Comm./Whole.—3rd Reading- ADOPT as AMENDED 4/14-2026 –Morrison/Adkins)

President Potter presented Resolution No. 012-2026 as amended, "A Resolution Providing for the Submission of the Question of the Recall of Mayor Michael Bivens to the Electors of the City and the Declaration of an Emergency."

Motion: Councilor Morrison introduced Resolution 012-2026 as amended for adoption. Councilor Adkins seconded the motion.

President Potter opened the floor for discussion on the motion.

Councilor Harcar asked, given that they had learned voters would have 2 fewer days for early voting, whether there was any interest in moving the election back to the 26th to keep the original date. She was told "No" and that it was still the prerogative to move to the 28th.

Councilor Harcar stated she just wanted to clarify the situation for the public, noting that originally they heard the date was moved so the community would have more opportunity to vote and have their voices heard, but they had just learned the community would actually lose 2 days if they moved the date to the 28th. She questioned whether there was any reasoning for needing it to be the 28th, expressing doubt about the explanation that people needed time to decompress after the holiday weekend, as she was certain people would have their minds made up by the time they got to the ballot.

Councilor Dixon responded that the open and honest answer had been given at the previous week's council meeting, which Councilor Harcar had not attended, suggesting she could watch the meeting online to find those answers as they had been thoroughly discussed.

Councilor Harcar explained she had listened to the meeting despite not being present due to a work conference scheduled two months in advance. She reiterated that the reasoning she heard was about the day after the holiday and people needing time to decompress, which she found difficult to believe was the true motivation.

Councilor Morrison confirmed that was indeed the answer, explaining he had introduced the change to the 28th after being contacted by constituents who expressed concerns about the holiday. He had conferred with the city attorney to ensure it wouldn't be a drastic interference, and the attorney had checked with the election board.

Councilor Harcar pressed about the number of constituents, and Councilor Morrison said he didn't recall if he had said one or two, just "some constituents." Councilor Harcar noted she remembered him saying "even if it was just me" at one point.

Councilor Harcar acknowledged that everyone had to do what they felt was best in their roles and had no issues with people representing their constituents. However, she argued they had a responsibility to do what's best for the most people possible, criticizing decisions that impact the entire community based

on input from just one, two, or five people. She emphasized they had an opportunity to give the entire community an extra 2 days to vote, but instead were sacrificing that based on a couple of people reaching out about preferring the 28th.

Councilor Elmore spoke about the historical precedent of elections being held on Tuesdays, arguing that moving the election to Thursday would confuse voters' minds. She characterized it as an attempt to confuse voters, noting they already had a May 5th election and then would have another special election on the 28th. She emphasized that voters had early voting and absentee voting options available.

Councilor Elmore then addressed the recall itself, noting that since Mayor Bivens was not present, she would speak to the issues raised. She cited the recall organizers' stated concerns about community development decisions, fiscal responsibility, transparency, and leadership. She proceeded to list Mayor Bivens' accomplishments during his two years in office, including a \$48 million infrastructure and facilities improvement plan from 2024 to 2026, with \$16 million completed in 2024. She detailed specific projects, including East Broad Street and police department improvements totaling \$11 million completed in 2024, and waterline replacement and street reconstruction projects completed in 2025.

Councilor Elmore also highlighted what she called "effective accountability government," including the creation of the office of neighborhoods, modernized city operations, a mobile app, and budget transparency measures that hadn't been done before. She mentioned workforce development opportunities, including the first-ever job fair and regular job fairs at city events.

She emphasized the city's financial strength, noting that they had achieved disciplined spending and careful financial management from day one, with a \$1.5 million budget stabilization fund and a total budget of \$5.7 million. She concluded by stating that all the issues mentioned in the recall were "inaccurate" and "false" because the mayor had exceeded what had ever been accomplished for Whitehall's budget.

Councilor Brown thanked Councilmember Elmore. He acknowledged he might hear that this was "the will of the people," but characterized it as "the will of a small group of people with their own interests." He shared an anecdote about attending an event with an organization called "race to space" that connects schools from different socioeconomic statuses to get kids involved civically. He had discussed how the mayor and city of Whitehall had put together a youth advisory council for the same purpose, and schools from Upper Arlington, Westerville, and Dublin were amazed to hear about students being connected with community leadership.

The discussion continued with President Potter calling for any further discussion before proceeding to the vote.

Vote Result: The motion passed with Councilor McCann, Councilor Dixon, Councilor Morrison, and Councilor Adkins voting yes; Councilor Brown, Councilor Elmore, and Councilor Harcar voting no. Resolution 012-2026 was adopted without the emergency clause.

Resolution No. 013-2026 (Comm./Whole.—3rd Reading- ADOPT as AMENDED 4/14-2026 –Morrison/Dixon)

President Potter presented Resolution No. 013-2026, "A Resolution Providing for the Submission of the Question of the Recall of Councilmember Lori Elmore to the Electors of the City and the Declaration of an Emergency."

Motion: Councilor Morrison introduced Resolution 013-2026 and moved for adoption as amended. Councilor Dixon seconded the motion.

President Potter opened the floor for discussion.

Councilor Brown reiterated that this vote from the four council members had taken away 2 days of early voting from the community, expressing confusion about why someone was laughing and stating she didn't understand the decision.

Councilor Dixon responded that the body had the ability to make decisions and debate those decisions, noting that a week ago, the body had debated and voted on the date change by majority vote. He explained this was how the body worked, whether others liked it or not. He shared his experience of being in the minority for over 4 years, during which much of his introduced legislation was "tabled and eschewed and pushed back and hated on." He noted that things had changed through elections, and while one may not have liked certain votes in the past 4 years, he had respected them. He characterized calling out particular members as "a disservice and disrespectful to this body politic."

Councilor Harcar responded that Councilor Dixon was right that decisions were made by voters who elected them to office. She argued that if people didn't like them or think they were qualified, they should have run against them. She characterized the recall as an attempt to remove them "for doing what we said we were going to do because you don't like who we advocate for."

Councilor Harcar acknowledged that Councilor Elmore was "a little bit outspoken" and that this "rubs people the wrong way." She described instances where people had come into the chambers and disrespected her while she sat on the council, making faces, sticking their tongues out, and yelling at her, yet they were supposed to be respectful to those individuals because of what their family members had done. She stated she was vocal and didn't "take it sitting down," noting that anyone who knew her for the 10-plus years she'd been involved knew this was how she was, and they had voted her into office multiple times.

Councilor Harcar revealed there had been discussion that the recall was planned for 2 years, noting that both the mayor and she had been in office for exactly 2 years and 6 days when the recall was announced. She argued that if there had been problems with her 2 years ago, people should have run against her then, calling it "a disservice to the people that voted for us to take away their votes." She emphasized that if people didn't like how things were done but chose not to vote or run, they would have another opportunity soon, as elections weren't far away.

Councilor Harcar concluded by stating it wasn't easy to sit on the council, campaign, or hear constant complaints from people who didn't want to hear what you had to say, no matter how much you tried to educate them. She reiterated that Councilor Elmore had always been outspoken for the community and called the recall "a disservice to the individuals that voted her into office."

Councilor Elmore then spoke on her own behalf, characterizing the tactics as attempts to confuse voters by deviating from the Franklin County Board of Elections' recommendations. She found it "interesting" that some council members wanted to deviate from these recommendations, contrasting this with the lack of outrage when called to uphold the charter regarding someone named Stein's residency requirements, despite knowing "full well, she did not meet the requirements."

Councilor Elmore identified Stein as having been "the primary voice behind recall" and noted that Stein had cited concerns about accountability. She argued that filing a lawsuit because Stein violated the charter was itself accountability. She detailed that Stein had been on the Buckeye Lake Parks and Recreation commission for months before pulling petitions to run for Whitehall Ward 4.

Regarding the use of tax dollars, another cited issue, Councilor Elmore stated that if Stein had "removed herself and done the right and ethical thing, this would be a moot issue." She emphasized her oath to uphold the office, charter, and local laws.

Councilor Elmore addressed legal liability concerns, stating that having Stein as "an undetermined resident of Whitehall keeps running up the tally" because she was removed from the ballot and "now she's bitter." She argued that if Stein truly cared about the city as claimed, "She would not seek to advance herself for her own political agenda."

On community development decisions, Councilor Elmore noted that housing was an issue across the country, and they needed to meet community needs for affordable market-rate homeownership, which

they were doing. She emphasized that since 2017, her platform had always been economic development and growth, with every decision documented in minutes for complete transparency, making the allegations "unfounded."

Councilor Elmore addressed the recall organizers' focus on accountability in government, citing concerns about lawsuits and fiscal responsibility. She stated there had been "0 data or facts to back their assertions," calling them "merely buzzwords that grab people's attention" that "frankly, lack credibility." She emphasized there had been no mismanagement of funds, pointing to their \$5.7 million surplus and \$1.5 million in the stabilization fund.

She concluded that anyone who violates the charter should be held accountable, with exceptions only for gross misconduct, but "I guess that's okay in some people's eyes." She noted that since Holly Stein's involvement in Whitehall, she had cost taxpayers close to \$100,000. Councilor Elmore characterized everything Stein cited as challengeable, stating, "pure and simple, this is business. If this isn't business, this is personal. Personal attack to me."

Councilor Elmore reiterated that elections are traditionally held on Tuesdays in May and November, with voters having three options: early voting, absentee voting, and Election Day voting. She concluded that "moving the voting day to Thursday is simply a tactic to confuse and dissuade the voter."

Councilor Brown responded that he had obviously shared his thoughts about Councilor Elmore the previous week and why he believed she was a good councilwoman. While acknowledging they'd had disagreements both publicly and privately, he ultimately believed Councilor Elmore brought value to the council.

Addressing the date issue, Councilor Brown noted the use of the term "body politic" and characterized what they were seeing as "politics," which he found unfortunate because the city deserved leadership that looked very different from what was happening. He pointed out the contradiction between people claiming to be "the voice of the people" and "the man of the people" whose job was to represent the people, while simultaneously voting to take away 2 days from people being able to let their voices be heard.

Councilor Brown hoped the community would continue paying attention and staying focused on "what is real and what's not." He referenced previous minority status issues, specifically mentioning fireworks legislation as an example. He noted that the legislation was actually withdrawn after conversation rather than being voted down, and emphasized that when they asked questions, they weren't attacking people, even though some felt they were being attacked when questioned about current issues.

Councilor Dixon requested permission to speak briefly, emphasizing that pointing out individual council members' past issues didn't change what was happening with the recall. He noted there was "a lot of get Dixon verbiage up here" and wanted to clarify that it wasn't Mr. Dixon's fault.

President Potter called for additional comments before proceeding to the vote.

Vote Result: The motion passed with Councilor McCann, Councilor Dixon, Councilor Morrison, and Councilor Adkins voting yes; Councilor Brown, Councilor Elmore, and Councilor Harcar voting no. Resolution 013-2026 was adopted without the declaration of an emergency.

Resolution No. 014-2026 (Comm./Whole.—3rd Reading- ADOPT as AMENDED 4/14-2026 –Morrison/McCann)

President Potter presented Resolution No. 014-2026 as amended, "A Resolution Providing for the Submission of the Question of the Recall of Councilmember Amy Harcar to the Electors of the City and the Declaration of an Emergency."

Motion: Councilor Morrison introduced Resolution 014-2026 and moved for adoption as amended. Councilor McCann seconded the motion.

President Potter opened the floor for discussion.

Councilor Brown began by referencing his comments from the previous week about Councilmember Harcar being recalled, and again addressed the date issue. He emphasized that the community should understand that a council person had said the previous week that they'd had disagreements with Councilmember Harcar before, but that Councilmember Harcar had reached out and they'd had a conversation. This was important for the community to hear and see.

Councilor Brown noted that as far as he knew, Councilor Elmore, herself, and the mayor had not avoided talking to people they disagreed with and had welcomed all these people to have conversations. He pointed out that they were hearing from people who disagreed with them that they had indeed had good conversations, even if they didn't reach final solutions. He characterized this as "what leadership looks like from Ms. Harcar."

Regarding the date, Councilor Brown noted that her point about the two lost early voting days had been "completely ignored." He stated he would continue raising this issue and challenge these people to discuss it if they wanted to, or not. He reiterated that if they truly cared about people's voices and allowing them to have opportunities to be heard, he couldn't understand why they wouldn't allow two extra days for early voting. He offered to yield his time to anyone who wanted to answer that question, assuming he wouldn't get an answer "for the reason I stated, which is this is politics, it's not leadership, and Whitehall does deserve better for sure."

Councilor Harcar explained she was on council for one very specific reason related to her day job, which she talked about constantly. She identified the constant point of contention with the majority of people signing the recall petition as her work with immigrants and advocacy for immigrants, which "really rubs some people the wrong way."

Councilor Harcar detailed that she had sat in council numerous times sharing the many different paths people came to her needing help, whether for U-visas for domestic violence survivors or T-visas for trafficking survivors. She noted that footage of her explanations had been posted on Facebook pages to show how she worked with "illegals," which was "the only terminology some of you seem to care about."

She directly addressed the recall motivations: "So if you want to recall me for the work that I do, then just be transparent. I have no interest in siding with people who want to do that." She acknowledged that people could say the recall was about other things, but maintained that for the majority of petition signers, her immigrant advocacy was their real issue with her.

Councilor Harcar addressed questions about what she had actually accomplished in her two years on council. She noted that many speakers she had brought in or who had come to council she had known for years, discussing mental health, suicide information, and food access—all topics for which she had been criticized.

She stated that underlying all the recall issues was her introduction of legislation to protect immigrants and the LGBTQ community, which made her "heavily targeted." She noted that the same people would side with the Councilor who supported such protection but had done things currently being investigated by the police department, though she declined to elaborate further.

Councilor Harcar emphasized she hadn't come to council with preconceived ideas or with one supporter funding her entire campaign. She had done one fundraiser and raised donations through small contributions from friends and family, without allegiance to any organization. She questioned why there were concerns about the mayor accepting donations from a developer while being "okay with counselors accepting large sums or grand sums of money from one particular agency, which funded nearly the entire city council elections this cycle."

She concluded by stating, "That is why I'm up here. I have always been this way. I have always been an advocate. I have always been outspoken, and I guess sometimes to my detriment. That is just fine with me, because anybody who knows me knows that that is who I am, whether I'm on council or I'm not on council." She expressed confidence that people would see through "some of the awful rhetoric"

and that regardless of the vote outcome, she would continue advocating for the community that needed it.

Councilor Elmore requested to speak about Councilor Harcars character and integrity, emphasizing that Councilor Harcar possessed both qualities, "which unfortunately doesn't apply to those who throw a rock and hide their hand." She described Councilor Harcar as "an upstanding person" who "represents those that are the least of us" and "represents new Americans with a pathway to citizenship."

Councilor Elmore noted that Councilor Harcar had brought forth legislation, particularly highlighting legislation regarding gross misconduct as what had gotten her "on the hot seat." She emphasized that Councilor Harcar had "done nothing but really help this community."

As at-large council members, Councilor Elmore stated that together, she and Councilor Harcar had helped more people and had more legislation, resolutions, and programs adopted than other council people in Whitehall. She characterized attacks on Councilor Harcars character and work for people who have businesses, bring revenue to the community, pay taxes, and are homeowners as unfounded.

Councilor Elmore addressed discrimination issues, noting that some people "don't want renters and they don't want illegals." She shared a personal experience from campaigning when she was told "don't talk to the neighbors" who happened to be Ethiopian, emphasizing this was something she experienced, not just heard about.

She concluded by noting that Whitehall "is full of everybody" and "is a melting pot," emphasizing it would benefit everyone to get along as "it is not like it used to be." She highlighted that she had grown up in Columbus, while Councilor Harcar had been in Whitehall for 20 years, being effective both on and off council. She attributed the success of legislation to Councilor Harcar having "a crowd of people that she's backing and that believe in her," noting their election results of over 1,900 votes and 1,700 votes respectively, with more than 1,100 votes at-large.

Councilor Elmore characterized attacking Councilor Harcar as "doing a disservice to yourself" and expressed hope that "people who are willing to stand up to represent this city with character and integrity come out and vote for Harcar, Mayor Bivens, and myself."

Councilor Dixon requested a moment to respond briefly to one of his colleagues who had called the rest of them "these people," stating he would prefer the term "my colleagues."

President Potter called for any additional comments before proceeding to the vote.

Vote Result: The motion passed with Councilor McCann, Councilor Dixon, Councilor Morrison, and Councilor Adkins voting yes; Councilor Brown, Councilor Elmore, and Councilor Harcar voting no. Resolution 014-2026 was adopted without the emergency clause.

Adjourn

President Potter adjourned the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Submitted by,

Julie A. Ogg, Clerk of Council

APPROVED: May 6, 2026

Thomas M. Potter, Council President

City of Whitehall

City Council Committee Meeting

April 14, 2026 minutes

President Potter called the meeting to order at 7:14 PM.

Present at the meeting were the following:

Councilor Lori Elmore, Councilor Amy Harcar, Councilor Brian McCann, Councilor Gerald Dixon, Councilor Devin Brown, Councilor Larry Morrison, Councilor Mike Adkins, and President Thomas Potter.

City Attorney Brad Nicodemus and Economic Development Director Jackie Russell.

Special Presentation - Anti-Human Trafficking Education

Council President Potter opened the committee meeting and welcomed Yolanda Rory, Human Trafficking Associate Manager for Salvation Army in Central Ohio. Councilor Brown explained that he had learned about Ms. Rory and the Salvation Army's work after attending an anti-human trafficking event, and worked with a fellow council member to bring Ms. Rory to share information about their community impact and victim advocacy work. Councilor Brown deferred to another council member who had worked more extensively with Ms. Rory for the introduction.

Councilor Harcar stated that she had worked with Ms. Rory for several years to assist trafficking survivors through extensive collaboration. She thanked Councilor Brown for inviting Ms. Rory and asked her to join them to explain the amazing work being done at the Salvation Army.

After some technical difficulties with the microphone system, Ms. Rory began her presentation, describing herself as very adaptable and flexible in her daily work. She expressed gratitude for the invitation to discuss the Salvation Army's anti-human trafficking work.

Ms. Rory explained that as the associate manager for the anti-human trafficking program, she assists survivors in gaining stability in their lives after exiting trafficking. She outlined the comprehensive scope of their work, from outreach to long-term stability support.

The Salvation Army manages the Central Ohio Reach and Restore Coalition, comprising over 100 organizations and over 300 individuals from Columbus and surrounding counties who collaborate to help human trafficking survivors. They also have a victim advocate working with the Franklin County human trafficking task force, providing advocacy from initial investigation through comprehensive case management.

Ms. Rory described their management of the 24-hour National Human Trafficking Hotline, with someone available around the clock to assist callers seeking help or resource connections. Their comprehensive case management program walks alongside survivors, whether they've been out of trafficking for 10 days or 10 years, helping rebuild lives and build stability based on individual goals such as educational pursuits or mental health resources.

She detailed their partnership with Beacon 360 Management and Alvis for Harriet's Hope, a 52-unit recovery-supported housing facility on Columbus's west side specifically for trafficking survivors. This complex project has been operational for two years and provides crucial housing support for survivors who otherwise struggle to secure housing and necessary support services.

The Salvation Army conducts street outreach on Columbus's west side, targeting street-based exploitation, aiming to reach women and provide hygiene items while letting them know there's a place available if they decide to exit and enter case management. Their drop-in center, also on the west side,

provides meals, clothing, and hygiene items while developing relationships so women know support is available when they reach readiness for case management participation.

Ms. Rory explained their trauma and addiction groups, with case managers working in Franklin County jail, Delaware County jail, and, more recently, at the Ohio Reformatory for Women. They run an evidence-based program called Seeking Safety to help women learn about healthy relationships and assess them for success upon release from incarceration.

Their relationship with the Ohio Reformatory for Women involves a case manager working with those nearing release, helping link them with resources, housing, and shelter when necessary to set them up for success.

Ms. Rory described their recent partnership with the Ohio Attorney General's Human Trafficking Initiative and a local plastic surgery organization for tattoo removal for trafficking survivors. She explained that trafficking sometimes involves branding with tattoos indicating ownership by traffickers, and many survivors don't know how to address these tattoos. The program has been phenomenal, with Salvation Army case managers supporting survivors through multiple sessions needed for tattoo removal.

Finally, she outlined their training and consultation services, providing free one-hour or longer community trainings on human trafficking. Organizations, church groups, and first responders can request these trainings, which she provides free of charge.

Regarding statistics on human trafficking prevalence, Ms. Rory acknowledged the difficulty in providing accurate numbers since they constantly change and are based on identified cases rather than actual occurrences. She provided a handout from the Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force dashboard, which lists total survivors identified and referred for services. The website allows users to hover over different counties to see survivor numbers based on different agencies and referral sources.

Council President Potter asked about the significant drop in survivors from 567 in 2024 to lower numbers in 2025, questioning whether this represented underreporting. Ms. Rory confirmed that underreporting is sometimes an issue, noting that sex trafficking reporting tends to be much higher than labor trafficking reporting. She explained that many labor trafficking victims aren't necessarily domestic, leading to underreporting due to deportation fears, trafficker manipulation, fake documents, and threats of deportation. She emphasized that labor trafficking also affects U.S. citizens and is harder to spot than sex trafficking.

Council President Potter noted interesting patterns in the data, including darker shading in southeastern Ohio and one county northeast of Franklin County, despite these being rural areas where reporting might be expected to be lower. Ms. Rory acknowledged this was interesting, but noted it was based on who's been referred for services.

Regarding underreporting among men, Ms. Rory explained that men are generally socialized to be providers, non-emotional, and not vulnerable. When trafficked, often starting in childhood through sexual abuse or due to vulnerabilities like homelessness, men don't want to report due to shame and embarrassment. Women tend to be more apt to share their experiences, explaining the underreporting disparity.

Councilor Morrison asked about the ratio between Ohio residents and people from other states found in trafficking situations. Ms. Rory couldn't provide a completely accurate answer but noted that many survivors they work with come from various counties within Ohio.

Councilor Brown mentioned that certain events like the Arnold Classic are understood to be hotbeds for trafficking activity, though he didn't know specific statistics. He asked Ms. Rory to explain the different types of trafficking for those who might not see the handout.

Ms. Rory defined human trafficking as the exploitation of men, women, and children for commercial sex or labor purposes. Sex trafficking can include street-based solicitation (the traditional movie portrayal), but more often involves grooming by older boyfriends or girlfriends who provide gifts and

kindness before demanding payback or services. She emphasized that trafficking often involves people currently in victims' lives, such as children being approached online through platforms like Roblox or teenagers with mental health struggles being targeted by understanding individuals who exploit parental conflicts.

Labor trafficking can involve promises of amazing jobs with good pay, but once victims arrive, they discover the reality doesn't match the advertisements and become exploited through threats and coercion. Ms. Rory stressed that more often than not, trafficking looks like people currently in victims' lives rather than the sensationalized television and movie portrayals.

When asked what someone should do if they suspect trafficking, Ms. Rory recommended calling the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. For all 14 central Ohio counties, these calls go to The Salvation Army, allowing them to connect people to services. She noted recent changes from the Polaris Project to Compass Connections, which has established new protocols for working with local agencies and law enforcement when needed.

For individual education, Ms. Rory mentioned one-hour trainings available on the Attorney General's website, though she couldn't immediately remember specific details about the Governor's office trainings.

Councilor Elmore asked about the grooming process, specifically how perpetrators would groom a child having issues with their parents. Ms. Rory explained that grooming begins with being understanding and friendly, agreeing with the child about parental issues. It progresses to encouraging rule-breaking behavior, offering housing when children express a desire to leave home, then demanding sexual acts or prostitution in exchange for continued housing or drug money. She also addressed the sad reality of familial trafficking, where family members groom children from very young ages, normalizing inappropriate behavior and introducing explicit images before involving them with substances.

Councilor Elmore emphasized the importance of keeping human trafficking awareness in the forefront so people can recognize signs and better protect children.

Councilor Harcar thanked Ms. Rory and encouraged everyone to put the trafficking hotline in their phones, noting that even suspected situations can be reported without triggering dramatic police responses. Reports help build cases when multiple people notice concerning situations.

Councilor Brown expressed gratitude for Ms. Rory's informative presentation, acknowledging his own previous ignorance about human trafficking before learning from family members and colleagues working in anti-trafficking efforts. He emphasized the importance of educating people about different forms of trafficking, warning signs, and ways to help stop it, particularly noting that many trafficking situations involve known individuals and relationships.

Council President Potter also thanked Ms. Rory for the important information and moved to the next agenda item.

Committee of the Whole Legislation and Issues

Councilor Elmore raised an issue for consideration regarding council rules, specifically addressing decorum and respect in the chamber and on the dais. She noted that while professional behavior for council members was already addressed in quorum discussions, she wanted to add language to council rules because councilors should not wear t-shirts and ball caps with political slogans turned backwards while sitting on the dais, as this shows total disrespect to the dais, chambers, and councilor position. She recommended that casual or professional dress or attire should be worn on Tuesdays.

Councilor McCann requested to add something, making a public apology to Councilor Elmore. He admitted that yesterday he didn't give much thought to his appearance when coming to council because he thought it would be a quick meeting, and he was wrong. He apologized to the people of his ward and the city, but more importantly to Councilor Elmore because she was the only one who actually called him out on it. When she called him out, he wasn't happy about it, and they exchanged quite a heated discussion about this and other topics.

Councilor McCann continued that when he got home that evening, not only did his wife tell him he was wrong, but as he had time to think about it, he realized Councilor Elmore was absolutely right. He publicly apologized again and thanked her for holding him accountable.

Councilor Elmore responded that it takes a big person to admit wrongdoing and apologize, giving Councilor McCann major points because it was indeed a heated discussion. She emphasized that when sitting on the dais, there is a certain attire that should be worn as a matter of respect, thanking him and expressing appreciation.

Council President Potter acknowledged that Councilor McCann's public apology made him a bigger person and asked if Councilor Elmore's recommendation was to add this to council rules. She confirmed yes.

Councilor Dixon shared that he'd been attending meetings for 17 years and had seen ball caps and shorts. His grandfather used to wear a shirt and tie when mowing the lawn, reflecting his upbringing, but he didn't know whose authority it was to address dress code—whether the council president or council clerk. He never felt it was his place to say anything to anyone during his 17 years. He noted that Tuesday committee meetings typically don't require suits and ties, just something nice but not too casual, while council meetings warrant dressing up for the occasion. He questioned whether this should be common knowledge or require an entity or authority to direct it.

Council President Potter explained that any member of council can examine council rules at any time and bring up issues for consideration. If Councilor Elmore chooses to bring this for a vote next week, it becomes part of their council rules rather than just direction from him or the clerk. This creates a permanent record of expectations for future councils rather than relying on institutional knowledge that might change with leadership.

Councilor Harcar agreed there's nothing to lose by putting it in the rules and found it quite helpful since there's no handbook when starting as a council member. She described the confusion new members face without an HR packet explaining expectations, noting she had to ask questions about appropriate attire for different meeting types.

She also mentioned previous contention around the dress code issue, describing an incident where someone made derogatory comments toward the mayor for not wearing a tie one day with his suit, then went down the council line, thanking only men wearing suits and ties while excluding others not meeting that standard.

Councilor Harcar expressed appreciation for Councilor McCann's comments and Councilor Elmore's initiative, supporting putting dress code expectations in the rules so people know what's expected, rather than relying on unwritten institutional knowledge.

Councilor McCann stated he saw no harm in adding dress code requirements to the rules.

Council President Potter asked if a councilor would write up the dress code addition, noting that something was sent via email that he hadn't received due to technical issues. The discussion clarified that Councilor Elmore had emailed something that day, though Council President Potter and another member had email delivery issues requiring IT assistance.

Councilor Adkins commented that he didn't have an issue with putting dress code requirements in rules, but thought there should be consideration for circumstances. He noted that people on council with 8-to-5 jobs might struggle if special meetings were initially scheduled for 5:00 PM, making it difficult to go to work, go home, change, and return. Even a 5:30 meeting could be challenging for those on the west side of Columbus. He suggested work clothes would be more appropriate than really casual attire for such situations.

Council President Potter agreed that work clothes would be different from really casual attire and left it with Councilor Elmore to make a motion next week for a vote.

ORDINANCE NO. 027-2026

Council President Potter introduced the second reading for Ordinance 027-2026, authorizing and approving amendments to the codified ordinances of the City of Whitehall 161 table of authorized personnel for fiscal year 2026 and declaring an emergency.

Director Russell began by thanking the council for the time to discuss the legislation, acknowledging that it was added to the agenda before reaching committee. She credited Director Wentz with helping draft the ordinance since she's not an HR person.

Director Russell explained that they want to add to their development department team. Currently, her department oversees three different divisions: economic development, building, and zoning (specifically development-related zoning, not code enforcement). With four staff members—herself, Laura as economic development specialist, Don as chief building official, and Rica as permit specialist—they're running out of capacity to handle inquiries and various job nuances.

She detailed that Don currently serves as both chief building official and zoning administrator, roles that are separate in many other municipalities. A planning person or zoning administrator typically specializes in zoning code, reviewing occupancy permits to ensure proposed businesses meet zoning requirements, or reviewing new building setbacks and zoning requirements. Currently, Don handles zoning review alongside his chief building official duties of residential plan review, small commercial plan review, and commercial and residential inspections, making zoning ancillary to his major responsibilities.

Simultaneously, Laura Jones has been an economic development specialist for several years, but spends more time on zoning items and boards and commissions for the BZBA and planning commission rather than economic development activities beyond the Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) annual tax incentive reviews. Her role at the chamber exists, but she lacks the capacity for business community engagement, attending special meetings, meeting site selectors, or prioritizing economic development while managing two monthly board meetings.

Director Russell described their excellent intern, Curtis Nutter, who is minoring in planning as part of his master's program and considering changing to a dual major with a master's in city and regional planning. Curtis desires to be a city planner, making this timing ideal for bringing him on full-time to take over boards and commissions.

Internally, they've been testing this arrangement for 3-4 months since January, allowing Laura to focus on economic development activities like scheduling meetings with prospective developers and visiting businesses to establish helpful relationships. They've seen increased potential project discussions and met with smaller businesses in multi-tenant buildings, with another meeting scheduled. This represents what economic development should be—connecting people to resources for business growth.

Curtis has been managing boards and commissions, writing staff reports, attending and presenting at meetings while Laura trains him. The final phase would involve him taking zoning reviews from Don.

Director Russell emphasized they're not creating the position without testing it, as the arrangement seems to work well, allowing them to divide and conquer while spending more time on economic development and helping people efficiently.

During ordinance review preparation, Director Russell discovered a code section referencing a city planner position that doesn't exist. Code section 151.04(e) under procedure variance states: "The board may forward a copy of the application and plot plan to the city planner for review with the request that the city planner submit a report to recommend approval, modification, or disapproval of the variance and reasons therefore."

She found it interesting that their code references a planner position not listed in the position table. With this position's creation and zoning administrator role removal, multiple code sections will reference this new planner position through zoning code functions.

Councilor Dixon praised Curtis as a great person deserving high praise but questioned his current status as an intern, typically unpaid positions, versus the transition to full-time employment. Director Russell clarified this legislation would add the planner position to the table for a hiring process, hopefully including Curtis pending background checks and other requirements.

Councilor Dixon asked about continued intern positions. Director Russell explained the city could still have an intern since they budgeted money anticipating this transition, with cushion in intern salary for moving Curtis to full-time while maintaining intern program funding through MORPC.

Councilor Dixon inquired about the difference between hiring a city planner while using OHM for city planning studies. Director Russell explained that planning firms provide long-term visionary planning, not daily execution. City planners take long-range plans and zoning codes, layering them together to make city advisements.

Using Main Street redevelopment as an example with bus rapid transit coming, Curtis would take the strategic plan vision, zoning code guidelines, and advise on redevelopment compatibility, building setbacks, curb cuts relative to alleys, and serve as liaison between applicants, developers, city staff, vision, and goals.

Director Russell provided a specific example from the previous night where Curtis presented to the board of zoning and building appeals regarding Casto's Town and Country sign redesign. When they initially submitted plans for re-signing existing 22-foot pole signs, Curtis identified that their code no longer allows that signage type, requiring monument signs instead. Curtis redesigned their signs, sent alternatives, and explained the improvements. Casto representatives publicly praised his partnership and acknowledged his design was better than their original proposal. This exemplifies the planner's role in troubleshooting zoning code and long-term vision implementation.

Councilor Dixon asked about salary differences between Curtis's current intern position and the proposed planner role. Director Russell stated Curtis currently earns \$20 per hour part-time (approximately 30 hours weekly, not working Tuesdays, half days Mondays), while they're requesting \$69,900 for the position—lower than the median salary of \$73,000-\$75,000 for this level position.

Councilor Brown expressed public support for Curtis Nutter, praising his fantastic work. Having a city and regional planning background from Ohio State himself, he found his intern work thoroughly impressive, from facilitating conversations to preparing interactive materials for public review. He noted his extensive collaboration with Director Russell's department and excitement about bringing someone like Curtis full-time after his valuable experience without scaring him away.

Councilor Elmore commented on Curtis's excellent grasp of Whitehall's current situation, needs, and appropriate development fitting their vision and plans.

When Councilor Elmore asked about the \$69,900 salary and budget accommodation, Director Russell explained that the next legislation (number 28) would add the position to the table. They would either front the cost from her account this year or use general fund money, with \$570,000 available. Her preference was general fund funding, though she would use her account if necessary.

Council President Potter confirmed this would need introduction for the April 21st meeting. Councilor Brown agreed to introduce with Councilor Elmore seconding.

ORDINANCE NO. 028-2026

Council President Potter introduced the companion piece, Ordinance 028-2026, which Director Russell had explained includes both the city planner position and payroll clerk changes necessitating the rushed timeline for the payroll clerk hiring. Councilor McCann agreed to introduce, with Councilor Brown seconding.

Administration and Financial Management

Councilor Elmore opened the Administration and Financial Management committee at 8:01 PM. With no drafts or pending legislation and nothing else for the body, she closed the committee at 8:01 PM.

Community and Elder Advocacy

Councilor Harcar thanked Yolanda from The Salvation Army for sharing human trafficking information, expressing her passion for this issue and belief that education enables people to report trafficking they might not otherwise recognize.

She announced hosting a suicide prevention training at the end of April, with signs posted in the hallway, senior center, and VFW. Keeping the group small, this training helps individuals who may contact people feeling suicidal or having suicidal thoughts. Called QPR (like CPR), it provides emergency information for prevention situations.

The training occurs April 30th at the senior center from 5:00-7:00 PM, with the core training lasting about an hour and extra time for additional help, support, or questions. She requested people email her council or work email for RSVP to maintain small group size, offering to repeat the training if needed.

Councilor Harcar mentioned partnering with Franklin County suicide prevention and a recent meeting with someone from the VA working in suicide prevention, though she couldn't obtain his information while driving. She hopes to establish that connection for additional support, especially for veterans who are high-risk.

She noted discussions with Councilor McCann shortly after he joined council about veteran concerns, sharing her own concerns about food access and mental health issues, hoping for future collaborative efforts.

Councilor Harcar described attending the End Violence Against Women International Conference in New Orleans with nearly 2,000 attendees. Despite the location requiring her to experience local cuisine, her goal remains standing with survivors. She trains on trauma-responsive care, human trafficking, and domestic violence, always focusing on survivor support.

She emphasized that regardless of someone's position, accountability is necessary when wrongdoing occurs. While people have asked her to make statements on recent issues, her focus remains working with survivors to ensure they receive needed help, support, and care.

With no other committee business, Councilor Harcar closed Community and Elder Advocacy at 8:06 PM.

Community Standards and Enforcement

Councilor McCann opened Community Standards and Enforcement at 8:06 PM, noting a third reading for Ordinance 022-2026 up for adoption April 21, 2026. Introduced by himself and seconded by Councilor Dixon, this ordinance amends the planning and zoning code to require special permits for detention facility construction or operation.

Director Russell requested to address the committee, explaining she won't attend next week's meeting due to attending her final in-person training for the International Economic Development Professional certification. The training was planned after the legislation introduction, and she needs to complete certification while her knowledge remains fresh. She'll be accessible by phone and available beforehand for questions, with her staff and Director Rowlands prepared for the public hearing.

Councilor McCann closed Community Standards and Enforcement at 8:08 PM.

Economic Development

Councilor Dixon opened Economic Development at 8:08 PM with no drafts or pending legislation on the agenda. He noted Director Russell had an add-on piece of legislation and asked if she wanted to discuss it now.

Director Russell apologized for the resolution arriving late due to feeling unwell yesterday morning. The resolution allows them to apply for a technical assistance grant through MORPC to help create the transportation plan Director Rowlands previously discussed. This grant covers the cost, preparing them for a larger Safe Streets grant.

Curtis drafted this resolution as the main grant application drafter, with an April 24th deadline requiring one reading and adoption for timely submission.

Councilor Dixon expressed concern about spending taxpayer dollars to determine safe routes for walking, biking, and transit use. He questioned whether streets have always existed in Whitehall for such activities, arguing against spending money to designate certain streets as safe versus unsafe, particularly since people should use their judgment about safety regardless of official designations.

Director Russell clarified this is a MORPC grant, not requiring additional Whitehall taxpayer funds beyond existing MORPC dues. The grant provides staffing to help create the plan rather than paying planning firms tens of thousands of dollars. MORPC planners specialize in transportation and sustainability planning.

She explained the active transportation plan's main driver: Whitehall is missing 10 miles of sidewalk. The community was created for automobiles, but administration priorities include providing sidewalks for children and pedestrians without cars or who ride bikes. The plan helps successfully identify priority locations and deploy existing public improvement dollars more effectively.

For larger federal grants and good planning practices, they need to know optimal sidewalk routes, missing gaps, and project prioritization. The active transportation plan helps prioritize unsafe streets without sidewalks for safety improvements.

Director Russell noted their last transportation plan was over 10 years old. They attempted earlier school collaboration since schools are primary components (as the number one reason people don't walk), but weren't successful, making this grant an opportunity for additional resources to begin this important project for schools, businesses, and residents to prioritize correct sidewalk routes.

Councilor Dixon maintained his position about spending taxpayer dollars on something he viewed as unnecessary, arguing that he survived these streets without needing studies to determine safety.

Council President Potter clarified that MORPC receives funds regardless of whether Whitehall gets this grant—the money will go somewhere for projects, and applying doesn't create new taxes or additional citizen burden.

Councilor Harcar responded to the "I survived" argument, comparing it to surviving without car seats or seat belts while acknowledging many people didn't survive. She emphasized preferring tax dollars spent on keeping children safe, noting news reports of children not making it off school buses due to accidents or walking in roads because drivers couldn't see them.

Councilor Harcar stated that surviving dangerous situations in the eighties as "free-roaming children" is not how she raises her child today, emphasizing learning from past experiences. If this money will go somewhere, she prefers it coming to Whitehall for potential child safety improvements as the best tax dollar use.

Councilor Elmore asked if their current dollars already go toward roads and sidewalks for city improvement. Director Russell confirmed they use public improvement dollars for sidewalks and streets, with TIF dollars available for such projects. The plan simply provides better deployment guidance for existing funds.

Councilor McCann shared surviving dangerous bike pedals with shin-hitting spikes from childhood before asking for layman's terms clarification. Director Russell clarified they're applying for a MORPC grant to provide their staff assistance in creating an active transportation plan document, which would fund technical assistance for plan creation.

Councilor McCann agreed this represents a good opportunity to improve the city, make it safer, and help not just children but elderly residents and others benefit from sidewalk placement where currently missing. He noted neighboring cities' recent tragedies with children and school buses, observing children walking in streets due to absent sidewalks. He emphasized that fewer cars on roads from increased walking and biking helps everyone, preferring Whitehall receive tax dollars rather than other locations.

Councilor Elmore described seeing elderly residents on scooters riding in streets after grocery shopping, requiring cars to wait for safe passing opportunities due to missing sidewalks. She viewed this as good use of resources as baby boomer populations increasingly use scooters.

Councilor Adkins acknowledged that some people still walk in streets despite available sidewalks but agreed that improving conditions helps more than current situations.

Councilor Brown thanked Director Russell for explanations and Councilor McCann for good-faith questions that helped others understand. He emphasized council members' responsibility for continued education and making decisions based on facts rather than personal opinions about whether something seems silly.

She noted that if they don't receive this money, someone else will, making it important to understand how these processes work. For fiscal responsibility questions, she suggested asking whether grants fund 100% of studies or require matches from city dollars.

Director Russell agreed to double-check match requirements and send Curtis's informational letter by tomorrow for review before next week's vote.

Councilor Brown emphasized that even with required city contributions, investing in safe, walkable, bikeable cities benefits overall quality of life for Whitehall residents, warranting consideration for fiscal responsibility while discussing such investments.

Councilor Dixon had a second opportunity to speak, clarifying misconceptions about his position. He explained that his "surviving the streets" comment wasn't boastful but addressed legislation implications that without studies, people might not survive these "mean streets."

He expressed concern about the nation's \$37 trillion debt, arguing against the "if we don't take it, someone else will" mentality that could lead to catastrophic national situations. While understanding that others may benefit if Whitehall doesn't pursue grants, he believes someone must address unsustainable spending using taxpayer dollars rather than private donations.

Councilor Dixon emphasized his obligation to examine taxpayer dollar usage carefully, expressing frustration when portrayed as unreasonable for fiscal responsibility concerns. He noted growing up on a street without sidewalks where no one was killed, injured, or maimed over many years, informing his perspective on this spending.

Councilor Brown responded that accepting grants has nothing to do with city debt since grants don't require repayment, distinguishing between fiscal responsibilities (asking about required matches) and making decisions based on feelings rather than facts. He emphasized their responsibility to make informed decisions potentially impacting the community for decades.

Councilor Adkins requested Director Russell provide information tomorrow about whether they pay a percentage.

Councilor Dixon asked for information about funding sources—whether private donations or taxpayer dollars—seeking understanding of money origins.

Director Russell acknowledged Councilor Dixon's perspective from their previous lengthy discussions about grants and national concerns. She noted Whitehall's MORPC membership requiring annual dues, making grants somewhat like receiving money back through programs directly benefiting them. MORPC provides many benefits beyond grants, and she offered to discuss these with unfamiliar councilors.

She viewed this grant as using an internal savings account to fund projects they would otherwise finance independently, though she'd need to research exact dollar amounts and technical assistance grant award processes.

Director Russell noted that while Whitehall hasn't had casualties, they have significant numbers of vehicle-struck pedestrians. Council President Potter corrected this, mentioning a pedestrian fatality at Main Street and Shady Lane corner where no sidewalk exists on Shady Lane.

Director Russell confirmed statistics from Director Rowlands: between 2012 and mid-2023, 202 pedestrians were struck, with 19 pedestrians struck in the past calendar year ending 2025. Their goal involves reducing these numbers as much as possible, whether resulting in casualties, significant injuries, or even non-injury incidents, since being struck by vehicles isn't acceptable for residents.

She emphasized different grant opportunities and programs (not always grants) that can partner to help secure funding and mechanisms. The work behind this and funding acquisition for additional sources and mechanisms remains extremely important.

Councilor Harcar noted that even if 75% of struck pedestrians were intoxicated, significant numbers of people still suffered injuries. She doesn't want Whitehall in news for serious injuries or fatalities, viewing community safety investment as worthwhile.

Councilor McCann encouraged public outreach to councilors about constituent preferences given the short decision window, emphasizing the importance of ward resident input.

Director Russell confirmed providing match percentage information by tomorrow and requesting MORPC funding source breakdown, though uncertain about receiving that information before the vote depending on their response timing.

Councilor Morrison will introduce the technical assistance grant resolution, seconded by Councilor Brown.

Director Russell apologized for not sending a survey Friday due to Survey Monkey payment requirements for her designed question types, necessitating redesign and Tuesday delivery to council emails. She requested responses by next Tuesday, noting questions aren't as in-depth as preferred due to avoiding Survey Monkey costs. She encouraged additional formal responses via email for thoughts and feelings beyond survey responses.

Councilor Dixon thanked Director Russell for her considerate professional response and closed Economic Development at 8:36 PM.

Infrastructure Maintenance and Services

Councilor Brown opened Infrastructure Maintenance and Services at 8:36 PM with no current drafts or pending legislation and no committee business, closing at 8:36 PM.

Public Safety

Councilor Morrison opened Public Safety at 8:36 PM with no drafts or pending legislation and no committee business, closing at 8:36 PM.

Parks and Recreation

Councilor Adkins opened Parks and Recreation at 8:36 PM with no drafts or pending legislation. He noted numerous activities at Parks and Recreation available on the website, including candle making for Mother's Day, baseball opening day, Arbor Day, Healthy Kids Day, and Live Birds at the park, encouraging attendance for interested activities.

Councilor Dixon shared observations about Whitehall Community Park gates leading to lower levels with posted time restrictions, suggesting using "open from such time till dusk" rather than specific times requiring constant changes. He noted other locations using this approach for easier maintenance.

Councilor Brown mentioned previous posting about closure times with rangers locking gates, uncertain about recent changes but agreeing to investigate.

Councilor Brown promoted Parks and Recreation Commission meetings every third Wednesday at 6:00 PM in council chambers, encouraging public attendance and noting his regular participation.

Councilor Adkins noted bulk trash collection tomorrow, reminding everyone of the four-times-yearly service. Councilor Dixon clarified that bulk trash doesn't include regular trash bags outside cans, though discussion revealed bulk pickup does accept anything dragged out, including wrapped mattresses and additional trash bags beyond regular weekly limits.

With no additional business, Councilor Adkins closed Parks and Recreation at 8:38 PM.

Council President Potter adjourned the meeting at 8:39 PM.

Submitted by:

Julie A. Ogg, Clerk of Council

APPROVED: May 6, 2026

Thomas M. Potter, Council President

Whitehall City Council Meeting April 21, 2026 Meeting minutes

President Potter ordered the Tuesday, April 21, 2026, agenda meeting at 6:30 p.m. All members were present except for Councilor Brown.

President Potter reviewed the agenda and confirmed who would handle the required motions this evening.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Submitted by,

Julie A. Ogg, Clerk of Council

APPROVED: May 6, 2026

Thomas M. Potter, Council President

Whitehall City Council Meeting

April 21, 2026 Meeting minutes

Call to Order

President Potter called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, in the Council Chamber at City Hall. He began with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Clerk Ogg conducted the roll call, with the following councilmembers present: Councilors Dixon, Elmore, Morrison, Harcar, Adkins, and McCann. President Potter was also present.

President Potter requested a motion to excuse the absent member. Councilor Elmore made the motion, which was seconded by Councilor McCann. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting yes.

Approval of Minutes

President Potter called for a motion to approve the April 13, 2026 special meeting minutes. Councilor Dixon made the motion to accept the minutes, which was seconded by Councilor Adkins. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting yes.

Standing Committee Reports

Administration and Financial Management – Chairperson Elmore

Councilor Elmore reported that Administration and Financial Management met last Tuesday. Their minutes are on file, and they have several pieces of legislation this evening. The committee will meet next Tuesday again at 6:30.

Community and Elder Advocacy – Chairperson Harcar

Councilor Harcar reported that Community and Elder Advocacy met last week with minutes on file. They have no drafts or pending legislation this evening and will meet again next week sometime after 6:30.

Community Standards and Enforcement – Chairperson McCann

Councilor McCann reported that Community Standards and Enforcement met last Tuesday with minutes on file. They have a piece of legislation this evening and will meet again next Tuesday at 6:30.

Economic Development – Chairperson Dixon

Councilor Dixon reported that Economic Development met last week with minutes on file. They have no pieces of legislation on the agenda tonight and will meet in these chambers next week after 6:30.

Infrastructure, Maintenance, And Services – Chairperson Brown

In Chairperson Brown's absence, Councilor Dixon filled in for the report. He stated that Infrastructure, Maintenance, and Services met last week with minutes on file. There are no pieces of legislation on the agenda for this evening, and they intend to meet next week after 6:30.

Public Safety – Chairperson Morrison

Councilor Morrison reported that Public Safety met last week with minutes on file. They will meet again next Tuesday, sometime after 6:30.

Parks and Recreation – Chairperson Adkins

Councilor Adkins reported that Parks and Recreation met last Tuesday with minutes on file. They will meet again sometime after 6:30 next Tuesday.

Officials' Reports

Mayor Michael T. Bivens

Mayor Bivens began his report by thanking the public safety department, both the police and the fire department. He shared that he had the opportunity to spend full days with both departments the previous week alongside Director Wright. The mayor highlighted meeting three brand-new recruits about to go through the Westerville Police Academy, with four recruits in total and three others currently at the State Highway Patrol Academy. He expressed excitement about adding seven recruits to the Whitehall Police Department.

Mayor Bivens mentioned putting out a recruiting video for the police department, noting they are still trying to reach full force. While acknowledging he didn't contribute to the video production, he liked to take some credit for its quality and their active recruiting efforts.

Regarding the fire department, Mayor Bivens praised the "just fantastic EMT and firemen" and spent a day with them discussing recruiting. He made a specific public call for a female firefighter, stating, "Our Whitehall Fire Department needs a female firefighter. We're due." He expressed confidence that there would be a female candidate who meets the test requirements to join their "fighting 151st."

The mayor reported that the Department of Neighborhoods is "gaining traction" and going out into the community to develop and build bridges. He announced a new program building on the existing "see something, say something" initiative, which has infrastructure, roads, and zoning components. The expanded program will utilize bicycles currently sitting at the police department, which will be outfitted with baskets and identified as the Department of Neighborhoods vehicles. The mayor explained they will "invite the community to come out with us on bicycles so that if you see something, say something, but on a neighborhood basis."

Mayor Bivens specifically addressed council members, stating he would need their help rolling out the program from ward and at-large perspectives to identify community members who could participate in bicycle rides throughout the city. He emphasized their goal of making the city "more walkable, more bicycle friendly," explaining that "getting out in the neighborhoods on a bike is probably one of the best ways to see the neighborhood differently so that we can say things to improve it."

The mayor acknowledged Mr. Long's presence and publicly thanked him for their collaborative work on bringing Whitehall's first Founders Day in the fall. He emphasized this would be unprecedented in the city's history, working with the historical society to create "a real designated Founders Day to the city of Whitehall with all of the bells and whistles." The event would cover the city's history from its beginnings through the industrial age, World War I to World War II, and include music and festivities. Most importantly, Mayor Bivens stated, "we're going to have information about who we are as Whitehall, where we've come from, where we are now, and where we're going."

Finally, Mayor Bivens teased the upcoming food truck festival, announcing they would soon reveal the headliner. He explained the delay in the announcement, saying they were waiting for the headliner to provide a video message saying, "Hey, Whitehall, I'm coming." He expressed anticipation for making "a big deal of it" once the video was ready.

City Auditor Shaquille Alexander

City Auditor Alexander delivered a comprehensive financial report, noting he had provided council with "a very dense packet of about 7 pages" along with a more readable summary page. He acknowledged that some council members "don't like to read" and offered to make the long form available to the public upon request.

Auditor Alexander highlighted key financial metrics: the city's total portfolio as of March 31st was approximately \$30 million, with investment revenue well above pace at just over \$215,000. He reported that debt is properly managed, and cash on hand at the end of March was \$4.4 million, though he clarified this was "an accounting metric" that was actually higher due to encumbrances not included in that figure. Adding the budget stabilization fund of \$1.54 million brought the total to roughly \$5.9-6 million.

The auditor shared a quote from Finnish President Alexander Stubb's book that resonated with him: "In today's political economy, globally, facts are contested like subjective opinions, and truth is dismissed as a matter of choice." He expressed concern about receiving questions that "don't even make sense" to him as a finance professional, some of which he knew to be "completely off base." He encouraged anyone with financial questions to come directly to him rather than relying on secondhand information or social media, stating he gets "very excited" about discussing city finances and is "readily available."

He concluded by requesting favorable consideration of Ordinance 033-2026 and Resolution 015-2026.

City Attorney Bradley S. Nicodemus

City Attorney Nicodemus was not present at the meeting.

Treasurer Trevel Balser

Treasurer Balser was not present at the meeting.

Director of Public Service Casey Rowlands

Director Rowlands reported that Broad Street Phase 3 is nearly complete and "very smooth" and "beautiful," with only line striping remaining. She hoped to have the lines and striping completed by the end of the week, after which contractors would return for dirt replacement and seeding on the sides.

Regarding Yearling Road, Director Rowlands reported that progress is "trucking along" with contractors finishing tines on hydrants and waterline. She indicated they would begin milling (removing the first layer of pavement) in the coming weeks, which would eliminate some potholes before the final pavement layer. The project remains on track for August 1st completion.

Director Rowlands provided an update on the "see something, say something" program, reporting approximately 30 submissions so far, with the city having "complied and fixed all 30 of them." She noted the QR code remains available in the lobby, on Facebook, and on the website.

Councilor Morrison asked about the Broad and Hamilton intersection, where the traffic pattern had changed from two lanes going forward to one going right, one going straight, and two going left. He expressed concern that after "decades and decades" of the previous configuration, it would take residents time to adjust.

Director Rowlands acknowledged the confusion, explaining that the main issue was the signals themselves being confusing when drivers get into lanes without realizing the change. She confirmed there would be two arrows for the two left-turning lanes and reported being in close contact with ODOT representative Heath, who had been "very helpful." She noted ODOT had added extra striping, arrow boards, and signage over the previous weeks, doing "everything that they can at this point except for the signals." The signals would come later, and Rowlands requested patience from drivers while asking them to "be aware" and "realize that the traffic pattern is changing."

Director of Economic Development Jackie Russell

Director Russell was not present at the meeting.

Director of Public Safety Van Gregg

Director Gregg was not present at the meeting.

Director of Neighborhoods Gerald Wright

Director Wright was not present at the meeting.

President Thomas M. Potter

No officials' reports have been filed in the Council office since the last meeting.

Communications, Petitions, and Claims

President Potter reported that no communications, petitions, or claims had been filed with the council office since the last meeting.

Public Hearing

President Potter opened the public hearing on Ordinance 022-2026 at 7:15 PM. The ordinance addresses amending the Planning and Zoning Code to require special permits for the construction or operation of detention facilities.

Mr. Nutter approached the microphone, with President Potter asking him to position it closer due to audience complaints about audio quality.

Mr. Nutter explained that Ordinance 022-2026 proposes legislation to require a special use permit for the development and operation of detention facilities in all zoning districts. He detailed the special use permit process: application to the city hall, staff review and report preparation, assistance to applicants in meeting procedures, and then review by the Whitehall Planning Commission for recommendation. He noted the Planning Commission provided a unanimous recommendation across all seven members, including Director Rowlands, before the matter came to the city council.

Mr. Nutter explained that the legislative process and special use permit process are "very, very similar." He provided a comprehensive definition of detention facilities, noting it was drafted by Attorney Nicodemus based on modified language from the Ohio Revised Code, describing "any place used for the confinement of a person arrested for an ongoing offense" with comprehensive coverage of various confinement scenarios.

The presentation included two main components: first, defining detention facilities and separating them from other government-owned and operated buildings and facilities; second, implementing the special use permit process. Mr. Nutter explained it would be "abnormal to have a max security prison right next to a bookstore" and that it's "typically not best planning practice." He noted that in some districts, the current code doesn't allow proper regulation or ensure space is used to its greatest potential.

Using a visual presentation, Nutter showed the current use table where detention facilities fall under "governmentally owned and operated building and facility," permitted by special use permit in single and two-unit residential districts and by right in every other zoning district. He pointed out that under current rules, "a new private prison could be built in any of the multi-use residential districts," meaning "English Village could be turned into a new detention facility," which doesn't reflect the 2019 plan for the city.

The proposed change would require special use permits in every district, ensuring new developments "fit the character of Whitehall and fit your plan for the future." Mr. Nutter compared this to how drive-throughs are regulated, calling it "a very comparable way to make sure that we are putting our best foot forward with new developments in the city."

Mr. Nutter summarized the proposal as "a narrowly tailored decision, definition, classification, very standard 2-step policy" to ensure the city has more impact in achieving its vision for the community's future. He emphasized that the special permit process is "supportive of any new developments, but in the right circumstance."

Staff recommended favorable consideration of the ordinance, and he offered to take questions.

Councilor McCann asked how many adjacent communities are moving forward with similar plans. Mr. Nutter responded that he wasn't aware of other suburban communities, noting many have different classifications altogether. He explained that creating the new detention facility definition is within planning best practice, and regarding special use permits, "it really depends on your community." He provided an example from Wood County, Ohio, where Bowling Green has their county jail outside city limits with specific zoning district provisions. Given Whitehall's 5.28 square miles, He felt it didn't make sense to include that in the future plan, but rather to have this process to reflect future needs.

An audience member asked about rumors regarding planning a detention center where the old Big Bear used to be. Mr. Nutter clarified that from everything coming through the building department, there are no upcoming projects related to any type of detention facility. He emphasized this is "a step to make sure that our practices are within best practice."

An audience member asked whether the proposed detention center would be for Whitehall's use or extended to the county. Mr. Nutter explained they regulate the use, not the user, noting that zoning typically cannot regulate who lives in or operates a space because that would be "very prejudicial." He compared it to tobacco licenses, where they have rules about distance between establishments but cannot regulate who operates them.

When pressed about the general purpose of detention centers, Mr. Nutter read the full definition: "Any place used for the confinement of a person arrested for, charged with, or convicted of an offense or charged with being, or adjudicated to a juvenile offender, or held to extradition, or as a material witness, or as otherwise confined pursuant to an order of a court in any work release, furlough, or other such facility or program."

An audience member asked about the English Village reference. Mr. Nutter explained that English Village is in the multiunit residential zoning district, one of two residential districts in Whitehall. While English Village is zoned to allow four units per building, they don't currently have them. Under current regulations, a facility could come to Whitehall by simply visiting the building department and pulling a zoning permit, whereas the new process would require going through the building department, planning commission, and city council.

An audience member expressed concern about community attractiveness, questioning what would make people want to live in Whitehall with multiple halfway houses and potentially a detention center. Mr. Nutter explained the reason it's not a flat-out ban because the city has holding cells in the police station, so they need to ensure that if the police station becomes old and renovation doesn't make sense, they can move elsewhere in the city through the proper process.

Councilor Morrison commented that there's been controversy throughout the country with detention centers that ICE has been placing in locations residents didn't appreciate, and this is "a preventative measure so that the city has control if they do wish to put a facility here." Mr. Nutter agreed, noting it's about location control.

Councilman Dixon sought clarification that they don't have the right to tell an entity they cannot come to Whitehall as long as they're doing something legal, and this makes it "more difficult" for them to do so. President Potter clarified it's not structured to make it more difficult, but "structured so the city has more control."

President Potter emphasized that this is preventative, adding another step in the process to "narrow the field and to have more control" because, currently, a facility could just come in without notice. He noted it would go to two more bodies - planning commission and city council - giving "double input" with public meetings at both levels, providing "a lot more control for everybody involved in the process."

President Potter asked if there were any proponents or opponents wishing to speak, and if any correspondence had been sent to the council office regarding the ordinance. Clerk Ogg confirmed there was none.

President Potter closed the public hearing on Ordinance 022-2026 at 7:35 PM.

Poll Public

President Potter opened the first poll public session, asking speakers to sign in and state their name and city, with a three-minute time limit.

Tatiana Bozhinovski from Reynoldsburg, who works in Whitehall, addressed the council. She shared that she lived in Whitehall from 1992 to 2006 and currently spends more time in Whitehall than at home due to work. She expressed admiration for recent developments and the city's direction, noting that she and her husband are considering moving back. She described herself as "a proud immigrant from Macedonia" and mentioned several Macedonian-owned businesses in Whitehall, including Sunrise Market, Whitehall Cleaners (now called La Vendoria), and Jumbo Subs. She recounted arriving in 1988 at age 16 with her parents, not speaking English, and facing discrimination when a teacher told her to "go back to my country where I came from." This experience motivated her to work with immigrant and refugee families, spending 16 years with Columbus City Schools' ESL department before discovering the nonprofit world. She praised Amy Harcar, stating she has "met many, many people who like to help people, individuals, but Amy is one of a kind. I have only met very, very few like her." She emphasized that Amy Harcar would help "any individual anywhere" and concluded that "Your city needs Amy Harcar. Your city needs more people like her. Our entire country needs more people like Amy."

Diane Peters from Whitehall addressed the council, sharing her experience attending a Rosemore girls' softball game at Councilor McCann's invitation. She sat with two women who had lived in Whitehall their entire lives, whose parents lived there, and whose children attended the same schools they did. She related to their feelings, having lived 45 years on the east side near Franklin Park in a close-knit neighborhood where residents knew each other, watched each other's children, and shared meals. She described how gentrification changed her former neighborhood: "People saw the houses, but not the homes that we had built. The neighborhood grew distant, families left, and something meaningful was lost." While understanding "the fear of losing that hometown feeling," she argued that "our mayor and the councilors facing recall did not cause that loss here in Whitehall." She stated that the mayor and councilwomen are "working to build a community by making sure all residents have an opportunity to thrive" and have "welcomed new neighbors." She expressed her preference to "live next to someone who wants to be here and cares about their home, rather than someone who doesn't give a darn about the home or our community." She attributed the current division to outside influences and personal vendettas, referencing a recent council meeting where someone expressed, "This is what they did to me, so I'm going to do it to them." She called this "not leadership" and "not building community," but rather "turning neighbors against each other and using this council as a weapon." She concluded by expressing belief that Mayor Michael Bivens is "moving the city forward, keeping us safe and financially strong," and that Councilors Elmore and Harcar are "supporting all residents, especially those that are most vulnerable." She thanked Councilor McCann "for reminding me what community really looks like."

President Potter noted there would be another poll public session later for additional comments on the same subject.

Verification of Copies

Clerk Ogg conducted roll call to verify each council member received copies of all agenda legislation prior to the meeting, including any add-on legislation. All members confirmed they had received copies.

Third Reading: Ordinance No. 022-2026

Councilor McCann introduced and moved to adopt Ordinance No. 022-2026, that will amend the planning and zoning code to require a special permit for the construction or operation of detention facilities. Councilor Dixon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Second Reading: Ordinance No. 027-2026

Councilor Elmore introduced Ordinance No. 027-2026 and moved for suspension of all rules, with Councilor Morrison providing the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Elmore then moved to adopt the ordinance, with Councilor Morrison seconding.

Councilor McCann expressed being "on the fence" about the ordinance. He questioned why it was in the budget at the beginning of the year but never moved forward then, asking, "Why now, after the budget was already voted on?"

Director Rowlands responded that it was appropriated in the budget but removed to ensure funding for other things. Since they had satisfied funding for those other items, they now had the funding to move forward with this position.

The motion failed with Councilor Dixon, Councilor Morrison, Councilor Adkins, and Councilor McCann voting no; Councilor Elmore and Councilor Harcar voting yes.

Second Reading: Ordinance No. 028-2026

Councilor McCann moved to introduce Ordinance No. 028-2026 and suspend all rules. Councilor Morrison seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilor McCann moved to adopt Ordinance No. 028-2026. Councilor Morrison seconded. The motion failed with Councilor Dixon, Councilor Morrison, Councilor Adkins, and Councilor McCann voting no; Councilor Elmore and Councilor Harcar voting yes.

First Reading: Ordinance No. 033-2026

Councilor Elmore moved to introduce Ordinance No. 033-2026 and suspend all rules. Councilor Morrison seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

City Auditor Alexander provided context for the ordinance, explaining that HR Director Tracy Wentz had reached out about HR having two separate training accounts - one for all city employees and one for HR employees themselves. Somehow, during budget passage, only the account for all city employees got funded, while Tracy and Lesley's account did not. He noted they likely have conferences and licensing certifications to complete and believed this was consistent with prior years and the citywide training account. He requested favorable consideration, emphasizing he didn't want council voting without context and that "this needs to happen."

Councilor Elmore moved to adopt Ordinance No. 033-2026. Councilor Morrison seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 015-2026

Councilor Morrison moved to introduce Resolution No. 015-2026 and suspend all rules. Councilor Elmore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Dixon expressed his concerns about taxes and debt, clarifying he had received information about various entities that fund MORPC, including federal and state funds. He stated he wasn't necessarily against such measures but wanted to bring awareness to the country's debt problem and what they're doing to future generations. He emphasized his concern wasn't for himself since he wouldn't be alive to see the problems, and he doesn't have children, but others do have children and grandchildren who "are the ones that are going to suffer from this mountain of debt."

Councilor Elmore noted that Director Russell had sent information about the technical assistance grant funding background on April 15th, including what MORPC is, technical assistance grant history, local funding sources, and conclusions. She argued that being a MORPC member has benefits, comparing it to Planet Fitness membership benefits. She stated that not receiving this grant money is a "misrepresentation of what this issue is really about."

Councilor Elmore explained that MORPC (Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission) provides a framework for how they look at Franklin County and what they're allowed for in block grants. She emphasized that if they're allowed a grant to help examine different ways the city would benefit in walkways and connectivity, "those are the things that we take advantage of."

President Potter added that if they don't take this grant, the money won't be released or go unspent - it will go somewhere else. He noted that sister communities like Reynoldsburg and Gahanna would thank them for opting out because it increases their chances of being awarded the money. He emphasized that not voting for this wouldn't alleviate debt, as it's a much larger global issue requiring statewide or federal initiative. Whitehall not taking this opportunity would have "zero impact" on the broader debt issue.

Councilor Harcar questioned why they wouldn't move forward when residents have expressed concerns about roadways, sidewalks, and safety. She stated, "If we're going to use tax dollars wisely, investment in keeping our residents safe and making sure that we have safe sidewalks for them... I just don't know why we would turn away money for public safety."

President Potter confirmed the explanation that it's a \$100,000 grant that MORPC would handle themselves or hire contractors to complete over a 7-to-9-month process with no local match required.

City Auditor Alexander, speaking as the city's chief financial officer, stated that any money available to spend that doesn't come from their own pockets is positive. While acknowledging Councilor Dixon's federal debt concerns as valid, he noted they wouldn't solve that problem "in the city council chambers for the city of Whitehall." He argued this \$100,000 could free up funds for other uses and help alleviate their debt burden, making acceptance responsible stewardship.

Auditor Alexander shared his personal perspective as a world traveler who has visited walkable, connected cities like London and Tokyo. He expressed frustration that despite living down the street from Roosters, he would never walk there because it's "an abysmal pedestrian experience, and also it's not safe." He supported anything that could make areas "more connected, more walkable, safer, and have a better pedestrian experience for adults like me, for our kids... and some of you may have grandkids."

Councilman Dixon thanked City Auditor Alexander for his "gracious and civil response," noting what he said "has merit" even if people don't want to hear it. He emphasized his concerns are "well founded and concerning and caring about everyone's children and grandchildren, not mine" since he has no children who will see this problem come to fruition.

Councilor Dixon expressed frustration that his "decent points about trying to be decent up here" always turn into "Dixon, you're terrible" and stated this is what he consistently experiences. Despite his concerns, he indicated he would vote yes because "it doesn't bother me so much," but wanted to make the point that "debt debt debt is not okay. At some point, we've got to wrestle it. Some point, we've got

to do something about it. For our children's sake and for the grandchildren's sake and the future generations."

Councilor Morrison moved to adopt Resolution No. 015-2026. Councilor Elmore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Poll Public (Second)

President Potter opened the second poll public session with the same three-minute format.

Marie Long from Whitehall addressed the council, sharing experiences from recent community events. She recounted being at Lamby Lane Park during a city event where the mayor was present, and at a recent council meeting where three people approached her with concerning stories.

Ms. Long described meeting a woman who lives close to Wolf Park, whose grandchildren love visiting because she lives around the corner. However, on Easter Sunday, "she could not let her kids, her grandkids come to the park because of all the hate that's happening right now."

Another person with five children told Ms. Long, "His children were not allowed either as he was not comfortable about letting his kids come to the parks." At Lamby Lane, a third person mentioned her children love going to that park, but "they are not comfortable" letting their kids come. She emphasized she had informed the mayor and the Department of Neighborhoods about these concerns. She stressed that "these families have always" brought their children to their grandmother's houses and parks, but now "they cannot let their kids come. And that is sad, guys. That is very, very sad." She praised the city's parks as "beautiful" and "wonderful," recalling when her children were little and could go to parks during a different time when she "didn't have to be right with them." She concluded by noting that "hate is really taking over a lot of things right now" and she had heard similar concerns from "3 different people in 1 week and it's scary."

Community Date Board

Councilor Harcar announced that the Arbor Day celebration will take place May 24th at John Bishop Park from 3:00 to 4:00 PM at the playground area, where they'll be building little fairy doors to decorate and other fun activities.

Councilor Adkins mentioned mulch available for purchase from the schools, noting tomorrow was the deadline for orders. He described it as "black mulch, the finely shredded mulch" and emphasized it's "a very good cause" supporting school awards, though he noted Miss Lesley wasn't present to distribute flyers as usual.

City Auditor Alexander shared two community-related items. First, he highlighted Andre Jackson, a 2014 Whitehall graduate who interned in Steven Quincel's office and ran track as a freshman at a smaller Illinois school. Jackson now attends the University of Tennessee and recently set a school record as the "seventh fastest 400-meter dash all time at the University of Tennessee, 45.68 seconds." Auditor Alexander expressed pride in someone who "grew up in Whitehall" and was "a state qualifier for Whitehall City Schools track and field" who's now "representing us well."

Auditor Alexander also praised other local athletes, including Cameron Barker, "a student athlete, All-state athlete I had the pleasure of playing with, who's now a head coach of the football team," and Dassai Jefferson, "coaching on the track team, who was a league champion in 3 sports, 1 season, 2, for 1 year."

Regarding the failed ordinance affecting his office, Auditor Alexander clarified that the position he budgeted for was originally an executive assistant, but he told his team he wasn't worried about emails or calendar management - he wanted to put them "in a position to succeed." He explained that payroll administrator Karina Large "has been running payroll for the entire city for the better part of 2 and a half, 3 years by herself" and "needs support." The money was already allocated; they just changed the

title and job description. He expressed confusion about the additional step and indicated they would return to address the issue.

Auditor Alexander also celebrated the University of Michigan's recent success, noting it coincided with his birthday.

Poll Council

Councilor Dixon

Councilor Dixon thanked Mr. Nutter for his presentation, praising his "tenacity and acumen." He thanked the evening's speakers – Ms. Bozhinovski, Ms. Peters, and Ms. Long.

Addressing Miss Long's comments about hate, Councilor Dixon shared his personal experience: "You haven't lived until cars have come by your house and yelled faggot at you." He revealed this occurred "within the last month or so" in Whitehall, the city of his birth. He recounted being "beaten in the streets in New York for being gay" and expressed his understanding of hate while emphasizing his opposition to it.

Councilor Dixon offered condolences to the Kelly family on the loss of Nancy, whom he described as "the matriarch" at 93 or 94 years old, who had come to council chambers regarding the Fairway Cliff situation. He praised the Kellys as "great philanthropic help in this community" and "great neighbors, community members, great civic members, and "stating that "this city owes them a debt of gratitude."

Councilor Elmore

Councilor Elmore thanked audience members who remained in chambers, those watching, and poll public participants. She announced a meet and greet on Thursday, April 23rd, from 4:30 to 6:00 PM at 4237 East Broad Street.

Councilor Elmore congratulated Whitehall Yearling High School for earning the Momentum Award from the state of Ohio, "recognizing improvement in student performance and continued strong academic growth."

Councilor Elmore addressed what she called "theatrics and dramatization of comments," stating they are "unwanted." She defined misrepresentation as "making inaccurate or misleading accounts of facts, situations of somebody's words, typically to deceive or gain an advantage," clarifying that correcting misrepresentation "is not bashing" but rather their responsibility. She also offered condolences to Nancy's family.

Councilor Morrison

Councilor Morrison thanked everyone who attended and provided comments. He mentioned Saturday's celebration of life for Bob Ochsendorf, "a member of Whitehall VFW," noting the venue was packed with a full parking lot, describing it as "a great celebration."

Councilor Harcar

Councilor Harcar began by addressing "a really horrific week nationally for advocates, for survivors," referencing "2 very high-profile domestic violence cases that have resulted in substantial loss of life, including 8 children." She emphasized that "leaving is the most dangerous time for a survivor" and should be done "whenever possible with some help, some support, and an advocate."

Councilor Harcar shared the local hotline number: 614-224-4663, which spells "HOME," noting it's a local hotline where people can talk without committing to services and can call back or never call again. For non-local residents, she recommended the Ohio Domestic Violence Network or National Domestic Violence Network. She connected this to the hate comments discussed, expressing "similar concerns, quite honestly, having a child and being a little concerned about where they're out and about these days." She shared feeling "uncomfortable just going out and about for a walk because of some incidents" in recent weeks, though she noted "nothing major" and "everything is okay."

Councilor Harcar stated, "There is no excuse" for the homophobic bigotry Councilor Dixon experienced or for "racist attacks" that unfortunately continue. She emphasized it's unfair for anyone to face hate "because of the color of their skin, because of their accent, because of whether they cover or not, or their skin is black or brown, and maybe you don't realize that they are from here." She called for condemning such behavior and not standing by those who express racist views.

Councilor Harcar thanked the Whitehall Fire Department for the second time in three months for responding when she found "an elderly person on the street that was literally bleeding and needed help," noting they responded immediately after her 911 call. Finally, she congratulated students for the play "Clue," mentioning she "did solve the mystery" and calling it "a fantastic play."

Councilor Adkins

Councilor Adkins agreed with everything said and praised City Auditor Alexander for his detailed explanations. He thanked the audience, noting "a lot of your words are coming out now because there is a lot of hate going on right now" and attributing it to "the social media thing." He expressed hope that people would hear the speakers' messages and was committed to "try to do a better job."

Councilor McCann

Councilor McCann thanked everyone for their presentations and information, noting they were delivered "in kind of a very polite and professional manner." He made special thanks to Ms. Peters and Jimmy (whose last name he didn't know) for supporting the Rosemore girls' softball team, promising to see them at games and confirming they would have bubble gum available.

President Potter

President Potter thanked the administration for their reports, specifically mentioning City Auditor Alexander, Mayor Bivens, and Director Rowlands for providing "good information, positive on all fronts." He congratulated the high school for state recognition, noting "they are doing great things down there and it just gets better and better."

Adjourn

President Potter, noting no additional comments or business from the council, adjourned the meeting at 8:18 PM.

Submitted by,

Julie A. Ogg, Clerk of Council

APPROVED: May 6, 2026

Thomas M. Potter, Council President

City of Whitehall

City Council Committee Meeting

April 28, 2026 minutes

President Potter called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

Present at the meeting were the following:

Councilor Lori Elmore, Councilor Amy Harcar, Councilor Brian McCann, Councilor Gerald Dixon, Councilor Larry Morrison, Councilor Mike Adkins, and President Thomas Potter.

City Attorney Brad Nicodemus and Economic Development Director Jackie Russell.

6:31 P.M. – Administration/Council of the Whole Matters

President Potter reminded all members of Council and the public in attendance—as well as those watching from home—that the following Tuesday's regular meeting would not be held due to Election Day. He announced that Council would instead convene on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, and asked everyone to mark their calendars accordingly so as to avoid confusion.

President Potter then noted that there were three pieces of draft legislation on the agenda.

Committee of the Whole Legislation/Issues

Draft #1 — Ordinance No. 035-2026

Authorizing and Approving an Amendment to the Codified Ordinances of the City of Whitehall 161 Table of Authorized Personnel for the Fiscal Year 2026 and Declaring an Emergency.

President Potter introduced the item and noted that it had been requested by Director of Development Jackie Russell. He invited Director Russell to open the floor for discussion. Director Russell indicated she wished to address Ordinance No. 035-2026 and Ordinance No. 036-2026 together, and Council President Potter agreed to allow that approach.

Director Russell began by acknowledging that the legislation had been voted upon at the prior meeting during her absence, and that outstanding questions and concerns had not been fully addressed at that time. She stated that she had subsequently emailed a job description for the proposed City Planner position to all Council members, noting that work on that description had begun in February. She apologized for not including it in the original legislative package and explained that she was still learning the processes of the office. Her preference for the evening was to open the floor to full dialogue—questions, comments, and concerns—rather than to deliver a formal presentation, and she invited Council to do so.

Discussion on the City Planner Position

Councilor Harcar noted that she had not heard requests for the job description until she received Director Russell's email, and she asked whether the absence of the job description was the primary reason for the prior "no" vote, or whether Council members had not fully understood what they were voting on. Director Russell confirmed that Director Rowlands had reached out to Council members following the vote to ask what additional information would have helped, and that the consistent response was the absence of a job description—members had felt they could not evaluate a new position without it.

Councilor Morrison raised a pointed concern regarding the timeline and process. He questioned why the legislation had been brought forward on a first reading as an emergency, given that the

administration had been aware of the position since at least early in the year, and the HR description had been drafted back in February. He expressed that it was "personally irritating" and "disrespectful" to the Council to have items presented at the last minute when months of preparation had taken place. He stated, "It just doesn't make sense to me to wait until the last minute to present this to the council when your administration's been aware of it for months." He also asked where the pay scale for a brand-new entry-level position had been established, expressing the view that the proposed starting salary was high given the candidate's experience.

City Attorney Brad Nicodemus interjected to address the procedural question of why the item came forward on a first-reading emergency. He explained that the legislation also included a pay and title change for an auditor's office position where the person was already performing the role, and that matter needed to be resolved quickly. Because Human Resources historically bundles employment-related changes onto a single piece of legislation, the City Planner position was included on the same bill and subject to the same accelerated schedule. He stated that this was how the City Planner position ended up on a first reading.

Councilor Morrison acknowledged that he had personally overlooked the auditor's position when the original legislation was reviewed, and that the two items could have been separated by a line-item vote. He stated that Clerk Ogg had confirmed to him she would highlight such distinctions going forward.

Director Russell confirmed that she had originally requested three readings for the legislation. She reiterated her general practice of reserving emergency designations for circumstances involving financial agreements or contractual obligations where a 30-day referendum window would create operational difficulties—such as the example of the OHM agreement. She apologized for the bundling and acknowledged Councilor Morrison's frustration as legitimate, stating: "I can certainly appreciate your frustration."

On the matter of the pay scale, Director Russell explained that the salary of \$69,900 was derived from MORPC (Municipal Organization Resource Salary Analysis) data, which showed the average salary for a planner position across comparable communities to be approximately \$73,000. Because the proposed position was an entry-level role, the administration made the deliberate decision to come in below that average by a few thousand dollars. She emphasized that "planner" is typically the first step in a planning career, and that the city was trying to be both competitive and fiscally mindful.

Councilor Morrison stated he still found the figure on the high side. Councilor Elmore noted simply that "salaries are high these days."

Councilor Adkins raised the question of why the position had not been included in the budget during the November–December process. Director Russell provided a detailed explanation. She noted that her department is primarily funded through end-of-month transfers rather than the general fund, and that during budget season, Mayor Bivens had made a priority of fiscal conservatism to ensure a healthy carryover reserve. As a result, Director Russell had voluntarily removed the City Planner from her wish list so that the budget could reach a conservative baseline. The understanding was that if the general fund remained in a healthy position through the first months of the year, the position could be funded at a later point. Director Russell stated that after four months, the budget was in a strong position—the reserve was equal to or greater than where it had started—making this a fiscally appropriate moment to move forward. She also noted that the prior year's general fund expenditure had included a one-time community strategic plan at a cost of \$110,000–\$120,000, and that in subsequent years the City Planner position would effectively replace that recurring ask.

Councilor Adkins asked whether the position would be publicly advertised. Director Russell confirmed it would be posted, advertised, and filled through a competitive interview process. She acknowledged that the current intern—having been trained within the city's systems—was a natural top-of-mind candidate, but emphasized that he would still need to compete for the position through the standard hiring process.

Discussion on Code Enforcement

Councilor Morrison shifted the discussion to the long-standing need for additional code enforcement resources, expressing that he was concerned the City Planner position was being prioritized over a department that had been "under-serviced" for over a decade. He stated that he regularly received constituent calls about code enforcement violations, that Code Enforcement Officer Walt Sural faced an unmanageable workload, and that the community had become increasingly frustrated.

Councilor Elmore clarified that economic development and public services are two separate departments and that the needs of each should be addressed independently. She noted that Director of Public Service Rowlands had the same prerogative as Director Russell to bring forward a staffing request, and that it would not be appropriate to "hold hostage one position over another." She added that Director Rowlands had, in fact, indicated at the prior meeting her intention to bring a code enforcement position forward at the next committee meeting.

President Potter confirmed this understanding, noting that Director Rowlands was expected to present a new code enforcement officer position at the upcoming committee meeting.

Councilor Dixon expressed strong agreement with the need for additional code enforcement, calling it a matter that had been inadequately addressed for a decade. He stated that while he understood and did not dispute the value of the City Planner position, the community's visible frustration with code enforcement needed to be acknowledged. "When they see a new position being created when we can't even support the existing departments, that's the side we see," he said.

Councilor Morrison concurred, noting that he had personally driven past properties in need of code attention and that Walt simply did not have enough hours in the day to address the volume of issues citywide.

Councilor Dixon referenced a specific property on Bernhard as an example of longstanding conditions that had gone unaddressed.

Discussion on GIS Services

Councilor McCann asked Director Russell to explain the city's current Geographic Information Systems (GIS) situation, referencing a phone call the two had shared earlier that day. Director Russell provided a detailed explanation. She noted that the city's GIS systems are currently housed through a contract with an individual contractor affiliated with the City of Gahanna. While she described the contractor as capable and professional, she noted that any updates to the city's zoning map or other GIS data require submitting a request and waiting in the contractor's queue—sometimes for weeks. She emphasized the breadth of city services that rely on GIS, including police cruiser navigation, fire and EMS, zoning, permitting software, and departmental mapping.

Director Russell explained that one of the primary functions of the proposed City Planner role would be to serve as the city's in-house GIS manager. She stated that this would allow the city to eliminate its current GIS contract, which is billed hourly up to approximately \$10,000 per year, and to build out GIS capabilities that could ultimately benefit residents—for example, allowing citizens to hover over a parcel on an online map and view historical building permits or code violations. She acknowledged that a full transition would take approximately two years and would require some upfront investment to update data (such as fire hydrant locations) and bring the system to a functional standard, but that once updated, ongoing maintenance would be far more manageable for an in-house staff person.

Director Russell also disclosed that the city had received an outside quote of \$90,000 from a private GIS company to provide comparable services, which several Council members recalled from a prior Parks and Recreation presentation. She stated that four department heads—covering economic development, parks and recreation, public service, IT, and building/zoning—had been collaborating on how to address the GIS gap, and that the staffed planner solution had emerged as the most logical path forward.

Councilor Adkins recalled the \$90,000 quote and the prior presentation, confirming the context Director Russell described.

Discussion on the Zoning Officer Role and Building Department Workload

Director Russell also explained that the City Planner position would assume the role of Zoning Officer, which currently falls to Chief Building Official Don Day. She noted that while Don is highly credentialed in the building field, his expertise is not primarily in zoning, which creates a customer service problem. For example, when a business submits for a sign permit that does not meet the zoning code, they are currently sent back and forth between multiple departments before receiving an answer. With a planner serving as Zoning Officer, the first call could go directly to the planner, who could advise the applicant on what the code requires before any permit application is filed—streamlining the process for the business owner and allowing Don to focus solely on building functions.

Director Russell further noted that Don Day performed over 1,000 inspections in the prior year and is the only residential plan reviewer, handling every fence, patio, room addition, and modification by himself. Assigning zoning-related permits—such as fence zoning permits—to the planner would relieve pressure on the building department, allowing it to focus on inspections and plan reviews without the added burden of zoning determinations.

She also described how the planner and economic development specialist would share office space, creating a collaborative environment that would allow the economic development team to redirect energy toward proactive business retention. Director Russell stated that the city had thus far met with only one of its top "index companies" this year, against a goal of completing first-quarter visits by March, due to the volume of tasks being managed by a single staff member. She described the ideal as meeting with major employers a minimum of three times per year in various formats, and connecting them with other city departments. "Our job is the economic development is to be the connector," she stated.

Councilor Elmore affirmed the importance of relationship maintenance with existing businesses, noting that if businesses are not receiving adequate service, "it doesn't look good and favorable for us as a city."

Discussion on the February vs. March Job Description

Councilor Morrison noted that the job description he received by email was dated February, while the version distributed at the meeting was dated March, and asked about the discrepancy. Director Russell explained that she had made a couple of additions after submitting the original draft to Director of HR Tracy Wentz: she had added the Zoning Officer designation (which was not in the original draft), added language pertaining to GIS responsibilities, and added language relating to field inspections. She described the planner's code enforcement role as a "backup to the backup"—able to handle zoning-related cases such as businesses operating without the correct zoning classification—but clarified that the role would not involve full-time code enforcement duties such as measuring grass height. She acknowledged she may have forgotten to update the date on the revised version.

Resolution: Amending Legislation to Include Code Enforcement Position

Director Russell proposed to Council that rather than waiting for a separate piece of legislation on code enforcement, Council might feel more comfortable if the code enforcement officer position were added to the current legislation so that both items could move forward simultaneously. There was broad and immediate agreement among Council members.

Councilor McCann expressed appreciation for Director Russell's willingness to accommodate the request. Councilor Morrison and Councilor Dixon both affirmed that the community needed to see movement on code enforcement, and that including it in the same package would send a clear message that the administration and Council were responsive.

Councilor Dixon stated: "The community sees that they have these concerns and complaints and want to see movement and so forth from administration and council, and this would give them some sort of hope that, oh, they're listening."

President Potter confirmed that the two pieces of legislation—Ordinance No. 035-2026 and Ordinance No. 036-2026—would be rewritten to incorporate the additional code enforcement officer position. Director Russell agreed to work with Director Rowlands, Director Wentz, City Attorney Nicodemus, and Clerk of Council Ogg to prepare a revised draft prior to the end of the week and distribute it to Council by email, with a clear outline of all changes.

On the question of what changes would be required to Ordinance No. 036-2026, City Attorney Nicodemus noted that the Code Enforcement Officer's hourly rate cap is currently set at \$36.00, and that a new hire would come in at or below that rate, meaning the pay schedule may not require substantive modification. The legislation would, however, need to be updated to reflect authorization for two full-time Code Enforcement Officers rather than one.

President Potter confirmed that because the prior version of the legislation had been returned and this was technically a first reading under the revised form, the item would appear as fresh legislation—not requiring a floor amendment—and Council would see it as a new draft. Director Russell is committed to emailing the revised draft to all members. Councilor Dixon expressed appreciation for the outcome.

Because Ordinance No. 035-2026 was to be rewritten and reintroduced in revised form, no action was taken on that draft at this meeting.

Draft #2 — Ordinance No. 036-2026

Amending Ordinance 129-2025; Authorizing and Approving the Following Changes to 161.38 and Declaring an Emergency.

City Attorney Nicodemus advised that Ordinance No. 036-2026, the salary schedule, could move forward as introduced, given that the Code Enforcement Officer's hourly rate ceiling of \$36.00 is already reflected in the existing pay schedule and any new hire would fall within that range. Any necessary structural changes—such as the addition of a second authorized Code Enforcement Officer—would be addressed in the revised Ordinance No. 035-2026.

Motion to introduce Ordinance No. 036-2026 will be made by Councilor Elmore and seconded by Councilor Dixon.

Standing Committees

Administration and Financial Management — Chairperson Elmore

Members: Morrison, McCann, Brown

Councilor Elmore opened the Administration and Financial Management Committee at 7:15 P.M. There were no drafts or pending legislation. Chairperson Elmore noted that a matter of an add-on item would be deferred to the end of the meeting. The committee was closed at 7:16 P.M.

Community and Elder Advocacy — Chairperson Harcar

Members: Adkins, Dixon, Brown

Councilor Harcar opened the Community and Elder Advocacy Committee at 7:16 P.M. There were no drafts or pending legislation and no discussion. The committee was closed at 7:16 P.M.

Community Standards and Enforcement — Chairperson McCann

Members: Dixon, Elmore, Harcar

Councilor McCann opened the Community Standards and Enforcement Committee at 7:16 P.M. There were no drafts or pending legislation and no discussion. The committee was closed at 7:16 P.M.

Economic Development — Chairperson Dixon

Members: McCann, Morrison, Brown

Councilor Dixon opened the Economic Development Committee at 7:16 P.M.

Draft #3 — Ordinance No. 034-2026

Allowing a Special Permit Under 1125.04 to Allow Drive-Through Facilities on the Property Located at 4600 E Broad Street, Parcel Numbers 090-008427-00 and 090-008249-00, Property Owned by Meyer Foods Management Company, and Declaring an Emergency.

Councilor Dixon introduced the item and noted that it was referred to the Whitehall Planning Commission for a special meeting to be held at a date to be determined in May, with a City Council public hearing scheduled for June 2, 2026.

Director Russell provided context for the legislation. She explained that the subject property is the former Applebee's location at 4600 East Broad Street, which has been vacant for approximately ten years. The proposed use is a Culver's restaurant, which will demolish the existing building and construct an entirely new facility. Because East Broad Street does not permit drive-through facilities by right, a special use permit under Section 1125.04 is required.

Director Russell described the site plan in detail. The project utilizes two adjacent lots, which are relatively narrow, necessitating the use of both parcels. The operational model involves customers ordering at the drive-through and then being directed to a numbered parking stall where runners deliver food—a system similar to other Culver's locations. The building will feature four-sided architecture with stone exterior, windows, storefronts, and signage on all sides, which Director Russell described as a "pretty sharp" design that would be a positive addition to the corridor.

Director Russell noted that Culver's had already undergone a variance process before the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals (BZBA) related to setback and building orientation issues. The applicant originally presented six or seven variance requests, and through collaborative work with the city's planning intern Curtis Nutter, that number was reduced to three or four. She stated that Culver's has been an enthusiastic partner, noting that they had originally planned to break ground in 2027 but had asked the city to fast-track their entitlements. Director Russell expressed excitement about filling a long-vacant lot and about the approximately 80 jobs the location is expected to generate for the community—drawing a parallel to the 750 applicants Chick-fil-A attracted when it opened in Whitehall.

Councilor Harcar and Councilor McCann expressed anticipation for the opening and inquired about construction timing. Director Russell indicated that Culver's was essentially waiting on the city to complete the entitlement process before finalizing their full design package.

Councilor McCann asked whether the existing building would be retained or demolished. Director Russell confirmed it would be fully demolished and replaced with a new structure.

A brief discussion arose regarding the drive-through configuration. Director Russell clarified that there is one primary drive-through lane, not two, though the parking-stall delivery system may appear to create a second lane from the outside. She also described an "escape drive-through" feature—a drive aisle providing an exit route for vehicles if needed. Councilor McCann noted that based on his review of a recently constructed Culver's in Marysville, the configuration actually features two ordering stalls that merge into one lane, similar to a dual-lane McDonald's setup.

Councilor Harcar raised the topic of pending state legislation requiring escape routes in drive-through designs, referencing an incident in Stow, Ohio, where a woman was killed while trapped in a drive-through line. Director Russell confirmed her awareness of the legislation, noting that it had been introduced at the state level following that tragedy, and that some municipalities had already adopted their own versions. She stated that in evaluating the Culver's project, the city had already confirmed the escape route was incorporated into the design. Councilor Harcar indicated that he and Director Russell should discuss this legislation further, as it may warrant a city-level ordinance for future drive-through developments.

Motion to introduce Ordinance No. 034-2026 will be made by Chairperson Dixon and seconded by Councilor McCann.

The Economic Development Committee was closed at 7:23 P.M.

Infrastructure, Maintenance, and Services — Chairperson Brown

Members: Morrison, Dixon, Adkins

Councilor Brown was not present. In his absence, Councilor Morrison opened the Infrastructure, Maintenance and Services Committee at 7:23 P.M. There were no drafts or pending legislation. Director of Public Service Rowlands was not in attendance. No questions or discussion were raised. The committee was closed at 7:23 P.M.

Public Safety — Chairperson Morrison

Members: Elmore, Adkins, Harcar

Councilor Morrison opened the Public Safety Committee at 7:24 P.M. There were no drafts or pending legislation on the agenda. However, Councilor Elmore raised a substantive matter for discussion.

Deer Culling Legislation

Councilor Elmore advised Council that she and City Attorney Nicodemus had been exchanging information regarding the possibility of revisiting deer culling legislation for the City of Whitehall, in light of Worthington's recent successful implementation of such a program. She stated that she had been regularly observing deer in residential areas—including lying down in her own backyard—and that the matter warranted renewed attention.

City Attorney Nicodemus provided an overview of the Worthington program. He noted that while the city had previously considered deer culling legislation, the earlier version had been broader in scope. The Worthington ordinance was more narrowly tailored, employing stringent guidelines for marksmen (described in some press coverage as "federal sharpshooters," though Nicodemus clarified they were highly qualified civilian shooters). The Worthington program operated for approximately eight days and resulted in the removal of more than 100 deer, with over 4,000 pounds of processed meat donated to a local food pantry. City Attorney Nicodemus indicated he would pull the Worthington ordinance and adapt it to Whitehall's context, making it more targeted than the version previously considered by the city.

Councilor Harcar asked whether Center of Hope or a comparable food distribution organization could be engaged to receive the meat from any future Whitehall program, ensuring it benefits residents experiencing food insecurity. City Attorney Nicodemus indicated he would consult with Director of Neighborhoods regarding appropriate local partners, noting that the Director of Neighborhoods would be well-positioned to connect the program to available resources. Council members expressed general agreement that the food should be directed toward local benefit.

No-Feed Ordinance

City Attorney Nicodemus raised the related matter of a no-deer-feeding ordinance. He noted that Worthington prohibits residents from placing cracked corn or other attractants out for deer, which discourages deer from congregating in residential neighborhoods. He advised that such an ordinance could be adopted separately from—and more quickly than—the culling program itself. Councilor Elmore confirmed that some Whitehall residents had been observed maintaining salt licks, which she described as a significant attractant. Council members expressed general support for the concept.

City Attorney Nicodemus confirmed he would bring forward draft legislation modeled on the Worthington ordinance, adapted for Whitehall, for future committee consideration.

The Public Safety Committee was closed at 7:28 P.M.

Parks and Recreation — Chairperson Adkins

Members: Elmore, Harcar, McCann

Councilor Adkins opened the Parks and Recreation Committee at 7:29 P.M. There were no drafts or pending legislation.

Councilor McCann offered a brief update, noting that the Rosemore softball team had won two consecutive games—defeating Madison Christian and Worthington Christian—and encouraged Council members and the public to attend upcoming Tuesday and Thursday games. He expressed that community attendance had been growing and was appreciated by the team.

The Parks and Recreation Committee was closed at 7:29 P.M.

Add-On Item — Ordinance No. 037-2026

Authorizing and Approving an Advance of Order for Reimbursement in the Amount of \$61,248.60 from the General Fund 101 to the Project Fund 810; Authorizing a Previous Settlement Appropriation in the Same Amount; and Appropriating Money to the General Energy Project Fund 810 Expense Account 810-500.

President Potter introduced the add-on item, which had been deferred to the end of the meeting. Councilor Elmore noted that Deputy Auditor Crystal Peterson had provided written communication indicating that the first-half real estate tax settlement distribution, originally expected between May 15 and May 30, was likely to be extended to no later than mid-June due to ongoing system and data validation work in the auditor's and treasurer's offices.

Director Russell provided clarifying context. She explained that under a special assessment ordinance adopted in 2017, the city is obligated to make annual payments to the Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority into an energy project fund. Normally, these payments are made directly from real estate tax disbursements received on a standard schedule. Because the county's distribution will be delayed this year, the city must advance funds from the general fund (Fund 101) to cover the payment when due, and then reimburse the general fund once the real estate tax disbursement is received. She described the ordinance as essentially a housekeeping measure—moving money to cover an obligation and then moving it back once the offsetting revenue arrives. Council members confirmed they understood the mechanism.

President Potter noted that the ordinance does not include an emergency declaration, and therefore would proceed on a standard single-reading schedule.

Motion to introduce Ordinance No. 037-2026 will be made by Councilor Harcar and seconded by Councilor Elmore.

President Potter adjourned the meeting at 7:34 P.M.

Submitted by:

Julie A. Ogg, Clerk of Council

APPROVED: May 6, 2026

Thomas M. Potter, Council President

ORDINANCE NO. 034-2026

ALLOWING A SPECIAL PERMIT UNDER 1125.04 TO ALLOW DRIVE-THROUGH FACILITIES ON THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4600 E BROAD STREET, PARCEL NUMBER 090-008427-00 and 090-008249-00, PROPERTY OWNED BY MEYER FOODS MANAGEMENT COMPANY, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

WHEREAS, Council has received a new application from the Mannik and Smith Group LLC on behalf of Meyer Foods Management Company for a special use permit to permit drive-through facilities on land located at 4600 E Broad Street; and

WHEREAS, Said request for a special permit was referred to the Planning Commission Case No. 904, which reported a _____ recommendation on said request; and

WHEREAS, Council has held a Public Hearing after due notice according to law; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO

SECTION 1: If development of the special permit use does not commence within a period of one year, the approval shall be voided unless an application for a specified time extension of six months is submitted to and granted by Council.

SECTION 2: That this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure immediately necessary for the preservation of the public health, peace, safety, and welfare, and for the further reason that the project is supported by and is in line with the goals of the Whitehall Works Comprehensive Development Blueprint adopted by City Council on July 16, 2019; WHEREFORE, this Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED this _____ day of _____, 2026

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026

Mayor

Requested by: Mannik and Smith Group LLC (Applicant)
Prepared by: Curtis Nutter, Intern
Approved as to form: Kylie Keitch, Asst. City Attorney kk/jo 4/21/2026

ORDINANCE NO. 035-2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL 161 TABLE OF AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

WHEREAS, the budget presented by various departments includes updated titles that best represent what employees do in their daily work and includes position(s) added, revised, and/or no longer required; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO:

SECTION 1: The Council of the City of Whitehall, Ohio approves the following changes to the Table of Authorized Personnel for the fiscal year 2026.

161.37 TABLE OF AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL.

The following legends shall apply to all tables delineating authorized strength:

Column	Name	Code
1	Position title	
2	Pay grade or salary pay range	SPR
3	Classified civil service	CCS
	Unclassified civil service	UCS
4	Number authorized	
5	Union bargaining unit	UBU
	Exempt from union	EFU

(b) Development Department.

1	2	3	4	5
Director of Development	SPR	UCS	1	EFU
Economic Development Specialist	SPR	UCS	1	EFU
Chief Building Official	SPR	CCS	1	EFU
Assistant Building Inspector (part-time)	SPR	UCS	1	EFU
<u>City Planner</u>	<u>SPR</u>	<u>UCS</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>EFU</u>
Permit Specialist	C-21	CCS	1	UBU

(f) Service Department and Street Employees.

1	2	3	4	5
Administrative Assistant (full-time)	SPR	UCS	1*	EFU
OR				
Administrative Assistant (part-time)	SPR	UCS	2*	EFU

ORDINANCE NO. 035-2026

*If the Administrative Assistant is held as a PT position, the FT position is not authorized				
Director of Public Service	SPR	UCS	1	EFU
Facilities Operations Maintenance Chief	S-25	CCS	1	UBU
Custodian, full-time	SPR	UCS	1	EFU
Street Superintendent Public Service	SPR	CCS	4	EFU
Crew Chiefs	S-25	CCS	2	UBU
Chief Automotive Mechanic	S-25	CCS	1	UBU
Mechanic	S-24	CCS	1	UBU
Service Worker	S-22	UCS	13	UBU
Code Enforcement Officer	SPR	UCS	4 <u>2</u>	EFU
Animal Control and Code Enforcement Officer	SPR	UCS	1	EFU
Part-time casual employees/ seasonal employees (Labor Maintenance Office Employee)	SPR	UCS	15	EFU

SECTION 2: That this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure immediately necessary for the preservation of the public health, peace, safety, and welfare, and for the further reason these title changes reasonably reflect the duties of the position, and additional positions that were budgeted; WHEREFORE, this Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

Requested by: Jackie Russell, Director of Development
 Prepared by: Tracy Wentz, Director of HR
 Approved as to form: Brad Nicodemus, City Attorney bsn 04/27/2026

ORDINANCE NO. 036-2026

AMENDING ORDINANCE 129-2025; AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO 161.38 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

WHEREAS, efficient personnel and payroll record keeping requires a permanent definition of uniform published standards; and

WHEREAS, the current salary ordinance requires updating for the year 2026; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO:

SECTION 1:

161.38 SALARY SCHEDULE.

(a) The following salary ranges are hereby set, with pay to be determined by the respective appointing authority.

Clerk of Council (hourly)	2020	25.00 to 35.39
Office Assistant Part-time (hourly)	2020	11.00 to 22.57
Deputy Auditor (hourly)	2026	30.10 to 44.23
Deputy Tax Commissioner (hourly)	2026	to 48.08
Payroll Administrator (hourly)	2026	to 39.06
Accounting Specialist (hourly)	2026	to 37.02
Payroll Clerk (hourly)	2026	to 36.00
Director of Public Service (hourly)	2025	to 55.57
Administrative Assistant (hourly)	2024	to 36.00
Code Enforcement Officer (hourly)	2024	to 36.00
Chief Building Official (hourly)	2026	to 52.61
Assistant Building Inspector Part-time (hourly)	2020	to 30.00
Director for Public Safety (salary)	2026	to 54,900.00
Assistant City Attorney/Prosecutor (salary)	2026	to 89,000.00
Assistant City Attorney, Part-time (salary)	2023	to 75,000.00
Prosecutor (Part-Time)* (salary)	2024	to 123,600.00
Legal Assistant (hourly)	2026	to 39.90
Parks and Recreation Director (hourly)	2026	to 57.69
Police Deputy Chiefs (hourly)	2026	to 82.14
Assistant Fire Chief (hourly)	2026	to 82.14
Chief of Police (hourly)	2026	to 92.81
Chief of Fire (hourly)	2026	to 92.81
Crime Analyst Supervisor	2026	to 43.82
Coordinator of Victim Services (hourly)	2020	21.00 to 33.89
Property Room Coordinator (hourly)	2026	to 27.86
Property Room Clerk (hourly)	2026	to 27.86
Crime Analyst (hourly)	2026	23.04 to 35.93
Human Resources Director (hourly)	2026	38.53 to 49.28
HR Generalist (hourly)	2026	28.00 to 33.17
Director of Development (hourly)	2022	to 55.00
Deputy Director of Public Affairs (hourly)	2023	to 42.79

ORDINANCE NO. 036-2026

Director of Information Technology (hourly)	2026	to 54.33
Systems Administrator (hourly)	2024	to 44.00
Senior Administrative Assistant (hourly)	2026	to 40.37
Executive Assistant to the Mayor (hourly)	2026	to 40.87
Clerk of Courts (hourly)	2026	to 41.20
Paralegal (hourly)	2026	20.00 to 33.65
Recreation Superintendent (hourly)	2023	to 38.25
Code Enforcement/Animal Control Officer (hourly)	2026	to 32.53
IT Security Specialist	2026	to 38.20
Full-Time IT Technician (hourly)	2024	to 37.09
Grants Administrator (hourly)	2025	to 46.34
Records Clerk Part-time (hourly)	2026	to 28.96
Economic Development Specialist (hourly)	2026	to 36.59
City Planner (hourly)	2026	to 33.17
Adult Resource & Engagement Specialist	2026	to 27.89
Street Superintendent	2026	to 54.62
P&R Program Supervisor (hourly)	2025	to 34.06
Recreation Manager (full-time)	2026	22.00 – 27.00
Program Assistant (part-time)	2024	15.00 – 25.00
Assistant Clerk of Courts	2026	to 34.13
Communication and Marketing Specialist	2026	to 33.65
Police Community Coordinator	2026	to 26.25
Director of Neighborhoods	2026	to 44.23
Events and Advancement Coordinator	2026	to 29.33
Service Maintenance Custodian	2026	to 26.44
Police Custodian	2026	to 26.44

SECTION 2: That this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure immediately necessary for the preservation of the public health, peace, safety, and welfare; WHEREFORE, this Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED this ___ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ___ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

Requested by: Michael T Bivens, Mayor
 Prepared by: Tracy Wentz, Director of HR
 Approved as to form: Brad Nicodemus, City Attorney bsn 04/27/2026

ORDINANCE NO. 037-2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING AN ADVANCE OF UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE AMOUNT OF SIXTY-ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-EIGHT AND 60/100 DOLLARS (\$61,228.60) FROM THE GENERAL FUND (101) TO THE ENERGY PROJECT FUND (810); AND AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN THE SAME AMOUNT FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE ENERGY PROJECT FUND (810) TO THE ENERGY PROJECT FUND EXPENSE ACCOUNT (810.000.50000).

WHEREAS, Ordinance 083-2017 levied a special assessment for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, and improving certain public improvements on a property owned by East Broad Street Partners, LLC at 4500 East Broad Street; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ordinance 119-2025, monies received by the City of Whitehall from the Franklin County Auditor's Office in connection with said special assessment are to be paid to the Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority through the Energy Project Fund (810); and

WHEREAS, the Franklin County Auditor's Office has notified the City of Whitehall that the tentative distribution window of May 15 to May 30 is now likely to extend into June, and as such, timely receipt of property tax settlement monies into the Energy Project Fund (810) to service the obligation to the Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority is not likely; and

WHEREAS, to meet the City's obligation in a timely manner, it is necessary to advance unappropriated monies from the General Fund to the Energy Project Fund (810), with such advance to be repaid to the General Fund upon the City's receipt of the corresponding property tax settlement monies from the Franklin County Auditor; and

WHEREAS, upon completion of the advance, a supplemental appropriation from unappropriated monies in the Energy Project Fund (810) to the Energy Project Fund Expense Account (810.000.50000) is required to enable payment to the Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO:

SECTION 1: The Council of the City of Whitehall, Ohio, hereby authorizes and approves an advance of unappropriated monies in the amount of sixty-one thousand two hundred twenty-eight and 60/100 dollars (\$61,228.60) from the General Fund to the Energy Project Fund (810). Said advance shall be repaid in full from the Energy Project Fund (810) to the General Fund upon the City's receipt of the corresponding property tax settlement monies from the Franklin County Auditor's Office.

SECTION 2: The Council of the City of Whitehall, Ohio, hereby authorizes and approves a supplemental appropriation in the amount of sixty-one thousand two hundred twenty-eight and 60/100 dollars (\$61,228.60) from unappropriated monies in the Energy Project Fund (810) to the Energy Project Fund Expense Account (810.000.50000).

SECTION 3: That the City Auditor is hereby authorized to draw his warrant upon the Treasurer of the City for these funds for the purpose stated.

SECTION 4: That this Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

ORDINANCE NO. 037-2026

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

ORDINANCE NO. 038 -2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$55,000.00) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE GENERAL FUND (101) TO THE ACCRUED BENEFIT RESERVE FUND (505); AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$55,000.00) TO THE ACCRUED BENEFIT RESERVE EXPENSE ACCOUNT 505.000.51000.

WHEREAS, the Accrued Benefit Reserve Fund is used for employee payouts for the designated benefits that belong to the employee through their union contract or by codified ordinance upon separation of employment from the City of Whitehall, and

WHEREAS, the fund requires additional funding to pay obligations to a retiring employee; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO:

SECTION 1: That the Council of the City of Whitehall, approves a fund transfer in the amount fifty-five thousand and 00/100 dollars (\$55,000.00) from unappropriated monies in the General Fund (101) to the Accrued Benefit Reserve Fund (505) and approves a supplemental appropriation in the amount of fifty-five thousand and 00/00 dollars (\$55,000.00) to the Accrued Benefit Reserve Fund Expense Account (505.000.51000),

SECTION 2: That the City Auditor is hereby authorized to draw his warrant upon the Treasurer of the City for these funds for the stated purpose.

SECTION 3: That this Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

ORDINANCE NO. 039-2026

APPROVING AND MAKING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY-FOUR THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTEEN AND 07/100 DOLLARS (\$284,417.07) FROM VARIOUS ACCOUNTS IN THE WMPITIE FUND (279) TO THE DEBT SERVICE FUND (401).

WHEREAS, bonds were issued on June 22, 2016, to purchase the Commons at Royal Landing, complete Streetscape Improvements, and acquire land; and

WHEREAS, bonds were issued on September 30, 2014, to make infrastructure improvements and to purchase blighted property; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 119-2025 appropriated monies for the repayment of these bonds; and

WHEREAS, the Auditor of State requires that bond retirement payments and other long-term debt obligations be paid from the Debt Service Fund; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO:

SECTION 1: The Council of the City of Whitehall hereby approves the following fund transfers:

Amount: \$95,287.25
From: 279.000.50001 Main Yearling Incentive
To: (401) Debt Service

Amount: \$122,008.00
From: 279.000.50002 Main Hamilton Incentive
To: (401) Debt Service

Amount: \$10,980.72
From: 279.000.50003 Town & Country Incentive
To: (401) Debt Service

Amount: \$13,438.30
From: 279.000.50004 Hamilton Broad Incentive
To: (401) Debt Service

Amount: \$42,702.80
From: 279.000.50005 Poth Road Incentive
To: (401) Debt Service

Total Transfer: \$284,417.07

SECTION 2: The City Auditor is hereby authorized to draw a warrant upon the Treasurer of the City for these funds for the purpose stated in this Ordinance.

SECTION 3: This Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. 039-2026

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

ORDINANCE NO 040-2026

APPROVING AND MAKING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF SEVENTY SEVEN THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED FORTY EIGHT AND 86/100 DOLLARS (\$77,648.86) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE GENERAL FUND (101) TO THE DEBT SERVICE FUND (401).

WHEREAS, Ordinance 119-2025 appropriated monies for repayment of the OPWC loans; and

WHEREAS, the Auditor of State requires bond retirement payments and other long-term debt to be paid from the Debt Service Fund; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO:

SECTION 1: That the Council of the City of Whitehall approves and makes a fund transfer in the amount of seventy-seven thousand six hundred forty-eight and 86/100 dollars (\$77,648.86) from unappropriated monies in the General Fund (101) to the Debt Service Fund (401).

SECTION 2: That the City Auditor is hereby authorized to draw his warrant upon the Treasurer of the City for these funds for the purpose stated in this Ordinance.

SECTION 3: That this Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026

Mayor

ORDINANCE NO. 041-2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF TWO HUNDRED THREE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED FIFTY-ONE AND 75/100 DOLLARS (\$203,651.75) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE GENERAL FUND (101) TO THE DEBT SERVICE FUND (401).

WHEREAS, Ordinance 119-2025 appropriated monies for the purpose of repayment of long-term debt for the Recreation Bond; and

WHEREAS, the Auditor of State requires bond retirement payments and other long-term debt to be paid from the Debt Service Fund; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO:

SECTION 1: That there be and is hereby transferred the sum of two hundred three thousand six hundred fifty-one and 75/100 dollars (\$203,651.75) from unappropriated monies in the General Fund (101) to the Debt Service Fund (401)

SECTION 2: That the City Auditor is hereby authorized to draw his warrant upon the Treasurer of the City for these funds for the stated purpose.

SECTION 3: That this Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

ORDINANCE NO. 042-2026

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF SIX THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND NO/100 DOLLARS (\$6,500.00) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE GENERAL FUND TO THE 101.900.55100 RECORDS MAINTENANCE EXPENSE ACCOUNT.

WHEREAS, the annual appropriation ordinance did not include sufficient funding for records maintenance, which is necessary to maintain accurate and complete municipal records; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO:

SECTION 1: The Council of the City of Whitehall, Ohio, approves the supplemental appropriation in the amount of six thousand five hundred and no/100 dollars (\$6,500.00) from the General Fund (101) to Record Maintenance Expense Account (101.900.55100).

SECTION 2: That this Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

ORDINANCE NO. 043 -2026

APPROVING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY-SIX THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED TWENTY-THREE DOLLARS AND 33/100 (\$456,623.33) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE WATER UTILITY FUND (841) TO THE DEBT SERVICE FUND (401).

WHEREAS, the City receives water and sewer surcharges from the City of Columbus for the purpose of maintaining and improving its water and sewer infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the City entered into loan agreements with the Ohio Water Development Authority for various water and sewer line improvements and street reconstruction projects; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 119-2025 appropriated monies for repayment of these obligations; and

WHEREAS, the Auditor of State requires that bond retirement payments and other long-term debt obligations be paid from the Debt Service Fund; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO:

SECTION 1: The Council of the City of Whitehall hereby approves a fund transfer in the amount of four hundred fifty-six thousand six hundred twenty-three and 33/100 dollars (\$456,623.33) from unappropriated monies in the Water Utility Fund (841) to the Debt Service Fund (401).

SECTION 2: The City Auditor is hereby authorized to draw his warrant upon the Treasurer of the City for these funds for the purpose stated in this Ordinance.

SECTION 3: This Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

ORDINANCE NO 044-2026

APPROVING AND MAKING A FUND TRANSFER IN THE AMOUNT OF FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY-THREE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-EIGHT AND 75/100 DOLLARS (\$423,368.75) FROM UNAPPROPRIATED MONIES IN THE GENERAL FUND (101) TO THE DEBT SERVICE FUND (401).

WHEREAS, bonds were issued on August 15, 2019, for the purpose of improving and expanding the City's Municipal Recreation Facilities at Whitehall Community Park and the amount due to service these bonds is \$66,575.00; and

WHEREAS, bonds were issued on October 24, 2023, for the purpose of providing funds to pay the costs of a court-approved final settlement of claims made by the City in the case of *The City of Whitehall, Ohio et al. v. Olander, Thomas J. et al.*, Case No. 2007 EVH 060217 in the Franklin County Municipal Court, and the amount due to service these bonds is \$47,362.50; and

WHEREAS, bonds were issued on November 14, 2023, for the purpose of paying the costs of the City's acquisition of a portion of an approximately 37-acre parcel located at the northeast corner of Hamilton Road and East Broad Street, and the amount due to service these bonds is \$268,437.50; and

WHEREAS, bonds were issued on November 14, 2023, for the purpose of funding improvements to City Hall, including foundation, structural, walkway, ramp, and entryway work, and the amount due to service these bonds is \$40,993.75; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 119-2025 appropriated monies for the repayment of these bonds; and

WHEREAS, the Auditor of State requires that bond retirement payments and other long-term debt obligations be paid from the Debt Service Fund; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITEHALL, OHIO:

SECTION 1: That the Council of the City of Whitehall approves and authorizes a fund transfer in the amount of four hundred twenty-three thousand three hundred sixty-eight and 75/100 dollars (\$423,368.75) from unappropriated monies in the General Fund (101) to the Debt Service Fund (401), and hereby declares an emergency.

SECTION 2: That the City Auditor is hereby authorized to draw a warrant upon the Treasurer of the City for these funds for the purpose stated in this Ordinance.

SECTION 3: That this Ordinance shall go into full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

President of Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2026

Mayor