

DRAFT MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – FINANCE MEETING
OF WADSWORTH CITY COUNCIL
February 3, 2026 5:30 P.M.

The regular meeting of Wadsworth City Council, Tuesday, February 3, 2026 5:30 P.M. was held in-person at City Council Chambers.

PRESIDING: Dan Rospert, *President of Council*

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Reese, Jon Yurchiak, Jeanne Hines, Angela May, Chris Maxwell, Zach Berger, Tom Stugmyer

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Mayor Robin Laubaugh, Safety Dir. Dan Chafin, Service Dir. Matt Hiscock, Law Dir. Bradley Proudfoot, Auditor Cathy Fix, Asst. Public Service Dir. Mike Testa, Asst. Public Service Dir. Jon Bellack, Clerk of Council Julie Darlington.

PRESS REPRESENTATIVES: None

CALL TO ORDER: Council President Rospert called the **February 3, 2026** Committee of The Whole – Finance meeting to order at approximately 5:30 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL: The Clerk called the roll.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Council President Rospert noted that members had the opportunity to review the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Finance meeting from January 6 and 20, 2026 **Council Member Reese** made the motion to approve the minutes from January 6 and 20, 2026, which was seconded by **Council Member Hines**. All members voted in favor of the motion. **MINUTES APPROVED.**

III. DRAFT LEGISLATION

- ORDINANCE NO. 26-029** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO PURCHASE A NEW CATERPILLAR MODEL 926 14A WHEEL LOADER FROM OHIO CAT THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN A SOURCEWELL CONTRACT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Council President Rospert explained that that item was not initially presented at the Public Ways Committee meeting because they were originally planning to authorize it to go out to bid. However, he stated, they did find one in stock that they could take delivery on very quickly. He had discussed this with Assistant Service Director Bellack and decided that since it was already budgeted for that year and they could get immediate delivery, there was no sense in waiting.

Council Member May asked if it was included in the budget, to which President Rospert confirmed it was included and they were going to go out to obtain it, but they actually have one in stock that they can get much quicker than if they wait and go about this differently.

Council President Rospert indicated he would like to see this brought forward with suspension of the rules to make the purchase immediately so they could get the equipment running right away. Before proceeding, he opened the floor for questions.

Council Member Berger asked, if it was the same cost as before.

Assistant Service Director Bellack responded affirmatively, explaining that the loader was the same model they have for the street department, the airport, and would now be replacing a 2006 Volvo loader at the wastewater plant. He emphasized, as President Rospert said, this particular piece of equipment was on the lot right now. Typically, it was a 4 to 6 month lead-time on that piece of equipment. It was kind of nice being able to get the thing delivered.

Assistant Director Bellack detailed that it was a Sourcewell contracted item, noting they receive a 24% discount through Sourcewell and another 6% offer from Ohio CAT on this piece of equipment. He reiterated that it was a budgeted item and they were asking for suspension of the rules with the emergency clause.

Council Member Stugmyer inquired whether this purchase would be complete off the lot or if modifications would need to be done after purchase. Asst. Director Bellack confirmed, it was complete and ready.

Council Member May then raised a financial concern. Council Member Berger, added that the purchase price exceeds the budget amount.

Asst. Director Bellack addressed this by explaining they had \$210,000 budgeted, but they had some money that could be transferred over in the wastewater capital fund to cover the extra \$5,000 for it. When asked to confirm it was an extra \$5,000, Asst. Director Bellack replied, Correct.

Council Member Yurchiak then asked if everyone was familiar with Sourcewell and contract purchasing, offering to have it explained. Service Director Hiscock provided a comprehensive explanation of cooperative purchasing arrangements.

Service Director Hiscock began by explaining that under municipal procurement laws, the City was required to go out to bid for purchases over a certain amount and believed it was \$79,000 this year and some change. He noted that this monetary limit increases 3% per year based on law changes.

He then detailed how cooperative purchasing arrangements like Sourcewell work: Cooperative purchasing arrangements like Sourcewell, there are other types of arrangements that are out there that the City was a member of, essentially removes the bidding requirement. He clarified, it did not do away with the bidding requirement, it basically meant that Sourcewell or the company who holds a cooperative purchasing agreement had done the bidding process with eligible vendors and has submitted that to the state of Ohio.

Service Director Hiscock explained that through this process, vendors compete and their prices are greatly reduced because they wanted to win the bid because they were looking to do volume-based business more than profit on single unit based business.

When Council Member Berger asked if there was a fee paid to Sourcewell, Service Director Hiscock responded, they do not pay a fee to be a member of Sourcewell, not as an end user, the vendor pays.

Council Member Yurchiak added, one of the other advantages of it was when they do that, they did not have to use the manpower in house to put a bid together and they don't have a lot of that tied up. It was a very popular way of municipalities purchasing things.

Service Director Hiscock agreed, noting it was an excellent point and that they spend considerable time reviewing or drafting RFP or RFQ processes, which were onerous and changing depending upon the unit or what they were trying to acquire. He confirmed they had not run into any issues with purchases through cooperative purchasing arrangements and did not believe the auditor's office had found any issues either, stating, they were very well vetted.

Council Member Berger asked one more question of Asst. Director Bellack, it was not going to sit for 3 to 6 month, were they going to use it right away. Asst. Director Bellack assured him, No, it would be moving as soon as they get it on-site.

After all questions were addressed, President Rospert asked Council Member Berger to take it and suspend the rules. Council Member Berger agreed. The clerk assigned the Ordinance No. 26-029.

IV. CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REVIEW

Council President Rospert led the review of the regular Council agenda items.

First was Ordinance No, 26-002, sponsored by Council Member Reese, which they would move to 3rd reading.

Next was Ordinance 26-005, **Council Member Maxwell** said they were going to put that on third reading that evening.

Then Ordinance 26-026, sponsored by Council Member Hines who expressed curiosity about why it was being added them after seeing it a couple times already.

Service Director Hiscock explained that the amendment first and foremost corrects the incorrect parcel number they had before them at their last meeting. It has the correct permanent parcel number adopted, but it also added language that essentially would allow the City to pay 4% of that purchase price to the CIC, Community Investment Corporation.

Service Director Hiscock detailed that since their last meeting, the CIC had met and discussed what the CIC should receive as acting agent for this and future sales. He explained the decision was made to request that the CIC received 4% of that purchase price for the work that it did in terms of effectuating the sale. He noted that in that case, with a purchase price of \$15,000, the 4% fee would equate to \$600.

Director Hiscock elaborated on the work performed by the CIC executive director, including receiving phone calls, actively marketing the parcel to adjoining landowners, putting together the bid process, and ultimately making recommendations to the CIC on the sale agreement.

Council Member Stugmyer asked if those fees would go into the CIC's general funds, Service Director Hiscock confirmed, exactly. The CIC did not have its own funding source

necessarily and so they were looking to establish some level of revenues, while perhaps not consistent, but revenues that the CIC could use for its mission as it moved forward.

Council Member Berger raised a concern about whether it was appropriate for City Officials on the CIC board to receive money through that arrangement.

Law Director Proudfoot addressed that, explaining that statutorily, certain elected officials and administration members were required to be on the CIC, and everything done was in accordance with Ohio Revised Code requirements. He stated, everything that they had done, He had actually reviewed and had discussions with multiple people and it was all accurate in the way that it was statutorily set out to proceed.

Council Member May asked if there were any debts or liens against the parking lot. Service Director Hiscock responded, none that he was aware of.

Hines indicated she would amend and suspend and call on the ordinance.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Service Director Hiscock thanked the Council for scheduling the meeting early to continue discussion about funding the downtown infrastructure project. He began with a comprehensive review of where they stood.

Service Director Hiscock reminded Council that they had participated in a work session with the consultant team on MLK Day where they had very productive discussions about what this particular Council would like to see done and the pros and cons of some of the aspects of the improvements and the costs estimates associated with those improvements.

He noted that since it was a work session, Council could not make definitive decisions but they had identified some of the likes and non-likes of members of the Council. Service Director Hiscock stated they needed to continue the discussion in a committee format where Council could have thorough discussions, deliberate openly, and maybe make some decisions and provide us with guidance on where they went or where they go from here.

Service Director Hiscock then explained that based on his notes from the work session, he had sought clarity from the consultant team on additional cost opinions. On January 28, he had forwarded an email to all Council Members with the consultant team's responses. He explained, essentially his requests were outlined in terms of questions to them regarding costs based upon the comments that were made by many, if not all of the Council Member at their work session.

The consultants provided revised opinions of probable cost, with additional cost items totaling about \$1,550,000. Service Director Hiscock detailed how they analyzed the proposed costs, greatly reducing those in certain areas. Some to the effect of 7.5% , some removing altogether, some reducing by 35%, others again were reducing by 40%, and there were even more than that. I think the highest reductions in two categories were 58% in terms of reductions. They also added \$100,000 to an item labeled wayfinding based on work session discussions.

Service Director Hiscock then presented his analysis of which improvements received majority support (defined as 4 or more members expressing interest): based upon my notes, it looked like improvement number 3, improvement number 5, improvement number 8, and improvement number 9, all received majority support.

He then provided detailed financial breakdowns from Baker Tilly, the municipal advising team:

- Current approved base (Option A plus improvement 2): \$13,200,000 total project cost
- With consultant's revised recommendations (+\$1,550,000): \$14,844,000 total
- With original improvements 3, 5, 8, 9 (+\$1,700,000): \$15,024,000 total

For debt service implications:

- Current approved \$13.2M: \$1,066,745 annual debt payment (\$628,000 from general fund)
- With \$1.55M addition: \$1,199,000 annual debt payment (\$753,077 from general fund)
- With \$1.7M addition: \$1,214,000 annual debt payment (\$767,520 from general fund)

Council Member Maxwell asked about the construction management fees from the CMAR. Service Director Hiscock responded that while he could not provide a definitive answer, his strategy would be not to come to that Council and ask for any additional dollars above the discussion points that they had. He explained that contingency amounts baked into the estimates appeared healthy enough to allow for CMAR fees to be deducted from that.

When Maxwell asked about the CMAR process status, Service Director Hiscock explained the RFQ had been drafted and reviewed but not yet published. He detailed the unique aspects of their ask, particularly regarding communications and impacts to businesses.

Service Director Hiscock then explained the statutory CMAR process, emphasizing it was a three-step process: seek qualified based selections, interview qualified entities, and enter into scope negotiations before getting authorization for a contract.

Council Member Berger raised financial concerns, noting that in 2024 their debt was \$40 million but in 2026 it looks like over \$81 million. He asked how that affected their debt service or their credit rating for future projects and funding those.

Finance Director Fix responded that with current numbers for the downtown project, they would not pay debt service until 2027. She explained that total debt service for the entire general fund would be at 11.5% of income tax allocation. She noted that AAA and AA+ rated cities stay around 10% or below. When they start going up to 15%, between 10 and 15%, most cities are in a growth area... When they get above 15%, they start limiting potentially your future issuances... At 20%, your credit rating starts dropping. With the \$1.7 million add-on, they would be at 12.2%.

Council Member Berger expressed additional concerns about the 5 and 10-year capital plan showing projected spending of \$64.3 million in '26, \$23 million in '27, \$25 million in '28, and \$28 million in '29. He stated, he guess just my concerns are if we're already kind of right at that threshold for their credit limit and they have these future projects as well, which are in the tens of millions, you know, how does that affect us in the future for future funding, future projects?

Service Director Hiscock responded comprehensively, explaining that not all planned debt issuance comes from general fund dollars - In fact, the vast majority of the large scale numbers have nothing to do with the general fund. They have to do from utility funds. He emphasized that water and sewer debt has little effect on bond ratings compared to general fund debt.

He also noted the capital planning documents are planning tools, not approval documents, and that annual decisions would still need to be made by Council. Service Director Hiscock referenced the general fund cash reserve policy showing cash reserves going up and posed the question: what do their constituents want to see them do? Do they want to see them stockpile cash in the general fund? Or they want them to see them use their tax dollars for purposes, which encourage and enhance their lifestyle or provides better services to them.

Service Director Hiscock explained that debt in the governmental sense was different from personal debt: Debt was a tool to spread the cost of an asset that would be used by 20 or 30 years' worth of citizens over all of those individuals... That was a standard well-accepted principle.

Council Member Reese asked if there was research into how to fund the improvements, suggesting combining debt and cash. He proposed potentially using half from the 431 Fund (parks) and half from debt to keep the debt ratio down while still achieving the improvements.

Service Director Hiscock explained the 431 Fund was a sub-fund of the 425 Fund designated for park improvements, currently funded by transfers from the general fund. He noted there was \$900,000 in revenue coming to the fund from a private donation that was restricted for Passive Park development at the Brickyard.

Council President Rospert then opened discussion on how to move forward. Council Member Yurchiak asked how they moved forward getting the administration a number.

Law Director Proudfoot clarified that discussions must be in open forum and Council should not pre-commit their votes, President Rospert suggested making motions to determine Council's will.

Various Council Members expressed their positions. Maxwell stated support for keeping it at \$13.2 million original. Council Member Hines expressed the same. Council Member Yurchiak noted that safety bump outs at \$310,000 seemed to have support and the \$13.2 million in his mind was not the number. Council Member Reese agreed that safety bump outs were necessary as it was dangerous crossing in some of those spots.

After continued discussion about funding options and priorities, Council Member Stugmyer made a motion to go with the \$1.55 million above the current \$13.2 million budget. He explained his reasoning: he thought that they probably would not be having any of those discussions if they were not already tearing up the downtown. It just kept coming back to him that they were tearing it up and did not put down what was there in 1983 and with some of those amenities that they were adding in, they were using more of the sidewalk space, which was prime real estate anyway.

Council Member Stugmyer made a motion seconded by Council Member Reese to go with the \$1.55 million above the current \$13.2 million budget. Council President Rospert clarified the motion was to increase the project by \$1,550,000 to a total of \$14,800,000. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Yurchiak, Stugmyer, Reese, May. Nays: Maxwell, Hines, Berger. **MOTION PASSED.**

President Rospert announced that Council had approved \$1,550,000 more for the downtown project and directed administration to go back to the consultants. He asked if they should discuss funding. Service Director Hiscock clarified that the vote dictates a supplemental appropriation be prepared for consideration at the next meeting, giving administration a budget that will be reflective of the discussions to date.

Council Member Reese asked if administration could put together a 5 or 10-year plan showing how to bring the debt percentage back to 10. Auditor Fix explained that debt service starts falling in '28 slightly and they could present those numbers.

Council Member Berger asked if the \$1.5 million would include wayfinding items. President Rospert clarified it was just a blanket \$1.55 million to let the designers be creative with what they can do with what they just allocated.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: Council Member Yurchiak made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Council Member Stugmyer **MEETING ADJOURNED at approximately 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson

Date Approved