

COUNCIL PRESIDENT-JENNIFER WASILK
COUNCIL AT LARGE-DAVID JANIK
COUNCIL AT LARGE-MATT NAHORN
COUNCIL AT LARGE- CHUCK WINIARSKI

COUNCIL WARD ONE-BRIAN DEMBINSKI
COUNCIL WARD TWO-BECKY HARMYCH
COUNCIL WARD THREE-JAKE WACHHOLZ
COUNCIL WARD FOUR-JOHN MOWCOMBER

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Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held March 16, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. Present in Council Chambers were Chairman Dembinski, Mr. Nahorn, Mr. Wachholz, Mr. Mowcomber, Mr. Winiarski, Ms. Harmych, Council President Wasilk, Mayor Costilow, Auditor Phillips, Treasurer Miller, Law Director Pecora, Assistant Law Director Ward. Mr. Janik and Mr. Jeffreys were absent and had letters on file. Mr. Nahorn motioned to excuse Mr. Janik and Mr. Jeffreys. Seconded by Ms. Harmych. Vote 6-0 to excuse. Also present were Police Chief Cawthon and four members of the public.

A-26-15 Authorizing Mayor to enter into an agreement with Ohio Department Of Transportation for Drones for first Responders Program; emergency

Mayor Costilow mentioned this is to accept and use a grant to develop this two year drone program. Chief Cawthon explained we were approached by the Lorain County EMA about this program and asked if we were interested to participate. Different from a normal drone this is called a drone-in-a-box where it is stationary at the police station and can be autonomously deployed to re-enforce the safety for our police officers to allow for eyes on the scene sooner. From the time the call is received to when the drone is enroute is 90 seconds. Purchasing this drone also allows for future opportunities for a larger program in coordination across the county. We're able to start this program with no upfront cost to the city. Mr. Wachholz asked where the operators of the drone would be stationed and how does it work without a line-of-site which is normally required and the Chief answered the operators would normally be at the station and there is a waiver which is needed from the FAA which is part of the grant. Mr. Mowcomber asked if the drone would be launched automatically or manually and the Chief answered that the details are being worked out but the dispatcher would be able to dispatch it through their computer system. The Chief also mentioned from a privacy perspective that the cameras are programmed to face forward towards the horizon when enroute, not towards the ground until it reaches its destination. Mr. Mowcomber asked if the City is responsible if the drone is destroyed while being used and the Chief answered no, that is covered as part of the contract with the drone company. Mr. Mowcomber asked about the specifications of the drones in the proposal and the Chief answered the drone we pick would depend on potential integrations to our existing systems and requirements specific to Amherst. Mr. Winiarski asked about estimated annual costs and the Chief answered nothing for the first two years and after that it would depend on the drone chosen and how the costs may

change in the future but generally between \$25k and \$50k per unit per year. If at the end of the two year program we determine the cost is too high we can walk away from the program. Mr. Dembinski asked about transparency to the public and the Chief answered there's a portal the public would be able to log in and see the flight path and some additional information about when the drone was used. Mr. Mowcomber asked about prohibited uses and the Chief answered it would not be used for surveillance but only when there was a call and it was required. Mr. Mowcomber asked for clarification and the Mayor and Law Director explained we already have other drones within the city and we would need to follow our own existing policies which cover drone usage. This drone policy is going to be provided to city council. Mr. Mowcomber suggested council should enact an ordinance to have that drone policy be public information.

Mr. Wachholz motioned to send this to the floor of Council with emergency. Seconded by Ms. Harmych. Voice vote 5-1 with Mr. Mowcomber voting no.

A-26-16 Authorizing the Safety/Service Director to solicit bids for the 2026 OPWC State Issue 1, Round 39 South Lake Rehabilitation project and authorizing and directing the Safety Service Director to award the contract for such work to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder; emergency

Mayor Costilow explained that every year we do OPWC projects where the State contributes dollars to one of these. We had this in front of Council where we applied for the grant. Council approved the engineering funding already. The state will contribute \$500,000 to the project. Mr. Winiarski motioned to take this to the floor of Council with the emergency. Seconded by Mr. Wachholz. Voice vote e 6-0 to take to the floor of council with emergency.

A-26-17 Authorizing the Safety/Service Director to solicit bids for the 2026 Road Rehabilitation Program and authorizing and directing the Safety Service Director to award the contract for such work to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder; authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract for professional services with Bramhall Engineering relating to such project; emergency

Mayor Costilow explained that this is our annual road program. Both downtown parking lots are also in the program this year. This year it includes a lot of electrical work which is being paid for out of the electrical fund. Mr. Winiarski asked about the funding of the parking lots and if the street maintenance can be used. Mayor Costilow answered they will be paid out of the 201 account.

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Mr. Wachholz motioned to takt this to the floor of Council with the emergency. Seconded by Ms. Harmych. Voice vote 6-0 to send to the floor of Council with the emergency.

Mr. Wachholz motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Nahorn. Vote 6-0 to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Brian Dembinski, Chairman
Finance Committee