



City of Kent

Regular City Council Meeting

320 S. Depeyster Street, Kent, Ohio 44240

April 16, 2025

MINUTES

At 7:00pm, Mayor Jerry T. Fiala called the Regular City Council meeting to order.

Present: Mr. Jack Amrhein; Ms. Melissa Celko; Mr. Jeff Clapper; Mr. Michael DeLeone; Mr. Chris Hook; Ms. Gwen Rosenberg; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Roger Sidoti; Mr. Robin Turner

Also Present: Mr. Jerry T. Fiala, Mayor and President of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Mr. Nick Cecil, IT Director; Mr. Nick Shearer, Chief of Police; Ms. Bridget Susel; Community Development Director; Ms. Dominique Bollenbacher, Community Outreach Coordinator; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer; Mr. Jamie Samels, Fire Chief; Ms. Kathy Coleman, Clerk of Council

OPENING REMARKS AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Celko recognized and thanked all the businesses and organizations that make up the Kent community. She reminded Council of the food drive competition between Kent and Ravenna. She then led Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMUNICATIONS

Public Comment:

Ms. Sandra Halem of Carthage Avenue addressed Council to express fondness for Kent and respect for its law enforcement, but shared great concerns regarding the Portage County Sheriff's Office entering an agreement with the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency and its potential impact on Kent.

Ms. Christen Wood of Marvin Street echoed those sentiments and urged Council to do whatever it could to protect Kent.

Written Communication:

On April 2, 2025 a notice from the Portage County Board of Elections was received, announcing that the primary elections will be held on Tuesday, May 6. A list of precincts and polling locations was provided and shared with Council members at the April 2 Committee meeting.

On April 2, 2025, the March meeting minutes and April agenda were received from Standing Rock Cemetery and posted online.

On April 3, 2025, the March meeting minutes and April Agenda and statistical report were received from the Health Department.

On April 8, 2025, a letter from American Legal Publishing Corporation was received, advising of a name change to American Legal Publishing, LLC.

On April 9, 2025, the agenda and staff report for the April 15 Planning Commission meeting were received from the Community Development Department.

Written Communication Received After Agenda Publication:

On April 15, 2025, an email message from Jon Ridinger was received, announcing that he was able to find a company to produce the Kent flag and it is available to order. Details were shared with Council.

On April 16, 2025, the agenda and board report for the April 17 Parks & Recreation Board meeting were received.

On April 16, 2025, an email message from Rick Hawksley expressing his objection to the use of Flock cameras was received and shared with Council.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Rosenberg thanked the Leanne and Barry Blankenship for their donation to the Fire Department.

MOTION TO APPROVE ITEMS 1-12 OF THE CITY MANAGER'S REPORT was made by Mr. Amrhein, seconded by Mr. Clapper, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

1. Chief Samels has asked for Council's approval to accept and allocate a donation in the amount of \$50 from Leanne and Barry Blankenship in memory of retired fire lieutenant Dick Hill.
2. Rhonda has requested Council's approval of the most recent "then and now" financial statement.
3. Eric has asked for Committee of the Whole time for Heather to present on Main Street Kent.
4. Bridget has asked for Community Development Committee time to present proposed amendments to Chapter 14 of the City's Property Maintenance Code.
5. Bridget has requested Community Development Committee time to present a recommendation from the city's Tax Increment Review Council (TIRC) to renew the Davey Tree Enterprise Zone agreement.
6. Bridget has asked for Community Development Committee time to provide a follow-up report on the funding for the homeless warming center project.
7. Rhonda has asked for Finance Committee time to present the "Notice to Proceed" for the West Side Fire levy for Council's consideration.

8. Nick has asked for Health and Public Safety Committee time to provide further discussion on the Flock traffic camera technology contract.
9. Bridget has asked for Land Use Committee time to finalize the integration of the design guidelines into the City's zoning code.
10. Bredget has requested Streets, Sidewalks, and Utilities Committee time to present a request to keep Franklin Avenue open for the summer season.
11. Melanie has asked for Streets, Sidewalks, and Utilities Committee time to discuss the replacement of the pumps at the Heritage Park dam.
12. Jim has requested Streets, Sidewalks, and Utilities Committee time to share a proposal for an updated public art mural at the Haymaker Farmers' Market.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION TO SUSPEND THREE READINGS OF DRAFTS 2025-023 and 2025-025 THROUGH 2025-032 was made by Ms. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Ms. Shaffer Bish, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Approval of March Regular Council Meeting minutes

Approval of April Council Committee Meeting minutes

DRAFT 2025-023 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE FINANCE DIRECTOR, UPON THE ISSUANCE OF A CERTIFICATE OF AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, TO PAY CERTAIN PURCHASE ORDERS MADE THAT EXCEED \$3000.00; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

DRAFT 2025-025 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2024-131, THE CURRENT APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE, PASSED DECEMBER 18, 2024; SO AS TO ADJUST APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS AND ADVANCES FROM THE VARIOUS FUNDS OF THE CITY OF KENT TO INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE CITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2025; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

DRAFT 2025-026 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO AMEND AND APPROVE THE SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATION FROM THE KENT JAYCEES KNOWN AS "KENT CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL" TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2025, AND THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF NORTH WATER STREET BETWEEN MAIN STREET AND PORTAGE STREET NORTH ON NORTH WATER STREET TO BRADY STREET AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

DRAFT 2025-027 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AN ADMINISTRATIVE VARIANCE FOR SECTION 915.05(e) "USE OF PUBLIC SANITARY SEWER REQUIRED" OF THE KENT CODIFIED ORDINANCES IN ORDER FOR A NEW SANITARY SEWER LATERAL TO BE INSTALLED FOR THE NEW KLABEN LINCOLN DEALERSHIP AT 1238 WEST MAIN STREET, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

DRAFT 2025-028 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF KENT AND KENT STATE UNIVERSITY FOR THE SHARED FUNDING OF THE PURCHASE OF A NEW LADDER TRUCK FOR THE KENT FIRE DEPARTMENT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

DRAFT 2025-029 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE KENT SAFETY TOWN DECLARATION OF COLLECTIVE INTENT (DCI) FOR THE COMPLETION OF A PERMANENT SAFETY TOWN IN KENT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

DRAFT 2025-030 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION TO CHANGE THE CIVIL SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS SPECIFICALLY RULE 5.01 AND RULE 6.02 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

DRAFT 2025-031 AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE CURRENT REPLACEMENT PAGES TO THE CITY OF KENT CODIFIED ORDINANCES AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

DRAFT 2025-032 A RESOLUTION DECLARING IT NECESSARY TO RENEW THE CITY'S EXISTING 0.73-MILL TAX LEVY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSE OF MAINTAINING AND OPERATING A FIRE STATION IN THE CITY OF KENT WEST OF THE ERIE RAILROAD; REQUESTING THE COUNTY AUDITOR TO MAKE CERTAIN CERTIFICATIONS RELATED THERETO, PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 5705.03, 5705.19(I) AND 5705.191 OF THE REVISED CODE, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Consent agenda passed.

STANDING COMMITTEES AND LEGISLATION

Committee of the Whole – Chair Mayor Fiala/Vice-Chair Amrhein

MOTION TO APPROVE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE APPLICANTS Tom Mahon, Darlene Rocco, Pete Kenworthy, Don Schjeldahl and Kai Carpenter was made by Mr. Sidoti, seconded by Ms. Rosenberg, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Community Development Committee – Chair Rosenberg/Vice-Chair Clapper

No action.

Health & Safety Committee – Chair Amrhein/Vice-Chair Sidoti

Council discussed the implementation of Flock cameras and feedback received from the community. A suggestion was made to postpone the voting for 6 months in order to gather more information.

MOTION TO POSTPONE VOTING ON DRAFT 2025-024 UNTIL THE OCTOBER 2025 MEETING was made by Mr. Hook, seconded by Ms. Shaffer-Bish, and carried 6-3-0, with Mr. DeLeone, Mr. Sidoti, and Mr. Turner voting no.

DRAFT 2025-024 WAS POSTPONED UNTIL OCTOBER 2025

Land Use Committee – Chair Shaffer-Bish/Vice-Chair Hook

No action.

Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee – Chair Sidoti/Vice-Chair Clapper

No action.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Sidoti recognized Mayor Fiala's time and dedication to public service and the community, and proposed naming the new council chambers in City Hall after him.

MOTION TO DESIGNATE THE NEW COUNCIL CHAMBERS THE "JERRY T. FIALA COUNCIL CHAMBERS" was made by Mr. Sidoti, seconded by Mr. DeLeone, and carried by voice vote 8-0-1 with Ms. Shaffer Bish abstaining.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. DeLeone reminded council that a representative to the Standing Rock Cemetery Board of Trustees needed to be appointed at the next meeting.

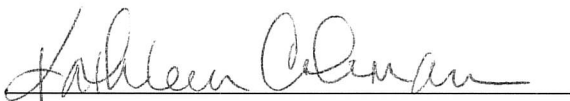
Ms. Rosenberg read a statement from Mary Kanaly in recognition of Kent's dispatchers during Telecommunicators Week.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Fiala echoed the sentiments honoring the dispatcher's contributions. He reminded Council about the food challenge but emphasized that it was not about the competition, but rather helping others in need. He wished a Happy Easter to those who celebrate it.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.



Kathleen Coleman
Clerk of Council



Jerry T. Fiala
Mayor and President of Council

