



City of Kent

Regular City Council Meeting

319 S. Water Street, Kent, Ohio 44240

January 21, 2026

MINUTES

At 7:00pm, Mayor Jack Amrhein called the Regular City Council meeting to order.

Present: Ms. Melissa Celko; Mr. Jeff Clapper; Mr. Chris Hook; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Benjamin Tipton; Mr. Robin Turner; Ms. Tracy Wallach; Ms. Sarah Wesley

Also Present: Mr. Jack Amrhein, Mayor and President of Council; Ms. Kathy Coleman, Clerk of Council; Mr. Dave Ruller, City Manager; Ms. Hope Jones, Law Director; Ms. Melanie Baker, Services Director; Ms. Bridget Susel; Community Development Director; Eric Helmstedter, Economic Development Director; Dominique Bollenbacher, Community Outreach Coordinator; Joan Seidel, Health Commissioner; Jamie Samels, Fire Chief; Jim Bowling, City Engineer

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Turner led Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMUNICATIONS

Public Comment: None

Written Communication:

- On December 23, 2025 the Clerk's office received notice that there will not be a Planning Commission meeting on January 6, 2026, but there will be a meeting on January 20th. The agenda and staff report were received on January 13, 2026.
- On January 2, 2026, the minutes from the December Standing Rock Cemetery meeting were received, along with the agenda for the January meeting. These were posted online.
- On January 12, 2026, the Clerk's office received notice that there will be no Board of Zoning Appeals meeting on January 26th due to a lack of agenda items.
- On January 12, 2026, the Clerk's office received an email from Nichole Marxen, Property Manager at Kentwood Square Apartments, complimenting the Health Department on their professional and efficient inspection of the rental property, and complimenting the City on caring enough about their residents to

conduct yearly rental property inspections. The email was shared with Council.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CITY MANAGER'S REPORT was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Mr. Hook, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

WARD 2 COUNCIL APPOINTMENT

- Ms. Shaffer Bish made a **MOTION TO APPOINT ERIC DREGER TO THE WARD 2 COUNCIL POSITION**; the motion was seconded by Mr. Clapper. The motion passed by voice vote 5-2-0, with Mr. Hook and Ms. Wallach voting no.
- Mr. Clapper made a **MOTION TO AUTHORIZE INSERTION OF MR. DREGER'S NAME INTO DRAFT 2026-08**; the motion was seconded by Ms. Celko. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
- **MOTION TO SUSPEND THREE READINGS OF DRAFT 2026-08** was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Ms. Shaffer Bish passed by unanimous roll call vote.
- **MOTION TO APPROVE DRAFT 2026-08 AN ORDINANCE APPOINTING ERIC DREGER TO THE POSITION OF WARD 2 COUNCIL PERSON OF THE CITY OF KENT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY** was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Ms. Shaffer Bish and passed by unanimous roll call vote.
- Mr. Dreger was then sworn in by Mayor Amrhein and joined Council on the dais.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Wallach requested that the December regular minutes and January committee minutes be removed from the consent agenda.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THREE READINGS OF DRAFTS 2026-01 through 2026-06 and 2026-09 was made by Mr. Hook, seconded by Mr. Clapper, and carried by unanimous roll call vote, 9-0-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA as amended was made by Ms. Wallach, seconded by Ms. Shaffer Bish and carried by unanimous roll call vote, 9-0-0.

- Approval of January Special Meeting minutes
- **DRAFT 2026-01 AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE CITY OF KENT'S CYBERSECURITY POLICIES AS REQUIRED BY ORC §9.64 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**
- **DRAFT 2026-02 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION TO CHANGE THE CIVIL SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS SPECIFICALLY RULE 5.08.1 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**
- **DRAFT 2026-03 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF KENT AND**

PORTAGE COUNTY TO CONTINUE THE STOW/SUMMIT STREET BRIDGE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AGREEMENT FOR DESIGN SERVICES AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **DRAFT 2026-04** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF KENT AND KENT CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT TO PERFORM A JOINT STUDY OF PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE CONNECTIVITY THROUGH THE HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS THAT WOULD INCLUDE THE LAKE ROCKWELL TRAIL EXTENSION PROJECT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-05** AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 353.02 “PARKING REGULATION AUTHORIZATION” OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF KENT TO CHANGE THE PERMISSABLE PARKING CONDITIONS ON EAST GRANT STREET AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-06** AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 2025-50 PASSED BY KENT CITY COUNCIL ON JUNE 18, 2025 TO INCLUDE FOLLOW-UP ITEMS FROM THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-09** 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.

Consent agenda passed.

STANDING COMMITTEES AND LEGISLATION

Committee of the Whole – Chair Amrhein

- **Board/Commission Appointment**
 - **MOTION TO APPOINT David Kovacs to the Loan Review Board** was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Mr. Hook, and carried by unanimous voice vote.
 - **MOTION TO AUTHORIZE INSERTION OF NAMES INTO DRAFT 2026-07** was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Mr. Hook and carried by unanimous voice vote.
 - **MOTION TO SUSPEND 3 READINGS OF DRAFT 2026-07** was made by Ms. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Mr. Clapper and carried by unanimous roll call vote.
 - **MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2026-07 AN ORDINANCE APPOINTING DAVID KOVACS TO THE LOAN REVIEW BOARD AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY** was made by Mr. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Mr. Clapper, and carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Draft 2026-07 passed.

- **Approval of December Regular Council Minutes**
Motion to approve December Regular meeting minutes was made by Mr. Clapper and seconded by Mr. Hook. The voice vote was 4-0-5, with Mr. Turner, Ms. Wallach, Ms. Wesley, Mr. Tipton, and Mr. Dreger abstaining
- **Approval of January Committee Meeting Minutes**
Motion to approve January Committee meeting minutes as amended was made by Mr. Hook, seconded by Ms. Shaffer Bish and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Finance Committee – Chair Celko/Vice-Chair Tipton

No action.

Health & Safety Committee – Chair Hook/Vice-Chair Clapper

No action.

Land Use Committee – Chair Clapper/Vice-Chair Hook

No action.

Streets, Sidewalks & Utilities Committee – Chair Wallach/Vice-Chair Tipton

No action.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Clapper moved to address the issue of AI Data Centers within the Zoning Code in committee. Ms. Shaffer Bish seconded. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

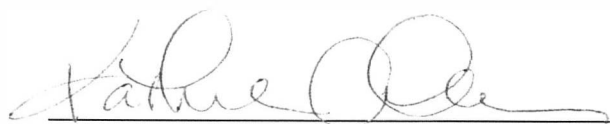
Mr. Hook thanked all of the candidates for the Ward 2 Council position and encouraged those not selected to consider running when Mr. Dreger's term is up.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Amrhein also thanked the Ward 2 candidates. He wished Mr. Turner a happy birthday and reminded everyone of Main St. Kent's 3rd annual Snow Day coming up. He also reported that a kindergarten class from the KSU CSC would be visiting his office on the 29th and he looked forward to telling them about how the City runs.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22pm.



Kathleen Coleman
Clerk of Council



Jack Amrhein
Mayor and President of Council