



City of Kent

Regular City Council Meeting

319 S. Water Street, Kent, Ohio 44240

February 18, 2026

MINUTES

At 7:00pm, the **Public Hearing** regarding the Community Development Block Grant PY 2026 Annual Action Plan was presented by Ms. Susel. She stated that there are three national objectives in the City's 5-year consolidated plan: targeted infrastructure; safe and decent housing through housing assistance; and supportive services, all for low to moderate income neighborhoods. The city is awaiting confirmation on this year's allocation, with last year's amount being \$264,000. There were no public comments.

Immediately following the Public Hearing, Mayor Amrhein called the Regular City Council meeting to order.

Present: Ms. Melissa Celko; Mr. Jeff Clapper; Mr. Eric Dreger; Mr. Chris Hook; Ms. Heidi Shaffer Bish; Mr. Benjamin Tipton; 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; Mr. Jim Bowling, City Engineer

Motion to excuse Mr. Turner was made by Ms. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Mr. Hook, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

OPENING REMARKS and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Amrhein led Council in the Pledge of Allegiance, then acknowledged the loss of two significant individuals in the community, Judge Mark Fankhauser and Dr. Jerry Lewis from Kent State University, and led a moment of silence in remembrance.

COMMUNICATIONS

Public Comment

- Ms. Chris Untrauer, of Murray Avenue in Ravenna, addressed Council regarding the Veterans Grave Marker Project, which aims to identify and mark veterans' unmarked graves in local cemeteries, including Standing Rock, where they have already ordered two

markers. She emphasized the importance of honoring veterans, many of whom have gone unrecognized for their service. She seeks volunteers for genealogy research and community support, mentioning the need for assistance in updating records. A fundraiser event to support the project will be held at the American Legion in Kent on May 2nd. She encouraged community members to reach out and participate in the initiative. Mayor Amrhein encouraged her to contact the Kent Historical Society as well.

- Mr. Rich Hager of Horning Road addressed Council regarding a personal crisis that he and his family are experiencing as a result of the inability to connect to the City's water line due to the governmental processes involved. The family has been without running water for 23 days since their well malfunctioned. He stressed the urgency of their situation, emphasizing the emotional burden it places on their family, particularly on young children. He appealed to Council for immediate action, urging them to bypass standard procedures to address the situation and expedite the approval for access to the city's water supply.

Mr. Ruller stated that the related ordinance was scheduled to be addressed at the next committee meeting, but asked Council to approve its placement on the City Manager's current report as an unauthorized item, which would allow the process to start sooner.

Written Communication:

- On January 26, 2026, the agenda for the February 3rd Planning Commission was received and posted in the foyer of City Hall.
- Between January 27th and February 2nd, the Clerk's office was cc'd on multiple emails between Rick Hawksley and Bridget Susel regarding snow removal efforts in the City. These were shared with Council.
- Between February 2nd and 4th, the Clerk's office was cc'd on multiple emails between concerned residents of the Forest Lakes subdivision and Bridget Susel, regarding the Agricultural District application at 100 Johnson Rd. These were shared with Council.
- On February 2, 2026, an email from Lynn Harvey of the Kent Historical Society was shared with the Clerk's office, requesting that the building at 237 E. Main St. be designated a local historic building. This email was shared with Council.
- On February 4, 2026, the January minutes and February agenda for the Standing Rock Cemetery Board of Trustees meetings were received and posted online.
- RECEIVED AFTER AGENDA NOTIFICATION: an email from Rick Hawksley on February 17 regarding ICE and a suggestion to pass a resolution regarding immigration enforcement. This email was shared with Council.

City Manager's Report

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CITY MANAGER'S REPORT AS AMENDED with the addition of the Horning Road water tie-in was made by Mr. Clapper, seconded by Ms. Wallach, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Wallach requested that the February Committee and Special minutes be removed from the consent agenda.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THREE READINGS OF DRAFTS 2026-11 through 2026-16 was made by Mr. Hook, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous roll call vote, 8-0-0.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA as amended was made by Ms. Wallach, seconded by Mr. Hook, and carried by unanimous roll call vote, 8-0-0.

- **Approval of January Regular Council meeting minutes**
- **DRAFT 2026-11** 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 2026-12** AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2025-111, THE CURRENT APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE, PASSED DECEMBER 17, 2025; 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, 2026; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-13** AN ORDINANCE AFFIRMING THE KENT DESIGN & PRESERVATION COMMITTEE'S DESIGNATION OF THE KENT HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING LOCATED AT 237 EAST MAIN STREET AS A "LOCAL HISTORIC PROPERTY" AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
- **DRAFT 2026-14** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO ENTER INTO AN ACQUISITION ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WITH COPEN MACHINE FOR THE PURCHASE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 200 WEST WILLIAMS STREET PROPERTY AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY
- **DRAFT 2026-15** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER, OR HIS DESIGNEE, TO ENTER INTO AN AMENDMENT OF THE DUAL-USE CANNABIS OPERATING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF KENT AND SLIGHTLY TOASTED, LLC (DBA BLISS OHIO), TO MODIFY ITS OPERATING HOURS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OHIO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE (OAC) AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

- **DRAFT 2026-16** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF KENT SERVICE DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$800,000, AND TO ACCEPT THE GRANT, IF AWARDED, WITH CORRESPONDING APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Consent agenda passed.

STANDING COMMITTEES AND LEGISLATION

Committee of the Whole – Chair Amrhein

- **Approval of February Committee and Special meeting minutes**

MOTION TO APPROVE FEBRUARY COMMITTEE AND SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES was made by Ms. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Mr. Hook, and carried by voice vote 7-0-1, with Ms. Wallach abstaining.

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

- **Application for Placement of Property in Agricultural District**

MOTION TO SUSPEND 3 READINGS OF DRAFT 2026-17 was made by Ms. Shaffer Bish, seconded by Ms. Wallach, and carried by unanimous roll call vote, 8-0-0.

MOTION TO ADOPT DRAFT 2026-17 was made by Ms. Wallach, seconded by Ms. Celko, and carried by unanimous roll call vote, 8-0-0.

DRAFT 2026-17 A RESOLUTION REJECTING THE APPLICATION OF ERIC KOLB / KOLB ACRES LLC FOR PLACEMENT OF PROPERTY IN AN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT PURSUANT TO OHIO REVISED CODE CHAPTER 929, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

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

No action.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Shaffer Bish commented on the recent snowstorm's aftermath, emphasizing the importance of property owners clearing snow and ice from sidewalks. She highlighted the challenges faced by the city in managing state route sidewalks and suggested the need for community initiatives to honor those who maintain sidewalks. She stressed collective responsibility for the benefit of the neighborhood.

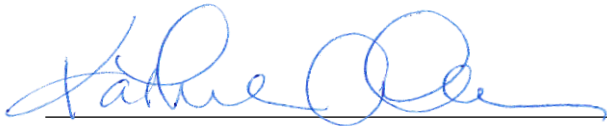
Ms. Wesley suggested initiating a campaign focused on pedestrian safety and community service, particularly concerning snow removal on the east side of Kent. She noted that university students, older individuals, and dog walkers struggle with icy pathways, often in inadequate footwear. Encouraging the clearing of sidewalks, even those not directly owned, would benefit everyone.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Amrhein reported that during the last month, he met with young children from Kent State's Child Development Center who toured City Hall and interacted with local officials. He participated in a meeting with Family and Children First and Health Commissioner Seidel to discuss community initiatives, and attended the fire and police awards ceremony to honor outstanding recipients. He will be attending a safety meeting with Kent State University and local city leaders to enhance community safety collaboration.

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