

Regular

February 4, 2026

Ontario City Council met in regular session on February 4, 2026, at the Municipal Building with Council President Eddie Gallo presiding. The meeting opened at 7:03 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present during roll call were Council members Brennen Finfgeld, Rick Pauley, Anderson Roll, Jason Bilyj, Rose Feagin, Nathan Sunderland, Mayor Josh Bradley, Law Director Andrew Medwid, Service-Safety Director Michael Morton, Clerk of Council Cathy VanAuker, and Assistant Clerk of Council Abbey Beaver. Absent: Sherry Branham-Fonner

The minutes of the regular Council meeting of January 21, 2026 were presented for approval. Hearing no corrections, the minutes were approved as presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Pauley said the Economic Development Committee met this evening and discussed improving and creating relationships with Ontario businesses. They also discussed having a meeting with Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) and Council members.

Mr. Roll said the Streets Committee met this evening to discuss the resurfacing projects for 2026. There were nine roads selected for resurfacing that are all grouped together to save on costs of moving the equipment. All nine roads were approved. They also talked about some room for improvements.

Ms. Feagin gave a reminder of the Parks/Finance Committee meeting of the Whole for February 18, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Bradley reported:

- The new computer server purchase order was approved for \$38,945.98. Once the official order is in, it will take about two to three weeks to build, this is a custom build by Sentec Systems. There will be a two-hour outage during business hours for the switchover.
- The Cyber Security Training is random training that must be done to prepare city employees to recognize and avoid possible cyber-attacks and help with the insurance carrier if there is a breach.
- He attended the Mayoral Vision 2026 Conference hosted by the Richland County Chamber of Commerce, where he discussed some of the positive things happening in the community.
- He attended the Young Leaders Institute with Mayor Perry. Mason Wilkerson, a sophomore at Ontario High School, interviewed him. Mason was prepared with good questions.
- Last week we approved contracting Burton Planning Services for the safe route to school grant. This group assisted with the development of the plan. With multiple possible projects for infrastructure and other city needs it was decided to go with the four grants plan cost to benefit the city.
- There are issues with the traffic lights and getting parts for repair, they are getting hard to find.
- Hometown Hero banner applications are on the website, deadline for submittal is March 15th.

SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Morton reported:

- Thanked the Mayor, Police Chief and Council members who provided letters of support for the Walker Lake Road and Lexington Springmill Road planning study. The unified planning work program funding has been applied for through Richland County Regional Planning Commission.

Regular

February 4, 2026

- Well #2 was down since February 2025 to repair the pump and motor. This work has been completed, and it is now operational.
- Thanked all the plow truck drivers in our service departments who worked late and came in early several days in a row to keep the streets passable and clear.
- Due to the cold weather, we have had three watermain breaks. Two on Elizabeth Avenue and one on Clare Road. All three have been addressed.
- Cemetery Report for 2025: Three lots sold, 394 lots are remaining; 22 ½ hours for burials and 295 Superintendent hours; the city collected \$5,225.00 in burial fees and \$1,575.00 in lots sold for a total of \$6,800.00.
- He attended a presentation by Pathmaster Premier Company that sells and supports traffic signal equipment. The system we currently use is outdated; parts and support are not available. Looking into ways to upgrade the equipment and make the systems more functional and modern.
- He attended the Traffic Impact Study review with KEM for Redwood Development and Chic-fil-A. See Ontarioohio.org for Redwood Traffic Impact Study Executive Summary.
- Currently collecting quotes for the City Hall backup generator repair. Waiting on one more quote before a final decision is made.
- Will be scheduling CPR and first aid training that is required by the Bureau of Workers Compensation in the next couple of months for the Service Departments. Also intend to provide quarterly safety training primarily through LTAP (Local Technical Assistance Program) provided by ODOT. This is low cost or free training offered to municipalities that share processes and best practices that ODOT recommends.
- Bidding will open on Thursday, February 12th, for the waterline replacement project. Bids will be accepted until opening day on March 5th at 10:00 a.m.
- Reached out to Mansfield to discuss the Home Road and Walker Lake Road intersection and have not heard back from them; will continue to look into this.

LAW DIRECTOR'S REPORT

No report.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

Craig Hunt, 3680 Park Avenue West, addresses the attendance issues and would like to see a process in place to handle absences and resolve the issues.

Mark Vanerio, 1883 Walker Lake Road, asked about the Mexican restaurant that was supposed to open last fall. President Gallo advised there were some contracting issues from previous tenants and they are fixing them. He also asked about the traffic study done for the Redwood project on Walker Lake Road; he is concerned about traffic being held up for someone that would like to turn into the development.

Corri Dininger, 1768 Walker Lake Road, had a question regarding the mound at Walker Lake Road and Home Road intersection. She then asked for clarification on zoning laws, what can be done on an R-2 versus a PUD. The answer was explained to her by President Gallo, Law Director Medwid, and Director Morton. She then asked if they could build more units on the property in the future; it was explained they would not be able to build more than proposed in the PUD.

Radd Schneider representing Redwood USA, LLC responded to Council Members questions:

- The type of vinyl siding they use is a more premium 0.42 thickness made by Norandex where entry level vinyl siding is 0.35 thick.
- There is a request for the site plan to include a city limits sign between Ontario and Mansfield.
- All concrete and roofing are inspected two to three times per year on all properties; they have a roofing specialist that is qualified to inspect.
- The storm basins and drainage systems are inspected monthly due to them being wet ponds, there are aerators in each one to prevent algae buildup and help stay clean. If they are deep enough, there will be a fountain; this helps move the water and keep the bugs away.

Regular

February 4, 2026

- They hold funds to do maintenance; the lender requires money held back in an escrow account.
- A tax analysis done and the most probable case is \$2,800.00 per unit at the time of construction completion for the initial appraisal. This will be approximately \$220,000.00 in taxes for the eighty units in Ontario.
- The company portfolio shows a ninety-five percent or higher physical occupancy for over 23,000 units.
- They want to go with a PUD to ensure that what is suggested is built with no changes.
- They could build less units on the site under this PUD, just not more units than proposed.
- There is language in the PUD where R-2 and R-1 can be utilized with the existing zoning code for those who may purchase the property if this deal does not go through. However, if they build under the PUD, they must follow the text in the PUD that was approved.
- These units would have to be replotted through the legal process to be sold individually as a condominium. It would be easier to sell the entire property as one.
- When the financial crisis happened in 2008/2009 this company started growing because property became available along with failing condominium developments they bought and turned around.
- The offered features that make renting more attractive than buying a home is the living space, the attached two car garage, single story living, no steps in any unit, all units are wheelchair compliant, high level of service, the managers are neighborhood managers where everyone knows them, and there are holiday events.
- There are emergency hotline numbers that always have someone available to come and fix something.
- On average, there are about 7 minors per 100 apartment homes. Due to privacy laws, they cannot determine if they are school age. Historically there is low impact on the schools.
- The managers on site are able to watch and see who is on the property along with service technicians who do quarterly inspections inside each unit. The tenants get notice ahead of time that someone is coming into the unit.
- The Ontario community will benefit from more housing availability and providing a different type of housing that Ontario does not have.
- The rent is calculated based on the most recent US Census data with growth assumptions. They do an analysis looking at three-to-five-mile radiuses and median household incomes.
- If rent needs to be lowered, it would not be lowered by hundreds of dollars. There would not be a significant drop in rent to fill the units. Leases on average are fifteen months.
- Rent is raised by the two to three percent industry standard. If the market is flat there may not be an increase.
- Service technicians and managers are offered rental discounts to live on site, but they are not required to live there.
- There are no security cameras on site. Residents would have to contact the police department to file a report for an investigation like a regular single-family home.
- If approached they may do a corporate lease for employees that are coming to the area to do work. Subleasing of units or Airbnb is not allowed.
- Most of the renters are from a three to five-mile radius and want to downsize with less upkeep than a home.
- The Mansfield acreage is not geared toward college students; this is not the purpose.
- There will be two full-time jobs created after construction is completed.
- The construction workers usually commute to the jobsite and do not stay in hotels; they use local trades.
- The current location in Mansfield is full, if there was a move out, it has been filled.
- They do have other properties that have service entrance gates, still working on getting those examples.
- There will not be any amenities built after construction is finished such as a clubhouse, basketball courts, and so on. There is no fencing around the property.
- Will check into contracting for a new traffic study or surety for a turn lane after the build date but would like to have it sorted out before the vote.

Regular

February 4, 2026

Ben Morgan, Traffic Engineer representing Davy Resources Group, came forward to explain the traffic study results on Walker Lake Road:

- They estimate one and a half cars per unit.
- Consulted with the City Engineer for the study limits which were the Menards entrance to Home Road on Walker Lake Road as well as the proposed site drive.
- They do traffic count data with intersection count or two-way traffic along the road.
- They add in the regional growth for the area to establish the background volumes.
- Focused on a.m. and p.m. peak hours when there is more traffic on the road which is calculated by the collected traffic data.
- They looked at turn lane warrants based on charts from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).
- They did not collect weekend data or holiday traffic data.
- Traffic counts can fluctuate from day to day, ODOT has a policy and procedure that they use. They raise the volume of traffic given the day and month the count was taken to account for the seasonal adjustment.
- They do not design for Black Friday traffic, that is not something ODOT designs for because they occur infrequently.
- Davy Resources Group does not receive any benefit from Redwood USA, LLC for doing this study, there are licenses and ethics at stake.

CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO. 26-02

A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE 2026 ONTARIO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN, A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE WALKING AND BIKING FOR RESIDENTS WITH INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROGRAMMING, WHILE INCREASING SAFETY, HEALTH, AND EQUITABLE MOBILITY FOR ALL.

Mr. Finfgeld read Resolution No. 26-02, for the second time, by title only.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-06

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF ONTARIO, OHIO TO CHANGE ZONING OF CERTAIN LAND FROM R2-MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT TO PUD - PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (WALKER LAKE ROAD), AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Pauley read Ordinance No. 26-06, for the first time, by title only.

At 9:10 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Mr. Roll, second by Ms. Feagin.

/s/ Eddie Gallo
President of Council

/s/ Cathy VanAuker, Clerk of Council