

## Regular

April 1, 2026

Ontario City Council met in regular session on April 1, 2026, at the Municipal Building with Council President Eddie Gallo presiding. The meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Condolences were extended to Mr. Sunderland and his wife for the passing of a family member.

Congratulations went out to Mrs. Branham-Fonner on her retirement from Richland County Mental Health Board.

The minutes of the regular Council meeting of March 18, 2026 and special Council meeting of March 23, 2026 were presented for approval.

Hearing no corrections, the minutes were approved as presented.

Brigitte Coles, Community Engagement Specialist for Richland County Children Services, and Tara Lautzenhiser, Executive Director for Richland County Children Services, came forward to receive a Proclamation for National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

## National Child Abuse Prevention Month

WHEREAS, every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment – free from abuse, neglect, and harm; and

WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect remain a significant public health and community concern, affecting millions of children each year and leaving long-lasting impacts on physical, emotional, and mental well-being; and

WHEREAS, the 2026 Child Abuse Prevention Month theme, “Together, We Protect Their Tomorrows,” remind us that every action taken today – large or small – helps safeguard the future of the children in our care; and

WHEREAS, strong families and supportive communities are the foundation of healthy childhoods, and preventing abuse is a shared responsibility that requires the involvement of parents, caregivers, educators, service providers, neighbors, leaders and local government; and

WHEREAS, since 1883, the agency has been committed to helping future generations succeed, is focused on ensuring the safety, and well-being of all families, and is partnering with local, state and federal agencies to improve the lives of children and their families; and

WHEREAS, we today call upon the citizens of Ontario, and all Richland County residents to join the effort to keep children safe and families strong;

THEREFORE, I, Josh Bradley, Mayor of Ontario, along with the City of Ontario, join with the Richland County Commissioners, and do hereby proclaim April 2026 as Child Abuse Prevention Month and I call upon all residents, businesses, schools, faith communities, and organizations to join in supporting families, promoting safe and healthy childhoods, and working together to ensure that every child in our community is protected, valued, and able to reach their full potential.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my Hand and caused the seal this First day of April, in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six.

Josh Bradley, Mayor

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## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Pauley said the Economic Development Committee met on March 30<sup>th</sup> and discussed the possibility of a small business appreciation luncheon. They went over details on the number of attendees, lunch menu, and itinerary. Mr. Roll stated that he appreciates what the Committee has done. This is a great opportunity to recognize the small businesses in Ontario and thank them for investing in the City.

Ms. Feagin said the Parks Committee met today to discuss a possible project at Marshall Park. Toys, bikes and other items being left at Doris Carr Park were also discussed. She gave an update on events:

- Soccer season is starting and thanked the City workers for getting the fields ready.
- Easter Egg Hunt is this Saturday at 11:00 a.m. at the Ontario Center. Anyone interested in volunteering can meet at the food court between 10:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

President Gallo reminded everyone to be careful with the flooding due to the recent storms.

## MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Bradley reported:

- He met with Troy Smith, Manager of Community Education for the Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities (RCBDD), Chief Hill, Assistant Chief Griefenstine, and Director Morton. Mr. Smith discussed a new program they offer to First Responders in Richland County. Officers will now carry a Cruiser Kit which has stuffed animals, color books, crayons and sensory based items to hand out during traumatic incidents to children to help minimize long term effects of a stressful event. Once a kit is used, RCBDD will replace it.
- He is speaking with multiple website design firms to modernize the City's website. He met with two national website design firms and plans to schedule meetings with some local firms. One firm emailed information that he will send to Council for review.
- The Senior Center project is underway. The Maintenance Supervisor has been assigned to the project. They are hoping to have it done by the end of April.
- There were five late submissions for the Hometown Hero Banners, they were able to add them to the order. The number of participants went from 42 to 47. The Mayor thanked Cain Graphics for being able to get those five in at the last minute.

## SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Morton advised:

- Bid advertising for 2026 resurfacing is scheduled for April 2<sup>nd</sup> and April 16<sup>th</sup>. Bid opening will take place on April 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Community Room at 10:00 a.m.
- The City owned stormwater retention/detention ponds have been inspected and are in good functioning condition. Only minor maintenance is necessary this year. The Streets Department will address it this summer.
- The Streets Department is repairing 11 stormwater catch basins on Briggs Street and August Drive prior to resurfacing.
- Richland County Sheriff's Department has issued over 40 citations for illegal dumping on Railroad Street by the recycle bins. They have a trail camera set up to provide video evidence for these occurrences.
- New signs will be installed at Marshall Park by Cain Graphics. Due to the condition of the posts and the size of the signs, this is not something Ontario employees are able to do without specialized equipment.
- He met with K.E. McCartney and the Sewer Supervisor to discuss the new generator for the Rock Road lift station. He will be looking into grant money for this project to keep the cost down.

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- The sign blown down by the windstorm on St. Rt. 309 in front of Springfield Square will be replaced by Lake Erie Construction.

Planning Commission and Zoning updates:

- There was a variance request from St. John's United Church of Christ to add a second ground sign at 2010 Park Avenue West. This was approved.
- There was an application from a year ago for a rezone request, a PUD (Planned Unit Development) for the property at Stumbo Road and Ferguson Road. Planning Commission voted to officially dismiss that application.
- There was discussion on sidewalks at Ohio Health Children's Hospital on West Fourth Street and the new home construction on Park Avenue West/Clare Road. It was decided they need sidewalks and if they don't want to put them in, they need to apply for a variance.
- A new Vision business is going in next to Five Guys.
- Chick-Fil-A is ready to record their easement and get the project moving forward.
- Rural King is starting demolition on the interior of the old Macy's building.
- Puerta Vallarta Mexican Restaurant is waiting on opening due to some fire suppression issues.
- Home Goods, going in the old Big Lots building, received a zoning permit exemption from the City, everything else is through Richland County Building Department for interior renovations. Home Goods would like to be open prior to the holiday shopping season.
- Parking lots that need repairs will be addressed. Mayor Bradley said parking lot maintenance will be added in the zoning code update.

**LAW DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

No report.

**MISCELLANEOUS REPORT**

President Gallo stated:

- There was discussion on the possibility of streaming Council meetings. They will continue to investigate this.
- Applications and fliers for Miss Ontario Pageants have gone out. School age girls are eligible for the Little, Junior, and Miss Ontario age groups. This is an important ambassador role for the City and gives scholarship financial rewards to the high school girls. The Pageants will be June 24<sup>th</sup> for the Little and Junior, and June 26<sup>th</sup> for Miss Ontario. The current group of Queens have been fantastic.
- After the Police Department's lifesaving information with LifeVac became public a local assisted living facility purchased some LifeVacs and were able to save a life last week.

**PUBLIC COMMENTARY**

Craig Hunt, 3680 Park Avenue West, wanted to discuss Ordinance 26-09 Vacating an Alley. He doesn't want Council to vacate the alley. He also wanted to discuss Ordinance 26-12 Pay CIC for Property Purchase. He would like to know if the details will be done before the public knows about it.

- Mayor Bradley appreciates that Mr. Hunt attends every meeting for the City and Township. Executive sessions are to protect negotiations.
- President Gallo explained there is a legal element of privacy on behalf of the owner of the property until the transaction becomes public.

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**CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION**

ORDINANCE NO. 26-09

AN ORDINANCE VACATING A PUBLIC ALLEY BETWEEN PARCELS 0386018105000, 038601810800, AND 0386025604000 TO ALEC SCHMITZ AKA ALEC J. SCHMITZ, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY, AS AMENDED.

Mr. Finfgeld read Ordinance No. 26-09, for the second time, by title only.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-11

AN ORDINANCE WAIVING THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR BE A RESIDENT OF THE CITY OF ONTARIO, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Pauley read Ordinance No. 26-11, for the first time, by title only.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-12

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO PAY ONE HUNDRED FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$105,000) TO THE ONTARIO COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION TO PURCHASE REAL PROPERTY TO BE USED FOR THE PUBLIC, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Roll read Ordinance No. 26-12, for the first time, by title only.

At 7:41 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Mr. Sunderland, second by Ms. Feagin.

/s/ Eddie Gallo  
President of Council

/s/ Cathy VanAuker, Clerk of Council