

MINUTES – REGULAR SESSION

PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Monday January 12, 2026
6:00 p.m.

The City Council of the City of Portsmouth, Ohio met in regular session on Monday January 12, 2026 at 6:00 p.m., in the temporary Council Chambers of the Shawnee State Innovation Hub.

Mayor Charlotte Gordon called the meeting to order and thanked the SSU Kricker Innovation Hub for allowing Council to have their meetings in their building and advised that the meetings will soon be held at the new city building. Councilman Neff offered prayer and it was followed by The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call showed the following members to be present:

David Malone	1 st Ward
Charlotte Gordon	2 nd Ward
Andy Cole	3 rd Ward
Lyvette Mosley	4 th Ward
Chris Neff	5 th Ward
Dennis Packard	6 th Ward

Also, present was, City Clerk Diana Ratliff, City Manager Sam Sutherland. Auditor M. Trent Williams and Solicitor John Haas were absent.

Vice President Mosley motioned to dispense with the reading of the Journal for the Regular Session of December 15, 2025 and the Organizational Meeting of January 5, 2026. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays.**

Vice President Mosley motioned to add legislation to the agenda as item 7(a), an Ordinance authorizing approval of the preliminary legislation submitted by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) proposing the need for pedestrian safety improvement project at Coles Boulevard in the City of Portsmouth in Scioto County at SCI-Coles Blvd-Portsmouth Safety Agreement No:43746. **The motion carried viva voce: VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays.**

Item Added

Vice President Mosley motioned to add legislation to the agenda as item 7(b), an Ordinance authorizing approval of the preliminary legislation submitted by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) proposing the need for intersection improvement along 17th Street from Grandview Avenue to Mabert Road in the City of Portsmouth in Scioto County at SCI-Portsmouth 17th St (Safety) Agreement No:43599. **The motion carried viva voce: VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nays.**

Item Added

STATEMENTS OR REMARKS FROM CITIZENS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There was no one present that wished to address Council on items on the agenda.

LEGISLATION

The clerk gave a **first reading** to an Ordinance authorizing approval of the preliminary legislation submitted by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) proposing the need for pedestrian safety improvement project at Coles Boulevard in the City of Portsmouth in Scioto County at SCI-Coles Blvd-Portsmouth Safety Agreement No:43746. Pursuant to Council Rule 5, this legislation is requested to be passed as an emergency in accordance with Section 10 of the Charter for the City of Portsmouth in order to facilitate administration, daily operation and avoid practical and legal entanglements.

Vice President Mosley moved that the balance of the readings be waived.

The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, the readings were waived.

Vice President Mosley moved that this legislation be passed.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, the Ordinance was passed.**

The clerk gave a **first reading** to an Ordinance authorizing approval of the preliminary legislation submitted by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) proposing the need for intersection improvement along 17th Street from Grandview Avenue to Mabert Road in the City of Portsmouth in Scioto County at SCI-Portsmouth 17th St (Safety) Agreement No:43599. Pursuant to Council Rule 5, this legislation

Ord. #01-2026
ODOT
Preliminary
legislation for
Coles Blvd.
pedestrians'
safety
improvement
project

is requested to be passed as an emergency in accordance with Section 10 of the Charter for the City of Portsmouth in order to facilitate administration, daily operation and avoid practical and legal entanglements.

Vice President Mosley moved that the balance of the readings be waived.

The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, the readings were waived.

Vice President Mosley moved that this legislation be passed.

There were no further questions or comments. **The role was called. VOTE: 6 ayes – 0 nay, the Ordinance was passed.**

Ord. #01-2026
ODOT
Preliminary
legislation for
17th Street
intersection
improvement
project

STATEMENTS OR REMARKS FROM CITIZENS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Lorrie Swain - 1717 Poplar Street – Portsmouth, OH – She was dismayed that the people living in the homeless encampment by the river off Offinere Street were given a 4-day notice to disappear. She understood the safety issues of having heavy construction ongoing and the need to close the road and to provide safety to remove everyone from harms way, but the city had known about schedule for months. She added that when she heard that four Police Officers and Code Enforcement Official Andy Gedeon had shown up on Friday to tell the people living there that they had 4-days to evacuate; she thought it was a rumor because the city had been very good about that encampment and provided a port-a-potty and a dumpster. She said that recently at Christmas time, some of the Officers came to Tracy Park and told unhoused people about the encampment on the riverbank. She stated that it was hard to understand why they were only given a 4-day notice, with no guidance in the coldest month of the year. She added that Portsmouth promotes themselves as “Where Hospitality Begins” and in her opinion this was a bad move on the part of the city

Gwen Mason – 16062 State Route 104 Lucasville, OH – She asked to read a letter from Landon Puckett who could not be in attendance this evening and she agreed with everything in the letter. “Forcing homeless residents out of their only encampment with just 4-days’ notice is deeply unchrist like and morally indefensible. These are people who have harmed no one, yet they are being punished for simply existing in public. A society’s value are revealed not by how it treats the powerful, but how it treats those with the least protection. Displacing vulnerable people without offering an alternative is not leadership, it is neglect at its finest. If we claim moral values (Christian values) they must be reflected in our actions, not just our rhetoric. I urge Council to work with the city Code Enforcer to address this issue and to have sympathy for our friends who might have something less than we do.”

Becky O’Connor – 3022 Sheridan Road Portsmouth, OH – She voiced the same concerns as Lorrie and Gwen and supports them 100%. She’s a religious person and the heavenly father loves the homeless just as much as he loves her, he loves the sinners, just as much as he loves her and his love has no bounds. She quoted Luke 6:31 – “do to others who would have them do unto you” and she felt that said a lot. She has been down to the encampment and spoken with Robert who lived in his truck that doesn’t run, but that was where he slept. He was in the hospital when his truck was towed away, no one listened, no one cared and the only thing he has now to wear were the clothes he had going into the hospital and it is very cold out. She felt that the city should have some compassion for these people, she said there were Veterans out there that have served their country and done their duty and has had the world turn upon them. She quoted Matthew 25:40 “Truly I tell you whatever you did for one of these, least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me.” She said how we treat others, is how we should treat Jesus and felt that we could do better as a city. She encouraged Council to go to the encampment to speak to the homeless, they are a lot like us, then they are different from us. She’s had the experience to go to the encampment and to volunteer at the warming center and she felt upset that Salvation Army had turned their back on the homeless and not doing as much as they used to and it was up to us as a community to help out those who are in need and we shouldn’t restrict that responsibility to someone else with the thinking that someone else will take care it. She said that it is not only the homeless but the campers in that area; her son has a boat and they weren’t given much notice either as far as to be able to move their boats. She asked where they would get gas if they must go down to the Marina and the closest place her son has was Greenup which would be hard to do, and her granddaughter really likes to go boating and had a lot of set-backs this year and boating made her happy. She said that once the riverfront was paved, it would flood and all the trash from the river will come up, who will clean that up and do we have the money to clean it up?

Katie Cochran – 2901 Cedar Street – She said that she stands in solidarity with the others and she’s gotten to know a lot about them in the past several weeks and this was a significant amount of the manpower that operates a warming station for many of the unhoused community members. These volunteers go without sleep, they pull food from their pantries, they do all of this to make sure that the warming station stays running. Her point in visiting tonight was to ask about the data centers. She said the County Commissioners issued a public statement with frequently asked questions regarding the unnamed Data Center that was proposed for Franklin Furnace. There were multiple mentions in that frequently asked question response that this unnamed company had been working closely with the City Government. She’s asking formally to please let the citizens of Portsmouth (your constituents) in Scioto County know what the city had done in conjunction with the project, what you know about the project, as the citizens have been asking for answers. She said that if for some reason the city could not reply because of a signed NDA (non-disclosure agreement) she asked that the information be released to the public. She said that this was a major concern to citizens and she requested the city to operate with the upmost transparency as possible.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND REPORTS:

City Clerk’s Report – Clerk Ratliff reported the following:

1. She prepared a proclamation for the retirement of Steve Hayes.
2. She received from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control a request for a new Liquor License from Kitchen Collective at 429 2nd Street Portsmouth. There were no objections.
3. She received from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control a request for a transfer of Liquor License Ownership from Dirty Sally’s, LLC at 2110 Gallia Street, Portsmouth to CASBK Holdings, LLC dba Club 740 at the same address. There were no objections.
4. She received City Solicitor’s 2025 Annual report on January 9, 2026 and forwarded it to Council for their review.
5. She reviewed City Clerk’s 2025 Annual report as follows:

CITY CLERK’S ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR 2025
PURSUANT TO SECTION 7 OF THE CITY CHARTER

Regular Sessions	24
Manager’s Conference Sessions	18
Special Meetings	0
Organizational Meeting	0
Executive Sessions	5
Public Hearings	1
Citizens Addressing Council at the Public Hearing	0
Ordinances Passed	65
Resolutions Adopted	17
Additions to the Agenda	18
Readings Waived	42
Items Amended	10
Tabled Ordinances	3
Tabled Resolutions	0
Defeated Ordinances	2
Defeated Resolutions	0
Appointments by Council	29
Oaths of Office	13
Proclamations	13
Ohio Department of Liquor Control	
Notice of Permit Transfers	3
Request for New Permits	1
Notice of Stock Transfers	
Citizens Addressing Council	
Items on the Agenda	17
Items not on the Agenda	155

The City Clerk’s report was received, filed, and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Mosley. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

City Manager’s Report – Manager Sutherland reported the following:

1. He addressed statements concerning the riverfront project. He said the project had been ongoing with many moving parts for the past couple of years. They were recently informed that the permit process through the Corp of Engineers that construction could begin and contractors approached the city with safety issues, what would be torn out, and the whole project must be completed within 10 months. This was \$30 million dollars’ worth of work had to be completed and they thought it best to not allow any access to the riverfront which was why the city took the stance that it took. He added that if someone was to get hurt the city couldn’t get to them, or if there was a fire, the city couldn’t get to it. He said the best thing to do was to get everyone out and keep them out until the riverfront project was complete. He added that they had met with the Boat Clubs and they were very cooperative and understood what was going on and were happy that they would see improvements to their facilities

when it was all done. He explained that this removed the liability from the city and provided safety for all the people and they don't want anyone over there. He said it wasn't spur of the moment "get them out in 4-days", he told them that when construction begins, they would have to leave and the ones that he spoke with, understood it. He said this was \$30 million dollars of investment and the State of Ohio was gracious enough to get it to us and people should be proud of the project.

The City Manager's report was received, filed, and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Mosley. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

Mayor's Report – Mayor Gordon reported the following:

1. She didn't say a whole lot last week during her mayor's report as she wasn't feeling totally up to speed, but she welcomed Councilman Malone and Councilman Neff to the ranks. She said it was the start of a good year and she looked forward to working with everyone and that they wouldn't always agree, but they will disagree with respect.
2. She reminded Council to review the council rules and to be ready to discuss them at the next meeting.
3. She wished Manager Sutherland a Happy Birthday which will be tomorrow. He works very hard for the city.
4. Clerk Ratliff asked to add something to that regarding the council rules. She asked that councilmembers review the rules and if they have questions or concerns jot them down in an email and send them to her. She is making a master copy for the Solicitor to review and each councilmembers question will be color-coated so he will know who to address. She said that Councilman Cole, Councilman Malone, and Councilman Packard have sent theirs and she's waiting to hear from the others so that she could get the document together prior to the next meeting. Mayor Gordon said that the color-coating was very helpful.

The Mayor's report was received, filed, and made part of the record, on a motion by Vice President Mosley. The motion carried viva voce: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays.**

Solicitor Haas Report – Solicitor Haas had no report due to absence.

Auditor Williams Report – Auditor Williams r had no report due to absence.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS FROM CITY COUNCIL

1st Ward – Councilman Malone reported the following:

1. He said that he didn't have a whole lot, but he was grateful for the opportunity to serve on city council once again and be a servant to the first ward residents and to the city.
2. He too had concerns about some of the issues that were brought forward by several citizens tonight. He will speak with Manager Sutherland and Chief Brewer to get some answers, to see if there's a solution or a way to address the issue.
3. He welcomed every first ward resident and his email was listed on the city's website and those on facebook could reach him through social media.

2nd Ward – Councilwoman Gordon reported the following:

1. She advised that she was without a phone for about a week between Christmas and New Years and if anyone tried to contact her, please try again as she now has a new phone with the same number. She also lost most of her contacts, and asked that if you contact her to please let her know who you are so she can input the contact information.
2. She had the honor of reading the retirement Proclamation for Steve Hayes on his last day at WNXT radio station. Steve has done so much for the city, he's a character, and he's still going to be around and she wished him a happy retirement.
3. She thanked Friends of Portsmouth for hosting Winterfest again this year. She said that it was a lot of hours, a lot of volunteers and it was cool that our kids don't have to leave town to do all the activities that were at Winterfest.

3rd Ward - Councilman Cole reported the following:

1. He reminded everyone of the Ellen Vetter Chocolate Walk is February 7th and urged people to get their tickets because they go fast. Last year they sold out.
2. He said that the idea behind what Manager Sutherland was explaining regarding the \$34 million dollar project was extremely complex with lots of moving parts. He was asked what it meant and "if they could walk down to the river to fish?" the answer is "no" not until the project was completed. He said everything from Alexandria Point to Doyles Landing was off-limits and he realizes that it will cause some grief for people that are used to using the riverfront. He hoped everyone realizes how big this project is and why the inconvenience was happening.

4th Ward - Councilwoman Mosley reported the following:

1. She welcomed the two new councilmembers; Councilman Neff and Councilman Malone and she looked forward to working with both.
2. She attended an Early Town Park meeting on the East End with LuAnn Valentine from Community Action. She advised that they (the committee) were in the process of building a shelter. She asked Manager Sutherland if he was aware that they would be reaching out to him and he acknowledged that he was aware. She said that they were also looking to get signage for the park.
3. She advised that January 17th was the Martin Luther King breakfast at the Shawnee State University ballroom at 9:00 a.m. and the tickets are \$15.00. She said that Maxine Malone and her committee always put on a great event in honoring Martin Luther King.

5th Ward – Councilman Neff reported the following:

1. He said that his email was up and running
2. He's received very good comments about the flashing signs in his ward and people were requesting more.
3. He advised that he had a good relationship with the Salvation Army and will reach out to Major Dan and Major Misty as to what they were doing up to this point, but have stopped doing.
4. Safety Issues – he will inquire about speed bumps for Coles Boulevard, Dorman Drive, and 17th Street.
5. He asked for constituents' patience as he gets acclimated and he thanked those that spoke earlier. He said his job was to listen and try to find workable solutions.

6th Ward – Councilman Packard reported the following:

1. He talked about what was ahead and what he's found over the past 5-years of being on council and things that he gets most reports or complaints about and where he's at currently going forward. He will share with council what they will be hearing from him:
 - a. He advised that the Post Office was holding people's mail because Harding Avenue was closed off at Main Street. People have been calling and they've found out from the main Post Office that some of the mail was being brought downtown and people could come to the post office and pick it up. He said it wasn't everyone in that area, but some in the area just passed where the construction was located.
 - b. He said that council will hear him talk about the final brownfield in city.
 - c. He added that one of the biggest complaints was litter, weeds, fences, signs, and potholes.
 - d. He addressed that over the years there had been black ice on the Sciotoville overpass on Route #52. He said that because of the design, if you're eastbound, the first car that spins out stalls in the middle of traffic, and oncoming traffic could not see it until they're right on it. He hoped to be able to work together to get a flashing light for that overpass during inclement weather.
 - e. He would like to see a downtown redevelopment district for Sciotoville as there was a ripe area at the corner of Gallia and Harding Avenue. Two commercial buildings are dilapidated and have been sitting empty for at least 10-years.
 - f. He would like to see the Little Leagues removed from the grant application process as they keep up public property. This is city property that they maintain and spend money on and he felt it would be alright to reimburse them on their expenses. He hoped that moving forward there could be more discussion.
 - g. He receives a lot of complaints about street cleaning. He said the city purchase a new street cleaner and he would like to see a routine/schedule that the public could be aware of and know not to park their cars on streets that were scheduled to be cleaned.
 - h. He said that with the massive amount of revenue that the city was getting from the marijuana tax and combined with the new levy for paving the streets, he would like the city to consider repealing the tag tax that people who live in the city had to pay extra for their tags each year.
 - i. He addressed some water bill complaints. He said that if a person goes online to the bill pay service at the bank and chose to pay the water, the bank would generate a paper check which was then sent to Cincinnati and several people have shown him that even if they received the bill today and go online to pay it through their bank, that check doesn't get to the city in time to avoid a late fee. He requested that the city make it like other utilities, where it would be automatic if you select pay and it would give you the date.
 - j. He's received complaints from people who work in the private sector, they only have their lunch break to take care of business through the city and when they go to the city

departments that have walk-up service, it is closed for lunch. He didn't know if there was a way around it, but he hoped that we could help with that issue or at least have a conversation about it.

- k. He spoke about the owner occupation tax credit that the city gives to residents for real estate. He's seeing more and more LLC and commercial companies buying up the residential real estate and giving less and less of the owner occupation tax credit. He asked that it be quadrupled the amount to incentivize owner occupation. He was aware that there was a bigger discussion at the state level.
- l. He would like to team up with the county and other area organizations to help Maureen Cadagon with the homeless issue.
- m. He reappointed Amy Tomlin to the Art Commission.

**Reappointed
Amy Tomlin
to the Art
Commission**

Vice President Mosley motioned to move into Executive Session to discuss the potential purchase of property and she invited the City Manager. The role was called and the motion carried: **VOTE: 6 ayes– 0 nays, Council recessed into Executive Session at 6:39 p.m.** Vice President Mosley motioned to reconvene from Executive Session. Council reconvened at 7:01 p.m. with all still in attendance.

**Executive
Session**

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m. on a motion by Councilman David Malone.

City Clerk

Mayor

For the full audio version of the Council Meeting, please go to www.portsmouthohio.org under City Council 2026 "Audio".