

ALLIANCE - RECORD OF MEETINGS OF COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2026 REGULAR MEETING OF THE ALLIANCE CITY COUNCIL

The meeting was called to order by President Garnes at 6:00 pm. Councilman Lohnes gave the invocation and led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Kris Bugara, Sheila Cherry, Jim Edwards, Dr. Lohnes and Phillip Mastroianni were present.

A motion was made and seconded to excuse Councilwoman Kiko and Councilwoman King. Roll call was unanimous. **MOTION PASSED BY ACCLAMATION OF ALL MEMBERS.**

MINUTES: Meeting minutes from December 15, 2025, Regular Council Meeting and December 22, 2025, Special Meeting were distributed electronically to all members prior to the meeting. The minutes were received and filed as presented.

President Garnes – no one contacted him in regard to changing the committee assignments. They will stand as they were last year.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Memorandum from Mayor Grove RE: Receipts collected – October 2025
2. Memorandum from Mayor Grove RE: Receipts collected – November 2025
3. Income Tax Recap – December 2025
4. Income Tax 2025 Summary
5. Minutes – Streets and Alleys – December 5, 2025
6. Online Sunshine Laws Training

Cherry had a question regarding the \$10,000 collected in the Mayor's office for November – Bond foreclosure. Motion and seconded to receive and file all communications tendered to the Clerk.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

Mayor Grove: reviewed the receipts collected for the Mayor's office for October and November 2025.

The Annual Report to the Legislation Body 2025 will be completed and issued to everyone for the January 20th meeting. He will also be sending out the 2026 Plan of Operation.

Safety Service Director Dreger: there was quite a snowfall on New Years. He had some questions regarding less salt on the secondary streets. By the time they got done on Thursday night they were getting low – 300 tons. It wasn't going to help much. Good news – we received a delivery of salt. He gave credit to Mr. Bertolini for all the hours worked. He appreciated them being out there.

Thousands of letters went out regarding the lead lines. The letter was required by the EPA. He was going to ask for suspension of rule and adoption tonight, but that's not possible.

Ordinance 001-26 – AECOM – grant approved over two years ago. We realized that the portion to allow us to get the grant, but it didn't include allowing them to be hired. Ordinance 002-26 – needs to be done every two years. It allows us to use the public defender service. We have to be able to provide legal counsel for indigence.

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Questions – Cherry – Ordinance 002-26 – many families do not know this exists. This is where we need that transparency because she knows several families could use this but if they don't know that we have certain things on the books that will assist them in their time of need, we need to be more public about what we have that we offer to the public families. People are dying, people are sick, but we need to let that be known. Dreger – he's not sure what she is believing it for. Cherry – loss of liberty offenses, right? Dreger – it's for criminal attorney. Cherry – because of some of these things led to death and somebody in that family. We need to be more transparent with that Ordinance to let people know. She doesn't care if we put a one liner on the water bill. Something needs to be done, a community service bulletin board because we got a lot of things that we can offer to the City that all of our taxpayer citizens don't know that they can come to the City for. In 2026, we need to be more vigilant in communicating what we can offer to our constituents. Edwards – this is just for somebody that's been criminally charged. Selwa – Correct. Anything from an M4 to an M1 felony. That's your indigent defense fund. Lohnes – wouldn't that be the responsibility of the court to tell the families that they have a public defender option? Selwa – everybody that comes into court that is charged criminally with an M4 to an M1 misdemeanor with a fourth degree 30 days of jail, that's the life liberty that Cherry was just talking about. If you can have incarceration with that charge that's charged by APD, Minerva, Stark County, you are advised of your right to counsel at your initial appearance, at your arraignment. People that are indigent – there's a fee affidavit that shows that you are indigent. You would get the Public Defender unless there is a conflict. At that time, they would appoint private counsel, and this fund pays for it. It's not for any type of private lawsuit or anything like that.

Law Director Selwa: he owes an annual report because he took his oath on December 1st. There are a couple of lawsuits still pending from the prior administration. He is working through those things. The biggest thing – 95% of the old McCaskey Register building is gone. It's going to be backfilled by Friday. He will let everyone know that the gentleman is now serving a couple days in jail for not completing it on time. The judge gave him a deadline.

Auditor Knowles: brought up something that wasn't on the agenda. We need to elect a clerk and a president pro tem the first meeting of the new council. President Garnes apologized. Motion and seconded for Staci Gurney to be the Clerk of Council. Roll call unanimous. Motion and seconded for Councilman Lohnes to be the president pro tem. Roll call unanimous. Sunshine law – every term elected officials have to go through this. This is something that is audited regularly by the state auditors.

We had an audit released last week. Everybody here would have received an email indicating that. It has been posted on the website for the public to review.

Income tax – second year we are not sending out forms. We are sending out a postcard again this year. It will probably be the last time. He reviewed the Income tax recap.

Ordinance 003-26 – Light up Alliance – we established a fund for that in December. He has been receiving checks.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Streets and Alleys: Bugara: No formal report. He would like to ask for support for Ordinances 077-25 & 080-25. Shout out to John Bertolini for getting the leaves done and all the work over New Years. They did a great job. Dreger – thanked him for the compliments but there is a section of leaves that still needs to be completed. East of Union and South of State Street.

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Properties and Lands: Cherry: No formal report.

Utilities: Edwards: No formal report. There was a Water Sewer Advisor Board Meeting on Wednesday, December 17th. Those minutes should be able to be in the communications for the next meeting.

Safety and Judiciary: Kiko: Excused

Community Development: King: Excused

Finance: Lohnes: there will be a Finance and Safety and Judiciary Committee Meeting the third week of January. They will go over the issues that were brought up at the last Council meeting. They will look at 2025 end year numbers and review Ordinances 001 & 003.

Planning Zoning and Housing: Mastroianni: No formal report.

Public Speaks:

Brandi Douthitt – S Seneca – She is disgusted with the fact that the committee assignments didn't change after it being brought to the attention multiple times that there are conflicts of interest. At the very least, it gives the appearance of a conflict of interest, and this council should be opposed to that.

The young man who froze to death – the previous law director brought to Council when it was still warm and cozy outside that something needed to be done. We have to stop making homelessness a political issue. This is a human issue. There are people standing in the way of solutions. There are groups who refuse to work together because of their egos or she doesn't know why. There are solutions and we need to find one. We can't let human beings freeze to death in our City and walk around and say we are doing a good job.

Connie Bancroft – Electric Blvd – She stated the meetings are very difficult to hear what is being said. She is challenging the leadership and Council to find a way for the public to hear clearly the discussions, emotions and decisions so they can participate in the process appropriately as Citizens of Alliance. She complemented Lohnes for his prayer. She also shared a prayer with Council. She gave everyone a copy.

Ben Bolog – Vincent Blvd – why don't we make it easier for them on this side. Why don't we

use the TV screen when bringing up Ordinances? Why do we not do anything to make it so everybody in this room understands what we are talking about? It's our tax dollars that we are spending and then we have to just magically understand what you are talking about or figure out two plus two and a lot of times it's like two plus two equals yellow and we are like what just happened.

He wanted to know if we still had it on to make the Safety Service Director position part-time. He wanted to know what is being done with the wall on Ely. He wants to know if a City official is going to serve jail time.

Is there going to be any types of receipts of the session this year? Are they going to get to hear what the bids are? Can they get pictures?

There were 51 meetings last year that he went to – landlords are bad – landlords are the problem - Rentals are the problem - we need some type of registration – that was the topic of 31 of the 51 meetings.

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Does anybody have any idea how many inspections we did last year? Does anybody have any idea of what's going on? Is there a report made? Is there anything accomplished or do we just waste two years of our time?

2026 – let's get some accountability.

Ola Former – S Morgan – spoke on the infestation of cats and dogs in the neighborhood. She has been attacked on two different occasions by pitbulls. There are refrigerators and stoves everywhere, furniture everywhere. These are all rental properties. No matter who you tell, there's nothing done. She has spoken with Bill at the Health Department. Mr. Oyster before him and Dr. Lohnes really helped her. It's horrible. Something has to be done about the pit bulls. Every time the police come they say they have that invisible fence. It's not true. She seen them attack people twice.

Morgan is a one-way street. They drive it like it is a two-way street. She has called and complained, and they won't do nothing about it. She has it wrote down for Cindy King. Somethings got to be done.

The cat and dog infestation is horrible. If she is attacked again on her property, what can she do to the dog? She is a CCW carrier and is not going to be bit no more.

THIRD READINGS:

Ordinance No. 073-25: Introduced by: Mastroianni: An Ordinance accepting and approving the replat of lots 8192, 8193, and 13223 located at 763 West Harrison Street, in the City of Alliance, County of Stark, and State of Ohio. Reminder this is a residential replat. Motion and second to adopt. Roll call unanimous.

SECOND READINGS:

Ordinance No. 077-25: Introduced by: Bugara: An Ordinance authorizing and directing the Director of Public Safety and Service to advertise for bids and enter into contracts for services to complete and carry out the 2026 Comprehensive Road Resurfacing and Overlay Program in an amount not to exceed \$1,400,000; and declaring an emergency. Motion and seconded to adopt. Lohnes questioned if the rules were suspended. Yes. Roll call unanimous.

Ordinance No. 080-25: Introduced by: Bugara: An Ordinance authorizing and directing the Director of Public Safety and Service to advertise for bids and enter into contracts for the South Liberty Avenue Street Resurfacing Project at a cost not to exceed \$220,000; appropriating funds for the Street Resurfacing Project; and declaring an emergency. Motion and seconded to adopt. Roll call unanimous.

Ordinance No. 081-25: Introduced by: Council As A Whole: An Ordinance ratifying and approving loan agreements with Corarah Properties, LLC and Crucible Industries Alliance, LLC dba Salco Machine, LLC and any and all payments made pursuant thereto. Edwards asked if there was emergency language last time. Motion and seconded to adopt. Cherry need clarity. There was a discussion. Roll call – Bugara, Edwards, Lohnes and Mastroianni – yes. Cherry – no.

NEW BUSINESS:

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Ordinance No. 001-26: Introduced by: Council as a Whole: An Ordinance authorizing and directing the Director of Public Safety and Service to enter into a contract AECOM Technical Services, Inc. for Professional Engineering Service for dam inspections and analysis at Walborn Reservoir, appropriating the sum of \$250,000; and declaring an emergency. Motion and seconded to refer to Finance Committee. Roll call unanimous.

Ordinance No. 002-26: Introduced by: Council as a Whole: An Ordinance authorizing and directing the Director of Public Safety and Service to enter into a two-year contract to provide legal counsel to indigent persons charged with loss of liberty offenses in the Alliance Municipal Court; and declaring an emergency. No action.

Ordinance No. 003-26: Introduced by: Lohnes: An Ordinance making appropriations and transfers of funds in the 2026 appropriations to provide for necessary expenses and adjustments; and declaring an emergency. Motion and seconded to refer to Finance Committee. Roll call unanimous.

OLD BUSINESS:

Edwards – there was a misunderstanding at the last meeting for Ordinance 065-25. It was just to approve the replat for Washington Hills next development. It was to move a border about 300 yards to the north. He heard the residents weren't getting much feedback from the developer. He sent them a letter and asked questions. They met on the 19th of December. They did answer the questions. He isn't against the replat. He wanted to make sure the people were able to meet with the developer. He would like to make a motion to reconsider this Ordinance to bring it back up and then also have a motion to table it. The Developers said they would be here to answer any questions. Bugara – if we do reconsider this, do we have to vote on it tonight? No. Garnes – it has to be reconsidered after the first meeting. Motion and seconded to reconsider. Bugara, Edwards and Lohnes – yes. Cherry – No. Mastroianni – abstained. Cherry asked who owns the lots. Edwards – Lemon and Dehoff. She asked if the neighborhood has questions about what this man is going to do with his lots and how he was going to go about building? Edwards – yes. Cherry – did they ever question when Washington Hills first came up and built what they have out there now? Edwards – he has no idea. That's what she's trying to tell you. Now since they are all happy in their little nice neighborhood, they are going to questions this man about his lots and how he wants to build and this woman over here that just talked about the dogs and shit running up and down. All these things that we are looking at. We are looking at pleasing people in their little nice comfortable homes but yet still there's bigger problems in this town that we got to deal with. Edwards – he agrees but this has nothing to do with that. Cherry – we need to focus on what we need to do to take care of all the people in Alliance. Edwards – don't we need more housing? Cherry – we need more housing because if the Administration would let Niki do what she need to do in Habitat we would have more housing. If the Administration would turn around and go to the Planning Department and let them do their job proactively and do the citations, we can get some down and have lots. If we do 034-25 and bring back the lots from the land bank, we have more property to do what we got to do to make this town look a little bit better all over then north, the south, the east, and the west. Garnes – your points are well taken, but they are not appropriate to what we are discussing. Cherry – he asked and I told him. Motion and seconded to table. Bugara, Edwards, Lohnes – yes. Cherry – no. Mastroianni – Abstained.

ROUND TABLE:

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Councilman Bugara: Nothing

Councilwoman Cherry: 2026 we need to look to the future. Some things that she feels is petty. We need to look outside the box and look for everybody. It's not a certain group or a certain thing. She doesn't mean to be blunt about it, but she has been here for 14 years, and it's been the same thing over and over again. We can look to the future of taking care of everybody and all the issues that's in this town. We got to be proactive about the simple things. We've got Ordinances that been out there for 24 years, but we are not even looking at to actually do the citations. We need to be doing the work. She is sick and tired of being sick and tired of meetings on top of meetings. Two years of this meeting, two years of that meeting. She's got to wait three years to just get grass cut down in her area and these people are upset about what the contractor going to do up in Washington Hills. Do you feel her pain? It has to come better than that. There's bigger problems and fish to fry. All of us got issues. Let's prioritize. In 2026 we said we were going to be proactive and we still ain't going out. Why do we have the oversight Board when we're not even proactively going after these abandoned houses and finding money to try to get some of these houses knocked down and cleaned up? Do y'all see what she sees? We go to do better.

Councilman Edwards: he wanted to comment on that. He agrees with that. Housing is a priority for us and all he is doing is trying to help the constituents in his ward. That's what he is here for.

Councilwoman Kiko: Excused

Councilwoman King: Excused

Councilman Lohnes: The opposition of 065-25 has to do with a zoning change. Is that correct, from an R1 to R2. Dreger passed out a map of the replat. He reviewed the information on the replat.

Councilman Mastroianni: Have a great evening.

Executive Session: Not needed

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn made and seconded. Roll call unanimous. Adjourned at 6:56 pm.



ARTHUR GARNES,
COUNCIL PRESIDENT



STACI R. GURNEY,
COUNCIL CLERK