

ALLIANCE - RECORD OF MEETINGS OF COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 2, 2026 REGULAR MEETING OF THE ALLIANCE CITY COUNCIL

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

President Garnes appointed Jennifer Merriman as the Clerk. Staci had an emergency.

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

MINUTES: Meeting minutes from January 20, 2026, were distributed electronically to all members prior to the meeting. There was one correction that was fixed after the minutes were sent out. In the Order of the Round Table Topics it had Kiko as excused. It was changed to Nothing. The minutes were received and filed with correction noted.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. 2025 GF Report to Council
2. Water Funds
3. Sewer Funds
4. Memorandum from Mayor Grove RE: ECEA Board appointments
5. January 2026 Income Tax recap

There was one addition to the Communications – Board of Zoning & Appeals meeting Feb 17, 2026, at 4:30 pm. Motion and seconded to receive and file all communications tendered to the Clerk. Roll call unanimous.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

Mayor Grove: asked for approval of his ECEA Board appointment. There was a motion and seconded to approve appointment. Roll call unanimous.

Mayor acknowledged Safety Service Director Dreger, Street Superintendent - John Bertolini, Doug Hastings – Distribution and Kim Cox – Parks Department for the outstanding cleanup and safety during the winter storm. He thanked Chief X and Chief Hunt for always keeping everyone safe. He also thanked Deputy Director – Staci Gurney and IT Specialist – Jason Lilley for the communication with the City and the City staff and citizens.

Mayor Grove had a meeting with the Mayor of Canton – William Sherer, Scott Schneider from Refuge of Hope, Abby Schroeder from The Commons and Heidi McClung from GAF. Refuge of Hope would like to include Alliance in their program. They provide everything – food, shelter, clothing, health care, ministries, laundry and showers. Abby and Heidi are going to meet with the Salvation Army to see if that could be our home base.

He thanked Ben Bolog and Clothed in Righteousness for the warming stations.

Safety Service Director Dreger: reviewed several of the Ordinances on the agenda – Ordinances 13, 14, 15, 17 and Resolution 18.

Dreger stated that the Street Department did an incredible job. They had everyone working on it – Park Employees and Distribution. One of the things that they were happiest about is that they were able to clear all secondary streets in about 16 hours. We took one delivery of salt today.

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We have another 180 tons coming this week. We have enough for about three more storms and we have about another 500 on order.

Don Ackerman spoke about the 10 houses that are going to be built though Build Ohio. He answered questions from Council.

Questions for Dreger – Lohnes asked which Ordinances needed passed. King asked if they were just upgrading the lights. She asked if they were putting in turning lanes? No that would require the streets to be widened. Kiko asked if they are paying until the grants come in. ODOT 80/20. Public Works 45/55. \$230,000 already budgeted per Dreger. Kiko – you want that tonight. It would be very good if we can. Kiko – when the packet came out, she received a lot of calls about UDAG. She thinks UDAG needs to be explained. Dreger explained how the Ordinance reads. Kiko asked if we need to change it. Dreger doesn't think he needs to be in. Pete would have been there but had a family emergency. Lohnes – there is a seven-member committee that reviews them.

Law Director Selwa: No formal report. He will not be at the next meeting - Assistant Law Director Fink will be attending.

Auditor Knowles: went over items 1, 2 and 3 in the Communications.

Ordinance 017-26 is all grants per Knowles.

Questions for Knowles - Cherry – asked if there was an employee handbook in his office.

Knowles stated it is online. She asked if there was a social media policy. There is.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Streets and Alleys: Bugara: No formal report. Kuddos to the Street Department and the Water Department that had to be out every night. All the City Departments did a wonderful job.

Properties and Lands: Cherry: No formal report. She wanted to say thank you. She is on one of the side streets that usually much later. They guys was out there. They did a heck of a good job and she wanted to tell them all thank you.

Utilities: Edwards: No formal report. Employees did a fantastic job.

Safety and Judiciary: Kiko: No formal report. They had a combined meeting with Finance.

Community Development: King: No formal report. The meeting was cancelled due to the weather. She believes they'll be rescheduling.

Finance: Lohnes: discussed the Safety and Judiciary and Finance Committee meeting and the restructuring of the Safety Service Director's job and the Director of Water Distribution. He stated there seemed to be good clarity or definitions about what was going on and the Mayor produced a graph that kind of shows the changes. The Safety Service Director still oversees the entire 10 departments. In the past there was the Water Quality Control Director and that's going to be part of Mr. Dreger's role. He answers directly to the Safety Service Director. Maybe they can elaborate on that a little bit. Lohnes passed out a copy of the graph for everyone to look at. He stated there was no objection made at the committee meeting for this to move forward in regards of the restructuring of the two positions. Knowles went over the finance portion of the meeting. Lohnes will have the minutes for the next Council meeting on the 17th. He stated that's for your review – water Quality Control Director. Lohnes also stated there was a discussion of a stipend being an additional payment towards the WQC that they didn't get clarity on what that amount is yet. Question to Lohnes from Cherry – she asked if the Safety Service position was abolished and he only created a Service Department? No – they reviewed the graph. She asked

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if the WQC was a bid out job. The WQC was in the past. It just hadn't been recognized for a period of time. Dreger stated it was up to 2016. Cherry – it's not really creating another job. This was a position up through 2016 and based on the new proposal the Mayor had the right to have Safety Service so we still have a Safety Service Director and then they brought this back alive at WQC. Lohnes – correct. Cherry – without bidding on anything. Lohnes – the question still exists in regard to whether the Supervisor of Water Distribution should have been publicly open. That has always been in question.

Planning Zoning and Housing: Mastroianni: No formal report.

Public Speaks:

Brandi Douthitt – S Seneca – She is excited about the infill building. This is exactly what she was thinking of. She thanked all of the City employees who did such a good job. Seneca – she feels like they waited a little bit. It was 100% okay because she wasn't going anywhere. All in all she thought things went really well and she is impressed at the quality of work that was done. She asked for support on Ordinance 017. It is at the end of her road and it goes out pretty frequently. She would love to see that light fixed. She feels heard and feels like you have been listening.

Ben Bolog – Vincent Blvd – He went back to the Water Treatment and Safety Service Director positions. The position hasn't been filled since 2016. 2017 is when the City started getting a better carryover and money savings and has been really doing a good job at bringing the money back. So wouldn't an efficiency and be more benefit to the taxpayers and our budget by not bringing back a position that we haven't been paying for since when we were in the negative. If it comes down to the aspect of helping the Safety Service Director and splitting it, why don't we just do that splitting of the Safety Service Director to two positions? Mike can be the Service Director and do the service side and the Safety Director do the safety side. He thinks it ultimately comes back to splitting the Safety Service Director position and becoming an efficient budgeted way of doing our system. He asked if when doing traffic lights, is there a way to have Simpson flashing earlier in the evening. That and Main Street are the most annoying at night. It doesn't start flashing until 11:14 pm. Is it possible at 10? Every Mount kid who lives in the neighborhood literally loops all the way down around and comes up Vincent and then it's like a mass squiry to try to get on Union.

THIRD READINGS: None

SECOND READINGS:

Resolution No. 004-26: Introduced by: Lohnes: A Resolution authorizing the sale, by internet auction during calendar year 2026, of City owned personal property which is not needed for public use or which is obsolete or unfit for the use for which it was acquired. No action.

Ordinance No. 006-26: Introduced by: Council as a Whole: An Ordinance authorizing and directing the transfer of Stark County Auditor's permanent parcels nos. 101477, 103145, 106353, 109138, 108130, 102878, 104664, 107032, 104648, 100610 and 103833, no longer needed for municipal purposes, to the Greater Alliance Development Corporation. Motion and seconded to suspend the rules for three readings. Roll call unanimous. Motion and seconded to Adopt. Roll call unanimous.

Ordinance No. 007-26: Introduced by: Council as a Whole: An Ordinance waiving City fees for water taps and sewer taps, and the City's portion of any required building permits for single family residential construction on Stark County Auditor's permanent parcel nos. 101477,

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103145, 106353, 109138, 108130, 102878, 104664, 107032, 104648, 100610 and 103833 by Build Ohio Acquisition & Holding Company, LLC. Motion and seconded to suspend the rules for three readings. Roll call unanimous. Motion and seconded to Adopt. Roll call unanimous.

Ordinance No. 008-26: Acquisition is misspelled on your copy. It has been corrected on the original. Introduced by: Council as a Whole: An Ordinance appropriating funds and authorizing and directing the Auditor to pay \$100,000 to Build Ohio Acquisition & Holding Company, LLC from the HUD Fund Account No. 235-4-533-54104 buildings for single family residential construction on Stark County Auditor's permanent parcel nos. 101477, 103145, 106353, 109138, 108130, 102878, 104664, 107032, 104648, 100610 and 103833 in the Liberty Heights area. Motion and seconded to suspend the rules for three readings. Roll call unanimous. Motion and seconded to waive Finance. Roll call unanimous. Motion and seconded to Adopt. Roll call unanimous.

Ordinance No. 009-26: Introduced by: Bugara: An Ordinance directing the Director of Public Safety and Service to install and maintain a "Children at Play" sign at the intersection of Stratford Place and Northview Avenue facing westbound traffic on Stratford Place; and declaring an emergency. No action.

Ordinance No. 011-26: Introduced by: Council as a Whole: An Ordinance authorizing all actions necessary to accept Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) 2026 Energized Community Grant(s) Funds. No action.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ordinance No. 013-26: Introduced by: Council as a Whole: An Ordinance accepting the execution of a loan agreement with respect to the proceeds derived from Urban Development Action Grants (UDAG) in the amount of \$175,000 to Dudbites Downtown, LLC and Dudbites, LLC; and declaring an emergency. Motion and seconded to suspend the rules for three readings. Roll call unanimous. Lohnes - this is going into the old cheesecake building. There's going to be a front area in which will be a pizza shop and in the back a catering kitchen. The business previously exists and will continue to exist in Damascus. It's just expanding to and it did go through the UDAG Committee for approval. Motion and seconded to Adopt. Roll call unanimous.

Ordinance No. 014-26: Introduced by: Council as a Whole: An Ordinance accepting the execution of a loan agreement with respect to the proceeds derived from Urban Development Action Grants (UDAG) in the amount of \$620,173.45 to Tradition Investments, LLC and Ballher, LTD.; and declaring an emergency. Motion and seconded to suspend the rules for three readings. Roll call unanimous. Motion and seconded to Adopt. Lohnes - this is UDAG - going into the Fastenal building. He's been in business for 10 years. It's a very interesting company. There are ties to the WNBA. Roll call unanimous.

SSD Dreger stated that the point is well taken. It's something that kind of has been overlooked and we will make sure that when the Ordinance follows that second meeting minus the financial things that you see, we will have a presentation from now on that lets the public see what's coming here.

Ordinance No. 015-26: Introduced by: Edwards: An Ordinance authorizing the Director of Public Safety and Service to enter into contract with Arcadis for Professional Engineering

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Services to provide Stream Mitigation Monitoring for the Wastewater Treatment Plant NFA Improvements Phase I at a cost not to exceed \$33,429.00; and declaring an emergency. Motion and seconded to suspend the rules for three readings. Roll call unanimous. Motion and seconded to Adopt. Kiko asked for explanation and Dreger explained. Roll call unanimous.

Ordinance No. 016-26: Introduced by: Edwards: An Ordinance authorizing the Director of Public Safety and Service to enter into contract for the design, construction and installation of a new blower control cabinet for the Wastewater Treatment Plant at a cost not to exceed \$27,000. Motion and seconded to suspend the rules for three readings. Roll call unanimous. Motion and seconded to Adopt. Roll call unanimous.

Ordinance No. 017-26: Introduced by: Bugara: An Ordinance appropriating funds and authorizing and directing the Director of Public Safety and Service to advertise for bids and enter into contracts for the upgrade and replacement of traffic signals along US62/East State Street at South Arch Avenue, South Seneca Avenue, and South Mahoning Avenue at a cost not to exceed \$750,000; and declaring an emergency. Motion and seconded to waive Finance. Roll call unanimous. Motion and seconded to suspend the rules for three readings. Roll call unanimous. Motion and seconded to Adopt. Roll call unanimous.

Resolution No. 018-26: Introduced by: Council as a Whole: A Resolution establishing weather emergency pay for City Employees. Motion and seconded to adopt. Roll call unanimous.

OLD BUSINESS: None

ROUND TABLE:

Councilman Bugara: Nothing

Councilwoman Cherry: Ordinance 015-26 – is it for the algae or what was it for? Dreger – no, it's a process to close the whole construction project. That's all we should say. She's looking out for the people. They want to see it. That's all she's saying Mike, is just clarity. Mike stated he suggests she read the whole ordinance. It's pretty clear.

Councilman Edwards: have a good evening. Stay warm.

Councilwoman Kiko: thanked the Safety Services and the Street Department.

Councilwoman King: thanked the City for the snow removal and all the hours that they put in. She even saw water people in the trucks moving snow. The City definitely came together.

Councilman Lohnes: wanted to comment on the roads as well. They did a great job, but he asked has anybody had any trouble with seeing over the mounds of snow at the stop signs? He doesn't know if anything can be done. Selwa stated that it is being moved by a front loader away from the curb. He stated that Dreger is probably taking care of that in some capacity. He also thanked the Mayor for his action in getting involved with the homelessness issue. He is excited about Build Ohio and GAF.

Councilman Mastroianni: thanked the Street and Water Departments and everyone that came out for the school district. They rode on buses around the bus routes and cleared corners. That was great community effort to get the kids back to school.

SSD Dreger thinks the community also deserves a lot of credit. When you rely on street parking, it's tough. There were people they had to move and things they still need follow up on, but overall, the persons who rely on on street parking for this snowfall did a phenomenal job of

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trying to help then get out of the way. It made it tough on some of the parking lots to get into but all in all the community ought to get a hand for what they did.

President Garnes – everyone received a letter regarding Ohio Revised Code 731.06 that requires that our wards be equal in voting population, the old one to one vote. One person, one vote. The Mayor and Garnes met with the League of Women Voters. They outlined the process they use. They are nonpartisan. They are going to ask them to come and present it to council because this is really Council's responsibility to do. They are going to make that arrangement.

Garnes also stated there are two vacancies on the Water and Sewer Committee. If anyone is interested in being appointed to that committee they need to email Mr. Dreger their name.

Executive Session:

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn made and seconded. Roll call unanimous. Adjourned at 7:08 pm.



ARTHUR GARNES,
COUNCIL PRESIDENT



STACI R. GURNEY, Jennifer Merriman
COUNCIL CLERK