

**Minutes**  
**Committee of the Whole**  
**October 6, 2025**

The Committee of the Whole met on October 6, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room at the City Building. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Melissa Monich. Attendance was as follows:

Members Present: Dan Driehaus, Joe Hornsby, Melissa Monich, Cindy Peebles, April Robles, Jodi Woffington, Chris Woodside

Staff Present: Rusty Herzog-City Manager; Brooke Brady-Police Chief; Rob Nicolls-Public Works Director; Jeremiah Caudill-Finance Director, Rachel Leininger-Human Resources Director

Mayors for Peace Organization

The meeting began with Mayor Monich introducing the topic of the Mayors for Peace Organization. She explained that Werner Lange, a retired college professor and resident of Oliver Road, had approached the City with an invitation to join the organization. Mr. Lange currently serves as the chairperson of the Ohio Peace Council and shares this opportunity to become part of a global initiative rooted in the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation. The Mayor clarified that the organization's purpose is to unite cities worldwide in opposition to nuclear war.

Mayor Monich emphasized that the membership process was straightforward and came with minimal commitment. She stated that after carefully reviewing the materials, she found that joining the organization involved no mandatory activities. Membership mainly serves as a public declaration against nuclear warfare. However, she noted that educational materials and programs are available for cities that wish to participate more actively. These include resources for local schools, educational opportunities, and optional events promoting peace and awareness.

The Mayor further detailed that the annual membership fee is approximately \$13.43. She mentioned that when Mr. Lange first contacted her, ten Ohio communities had already joined Mayors for Peace. Mr. Lange's goal was to encourage more Ohio cities, including Wyoming, to take part in this symbolic global effort.

In summarizing the organization's intent, Mayor Monich explained that Mayors for Peace was originally founded by the mayor of Hiroshima to promote international solidarity and collective acknowledgment of the dangers of nuclear war. The network now spans cities across every continent, reflecting a shared vision for global peace. The Mayor also noted that Mr. Lange, as a Wyoming resident and active peace advocate, hoped that the City of Wyoming would join this international coalition.

The discussion continued with questions from attendees about whether any obligations, bylaws, or initiatives were required after joining. Mayor Monich assured everyone that there were none. Participation in additional programs—such as educational exchanges, art competitions, and peace education webinars—was entirely voluntary. She mentioned some of the symbolic options offered by the organization, such as receiving seeds from trees that survived the atomic bombing or hosting exhibitions of peace-themed artwork and posters. She reiterated that all these opportunities were optional and intended to encourage community engagement if the City so desired.

Members expressed support for joining the organization, emphasizing that it aligned naturally with the City's values. Mayor Monich agreed, saying that joining was a simple yet powerful gesture to affirm the City's stance against nuclear war. She clarified that if the organization had required ongoing programs or mandatory events, the decision might have required further consideration, but since all participation was optional, it was primarily a symbolic commitment.

The Mayor concluded that the City's inclusion on the Mayors for Peace roster would simply acknowledge Wyoming's support for peace and international solidarity. She noted that the City would receive a logo for use in communications or on email signatures, which would serve as a visual representation of its participation. Mayor Monich added that the broader purpose of the organization was to increase global awareness through collective commitment, and even this discussion itself contributed to that mission.

Council Members appeared supportive, and the overall sentiment favored joining the Mayors for Peace Organization as a meaningful yet low-cost and low-effort way to promote the City's values of peace, education, and global awareness.

#### CIP Projects

The discussion opened with Mr. Herzog presenting an updated five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list for 2026 through 2030 and explaining that Council adopts a five-year plan; this reorganized list is intended to satisfy that task. He described the layout of the working spreadsheet: a 2026 column of proposed projects slated for budget approval, a 2026 "alternate" column of projects that will only proceed later in the year if funding becomes available and Council appropriates additional dollars, and "out-year" placeholders for 2027-2030. Each project is labeled with a short description, whether it is grant-eligible, and its expected funding mix across categories such as Cash (General Fund), Cash (Streets & Roads Fund), OPWC Loan, Grants/Donations, Cash (Water Fund), or Bonds. Cumulative totals appear at the bottom of the columns to show both annual and funding-source roll-ups.

Mr. Herzog highlighted that the 2026 total shown on the working sheet is \$13,664,000, a figure that includes major road and water work financed by a \$10,000,000 short-term note and an additional \$2,100,000 from SORTA/Metro. To clarify the size of the non-road capital program, Mr. Herzog broke out the core 2026 CIP at \$1,564,000 when the \$12.1 million of road and water work is excluded. He confirmed that Council historically approved \$100,000 per year for sidewalk maintenance, that no sidewalk work was done in 2025, and that the city's real need is closer to \$200,000 annually going forward. For 2026 the sidewalk replacement program totals \$200,000, with \$125,000 covered by a Hamilton County Block Grant and \$75,000 from the General Fund; future years will likely require the full \$200,000 from the General Fund unless additional grants are secured. Separately, a \$100,000 General Fund allocation is planned for a new sidewalk on Linden Lane—paired with the road project but outside the \$10 million note because the note did not authorize new sidewalks—so residents on Linden Lane and Linden Ridge can connect by sidewalk to Springfield Pike.

Mr. Herzog reviewed additional 2026 project lines. He scheduled \$30,000 in 2026 for design work to prepare an \$800,000 water tower painting project programmed in 2028. He outlined a comprehensive Recreation Center “turf and fan experience” project currently estimated at approximately \$900,000. That package replaces the synthetic turf (estimated at roughly \$535,000 within the total) and improves spectator viewing by removing the existing chain-link fence line in front of the bleachers, pouring interior concrete pads, and installing an eight-foot ornamental aluminum perimeter fence with brick or concrete pillars along the recreation building side. The plan contemplates branded lower panels along the fence and separate upper screening where sponsorships could be sold, along with end-zone netting to keep balls within the field and potential parking enhancements; fence bid results are still pending.

Additionally, a \$100,000 line for new income-tax software is being added because the current system is no longer supported, and he noted an unplanned \$30,000 in pool pump and gutter-cover repairs that must be completed. He also proposed a \$100,000 city-wide camera program focused on the Police Department (interior and exterior), the City Building, the Recreation Center and fields, and the Village Green. He expects the final price to come in below \$100,000 once bids are finalized. All cameras will be standardized on a single video platform for fixed-site cameras while maintaining Flock Safety license-plate reader service as a separate tool. Addressing a resident's privacy concern about Flock, he clarified that while private entities may operate Flock cameras, they cannot access police data; private operators may elect to share their own camera data with law enforcement, but data does not flow the other way. Staff will design the fixed-site camera system for future expansion.

The 2026 alternate list focuses on maintenance and amenity work that could move forward if year-end capacity is available. Alternates include paving the City Building lot, completing the remaining high-school lot paving, resurfacing the asphalt trail at Oak Park, and

renovating the Chisholm Park playground at a total placeholder of \$1,200,000 with a target funding split of \$600,000 from the General Fund and \$600,000 from grants or donations.

An \$80,000 placeholder has been allocated for first-floor restroom access at the Fine Arts Center to support accessibility and serve the Village Green. However, Mr. Herzog cautioned that the ultimate cost will likely exceed \$80,000 and that the City and the Fine Arts Center will need to pursue outside grants and finalize the design before returning to the Council. A \$100,000 initial estimate is listed for restroom improvements at the City Building.

The alternates also include \$30,000 for the design of a two-phase dirt bike skills and pump track concept at Oak Park. Recreation Commission members have reviewed the concept, but no budget was presented to them, and the City Manager does not intend to advance construction dollars at this time. Each construction phase is estimated at approximately \$500,000, and the proponent believes that philanthropic and grant funding could cover nearly 100 percent of the costs. Mr. Herzog reiterated that design funding would only be considered after the concept has been fully vetted and competing priorities have been addressed.

He reported strong progress on out-year transportation grants. The Vale Creek Bridge and Hike/Bike Trail project, originally penciled for an earlier year, is now programmed for 2027 because the City secured a grant award of approximately \$937,000 that fully funds design, engineering, and construction. Staff are exploring whether the funds could arrive sooner, but 2027 is the working year until confirmed otherwise. He also emphasized the City's recent grant success, noting a running total of about \$9,300,000 awarded during his tenure as City Manager.

Mr. Herzog then walked through the cash position that underpins the 2026 plan. The City targets a minimum reserve equal to six months of operating expenses, currently estimated at roughly \$5,000,000. The projected year-end 2026 balance is \$8,451,000. Net of the six-month reserve, that leaves approximately \$3,451,000 available for capital. After subtracting the \$1,564,000 in non-road 2026 CIP projects, an uncommitted balance of about \$1,887,000 remains. He recommended holding most of that cushion in case the City does not receive OPWC/SCIP funding for the Fleming Road project scheduled for 2027. If the grant package is awarded as requested, the roadway portion would be fully grant-funded, and the water portion—estimated at \$2,000,000—would be financed with a 0 percent loan. If the City is not awarded the loan in December, staff will need to preserve \$1,000,000 in 2026 and another \$1,000,000 in 2027 from cash to cover the water work. The road share would reduce the number of other streets that can be addressed under the existing \$10,000,000 note. He underscored the timing complication that the 2026 budget must be adopted before the December grant decision is known, making prudent reserves essential.

He closed the budget segment by noting several external pressures that argue for caution, even if alternatives could be funded on paper. Health-insurance costs continue to rise sharply under the City's self-insured arrangement. The General Assembly is discussing substantial changes to property tax policy that could materially affect local revenue. Equipment costs remain elevated. Finally, even if funds are available, staff capacity may limit the number of projects that can be delivered in a single construction season, which could naturally push some alternates into 2027. Separate questions addressed the Civic Center, where a stage project may still proceed, despite the fact that basement renovations are not currently included in the budget. Additionally, a pickleball concept proposed for 2027-2028 will be refined with user input.

Under miscellaneous business, Mr. Hornsby provided an update on planning for the United States Semiquincentennial. A City committee, chaired by Rachel Leininger, has begun meeting to prepare 2026 programming that incorporates the 250th theme into existing events and partnerships. The committee includes representatives from the Wyoming Historical Society, WCIA, JWC, staff, and a Council liaison. It will also involve partners such as the Art Show Committee and the Fine Arts Center as specific projects arise. The group is open to adding high school students. Ideas under consideration include coordinating kid-art installations in public buildings, listing Wyoming's murals on a statewide interactive map and in Ohio Magazine, exploring a highly visible time capsule on the Village Green, and aligning with countywide efforts to draw regional visitors. The team is also exploring collaborations with the Flying Pig Marathon to integrate 250th branding and volunteer recruitment, with the broader goal of amplifying Wyoming's profile during a year of statewide commemoration.

Wyoming resident Clay Monahan was present at the meeting and addressed Council regarding a bike park proposal. The discussion centered on a proposal to establish a bike skills and pump-track facility at Oak Park, aiming to better serve youth riders and diversify recreational uses citywide. Mr. Monahan explained that conversations with staff began more than a year ago, when Rachel Leininger was still working in the Recreation Department, and have been driven by an observable need: middle-school and teenage riders are constantly seeking places to ride. He described seeing groups of children repeatedly circling the business district on bikes and scooters, and noted similar activity at Crescent Park. He emphasized that Oak Park is a strong fit for this use and that the City's Master Plan calls for more bike facilities, including "off-trail" options that go beyond the existing multi-use paths.

The proposal envisions a phased development located on the north field at Oak Park. That area, which sits atop settled landfill material and currently serves primarily as a buffer during events like the Fourth of July fireworks, is less suited to traditional field sports and is underutilized for programmed events such as the Easter Egg Hunt. The proposed Phase 1 would establish a youth-focused skills area and a beginner pump track featuring low,

rolling elements suitable for bicycles, scooters, and skateboards. The concept purposefully starts at the "entry level" of difficulty to create a safe, inclusive space for younger riders and families while laying groundwork for future progression. A reserved envelope on the site would allow a Phase 2 expansion once demand, funding, and design details are in place; that layout also preserves space for a potential recycling initiative under separate consideration, ensuring compatible long-term use of the backfield.

Mr. Monahan linked the project to regional trail connectivity. He noted that Wyoming sits at the base of a "creek triangle" connection that will tie into Winton Woods and Sharon Woods and ultimately link to Cincinnati's CROWN loop. Because Oak Park is already adjacent to these corridors, a bike skills area would serve both neighborhood riders and visiting trail users, creating a logical node for families who arrive by path rather than by car. To ground the concept, he referenced successful models, including the Dayton Bike Yard, which Rusty visited to observe operations and design features firsthand.

Stakeholder and technical support were outlined in some detail. The Cincinnati Off-Road Alliance (CORA), which builds and maintains more than 100 miles of local mountain-bike trails, has reviewed the Oak Park site. CORA's director of trail development walked the field with Mr. Monahan, and offered positive preliminary feedback, and indicated a willingness to advise on design and grant strategy. He added that similar Cincinnati-area projects have succeeded with support from trail organizations and regional partners, suggesting Oak Park could follow that template.

The immediate request is funding for professional design services in the amount of \$30,000. Completing design work within four to five months would position the City to apply by March to the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which CORA believes is the best initial fit and for which Mr. Monahan characterized the prospects as "more likely than not." If the March window is missed, the RTP cycle repeats the following year. He also outlined a layered funding approach for construction that would pursue Hamilton County opportunities in 2027, explore targeted state budget earmarks with the understanding that those are lower-probability, and engage private and industry philanthropy, including bike-industry programs that support community pump tracks. Regardless of external awards, he anticipated that a community fundraising component would be necessary to close any remaining gap.

Council questions centered on the likelihood of funding and organizational roles. When asked to quantify the chances of RTP success, Mr. Monahan stated that, in CORA's view, the project is competitive at the concept stage and would be stronger with a completed design. He clarified that CORA stands for the Cincinnati Off-Road Alliance and summarized its mission and footprint to underscore its credibility as a partner. Members thanked Clay for the presentation, acknowledged the clear youth demand and the alignment with the Master Plan, and noted that a modest design investment could validate costs, refine

phasing, and strengthen grant applications. The conversation concluded with appreciation for the work to date and an understanding that early-2026 action on design would be necessary to meet the March grant deadline.

#### Miscellaneous

Chief Brady reported on recent investigative developments and the critical role that Flock Safety Camera technology has played in solving major cases in the City of Wyoming. The discussion began with a review of a significant burglary that occurred on August 13 on Laramie Trail. This case was described as one of the largest burglary incidents the city has experienced in several years. Detective Doss, assigned to the case as his first major investigation, was credited with leading a successful multi-agency operation that resulted in the identification and indictment of suspects. Through collaboration with the West Chester Police Department, Butler County authorities, and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), the investigation uncovered a large, organized crime ring operating primarily in Butler County but also responsible for multiple burglaries in Hamilton County, including the Wyoming incident.

The success of this case was largely attributed to the Flock Safety Camera System. Detective Doss used a new analytical feature within Flock's "Capture" search tool to connect vehicle license plate data between jurisdictions. West Chester investigators had obtained a plate number from one suspect vehicle. When they entered it into the system, the Flock software revealed patterns linking that vehicle to another that frequently traveled with it at multiple burglary scenes. Wyoming's Flock data corroborated these findings, confirming that two suspect vehicles were operating together. Law enforcement agencies subsequently issued an "attempt to locate" alert, and one of the vehicles—a Volvo—was stopped in West Chester. Officers monitoring the radio recognized the connection to the Wyoming burglary in real time. Based on this coordinated effort, four individuals were indicted the previous week on two counts of complicity to burglary and one count of participating in a pattern of corrupt criminal activity. The department emphasized this as a major investigative win and a strong demonstration of interagency cooperation supported by advanced surveillance technology.

Chief Brady reported on another major case resolved with the assistance of Flock. On September 17, officers responded to a report of a runaway juvenile. The mother had contacted police after finding a note from her son and discovering that he had deactivated his Life360 tracking app and disabled his phone's location features. Initially, digital pings suggested the boy might be in Oklahoma or possibly with his father in Kentucky, which complicated the search. However, officers continued to monitor Flock cameras for sightings of his vehicle and received multiple hits in the Fairfield area. After learning from the mother that the juvenile had an acquaintance in Fairfield, Wyoming, officers coordinated with the Fairfield Police Department to check that address. The teen was successfully located and returned home safely the following day. Officers noted that without the Flock system's

ability to detect and trace the vehicle, the outcome could have been significantly delayed or unsuccessful, given the lack of other tracking tools.

Chief Brady further informed Council that Flock cameras are now routinely used in a wide range of investigations, with these two cases serving as prominent examples of their value. They also cautioned that the department has seen a sharp increase in scam-related cases, including one ongoing investigation involving a potential loss of around \$100,000. Officers routinely remind residents to remain vigilant and to treat any request for payment in Bitcoin as an immediate red flag. She reiterated that no legitimate government agency, law firm, or business currently requires payment in cryptocurrency for taxes, legal fees, or similar obligations.

Chief Brady was asked if there were any details on how the burglary suspects had targeted Laramie Trail, and if their operations were based mainly out of West Chester. Chief Brady explained that, while they could not disclose all investigative details due to the ongoing nature of the case, the group had specifically targeted certain Hispanic households in specific communities. When the suspect vehicles were stopped, investigators found a detailed list of residences in their possession. Evidence suggested that the group had been selecting targets based on specific characteristics of the homes and neighborhoods. The department added that one additional residence in Wyoming had been identified as a potential target, and officers were able to notify that household early, preventing another burglary. She described the ring as an organized and highly intelligent network that had been operating across multiple jurisdictions before being dismantled.

The discussion concluded with thanks extended to the Police Department for their dedication and to Detective Doss for his effective work in resolving the case. Council Members acknowledged the importance of technological tools, such as Flock cameras, in strengthening public safety, improving investigative capacity, and building cooperative relationships between regional law enforcement agencies.

Adjourn

With no further items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debby Martin, Executive Assistant

Melissa Monich, Mayor