

BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

September 10, 2026

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1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Council of the City of Blue Ash, Ohio, was held on September 10, 2026. Mayor Jill Cole called the meeting to order in Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was video recorded and viewable on the City of Blue Ash website and WatchBlueAshOhio.com.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Cole led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilman Jeff Capell, Councilman Jim Friend, Councilman Brian Gath, Councilman Pramod Jhaveri, Councilman Marc Sirkin, Vice Mayor Katie Schneider, and Mayor Jill Cole,

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager David Waltz, Solicitor Bryan Pacheco, Deputy Clerk of Council Julie Kipper, Assistant City Manager Kelly Harrington, Treasurer Matt Sanders, Police Chief Roger Pohlman, Public Works Director Gordon Perry, Parks & Recreation Director Brian Kruse, Fire Chief Chris Theders, Communications Coordinator Rachel Murray, and interested citizens

4. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Vice Mayor Schneider moved, Councilman Gath seconded to accept the agenda as revised. A voice vote was taken. Six members voted yes. Councilman Capell voted no. Motion carried.

1. *MEETING CALLED TO ORDER*
2. *PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE*
3. *ROLL CALL – Deputy Clerk of Council Julie Kipper*
4. *ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA*
5. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES*
 - a. *Regular Meeting of August 13, 2026*
6. *COMMUNICATIONS*
 - a. *Presentation of Proclamation recognizing National Adult Education & Family Literacy Week, September 14-19, 2026*
 - b. *Communications to Council – Deputy Clerk of Council Julie Kipper*
 - c. *Reports From Outside Agencies*
 - d. *Mayor’s Court Report – August 2026*
 - e. *Financial Report – Motion to accept the report for August 2026*
7. *HEARINGS FROM CITIZENS*
8. *COMMITTEE REPORTS*
 - a. *Finance & Administration Committee, Marc Sirkin, Chairperson*
 1. Resolution No. 2026-63, *Providing for amendments within the 2026 annual appropriation Resolution No. 2025-71*
 2. Resolution No. 2026-64, *Authorizing contracts for employee benefits coverage*
 3. Resolution No. 2026-65, *Levying special assessments on real property related to property maintenance issues*
 4. Resolution No. 2026-66, *Authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources*
 5. ~~Resolution No. 2026-67, *Resolution removing special assessments previously levied in cooperation with the Suburban Communities Energy Special Improvement District, Inc.*~~

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- b. *Parks & Recreation Committee, Brian Gath, Chairperson*
 - 1. Resolution No. 2026-68, *Authorizing a professional services agreement for the rental and installation of a temporary ice rink at Summit Park*
- c. *Planning & Zoning Committee, Pramod Jhaveri, Chairperson*
 - 1. Resolution No. 2026-69, *Approving a Concept Development Plan for a 3-acre site at 4255 Parkview Drive in the Arabella subdivision of The Neighborhoods at Summit Park*
- d. *Public Safety Committee, Jeff Capell, Chairperson*
 - 1. Resolution No. 2026-70, *Authorizing the purchase of two replacement cruisers for the Police Department*

9. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. *Property Acquisition – to consider the purchase of property for public purposes, or for the sale of property at competitive bidding, if premature disclosure of information would give an unfair competitive or bargaining advantage to a person whose personal, private interest is adverse to the general public interest*
- b. *Details relative to the security arrangements and emergency response protocols for a public body or a public office, if disclosure of the matters discussed could reasonably be expected to jeopardize the security of the public body or public office*

11. ADJOURNMENT

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Friend moved, Vice Mayor Schneider seconded to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 13, 2026. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Presentation of Proclamation recognizing National Adult Education & Family Literacy Week, September 14-19, 2026

Mayor Cole presented a proclamation to Sara Betts, Director of University of Cincinnati’s Aspire Program to recognize National Adult Education & Family Literacy Week from September 14-19, 2026. UC’s Aspire Program is an adult education program available in the community to help individuals build literacy, and workforce skills.

- b. Communications to Council

The Clerk reported that the City received a notice from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control for a liquor license transfer application (Permit No. 10019546-1) for Yori, LLC. located in the former Catch A Fire Pizza at 9290 Kenwood Road, Blue Ash, Ohio 45242. The Police Department has reviewed the request and had no objections. There were no objections expressed by Council.

- c. Reports From Outside Agencies

There were no representatives from outside agencies present at the meeting.

- d. Mayor’s Court Report – August 2026

RECEIPTS COLLECTED:

(Cash Book Total/Restitutions/Bond Surcharge/Bond Forfeitures/Bond Returned:..... \$7,910.50

DISBURSEMENTS:

To the City of Blue Ash
(Fines/costs/Expungements/forfeitures/NSF check charges, vendor permits)\$5,729.00
To the State of Ohio:\$2,027.50
To Hamilton County Municipal Court\$79.50
Refunds Issued/Overpayment (not included in receipts collected)\$0.00
Bonds Returned\$0.00
Restitution payment\$74.50
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS \$7,910.50

TOTAL IN BOND ACCOUNT (not yet applied included in receipts collected)\$0.00
Mayor’s Court Traffic/ Parking citations issued..... 73

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Court Criminal/Building citations issued.....	0
OVI Citations Issued.....	1
Seatbelt (Click it or Ticket Campaign)	
Total Mayor’s Court Citations Issued	74
BLUE ASH REVENUE FROM MAYOR’S COURT CASES:.....	\$5,729.00

e. Financial Report – August 2026

Vice Mayor Schneider moved Councilman Jhaveri seconded to accept the Financial Report for August 2026 as submitted. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried.

CITY OF BLUE ASH FINANCIAL POSITION STATEMENT- MONTH ENDING AUGUST 31, 2026			
MONTH TO DATE	2025	2026	
START OF MONTH FUND BALANCE:	\$91,577,902.72	\$95,997,104.10	
Revenues:			
Earnings Tax Collections:	\$3,229,119.91	\$3,810,348.33	
Debt Financing (long term)	–	–	
Debt Financing (short term)	–	–	
Other Revenue Received:	\$1,562,149.83	\$1,842,807.12	
= Total Monthly Receipts	\$4,791,269.74	\$5,653,155.45	
Expenditures:			
Long term Debt Payments	475,731.26	201,243.76	
Short term Debt Payments	–	–	
Other Expenditures:	\$4,709,455.99	\$3,545,171.04	
= Total Monthly Expenditures:	\$(5,185,187.25)	\$(3,746,414.80)	
END OF MONTH FUND BALANCE:	\$91,183,985.21	\$97,903,844.75	
END OF MONTH GENERAL FUND BALANCE:	\$81,949,127.81	\$87,126,482.35	

YEAR TO DATE	2025	2026	
START OF YEAR FUND BALANCE:	\$88,817,299.72	\$90,783,045.41	
Revenues:			
Earnings Tax Collections:	\$28,721,217.19	\$31,529,490.14	
Debt Financing (long term)	–	30,000,000.00	
Debt Financing (short term)	20,055,907.25	–	
Other Revenue Received:	\$19,267,765.60	\$19,944,915.87	
= Total YTD Receipts	\$68,044,890.04	\$81,474,406.01	
Expenditures:			
Long term Debt Payments	\$2,973,654.21	\$3,838,566.19	
Short term Debt Payments	20,719,786.11	20,670,111.98	
Other Expenditures:	\$41,984,764.23	\$49,844,928.50	
= Total YTD Expenditures:	\$(65,678,204.55)	\$(74,353,606.67)	
YEAR TO DATE FUND BALANCE	\$91,183,985.21	\$97,903,844.75	
YEAR TO DATE GENERAL FUND BALANCE:	\$81,949,127.81	\$87,126,482.35	

YTD Interest rec'd: (incl. in Other Rev.) \$2,280,259.42
Receipt and Eexpenditure figures do not include interfund transfers or advances. All debt includes principal and interest.

BLUE ASH INCOME TAX DIV. INCOME TAX RECEIPT SUMMARY - MONTH ENDING AUGUST 31, 2026			
MONTH TO DATE	2025	2026	
Business Net Profit	\$170,030.29	\$403,074.41	
Resident Net Profit	\$40,448.77	\$39,027.90	
Non-Resident Net Profit	\$7,359.00	\$7,888.96	
Subcontractor Net Profit	\$(3,995.73)	\$3,379.16	
Net Profit Total	\$213,842.33	\$453,370.43	
Withholding	\$2,917,112.99	\$3,265,333.61	
Subcontractor Withholding	\$98,164.59	\$91,644.29	
Withholding Total	\$3,015,277.58	\$3,356,977.90	

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Monthly Collection Totals	<u>\$3,229,119.91</u>	<u>\$3,810,348.33</u>	18.00%
YEAR TO DATE:	2025	2026	
Business Net Profit	\$4,730,834.49	\$5,693,376.15	
Resident Net Profit	\$1,608,829.55	\$1,614,207.74	
Non-Resident Net Profit	\$323,508.29	\$302,004.16	
Subcontractor Net Profit	\$324,512.86	\$116,081.04	
Net Profit Total	\$6,987,685.19	\$7,725,669.09	
Withholding	\$20,994,691.64	\$23,062,009.60	
Subcontractor Withholding	\$738,840.36	\$741,811.45	
Withholding Total	\$21,733,532.00	\$23,803,821.05	
Year-To-Date Collection Totals	<u>\$28,721,217.19</u>	<u>\$31,529,490.14</u>	9.78%
Withholding Refunds	\$841,667.07	\$637,537.25	
Net Profit Refunds	\$943,717.31	\$476,368.37	
Year-To-Date Refund Totals	<u>\$1,785,384.38</u>	<u>\$1,113,905.62</u>	-37.61%

7. HEARINGS FROM CITIZENS

Beth Conforata of the Blue Ash Public Library invited the community to a baseball-themed customer appreciation event on Saturday, September 19, featuring crafts, snacks, library giveaways, and a magician from the Cincinnati Circus. The event will also include a presentation by author Greg Fegley about former Cincinnati Reds pitcher Joe Nuxhall.

Matt Walker, the developer of the Arabella neighborhood, spoke regarding the concept plan for the 3-acre site for Phase Three of the development at 4255 Parkview Drive. He noted that the revised plan reduces open space by approximately 0.17 acres, while also reducing the number of units by ten. He added that homes in the new phase are expected to be priced in the \$600,000–\$700,000 range, compared with an average price of approximately \$1.4 million in the existing phase.

Hearings from Citizens was declared closed at 7:08 p.m.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Prior to the Council meeting, Council members received the following report describing agenda items:

This memo offers a brief description of the topics included on the September 10, 2026 Council meeting agenda.

8.a.1. Resolution No. 2026-63 – Providing for amendments within the 2026 annual appropriation Resolution No. 2025-71

Resolution 2026-63 provides for the following 2026 budget amendments:

As discussed during the August Council session, staff has developed a proposed plan to improve several areas of Summit Park, including the West Parking Lot, East Parking Lot, Picnic Grove (Beer Garden), and Dog Park.

The discussion concluded with an agreement to allow Council additional time to consider the proposals and revisit the overall plan at the September meeting, with a request for direction at that time. In the meantime, staff has continued design work on the parking lot improvements, as funding for those projects was previously included in the 2026 budget.

As a starting point for moving forward, staff is proposing a budget amendment providing an additional \$2,175,000 for the West Parking Lot, East Parking Lot, and Picnic Grove improvements. Combined with the \$1,525,000 currently budgeted in 2026, this would establish a total project budget of \$3,700,000.

This recommendation reflects the August discussion, during which there appeared to be strong support for moving forward with the West and East Parking Lot improvements and majority support for the Picnic Grove. While there was some support for the Dog Park improvements, Council expressed a desire for additional consideration before moving forward with that portion of the plan, potentially at a different scale or layout.

If Council ultimately determines that the Dog Park should also be included, it could be brought back for consideration at a subsequent Council meeting, or included as part of the 2027 budget process.

Please direct any questions regarding this resolution to the Treasurer/Administrative Services Director or related Department Director.

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8.a.2. Resolution No. 2026-64 – Authorizing contracts for employee benefits coverages

This resolution authorizes the City Manager to enter into agreements and to make related payments associated with the City's group health, dental, vision, and life insurance plans for eligible employees for plan year November 1, 2026 through October 31, 2027.

Historically, the City of Blue Ash has provided its employees with an excellent array of benefits including health, vision, dental, and life insurance plans. Several years ago, the City Manager requested the formation of an employee-based health insurance advisory committee to not only review the City's cost in this area but also to help with employee education and to examine alternatives which might continue to provide excellent coverage at a lower cost.

In 2022, the City joined Jefferson Health Plan (JHP), a benefits consortium of over 200 government members and over 25,000 covered public employees. Joining JHP is a long-term strategy to build reserves while taking advantage of the cost savings that group benefit purchasing provides. Following a particularly difficult year and several high-cost claims, the health insurance plan exceeded its budget. The combined impact of current plan performance and underfunded reserves has resulted in a negative reserve balance. In response, the Health Insurance Committee and the City's health insurance broker have been working closely with JHP over the past few months to develop a renewal strategy for November 1, 2026. JHP has proposed an overall rate increase of 18.96%, with 5.94% of that increase specifically allocated to replenishing the City's reserve balance.

A full market pharmacy bid was conducted by the City's health insurance broker to solicit competing proposals to benchmark Optum Rx's incumbent pricing and ensure the plan was receiving best-in-market terms. Optum Rx responded to competitive offers by improving their rebate position from \$66,240 to \$117,800. This was a \$51,560 improvement over their current rate. Additional savings will be helpful in working towards increasing the reserve balance. The Health Insurance Committee will continue to market pharmacy benefit managers annually to ensure pricing and clinical program performance remain best in class. Administration recommends approving this renewal, as it supports rebuilding the reserve, maintains coverage through United Healthcare, and minimizes disruptions to employees' healthcare services.

As for other benefit renewals, there was no proposed rate increases for dental, vision, and life. Delta Dental released a one-year contract with no price increase. A market bid was completed. Delta Dental offered the most in-network providers and a zero percent increase. The City is in year two of two-year contract with Vision Service Plan. The life insurance benefits remain the same, with Standard Insurance Company, with no rate increase. This will be year one of a two-year contract. Administration recommends that the City continue with these providers.

The City will continue to offer tax deferred savings vehicles such as flexible spending accounts and/or portable health savings accounts. Employees may earn additional City contributions through attendance at educational seminars and/or participation in wellness events during the plan year. The City offers a \$2,000 payment to any eligible employee who chooses to secure health insurance elsewhere and opts out of the City's health care plan.

Please direct questions regarding this resolution to the Treasurer/Administrative Services Director.

8.a.3. Resolution No. 2026-65 – Levying special assessments on real property related to property maintenance issues pursuant to Chapter 911 of the BA Code

The City's property maintenance provisions defined in Chapter 911 allow for the City to "step in" and take care of the mowing of tall grass and weeds if the property owner, after an extended period of time and with notice, has not taken care of the problem. The City then bills the landowner for the cost of that maintenance. If the invoiced cost of the maintenance has not been paid by the landowner to the City after a defined period, the City can then "certify" it to the County Auditor to be placed upon the tax duplicate and collected and paid back to the City.

In the past several months, the City has taken care of maintenance issues multiple times on several Blue Ash properties. Resolution No. 2026-65 represents the notification to the County Auditor of such payments directing the specified amounts to be levied and assessed on the properties as noted within the resolution.

Please direct questions regarding this Resolution to the Treasurer/Administrative Services Director.

8.a.4. Resolution No. 2026-66 – Authorizing the City Manager to execute a grant agreement with the Ohio Division of Natural Resources related to the Blue Ash Summit Park Improvements project

The City requested grant funding from the Ohio Capital Budget Senate Bill 450 (S.B. 450) in support of the Summit Park Phase Four Improvements. The City was awarded \$350,000 which will be administered through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Please direct questions related to this Resolution to the Assistant City Manager or Parks and Recreation Director.

8.a.5. Resolution No. 2026-67 – Resolution removing special assessments previously levied for certain public improvements in the City of Blue Ash, Ohio in cooperation with the Suburban Communities Energy Special Improvement District, Inc.

In 2021, the City facilitated the passthrough of a \$6.8M PACE loan (property assessed clean energy) for the Cincinnati Rehabilitation Hospital at the Neighborhoods at Summit Park. The owner is preparing to sell the facility and has decided to pay off the debt early.

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Please direct questions related to this Resolution to the Assistant City Manager.

8.b.1. Resolution No. 2026-68 – Authorizing a professional services agreement for rental and installation of a temporary ice rink at Summit Park

As the City heads into the 10th season of the Ice Rink at Summit Park, staff is recommending renewal of the agreement with Ice Rink Events, the provider of the rink. Ice Rink Events operates professional ice rinks throughout the country and has been the City's partner since the program was first introduced at Summit Park.

Staff would like to enter into a one-year agreement with Ice Rink Events for the 2026/27 season at a cost of \$155,500. The agreement includes a turnkey rink, cooling system, generator, and all setup and teardown services.

Please direct questions regarding this Resolution to the Parks & Recreation Director.

8.c.1 Resolution No. 2026-69 – Approving an amendment for a new concept development plan for a residential development at 4255 Parkview Drive in the Arabella subdivision of the Neighborhoods at Summit Park

Mathew Walker, representing WP Land, presented to Planning Commission on September 3, 2026 and requested approval of an amendment to the Concept Development Plan PUD that was approved for the third phase of the Arabella site, at 4255 Parkview Drive, in 2016. That concept and the subsequent Final Development Plan called for a 36-unit condominium building and 28 detached townhomes. This amendment would instead result in 54 attached townhomes distributed among 12 buildings, each with between three and seven townhomes.

Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the amendment and conditioned approval on a requirement that the plan meet the Fire Marshal's approval. Mr. Walker has already been in communication with the Fire Marshal to ensure that the amended plan is satisfactory. In their motion, Planning Commission decided to view the amendment as substantial. This means that it constitutes a new Concept Development Plan requiring City Council review that, if approved, would replace the current one. This review is administrative and does not require a Public Hearing. If City Council approves the amendment, the applicant can submit a Final Development Plan to Planning Commission at a future meeting. If the amendment is not approved the existing Concept and Final Development Plans will remain in effect.

8.d.1. Resolution No. 2026-70 – Authorizing the purchase of two replacement cruisers for the Police Department

Resolution No. 2026-69 authorizes the City Manager to purchase one 2026 Chevy Silverado PPV and one 2026 Chevy Tahoe Police vehicle, from Tim Lally Chevrolet of Warrensville Heights, Ohio through the State of Ohio's Cooperative Purchasing Program for a total purchase price of \$104,765. Funding for this purchase was approved in the 2026 Budget. This resolution also authorizes the City Manager to convert two surplus police vehicles and reassign them for other City use.

Please direct questions regarding this Resolution to the Police Chief.

9. Miscellaneous Business – Motion by Councilman Capell – Sister City Policy

Councilman Capell has submitted the attached motion for Council consideration and discussion during Miscellaneous Business.

a. Finance & Administration Committee, Marc Sirkin, Chairperson

Councilman Sirkin asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2026-63 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-63

**PROVIDING FOR AMENDMENTS WITHIN THE 2026 ANNUAL
APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION NO. 2025-71**

Councilman Sirkin moved, Vice Mayor Schneider seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2026-63.

Council expressed strong support for the proposed Summit Park improvements, including the expanded east and west parking, the Picnic Grove, landscaping, and sustainable stormwater features, and noted that the project would help finish off and clean up some of the remaining areas of the park. Council also noted that a \$350,000 grant will help offset costs. Staff responded to questions from Council regarding parking capacity and the possibility of using the Picnic Grove area to support future ice rink operations, and expects to bid the project in January and begin phased construction in the spring to keep portions of the parking areas open.

There being no additional discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Jhaveri, Capell, Gath, Friend, Sirkin, Vice Mayor Schneider, and Mayor Cole voted. Seven yes votes. Resolution No. 2026-63 passed.

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Councilman Sirkin asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2026-64 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-64

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO
CONTRACTS FOR EMPLOYEE BENEFIT COVERAGES AND
AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE RELATED
DOCUMENTATION AND CONTRACTS

Councilman Sirkin moved, Councilman Capell seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2026-64.

Councilman Sirkin explained that the City's employee benefits are through the Jefferson Health Consortium. This year there was an 18.9% increase in health insurance costs following a year of unusually high claims. About 6% of the increase will rebuild reserves, while dental, vision, life insurance, and prescription costs are expected to remain stable. It was noted that similar health insurance increases are being seen by other organizations.

There being no further comments, the Clerk called the roll. Vice Mayor Schneider, Councilpersons Friend, Gath, Sirkin, Capell, Jhaveri, and Mayor Cole voted. Seven yes votes. Resolution No. 2026-64 passed.

Councilman Sirkin asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2026-65 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-65

A RESOLUTION TO LEVY SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS ON REAL
PROPERTY FOR THE COST OF ABATING PROPERTY
STANDARDS VIOLATIONS AND MITIGATING NOXIOUS
WEEDS AND HIGH GRASS PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 911 OF
THE BLUE ASH CODE OF ORDINANCES AND O.R.C. 715.261

Councilman Sirkin moved, Councilman Capell seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2026-65.

Councilman Sirkin explained that this is part of the City's process for addressing properties with overgrown grass and weeds that are in violation of the City's Code regarding property maintenance standards. The City Manager added that property owners receive multiple notices and opportunities to correct the issue before the City performs the work, with unpaid costs eventually added to the property taxes. He noted that the City generally works with property owners who have legitimate hardships before reaching this point.

There being no additional comments or discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Vice Mayor Schneider, Councilpersons Gath, Jhaveri, Sirkin, Capell, Friend, and Mayor Cole voted. Seven yes votes. Resolution No. 2026-65 passed.

Councilman Sirkin asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2026-66 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-66

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN
AGREEMENT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF A S.B. 450
GRANT AWARD IN SUPPORT OF SUMMIT PARK
IMPROVEMENTS

Councilman Sirkin moved, Vice Mayor Schneider seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2026-66.

There being no discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Gath, Sirkin, Capell, Friend, Jhaveri, Vice Mayor Schneider, and Mayor Cole voted. Seven yes votes. Resolution No. 2026-66 passed.

b. Parks & Recreation Committee, Brian Gath, Chairperson

Councilman Gath asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2026-68 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

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RESOLUTION NO. 2026-68

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT FOR THE RENTAL
AND INSTALLATION OF A TEMPORARY ICE RINK AT SUMMIT
PARK

Councilman Gath moved, Vice Mayor Schneider seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2026-68.

Councilman Gath explained that this resolution approves a contract for the Summit Park ice rink, noting that he views it as more than just a skating amenity—it also helps bring people to the park and support the nearby businesses during the winter. In response to a question from Council, staff clarified that this funding is in addition to the previously approved funding for the temporary tent. Some Councilmembers also noted that ticket sales don't capture everyone drawn to the rink, including family members and others who come to enjoy the activity and atmosphere.

There being no additional comments or discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Vice Mayor Schneider, Councilpersons Sirkin, Friend, Gath, Jhaveri, and Mayor Cole voted yes. Councilman Capell voted no. Six yes votes. One no vote. Resolution No. 2026-68 passed.

c. Planning & Zoning Committee, Pramod Jhaveri, Chairperson

Councilman Jhaveri asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2026-69 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-69

APPROVING AN AMENDMENT FOR A NEW CONCEPT
DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR A RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT
4255 PARKVIEW DRIVE

Councilman Jhaveri moved, Councilman Gath seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2026-69.

Council discussed a revised concept plan that replaces the previously proposed condominium and row houses with 54 townhomes. The discussion focused on the density of the development, with some Council members expressing the need for additional landscaping and buffering, particularly along the buildings and adjacent to the Daventry neighborhood. Concerns were also raised about the cumulative traffic from roughly 360 homes in Daventry, Skyview, and Arabella. The City Manager addressed Council's questions and noted that the area and roadway network were originally planned for even greater density and traffic from office development, and that concentrating housing near Summit Park and surrounding green space was consistent with the original vision for the area.

There being no further comments or discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Friend, Capell, Sirkin, Gath, Jhaveri, Vice Mayor Schneider, and Mayor Cole voted. Seven yes votes. Resolution No. 2026-69 passed.

d. Public Safety Committee, Jeff Capell, Chairperson

Councilman Capell asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2026-70 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-70

AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF TWO REPLACEMENT
POLICE CRUISERS FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT
UTILIZING THE STATE OF OHIO'S COOPERATIVE
PURCHASING PROGRAM

Councilman Capell moved, Councilman Gath seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2026-70.

There being no discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Vice Mayor Schneider, Councilpersons Sirkin, Friend, Gath, Jhaveri, Capell, and Mayor Cole voted. Seven yes votes. Resolution No. 2026-70 passed.

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9. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

The City Manager reflected on the end of another busy summer, noting the successful pool season, the opening of the new pickleball and tennis courts, and several upcoming community events this fall. He also shared memories from about 20 years ago when the City was taking the important steps necessary to acquire the former airport property that would eventually become Summit Park and the surrounding development. He closed by highlighting the upcoming Community Dinner under the canopy on September 17 as another opportunity to support and celebrate the community and Summit Park.

Chief Pohlman reminded everyone that the Police Department Open House will be held Tuesday, September 15, from 4:00–7:00 p.m. at the City Building and will include tours and demonstrations. He also thanked Chick-fil-A, Blue Ash Community Church, and the Police Credit Union for their donations and assistance with the event.

Gordon Perry reported that repairs to the Summit Park tower elevator were underway and provided an update on the City's paving program, which will begin next week in several neighborhoods. He also announced that the City received \$300,000 in municipal road funding for next year's paving program.

Brian Kruse noted that the upcoming Community Dinner is nearly sold out, with only about eight tickets remaining. He encouraged anyone interested in attending, or who knows someone who may be interested, to purchase tickets soon.

Chief Theders reminded everyone that tomorrow morning at Summit Park, the 9/11 Stair Climb and 2.2-mile run/walk commemorating the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The event will begin at 9:00 a.m. and he encouraged everyone to attend.

Solicitor Pacheco reflected on the 25th anniversary of 9/11 and the uncertainty many people felt following the attacks. He expressed appreciation for those at the federal, state, and local levels who have worked to keep communities safe over the past 25 years.

Councilman Jhaveri reported that he played on the new tennis and pickleball courts last week. He remarked that it was great to see people really enjoying the new courts and praised City staff for doing a great job on the project.

Councilman Gath reported on the challenges of property maintenance enforcement, especially the few difficult cases that are serious nuisance properties. The City Manager commented that staff regularly reviews the City's code and has the tools needed to address most issues, although some cases take longer because of due process and property rights. Councilman Gath acknowledged the frustration these situations can create for neighboring residents, but understood the need to balance enforcement with individual property rights.

Council also revisited the topic of making improvements to the Summit Park dog park. Some Council members felt the current dog park area is too muddy and worn and should either be significantly upgraded or removed all together, while others questioned whether a major investment in a dog park is necessary at all. The discussion focused around scaling back the proposed design, eliminating features like the water element, and looking for a less expensive option. After some additional discussion, the City Manager noted that without any clear consensus from Council, the project will not move forward right away and will likely be revisited next year.

Councilman Capell encouraged residents to attend the upcoming Police Open House noting that it is always a fun and enjoyable event, and he is particularly looking forward to tasting the desserts donated by Chick-Fil-A. He referenced his motion on Sister City policy that he submitted to be included on tonight's meeting agenda, and reiterated his belief that any legislation submitted before the Council agenda is published should be included with the agenda so residents can clearly see what Council will be considering. He questioned the value of the City's 25-year Sister City relationship with Ilmenau, Germany, saying it has not produced the economic development, new ideas, or community-wide cultural exchange originally envisioned. He argued that the staff time and taxpayer funding could be better used elsewhere. He then made a motion to prohibit the City from subsidizing any Sister City activities, with the exception to allow up to \$500 on expenses for an event that is open to the public. Councilman Friend seconded the motion.

Mayor Cole disagreed with Councilman Capell's position, noting that he has raised similar

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concerns about the Sister City program for many years but has not actively participated in it. She added that Council has historically supported the program and suggested that participating more fully might provide a better understanding of its benefits.

Councilman Capell responded that the discussion should focus on the Sister City program rather than his personal participation. He maintained that after 25 years, the program should be able to demonstrate specific results, such as jobs created or new ideas brought back to the City, and said he does not believe it has done so.

Vice Mayor Schneider said she continues to support the Sister City program and believes its value goes beyond measurable financial results. She pointed to the personal connections and relationships, cultural experiences, educational opportunities, and business connections it can create, while also acknowledging that the program's goals and resident participation could be reevaluated, but said she believes it continues to provide value to the community.

Councilman Sirkin said his participation in the Sister City program has exposed him to different ideas, perspectives, and best practices that have helped him as a Council member. He said the experience has changed his thinking on some City issues, and he encouraged Councilman Capell to participate more before judging the program's value.

Councilman Friend said he seconded the motion because the Sister City program deserves a broader discussion. He raised concerns about transparency, the lack of measurable results, and whether the same benefits could be gained closer to home, ultimately saying he believes the program may have run its course.

With no other comments or discussion on the motion, Councilman Capell asked the Clerk to call the roll. Councilpersons Capell, Friend, and Jhaveri voted yes. Vice Mayor Schneider, Councilpersons Sirkin, Gath, and Mayor Cole voted no. Three yes votes, Four no votes. The motion did not pass.

Councilman Sirkin thanked staff for the improvements to the recreation center complex, especially the pool and new tennis and pickleball courts. He noted the new fencing as a great addition and said he has heard many positive comments about the updated facilities.

Councilman Friend also praised the pool and tennis courts and encouraged residents to support the October 14th golf outing benefiting the Blue Ash Police Association. He commented that Tuesday was National Golf Superintendent's Day, and recognized Golf Course Superintendent Scott Kincaid for the excellent condition of the Blue Ash Golf Course and his care of an important City asset.

Vice Mayor Schneider commented on e-bikes and the Police Department's efforts to address e-bike concerns through education and enforcement. Chief Pohlman said the approach appears to be working, with fewer complaints and repeat violations, and noted that officers have been working with schools, students, and parents. A few citations and tows have been necessary, but overall e-bike issues appear to have decreased. Mayor Cole added that she heard recently about a resident's concern about a near-miss involving an e-bike and pedestrians. She is glad to hear the situation is improving, and noted that e-bike safety remains an ongoing challenge for communities throughout the area.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

After all items on the agenda were acted upon, Councilman Gath moved, Vice Mayor Schneider seconded to convene an Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to:

- a. Property Acquisition – to consider the purchase of property for public purposes, or for the sale of property at competitive bidding, if premature disclosure of information would give an unfair competitive or bargaining advantage to a person whose personal, private interest is adverse to the general public interest
- b. Details relative to the security arrangements and emergency response protocols for a public body or a public office, if disclosure of the matters discussed could reasonably be expected to jeopardize the security of the public body or public office

The Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Capell, Friend, Gath, Jhaveri, Sirkin, Vice Mayor Schneider, and Mayor Cole voted. Seven yes votes. Motion carried.

After matters pertaining to property acquisition and security arrangements and emergency

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response protocols were discussed, Councilman Gath moved, Vice Mayor Schneider seconded to convene to the regular meeting. A voice vote was taken. All Council members voted yes. Motion carried.

11. ADJOURNMENT

All items on the agenda having been acted upon, Councilman Gath moved, Vice Mayor Schneider seconded to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members voted yes. The Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:08 p.m.

Jill Cole, Mayor

Julie Kipper, Deputy Clerk of Council

MINUTES RECORDED AND WRITTEN BY:

Julie Kipper, Deputy Clerk of Council

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