

REGULAR MEETING OF CELINA CITY COUNCIL – February 23, 2026

Attendees: Council President King; Council Members Clausen, Doseck, Gray, Sanford, Schulte, and Wolfe; Safety Service Director Hitchcock; Law Director Moore; Police Chief Wale

Start Time: Council President King called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 PM

1. Prayer & Pledge

2. Call to Order and Roll Call:

- Council President King
- Council Members Present:
 - Clausen
 - Doseck
 - Gray
 - Sanford
 - Schulte
 - Wolfe

Absent: Mayor Hazel, Auditor Shinn, CM Uhlenhake

3. Acceptance of Agenda:

- Agenda Approval: CM Clausen made a motion to accept the Agenda, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

4. Corrections and acceptance of the Regular Council Meeting Minutes:

- Minutes Approval:
 - Previous Meeting: February 9, 2026
- Outcome: CM Gray made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by CM Schulte. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

5. Committee Reports:

- Committee of the Whole February 9, 2026- Council President King stated meeting moved to executive session.

6. Communications:

- None

7. Audience Communication:

- Jack Sawmiller, 504 E. Wayne Street, Celina, Ohio 45822, water rates increasing.
 - Key Concerns
 - Reported hearing of water bill increases via social media, lacking official notification.
 - Inquired about the basis for increases and related plans.
 - Council Response
 - Financial Necessity
 - *City water fund reserves have dropped, target minimum balance is \$2M (advised by bond counsel for maintaining good credit).
 - Upcoming Projects
 - *2026: State Route 703 water line; projected cost \$800,000+.
 - *2027: Sugar Street main line sewer (tower to treatment plant); cost \$1.1-\$1.2 million.
 - Other Cost Pressures
 - *Rising chemical and material costs.
 - *Bulk water consumption.
 - State Funding/Grants

*Some state funding for state routes; city regularly seeks grants, but much of water infrastructure is locally funded.

- Decisions of Rate Increases
 - *Water rates to increase by 15% in April 2026; further 10% increase in 2027 (total increase: 25% across 2 years).
 - *After 2027 a \$7/month GAC charge will expire, providing some future relief.
 - *Incremental approach chosen after lengthy discussion; rates have not increased since 2013.
 - Other Utility Rates
 - *No planned increases for electric rates at this time.
 - Resident Infrastructure Concern
 - *Broken curb at 504 E. Wayne Street (corner of Wayne and Armstrong) reported to council; city to inspect.
- Robert Tuttle, 8764 Kristan Lane Springboro, Ohio 45066 & Dr. John Diamond, 5424 Cherry Creek Columbus, Ohio 43228 request to reconsider support for Constitutional Convention (“Article V” Convention)
 - Context
 - Referenced a prior presentation on January 12, 2026, in support of a resolution endorsing a new constitutional convention.
 - Representative Angie King recommended both sides be heard.
 - Risk and Uncertainty
 - No Article V convention has ever occurred in US History; lack of precedent.
 - Constitutional language is vague; numerous Congressional Research Service reports (2012/2014/2016/2017) highlight unanswered procedural questions (ex. Rules, delegate selection, scope).
 - Noted that James Madison and numerous constitutional scholars warned against the dangers and unpredictability of such a convention.
 - States cannot control or limit proceedings; Supreme Court and State of Ohio legal opinions cited.
 - Congress, not states, is exclusively empowered to call and set parameters for a convention (per Article V).
 - Potential for “runaway” convention: original 1787 convention exceeded its mandate; entire new Constitution possible.
 - Outside influences (ex. wealthy donors, activists) could sway proceedings.
 - No guarantee amendments would be respected any more than current Constitution.
 - Potential Consequences
 - Both conservative and progressive groups have already drafted replacement constitutions containing significant changes- especially regarding the First and Second Amendments.
 - Specific references to proposals to weaken or limit religious freedom, allow more firearm regulation, or add ambiguous language.
 - Cited the possibility of unintended consequences and loss of foundational rights.
 - Warned the project is “Trojan Horse,” potentially undermining the Constitution rather than repairing it.
 - Alternative and State Powers
 - Encouraged legislative, judicial, and anti-commandeering/nullification strategies instead of a convention.
 - Noted the term limits and other reforms can be pursued through legislation, anti-commandeering (state refusing to enforce federal laws), legal action, and state-initiated nullification.

- Discussed the founding fathers' intent in omitting terms limits from the current Constitution (Federalist 53: need for institutional competence).
- Procedural Concerns
 - Even if 34 states apply for a convention, Congress interprets/approves requests and sets terms.
 - Any topic can be raised once conventions opens; subject boundaries unenforceable.
 - Comparative lack of scholarly expertise and constitutional literacy in current national leadership.
 - Noted differences between case law education and directly studying the Constitution.
- Recommendations
 - Urged Council not to take any action or issue a supportive resolution; stated local impact negligible, good to be informed but not to get involved as a municipal body.

8. New Business:

- Law Director Moore gave summary of 9-26-O and 10-26-O:
 - Both allow the City to purchase real estate to build a new fire department.
 - Council has discussed in executive sessions.
 - Certain requirements have to be met to build the fire department at a new location.
 - Maximum of a 4-minute response time and the 2 adjoining properties meet these needs
 - 9-26-O:
 - Former Orchard Tree property on Grand Lake Road.
 - Currently owned by Mercer Health; their board of governors meets later this week and are fully in support of this proposed sale.
 - Mercer Health is not making any profit on the sale; they have not increased the price to sell to the City.
 - The City will need to begin getting RFPs to build and move the fire department.
 - The plan remains to still do renovations to City Hall
 - 10-26-O:
 - The address for this property is 0 Grand Lake Road because nothing has been built on these properties.
 - Properties are directly adjacent to the former Orchard Tree Property.
 - Additional properties will be used for parking, storage of equipment and vehicles, as well as potential future use, which may include building expansion. (once the RFPs are started then we will know more about the properties use)
- a. **9-26-O:** An Ordinance approving the purchase of real estate and authorizing the Mayor to enter into a real estate purchase contract and declaring an emergency.

Discussion:

- SSD Hitchcock noted that Mercer Health is selling the property to the City for the exact price they paid for it; no profit will be made.
- CM Doseck expressed he understands this will be a cost savings going this route versus renovating the City Hall; thanked Administration for searching out those good deals for the community.
- President King explained there will still need to be renovations done at City Hall, but not building a whole new fire department as originally planned is the cost savings CM Doseck is referring too. There is no concrete dollar amount but there's going to be quite a substantial savings. This will also save money in not having to relocate the fire department for a year and a half to renovate current fire department.

- CM Clausen stated this makes a lot more sense for the department and for the city and for what we are trying to do and need to do. The department is definitely working with very antiquated facilities and it would be good to have more modern buildings/facilities.
 - President King shared with the public this may be coming to council tonight, but it is something council has been discussing for quite a while. A Feasibility Study was done that took about a year and a half and council had discussions in an executive session to come to the conclusion we have tonight. After many discussions and looking at different avenues, this seems like the best fit for the city to build a new fire department instead of taking a building that's an 1890 building and converting into a fire department.
 - CM Gray asked if the Fire Chief knows about the plans and likes them? SSD Hitchcock answered yes, he is aware.
 - Outcome: CM Gray made a motion to suspend, seconded by CM Wolfe. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Gray made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Sanford. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.
- b. 10-26-O:** An Ordinance approving the purchase of real estate and authorizing the Mayor to enter into a real estate purchase contract and declaring an emergency.
- Discussion:
- President King explained this would be the 2 properties just to the north of the old Orchard Tree property in between that and the Advanced Auto Parts. These 2 empty lots would complete the purchase and give enough room to build.
 - Outcome: CM Gray made a motion to suspend, seconded by CM Sanford. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye. CM Clausen made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Wolfe. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

9. Old Business (2nd Reading):

- a. 6-26-O:** An Ordinance authorizing a lease agreement between the City of Celina and Celina Concert Series for the lease of the Bryson Park District.
- Discussion:
- Outcome: CM Clausen made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.
- b. 7-26-O:** An Ordinance amending Ordinance 62-09-O passed on October 26, 2009 establishing water rates and declaring an emergency. **(AMENDED 2/9/2026)**
- Discussion:
- Outcome: CM Wolfe made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Doseck. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye.

10. Administrative Reports:

A. None

11. For the Good of the Order:

- A. CM Gray
- Congratulated newly sworn Patrol Officer Hunter Mote and new dispatcher Jazmyne Harris joining Celina Police Department; gratitude extended.
- B. CM Sanford
- Expressed excitement about new fire department facility.
 - Reminded public of ongoing baseball and softball signups through the Recreation Department.
- C. Law Director Moore
- Personally thanked Celina Police Department for exceptional response during a recent incident impacting his office.

12. Adjournment: Time: 8:08 PM

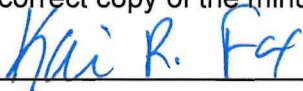


Jason D. King, Council President



Kari R. Fox, Council Clerk

I, Kari R. Fox, Clerk of Council of the City of Celina, Ohio, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of 2/23/2026, and were approved by Council 3/9/2026.



Council Clerk