

REGULAR MEETING OF CELINA CITY COUNCIL – August 10, 2026

Attendees: Council President King; Council Members Clausen, Gray, Schulte, Uhlenhake, and Wolfe; Mayor Hazel; Law Director Moore

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
 - Gray
 - Schulte
 - Uhlenhake
 - Wolfe

Absent: CM Doseck & CM Sanford

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 5-0 Aye.

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

- Minutes Approval:
 - Previous Meeting: July 27, 2026
- Outcome: CM Schulte made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by CM Wolfe. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

5. Committee Reports:

- Utility Committee Meeting July 27, 2026- CM Uhlenhake summarized
- Public Hearings (2) July 27, 2026- President King summarized

6. Communications:

- Liquor Transfer: From McDowell Coleman Inc. To Midwest Buckeye Liquor LLC- council approved with no concerns.
- The Mayor Discussed Tax Abatement/CRA:
 - Reported speaking with the Celina School Board President about the city's residential abatements and the school board appears to be in favor of the concept.
 - Additional information is still being gathered, especially regarding the city's pre-1994 vs. post 1994 CRA status.
 - Explained that under the current CRA Ordinance, the city is pre-1994, which keeps abatements at 100% under the current framework; moving to post-1994 would shift more negotiation authority to the school board on percentages and related terms.
 - Council discussed how much control the city would retain under either structure and whether the city has already made enough changes to trigger a status change.
 - Was indicated there is an attorney opinion suggesting three different changes may be relevant, though the city's current count may be two: the Law Director will help verify the city's position.
 - Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for August 24th at 6:00PM to discuss tax abatements.
- The Mayor Discussed Fire Department Staffing and Testing:
 - Announced that several firefighters are preparing for EMT and Medic testing.
 - The city had previously extended an offer to a firefighter/paramedic candidate, but the candidate declined because they did not want EMS duties and only wanted fire work.

- The Chief is pursuing another candidate, and said the department expects to get back up to full staffing.

7. Audience Communication:

- **Baseball Diamonds/Park Discussion**

1. David Weitzel, 2202 Eaglebrooke Circle, came back to follow up on previous meeting he attended and to raise concerns about the condition and future of the Eastview baseball diamonds.
 - He reported seeing roundup sprayed at Westview but not at Eastview.
 - He had heard some rumors that some people wanted to eliminate Eastview diamonds and asked whether such a change would require Council approval.
 - Mayor Hazel stated the decisions are based on use, not simply a formal council vote, and explained that if fields are unused, staff and Council can have a different discussion about their future.
 - He emphasized that the diamonds are in active use, including by travel baseball teams, and that he did not want the city to lose any diamonds.
 - He referenced a discussion with Doug Riesen, St. Marys City Auditor, and noted that St. Marys reportedly spent \$75,000 on ballfield maintenance, while Celina's current allocation is much lower.
 - CM Wolfe stated that after the last meeting he inspected the diamonds and found them unacceptable, saying they need to be fixed, sprayed, and worked with the Mack machine to remove overgrowth and restore them.
 - CM Wolfe also stated that an extra parks position had been discussed last year and believed it was in the budget for this year, but nothing had been done yet. He said he had previously raised this issue and believed someone had dropped the ball.
 - Mayor Hazel acknowledged he would look into why the position had not been posted and said he could not yet explain the delay.
 - Mayor Hazel stated the city has about 135 acres of parks, spends roughly \$500,000-\$600,000 annually from the general fund on parks, and relies on limited staff and public works help for maintenance.
 - He also noted that the drinking fountains were not on at Eastview and Westview; Mayor Hazel said he would check into that.
 - The conversation closed with agreement that the matter may warrant a Parks & Rec Committee Meeting.
2. Cole Stephens, 6793 Anderson Road, discussed Tax Abatement/Housing Development.
 - Urged Council to move forward with tax abatements, saying the issue is overdue and important for housing development.
 - He said he had contacted council members and found general support, but the process had stalled due to confusion between the School Board and City.
 - He argued that abatements help builders and developers bring more homes to market and that Celina needs more housing supply.
 - He said housing cost are rising, that many of his peers want to stay in Celina but cannot afford to, and that the city needs to be proactive rather than merely permissive.
 - He said St. Marys has had more new home construction than Celina over a recent 12-month span, which he viewed as a warning sign.
 - He also discussed the need for the city to support infrastructure and road building for developments, noting that some neighboring communities help with streets and utilities to make projects feasible.
 - He noted tax abatement is a major selling point for homes and can attract out of town buyers.

- He also raised concerns about the city's water tap fee increase, stating he was one of the first customers to pay the new rate and felt the increase was too steep.
- Mayor Hazel responded that water tap fees must be paid through the water fund, not the general fund, and that the city must cover the actual cost of a complex and upgraded water treatment system.
- Mayor Hazel also noted the costs for chemicals and material have risen sharply since COVID, and explained that the city has to maintain its own enterprise funds for water, electric, and sewer.
- CM Wolfe added that property tax abatements are relatively small for the city because most property taxes go to schools and county agencies, and that the city still has to pay for police and fire.
- Mayor Hazel noted that other communities can't simply shift those costs to the general fund without legal issues, and said there must be a balance between encouraging growth and paying infrastructure.
- Mayor Hazel also clarified that the city has limited developable land remaining inside city limits, with only a few major areas still available for future residential development.
- Mayor Hazel stated the city will continue researching the abatement issue and bring back more information for the next meeting.

8. New Business:

- a. **29-26-O:** An Ordinance amending Ordinance 56-23-O and authorizing the Mayor and Safety-Service Director to enter into an amendment to the Mercer County/City of Celina County Ambulance (EMS) Agreement.

Discussion:

- Mayor Hazel explained the Ordinance updates the agreement to reflect the current agreement after the EMS levy passed and the city began receiving funds for the additional services.
- Law Director Moore noted the agreement wording was somewhat awkward but believed the substance was correct.
- Council briefly discussed the wording of Section Two, which referenced a 3-year period ending December 31, 2026.
- Mayor Hazel explained that the Ordinance is simply memorializing what is already happening under the existing county run EMS agreement.
- CM Clausen state the Ordinance helps formalize the staffing gains enabled by the levy.
- Mayor Hazel noted the levy allowed the city to hire 3 additional firefighter paramedics, bringing staffing from 5 to 6 on a shift.
- Outcome: CM Clausen made a motion to pass the Ordinance to second reading, seconded by CM Uhlenhake. Motion passed with a roll call vote 5-0 Aye.

9. Administrative Reports:

A. Mayor Hazel Discussed:

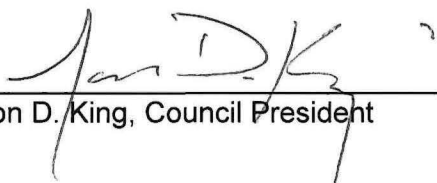
- Warned about a series of storms moving through the area and encouraged residents to pay attention to weather warnings, Nixle alerts, and forecasts.
- Noted that the Fair, boat races, and other summer activities are approaching their seasonal close as students prepare to return to school.
- Stated Celina has had a strong summer and remains an attractive community, though he wants it to become more of a destination for builders as well.
- Clarified that there are about 62 potential lots that could be built on, but many are privately owned and not actually for sale.
- He estimated the number of lots truly available for purchase is probably in the low 30s.

- Noted that much of the remaining developable land inside Celina is limited, with few possibilities along US 29 and near Staeger Road, plus the Wheatland area.
- Was also mentioned the Myers Road property, which Klosterman Development purchased, covering about 20 acres, though annexation will be required before development can proceed.
- He reiterated that many new lots cost \$60,000 to \$90,000 before a foundation is poured because of roads and utility infrastructure.
- The city is willing to talk to builders and developers and explain budgets and available resources.

10. For the Good of the Order:

- A. CM Clausen asked for clarification on the number of lots, noting that not all should be counted as for sale if they are not available on the market.
 - Mayor Hazel clarified that the city is counting all potential buildable lots, not just listed lots.
- B. CM Gray asked how the city expands its limits.
 - Mayor Hazel explained that owners must petition for annexation, the county must release the property, and certain township boundaries can require special legislation.
 - Council acknowledged that annexation is more complex than many residents realize.
- C. CM Gray reported a constituent complaint about the storm drain at Clover and Holly, near the ADA ramp. The substructure under the drain is collapsing and can be moved by hand.
 - Mayor Hazel noted he would have it checked the next day.
- D. CM Schulte asked what happened to the trash cans down by the lake he had some residents ask.
 - Mayor Hazel explained that the trash cans were consuming significant staff time- about 2 employees for 6 hours a day- because people were dumping household trash into them.
 - Mayor Hazel also explained those areas are largely DNR property and that the trash cans were removed because of abuse and illegal dumping.
 - The city still uses trash cans during special events such as Governor's Cup Regatta; Lake Festival; etc., but not as permanent household- disposal bins.
 - CM Wolfe supported the change, saying the trash cans had been abused for years and that the city cannot continue to maintain them under those conditions.
 - Mayor Hazel estimated that the trash cans had previously consumed about 60 man hours per week.

11. Adjournment: Time: 7:49 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 8/10/2026, and were approved by Council 8/24/2026.

 Council Clerk