

REGULAR MEETING OF CELINA CITY COUNCIL – September 14, 2026

Attendees: Council President King; Council Members Clausen, Doseck, Gray, Sanford, Schulte, Uhlenhake and Wolfe; Mayor Hazel; Auditor Shinn; 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
 - Uhlenhake
 - Wolfe
- Absent:

3. Acceptance of Agenda:

- Agenda Approval: CM Wolfe made a motion to accept the Agenda, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 7-0 Aye.

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

- Minutes Approval:
 - Previous Meeting: August 24, 2026
- Outcome: CM Schulte made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by CM Uhlenhake. Motion passed with a roll call vote 6-0 Aye; CM Wolfe abstained.

5. Committee Reports:

- Committee of the Whole meeting August 24, 2026 to discuss residential tax abatements for new housing was summarized by President King.

6. Communications:

- Benjamin Rife represented West Ohio Community Action Partnership (WOCAP) and introduced the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative.
 - He described WOCAP's service area as 3 county region and listed agency programs including:
 - early childhood services
 - energy assistance programs (HEAP, PIP)
 - summer and winter crisis programs
 - housing services, including lead safety and homelessness assistance
 - homeownership, getting ahead, most valuable parents, and financial management programs
 - The Responsible Father Initiative was described as a statewide grant piloted in 12 counties last year and expanded to all 88 Ohio counties, including Mercer County, this summer.
 - He stated 2 staff would remain in Allen County and 2 staff would serve Auglaize and Mercer Counties.
 - Program details included:
 - a 12-session curriculum
 - optional condensed delivery as one full day or two half day workshops
 - topics such as self-awareness, caring for self, fathering skills, and relationship skills

- a 3-month casework follow up after completion
 - incentives such as a \$10 fuel card per class, a \$200 spending spree after completion of the 12 sessions, and an additional \$100 spending spree after the 3 month follow up period
 - childcare, snacks, and a graduation celebration
- The program is voluntary.
- He stated they had already made themselves available to the courts in Allen County and hoped to do the same in Ottawa and Mercer Counties.
- The grant reporting period currently ends after the 3-month coursework, though the agency wants to stay engaged beyond that if possible.
- The program will begin classes at the Celina Library in the next week they already had a couple fathers signed up in Celina.
- Council members thanked him and expressed support for the effort.
- Liquor License Transfer: From Jin Yu Inc. To Man Tang LLC Asian Buffet council members approved with no concerns.

7. Audience Communication:

- Theresa Howick, 7531 State Route 197, tax abatement clarification.
 - Asked for clarification on whether the city, if remaining pre-1994, could still set up a residential tax abatement for 100% for any number of years.
 - Mayor Hazel clarified
 - current abatements are for commercial and industrial uses
 - there are some residential improvement abatements, but not new residential construction
 - an amendment would be required for residential abatements
 - the open question is whether such an amendment would preserve the city's pre-1994 authority
 - the school board must officially request council to consider the matter before council acts
 - Theresa expressed concern that the school board had historically resisted such a proposal and urged the city to remain in the pre-1994 posture if possible.

8. New Business:

- a. **33-26-O:** An Ordinance to amend Ordinance 24-26-O to one (1) Wastewater Treatment Plant Assistant Superintendent, four (4) Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators I, II, III, or Trainee, and increase the total authorized positions in Wastewater Department to six (6).

Discussion:

- Mayor Hazel explained this was a routine staffing strength adjustment based on organizational needs.
- The Superintendent had spoke at the previous meeting about the need for an assistant and that the Ordinance would allow posting the position.
- It was noted the position had been posted 3 times last year without a successful applicant, leading to the addition of another operator.
- The need for succession planning was emphasized, including training someone to step in when the current superintendent eventually retires.
- Council members agreed the city should not delay the position.
- Amendment: Add an emergency clause so the position could be advertised and filled as soon as possible.
- Outcome: CM Clausen made a motion to amend the Ordinance, seconded by CM Uhlenhake. Motion passed with a roll call vote 7-0 Aye. CM Sanford made a motion to suspend the Ordinance,

seconded by CM Wolfe. Motion passed with a roll call vote 7-0 Aye. CM Shulte made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 7-0 Aye.

- b. 3-26-R:** A Resolution authorizing the Mayor of the City of Celina to prepare and submit an application to participate in the Ohio Public Works Commission State Capital Improvement and/or Local Transportation Improvement Program(s) and to execute contracts as required, and declaring an emergency.

Discussion:

- Mayor Hazel explained this is the Sugar Street Reconstruction Project.
 - The project is a priority because it includes the main feed line from the water plant to the north tower and full street reconstruction.
 - The project was estimated at roughly \$6 million to \$7 million overall.
 - The city expects this application to proceed through the county engineer before submission to the state.
- CM Gray questioned the filing deadline was identified as October 1, 2026.
- Council/Mayor/SSD discussed the timing and was told the project has been planned for the 2027-2028 timeframe:
 - 2027: water line work and reconstruction from the water plant up to Logan. (South Sugar to Logan Street)
 - 2028: reconstruction from Logan Street north.
- SSD Hitchcock stated the city has received OPWC money from this type of grant before, typically a little over \$500,000.
- Mayor Hazel emphasized the state and local grant funding helps reduce the burden on local taxpayers.
- Outcome: CM Gray made a motion to suspend the Ordinance, seconded by CM Doseck. Motion passed with a roll call vote 7-0 Aye. CM Clausen made a motion the pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Sanford. Motion passed with a roll call vote 7-0 Aye.

9. Old Business (2nd Reading):

- a. 30-26-O:** An Ordinance authorizing a lease agreement between the City of Celina and Buckeye Soft Serve LLC for the lease of the Bryson Park District. (AMENDED)

Discussion:

- SSD Hitchcock explained the Ordinance was amended to include the shelter houses.
- Mayor Hazel clarified that the change adds the shelter houses in section one and specifically includes shelter houses 7, 8, and 10 in the festival lease agreement.
- Council accepted the amendment.
- Outcome: CM Clausen made a motion to pass the Ordinance to third reading, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 7-0 Aye.

- b. 31-26-O:** An Ordinance to accept the petition for the annexation of 1.5 acres more or less in Jefferson Township to the City of Celina; to be known as the Grieshop Properties Annexation.

Discussion:

- Outcome: CM Sanford made a motion to pass the Ordinance to third reading, seconded by CM Uhlenhake. Motion passed with a roll call vote 7-0 Aye.

10. Old Business (3rd Reading):

- 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 Couth/City of Celina County Ambulance (EMS) Agreement.

Discussion:

- Outcome: CM Clausen made a motion to pass the Ordinance, seconded by CM Gray. Motion passed with a roll call vote 7-0 Aye.

11. Administrative Reports

A. Mayor Hazel Discussed:

- Parks & Recreation Committee must meet before the next council meeting to discuss:
 - Various Park improvements
 - The potential for a community center
- The Parks & Recreation Committee meeting was confirmed for 6:30 pm on September 28, 2026.
- The new salt storage bin at the Public Works facility is complete.
 - It will hold 1,000 tons of salt
 - The new facility is concrete on both sides and will help with winter street operations

12. For the Good of the Order:

- A. CM Gray remarks, congratulations were offered to the Celina Bulldogs who were noted as ranked 3rd in the state in Division III football and having a strong season.

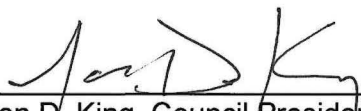
13. Executive Session

- A. Attendees of Executive Session: Council President King; Council Members Clausen, Doseck, Gray, Sanford, Schulte, Uhlenhake, and Wolfe; Mayor Hazel; Safety Service Director Hitchcock; Law Director Moore; Auditor Shinn; Pat Hire Clemans Nelson
- B. At 7:34 pm, CM Wolfe made a motion to go into executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual, unless the public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual requests a public hearing and for preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment, seconded by CM Schulte. Motion passed with a roll call vote 7-0 Aye.
- C. Executive Session adjourned at 9:15 PM.

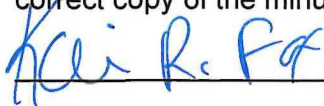
14. Adjournment: Time: 9:16 PM



Kari R. Fox, Council Clerk


Jason D. King, Council President

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 9/14/2026, and were approved by Council 9/28/2026.



Council Clerk