

Village of Cuyahoga Heights

Caucus Meeting

February 11, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Calls Meeting to Order

Council President Contipelli called the caucus meeting to order at 5:00 PM on February 11, 2026. A roll call was conducted with all council members present: Bloam, Centa, Contipelli, Schoeffler, Unger, and Volek, establishing a quorum.

Review of Council Meeting Agenda for Questions

Council President Contipelli asked if there were any questions regarding the agenda items for the upcoming council meeting. Councilman Schoeffler inquired about Ordinance 2026-16, specifically whether it involved new positions or salary changes for existing roles. CFO Meriwether explained that this ordinance addressed the non-bargaining employee salary scale, correcting formula errors from the August version and tidying up the errors and some position titles. The only additions that were adjusted by title were recreational positions (part-time seasonal) and a new "professional services" category for contracted instructors like yoga or craft teachers. Discussion ensued about the Assistant Recreation Manager position, with Mayor Bacci clarifying that this would provide shift coverage due to Parks & Recreation Director Wheaton working Monday through Friday day shifts. The assistant would handle afternoon and weekend coverage, not working simultaneously with Director Wheaton except for special events, similar to a pool manager structure.

Councilman Schoeffler asked about concession stand operations, with Mayor confirming that Parks & Recreation Director Wheaton oversees all recreational facilities with her assistant handling various duties as assigned.

Councilman Unger inquired about the service department hook truck replacement. Mayor Bacci explained that the current 22-year-old hook truck would be retained as a dedicated water truck, eliminating the need to constantly swap beds between watering duties and container pickups. Assistant Service Director Baciak recommended keeping the current truck for its specific watering function while purchasing a new one for general hook truck duties, as the current truck has minimal resale value.

Councilman Volek inquired about the fireworks legislation that was discussed previously a couple months ago. Law Director Chojnacki explained that he is still working on this, and about an inquiry from Councilman Schoeffler related to rental renewals and fees. Law Director Chojnacki explained that this is still under discussion.

Project Updates by Various Members of Administration

Fire Engine Update

Mayor Bacci reported that Fire Chief Suhy provided an update indicating the new fire engine should arrive around the end of September. Fire Chief Suhy and CFO Meriwether will work together to establish the funding mechanism. Council President Contipelli inquired if we would sell the old fire engine. Mayor Bacci explained this would need to be discussed further with Fire Chief Suhy.

House Project Update

Mayor Bacci provided a progress report on the house project, noting that final paint preparation and cleaning would be completed Thursday and Friday. He indicated plans to arrange individual or small group tours for council members once the work is finished.

Mayor Bacci addressed criticism about the backyard size, using an analogy about garage space to explain that eliminating a garage structure actually increases usable backyard space. He emphasized the house's design for small families or residents 55 and older, with everything accessible on the first floor. Regarding realtor fees, Mayor Bacci reported reaching out to several realtors about flat fee structures, as traditional percentage-based fees aren't standard for municipal sales. Three people have already expressed interest in purchasing the house before it goes on the market, with hopes of having it sold before the next council meeting.

Courts Project and Tree Removal

Council Member Unger raised concerns about the extensive tree removal in the park area, particularly around Sunny Pond. Village Engineer Sciano provided a detailed explanation of the sewer separation project, describing how the current combined storm and sanitary system would be separated into dedicated lines. The project involves removing cottonwood trees to accommodate new sewer infrastructure. Village Engineer Sciano explained the slope stability study conducted during previous trail work indicated the slope would remain stable even with complete tree removal. He also detailed the construction access requirements, explaining that a temporary construction road would run parallel to the existing trail to maintain public access during the two-year project. The Northeast Regional Sewer District requirements mandate water quality improvements to Sunny Pond, including pretreatment ponds before discharge. The project includes a substantial landscape budget for post-construction replanting in 2028, with plans to install quality hardwood trees rather than the cottonwoods being removed. Mayor Bacci noted this presents an opportunity for an Arbor Day celebration with community tree planting. Extensive discussion covered the sewer separation requirements for residential properties. New construction must have separated systems that tie together on private property, giving homeowners the option to fully separate their utilities in the future without forcing immediate compliance. The village will install connection points during the project but won't require existing residents to separate their systems. Questions about tree removal timeline were addressed with March 31 being the deadline for cutting due to Indiana bat nesting restrictions. The removed trees will likely remain on the ground until the project begins, estimated around late June when bidding is completed.

Klima Gardens Project

Mayor Bacci reported weather-related delays and steel fabrication concerns have set the Klima Gardens project back close to four weeks, with steel now ordered. The woodburning and gas fireplace will be reinstalled with the same capacity as before (approximately 120 people).

Toscana Project

The Toscana renovation encountered a 30-day delay due to asbestos discovery that requires professional remediation by the demolition company.

Softball Dugout Project

Weather delays have significantly impacted the girls' softball dugout construction. Parks & Recreation Director Wheaton has coordinated with Valley View to provide alternative playing facilities, with hopes to have the field playable for senior class members during the latter half of the season.

Executive Session

Mayor Bacci requested an executive session to discuss employee real estate matters.

Motion: Council President Contipelli moved to go into executive session, seconded by Councilman Centa. Roll call vote: All members vote "Aye." Motion carried.

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Pledge of Allegiance/Turn off Cell Phones

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the pledge, Mayor Bacci asked for a moment of silence for Mrs. Connie Doan.

Mayor Calls the Meeting to Order

Mayor Bacci called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted with all Council Members present: Centa, Contipelli, Schoeffler, Unger, Volek, and Bloam. The Mayor confirmed that a quorum was present.

Communications

A letter from Officer Susnik was entered into the record and which had been reviewed by council.

Minutes

Motion to accept the January 14, 2026 Caucus, Council Meeting and Finance Committee Meeting Minutes as prepared and place them on file. Mr. Centa made the motion, seconded by Mr. Contipelli. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting aye.

Financial Reports

Motion to accept the Income Tax and Net Profit Revenue Reports for January 2026 and Position of Cash January 2026 reports as prepared and place them on file. Mr. Contipelli made the motion, seconded by Mr. Schoeffler. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting aye.

Legislation

Resolution No. 2026-15 January Payment of Certain Claims and Transfers

A resolution approving and directing the payment of certain claims in the amount of \$1,520,030.47.

Motion: Mr. Schoeffler made a motion to dispense with the three-reading requirement. Mr. Unger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. For adoption, all members voted aye.

Ordinance 2026-16 Non-Bargaining Employee Pay Scale

An ordinance setting compensation schedule ranges for non-elected village employees and officials who are not members of a bargaining unit and declaring an emergency.

Motion: Mr. Unger made a motion to dispense with the three-reading requirement. Mr. Volek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. For adoption, all members voted aye.

Ordinance 2026-17 Village Scholarships Class of 2026

An ordinance creating village scholarships for graduating high school seniors residing within the village.

Motion: Mr. Volek made a motion to dispense with the three-reading requirement. Mr. Bloam seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. For adoption, all members voted aye.

Resolution 2026-18 Purchase of New Service Department Vehicle

A resolution authorizing the village to enter into a purchase agreement with Valley Ford Truck for the purchase of a Ford F650 at state pricing and declaring an emergency.

Motion: Mr. Bloam made a motion to dispense with the three-reading requirement. Mr. Centa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. For adoption, all members vote aye.

Resolution 2026-19 Vocon Klima Change Order

A resolution authorizing a change order to the village's design and implementation services agreement with Vocon for the Klima Gardens improvements project and declaring an emergency.

Motion: Mr. Centa made a motion to dispense with the three-reading requirement. Mr. Contipelli seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. For adoption, all members vote aye.

Resolution 2026-20 Metro Security Contract

A resolution authorizing the Village to enter into an agreement with Metro Cleveland Security for security services.

Motion: Mr. Contipelli made a motion to dispense with the three-reading requirement. Mr. Schoeffler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. For adoption, all members vote aye.

Resolution 2026-21 NOPEC Energized Community Grant

A resolution authorizing all actions necessary to accept Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) 2026 energized community grant funds and declaring an emergency.

Motion: Mr. Schoeffler made a motion to dispense with the three-reading requirement. Mr. Unger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. For adoption, all members vote aye.

Other Business

No discussion occurred on this item.

Mayors Report

Mayor Bacci announced that Cuyahoga Heights School District would be enjoying a four-day holiday weekend, while the Village Hall and Service Department would be closed only on Monday, February 16th in observance of President's Day. Service Director Sammons confirmed that rubbish collection would be moved to Tuesday, and special pickup would be on Wednesday, with everything pushed back one day.

The Mayor recognized February birthday wishes for several employees: Lance Hatcher on February 2, Dave Palucki and Jason Sagan on February 5, Nick Dalton on February 7, Assistant Building Commissioner Ken LaBella on February 14, Building Commissioner Norm Casini turns 93 on February 15, Councilman Rick Centa and Joseph Cipriano on February 16 and Lee Ann Schoeffler on February 28.

Mayor Bacci wished all the ladies a very happy Valentine's Day.

Council Report

Councilman Centa

Mr. Centa wished happy birthday to all the February birthdays and happy Valentine's Day to everybody.

Councilman Contipelli

Mr. Contipelli had nothing to report at this time.

Councilman Schoeffler

Mr. Schoeffler had nothing to report at this time.

Councilman Unger

Mr. Unger had nothing to report at this time.

Councilman Volek

Mr. Volek had nothing to report at this time.

Councilman Bloam

Mr. Bloam had nothing to report at this time.

Department Report

Police Chief Sturgill spoke about Mrs. Doan's family, describing her as a super great lady.

Parks & Recreation Director Wheaton had no report.

Service Director Sammons thanked council for their approval of the new truck.

Fire Chief Suhy had no report.

Law Director Chojnacki was excused from the meeting.

Chief Fiscal Officer Meriwether had nothing to report.


Administrative Assistant Schoeffler had nothing to report.
Assistant Building Commissioner LaBella had nothing to report.
Engineer Sciano had no report.

Comments from the audience

There were no comments from the audience.

Motion for Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made at 6:44 p.m. by Mr. Volek, seconded by Mr. Contipelli. All members voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

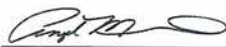
Approved: 

Mayor


Renato Contipelli (Mar 10, 2026 10:58:33 EDT)

Mayor and or President of Council

On: March 11, 2026



Chief Fiscal Officer and Clerk of Council