

NORTH COLLEGE HILL CITY COUNCIL

Minutes for NCH Council Meeting, Monday January 05, 2026, 7:00pm
Persons wishing to address Council prior to its dealing with current legislation may do so by registering with the Clerk of Council. Please provide the Clerk with your name, address, and the issue you wish to discuss.

PRAYER

President Wietlisbach led the prayer.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Wietlisbach.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Wietlisbach led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

- Council Member Zorb: Present
- Council Member Gaston: Present
- Council Member Alexander: Present
- Council Member Cureton: Present
- Council Member Clear: Present
- Council Member Davis: Present
- Council Member Chichester: Present

AGENDA

Council reviewed the agenda.

Council Member Gaston made a motion to amend the agenda by adding an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code, section 121.22 to enter into executive session under section G1 to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee or official or the investigation of charges and complaints or complaints against a public employee official licensee or regulated individual unless the public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual request a public hearing, after further remarks from the audience. Council Member Alexander seconded the motion.

Council Member Gaston asked for the executive session to be after further remarks from the audience.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

Motion by Council Member Gaston, seconded by Council Member Alexander, to amend the agenda to add an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code, section 121.22 to enter into executive session under section G1 to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee or official or the investigation of charges and complaints or complaints against a public employee official licensee or regulated individual unless the public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual request a public hearing, after further remarks from the audience. Motion pass 7-0

Council Member Zorb made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Council Member Gaston seconded the motion.

No discussion was had.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

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Motion by Council Member Zorb, seconded by Council Member Gaston, to accept the agenda as amended. Motion pass 7-0

MINUTES

Council Member Zorb made a motion to adopt the minutes from the December 15th, 2025, meeting. Council Member Gaston seconded the motion.

No discussion was had.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

Motion by Council Member Zorb, seconded by Council Member Gaston, to accept the minutes from the December 15th, 2025. Motion passed 5-0-2. (Council Members Zorb, Gaston, Alexander, Davis, and Chichester yes. Council Members Cureton and Clear abstain).

COMMUNICATION

There was no communication.

PUBILC COMMENTS

Barbra Thetford

- She was concerned about property maintenance
- Many of the landlords and renters around her do not care for their property
- There are areas of sidewalk that are in need of repair or replacement
- People still park on their yards and in the right-of-way
- One of her neighbors is using their yard to dump trash
- She tried discussing it with the neighbors, she also wrote a letter, and submitted a request 6 months ago, and recently submitted another request. The latest request did receive a response, but she feels that it is still taking too long
- There are some other houses that have trash in their yards
- Another house has many cars on their lawn, and it has been a reoccurring issue for years. They also have a tent in their front yard
- She has tried to get in contact with the NRO and the administration and received no response

City Administrator Arious DukesDean responded:

- Asked for Barbra Thetford's contact information
- Stated that she does not recall Barbra Thetford reaching out and cannot find any emails from her
- She would contact Barbra Thetford tomorrow

GUEST SPEAKERS

No guest speakers

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COUNCIL COMMITTEES

City, Community Development and Recreation

Council Member Gaston reported that they have not met since the last council meeting. The next meeting is on January 12 at 7:00pm

Budget and Finance

Council Member Zorb reported that they have not met since the last council meeting. The next meeting is on January 12 at 7:30pm

Rules and Public Policy

Council Member Clear reported that they have not met since the last council meeting. The next meeting is on January 12 at 6:00pm

Public Safety

Council Member Cureton reported that they have not met since the last council meeting. The next meeting is on January 12 at 6:30pm.

Ad Hoc Reports

Council Member Gaston reported that the North College Hill Board of Education is seeking applicants for a board member term that became vacant on January 1st.

- The deadline to email interest is Sunday, January 11th by 11:59 p.m.
- The board will then reach out to schedule interviews with eligible candidates after the board meets on January 12th.
- Must be a registered voter and live in the district

Mayor Tracie Nichols asked for a list of the Council and Ad Hoc Committee members. It was clarified that council only filled council appointed members, none of the mayor appointed members.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear confirmed that she could send out the council list to the administration.

Council Member Clear stated that if people wanted to learn more about the boards and commissions, they could go to the city website.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mayor

Mayor Tracie Nichols reported:

- Asked council members to consider joining some of the commissions
- Welcomed and said Happy New Year to the new council members
- They are working on things that they will present between now and the end of February

City Administrator

City Administrator Arious DukesDean reported:

- Wished everyone a Happy New Year and congratulated the new members
- They are working on getting the street schedule out in the newsletter and on the website. There are some streets that will be worked on in the spring

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- The street sweeper schedule was in the December newsletter, there may be modifications to the schedule if there are major interruptions
- Working on the FOP full and part-time agreements
- They are going to be opening bids for the Rumpke contract
- The clean-up ordinance is being worked on

Law Director

The Law Director was present and had no report.

Finance Manager

Finance Manager Sheva Stephans-Knott reported:

- She would like for everyone to refer to her as the Finance Manager, not the Finance Director, as that is her role and it is the role in the charter
- RITA has moved into the second phase of the subpoena program, RITA has connected federal returns with lack of North College Hill tax filings.
- Many citizens have received letters, they need to be responded to.
- All information can be uploaded to the RITA website, people do not need to come into the office
- They are working on getting the 2023/2024 audit done, it could be another 6 months
- The IT audit from the state is complete and they are working with a company on the recommendations

Council Member Cureton asked if the city was doing anything proactively to catch new homeowners or renters.

Finance Manager Sheva Stephans-Knott responded that they are planning on engaging people on the city website and adding information to the council's welcome baskets. She agreed that they needed to do more to inform citizens.

Council Member Alexander asked how they were reaching and informing young people.

Finance Manager Sheva Stephans-Knott responded that she has found out that its not just young people, its an information problem. She is also working with the city administrator and the mayor to possibly form a campaign. She noted that the posts on social media and the subpoena letters are getting responses.

Council Member Alexander asked if there was a way to alert businesses, where the young people work.

Finance Manager Sheva Stephans-Knott responded that its about educating adults on filing.

Council Member Clear noted that RITA used to send out post cards. She mentioned that its rental registration season and that ordinances state that it is the landlord's responsibility to report tenant information to the tax authority. She was wondering if they had installed a web-based tool for landlords to file their registration and report tenant information.

Finance Manager Sheva Stephans-Knott responded that she is working with the city administration to create a document to go with the onboarding process.

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Council Member Cureton asked if they were on track to collect the rental registration money by the end of January, collecting that rental information could help with RITA.

Finance Manager Sheva Stephens-Knott responded that December is still open so she could not respond.

Council Member Zorb stated that she never got the IT audit email and she attempted to contact auditor two times with no response.

Finance Manager Sheva Stephens-Knott responded that she probably did not contact the right person. She stated that she would send her the results.

CALL OF MEMBERS

Council Member Zorb

Council Member Zorb wished the citizens a Happy New Year and welcomed them to 2026. She thanked the voters for their trust and planned to not disappoint them. She said she understood if people did not vote for her since there had been things said about her that she believed were untrue. She took some time to respond to some of the things that she heard. One claim was that she disowned her daughter because her daughter had a child with a black man. She stated that she has only been pregnant and given birth once, and her son is biracial. She also addressed the claim from the organizational meeting on January 3 that she had been formally removed from the Budget and Finance committee. She was not removed from the committee, she was not voted back into council during that time and was not on the committee as a result. She had copies of the minutes from those meetings in January 2020.

Council Member Gaston

Council Member Gaston apologized to Council Member Zorb for what she had to go through. She is thrilled to continue working with her colleagues and congratulated them. She thanked the Vietnam veterans for the presentation of colors and for serving our country. She thanked Seth Cornelius for singing the National Anthem, Mike Graver for being the MC, Queen Selene, and Pastor Hudson. She also thanked Miss Brenda Beverly, Miss Linda Stagman, Miss Linda Braunwart, and so many other people. She acknowledged former council member Jim Dewald and expressed condolences to his family. She stated that no one should have to take the rude comments that are being spoken or on social media. She stated the council members need to work together and be respectful. Any concerns should be addressed professionally.

Council Member Alexander

Council Member Alexander said that the installation was great, one of the best she has seen. She was honored to be there. She stated that they needed to move forward and that they must respect each other. She stated that when she came in she did not know anybody, but she was ready to serve. They should all be treating each other how they would want to be treated. She reminded everyone that this is a job and they are here to work. She said that they shouldn't look back, they need to move forward and serve.

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Council Member Cureton

Council Member Cureton is excited and honored to serve on council and is thankful for the citizens who voted for her and supported her. She is also appreciative and honored to serve those who did not vote for her. She is committed to serving everyone. She expressed appreciation for her husband being by her side throughout the process of getting on council. She also expressed appreciation for the people who ran with her. She encouraged members to consider why they were here, for her it was that they are committed, dedicated, and ready to roll. She stated that members need to be able to put aside animosity. If citizens see her out, to come talk with her, she would like to meet and talk with citizens. She mentioned that there was a major accident and she was thankful to hear that the officers are ok. She also reminded people to not take moments for granted. There is a neighborhood watch meeting on January the 13th at 6:00 pm at the senior center.

Council Member Clear

Council Member Clear extended her sympathies to the Dewald family. She is grateful that there were no serious injuries for any of the officers and individuals involved in the car accident. She noted the importance and impact of having modern vehicles and equipment on safety. She thanked the citizens for trusting her as an elected official and for voting for her. She thanked her husband, daughters and son-in-law for supporting her. She noted that according to the numbers this was a large turn out for an election with no major state issues on the ballot. She that when you are in public service arrows can get pointed at you, but she tries to follow her motto and live so that no one believes the claims. She also mentioned the importance of working together, disagreeing respectfully, and moving forward.

Council Member Davis

Council Member Davis expressed condolences to the entire Dewald family. He mentioned that people get elected based on their poetry and that their governance is their prose. They are there to move forward together. He noted that the NCH girls basketball team is on a three-game streak and currently playing. They also have games on the 7th and 9th. He thanked Coach Greg, noting that he is moving on from coaching the football team. He thanked the coach for his team building, focus, discipline, and determination. The coach is also MVC Grey Division Coach of the Year and Southwest District Division 5 Coach of the Year.

Council Member Chichester

Council Member Chichester stated that she never spoke about anyone's personal life and that she doesn't know anything about their family. She said she was sorry that that happened to them. She stated that she has been coming to council meetings since the mayor was clerk. She also stated that she was wrong with saying removed and that she should have said not selected. She noted that she felt like she was falsely accused of altering an email and that she had to prove that she did not. She stated that they sit in their seats to serve the city. She noted that she never received any apology for that. She said that she should have brought documentation. After the meetings she moves on and she doesn't read the comments about herself online.

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Noting that they could delete social media or just not respond. She stated that family members should not be attacked. She agrees with council moving on and moving forward.

FURTHER REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE

No one signed up to speak during further remarks.

City Administrator Arious DukesDean asked if there was a time for citizens to be signed in for audience remarks.

Council Member Clear responded that citizens just signed in when they arrived as long as the time to speak hadn't passed.

Citizens now receive 3 minutes if they sign in at the meeting and 5 minutes if they contact the President of Council or Clerk of Council 24 hours before the meeting. They also have 2 opportunities to speak during the meeting.

This is a change that was decided to allow people to speak earlier in the meeting and time to give an opinion on the current legislation before the council voted on it.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council Member Gaston made a motion to enter an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code, section 121.22 to enter into executive session under section G1 to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee or official or the investigation of charges and complaints or complaints against a public employee official licensee or regulated individual unless the public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual request a public hearing, after further remarks from the audience. Council Member Zorb seconded the motion.

Discussion was had, City Administrator Arious DukesDean asked if she could come to the executive session to address an issue that fit the topic. Council Member Gaston stated that City Administrator Arious DukesDean could join at the end of the session. Someone would set out and invite her to the session when they were ready.

No further discussion was had.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Gaston, seconded by Council Member Zorb, to enter into an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code, section 121.22 to enter into executive session under section G1 to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee or official or the investigation of charges and complaints or complaints against a public employee official licensee or regulated individual unless the public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual request a public hearing, after further remarks from the audience.
Motion pass 7-0.*

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The executive session included Council Members Zorb, Gaston, Alexander, Clear, Cureton, Davis, and Chichester, President Wietlisbach, and Law Director Bill Deters. City Administrator Arious DukesDean also was invited to the session.

Council entered executive session at 8:16 pm and returned at 9:29 pm.
President Wietlisbach brought the meeting back to order.

LEGISLATION

There was no legislation.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Council Member Gaston made a motion to remove the gate lock from pies park effective immediately, no later than Tuesday at 9:00 am and that city staff coordinate with the property owner of Clovernook School for the Blind with whomever from council and develop a plan to ensure the park remains accessible to the public while maintaining safety, preventing illegal dumping and reducing potential crime activity and addressing any liability concerns. The motion was seconded by Council Member Alexander.

There was discussion, Council Member Chichester asked if it was the city's lock. It was confirmed by City Administrator Arious DukesDean that it was not a personal lock. She also noted that this is an administrative task, but she did not mind doing it because the city already had plans to do it.

There was no further discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

Motion by Council Member Gaston, seconded by Council Member Alexander, to remove the gate lock from pies park effective immediately, no later than Tuesday at 9:00 am and that city staff coordinate with the property owner of Clovernook School for the Blind with whomever from council and develop a plan to ensure the park remains accessible to the public while maintaining safety, preventing illegal dumping and reducing potential crime activity and addressing any liability concerns. Motion passed 5-2. (Council Members Zorb, Gaston, Alexander, Cureton, and Clear voting yes. Council Members Davis and Chichester voting no.)

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Chichester made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Zorb seconded the motion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

Motion by Council Member Chichester, seconded by Council Member Zorb, to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 pm. Motion passed 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 pm.

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Gillian Clear, Clerk of Council



Suzie Wietlisbach, President of Council