

# NORTH COLLEGE HILL CITY COUNCIL

Minutes for NCH Council Meeting, ~~Monday~~ Tuesday February 17, 2026, 7:00pm

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## 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 Zorb made a motion to amend the agenda by adding an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 (G)(1) To consider the appointment, employment, discipline, or compensation of a public employee or official. (G)(4) To prepare for, conduct, or review negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment. Council Member Gaston seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Zorb, seconded by Council Member Gaston, to amend the agenda by adding an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 (G)(1) To consider the appointment, employment, discipline, or compensation of a public employee or official. (G)(4) To prepare for, conduct, or review negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment. Motion passed 7-0.*

Council Member Gaston made a motion to amend the agenda by adding Resolution 02-2026, a resolution authorizing the city to enter into an agreement for retail electricity with a competitive retail electric service provider through the center for local government electricity consortium. to legislation. Council Member Zorb seconded the motion.

Discussion was had and it was clarified that this was time sensitive, it needed to be done by the end of the month. If they did not suspend readings then they would potentially need to have special meetings. It was confirmed that they would need to amend the legislation to add the emergency clause to the title. They also discussed having a recess before legislation was read to allow for more time to read the new legislation.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

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*Motion by Council Member Gaston, seconded by Council Member Zorb, to amend the agenda by adding Resolution 02-2026, a resolution authorizing the city to enter into an agreement for retail electricity with a competitive retail electric service provider through the center for local government electricity consortium. to legislation. Motion passed 7-0.*

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

There was no discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

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

## **MINUTES**

Council Member Clear made a motion to adopt the minutes from the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Council Member Chichester seconded the motion.

There was no discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Clear, seconded by Council Member Chichester, to adopt the minutes from the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Motion pass 7-0.*

## **COMMUNICATION**

There were no communications.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No one signed in to speak during Public Comments.

## **GUEST SPEAKERS**

### Proclamation

Council Member Cureton presented and read a proclamation to Ms. Barbra Graves. The proclamation highlights the fact that she was the first African-American elected to North College Hill City School District Board of Education. She has served for 26 years and has made numerous contributions to the city and community.

Mayor Nichols witnessed and signed the proclamation. She spoke about the impact Ms. Graves has had on the community. She also expressed appreciation for the work that she has done for the community.

Ms. Graves thanked the council, the mayor, and the city. She stated that it has been an honor to serve the children.

### Police and Fire Department Award

Mr. Maurice Thomas presented an appreciation award to the police and fire department. This award was to honor and express appreciation for letting them participate during Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the stuff a cruiser. He also highlighted the appreciation for the devotion in advancing the cause and interest of the men and women who were injured or sickened while serving the nation in uniform.

## **COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

### Rules and Public Policy

Council Member Clear reported they met on Monday February 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm and discussed:

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- New agenda format addressing the more urgent matters first followed by less urgent items
- Suggested changes to the committee schedule
- New expense policy for council that has a similar process to what administration does. The Clerk would not purchase things, but would communicate to administration what council need purchased
- They will need to amend the Council Rules to add a rule that governs council spending
- Started discussion on the new Council Member onboarding process

The next meeting is on Monday March 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm

### Public Safety

Council Member Cureton reported they met on Monday February 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm and discussed:

- Discussed the Police Department
- January statistics for Police Department
- Working on collaboration between citizens and Police Department

The next meeting is on Monday March 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30

### City, Community Development and Recreation

Council Member Gaston reported they met on Monday February 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm and discussed:

- City initiatives and events, such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Juneteenth
- Council Member Zorb presented a junk car removal idea
- Discussed beautification of parks and the park grants

The next meeting is on Monday March 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30

### Budget and Finance

Council Member Zorb reported they met on Monday February 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm and discussed:

- Worked through the monthly reports from the Finance Manager
- Discussed fraud prevention
- A clean up Ordinance is not needed
- Given a tentative FOP contract, did not discuss
- Discussed name plates
- Discussed new planning commission legislation, it is in council packets tonight
- Discussed waste and recycling RFP
- Discussed meter for city gas tank

The next meeting is on Monday March 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30

### Ad Hoc Reports

Council Member Clear attended OKI board orientation meeting

- Its a collaboration between Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana
- The committee discusses all methods of transportation
- 8 counties that collaborate on projects
- They have won awards for how well they implemented and utilized federal funds
- New page on their website for maps and data

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## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

### Mayor

Mayor Tracie Nichols reported:

- The deadline for the newsletter is not the 18<sup>th</sup> it is actually on Friday the 20<sup>th</sup>
- CIC was cancelled for this month
- Made sure they all received the email from the commissioner

Council Member Gaston confirmed that she submitted the first Council's Corner announcement for the newsletter.

Council Member Zorb wanted to make sure the website reflected the CIC cancellation.

### City Administrator

City Administrator Arious DukesDean was absent and had no report.

### Law Director

Law Director Bill Deters was present and had no report.

### Finance Manager

Finance Manager Sheva Stephens Knott was absent and had no report.

## **CALL OF MEMBERS**

### Council Member Zorb

Council Member Zorb had nothing to report.

### Council Member Gaston

Council Member Gaston had nothing to report.

### Council Member Alexander

Council Member Alexander noted that she was appreciative of the anonymous valentine.

### Council Member Cureton

Council Member Cureton noted that Rev. Jesse Jackson passed away today at 84. He was a Civil Rights pioneer. She highlighted the importance of remembering people who have passed away and finding something from their lives to bring into yours to make the world a happier and more loving place.

### Council Member Clear

Council Member Clear noted that Ms. Graves does a lot in the community, not just at the school level. She also congratulated the Police and Fire. She gave a shout out to the Finance team for upgrading the old software to something newer and more functional, noting the challenges that come with learning a new system.

### Council Member Davis

Council Member Davis mentioned that the girls and boys basketball begin tournament play. He also noted the Rev. Jesse Jackson was also a preacher in addition to being an activist. He read a quote from Reverend William Holmes Border Senior that Jesse Jackson would adapt and add to his speeches. He thanked Rev. Jesse Jackson for his service.

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### Council Member Chichester

Council Member Chichester thanked the DAV for the award, highlighting the work that was put into serving NCH. It's Senior Night in NCH and she congratulated them. She also called the younger generation to help fill the seats and start to prepare the world for the next generation.

### **FURTHER REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

#### Tracie Wright

Asked for council to consider those who do not have social media. She expressed frustrations with the lack of communication, especially regarding the recent Snow Emergency.

Council Member Cureton noted that in the past they used to be able to send out messages to everyone's phone. She noted that there is a storm coming on Thursday. She asked the Mayor to add future announcements to the website.

Mayor Nichols stated that she would talk with The City Administrator regarding the website and communication.

Council Member Gaston volunteered to help with the announcements.

Council Member Clear mentioned that you can sign up for website notifications.

Council Member Gaston made a motion to go into a 5-minute recess. Council Member Alexander seconded the motion.

There was discussion relating to the need for physical copies to be printed.

Council Member Cureton noted that she had many questions. President Weitlisbach stated that she would have time during the discussion portion for questions.

It was noted that this was an emergency and would require special meetings if it was not passed. Finance Manager Sheva Stephens Knott stated that the reason for the rush was that the email with the request had gone to spam and they had gotten a follow-up email with a date for return of the 28<sup>th</sup>. This agreement would keep NCH in the local government consortium that helps get the best rates for electric. This happens every 3 to 4 years.

Council Member Gaston asked if this was a renewal or a new contract. She also asked what happens if we do not pass it. Finance Manager Sheva Stephens Knott confirmed that it was a do-over and it's an agreement to stay in the group. She also confirmed that we would be kicked out if it did not pass.

Council Member Zorb asked why it did not have a specific kilowatt hour listed like the past ones had. Finance Manager Sheva Stephens Knott stated that the rates go up and down but the goal is to not exceed Duke's rate.

Council Member Cureton asked for confirmation as to why it was urgent. It was confirmed that it was urgent due to the prior agreement expiring.

Council Member Clear made a point of order, stating that they are deciding to get the legislation in front of everybody and that there would be an opportunity for discussion once they get to the legislation portion of the agenda.

It was confirmed that this vote would be for a 5-minute recess. It was also confirmed that an amendment would have to be made to include an emergency clause in the title and that the

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readings would need to be suspended, or they would need special meetings to pass the legislation. It was recommended to extend the recess to allow for time to make copies.

Council Member Gaston changed her motion to go into a 15-minute recess. Council Member Alexander seconded.

There was no discussion

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Gaston, seconded by Council Member Alexander, to go into a 15-minute recess. Motion passed 7-0.*

Council recess started at 7:58pm.

Council Member Gaston made a motion to return from recess and resume the meeting. Council Member Chichester seconded.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Gaston, seconded by Council Member Chichester, to return from recess and resume the meeting. Motion passed 7-0.*

President Wietlisbach brought the meeting back to order at 8:14pm.

### LEGISLATION

#### THIRD READING RES. 01-2026 A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING FORMAL CENSURE REGARDING CERTAIN STATEMENTS AND CONDUCT BY A MEMBER OF CITY COUNCIL DURING AN OFFICIAL MEETING

Council Member Zorb made a motion to adopt Resolution 01-2026. Council Member Gaston seconded.

Council Member Clear read a statement. (The statement was submitted to be attached to the minutes below.)

Council Member Chichester stated that she was in support of tabling the matter since they had already corrected; she retracted, and she apologizes. She also thought that they were moving forward before the Resolution was brought to the table.

Council Member Cureton stated that Council Member Clear mentioned that the corrective action was taken and asked Council Member Chichester to confirm the date that the corrective action was taken. Council Member Chichester believed it was at that next meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Council Member Cureton asked for confirmation of the corrective action that was taken. Council Member Chichester stated that she could not publicly. Council Member Cureton stated she knew it could not be clarified publicly, but she thought that there was a sequence that was to follow and wanted understanding on the plan.

Council Member Clear stated that she was not talking about executive session. Council Member Cureton stated that she wasn't either.

Council Member Cureton asked for the exact date of the corrective action. Council Member Clear stated that it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup>.

President Wietlisbach stated to Council Member Chichester that she mentioned that she did an apology. Council Member Chichester stated that she believed at the meeting she apologized for her words, actions, and for not coming to the table with professionalism. She noted that a lot of this

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was in executive session. She also believed that she said that her words at the time were not the clear interpretation of what she was trying to convey.

Mayor Nichols asked if this legislation was discussed in committee. Council Member Gaston stated that it was discussed in Executive Session with the Law Director.

Council Member Clear found the documentation and testimony that she was referring to. She stated that the minutes of the meeting on Monday, January 5th, 2026. Call of Members, Council Member Zorb addressed the claim from the organizational meeting on January 3rd 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 of 2020. She believed that the documentation and testimony that was provided corrected the record.

Council Member Alexander stated that she believed that the apology was just for a portion, for her not having the facts.

Council Member Chichester stated that privately there was an apology publicly there was statements made. She was trying to convey historical facts, it was not intended to attack Council Member Zorb.

Council Member Chichester asked the Law Director if they thought the matter was resolved after the last meeting. Law Director Deters stated that he was only present for the Executive Session portion and could not speak as to what happened in that meeting. Council Member Chichester asked if they needed to go back into Executive Session to make sure everyone was clear on things before they vote.

Council Member Gaston stated that a censure is a formal expression of disapproval, not discipline. She stated that there was a follow-up that was stated would happen and she did not know if that happened yet and what Council Member Zorb brought to council did not eradicate that.

Council Member Cureton asked for the date of what they thought was going to occur, because she could not find that information in the council notes.

President Wietlisbach reminded everyone that this is the third reading and she was also under the understanding that a sequence of events did not happen, because they were supposed to be made publicly. She noted that they could table this and send it to committee or discuss it further in executive session. She stated that there has been a lot of discussion and she would go to roll call if there were no other suggestions or motions.

Council Member Clear stated that her remarks were specifically to what was presented in open meeting. She stated that it was a fact that Resolution 01-2026 does not require any additional corrective action. She noted that in the January 5th call of members, Council Member Chichester stated that she was wrong by saying removed and that she should have said not selected. That predates the decision to go into executive session. She has a written copy of her remarks for the minutes.

Council Member Alexander asked Council Member Chichester if she followed through with everything that she agreed to. Council Member Chichester stated to her understanding she did. She also stated that she apologizes for her words and she did not mean to hurt Council Member Zorb's feelings. Her intent was not to attack, but to convey for the record of historical reference.

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She stated that she should have had the facts and evidence to back up anything before it was brought to council floor. She apologized.

Mayor Nichols noted that she was not in that Executive Session, so anything that she gets is from here. What she did know is that the legislation was presented before call members. She noted that the appearance is that they came out of that meeting and the decision was made to put this on the agenda. She stated that at the start of that meeting Council Member Gaston made a motion to add this before call of members. It appears that either way, if she did or did not apologize then this is what we're going to do.

Council Member Zorb stated that she felt like she was getting beat up all over again and that she was over this. She stated that an agreement was made in executive session of tasks that would be accomplished before the next meeting and they were not accomplished. She also made a point of order that Council Rules states that everyone only speaks twice, there had been way more than that happening on this, and she would like to make sure that it ceases.

Council Member Gaston called the question.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Gaston to call the question. Motion passed 4-3. (Council Members Zorb, Gaston, Alexander, and Cureton voting yes. Council Members Clear, Davis, and Chichester voting no.)*

It was confirmed that the council rules were silent on the votes needed for 'call the question'.

President Wietlisbach stated that it is just a majority of the people that are here and that is four.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Zorb, seconded by Council Member Gaston, to adopt Resolution 01-2026. Motion passed 4-3. (Council Members Zorb, Gaston, Alexander, and Cureton voting yes. Council Members Clear, Davis, and Chichester voting no.)*

**FIRST READING ORD. 02-2026 AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH A PLANNING COMMISSION STRATEGIC WORK SESSION**

Council Member Zorb made a motion to suspend 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> readings. Council Member Davis seconded the motion.

There was no discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Zorb, seconded by Council Member Davis, to suspend 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> readings. Motion passed 7-0.*

Council Member Zorb made a motion to adopt Ordinance 02-2026. Council Member Alexander seconded.

There was no discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Zorb, seconded by Council Member Alexander, to adopt Ordinance 02-2026. Motion passed 7-0.*

**FIRST READING RES. 02-2026 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR RETAIL ELECTRICITY WITH A COMPETITIVE RETAIL ELECTRIC SERVICE PROVIDER THROUGH THE CENTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTRICITY CONSORTIUM**

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Council Member Zorb made a motion to amend Resolution 02-2026 by adding 'and declaring an emergency' to the title. Council Member Gaston seconded.

There was no discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Zorb, seconded by Council Member Gaston, to amend Resolution 02-2026 by adding 'and declaring and emergency' to the title. Motion passed 7-0.*

Council Member Clear made a motion to amend Resolution 02-2026 by changing 'their respective chief executive officers.' to 'administration' in the sixth whereas. Council Member Zorb seconded.

There was no discussion

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Clear, seconded by Council Member Zorb, to amend Resolution 02-2026 by changing 'their respective chief executive officers.' to 'administration' in the sixth whereas. Motion passed 7-0.*

Council Member Zorb made a motion to suspend 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> readings. Council Member Alexander seconded the motion.

There was no discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Zorb, seconded by Council Member Alexander, to suspend 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> readings. Motion passed 7-0.*

Council Member Zorb made a motion to adopt Resolution 02-2026, a resolution authorizing the city to enter into an agreement for retail electricity with competitive retail electric service provider through the Center for Local Government and Center for Local Government Electricity Consortium and declaring an emergency as amended. Council Member Gaston seconded.

There was no discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Zorb, seconded by Council Member Gaston, to adopt Resolution 02-2026, a resolution authorizing the city to enter into an agreement for retail electricity with competitive retail electric service provider through the Center for Local Government and Center for Local Government Electricity Consortium and declaring an emergency as amended. Motion passed 7-0.*

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Council Member Zorb made a motion to enter an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code, section 121.22 to enter into an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 (G)(1), To consider the appointment, employment, discipline, or compensation of a public employee or official. (G)(4) To prepare for, conduct, or review negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment. Council Member Alexander seconded the motion.

There was no discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

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*Motion by Council Member Zorb, seconded by Council Member Alexander, to enter into an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code, section 121.22 to enter into an executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 (G)(1), To consider the appointment, employment, discipline, or compensation of a public employee or official. (G)(4) To prepare for, conduct, or review negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment. Motion passed 7-0.*

The executive session included: All Council Members, the Mayor, and the Law Director  
Council entered executive session at 8:48 pm and returned at 10:30 pm.

President Wietlisbach brought the meeting back to order.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Council Member Clear made a motion to authorize the city administration to purchase name placards for the three individuals on council who will need them. Council Member Zorb seconded the motion.

There was no discussion.

Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Cler, seconded by Council Member Zorb, to authorize the city administration to purchase name placards for the three individuals on council who will need them. Motion passed 7-0.*

### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Council Member Cureton made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Gaston seconded the motion.

There was no discussion.


Clerk of Council Gillian Clear called the roll.

*Motion by Council Member Cureton, seconded by Council Member Gaston to adjourn the meeting at 10:32 pm. Motion passed 7-0.*

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32pm.



Gillian Clear, Clerk of Council



Suzie Wietlisbach, President of Council

**REGARDING RES. 01-2026**  
**Anneliese Clear, Councilmember**

**February 17, 2026**

Having thoroughly read Res. 01-2026, I am reluctant to support it, not because I believe the conduct at issue was acceptable, but because I believe the matter was already resolved through proper procedures. In my view, this resolution unnecessarily escalates a situation that has already been addressed.

I want to be clear that I found Councilmember Chichester's statements regarding another councilmember during the January 3, 2026 meeting to be improper, and I disapprove of them; however, I believe that appropriate procedural corrective action has already taken place.

1. Councilmember Chichester was reprimanded for violating rules of decorum by the President of Council at the time of the incident, on January 3<sup>rd</sup>.
2. During the next regular council meeting on January 5, documentation & testimony refuting Councilmember Chichester's original claims was provided in open meeting. Therefore, the official record reflects verified facts.

It is important to note that Res. 01-2026 does not document either of the preceding corrective actions, nor does it seek any additional corrective action from Councilmember Chichester, such as a formal retraction or public apology. It only seems to reiterate formal disapproval of Councilmember Chichester's statements which have already been addressed and corrected through other procedural tools.

For these reasons, I believe revisiting this issue for a third time through a resolution of censure risks turning what should be a straightforward corrective process into an escalating conflict and forces individual Council members to publicly align themselves for or against a colleague in a way that does not serve this body or the public.

