

**MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF AVON, OHIO HELD TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
AT 7:30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Council Members: Council-at-Large – Mary Berges; 1st Ward – Jennifer Demaline; 2nd Ward – Anne Marie Etienne; 3rd Ward - Tony Moore; Council-at-Large – Michelle Patton; 4th Ward - Scott Radcliffe; Council-at-Large and Council President – Brian Fischer; Mayor – Bryan Jensen; City Engineer – Ryan Cummins; Planning/Economic Development Coordinator – Pam Fechter; Law Director – John Gasior; Finance Director – Steve Presley; Safety/Public Service Director – Duane Streator; Clerk of Council – Barbara Brooks

Council President Brian Fischer called the meeting to order.

Mr. Fischer advised they would be adding item no. 6a – Ordinance No. 8-26 – Hiring Architectural Services for the 2nd Fire Station.

1. **RIPPLE FIBER PRESENTATION** Stephen Maher, Director of Government Affairs for Ripple Fiber

Mr. Streator introduced Stephen Maher, Director of Government Affairs for Ripple Fiber, who was present to provide information about the company's plans to offer fiber Internet services to Avon residents. Mr. Streator provided background on how fiber options were introduced in Avon, explaining that he and Mr. Jenkins, IT Coordinator, were contacted approximately three to four months ago by Ripple Fiber, which expressed interest in entering the City to provide an additional fiber-based Internet option.

Council was reminded of the City's prior experience with Lit Fiber, which had partnered with the City to assess the feasibility of community-wide fiber Internet in response to significant community interest. Lit Fiber later chose to proceed without City involvement and was subsequently acquired by a larger communications company, which ultimately withdrew from the project before completion. Following Lit Fiber's withdrawal, Ripple Fiber identified an opportunity to serve Avon. Ripple Fiber, a utility company registered with the State of Ohio, plans to provide service to portions of the community not currently addressed by Brightspeed, the former CenturyLink. This effort coincides with Brightspeed's ongoing upgrades to fiber infrastructure along existing poles and underground in certain areas of the City. Ripple Fiber has completed the same approval and engineering review processes required of other providers to ensure compliance with the City's standards.

Mr. Maher stated that after reviewing the City's requirements, Ripple Fiber is prepared to move forward in Avon. Founded in 2021, Ripple Fiber has expanded into ten states, including Ohio. He explained that Ripple Fiber differentiates itself from traditional cable providers by offering symmetrical upload and download speeds, starting at 500 megabits per second for \$65 per month, with discounted options available for lower-income residents. He noted that fiber technology is generally more reliable than copper-based cable systems, particularly during severe weather events, and cited studies indicating fiber connectivity may increase home values.

Mr. Maher explained that the installation process is expected to take approximately three years and will primarily involve underground construction, with the goal of minimizing disruption to residents. He emphasized that all disturbed areas would be restored to as-is or better condition, with quality assurance teams in place to verify restoration standards. Ripple Fiber intends to focus on areas not currently served by Brightspeed.

Mr. Maher discussed Ripple Fiber's approach to community engagement, emphasizing proactive communication. Residents will be notified through door hangers, mailers, and neighborhood canvassing. Ripple Fiber will also provide customer support through a local office, a call center, and an online platform, allowing residents to report concerns directly to customer service staff. He noted that residents may mark sprinkler systems or other sensitive areas to prevent damage and reiterated Ripple Fiber's restoration commitment should damage occur.

Mr. Maher stated that engineering work for the project is largely complete and that the company is in the process of securing remaining permits. He explained the decision-making process between underground and aerial installation, noting that underground installation is preferred where feasible, though aerial deployment may be necessary in areas with difficult soil conditions. He clarified that the first three to five feet of property from the roadway is public right-of-way and accessible to utilities.

During the “Go Live” phase, Ripple Fiber plans to conduct outreach events, advertising, and canvassing, where permitted, to raise awareness and answer resident questions. Mr. Maher indicated these efforts are intended to support a smooth rollout of services and encourage community participation.

Mr. Fischer asked whether Ripple Fiber was attempting to avoid competing directly with Brightspeed in the same neighborhoods. Mr. Maher reiterated that Ripple Fiber intends to focus on areas not currently served by Brightspeed and does not typically overbuild existing fiber infrastructure.

Ms. Etienne asked about the project timeline. Mr. Maher confirmed that a ceremonial groundbreaking is planned for February 11, 2026.

Mayor Jensen asked whether Ripple Fiber’s policy of avoiding overbuild applied to areas already served by cable providers. Mr. Maher explained that cable is not considered equivalent to fiber service and that Ripple Fiber’s focus is on expanding next-generation fiber access, particularly in areas lacking fiber connectivity.

Mayor Jensen inquired how the Administration would coordinate communication with Ripple Fiber to keep residents informed. Mr. Maher emphasized the importance of timely and transparent communication and stated that Ripple Fiber would work closely with the City. Mr. Cummins confirmed that infrastructure maps and permits related to Brightspeed had been shared with Ripple Fiber. Mayor Jensen expressed the City’s interest in receiving consistent updates regarding work locations so staff can respond effectively to resident inquiries. Mr. Maher reiterated Ripple Fiber’s commitment to coordination and information sharing.

Mr. Maher noted that posting updates on the City’s website is one recommended method to keep residents informed and assist City Officials in responding accurately to resident inquiries. He added that Ripple Fiber also notifies the local Police Department of construction activities to support public safety and coordination.

Mayor Jensen asked about Ripple Fiber’s use of contractors. Mr. Maher explained that while subcontractors are used for installation work, Ripple Fiber assigns its own project managers to oversee crews and ensure quality and adherence to company standards.

Mr. Fischer asked how Ripple Fiber determines which areas to target and whether the company is racing other providers. Mr. Maher explained that Ripple Fiber strategically evaluates areas lacking fiber infrastructure and coordinates with the City Engineer. If permits are submitted for areas already being serviced, Ripple Fiber redirects its focus elsewhere.

Mr. Cummins clarified that his role is limited to reviewing engineering plans and ensuring compliance with City standards, not overseeing competition between service providers.

Mr. Moore expressed concern about potential disruptions from multiple Internet providers operating in the same areas. Mr. Maher acknowledged the concern and reiterated Ripple Fiber’s intent to minimize disruptions by avoiding overbuilding and focusing on underserved areas.

Mr. Radcliffe asked where Ripple Fiber plans to begin work. Mr. Maher stated that initial efforts will focus on the Highland Park area, with a cabinet location planned on Long Road near Avon Middle School.

Mr. Maher emphasized Ripple Fiber’s focus on educating residents about construction locations and right-of-way access and stated that advance notification is intended to reduce concerns. Mayor Jensen indicated his confidence that Ripple Fiber would operate responsibly.

Ms. Berges asked about projected subscriber numbers. Mr. Maher responded that initial estimates were approximately 10,000 homes Citywide, though the final number may be lower once Brightspeed's coverage is accounted for. He stated that Ripple Fiber's goal is to provide additional high-speed options where fiber is not already available.

Ms. Berges asked about online reviews of Ripple Fiber. Mr. Maher acknowledged early challenges reflected in some reviews, noting that rapid growth led to delays in some markets. He stated that Ripple Fiber has since expanded staffing and improved processes to reduce wait times.

Ms. Berges asked who would handle service calls. Mr. Maher explained that Ripple Fiber operates a call center based in North Carolina while also providing local customer service support.

Ms. Etienne asked whether Ripple Fiber utilizes XGS-PON technology. Mr. Maher confirmed that XGS-PON is used throughout Ripple Fiber's network.

Mrs. Demaline thanked Mr. Maher for his presentation and asked what other Ohio municipalities Ripple Fiber is working with. Mr. Maher stated that Avon will be the first Ohio municipality served, with discussions underway in Avon Lake, Westlake, North Olmsted, and Strongsville.

Mrs. Demaline asked whether Ripple Fiber plans to serve commercial areas. Mr. Maher confirmed that both residential and commercial areas are included, with service packages available for small and medium-sized businesses.

Mrs. Demaline asked if a map showing planned installation areas was available. Mr. Maher stated that while he did not have a map present, he would provide one via email.

Mr. Moore asked for additional information regarding subcontractors. Mr. Maher reiterated that subcontractors are overseen by Ripple Fiber project managers and stated that further details could be provided upon request. Mr. Moore expressed cautious optimism, noting support for competition while remaining concerned about potential resident complaints.

Mr. Fischer thanked Mr. Maher for attending and presenting to Council.

2. ORDINANCE NO. 112-25 – TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 413-68, PASSED JANUARY 15, 1969, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF AVON, OHIO, AS AMENDED, REZONING A 5.09 ACRE PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED ON THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF NAGEL & CHESTER, PPN: 04-00-021-000-264 FROM M-1 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL TO C-4/M-1 GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT OVERLAY/GENERAL INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

Planning Referral

The third of three readings of Ordinance No. 112-25 will be held on Monday, January 26, 2026

Ms. Fechter informed Council that representative from Premier Development Partners; Mr. Piczak, President and Ms. Sherman, Senior Partner, were present to address any questions regarding the rezoning. She relayed to the developers some of the concerns Council expressed over the past several weeks and noted they are willing to work with the City. The first phase is to go through the rezoning process and then as each lot is sold, that will bring in a development plan requiring a traffic study as they move through the process.

Ms. Fechter noted that they had previously worked with the City on the go-kart project in the existing building just north of the intersection. During that approval process, there was some concern about aligning developments with adjacent Cleveland Clinic Boulevard to better accommodate future traffic patterns. She added that Cleveland Clinic, while developing nearby, showed a willingness to collaborate on related issues, such as parking lot alignment.

Mrs. Demaline inquired regarding possible future plans to widen Chester Road in that area from Nagel Road to Jaycox Road. Mayor Jensen confirmed that the City's plan is to eventually widen that portion of Chester Road to

five lanes. He explained the process would involve relocating a gas line, extending a culvert, and coordinating potential Cleveland Clinic development and other possible improvements at or near the intersection. Mayor Jensen added that Mr. Cummins has a preliminary of one section for the widening and they have discussed what the widening would look like going up to Nagel Road.

Mrs. Demaline said her concerns are mainly focused on the bottleneck effect created by Chester Road being only two lanes near Jaycox Road leading to traffic congestion. She commented that it was good to know that the City has a plan to widen that stretch of Chester Road in the near future.

3. [ORDINANCE NO. 2-26](#) – TO AMEND THE PLANNING AND ZONING CODE SECTIONS 1264.07(f) – ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS FOR ATTACHED SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLINGS, 1264.08(e) – ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS FOR MULTI-FAMILY DWELLINGS, AND SECTION 1292.14(c) – IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE STANDARDS AS THEY RELATE TO ILLUMINATION ON PEDESTRIAN PATHS AND OPEN AREAS Planning Referral

The second of three readings of Ordinance No. 2-26 will be held on Monday, January 26, 2026.

A Public Hearing will be held on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 7:25 p.m.

There was no discussion on this item.

4. [ORDINANCE NO. 4-26](#) – TO AMEND THE PLANNING AND ZONING CODE SECTIONS 1222.02 DEFINITIONS, 1278.03(f)(7), SCHEDULE OF PERMITTED USES, 1280.05(II) MINIMUM LOT AND YARD REGULATIONS FOR SPECIAL USES IN NON-RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS, AND 1280.06(nn) TO REQUIRE A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR PET DAYCARES IN THE M-1 DISTRICT Planning Referral

The second of three readings of Ordinance No. 4-26 will be held on Monday, January 26, 2026.

A Public Hearing will be held on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 7:20 p.m.

There was no discussion on this item.

5. [ORDINANCE NO. 6-26](#) – TO AMEND AND SUPPLEMENT APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE NO. 106-25 Mr. Presley

Mr. Presley outlined several appropriation amendments:

- Adding \$150,000 for building improvements in the General Fund for the new City Hall as they did not expend all the funds that were budgeted in 2025 and they were not encumbered. This was to establish appropriations in 2026 for this expenditure.
- Adding \$250,000 for furniture and fixtures for the new City Hall
- Transferring \$250,000 to the Fire Station #2 Improvement Fund for Miscellaneous Contract Services
- Appropriating \$600,000 (amended from \$500,000) in the Recreation Income Tax fund for Little League Park improvements, including lighting for two fields (\$494,000) and batting cages (approximately \$100,000) available through cooperative purchasing.
- Appropriating \$43,145 in the Water Revenue Fund for interest payable to Avon Lake, noting this is the final year of payments

Mrs. Demaline asked for clarification on the \$250,000 for Fire Station #2, which Mr. Presley confirmed was for the Perspectus contract for architectural services to be discussed later in the meeting.

6. [ORDINANCE NO. 7-26](#) – AUTHORIZING THE HIRING OF THE TRUAX LAW GROUP, LTD., AS OUTSIDE SPECIAL COUNSEL TO THE CITY OF AVON FOR ALL MATTERS PERTINENT TO REVIEW OF CONTRACTS TO BE ENTERED INTO FOR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF FIRE STATION NO. 2 Mr. Gasior

Mr. Gasior introduced Phil Truax as a seasoned construction attorney who has previously worked with the City. He explained that Mr. Truax would provide specialized legal guidance regarding the contracts for Fire Station

No.2, including both the architectural services contract with Perspectus and the future construction manager at risk contract. Mr. Gasior felt it was important for the City to have someone with that kind of experience and expertise working for the City and he highly recommended Council approve this hire.

Mr. Truax was present at the meeting and briefly introduced himself to Council.

6a. ORDINANCE NO. 8-26 – AUTHORIZING HIRING OF PERSPECTUS TO PROVIDE BASIC ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES IN PREPARATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW FIRE STATION (NO. 2) TO BE LOCATED AT MIDDLETON ROAD AND PENDLETON COURT Mr. Gasior

Mr. Gasior explained that this Ordinance authorizes a contract with Perspectus for preliminary architectural work for Fire Station No. 2. He noted that Mr. Truax is working to refine the contract to ensure that initial work is not overly site-specific, as there are ongoing negotiations with Columbia Gas that could potentially affect the site selection and could have an impact on the purchase agreement that Council will be considering in early February.

Mr. Gasior explained that the initial contract would be approximately \$225,000 or less, focusing on programming and schematic design work that could be transferred to another location if necessary, noting that the agreement, (Exhibit A), should be finalized before Council votes next week. Mr. Gasior noted there would be subsequent agreements between the City and Perspectus.

Mr. Truax clarified that this initial proposal from Perspectus serves as a precursor to the full design and construction and administration of the agreement. For that reason, the City, the Mayor, and Mr. Gasior want to limit the work to two phases, with this proposal covering only the first, non-site-specific phase. The goal is to avoid spending money on site-specific work that could be lost if the site changes due to easements or other issues.

Mr. Truax continued by saying that this first phase includes programming, performance requirements, schematic design concepts, general building layout, access points, and an initial construction cost estimate. That information allows the City to determine whether the project is within an acceptable cost range before moving forward.

Mr. Truax explained that the subsequent Design Services Agreement—under which Perspectus would prepare final drawings and specifications for contractors—depends on the work completed in this phase. If the site changes after that later work begins, much of it would need to be redone. By limiting this proposal to programming and schematic design, the City reduces the risk of wasted costs and protects the investment in the later design phase.

7. RESOLUTION NO. R-3-26 – TO APPROVE WITH MODIFICATION THE NEW APPLICATION MADE BY DONALD & ANGELINE BURGE TO HAVE CERTAIN LAND OWNED BY THEM LOCATED AT 37180 CHESTER ROAD, PPN NOS. 04-00-009-000-024 AND 04-00-009-000-025, CONSISTING OF 20 ACRES, DESIGNATED AS BEING LOCATED WITHIN AN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT Mr. Gasior

A Public Hearing will be held on Monday, January 26, 2026, at 7:25 p.m.

Mr. Gasior explained that this is a new application for an Agricultural District designation, which would provide a property tax reduction for the landowners. He noted that the County cannot grant the Agricultural District designation without City Council's approval. The landowners must maintain agricultural use of the property to qualify for the designation, which is valid for five years.

8. REPORTS AND COMMENTS

MAYOR JENSEN reported on the following items:

- **Salt shortage:** The City has already used as much salt as was used during all last year and all the surrounding communities were in the same position with their salt supply. While salt is on order, the City will focus on salting main thoroughfares and intersections in subdivisions until supplies

are replenished. Mayor Jensen addressed a social media complaint about City snowplows speeding through neighborhoods. He noted that the City's GPS tracking on the vehicles showed the trucks were traveling at appropriate speeds (15-25 mph) and that large trucks can appear to be moving faster than they actually are.

- **Jameson House:** The City will take ownership at the end of February of the property located at 36675 Detroit Road. Mr. Larsen, owner of "The Strip" restaurant and several other businesses in Olde Avon Village, has offered to donate the historic railroad car to be placed on the Jameson property as a historical feature and working with the vocational students to get it restored.
- **The former Village School/New City Hall:** Renovations are progressing well, and the Mayor invited Council Members to visit the site in the coming weeks to see the progress.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

MS. BERGES, AT LARGE commended Biggby Coffee in Avon for their \$500 donation to Community Resource Services. She also noted that the City of Seven Hills is updating their Ordinances regarding e-bikes and e-scooters, suggesting Avon consider similar updates before warmer weather returns when the students would be out of school for the year.

MRS. DEMALINE, WARD 1 presented a draft Resolution opposing FirstEnergy's request to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio for longer power restoration times. She asked for Council to support such a Resolution that she asked Mr. Gasior to prepare for consideration next week. Mr. Gasior noted that several municipalities, including Mentor, Bay Village, and Barberton, oppose the request, along with bipartisan opposition from State Legislators. He agreed to prepare a Resolution for Avon.

MS. ETIENNE, WARD 2 expressed appreciation for Mayor Jensen's message about unity in a recent publication of the City Newsletter. She said she is happy and thankful to be serving the City as a Member of Council and learn from such a dedicated group.

MR. MOORE, WARD 3, thanked the road crews for their work despite the salt shortage as they were doing their best with the resources they have available.

MS. PATTON, AT LARGE made no comments.

MR. RADCLIFFE, WARD 4 also complimented the snow removal efforts, noting he had received positive feedback from residents.

MR. FISCHER, AT LARGE, inquired about the City's use of brine solution before recent snowstorms. Mr. Streator confirmed that the City uses brine as a pre-treatment when weather conditions allow, which helps the salt work more effectively and reduces the amount needed.

DIRECTORS/ADMINISTRATION:

MR. CUMMINS, CITY ENGINEER, made no comments.

MS. FECHTER, PLANNING/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR made no comments.

MR. GASIOR, LAW DIRECTOR, made no comments.

MR. PRESLEY, FINANCE DIRECTOR, made no comments.

MR. STREATOR, SAFETY DIRECTOR/PUBLIC SERVICE DIRECTOR emphasized that despite the salt shortage, the City will continue to salt all intersections in the subdivisions and asked residents to report any concerns to the Service Department noting that he would address any complaints as promptly as possible.

AUDIENCE:

There were no public comments made by the audience members.

9. ADJOURN: 8:47 p.m.

There being no further business, the Work Session of Council was adjourned.

PASSED: _____

SIGNED BY: _____
Brian Fischer, Council President

ATTEST: _____
Barbara Brooks, Clerk of Council