

**CITY OF READING, OHIO
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – LEGISLATIVE SESSION
MAY 19, 2026 – 7:30 PM**

For the full detail of this evening's Council Meeting, please visit www.watchreadingohio.com.

Opening and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by President Mattscheck at 7:30 pm with an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members present: Mr. Powell, Mr. Bronner, Mr. Bishop, Mr. Boehner, Mr. Thamann, and Mrs. Kroeger. Mrs. Eadicicco was absent. Motion was made by Mr. Boehner, seconded by Mrs. Kroeger to excuse Mrs. Eadicicco. Motion carried by 6-0 voice vote.

Other city officials in attendance- Law Director Mr. Stevenson, Safety Service Director Mr. Ross, Auditor Mrs. Smith and Treasurer Mrs. Owens.

Minutes for Approval

Minutes were not ready for approval.

Guest Speakers

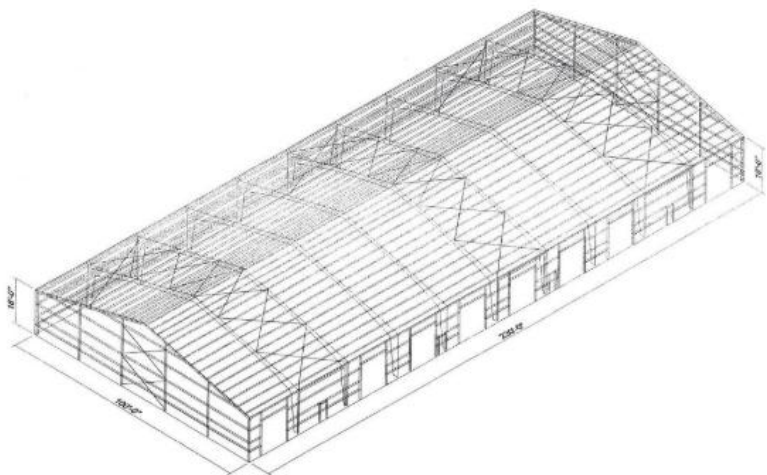
No guest speakers.

Audience Participation

Patrick McCarthy — Patrick presented a preliminary concept for a new 23,000 sq. ft. fire department building. He shared a rough cost estimate of \$318,553 for a delivered, pre-engineered steel “erector set” structure (white finish, galvanized roof), including architectural drawings and project management. The concept included eight tall bay doors for apparatus, walk-through doors, and specifications like 135 mph wind rating and a 50-year warranty. Installation would require a separate insured erector. He offered to volunteer time to coordinate exploratory, no-cost bid efforts for concrete, electrical, and IT, and to circulate the estimate. Exhibits that were provided are shown below.

Council thanked him for his efforts.

Building Specifications		
Project: McCarthy07-May-2026		Date: 05/07/2026
CONTACT INFO		
Attention: Patrick McCarthy	Phone: 513-227-0446	
Building Address:	County: Hamilton	
City: Cincinnati	State: OH	Zip: 45215
BUILDING DETAILS		
Width: 100'	Length: 230'	Eave Height: 18'
Pitch: 3:12	Roof: N/A	
Walls: N/A	Windows: N/A	Insulation: N/A
Wall Color: SMP - (TBO)	Floor Color: SMP - (TBO)	Roof Color: Galvalume
DOOR & GATE		
Ground Level: 20	Roof Level: 20	Wind: 135
Seismic: C	Building Code: IBC-21	Additional Load: 1
INCLUDED		
- Steel Joists & Wall / Girt Submittal / Secondary Framing - Galvanized Steel Roofing - Structural Steel L-Beams - 50 Year Warranty On All Structural Members - 20 Gauge 900 Color Wall / Siding (40 Year Warranty) - 24 Gauge 900 Color Siding / Roof (15 Year Warranty) - All Fasteners and Hardware - Lifetime Warranty against rust on all fasteners - Premium Paint Job - Dedicated Professional Project Manager - Certified, Skilled & Experienced Skilled Trades (Quality to your specs)		
EXCLUDED		
- ALUMINUM - Aluminum is provided by an American company that uses only American made materials. - Precision Engineering - Our precision on building. None of the an technology impacts that every building made in the highest standards. - On Time Delivery - Guaranteed delivery from make sure on time scheduling, using your time and money.		
ENGINEERING AND DRAWINGS		INCLUDED
PROJECT MANAGER		INCLUDED
BUILDING PRICE		\$318,553.00



Robin Knight — Robin thanked council for promptly informing the public that the police chief had been placed on administrative leave following the prior meeting. She asked council not to place the same levy proposal back on the November ballot and instead to convene community groups, listen, set clear priorities, and consider breaking the project into phases that are more economically feasible.

She raised transparency questions about the \$25,000 Crosden report on the police department—timeline (initiated Aug 2025, delivered Jan 2026), funding source, and what actions have been taken since. She also asked about the former Roman Haas property (Givaudan) and whether environmental issues are the city’s responsibility to address.

Council responses:

- Mr. Bishop: The November ballot will not repeat the same plan. Council will reassess scope, cost, timing, and partial solutions. Input was mixed; they’ll seek a path that addresses needs without overcomplicating. Community meetings will be held.
- Mr. Ross: The property is privately owned by Givaudan; the city has no direct responsibility. The city requested copies of environmental reports and is coordinating with the Port, REDI Cincinnati, Alloy (formerly HCDC), and Hamilton County to understand next steps. There has been known environmental oversight since Dow Chemical’s 2000s-era RCRA actions. Council awaits more details on Givaudan’s decision.
- Mrs. Kroeger: Noted that on March 3 she outlined items already being implemented or in progress from the Crosden report.

Dwight Daum — Dwight thanked members who responded to his records requests. He noted missing attachments from an 11/23/2025 email sent by Mrs. Eadicicco to council and requested those be made available in two weeks. He also flagged issues with a January special session notice: a header date error and lack of advertisement for the January 29 meeting (though January 27 was advertised), alleging the January 29 meeting may have been held without proper notice.

Council took the comments under advisement.

Bob Ashbrock — Bob urged a comprehensive public postmortem on the failed levy. He cited economic concerns and specific objections to tying stadium and city civic improvements in one proposal, arguing that perpetuating city–school stadium entanglements was off-putting. He urged the city to:

- Obtain appraisals and title searches for the stadium and the Central property.
- Explore alternatives to funding, including using portions of cash reserves and inside millage that currently yields about \$1M annually (half general fund, half capital), noting past use of capital funds to support bonded projects without a public vote. Council acknowledged the suggestions and reiterated that the same plan would not return in November.

Donna Wiggins — Donna provided historical context on contamination issues dating back to the 1960s (Pristine Chemical) and community engagement with Roman Haas in the 1970s–80s for emissions concessions. She urged transparency on why Givaudan withdrew (“if environmental, why?”) and whether the city has a right to know for residents’ safety. Council agreed it’s a valid concern and noted they await Givaudan’s response and clarification.

Liza Durbin — Lisa highlighted that nearby areas are documented Superfund sites with five-year reviews available on the EPA’s site and encouraged residents to consult those public updates. Council clarified that the Pristine site is just north of the property and that Superfund trustees meet annually with the city. Historic enforcement began around

1989–1990 under Chief Hollmeyer, leading to EPA involvement and long-running groundwater treatment. Phase I and II reports are public; any new, company-commissioned findings are not automatically accessible.

Sue Rinderle — Sue asked if the stadium soil and nearby fields behind the pool have been tested, noting concerns for children’s safety. Council said they had no specific knowledge to report and acknowledged the request to look into it.

Mary Ann Amyx — Mary Ann requested clear, accessible financial statements.

Auditor Mrs. Sabrina Smith responded:

- The State Auditor conducts audits every two years (current cycle covers 2024–2025), posted on the state’s and city’s websites.
- An annual GAAP financial statement is produced by a third-party each year and released around September.
- Monthly fund statements are provided to council and reflected in meeting minutes.
- All monthly expenditures are published on Ohiocheckbook.gov.
- The city’s annual budget process includes public hearings (first reading June 16; public hearing July 7 for the upcoming cycle). Mary Ann emphasized wanting facts over hearsay and praised local pride and collaboration.

Communications read by Mrs. Kroeger:

From Peggy Sutton — To the members of city of reading council: I would like to know what is going on with the two dilapidated houses on Hunt Road. It seems as if one of them is even worse than the first time I asked. These are now what I consider dangerous. Kids love to explore and don’t always read no trespassing signs. It is also disrespectful to the two houses that are there that maintain their property. Especially the last one as they were warned to clean up or else. They cleaned up and it looks pretty good. Something needs to be done about these houses, as they have been sitting there, dilapidated, for many years. Thank you for your time.

Mr. Ross’ response – they are trying to have one of the houses torn down as early as this Friday.

Mr. Powell’s response – the other house was sold at auction and forfeited back.

From Nicolle LouAllen — My name is Nicolle LouAllen and I’ve been a resident of Reading since 2004. I’m not writing to argue any single issue. I’m writing because of a pattern that I believe this council needs to hear named clearly. That pattern is this: time and again, residents of Reading have learned what is happening in their own city not from their elected officials, but from Facebook.

It started with the Crosden report. A \$26,000 investigation into our police department, paid for with public money. But the payments were split into increments under \$5,000 - creating the appearance that this was structured to avoid the public disclosure requirements that exist to protect residents. When that report eventually surfaced on Facebook, not by this council - it was dismissed as misleading rather than addressed. The community paid for that investigation. We were entitled to honesty and transparency. Instead it was buried, and when we found it anyway, we were told not to believe it.

Then came the levy. \$27 million on the May ballot. Residents asked for time, asked for dialogue, asked leadership to pause and reconsider. Those requests were ignored.

And what followed is something I need this council to sit with. That levy campaign tore this community apart. Neighbor turned against neighbor. Residents who publicly opposed the \$27 million expenditure were doxxed and targeted. And individuals and organizations that chose to participate in that targeting damaged reputations they had spent years building. Through all of it, this council and this mayor were largely silent. Not one statement. Not one call for civility during the campaign, and not one call for unity after it ended. The levy failed by about 70 percent - that's a decisive message.

But there has still been no acknowledgment of the damage done to this community, and no effort to begin healing it. Silence before the vote was a choice. Continued silence after it is a pattern.

Then residents learned - on Facebook - that our chief of police had been under investigation since January for conduct involving four felony-level allegations related to the illegal use of a law enforcement database. Days after it became public, the chief was finally placed on leave. This didn't have to come out the way it did. When action only follows public pressure, that's not accountability...that's damage control. We deserved to know about all of this sooner. We did not.

And then came the news about Givaudan. A \$217 million development project...gone. But what concerns me most is not the project itself. It is this: that project was cancelled because of toxic contamination. And this community learned that on Facebook too.

Residents of Reading have a right to know when there is contamination in their city. We have a right to understand what it is, where it is, and what it means for our families and our health. That information should have come from this council. It did not. We found out the way we find out everything...because someone posted it on Facebook.

This is the pattern. Report after report, revelation after revelation - not from the people elected to lead this city, but from social media. And each time something surfaces, this city's response has been to blame, minimize, delay, or dismiss rather than to inform and engage.

That pattern has consequences. It has eroded trust in a way that will not be repaired by a single meeting or a single statement. When each of you ran for your seat, you asked for this community's trust. Residents gave it to you. What I'm asking tonight is that you honor that. I'm asking this council and this mayor to commit to three things.

First - transparency. Residents should hear significant news about their city from their government. Not from third parties on Facebook.

Second - accountability. Residents are entitled to straight answers, not managed narratives.

Third - genuine engagement. Build real community input into major decisions before they become crises. And when conflict arises, lead through it - not away from it, and certainly not into it.

We are not your opposition. We are your constituents. And right now, many of us feel like we are being managed rather than represented. You still have the opportunity to change that. The community is watching. And many of us, myself included, are ready to work with any member of this council willing to meet this moment seriously. Thank you.

Mr. Bishop's response - Thank you for your letter. I empathize with your comments. Respectfully, I want to share what I've learned being on Council.

1. Things that seem very simple are frequently much more complex than they appear.
2. Because something appears on FB, doesn't mean that we have a credible source to act on.
3. You wouldn't go into a court of law and cite FB or AI generated news from a local news station as a source and fact.
4. Council is much like a court of law.
 - Legally, There are many things we cannot comment on:
 - Private property matters (like Gividaun) until the City has been officially informed of the details and has all the facts.
 - Subjects like land purchases which can drive up property values.
 - Active investigations
 - HR issues, etc.
 - We can neither confirm or deny these things until they are fully known to the City. At that time, we always let you know.
 - Addressing such issues based on social media can subject the City to lawsuits and or monetary consequences.
5. Council is not involved in every detail of City government. We have some oversight in that we approve larger expenditures.
6. We have the responsibility to take certain proposals to the public to vote on. That's where you come in as a voter. We heard the public loud and clear. It's a very mixed message, so Council and the Administration have our work cut out for us to solve the problems another way.
7. I know it's an inconvenient fact that FB is not a legal source, not always accurate and often preceeds legal channels. But remember we follow many of the rules of a court of law to protect the City and for your protection as well.

So please keep writing, you can contact me at mbishop@reading.ohio.org. I will always respond as quickly as possible.

Additional Acknowledgments and Announcements

- Council members thanked speakers for engagement and reiterated intentions to improve communication and involve the public.
- Memorial Day Festival: Parks Foundation funded fireworks on Sunday at 10:00 p.m. to celebrate the city's 175th and the U.S.'s 250th anniversaries.

Executive Session

Mrs. Kroeger made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bishop to enter 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 employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual requests a public hearing by division (G)(1) of section 121.22

of the Revised Code. Motion carried by 6-0 roll call. Entered Executive Session at 8:21 pm. Motion made by Mr. Boehner, seconded by Mrs. Kroeger to return from Executive Session. Motion carried by 6-0 roll call. Returned from Executive Session at 8:48 pm.

Legislative Session

Resolution — Natural Gas Aggregation Authority Council considered a resolution authorizing the Safety Service Director to enter into a natural gas aggregation agreement with a supplier recommended by Energy Alliances, to stabilize/reduce costs compared to Duke Energy Ohio's new Standard Service Offer approach (market-based monthly price plus a fixed per-CCF charge of approximately \$0.42 through March 2027). The third-party recommends authorizing execution only if the price is better than Duke's at signing, for up to 24 months. Opt-out would be available to residents at any time; caution was urged about third-party offers that sometimes include exit fees.

Mr. Bronner made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kroeger to suspend the rules requiring a second and third reading. Motion failed after 5-0 roll call, a recusal and an absence resulting in insufficient votes. The resolution ruled a first reading only.

Miscellaneous Business

Thanks and Recognitions

- Council thanked Lieutenant Bressert for 28 years of service.

Road Diet Discussion (Galbraith to the north)

- Members expressed conflicting views. Public feedback has been largely against, but safety concerns persist (narrow lanes, speeding, pedestrian risks). One member proposed using public input to guide a vote threshold (e.g., 10% of recent voters contacting with opposition).
- Timing and notice for any ODOT engagement should be better publicized.
- Alternative safety measures were discussed if the full road diet is not pursued—e.g., raised crosswalks and other traffic-calming elements during upcoming water main and repaving work.
- Staff will share ODOT cost breakdowns for individual elements and post a public notice with council contact emails to solicit feedback.

E-Bikes and Small Motorized Vehicles

- Council requested committees (Safety and/or Laws & Contracts) to draft legislation addressing e-bikes and similar devices due to safety issues, youth operation, sidewalk use, stop sign compliance, and neighborhood disturbances (including small gas-powered quads).
- Staff will review model ordinances (e.g., from Wyoming) and current Ohio law, and coordinate with police leadership. A public information post will summarize current rules, with emphasis on summer safety.
- Concerns were also raised about e-bike tire marks on the new school basketball court and broader facility protection.

Meeting Decorum Reminder

The Council President Mr. Mattscheck reminded the audience to refrain from side conversations during meetings per council rules.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Kroeger, seconded by Mr. Boehner, carried by 6-0 voice vote. Adjourned at 9:02 pm.

X _____
Respectfully Submitted,
Kevin Mattscheck
Clerk of Council, Pro-Tem

X _____
Kevin Mattscheck
President of Council