



June 2, 2025
Regular Meeting
7:30 PM

Cleveland Heights City Hall
Council Chambers
40 Severance Cir
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

MEETING MINUTES

1) Meeting called to order by Council President

Start: 8:05 pm

2) Roll Call of Council Members

Present: Craig Cobb, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., Davida Russell, Jim Petras, Jim Posch

Excused: None

Also present: Mayor Seren, Director Hanna, Clerk Balester, Director Gonzalez

3) Excuse absent members

- None

4) Amendments to the Agenda (if necessary)

Motion to amend agenda to add RES 112-025 and 114-2025 to First Readings - Consideration of Adoption Requested, RES 113-2025 to First Readings Only, and RES 097-2025 to Second Readings: Jim Petras

Seconded: Anthony Mattox Jr.

Yes: Craig Cobb, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., Davida Russell, Jim Petras, Jim Posch

No: None

MOTION PASSED

5) Approval of minutes from previous meeting(s)

a. April 7, 2025

APPROVED

b. April 21, 2025

6) Grocery Outlet Update

Sal Russo

- Grocery Outlet will open on July 10, 2025.

7) Communications from the Mayor

- Announced that the information-gathering portion of the investigation by the BCI into the shooting of Christian Thomas has been turned over to the special prosecution office, which will call a grand jury and present the evidence and materials to that grand jury, which will then determine whether to pursue criminal charges.
- Addressed the delay in opening the Cumberland Pool stemming from additional repairs/needs that the pool needed; by the time they got through the contract authorization process, the weather prohibited the repairs from being made at that time. We have had a stormy May this year, which has presented the City and the contractor with a challenge because they cannot make these specific repairs when it is wet. Mayor Brennan of University Heights was amenable to an agreement that would allow Cleveland Heights residents to use their outdoor pool. However, the University Heights City Council would not allow that to happen. The City is working through a potential agreement with the CHUH School District to temporarily use the pool at the high school between now and when Cumberland Pool can open. Though final approval has not been received from the School Board. Mayor Weiss in Shaker Heights is also amenable to allowing CH residents to use Thornton Park Pool temporarily. More information on that is forthcoming.

8) City Administrator's Report

- None

9) Departmental Report(s)

- Parks and Recreation Director Andres Gonzalez gave some additional information as to the delay in the repairs of Cumberland Pool. They had planned to end the repair work in the middle of May, which would provide a few weeks to be able to fill and heat the pool. Unfortunately, we had so much rain that the repairs kept getting delayed. He apologized for not letting the public know sooner about the delayed opening. The pool will be opening on June 16th.

- CH residents will be able to use Shaker Heights Pool from 12:00 pm to 7:30 pm every day of the week except for Saturdays, beginning this Thursday, June 5th.
- There is a lot of construction going on at Dennison Park, and all of that work needs to be done before the splash pad can be installed. He is working with GameTime to stay within the budget set back in 2023. The installation should happen this fall, and next spring the splash pad will be ready for use.

10) Report of the Clerk of Council

- To notify Council that a Notice to Legislative Authority has been received for a new D1/D3 liquor permit for 12 23 Lounge Place LLC dba 12 23 Lounge Place located at 2558 Noble Rd. This matter has been referred to the Mayor and Chief of Police.

11) Public Comment - Legislative Agenda Items only

Note: Persons wishing to speak must register in advance. A 3-minute time limit applies. If there are more than 15 speakers, the time will be automatically reduced to 2-minutes. Council President reserves the right to reduce the time limit based on the volume of business on the agenda.

Speakers

Name	Resident/Board Member/Other	Topic
Lou Mande	Resident	ORD 063-2025
Phillip Wadsworth	Resident	ORD 063-2025
Cindy Turik	Resident	ORD 063-2025
Helen Liggett	Resident	ORD 063-2025
Drew Herzig	Resident	RES 103-2025
Tom Hudak	Resident	ORD 063-2025
Paul Volpe	Resident	ORD 063-2025
Ken Surratt	Resident	ORD 063-2025
Kirstan Ryan	Resident	RES 103-2025
Robin Koslen	Resident	ORD 063-2025

12) Public Comment - General

Note: Persons wishing to speak must register in advance. A 3-minute time limit applies. If there are more than 15 speakers, the time will be automatically reduced to 2-minutes. Council President reserves the right to reduce the time limit based on the volume of business on the agenda.

Speakers

Name	Resident/Board Member/Other	Topic
CJ Nash	Resident	Shipping Containers
Lou Radivoyevitch	Resident	Zoning Text Amendments – Homes for Worship
Eileen Ramerman	Resident	Mayor
Elana Baldwin	Resident	Cumberland & Community Resources
Cindy & Larry Mittman	Resident	Pot holes, pool, Mayor's wife
Amy Eugene	Resident	Mayor
Josie Moore	Resident	Mayor Seren – Recall Petition
James Bates	Resident	Mayor
Deborah Van Kleef	Resident	General crisis in city government
Angel Fasolo	Resident	Mayor
Karin Lash	Resident	Mayor's unwillingness to release the audio from police worn camera recording

13) **LEGISLATION**

Note: The title for each piece of legislation contains a parenthetical reference to the Council Committee within which the subject matter of the legislation falls. Council Committees are abbreviated as follows: (AS)-Administrative Services; (COTW)-Committee of the Whole; (CRR)-Community Relations and Recreation; (F)-Finance; (HB)-Housing and Building; (MSES)-Municipal Services and Environmental Sustainability; (PD)-Planning and Development; (PSH)-Public Safety and Health. See Resolution 97-2022 for a list of Council Committee subject matter areas.

a. First Readings – Consideration of Adoption Requested

RESOLUTION NO. 101-2025(PSH): First Reading. A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement with Krueger International, Inc. d/b/a Spacesaver Corporation through the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Program, for the provision of new lockers to be installed in the Police Department's locker rooms; and declaring the necessity that this legislation be effective immediately as an emergency measure.

Introduced by Mayor Seren

Motion to adopt: Anthony Mattox Jr.

Seconded: Jim Petras

Discussion: Russell expressed her appreciation for this legislation coming

before council so that the Police Department can get a much-needed upgrade to their facilities. The Mayor expressed his happiness that this is become a reality and thanked council for being flexible about the funding sources so that some of the red tape could be eliminated to improving the facilities in the best way possible.

Yes: Craig Cobb, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., Davida Russell, Jim Petras, Jim Posch

No: None

LEGISLATION PASSED

ORDINANCE NO. 102-2025(PD): First Reading. An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to execute six (6) real estate purchase agreements for the sale of certain residential real property located within the City to certain purchasers; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

Introduced by Mayor Seren

Motion to adopt: Anthony Mattox Jr.

Seconded: Craig Cobb

Discussion: Larson is happy to see this legislation come to pass that allows Future Heights and Start Right to continue to rehab these houses that should not be blighting our neighborhoods. The Mayor wants people to be on the lookout for additional related projects as this is just the first step in a larger process. He is looking forward to taking some of the vacant lots and making them homes for families.

Yes: Craig Cobb, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., Davida Russell, Jim Petras, Jim Posch

No: None

LEGISLATION PASSED

RESOLUTION NO. 103-2025(COTW): First Reading. A Resolution expressing a loss of confidence in the Mayor of Cleveland Heights; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

Introduced by President Cuda, Vice President Russell, Councilmembers Petras, Cobb, Larson, and Posch

Motion to adopt: Gail Larson

Seconded: Craig Cobb

- **Discussion**

- **Councilmember Larson** stated that the resolution calls on Cleveland Heights leaders to embody the values they expect

from others. She emphasized that residents look to their leaders as role models. Citing recent reports and allegations of poor judgment by the mayor—including a failure to take accountability for exposing staff and residents to hate speech and inappropriate behavior—she expressed her support for the resolution.

- **Councilmember Posch** expressed deep disappointment over the city's current political turmoil, including the mayoral recall effort and the vote of no confidence. He emphasized that his hope had always been for a successful mayor, as that would mean a successful city. However, he believes Mayor Kahlil Seren has failed in leadership, contributing to operational dysfunction, low staff morale, and a toxic work environment. Posch stated that the mayor refuses to take responsibility and appears unaware of the harm caused under his leadership. He called for a return to best practices, transparency, and collaboration between branches of government. While acknowledging the dedication of many city staff, he described a climate of fear due to poor management. Posch concluded that Mayor Seren prioritizes self-interest over the city's well-being, and for that reason, he is voting yes on the resolution of no confidence.
- **Councilmember Mattox** reflected on the tense political climate in Cleveland Heights, noting that five out of seven councilmembers and the mayor are all running for office this year. He expressed fatigue with political infighting and stated a desire to step back and let residents make their own decisions. He voiced concern over leadership issues within the council, citing illegal meetings and a prior public statement of no confidence in the Council President. Mattox stressed the importance of allowing voters to express their will without council interference, especially during such a politically charged year. He also raised concerns about the racial undertones in the current discourse, sharing personal experiences of racially charged comments and highlighting the significance of Black representation—only four Black men have been elected in the city's 100-year history, three of whom are currently serving. Mattox expressed fear for his family's safety, noting that his sons are reluctant to canvass due to the current hostile environment. He urged the community to focus on facts rather than emotions, warning against divisive rhetoric that could deepen racial divides. He concluded by calling for mutual respect and unity beyond political outcomes and confirmed he is voting no on the resolution because he believes it is politically motivated and that the current council is not in a position to lead effectively on the issue.
- **Councilmember Petras** acknowledged that none of them

wanted to be in this difficult situation, but emphasized that the resolution is an important step forward. He expressed pride in the council's recent efforts, led by Councilwoman Russell, to increase transparency by requiring public posting of city contracts between \$7,500 and \$50,000, addressing concerns about contracts slipping by unnoticed. He noted ongoing work on legislation to improve key card access, also led by Council Vice President Russell, and the need to strengthen whistleblower protections. Petras referenced two recent lawsuits filed against the city—one alleging a hostile work environment and another alleging retaliation—as indicators of deeper issues. While supporting the resolution, he stressed that much more work remains to protect city employees and ensure high-quality services for residents, expressing eagerness to move beyond this moment toward meaningful change.

- **Councilmember Cobb** stated that the vote on this resolution is not political and is not about race because true leadership, regardless of race, requires transparency, accountability, and a commitment to the public good over personal self-interest. He said the city is unraveling due to failed leadership at the highest level. He noted that the Plain Dealer editorial board, which had previously endorsed Mayor Seren, has called for his resignation. He expressed that the city has become a laughingstock in Northeast Ohio, with the promise of progress under the new form of government remaining unfulfilled—in fact, the city has regressed. Cobb warned that things will worsen as more unfavorable information about the administration emerges. Most importantly, he said the respect and trust of the majority of residents and city employees has been lost, with no possibility of recovery under the current mayor. For these reasons, he is voting in support of the resolution of no confidence.
- **Council Vice President Russell** said she initially did not plan to speak but felt compelled to address the issue of racism. As a Black woman on the council, she stated that she has never experienced any racism from her fellow council members, who are predominantly white. While she acknowledged that she has been treated poorly at times during her four years on the council, she emphasized that this treatment did not come from any white council members. She urged residents to remove racism from the current narrative, affirming that it has not been part of her experience on the council.
- **Council President Cuda** acknowledged the tension frequently felt during council meetings and said that, despite his reluctance to get into it, he feels compelled to explain why he is voting in favor of the resolution. He cited the 2025 budget process as a turning point in his loss of confidence in Mayor Seren. While council worked diligently on the budget, the mayor was

combative—calling council members “stupid, ignorant liars,” insulting residents, cursing at a resident, and allowing his wife to use profanity at a council member without intervening. He also accused council of political motivations despite their clear, valid reasons. Cuda recounted a failed attempt to foster unity during a December 19 meeting, where the mayor deflected the conversation with a non sequitur about political opposition. He also described a leadership meeting where the mayor shouted at Vice President Russell, used profanity, and called her “pathetic.” He criticized the mayor for gaslighting and contradictory behavior—acting one way publicly and another privately. He noted that his concerns with the mayor’s leadership began early in the administration, especially with a lack of cooperation regarding the role of the Clerk of Council, which is supposed to be independent but was previously hired and supervised by the mayor. Cuda took initiative to seek guidance from other municipalities after being ignored by the mayor’s office. Despite acknowledging some positive achievements of the mayor—such as building renovations, the lead-safe initiative, sustainability efforts, and advocacy for the LGBTQ+ community—Cuda expressed that the mayor’s inability to work collaboratively with council, staff, the school board, and residents undermines confidence. He summarized that the negative aspects of the mayor’s tenure have begun to outweigh the positives, and although he had hoped for success, the situation has deteriorated. For these reasons, he is supporting the resolution of no confidence.

- **Mayor Seren** responded by acknowledging that nothing he said was likely to change the minds of councilmembers supporting the resolution, noting that they have the right to pursue this course—just as a past council once voted to censure him when he served as a councilmember. He stated that, in his view, the current resolution—like that past action—is not grounded in fact or good faith. He addressed the repeated claims that councilmembers were speaking on behalf of city employees, emphasizing that while he doesn’t claim to speak for staff, he has felt significant support and appreciation from them. Seren praised employees for continuing to do their jobs despite the current political turmoil and pledged to keep working with them to move the city forward. He rejected the idea of anonymous allegations being used to define the work culture at City Hall and expressed confidence in the dedication and hard work of the city’s staff. Seren reaffirmed his commitment to his vision for Cleveland Heights—a vision that includes government reform, environmental readiness, and smarter development—

regardless of whether councilmembers have confidence in him. He concluded by affirming his continued commitment to the city and its residents, stating that he will keep doing the work required of his office and continue to bring forward initiatives for council consideration

Yes: Craig Cobb, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Davida Russell, Jim Petras, Jim Posch

No: Anthony Mattox Jr.

LEGISLATION PASSED

RESOLUTION NO. 112-2025(MSES): First Reading. A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement with Altec Industries, Inc. for the acquisition of an Altec Articulating Aerial Truck for the Forestry Division of the Department of Public Works; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

Introduced by Mayor Seren

Motion to adopt: Anthony Mattox Jr.

Seconded: Gail Larson

Yes: Craig Cobb, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., Davida Russell, Jim Petras, Jim Posch

No: None

LEGISLATION PASSED

RESOLUTION NO. 114-2025(MSES): First Reading. A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement with Technology Install Partners, LLC, for design, purchase, installation, and support of a new security and alarm system at the City's Community Center; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

Introduced by Mayor Seren

Motion to adopt: None

Seconded: Craig Cobb

Yes: Craig Cobb, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., Davida Russell, Jim Petras, Jim Posch

No: None

LEGISLATION PASSED

b. First Readings Only

ORDINANCE NO. 104-2025(HB): First Reading. An Ordinance amending Section 1345.03 of the Codified Ordinances of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, entitled "Notice of violation; legal service; no notice for emergency or same

prior violation.”

Introduced by Councilmember Petras

READ INTO THE RECORD

RESOLUTION NO. 105-2025(PD): First Reading. A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to submit the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Five-Year Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan and entitlement application for the year beginning January 1, 2025; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

Introduced by Mayor Seren

READ INTO THE RECORD

RESOLUTION NO. 106-2025(MSES): First Reading. A Resolution to adopt the Solid Waste Management Plan for the Cuyahoga County Cuyahoga County Solid Waste Management District.

Introduced by Mayor Seren

READ INTO THE RECORD
MOVED TO COMMITTEE

ORDINANCE NO. 107-2025(AS): First Reading. An Ordinance amending Chapter 131 to add provisions for equity pay adjustments and benefits for the Chiefs of the Police and Fire Departments and Assistant Fire Chief.

Introduced by All City Councilmembers

READ INTO THE RECORD

RESOLUTION NO. 108-2025(COTW): First Reading. A Resolution determining that support of the 2025 Heights Music Hop is in furtherance of a valid public purpose; awarding Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$7,500) to FutureHeights, Inc. in support of the 2025 Heights Music Hop; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

Introduced by President Cuda

READ INTO THE RECORD

ORDINANCE NO. 109-2025(PD): First Reading. An Ordinance adopting the Park Synagogue S-2 Development Plan and Standards; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

Introduced by Mayor Seren

READ INTO THE RECORD

MOVED TO COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION NO. 110-2025(COTW): First Reading. A Resolution of support and appreciation for the Cleveland Heights city staff.

Introduced by All City Councilmembers

READ INTO THE RECORD

RESOLUTION NO. 113-2025(MSES): First Reading. A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement with Classic Chevy GMC of Madison for the acquisition of a 2024 Chevy Silverado 5500 Crew Cab w/11' SS Dump for the Streets Division of the Department of Public Works; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

Introduced by Mayor Seren

READ INTO THE RECORD

ORDINANCE NO. 111-2025(AS): First Reading. An Ordinance amending Ordinance No. 023-2025, "An Ordinance establishing salary schedules, position classifications, and other compensation, and benefits for officers and employees of the City," to create the position of Deputy Director of Law and to provide for compensation for the City's ADA Coordinators; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

Introduced by Mayor Seren

Motion to adopt: Anthony Mattox Jr.

Seconded: Craig Cobb

Yes: Craig Cobb, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., Davida Russell, Jim Petras, Jim Posch

No: None

LEGISLATION PASSED

c. Second Readings

RESOLUTION NO. 097-2025(COTW): Second Reading. A Resolution expressing support for the Myers Manor Transitional Living Facility for Homeless Women with Children Project.

Introduced by Vice President Russell

MOVED TO COMMITTEE (F)

d. Third Readings

ORDINANCE NO. 063-2025(PD): Third Reading. An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to execute a real estate purchase agreement for the sale of certain vacant real property located on South Overlook Road and Cedar Road, consisting of approximately 0.54 acres and identified as permanent parcel numbers 685-24-001 and 685-24-033 in the Cuyahoga County records; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

Introduced by Mayor Seren

- Mayor Seren introduced the item but requested that Council hold it rather than proceed with a vote or withdraw it. He expressed a desire to consult with Assistant Director Anderson and Director Zamft to reexamine the matter more thoughtfully, possibly including further discussions with Mr. Volpe to address outstanding concerns. Acknowledging the long-standing nature of the issue and Mr. Volpe's frustration over delays, the mayor emphasized the importance of finding a path forward that protects the viability of the project and avoids discouraging future development. He urged Council to pause action to allow for additional dialogue and the chance to reach a constructive resolution.
- Director Hanna stated that procedurally, there are a few options available. The Mayor, as the sponsor, could withdraw the item; Council could vote it down; or Council could choose to read it and take no action— which, as I understand it, is what the Mayor is currently requesting.
- President Cuda stated for the record we were not going to vote tonight. that was not going to happen so we'll just wait and see i guess and perhaps revisit at the next meeting

NO VOTE

14) Committee Reports

- **F:** The next meeting of the Finance Committee is tomorrow at 5:30 pm
- **MSES:** The next meeting of the MSES Committee is Wednesday, June 11 at 10am
- **HB:** The next meeting of the HB Committee is Monday, June 9 at 5:30 pm
- **PD:** The next meeting of the PD Committee is Wednesday, June 4 at 10:30 am

15) Old Business

- None

16) New Business

- Gave his condolences for Jack Boyle and would like to write a Resolution for his family to read at his funeral

17) Council Member Comments

(Note: Council comments should directly relate to the business of the City of Cleveland Heights, rather than personal reflection or commentary. A maximum 3-minute time limit applies, but the Council President may reduce time limit based on the volume of business on the agenda, the time of evening, or other similar factors.)

- **Councilmember Mattox** began by encouraging residents to stay connected to the community through upcoming celebrations like Juneteenth and Pride events, with details available on the city's website. He then addressed his recording during public comments, explaining that moving forward, his team will compare any potentially misleading or false statements to actual meeting footage. These videos will be shared publicly to ensure accuracy and transparency. He emphasized that this initiative is about separating fact from fiction and holding everyone accountable in real time. He stated firmly that he has nothing to hide and is committed to open and honest communication. Mattox closed by congratulating the Cleveland Heights High School Class of 2025—including his own son—and all graduates throughout the community. He expressed pride in their accomplishments and gratitude to the educators and administrators who supported them, wishing students a bright and successful future.

18) Council President's Report

- Council President Cuda began by thanking everyone for coming, staying, and passionately sharing their thoughts with the council. He emphasized that the council chambers are always open for residents to address the council. He referenced the mayor's closing remarks, affirming that the council will continue to do its work. He noted that, historically, the council has voted with the mayor 99% of the time—only seven no votes out of more than 750 pieces of legislation—demonstrating their commitment to governance despite disagreements. Cuda then addressed a troubling pattern he has observed on social media this week, which led him to research the term “gaslighting.” He explained gaslighting as a form of psychological abuse where someone manipulates others into doubting their own perception of reality, often to gain power or control. He warned the community not to fall for such tactics and highlighted the emotional confusion it causes as the gas lighter's agenda.

19) Adjournment

End: 10:23 pm

NEXT MEETING OF COUNCIL: JUNE 16, 2025

MINUTES APPROVED: JUNE 30, 2025



Tony Cuda
President of Council



Addie Balester
Clerk of Council