



## Council Minutes – Regular Meeting

January 20, 2026

Mayor Spalding called to order the New Albany City Council Meeting of January 20, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at the New Albany Village Hall, 99 West Main Street, New Albany, Ohio. Staff attending were City Manager Joseph Stefanov, Law Director Benjamin Albrecht, Finance Director Bethany Staats, Finance Department Deputy Director Morgan Joeright, Deputy City Manager Director Adrienne Joly, Police Chief Greg Jones, Development Director Jennifer Chrysler, Economic Development Manager Sara Zeigler, Planning Manager Chris Christian, Public Service Director Ryan Ohly, Deputy Public Service Director Steven Mayer, Public Services Engineer Justin Wilkinson, Chief Marketing Officer Josh Poland, Multimedia Communications Specialist Sam Fahmi, Finance Manager Cindy Powell, Management Analyst Ethan Barnhardt, Financial Reporting and Projects Manager Jeremy Gray, Finance Administrative Assistant Megan Thomas, Payroll Specialist/Financial Data Analyst Mike Khoury, and Clerk of Council Jennifer Mason.

### **ROLL CALL:**

The following Mayor/Council Members answered Roll Call:

Mayor Sloan Spalding	P
CM Marlene Brisk	P
CM Michael Durik	P
CM Chip Fellows	P
CM Kasey Kist	P
CM Matt Shull	P
CM Andrea Wiltrout	P

### **ACTION ON MINUTES:**

Council adopted the January 6, 2026 organizational meeting minutes by consensus.

Council adopted the January 6, 2026 regular meeting minutes by consensus.

### **ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

NONE

### **HEARING OF VISITORS:**

Ohio Auditor of State Presentation to the New Albany Finance Department of the Award with Distinction – Ohio Auditor of State Regional Liaison Scott Brown congratulated the city on a job well done. Mr. Brown described the sizable Auditor of State staff who addressed city challenges. Auditor of State Keith Faber asked Mr. Brown to attend on his behalf to present the Auditor of State Award With Distinction to New Albany. This award placed New Albany in the top 4%. This award was presented to local governments and school districts upon completion of a financial audit that met the following criteria to be defined as a clean audit report. The entity must have filed financial reports at the auditor's office by statutory due date without extension based on generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and have prepared a comprehensive annual financial report. The audit must not have contained any findings for recovery, material citations, material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, uniform guidance findings, or other question costs. Auditor Faber wanted to recognize the council, the administration, and the finance department who did an outstanding job. The award represented all of New Albany staff's hard work and accounting excellence. He recognized Finance Director Bethany Staats for her leadership and commitment.

Director Staats thanked Mr. Brown and recognized New Albany's finance department. She was proud to work in a city where all staff supported the appropriate management of finances.

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Mayor Spalding pointed out the rarity of this award and that the New Albany finance team had done this year after year. This award reflected the leadership of City Manager Joseph Stefanov and city council. Finances were critical to everything the city did, and that without having the finances in order, the city could not do all the great things that it did.

City Manager Search Firm Interview – MGT Senior Consultant Maureen Berry thanked council and City Manager Joseph Stefanov for selecting MGT and for the opportunity to learn more about New Albany. She described the origin of MGT as a smaller recruitment firm for city managers and other public sector positions, which then merged with MGT, bringing a broader network of resources and consultants across the country. They had a strong work plan and product to bring to the city. It was remarkable that City Manager Stefanov had stayed with the city so long, expanding his skill set and experience. MGT was pleased to work with the city, if chosen. Ms. Berry looked forward to meeting with council and other community members to learn what kinds of assets, experience, and attributes they sought in the next city manager. MGT had a process for this type of search and a high approval rating. Most of their clients used them for repeat business. She described MGT's process which started with discussion about scope through stakeholder meetings and creating a timeline. MGT was flexible and one size did not usually fit all.

Council Member Durik asked and Ms. Berry answered that New Albany was an interesting community and seemed like 2 cities in 1. New Albany was an outstanding and prestigious community with high amenities and services offered to residents and local businesses, which Ms. Berry referred to as 'older New Albany.' 'Newer New Albany' had large business parks with some of the best tech companies in the world; that had brought a layer of complexity to the city. MGT would look for a candidate with experience and a skill set for both aspects. It was important that the candidate know how to run a city, how to work with government and corporate entities, and how to work with residents and fulfill their needs. MGT was confident that there was outstanding talent with these skills and abilities out there.

Council Member Fellows asked and Ms. Berry answered that working with staff was an integral part of the stakeholder discussion process. Finding a candidate who was a good culture fit for New Albany would be discussed at length. The city tour was a good starting point to speak with a few staff members. She could see the commitment and expertise brought by city staff and that they had a lot of resources for the next city manager. She understood council was not looking to break the mold but was looking for someone to continue City Manager Stefanov's success. Getting input from council and staff would be crucial in the search for candidates that fit New Albany's model.

Jonathan Hager, 8200 Griswold Drive, wanted to discuss the datacenters being built in New Albany. Mr. Hager was concerned about the number of data centers in New Albany, more were coming, and he had not heard good stories about places with datacenters. He had heard of water becoming undrinkable, electricity bills that went up, and lives that became unbearable because of constant light and sound. He advocated for any and all regulations to be put on New Albany datacenters. He understood they were already coming, that deals were already made and land was already exchanged, but it was important to have laws in place that kept them from doing things that were too harmful, such as taking too much from the local electric grid or dumping water into local streams. Mr. Hager wanted the datacenters to take care of themselves and not make everything the residents' problem. He had lived in New Albany for a long time and was concerned he would not be able to much longer if the datacenters were allowed to function unregulated.

Mayor Spalding thanked Mr. Hager for coming and stated that datacenters were an interesting business partner and opportunity. There were lots of things to balance in those conversations. Sustainability was important to the

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New Albany community; however, the city didn't always have control. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the federal EPA had regulations related to water and air quality that New Albany would hold its partners accountable to. Water usage was an issue for central Ohio beyond datacenters; it was also related to residential and manufacturing growth. Mayor Spalding believed that central Ohio was doing a decent job in that regard. Electrical concerns were a bigger challenge. Ohio lived within the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection (PJM) region, so all 7 states involved would play a role in electrical issues. This was a collaborative effort, and the mayor appreciated residents paying attention to the issues. It was important to check multiple sources and learn all sides of the story. He invited Mr. Hager to come back to council with questions and concerns at any time.

Keshav Gopal, 12793 Fancher Rd, was a former New Albany resident and wondered if Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) came to New Albany, if the New Albany Police Department (NAPD) would cooperate with them and/or assist ICE in profiling citizens.

Mayor Spalding responded that no matter what happened, he wanted everyone to be safe, to trust in their local law enforcement, and to keep a level head.

Chief of Police Greg Jones stated it was common for federal agencies to contact local police departments and request assistance, such as backup, if they were making an arrest. Generally, NAPD assisted federal law enforcement and federal law enforcement assisted the city. It depended mostly on the kind of assistance they needed, which could be anything from blocking a road to using local facilities for questioning. Chief Jones said that the NAPD was not responsible for immigration enforcement and would not do anything that was contrary to Ohio or federal law, or do anything against NAPD's mission and values. Without a specific scenario, he could not answer with certainty whether they would assist ICE.

Mr. Gopal asked whether NAPD would block a street for ICE, for example. Chief Jones responded that ICE did not need permission to operate in New Albany and did not need to tell the NAPD if they were but if they asked NAPD to block a road or something similar, NAPD would assist as they would with any federal agency. This scenario was hypothetical and it really depended on the situation. The NAPD would want to make sure that the people who lived in the area were safe and would do what it could to ensure neither agents nor residents got hurt.

Mr. Gopal asked about Les Wexner's connection to high profile sexual abusers and traffickers, such as Jeffrey Epstein and Richard Strauss. He wanted Mr. Wexner's name to be removed from the New Albany community and asked, if he were to protest at the Wexner Pavilion, would the city allow that?

Mayor Spalding responded that Mr. Gopal had the right to protest in any public area. The pavilion was not a public area and had to be reserved. Mr. Spalding invited Mr. Gopal to peacefully protest outside of Village Hall. Any other questions regarding Mr. Wexner should be asked of his representatives directly.

### **BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

PLANNING COMMISSION (PC): No meeting.

PARKS AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD: No meeting.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD: Council Member Brisk reported the ARB tabled the Rose Run Presbyterian Church application. There was a conversation about prior required parking lot screenings that were not completed; however, that requirement did not apply when the screening would be in a utility

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easement. There was an AEP utility easement where the screening would go, which increased the likelihood of AEP tearing the screening down. There could be alternative solutions, including screening at Planters Grove park but that complicated who was responsible for it. The ARB unanimously approved the parsonage building addition to the Church of Resurrection. The ARB unanimously approved minor changes to the Marshad development plan. The ARB heard from the company working on the city's master sign plan about the process and drafted updates.

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS (BZA):** No meeting.

**SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD (SAB):** Council Member Kist reported on a potential city-wide curbside compost pilot program in partnership with SWACO. The SAB discussed issues accessing data for the public service department's solar panels. Council Member Fellows recalled a 20-year return on investment (ROI) on those panels. Pumpkin collection and 2025 yard sign collection had wrapped up. 33.7 tons of pumpkins would be composted. The new Taylor Farm drop-off location had worked well. The city collected 359 yard signs. The Windsor subdivision curbside composting program numbers were holding steady. Council Member Fellows requested the ROI on the composting diversion program. There would be 2 e-waste and household hazardous waste collection events this year. Advertising would be focused more locally this year. He encouraged applications to the 2026 Student Leaders in Sustainability grant program. The SAB would have a vacancy soon.

**IDEA IMPLEMENTATION PANEL:** No meeting.

**CEMETERY RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD:** No meeting.

**PUBLIC RECORDS COMMISSION:** No meeting.

**CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS:**  
NONE

**SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF ORDINANCES:**  
**ORDINANCE O-01-2026**

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO DETERMINE THE ANNUAL COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS OF THE MAYOR, COUNCIL MEMBERS, AND ADDITIONAL SALARY FOR THE MAYOR, PRESIDENT PRO TEM, OR DESIGNATED COUNCIL MEMBER PRESIDING OVER MAYOR'S COURT.

Clerk of Council Jennifer Mason stated Section 4.04 of the city's charter authorized council to annually determine its compensation. Salaries for the mayor, council members, and president pro tem or council designee serving in Mayor's Court were adopted at this time last year via Ordinance O-02-2025. This ordinance would increase council's salary by 3.25%, which was the same as the annual increase city staff received in 2026. This ordinance also made health insurance available to council members as described in Section 155.19(a) of the city's codified ordinances. The adjusted salary would be effective January 1, 2026.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

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Mayor Spalding moved to adopt the ordinance. Council Member Durik seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Ordinance O-01-2026.

### **ORDINANCE O-02-2026**

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO APPROPRIATE PROPERTY AND EASEMENTS FROM THE OWNER, HENDREN ONE LLC, AN OHIO LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT FANCHER ROAD IN LICKING COUNTY, OHIO FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING, MAKING AND REPAIRING ROADS, IN THE GREEN CHAPEL ROAD PROJECT, WHICH SHALL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, WITHOUT CHARGE; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Deputy Public Service Director Steven Mayer stated this ordinance authorized right-of-way acquisition for 1 property totaling 0.8 acres of land for public right-of-way. The city was negotiating with the property owner and would continue to do so, even with the passage of this legislation. The ordinance included emergency language to waive the 30-day referendum period. This was for the Green Chapel Road improvement project, to make sure it stayed on schedule. The city planned to bid out to bid on March 1, 2026 and start construction in late April/early May.

Mayor Spalding opened the Public Hearing. Hearing no comments or questions from the public, he closed the Public Hearing.

Council Member Wiltout moved to adopt the ordinance. Council Member Kist seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to approve Ordinance O-02-2026.

### **INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES:**

### **ORDINANCE O-03-2026**

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO ACCEPT THE EXPEDITED TYPE 1 ANNEXATION OF 106.4 +/- ACRES FROM JERSEY TOWNSHIP, LICKING COUNTY TO THE CITY OF NEW ALBANY.

City Manager Stefanov stated this property was contiguous to the city's existing boundaries. It was located within the heart of the Business Park in Licking County. The Licking County Commissioners approved the annexation petition on October 30, 2025. There was an existing annexation agreement with Jersey Township adopted in January of 2022 and a road maintenance agreement in 2021 and updated with Licking County in 2022. All of the requisite conditions for annexation had been met. The 60-day waiting period after the county commissioners approved the annexation had lapsed. The applicant requested that the second reading be held at council's meeting on May 5, 2026 to coincide with the rezoning of the property which would be consistent with the surrounding area.

Mayor Spalding set the ordinance for second reading at the May 5, 2026 council meeting.

### **ORDINANCE O-04-2026**

Mayor Spalding read by title AN ORDINANCE TO DECLARE THE IMPROVEMENT TO CERTAIN PARCELS OF REAL PROPERTY TO BE A PUBLIC PURPOSE, EXEMPT 100% OF THAT IMPROVEMENT FROM REAL PROPERTY TAXATION, REQUIRE THE OWNERS OF THOSE PARCELS TO MAKE SERVICE PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES, PROVIDE FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE APPLICABLE PORTION OF THOSE SERVICE PAYMENTS TO THE NEW ALBANY-PLAIN

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LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE EASTLAND-FAIRFIELD CAREER & TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, ESTABLISH A MUNICIPAL PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT TAX INCREMENT EQUIVALENT FUND FOR THE DEPOSIT OF THE REMAINDER OF THOSE SERVICE PAYMENTS, SPECIFY THE PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS THAT DIRECTLY BENEFIT THOSE PARCELS, AND APPROVE AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION OF ONE OR MORE TAX INCREMENT FINANCING AGREEMENTS.

Economic Development Manager Sara Zeigler stated this ordinance amended the Oak Grove II Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to include approximately 101.1 acres in Franklin County. The property was recently annexed and rezoned. The TIF was classified as “non-school” which meant that it did not negatively impact the New Albany-Plain Local School District or the Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools. The purpose of the TIF was to capture the incremental increase in the value of the land and the improvement to contribute toward qualified public infrastructure and public projects. The city had entered into a supplemental agreement with Plain Township regarding the funding for the township.

Mayor Spalding set the ordinance for second reading at the February 3, 2026 council meeting.

**READING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF RESOLUTIONS:**

NONE

**COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

NONE

**REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

- A. Council Representative to MORPC: City Manager Stefanov reported that MORPC Data Day would be February 10 and the State of the Region meeting was March 20.
- B. Council Representative to Joint Park District (JPD): No meeting.
- C. Council Representative to New Albany-Plain Local Schools (NAPLS): Council Member Wilttrout reported that the New Albany Schools Youth Theater earned the Excellence in Dance Award at the Junior Theater Festival. Mayor Spalding reported that the NAPLS High School Band recently marched at Disney World.
- D. Council Representative to Plain Township: Council Member Durik reported that Trustee Hans Schell was appointed as the township liaison to New Albany City Council.

**REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS:**

- A. Mayor Spalding: No report.
- B. Clerk of Council: Clerk Mason asked and council approved reserving the horse and wagon for Founders Day and golf carts for Independence Day. The total cars reserved would include at least 3 carts for city staff. Dance Unite Inc. had requested a liquor permit for non-profits which owned and ran arts venues. Chief Jones reported that his team was communicating with the Ohio Division of

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Liquor Control about that application. Clerk Mason would bring the matter back at the next council meeting. Clerk Mason and Chief Marketing Officer Poland discussed scheduling a council group photo.

- C. Finance Director: No report.
- D. City Manager: No report.
- E. City Attorney: City Manager Stefanov asked and council members agreed that he could execute an agreement with MGT for the city manager search.

**POLL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:**

NONE

**POLL FOR COUNCIL COMMENT:**

NONE

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Mayor Spalding moved that council go into executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22(G)(1) for discussion regarding appointment of a public official; and pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22(G)(3) for conferences with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action. Council Member Wilttrout seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes to go into executive session at 7:34 pm.

Council Member Kist moved that council come out of executive session and resume the regular meeting. Council Member Wilttrout seconded and council voted with 7 yes votes come out of executive session and resume the regular meeting. Council resumed the regular meeting at 7:58 pm.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Board & Commission Appointments**

Council Member Wilttrout moved to appoint Dr. Taru Saigal to the Planning Commission for a new term starting 2/1/2026 and ending 12/31/2028. Council Member Brisk seconded and council voted with 6 yes votes and 1 no vote (Shull) to appoint Dr. Taru Saigal to the Planning Commission for the term specified.

Council Member Shull stated that Dr. Saigal did an amazing job in the interview, and he knew she would do an exceptional job on the Planning Commission. His no vote was in staying with how he normally voted for appointments to the Planning Commission. He always looked for the person who was the most qualified based on their experiences. He thought there was another candidate that fit that bill. Having said that, he was happy for Dr. Saigal.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further comments and all scheduled matters attended to, Mayor Spalding moved and Council Member Kist seconded to adjourn the January 20, 2026 regular council meeting at 8:00 pm.



## Council Minutes – Regular Meeting

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ATTEST:

  
Jennifer H. Mason, Clerk of Council

  
Sloan T. Spalding, Mayor

  
Date