

City of Montgomery
City Council Work Session Minutes
August 20, 2025

Present

Brian Riblet, City Manager
Terry Donnellon, Law Director
Tracy Henao, Asst. City Manager
Kevin Chesar, Community Dev. Director
John Crowell, Police Chief
Maura Gray, Finance Director
Gary Heitkamp, Public Works Director
Ben Shapiro, Fire Chief
Matthew Vanderhorst, Community and Information Services Director
Amy Frederick, Community Engagement Coordinator
Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council

City Council Members Present

Ron Messer, Mayor
Sasha Naiman, Vice Mayor
Lee Ann Bissmeyer
Chris Dobrozsi
Craig Margolis
Catherine Mills-Reynolds
Ken Suer

City Council convened in Work Session for August 20, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall with Mayor Messer presiding.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Messer asked for a motion to dispense with roll call as all members were present. Mr. Margolis made a motion to dispense with roll call. Mrs. Bissmeyer seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Police Officer Andy McGuffey, along with his wife Maggie and two year old daughter Harlow, introduced their newborn daughter, Hallie to City Council. They thanked Council for approving the paternity leave that allowed Andy to remain home with his family after Hallie's birth.

City Council congratulated the McGuffey's on the birth of Hallie and welcomed her as the newest members of the Montgomery family.

ESTABLISHING AN AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 3, 2025 BUSINESS SESSION

LEGISLATION FOR CONSIDERATION THIS EVENING

A Resolution To Adopt Recommendation Of The Montgomery Tax Incentive Review Council With Respect To The Compliance Of All Tax Increment Financing Districts Within The City Of Montgomery

Mayor Messer explained that the legislation has been requested to be added to the agenda for passage at the meeting. He invited Ms. Gray to provide background on the legislation.

Ms. Gray explained that, if passed, this Resolution will adopt the recommendation of the Montgomery Tax Incentive Review Council with respect to the compliance of all Tax Increment Financing Districts within the City of Montgomery. Ms. Gray stated the Montgomery Tax Incentive Review Council met earlier in the day and unanimously made a recommendation to accept the TIF schedule. Ohio Law mandates that City Council approve, reject, or remand the decision of the Tax Incentive Review Council relative to the compliance of the tax increment financing districts with their enabling legislation prior to September 1, 2025.

Mr. Margolis made a motion to add the legislation to the agenda for consideration. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mr. Suer.

Mr. Suer read the title and moved to read by title only. Mr. Margolis seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

Mr. Suer moved for passage of the Resolution. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded.

Mr. Suer added to Ms. Gray's comments that as this was an annual exercise to be compliant with the mandate by the State of Ohio it was good to have the different parties meet to review the TIF's in place.

The roll was called and showed the following vote:

AYE: Bissmeyer, Mills-Reynolds, Dobrozsi, Messer, Naiman, Suer, Margolis	(7)
NAY:	(0)

PENDING LEGISLATION

A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to enter into an Agreement with the Sycamore Community School District Board of Education to Assign Two School Resource Officers

Mr. Donnellon explained that this legislation was tabled at the August 6, 2025 Business Session as staff were anticipating a confirmation of contract terms by the Sycamore Board of Education but had not received that confirmation by the time of the meeting. He reminded City Council that a motion had been made to extend the existing contract with the Schools to September 19. Mr. Donnellon explained that he had been contacted by the legal counsel for the School that a delay had occurred due to the absence of the legal counsel. He was informed that a review would be discussed at an upcoming School Board meeting. Mr. Donnellon recommended leaving the legislation as tabled until the September 3 meeting where an update would be provided.

NEW LEGISLATION

A Resolution Authorizing An Assessment For The Cutting Of Noxious Weeds And Removal Of Debris/Trash at 10039 Windzag Lane, Montgomery, Ohio 45242

A Resolution Authorizing An Assessment For The Cutting Of Noxious Weeds And Removal Of Debris/Trash at 10360 Southwind Drive, Montgomery, Ohio 45242

Mr. Chesar explained that both of the pieces of legislation, if approved, would authorize an assessment for the cutting of noxious weeds to be filed with the Hamilton County Auditor on both properties. He explained that due to negligence by the property owners, the City has been forced to cut the grass in order to bring the properties into compliance with our property maintenance code. He explained that Section 93.40 provides a prohibition against noxious weeds and grass that exceeds 6" in height. Section 93.13 and 93.41 of the code allows the Community Development Department to have these nuisances abated by contract and the cost to be charged against the real property and a lien to be placed upon the property. If the owner fails to comply with the notice within the time allotted, the City may begin minor nuisance abatement.

Mr. Chesar stated that there was a citation error regarding the Code Section numbers and that those would be corrected for the Business Session. Mr. Chesar explained that these types of assessments are not frequent and are often due to a home becoming vacant. He stated that the Code does provide for the City to be able to exercise control to bring properties into compliance and to demonstrate to neighboring property owners that maintenance of the property is expected.

Vice Mayor Naiman asked how the City is made aware of a violation like this.

Mr. Chesar replied it can come from neighbor complaints but also from the Zoning Code Compliance Officer proactively travelling through neighborhoods and the city to find blighted properties.

Vice Mayor Naiman stated that she does not recall seeing this type of legislation in the past and asked if our process has changed.

Mr. Chesar replied that we have not changed our process but are being more proactive in our inspection and response to complaints.

Vice Mayor Naiman asked if there is a policy about the number of communications required to have with the property owner.

Mr. Chesar replied there is a process defined in the Code and included in the packet are copies of notices sent by certified mail as well as door hangers for each property. He added that Mr. Vonden Benken, Zoning Code Compliance Officer, was able to make personal contact with one of the homeowners who stated they did not have time to deal with the mowing and conceded to letting the City hire a contractor to take care of the mowing understanding that the fees would be assessed to their taxes. He stated that staff has been unable to make contact with the other property owner.

Mr. Dobrozsi stated that it was unfortunate that staff has to deal with these kinds of issues and thanked Mr. Chesar and Mr. Vonden Benken for handling it.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds asked if the City was able to recoup the costs of having the properties mowed.

Mr. Chesar stated that it would be collected through the property taxes.

Mrs. Bissmeyer stated that obviously there have been other properties that staff have worked with, and this is the last resort to enforcing compliance with the Code.

Mr. Chesar stated that the challenge is making contact with the property owner as that is the initial goal to settling the issue.

Mrs. Bissmeyer asked if there was a policy on clutter as she hears complaints from people regarding properties that have an excessive number of yard decorations often around the holiday seasons.

Mr. Chesar stated that he would have to review Code as that could be a property right issue rather than a property maintenance issue.

Mayor Messer assigned both pieces of legislation to Mrs. Bissmeyer and stated that the Resolutions would be added to the September 3 Business Session agenda for consideration at that meeting.

A Resolution Authorizing The City Manager To Enter Into A Contract With Compass Point Planning, LLC For Professional Services Related To Land Usage Code Updates Consistent With The Montgomery's Moment: 2025 Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Chesar explained that, if approved, this Resolution would authorize the contract with Compass Point Planning, LLC to assist with the update to the Land Usage (Zoning) Code. This is a critical component to implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds stated that she is pleased with the process and the selection of Compass Point.

Mr. Dobrozsi thanked staff for working through the process of selecting Compass Point to assist with the update of the Zoning Code. He stated it will take time but is needed.

Mr. Suer stated that he felt that Compass Point will do a good job and has the necessary experience to lead the process.

Mr. Margolis asked if Compass Point was a new to this arena of consulting.

Mr. Chesar replied that the company itself has been around for several years and that Wendy Moeller, the Principal and Owner, is well experienced. He explained that she worked for 11 years as a project manager for McBride Dale Clarion and also is currently serving as the Region IV Director of the American Planning Association.

Mayor Messer assigned the legislation to Mrs. Bissmeyer and stated that the Resolution would be added to the September 3 Business Session agenda for consideration at that meeting.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Mr. Riblet reported the following items:

- A Council Business Session is scheduled for Wednesday, September 3 immediately following a CIC meeting scheduled at 5:45 p.m. Mr. Margolis made a motion to commence with the Business Session immediately following the conclusion of the CIC meeting. Mrs. Bissmeyer seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.
- The Law and Safety and Financial Planning Committees will meet Monday, September 8 at 3:30 and 4:30 p.m., respectively. The Planning, Zoning and Landmarks Committee has cancelled their meeting for the month of September.
- Currently the Parks and Recreation, Government Affairs and Public Works Committees do not have agenda items for September. Mr. Riblet stated he will provide an update at the September 3, 2025 Business Session.

Operations at the City

- The second Hopewell Cemetery Proposed Expansion Open House will be held Thursday, August 21 from 5:00 -7:00 p.m. There were five people who attended the 8/13 Open House.
- Vegas in the Village planning is in full swing as it will be held on Thursday, September 4 in downtown Montgomery. Ms. Henao, Ms. Frederick, Mr. Chesar and Mr. Vonden Benken have been hard at work with the planning and working with the local businesses. There are 41 businesses participating this year, the highest number that have been involved since the event began.
- As a reminder, the Council 2026 Budget Review meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 11, beginning at 5:30. There will be a light dinner available at 5:00 p.m. Council Candidates Mike Cappel and Frank Forsthoefel have been invited to the meeting.
- Clint Hutson, President and COO of Bethesda North Hospital, has invited City Council and Staff to a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the new lobby space at Bethesda North Hospital. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, September 9 beginning at 2:00 p.m.
- Last Tuesday, a very productive kick-off meeting with App Architecture regarding the Safety Center project was held. A criteria drawing meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 4.
- The City Hall fountain is undergoing maintenance and is not currently operating. It has been drained to remove and replace all existing lighting with LED fixtures. In addition, the fountain has been re-caulked, the interior bowls have been resealed and painted, new mechanical work has been completed in the pump room, and spray nozzles have all been replaced.

Mr. Riblet also reported that the landscaping at City Hall will be getting a much needed facelift to clean up a lot of overgrowth and to open the view of the building up for visitors. He added that although some people may not be aware there is a landscaping boulder located in Montgomery Park that features the names of the

Mayors that will be refabricated and updated to be included in the new landscape design in front of City Hall.

- Mr. Riblet recently signed an agreement with Citibot that will run through December 31, 2028, for an amount of \$30,416. This software will provide an AI chatbot on the City website. It is also capable of handling many different languages.
- Mr. Riblet recently signed an agreement with Placer A.I. that will run through December 31, 2027, for a total amount of \$33,500. This will be a great tool to primarily assist with marketing for economic development and evaluating the many city events.

Human Resources

- Firefighter/Paramedic positions – Second round interviews are scheduled next week with the two remaining candidates on the eligible list. There are three firefighter/paramedic positions to fill.
- Police Officer positions – The Civil Service Commission certified the police officer eligible list Monday at its August meeting. Results and ranking information is being forwarded to the candidates, and an interview schedule is being arranged. There are two open positions to fill.
- Recreation Specialist position – Interviews were finished today with the three internal candidates, and a decision is expected by the end of the week.

Events

- The Diversity Dinner will be held Saturday, August 30 at Swaim Park. The event runs from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Registration is available through the City website.
- Summer is winding down with Labor Day right around the corner. The K-9 Kerplunk will be held on Monday, September 1, which will also be the final day of the pool season.
- City Offices will also be closed on September 1 in honor of Labor Day.

Mr. Riblet requested an Executive Session to consider the purchase of property for public purposes.

LAW DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Donnellon had no report.

CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Mrs. Bissmeyer

Mrs. Bissmeyer had no meetings to report on but thanked staff for planning and working all the events that make the City so great. She commented on how much fun the Top Work Place celebration was and congratulated staff again for such a great accomplishment.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds expressed her thanks for the Fire Department crew who responded to her house for assistance with an emergency. She asked Chief Shapiro to relay her gratitude to the crew.

Mrs. Mills-Reynolds reported that neither the Beautification and Tree Commission nor the Park and Recreation Commission met in the month of August. She reported that Jorge Tameron the Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission did submit his resignation and praised his leadership while on the Commission.

Mr. Dobrozsi

Mr. Dobrozsi expressed how great the Top Work Place celebration was and thanked staff for planning it.

Mr. Dobrozsi reported on the following:

The Sister Cities Commission met to review Bastille Day and have already secured some of the food vendors for next year. They are currently working on the Soiree' event.

The Government Affairs Committee met and discussed the following topics:

- Surplus was approved for the Police, Public Works and Administration departments to be sold on GovDeals.
- The City Hall Landscaping design was shared and will really complement the building.
- Interviews for prospective Law Firms that will replace Mr. Donnellon upon his retirement are scheduled for Wednesday, August 27. There are four firms being interviewed. The anticipated timeline for that process is to bring a recommendation to Council in September or October to be approved by November which will allow the firm to begin working with Mr. Donnellon by the beginning of 2026. Mr. Donnellon will still function as the Law Director until March 31, 2026 while the firm shadows him and gets up to speed on current legislation and processes. The official switch will be on April 1, 2026.
- The Law Director and City Manager evaluations were discussed. The Law Director's process will be more of a review of pending and upcoming projects that need to be focused on during the shadow time with the new firm. That process is anticipated to begin the end of September. The City Manager process will start earlier so that it is completed by January 1, the original contract date for the City Manager.

Mr. Dobrozsi shared that he would be out of town from September 8 through September 23 and would miss the Business and Work Sessions for the month.

Vice Mayor Naiman

Vice Mayor Naiman thanked staff for all the good activities that are offered to the community.

Vice Mayor Naiman shared that she was contacted by a resident in The Winds subdivision regarding their concern about scooters and e-bikes and feels that continued education in the bulletin and social media is needed to prevent injuries in the community.

Mr. Suer

Mr. Suer had no report.

Mr. Margolis

Mr. Margolis shared that Cincy Cycle Club had a bike safety video on their website that may be a helpful reference.

Mr. Margolis reported that the Environmental Advisory Commission has been tracking the number of vehicles that attend the monthly cardboard recycling event to determine if three hours is needed for the event. The Commission will continue with this study through next year before recommending a change in the program.

The EAC will once again hold the annual One Stop Drop for recycling event on Saturday, September 20. Debbie Erdman and Graham Dostal have been great additions to the Commission.

Mr. Margolis reported on the formation of the History Club to create another edition of the History Book that will pick up where the previous one left off at 1995 and feature events and progress of the City through 2025.

Mr. Margolis reported that the Montgomery Farmers Market is undergoing changes with the Board members. He asked if staff could support them with a vision as at the end of the season they will be down to one board member.

Mr. Margolis may be out of town from August 22 through August 28.

Mayor Messer

Mayor Messer commented on the upcoming election of Council members and how those positions are uncontested serving as a reflection that the community is satisfied with the City leadership and how things are going. He compared this to neighboring communities where there are multiple candidates running for a seat.

MINUTES

Mr. Margolis moved to approve the August 6 Business Session minutes as amended. Mrs. Bissmeyer seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

MAYORS COURT REPORT

Mayor Messer explained there was confusion with the July Mayors Court report and asked that the report included in the packet be approved to replace the incorrect report.

Mr. Margolis made a motion to disburse the July Mayors Court Collections in the amount of \$8,184. Mrs. Bissmeyer seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS

New Liquor License—Chief Crowell explained that staff had received a notice from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control for a new license to be issued to Spicy Olive LLC dba The Spicy Olive, LLC. He stated that it is a new request for carryout of alcohol beverages only and he had no issues of concern. He recommended that there is no hearing needed.

Mrs. Bissmeyer made a motion not to request a hearing on the requested liquor permit. Mrs. Mills-Reynolds seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Messer asked for a motion to adjourn into an Executive Session to consider the purchase of property for public purposes.

Mr. Margolis made a motion to adjourn into an Executive Session to consider the purchase of property for public purposes. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded.

The roll was called and showed the following vote:

AYE: Bissmeyer, Mills-Reynolds, Dobrozsi, Messer, Naiman, Suer, Margolis (7)

NAY: (0)

Mayor Messer requested a short recess prior to the Executive Session. City Council adjourned into recess at 7:19 p.m.

City Council adjourned into Executive Session at 7:38 p.m.

City Council reconvened into Public Session at 7:53 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Messer asked if there was anything further to discuss in Public Session. As there was none, Mayor Messer asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Margolis moved to adjourn. Vice Mayor Naiman seconded. City Council unanimously agreed.

City Council adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Connie Gaylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. It is positioned above a horizontal line.

Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council