

Work Session April 21, 2026

**MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
SHEFFIELD LAKE, OHIO
April 21, 2026**

The regular meeting of the City Council Work Session was held Tuesday, March 17, 2026. Acting President Kovach called the meeting to order at 7:14 PM.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:

Present: Kovach, Morrow, Fogel, DeBottis, Petrucci, Cizl, Service Director Hastings.

Excused: Rosso, Gee, Mayor Radeff, Finance Director Rummell, Law Director Ward.

Attending: Council Clerk Randolph, Citizens.

PRESENTATIONS: Councilman Morrow-In house engineering. Presentation on tv with the following key points: Councilman Morrow says I just wanted to run the numbers to see about the engineering dept., whether or not it's something that's feasible for the city, if it's something that would pay us dividends for having it. At this point, it's kind of right at the line to where it is feasible, but not overly so. I do wanna say that anything going forward with this engineering dept. would be referred to Pat Hastings to give his input on it. I think that he's probably one of the best ones to be able to evaluate it if we wanna move it forward. Part of the reason for me doing this was because he's overloaded with a lot of work, and so I decided to run the numbers for it. Sheffield Lake annually undertakes about \$300,000 in engineering costs. It can be a little more, a little less. Road resurfacing, stormwater drainage, sewer infrastructure work, flood mitigation, development, plan review. The engineering is not episodic, it's ongoing. So, the question for council, should engineering remain outsourced or become a core municipal function? One of the benefits of bringing it in house is that normally your engineer can help to apply for grants, and the city can bring in more grants that way because you already have the engineer on staff to be able to do the engineering studies. Creation of a municipal engineering dept. This is what I got from a number of engineers that I talked to. This is what they recommended. It's not that we would have to go with it, but for what I'm recommending for the numbers, that this seems to be logical. It would operate as a division of the service dept. There'd be a city engineer, there's a registered professional engineer, engineering apprentice, and an engineering intern, which would be an independent private contractor and would work part-time. Total annual cost of the operation of that, and that's just by wages, the engineer salary, \$128,000, the apprentice, \$65,000, intern at \$40,000. Those numbers can be played with as needed, and that would also go to whether or not where you will get the return on investment at. This provides the capacity for 3 people, the capacity for

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about \$400-\$500,000 worth of engineering work that you would outsource. That's a guesstimate. Including the total startup investment, there's about \$73,000 in LIDAR, drone, engineering workstations, plotters, printers, software, capital equipment, would be amortized over 5 years, and that would be about \$14,660 a year. Total startup and one-year annual operating costs minus incidentals, and that would be office furniture and stuff that would be needed to establish it, right around \$350,000. So 5-year model assumption, 3% annual salary growth, 3% software inflation, no added headcount. Outsourcing costs rise 3% annually. We do two workload scenarios at the \$300,000 a year and \$400,000 a year. If the city typically spends \$300,000 a year, which it does now, operational savings over the 5 years is gonna be \$108,650. Net 5-year savings, \$35,350, would break even in year 3 and 4, and that's because of the equipment that you need to be able to run an engineering dept. It's a conservative model; small but steady savings builds on institutional capacity. Again, you can have these extra grants that you can apply for because you have this in-house. If a city typically spends \$400,000 in outsourcing, so let's just say that, and again, this won't eliminate our outsourcing. An engineer can only do so many different types of engineering, and a lot of times you do have to outsource, even if you have an in-house engineer. So, I would expect that our outsourcing would go up, but also our grants would increase coming in. That's what I would expect. That's what I'm assuming. So, after the startup, net five-year gain of \$535,350 vs outsourcing it, breakeven is less than a year. At this level, the internal engineering becomes physically advantageous. If authorized, reimbursable services, you could do neighboring municipalities, townships, school districts, regional authority. If we couldn't keep them busy, again, you could outsource the engineering dept. I don't see that happening, but it is a possibility. Even \$50,000 annual reimbursable services is \$250,000 over 5 years, so it just accelerates the return on investment if that's what we were to do. What this dept. would do, design and review road projects, stormwater and drain modeling, capital improvement planning, contractor oversight, change order evaluation, grant application, engineering support, GIS and asset management, floodplain analysis. The tangible benefits, reduce consultant markup for what we do with like Bramhall Associates and the other ones. They, of course, wanna make a profit. We're paying for that profit. If we brought it in-house, we would be able to reduce that. Faster project turnaround, better change order control, stronger grant applications, infrastructure lifecycle planning, institutional knowledge retention. The intangible benefits, professional credibility, stronger negotiating leverage, reduce vendor dependency, faster development review, workforce development pipeline, long-term municipal competence. The other thing that I will say is that on this, that what you can look at this in terms of also, it's sharing the knowledge of the service director. Right now, if Pat, if he was to get hit by a car tomorrow, I believe, and I believe a lot of people believe that the city would be in a world of hurt because there's a lot of institutional knowledge that he has. Being able to bring in these people helps to share that

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knowledge so that you've got some cross-training and it sets up an exit strategy for Pat when he goes to retire as well, that you have somebody that's ready to stand in and ensure that we're having engineering and that's a priority for the city. It seems to be one of the biggest problems that we've had in our history is that we didn't have a whole lot of engineering and now we're dealing with the problems with it with like the flooding that we have on the basements. Risk mitigation. The ordinance that I've put forth proposes ethics compliance requirements, conflict of interest restrictions, prohibition on representing private clients before the city. This is for the engineer. Liability indemnification clauses, revocation of authority by council, whether or not your engineer can take on outside work or not. Engineering remains accountable to the council and to the service director. At least that's the way that I wrote the legislation and of course, Pat Ward still has to go over that. What this does not do, again, it does not eliminate the outsourcing of engineering entirely. There are specialty services that may be required. This is intelligent integration, not isolation. If an annual workload falls to \$250,000, the savings is narrow. Right now, we're at \$300,000. So, this is like right on the edge of being feasible or not feasible. So, it's something we may put off but address again in another year or two. If we were able to bring it in-house and we were able to bring in more grants, well, then the workload could dramatically exceed that. So long-term outlook, by year 6 startup costs are fully absorbed. Institutional knowledge mature. Software and equipment stable. Grant captured improved. Preventative planning reduces emergency repairs. The economics improve over time. Is engineering a recurring core municipal function? I think Pat has really brought a bunch of professionalism to the service dept. by integrating the engineering aspect and wanting to have engineering. So, I believe this is where we're already heading towards. It's just whenever we wanna pull the trigger to be able to change over to bringing it in-house or not. If the answer is yes, owning the capacity is more strategic than renting it indefinitely. So, the decision before council, and again, I would gather to say that we would want Pat's input on this after some thoughtful review. If he says no, doesn't think the time is to move forward, I wouldn't move forward on that. But council, upon whatever the recommendation is, is to approve the creation of the engineering dept., amend structure or staffing, authorize reimbursable services, authorize intergovernmental agreements and table for further financial review. Sheffield Lake engineering needs are growing. The infrastructure needs are not declining. Continue purchasing the engineer, building engineer into the city's permanent institutional strength. That's what we're up for. Service Director Hastings states I think it's an astute observation to see that we are at that threshold of around \$300,000. I can tell you that number is actually double, because what you don't see in our books is the grants I have where engineering is paid for. The legislation you just passed, for example, for LOR-MR, which is the sidewalks on Lake Breeze and Walker, 100% grant for the engineering. There are some challenges. A lot of the ODOT work I do, you have to be ODOT pre-qualified. So, we'd have to work

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through those challenges and whether our own engineer would have the capacity to even do the engineering. Currently, we do a letter of interest. We do qualifications requests annually. I get all these engineers coming in and they have to reach certain criteria. There's also rules against contract administration and contract engineering, which is essentially the contract for the design of a project. You cannot have the same engineer then inspect the project. So, we have multiple engineering firms for that reason, but I do see a future. It's a good observation, a lot of discussion. I'm concerned on that threshold time where you switch from us pumping out \$300,000 a year and then start paying for it in-house at the same time you're pursuing grants. I think the idea of getting more grants is not as exciting as it might be, because I'm very attuned to how many grants are available to a municipality. I've applied for all of them and most years we get them. There's not just a massive amount of grant opportunities that we're skipping, but even if you did find more, and I'm sure they're out there, you'd still have to have the matching funds. So, I have absolutely, in my opinion, maximized our annual revenue to match these grants. So, I guess my final thought is it's something to continue in discussion. Councilman DeBottis asks if we did have in-house, can you by chance tell me how it would benefit us and you where you see that possibly not having it now? Service Director Hastings replies well, I think a big thing for grants, this isn't a huge savings, but a big thing for grants is the exhibits necessary and some of the preliminary engineering associated with applying. That's a big deal because if the city expends that money and then we don't get the grant, you say, geez, why did we spend that? But that is the nature of the beast. In most cases, if I was denied while I was being compensated as a grant writer, I'd put it on the shelf, send it back out the following year and eventually we would get it. But that's kind of my opinion on that. Councilman DeBottis asks if we had it in-house, is there things that you think could have been done quicker, possibly to benefit the city? I guess is the question I'm asking versus having to wait for that, whoever we hire to come in at their schedule, at their time, I guess that's the kind of. Service Director Hastings responds Bramhall Engineering is, I guess classified as our consulting engineer. Now, some cities have a retainer with their engineering firm and Sheffield Lake does not pay a retainer. Quite frankly, I try to pinch every dollar I can. But they are the primary engineer, unless I'm out to bid or getting an LOI or something like that. I think there are opportunities where it would save us time, but for the most part, time is driven by the grant cycles. Sheffield Lake, I don't think any project I've done didn't include a grant, anything of substance, the million dollars and on and on and on. So, yeah, I mean, that's where I'm at with that. Councilman Cizl asks in comparison to other cities that have in-house engineering, can you tell Avon, Avon Lake, Sheffield? Service Director Hastings replies Sheffield uses a consulting engineer. Avon and Avon Lake have been on both sides. I could be mistaken, but I believe Avon Lake is trying to rebuild their in-house engineering. It's challenging. But it's a city of our size. It's definitely common. Without tooting my own horn, the reason you see those numbers is

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because I'm aggressive. I don't think any history shows that much. So, you also have to bear that in mind, that the city has to maintain that pace. It's like the councilman said, I will retire. Councilman Morrow says I didn't put in the legislation how this would be done if we wanted to phase it in and maybe reverse it and get an apprentice first and maybe an assistant like that. Then maybe the following year, hire the actual engineer. I wanted to leave that open so that Pat would have that ability to work with council as to which way he wanted to implement an engineering dept. if we were to go that way. Service Director Hastings replies it's worth noting that a lot of the things, like when you mentioned GIS or even your efforts that I'm trying to catch up on with stormwater and flooding that you discuss. Quite frankly, a lot of those things are done. Even the maps that a resident suggested, hey, can we get some maps online and let's see what we're doing. I think that's a good thing. I have all that actually in place. I could give you all a website right now. I don't have time to update it. I really don't. We're working on that. We're working on the survey, which, I mean, I did read your information. I apologize, I'm just, I'm busy. Through the years, obviously, I have documented our flooding. This most recent event, March 31st, I actually had three calls for flooded basements. That's who takes the time to contact the city. Maybe if we do this survey, more people will be apt to tell us. But there is, and I'm getting off topic here, but there is significant responsibility on both the homeowner and the city to solve our problem. Because at the end of the day, these pipes only hold so much water. It's a very simple mathematical equation. Even our own codes say that if your house was built, say, prior to 1970, where it was otherwise legal to connect your footer drains to your sanitary sewer, today that is illegal. The fact that it was allowed when it was done is irrelevant. So, when you go to solve these problems, you have to go there with the idea that the city's firm. It's just a very challenge, especially for politicians. It's very difficult to start pointing the finger a little bit and say, well, let's look at all this water you're bringing in because you have to separate that. So, it's challenging, but it can be done. Councilman Fogel says I know we talked in the past about maybe getting you an assistant. I think my question was, would that help you or slow you down with that? I don't think that you had a firm answer on that. I know that I think every other director in the city has an assistant. Service Director Hastings replies it's a double-edged sword to me. One, I have to take the time to train them, you know? Councilman Fogel says my next question would be, would an in-house engineering department act as an assistant, sort of? Service Director Hastings replies oh, absolutely. One of his slides, he listed everything on there I do every day, from change order reviews to whatever that slide was. As you were going through it, I'm thinking, yeah, that's me. Councilman Fogel asks even if it didn't save us an extraordinary amount of money right away, it would give you more time to do other things? Service Director Hastings responds Undoubtedly. I just, I mean, personally, I'd rather just keep investing the money and do what I do, but to Councilman Morrow's point, I won't be here forever. I mean,

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there's a lot, there's pumps and things happening right now as we speak. You know, there's just an entire network moving and alive right now and only a couple of people who know it intimately.

*******COMMITTEES*******

ROADS & DRAINS: None. **SAFETY:** None. **BUILDINGS, LANDS, VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT:** None. **ORDINANCE:** None. **FINANCE:** None. **PARK BOARD:** Representative Kovach reports we met last night and I'll give a full report at next council meeting. Councilman Fogel says I know that the developer had offered to donate or gift a small parcel of property located in the rear of the development, that's wetlands, that wouldn't be able to be developed. So, I know there was a little contention there, and I didn't have a chance to really think about it, but if there's litter or trash that flows from their dumpster or from anywhere else onto that lot, or if someone dumps tires on that lot, or they dump trash, or a mattress, like happened at Windjammer recently, the city's gonna be responsible to go out and clean that up. The service dept., actually. So, I think we need to think about that before, I don't know if that's a valuable piece of property. I don't think we're gonna be able to do anything with it right away. I don't know if that's the best idea. Acting President Kovach says George Duozos made a presentation last night. There was no strings attached, and he was willing to donate, like Aden said, it's a small parcel at the back. It's a total of about almost 7 acres, which is not a massive parcel, but in essence, it would be a wetlands, it would be similar to, but in nowhere near in size to, I believe it's Sandy Ridge in North Ridgeville. That's a massive wetlands area, which they have a lot of, I think they have an eagle's nest out there, and it's a piece of, this piece of property would be good in the future as it's more or less a nature reserve. You'd be able to observe plants, animals. There was a presentation of it, putting a walking trail around it, and like I said, I'm not, at this meeting, I'm not for or against, I'm just saying that's, and technically, adding a piece of property that's, there's, you know, I don't know what the actual value of it would be, but again, that's, and I don't argue with you on that issue. You make some good points.

*******ADMINISTRATIVE*******

MAYOR: Mayor Radeff is excused. **SERVICE DIRECTOR:** Service Director Hastings reports West Dr. is scheduled to resume on Monday. I know people are antsy about that, and I get calls often. I would remind you that when these companies mobilize, I mean, that line item in a project of this magnitude is about \$10,000, just to set up, and they are doing that on another job. The weather is fickle, so we were waiting for the plant. It finally opened this week. Our boat launch has mobilized our contractors there. There again, there's your mobilization costs. Everything's expensive to move those. So, I hope to have those ramps in by the end of the month, early May. I have a lot of anglers calling me. I realized when I was

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reading my notes that I forgot to send Brandy the road list to spread out to you. I was gonna try to blame her for not passing it on. Obviously, I told you the roads in a public meeting, but I will share that. The ad is out. Finally, I intended to put the sidewalks on that annual bid. When I opened up the tabs, it did not have the square foot per sidewalk, and because I'm under a very tight timeline, I didn't include it in the annual bid. I have to get to the building dept. and get that square footage, because I have numbers over the course of 10 years and the ordinance of the city has changed. So mathematically, it's about two hours of work. Either way, I will pursue that. I have council's authorization. It will just be a little bit later.

Councilman DeBottis says you brought up something very interesting. My ward being one of the oldest wards, I'm just guessing from all the years I've walked and knocked on those doors, for the homes that have basements, I'm willing to bet that a very, very high percentage have cross-connection, because of the years that they were built. I just wanted to tell you, you brought up something very interesting. I have a small group that consistently calls me when they flood, and I always offer suggestions after I get with you and solutions, but it always comes back to they feel that because at one point in time, years ago, that the city allowed the cross-connections per code, that the city's responsible to fix those. I tried to explain that, but I like where you said we actually had that in our code, correct? Where we're not responsible for that. Service Director Hastings replies yes, we're not, because you have to appreciate, we're gonna be going on private property to rectify something that was done 30 years prior. Councilman DeBottis asks is there any way to get that word out to the masses or need help to get that word out? Because like I said, most of my conversations always turn to, and then it's a long conversation of, well, we don't feel we should have to apply for anything. We don't feel that we should have to pay for anything. It's the city's responsibility. I knew it wasn't from the beginning, but when you mentioned we have a code that spells that out. Service Director Hastings replies I have done education campaigns. Councilman Morrow did call me about a committee was forming. I thought education would be a good part of that. Actually, a very big part of that. Because a lot of the stuff, I was able to read some of your presentation. A lot of the stuff actually is in place. Hydraulic modeling, all these things, that's not my first rodeo. My hurdle is cash. I can pump out a lot of projects, but at the end of the day, cash. When I say cash, I'm cognizant that we still have an entire city to run. We don't need to focus solely on one thing. That's kind of our problem, in that we have used that methodology, and you don't need to. Because the pots of money that are available throughout the state, they define it. There's no mistake that I use the word transformational change when I started talking about a rec center and things like that. That's because I monitor how state money is going to be used. In 2023, it's exactly what they said, that they're

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gonna start funding. Much like the trail that we're building on Lake Rd., that some are in agreement, some are not. It was 7 years of work, and now realizing 7 million in improvements, mostly grants. Unless you just assess people, which I'm sure they don't want, we're moving at the pace of our own income, is what it boils down to. Councilman DeBottis replies I think the biggest thing, especially again in my ward, is just, I'm sure everyone has had to deal with, is the raw sewage coming up through the floor drains. I think that was what magnifies it being intolerable. It's not just storm water; it's the raw sewage. Service Director Hastings responds as a city official; I can illustrate where I did go in there and camera, I did go in there and line the sewers. An 8-inch pipe has a very firm calculation on how much water it's gonna hold. The capacity for moving sewage is not the problem, it's the infiltration, the I and I, the sump pumps, the cross connections, things like that. There's a lot of misinformation out there. People, most recently I was told are commenting that the Irving Park development has a combined sewer. That's completely false. Storm sewers are in the streets; sanitary sewers are behind the homes. So, it goes back to that education thing. Councilman Fogel says you mentioned assessments. I know with the ditch covering, and that got real popular real quick. Those people, those residents were willing to pay. I know they weren't paying for everything, but they were willing to pay for the material to have their ditches covered. I think that some of these other people that have flooding issues, like over on the east side of East Dr., I don't know how strong those were, but I've had some people reach out. I think if there was a way that the city could bond, get some money through a bond maybe, and help make those improvements, but assess that to the homeowner, and use the assessment to pay back the bond, not profit from it, but cover all the costs of the improvements; maybe put some surface drains in the backyards or disconnect those sanitary sewers and get some water flowing into the storm sewer. I think they'd be willing to pay for that and if it was stressed out over 5, 10, 15 years, I think it'd be even easier. Service Director Hastings replies I agree with a lot of what you're saying. I can tell you in the 1980s, they did attempt to assess East and West Dr., and the entire neighborhood was at this council to stop them. That doesn't necessarily mean it's gonna reflect today. The flooding that you speak of on East Dr., I'm not aware of that. They actually have an older and a newer storm sewer. Councilman Fogel states he will forward the email. Service Director Hastings states I can tell you that as a service director, to hear that they're flooding in the backyard isn't solely born on the city. Councilman Fogel replies I'm not saying that at all, Pat. What I'm saying is I don't know if it was \$5,000 or \$10,000 to get surface drains in the backyard and connect the downspout drainage to the storm sewer, because I know a lot of problems come from water coming off the roof. It's a majority of your problems. I think if there was money for them to get that done, and they would pay

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it back, I think they would gladly pay it back. I don't think it has anything to do with the city. I just think that the city could help them alleviate that problem. Service Director Hastings replies yeah, you could coordinate that for sure. I'll just tell you on the record, when I reached out to you by email and said, hold the brakes on this pipe, I have three men. I know I came across kind of aggressive, but I literally had 25 applications the next day, and the material I gotta buy, the scheduling, my clerks are freaking out. So that's why I said, please, cease and desist. I know we have the same goal, we just need to communicate. Councilman Fogel responds the first one turned out so well and I was trying to give you a little recognition, and I didn't expect that many people to be interested in that. That's why I thought maybe if we had a bond, we had some money set aside, we could finance that out for them, and it wouldn't cost the city anything, and we'd get those problems taken care of.

Councilman Morrow says I do wanna say that the committee that we have, the Community Action Committee, one of the big portions of that is gonna be education. A lot of everything that we have, yes, there's been a lot of this stuff that's been done in the past. I know Rosa gave me a booklet that she had of everything that had been done in the past. I think that there's enough people that don't know that and don't wanna read through it. I think it needs to go through again just to show that it's been done. Don't wanna increase your workload. That's something that I want the committee to do, and making the people part of that process should help to have some understanding between the city and the community of what's being done and just, hey, there's only so much money that the city can get, there's only so much that we can do every year, and not everybody's gonna be happy with that program. Plus, the other thing that I like doing is that at any given moment, the dumbest person in the room can have the smartest idea, and I always like hearing from the community and somebody saying, well, heck, that's a great idea, let's do that. There might be something that's been missed. I do believe that you're very competent. I know that you'll probably get angry with some of the stuff that I do, and that's okay. I want us to have a good working relationship, and like I say, I do wanna have that educational component and what's being done and everything by being able to ask all the questions as has the hydraulic study been done, and has this been done? My thing is to then go to you and the person that does the storm drainage is to find out what has been done in the past and then report that back so that you have two-way information going there with us and the community, and maybe even get some of that stuff put up onto the city's website so that it's readily available and easy to find.

/FINANCE DIRECTOR: Finance Director Rummell is excused.

LAW DIRECTOR: Law Director Ward is excused.

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: Acting President Kovach states the only new business we have is we have these applications for ex-clerk of council. We have, I believe, 16. We're gonna have to start setting up interviews, so. 16, I don't know how much time you wanna set aside for each one. Councilman Fegel asks should we maybe go through these at some point and maybe pick the top 5-6? Acting President Kovach replies that works for me. Brief discussion on how to proceed.

Councilman Fogel says so, I had the town hall and the local courts. I'd like to possibly get with Pat Ward and maybe put together a rough draft of some legislation that we could ultimately present to council with the understanding that it would be presented to the voters in the November general election. Acting President Kovach says I prefer it that way. I prefer that it would be on the vote of the people in case there would be an accident where it is on the voters as opposed to us.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

COUNCIL #014- THIRD READING- AN ORDINANCE BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SHEFFIELD LAKE AMENDING THE ZONING CLASSIFICATION OF CERTAIN LOTS LOCATED ON OR NEAR PARKVIEW DRIVE FROM R-1A (RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT) TO PRD (PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT).

COUNCIL #015-SECOND READING- AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT, INCREASE, AND/OR DECREASE OF CERTAIN FUNDS WITHIN THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SHEFFIELD LAKE, OHIO, AND THE DECLARING OF AN EMERGENCY.

COUNCIL #019- FIRST READING- AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF A FIRE TRUCK FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

COUNCIL #020- FIRST READING- AN ORDINANCE VACATING CERTAIN PORTIONS OF PARKVIEW DRIVE AND IVANHOE AVENUE.

MEETING ADJOURNED: With no further business before this council, Motion by Cizl /Second by DeBottis to adjourn at 8:01pm. Yeas All.

CLERK OF COUNCIL AFFIRMATION: This Meeting Of The City Council Of The City Of Sheffield Lake, Ohio Was Held And Conducted Under All Rules And Regulations Governing The Sunshine Laws Of The State Of Ohio As They May Apply. All meetings are recorded and available in council offices.

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CLERK OF COUNCIL/COMMITTEES
Brandy Randolph

MAYOR
Rocky Radeff

I, Brandy Randolph, duly appointed Clerk of Council of Sheffield Lake DO HEREBY CERTIFY that this is a true and exact copy of the Minutes of WORKSESSION of April 21, 2026.

ACTING COUNCIL PRESIDENT
Steve Kovach