

Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Minutes of the Finance and Appropriations Committee Meeting

September 15, 2025

Members: Mary Nichols-Rhodes, Chair
Mike Brillhart, Vice Chair
Meika Penta, Brian Ashton, Joe Siegferth

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes of the July 21, 2025 and July 28, 2025 Finance Committee meetings were approved as written.

Legislation Discussed

Temp. Res. B-65
Temp. Ord. B-66
Temp. Ord. B-67
Temp. Ord. B-68
Temp. Ord. B-69
Temp. Ord. B-70
Temp. Ord. B-71
Temp. Ord. B-72

Discussion:

Temp. Res. B-65

A resolution accepting the amounts and rates of taxation as certified by the Summit County Budget Commission, authorizing the necessary tax levies, certifying such authorization to the County Fiscal Officer, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Bryan Hoffman, Finance Director, presented Temporary Resolution B-65 to Council. The City, in accordance with the provisions of law, has previously filed Alternative Tax Budget Information with the Summit County Fiscal Officer for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2026. On August 4, 2025, the Budget Commission of Summit County certified its action thereon to the City, together with an estimate by the County Fiscal Officer of the rate of each tax necessary to be levied by the City and what part thereof is without and what part thereof is within the Charter tax limitation.

Mr. Hoffman stated that this ordinance is an annual ordinance that is described in ORC 5705.34 that requires a legislative body to accept the amounts and rates. These amounts and rates are described in our City Charter as 11 mills and the estimates in the ordinance are from the County Fiscal Office based on valuation of property in the city.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that the 11 mills are split up to the General Fund at 10.4 percent, Police Pension, .3 percent and Fire Pension is .3, which makes up 11 mills.

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Ms. Nichols-Rhodes asked if there were any comments or questions from the public. There were none.

Mr. Brillhart moved to bring out Temp. Res. B-65 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Penta. Motion passed (5-0).

Temp. Ord. B-66

An ordinance authorizing the Director of Public Service to enter into a contract or contracts, without competitive bidding, with Altec Industries, for the purpose of replacing the truck body on the 2016 Altec Model M2-106 Digger Derrick, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Rod Troxell, Electric Superintendent, presented Temporary Ordinance B-66 to Council. The Electric Department will be replacing the body and remounting the digger derrick on the 2016 Altec Model M2-106 Digger Derrick. The 2016 Model M2-106 Digger Derrick is an Altec vehicle, therefore Altec is the only company that can replace and remount the equipment.

The Director of Public Service will be authorized to enter into a contract or contracts, without competitive bidding, with Altec Industries, for the purpose of replacing the truck body on the 2016 Altec Model M2-106 Digger Derrick. The Director of Finance will be authorized to make payment for same from the Electric Fund, Line Item Capital Outlay.

Mr. Troxell introduced the new Assistant Superintendent for the Electric Department, Mr. Jimmy Filon, who has been serving in the Assistant Superintendent position for six months.

The Electric Department bought a tandem axle digger derrick in 2016 and received it in 2017 from Altec Industries. It is the biggest derrick they have and is capable of lifting every transformer in the field. The steel body on it started to rust shortly after COVID. They finally came to an agreement with Altec to do a remount on the new body. The cab and chassis of the truck is pretty solid, so they going to go with this remount and are hoping to get another 10 years with the remount. The cost of a brand-new truck is \$750,000 and they would probably get it in three to four years.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that the estimated cost is \$88,794.62, a far cry from \$750,000.

Mr. Troxell, in answering questions presented before the meeting by Ms. Nichols-Rhodes, stated that he confirmed there is a one-year warranty and six months labor on the new body. It is in pretty rough shape so they are probably not going to be able to salvage anything on the old truck. Altec is estimating that it is going to take a month, but they are going to plan on two months as a worst-case scenario. It is not slated to go until next year. They were supposed to receive another truck in 2026, so, hopefully, they will receive that truck and have a couple new trucks in the fleet.

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Ms. Nichols-Rhode stated that Altec is going to do the replacement of the equipment. Because it is an Altec vehicle, the work has to be performed by them. Mr. Troxell stated that that is correct. They have a buffer on the price and hopefully they will not have to come back to Council.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that they use this truck every day. It has an auger to dig holes and a crane to lift and put things in. It is mostly used for setting poles. Mr. Troxell stated that every crew currently has a digger derrick, a bucket truck and a pickup that they use. Any time they have to set a pole, they use that truck. That truck is ready to lift all the transformers and they use them quite often for the bigger transformers.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes asked if there were any comments or questions from the public. There were none.

Mr. Brillhart moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-66 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Penta. Motion passed (5-0).

Temp. Ord. B-67

An ordinance authorizing the Director of Public Service to enter into a contract or contracts, according to law, for the installation of above-ground fuel storage tanks and associated equipment, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. John Campbell, Superintendent of Motor Vehicles, presented Temporary Ordinance B-67 to Council. The Director of Public Service will be authorized to enter into a contract or contracts, according to law, for the installation of above-ground fuel storage tanks and associated equipment. The Director of Finance will be authorized to make payment for same from the Capital Projects Fund, Line Item Capital Outlay.

Mr. Campbell stated that this project has been planned for quite a while. The handout provided shows an overview of the site plan and fairly representative of the installation. Their general location is east of the east side of the garage on the Bailey Road barrier, but closer to the building. Each tank holds 12,000 gallons. Maintenance is kind of limited. They replace the filters and any parts. They wash them because they do tend to get dirty. Thirty years is the industry lifetime. The below-ground tanks will be removed the following year as a budget item. Collins Equipment is the ODOT-approved contractor. The below-ground tanks will be removed next year as a budget item.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that there are currently four underground tanks. Two are diesel and two are gasoline and they each hold 6,000 gallons. They are getting two tanks, one diesel and one gas, 6,000 gallons each. The current tanks have been in the ground since 1980. Mr. Campbell stated that the late 1980's seems to be when that installation was done. Collins Equipment may have been involved in the installation at that time because they have been around for a while.

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Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that they will be testing remediation once it is needed and there is already some testing leakage. Mr. Campbell stated that they have a 24/7 monitoring process that continually checks for leaks. The new installation calls for a containment basin but those were not required with the old tanks were installed, so there may be a small amount of soil contamination. Collins Equipment will assess the level of contamination and the remediation at the time of the old tank removal.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that there is going to be a driving lane between the installation and the building and there is going to be an opening up of some area that will be used for ground storage. Mr. Campbell stated that since the Electric Department has removed a lot of the gear to their new facility, there is a lot of open area that the Water Department will make good use of. That is the east side of the building and it tends to stay snowy, so they keep it out a little ways out past the drive area.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that the estimated cost of these new above-ground tanks are \$400,000 and it is going to come out of Capital Projects, Garage, which was budgeted for \$490,000.

Mr. Balthis asked if this is only fueling station for all city vehicles. Mr. Campbell stated that there is a new installation at the Electric Company and there is also a small storage area for Ward 8 at the Street Garage which they use for mowing and during winter storms. It is may be around 1,200 to 1,500 gallons. Mr. Balthis asked how often those need to be refilled. Mr. Campbell stated that they usually go for three-week intervals. During leaf season, they use diesel faster. Winter storms will push it up to every two weeks.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes asked if there were any comments or questions from the public. There were none.

Mr. Brillhart moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-67 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Penta. Motion passed (5-0).

Temp. Ord. B-68

An ordinance authorizing the Parks and Recreation Board to enter into a contract, with BOLD Designs & Recreation LLC for the installation of play equipment at Valley Vista Park, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Sarah Kline, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, presented Temporary Ordinance B-68 to Council. The City obtained quotes for the installation of play equipment and BOLD Designs and Recreation LLC provided the best pricing and is a Certified Playground Safety Inspector by National Parks and Recreation Association standards.

The Parks and Recreation Board will be authorized to enter into a contract or contracts, with BOLD Designs & Recreation LLC for the installation of play equipment at Valley Vista Park. The

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Director of Finance will be authorized to make payment for same from Recreation Levy Fund, Line Item Capital Outlay.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes asked if there were any comments or questions from the public. There were none.

Ms. Kline stated that this is playground equipment that has already been purchased. They have used this company for some other projects, which is why they are here tonight, because they are going to go over the limit for Council if this is approved. They have done a great job for the department at other play areas and other projects around the park system, so they are very happy with their services.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that the estimated cost is \$75,000 and that is exactly how much was budgeted, so well done. She asked for a timeline. Ms. Kline stated that the Electric Department is completing some very significant underground work at Valley Vista Park. As soon as that is complete, then they can begin.

Mr. Troxell, Electric Superintendent, stated that the Electric Department is close to ready to go out to bid for a contractor to install the duct bank that is going to run through that park. Once the duct bank is installed, Parks can do whatever they need to do. They just need the infrastructure to get installed. The final drawing just came out, so they should be ready to go out for bid for that project. Ms. Nichols-Rhodes asked for a ballpark for the process of the bidding and contract. Mr. Troxell stated that they hope to have the duct bank installed by the end of year.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that what is happening at the park has been a big mystery to residents. At one point, there was signage. She asked if there is anything at that location giving people information that it is underway. Ms. Kline stated that there is still a banner, but it has seen better days. Every so often, they put out a social media post. She doesn't know how effective that has been. They do take questions when they call. She would love the help of City Council to get the word out that it is coming and it is going to be great. They have a whole series of amenities planned and they should see some pretty significant infrastructure investment over the next couple of years at Valley Vista Park.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes asked if the playground equipment will be installed in the spring. Ms. Kline stated that she hesitates to give a timeline because it depends on so many factors outside of their control, including the project with Electric getting the bids and it coming in on budget and being able to be done and the weather. The playground is not able to be installed this winter, but in the spring.

Mrs. Penta stated that as this is in her ward, many residents have reached out to her. She tells them it is going to get done and it is going to be fabulous. They have to be very cautious and get the lines done accurately and correctly. This is going to be a wonderful park. It is going to have new restrooms and it is going to be great, but it takes time.

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Ms. Kline stated that they have the playground equipment purchased. They have things for the basketball court purchased. They have restrooms ready to go and to be built pending their 2026 budget approval. Pending the 2026 budget approval, they will have some other amenities that would be reviewed in due time. Once things get going, it really should be pretty timely.

Mr. Brillhart moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-68 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Penta. Motion passed (5-0).

Temp. Ord. B-69

An ordinance authorizing the Parks and Recreation Board to enter into a contract, with Safe Slide Restoration for water slide paint and repairs at Water Works Family Aquatic Center, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Sarah Kline, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, presented Temporary Ordinance B-69 to Council. Water Works Family Aquatic Center fiberglass slides are now over 20 years old and are reaching their effective life cycle. Safe Slide Restoration has completed slide repairs at Water Works Family Aquatic Center in the past and has expertise in water park fiberglass slide painting and repairs.

The Parks and Recreation Board will be authorized to enter into a contract or contracts, with Safe Slide Restoration for water slide paint and repairs at Water Works Family Aquatic Center. The Director of Finance will be authorized to make payment for same from Recreation Levy Fund, Line Item Capital Outlay.

Ms. Kline stated that this is to complete bolt repair and restoration as well as repainting and recoating of the slide system at Waterworks Park. It has not been done since the park was reopened a couple decades ago. They inspect it every year, but this is the first major overhaul of that slide system. They were able to capture some savings from other projects and instead of spreading it out over the years, they received a really good quote and will be able to get this done this year, and everything would be ready to go for the season in 2026.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that the estimated cost is \$95,387. It originally was budgeted for \$150,000 for three years, but with additional savings, it will cost \$95,000 rather than the \$150,000. Ms. Kline stated that they were able to find those savings and can do everything at once rather than do it over a couple of years. It will make the whole experience at Waterworks safer and smoother. The slides will be blue and yellow.

Mr. James stated that he is glad to hear this. An ounce of prevention is worth of a pound of cure. He would hate to see anything happen to anybody going down the slide. The Parks and Recreation Department is on top of their game every year. Ms. Kline stated that they are always doing inspections on all of the playground equipment and slides and aquatic structures.

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Ms. Nichols-Rhodes asked if there were any comments or questions from the public. There were none.

Mr. Brillhart moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-69 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Penta. Motion passed (5-0).

Temp. Ord. B-70

An ordinance authorizing the Director of Public Service to enter into a contract or contracts, without competitive bidding, with Collins Excavating Construction and & D&C Construction & Excavating for the maintenance and repair of the City's storm water, sanitary sewer, and water distribution systems, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Russ Kring, Water Utilities Superintendent, presented Temporary Ordinance B-70 to Council. The quantity of outstanding work related to water service lines, sanitary laterals, and sanitary and storm mains is more than can be handled in a timely manner by City personnel. Collins Excavating & Construction and D&C Construction & Excavating are able to complete the work in a timely and workmanlike manner.

The Director of Public Service will be authorized to enter into a contract or contracts, without competitive bidding, with Collins Excavating & Construction and D&C Construction & Excavating, for the maintenance and repair of the City's storm water, sanitary sewer, and water distribution systems. The Director of Finance will be authorized to make payment for same from the Water Fund, Sewage and Disposal Fund.

Mr. Kring stated that the backlog work in the Water, Sewer and Storm Water Department is ever increasing, so they would like to hire out some of the medium-sized jobs that they have. While none of these are over \$75,000 alone, they cumulatively are going to go over \$75,000 with these contractors, so they need to get approval for that.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that the reason for needing these contractors is because it has to be done by the end of year because that is when the amounts are used. They have used both Collins Excavating & Construction and D&C Construction & Excavating before. Collins Excavating does a lot of the emergency work. They have also been happy with D&C's performance. Mr. Kring stated that they started replacing lead service lines for Akron in their program. They have a lot of good experience. They have been a good resource and they do good work at a good price.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that each company might do 10 jobs each by the end of the year. They can work on lead pipe replacement, sinkhole repairs and sanitary lateral replacements. Contractors are needed for times that they don't have the necessary large equipment and specialized equipment. Mr. Kring stated that their day-to-day work, the crews do spend a lot of the summer doing new taps on the newly-installed lines. With the meter exchange program, they have a lot of the curb boxes, if not functioning properly, being replaced. If after flushing hydrants they don't work

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properly, they replace them or fix parts on them. They also have main breaks of about 10 a month. Those are the types of things the inhouse crews do on a day-to-day basis.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that they have very hard-working people in all the departments. The total estimated cost for all the work would be \$400,000 and that is split up between Water and Sewer, \$200,000 each.

Mr. James asked about a gentleman in his wad that is having some issues. Mr. Kring stated that they are running into all kinds of problems on that. The pipe is in bad shape. They are having trouble to find something to line it. If they dig it up, it is close to the house. They are looking at options. He will give him an update on that soon. They should have something out there still done this year. It is a tricky situation and will take a lot of coordination between Cuyahoga Falls and Munroe Falls.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes asked if there were any comments or questions from the public. There were none.

Mr. Brillhart moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-70 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Penta. Motion passed (5-0).

Temp. Ord. B-71

An ordinance authorizing the Director of Public Service to enter into a cooperative agreement with the County of Summit, Ohio to share the cost of engineering of the North Main Street bridge over the Cuyahoga River, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Tony Demasi, City Engineer, presented Temporary Ordinance B-71 to Council. It is necessary to have a cooperative agreement between the City of Cuyahoga Falls and the County of Summit, Ohio, to share the cost of the North Main Street bridge over the Cuyahoga River.

The Director of Public Service will be authorized to enter into a cooperative agreement with the County of Summit, Ohio to share the cost of engineering of the North Main Street bridge over the Cuyahoga River. The Director of Finance will be authorized to make payment for same from the Capital Projects Fund, line item Capital Outlay.

Mr. Demasi stated that the Summit County Engineering Office is moving forward with plans to replace the North Main Street bridge over the Cuyahoga River, also known as the High Level Bridge. In 2024, the County completed a feasibility study which looked at different alternatives for the bridge. The option that was chosen was a welded steel plate girder bridge, four spans, over the river. They are moving forward with the final construction plan. The total design fee is \$8.6 million. The County has been hard at work securing funding for the design. They have been able to secure over \$9 million in Federal funds. Those funds come with a local match requirement. They have spoken with Cuyahoga Falls and the City of Akron to participate in the local share. The agreement that they have been negotiating is for \$250,000 each from Akron and Cuyahoga

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Falls, and then Summit County will supply the balance of the local share, about \$1.2 million. Their share will help with any additional amenities that they might want to ask for with the new structure above and beyond what the County might ask. Construction is currently planned for 2030 and will be completed around 2034, but is all predicated on future funding for construction, and that is not secured. Estimated cost for construction is about \$60 million. This expenditure was budgeted in the 2025 Capital Budget and will be paid for using tax funds which were received last week.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that the estimated cost is \$250,000 and they budgeted \$250,000. When put up against a total of \$8.6 million, it sounds like a good amount.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes asked if there were any comments or questions from the public. There were none.

Mr. Brillhart moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-71 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mrs. Penta. Motion passed (5-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.