

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

March 16, 2026

Members: Mary Nichols-Rhodes, Chair
Mike Brillhart, Vice Chair
Brian Ashton, Joe Siegferth, Susan Spinner

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

The minutes of the February 17, 2026 Finance Committee meeting were approved as written.

Legislation Discussed

Temp. Ord. A-14

Temp. Ord. A-15

Discussion:

Temp. Ord. A-14

An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to apply for, accept, and enter into a Water Supply Loan Account Agreement with the Ohio EPA on behalf of the City for replacing non-copper water service lines, designating a repayment source for the loan, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Russ Kring, Water Utilities Superintendent, presented Temporary Ordinance A-14 to Council. The United States Environmental Protection Agency required all water systems, including the City of Cuyahoga Falls, to replace lead and galvanized service lines requiring replacement (GRR) service lines within a 10-year period. The City has identified over 3,400 such non-copper service lines needing replacement. The City intends to apply for Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to replace non-copper water service lines in fiscal year 2026. The Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account requires a government authority to pass legislation for the application of a loan and the execution of an agreement, as well as designating a repayment source.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that this ordinance is to allow Council to enter into an agreement with the EPA revolving loan and there is zero interest.

Mr. Kring stated that the original requirement from the EPA was to get the mapping and inventory submitted to them by October 16th of 2024, which has been met. They determined that they had about somewhere around 2,500 citywide service that were still lead and somewhere around 900 private residences with what they called galvanized downstream of lead, so basically a non-copper line.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that the EPA puts a 10-year limit. That will go into effect in 2027 and they will have 10 years from that time. Mr. Kring stated that it is still in draft form, so they anticipate that being final November 1st of 2027. They will have 10 years from that point, but

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they wanted to get a jump on it and get moving through them. It is not something really worth waiting on. Prices are not coming down, and the sooner they get it done, the cheaper it will be.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that the estimated total cost for the 3,500 is over the eight years. They are planning to work on 400 to 500 per year and, every year, they have the same legislation to apply again for a loan for that year's project. Mr. Kring stated that is correct. Currently, the plan is to continue to get the zero-interest loans every year to perform the yearly work that needs to be completed.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that it will take 8 years, which is good. It's going out for bid and then, once the bids open, they will have to follow the process of getting the loan. The estimated cost for this year's project for replacement is \$3 million and they had it budgeted for \$2,760,000.

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. A-14 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Siegfert. Motion passed (5-0).

Temp. Ord. A-15

An ordinance authorizing the Director of Public Service to enter into a contract or contracts, according to law, for replacing non-copper water service lines, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Anthony Zumbo, Service Director, and Mr. Russ Kring, presented Temporary Ordinance A-15 to Council. Temporary Ordinance A-14, if passed, will authorize the Mayor to apply for, accept, and enter into a Water Supply Revolving Loan Account Agreement with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the City for replacing non-copper water service lines. The City seeks to complete the Lead Service Line Replacement project and use Water Supply Revolving Loan Account funds to fund the project.

The Director of Public Service will be authorized to enter into a contract or contracts, according to law, for replacing non-copper water service lines. The Director of Finance will be authorized to make payment for same from the Water Fund, Line Item Other Operations.

Mr. Zumbo stated as a point of clarification that Temporary Ordinance A-15 is to enter into the agreement with the contractors to perform this work, so the discussion was mostly for Temporary Ordinance A-14, because they can then enter into that contract, as well. This particular ordinance will authorize him to sign it, but they are out to bid for the two contracts, so he wanted to make sure that Council was aware.

Ms. Spinner asked for an estimate of when the work will actually start. Mr. Kring stated that they hope to get the funding approved and be ready to go on May 1st of this year. They are currently hoping to have the 400 done by the end of October. They just had the pre-bid meeting this afternoon

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and they think they are going to need to extend that. By the time they follow-up the 2026 process, they will be entering into the 2027 funding year, so they will do a new bid, but it will pretty much go right on through. Mrs. Spinner asked if they have to reapply for the loans each year. Mr. Kring stated that was correct.

Mr. Balthis asked what will the process be to notify the private property owners when they are going to do the work. Mr. Kring stated that they have not worked out all the details. They are not sure if they are going to have the contractor notify the homeowners or put a door hanger up to have them call and schedule. This first round this year will be trial and error. Akron has done this already. Some of the contractors that are bidding on this have done the program for Akron, so they are going to rely on best practices. They are not 100-percent sure how they are going to do that. They can also contact them through the Utility Billing contact information.

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. A-15 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Siegferth. Motion passed (5-0).

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.