

**AGENDA
CHILLICOTHE CITY COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
FEBRUARY 23, 2026
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL BY CLERK

READING OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING BY CLERK

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS BY CLERK

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND ALDERPERSON

COUNCIL COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

ANYONE WITH BUSINESS CONCERNING CITY GOVERNMENT

PRESENTATION OF BILLS, TRANSFERS AND PAYROLLS FOR PAYMENT AND DISCUSSION

MAYOR HUGHES

1. Approve –Contract for a Grant Funding Strategy
2. Accept – Resignation Carrie McIntyre – Marketing & Tourism

CEMETERY & PARKS COMMITTEE – ALDERSPERSON WHITE

1. Refer- City Attorney – Draft Amendment to Cemetery Ordinance – Section 38
2. Approve – Hiring Seasonal Part Time – Bill Yocum
3. Approve – Hiring Seasonal Part Time – Tera Wilson

HUMAN RESOURCE- ALDERPERSON SEMTNER

Approve – Ordinance – Elected Official Salaries

1. Closed Session – Personnel – Section 2(c) 1 – Employee Hiring, Firing Compensation, Discipline and performance.
2. Open Session – Approve Supervisors Salary Increases

ADJOURNMENT

AGENDA CLERK

**CITY OF CHILLICOTHE
COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 23, 2026**

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Chillicothe, Peoria County, Illinois, met in Regular Session in person February 23, 2026 at 7:00 P.M. with Mayor Michael D. Hughes presiding and with proper notice having been posted.

Mayor Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance, to the Flag of the United States of America, was recited.

Chairman Hughes directed Clerk Byrnes to take roll.

Present:
Mayor Michael D. Hughes
City Clerk Jill M. Byrnes
City Treasurer Andrea Bredeman

Alders Present:
Barry Bredeman, Patricia Westerman-Connor,
Brett Cantwell, Michael Crabtree, Courtney Gehrig,
Sandi Levell, Patrick Semtner, Gary Sharp

Also Present:
City Attorney Kevin Day
Police Chief Jeremy Cooper
Office Manager Denise Passage
Assistant Office Manager Chelsea White
Economic Development Director Amanda Beadles

Others Absent:
Attorney Taylor Cascia
City Engineer Josh Harken
Superintendent of Public Works Shawn Sutherland

Chairman Hughes declared a Quorum present

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The Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting on February 9, 2026 were presented. Motion Alderperson Semtner, second Alderperson Crabtree, that the Council dispense with the reading of the Minutes of the February 9, 2026 Regular Council Meeting and approve the Minutes as presented.

Motion Carried Via Voce vote.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS BY THE CLERK:

Clerk Byrnes presented the following Committee and Commission Minutes:

1. Supervisor Review Group – 1/27/2026 10:45 a.m. session and the 3:30 p.m. session. Also Supervisor Review Group minutes from 1/29/2026 and 2/6/2026
2. Public Safety Committee – 2/3/2026
3. Public Works Committee – 2/4/2026
4. Economic Development Committee – 2/10/2026 was cancelled
5. Joint HR & Finance Committee – 2/11/2026
6. Shademakers – 2/17/2026

Communications by the Clerk:

1. 2025-2026 - 3rd Quarter Budget Review

I am in receipt of a resignation letter from Carrie McIntyre which reads:

Mayor Hughes,

I am writing to provide formal notice of my resignation from my committee member position on the Marketing & Tourism Commission. It has been a pleasure serving on this committee for many years. I wish you and the Commission the best.

Thanks

Carrie McIntyre

This will be discussed under the Mayor's agenda item #2.

Motion Alderperson Bredeman, second Alderperson Gehrig, that the petitions and communications as presented by Clerk Byrnes be accepted and placed on file.

Motion Carried Via Voce vote.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND ALDERPERSONS:

None

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COUNCIL COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS:

There will be a Chillicothe Viaduct Safety Initiative meeting at the Chillicothe Public Library on March 5, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. (See attached flyer). All Alderpersons are invited to attend.

Amanda Beadles EDC Director will post the notice.

Amanda Beadles explained that Tri-County Regional Planning will discuss in detail what the viaduct means to the region, proposed plans and helping us to understand what it would mean if the City would take the lead on the IDOT project letter that was previously discussed at the November 24, 2025 Council meeting. A motion was made at the December 8, 2025 Council meeting by Alderperson Connor for the City to accept taking the lead on the project, that motion failed for lack of a second.

ANYONE WITH BUSINESS CONCERNING CITY GOVERNMENT:

None

Motion Alderperson Crabtree, second Alderperson Sharp, that the bills as presented be paid and the payrolls and transfers be approved.

Roll Call Vote was:

Ayes: Bredeman, Cantwell, Connor, Crabtree,
Gehrig, Levell, Semtner, Sharp

Nays: None

Chairman declared motion carried.

MAYOR HUGHES:

Alderperson Semtner, second Alderperson Connor, that the Council approve the contract between the City of Chillicothe and Natalie Menke, Shortlist Studio, LLC. for a Grant Funding Strategy, in the amount of \$5,000.00, payable from General Fund, Economic Development Department. (See attached).

Discussion: Alderperson Semtner informed the Council he had reached out to several grant writing organizations over the last few months and was most impressed with Shortlist Studio that is based out of Peoria. Natalie Menke is a professional grant writer with over 13 years' experience, after speaking with her, her recommendation was to meet with the Council to determine the City's grant priorities and spend up to 8 weeks researching grants that the City would be interested in and have a chance of obtaining. The end result would be a list of available grants for the City to apply for. The \$5,000.00 cost would only be for the list of

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available grants, any additional services to include grant writing would be an additional expense.

Roll Call Vote was:

Ayes: Bredeman, Cantwell, Connor, Crabtree,
Gehrig, Levell, Semtner, Sharp

Nays: None

Chairman declared motion carried.

Alderman Semtner, second Alderman Gehrig, that the Council accept the resignation of Carrie McIntyre from the Marketing & Tourism Commission, and thank her for her service.

Roll Call Vote was:

Ayes: Bredeman, Cantwell, Connor, Crabtree,
Gehrig, Levell, Semtner, Sharp

Nays: None

Chairman declared motion carried.

CEMETERY & PARKS COMMITTEE:

Alderman Levell, second Alderman Gehrig, that the Council refer to the City Attorney to draft an amendment to Chapter 26 Cemeteries of the City Code to open section 38 in the cemetery, it will have only single grave spaces and they are to be sold consecutively.

Roll Call Vote was:

Ayes: Bredeman, Cantwell, Connor, Crabtree,
Gehrig, Levell, Semtner,

Nays: None

Chairman declared motion carried.

Alderman Levell, second Alderman Crabtree, that the Council approve the hiring of Bill Yocum, for a part-time seasonal position, at an hourly rate of \$17.00, subject to pre-employment testing.

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Roll Call Vote was:

Ayes: Bredeman, Cantwell, Connor, Crabtree,
Gehrig, Levell, Semtner, Sharp

Nays: None

Chairman declared motion carried.

Alderman Levell, second Alderman Connor, that the Council approve the hiring of Tera Wilson, for a part-time seasonal position, at an hourly rate of \$17.00, subject to pre-employment testing.

Roll Call Vote was:

Ayes: Bredeman, Cantwell, Connor, Crabtree,
Gehrig, Levell, Semtner, Sharp

Nays: None

Chairman declared motion carried.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

Alderman Semtner, second Alderman Gehrig, that the Council approve Ordinance No. 26-02-04, an ordinance regarding Salaries of Certain Elected Officials.

Roll Call Vote was:

Ayes: Bredeman, Cantwell, Connor, Crabtree
Gehrig, Levell, Semtner, Sharp

Nays: None

Chairman declared motion carried.

Motion Alderman Semtner, second Alderman Bredeman, that the Council adjourn into Closed Session at 7:34 p.m., for Personnel-ILCS 120/2 (c) (1) – Employee hiring, firing, compensation, discipline and performance and to allow Attorney Day to attend. Potential action may be taken upon returning to Open Session.

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Roll Call Vote was:

Ayes: Bredeman, Cantwell, Connor, Crabtree,
Gehrig, Levell, Semtner, Sharp

Nays: None

Chairman declared motion carried.

Council returned to Open Session at 7:52 p.m.

Motion Alderperson Semtner, second Alderperson Gehrig, that the Council approve the following Supervisor's wage increases as discussed and presented. (See attached).

Police Chief Jeremy Cooper – 5.0%

Office Manager Denise Passage – 4.5%

Superintendent of Public Works Shawn Sutherland – 3.5%

Economic Development Director Amanda Beadles – 4.5%

Roll Call Vote was:

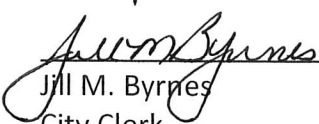
Ayes: Bredeman, Cantwell, Connor, Crabtree,
Gehrig, Levell, Semtner, Sharp

Nays: None

Chairman declared motion carried.

Motion Alderperson Sharp, second Alderperson Crabtree, that the meeting adjourn at 7:53 p.m.

Mayor Hughes declared the meeting adjourned.


Jill M. Byrnes
City Clerk

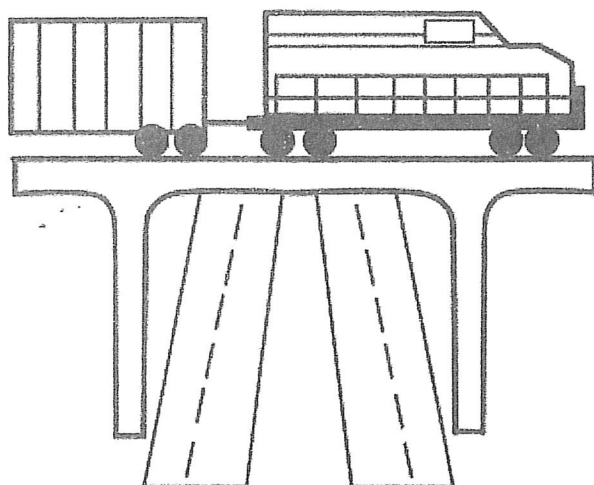
Please put **Thursday, March 5th, 2026, 4 PM** on your calendar.

We will be holding an informational meeting at the Chillicothe Public Library on that date and time.

More specific information will be sent you.

The meeting will conclude by 5:30 PM, the library has another engagement starting after that time.

Mike Krost
Chair
CVSI



Chillicothe Viaduct Safety In
-Since 2010-



February 9, 2026

Patrick Semtner
City of Chillicothe
Mayor Pro Tem and Alderman Ward 3
908 N. Second Street
P.O. Box 14
Chillicothe, IL 61523
(309) 214-8378

RE: *Draft* contract for a Grant Funding Strategy

Dear Patrick:

Thank you for reaching out and sharing the City of Chillicothe's (City) current funding environment, priorities, and readiness to pursue grants as a funding source. Through our conversation, it is apparent the City recognizes the value of grant funding, and there is strong internal alignment around its importance. However, despite this shared understanding, the City has struggled to convert intention into sustained action, leaving potential funding opportunities untapped.

This engagement is designed to break that cycle by providing expert, external leadership to guide the City through a focused strategy phase. Rather than offering one-off grant-writing services, this partnership provides structured guidance, decision-making support, and a clear path to implementation, ensuring the City not only identifies funding opportunities but also moves decisively toward them.

Through this process, I will serve as a fractional Grant Strategist, providing direction and hands-on support to develop a 12-to 18-month Grant Funding Strategy aligned with the City's top initiatives. This strategy phase is designed to reduce pressure on existing revenue sources while strengthening the City's long-term funding focus and impact. In addition to the strategy itself, this process includes the development of a Prospectus, a practical tool that supports relationship-building.

Below is an overview of how this grant funding strategy phase will unfold.

Funding Strategy Process

I will begin by leading a focused one-hour kickoff meeting to define the City's funding goals. I will structure the agenda to guide the discussion around priority funding needs and near- and medium-term objectives. During this session, I will ask questions commonly required in grant applications and document responses in a comprehensive Project Planning Toolkit. Once complete, we will review the Toolkit together to confirm a shared understanding of the City's funding priorities and positioning.

Building on the finalized Toolkit, I will develop a strategic **Grant Funding Strategy** and a concise, funder-facing Prospectus. Using my Instrumentl database access, I will analyze over 100 grant



opportunities to identify the 15–20 with the highest likelihood of success. We will then review and refine this draft strategy together to ensure alignment with the City's goals and capacity.

To further strengthen return on investment, I will conduct targeted outreach to select funders to assess competitiveness and alignment. Grant opportunities that meet a defined threshold of 20% or higher likelihood of success will be included in the final strategy.

I will deliver the Final Grant Funding Strategy in a clear, easy-to-use grid format that serves as a roadmap for the next 12 to 18 months. The final strategy document will include the rationale for each recommended grant, outstanding requirements, funder contact information, and submission deadlines. This document is designed to guide staff, leadership, and board decisions by focusing effort on the grants with the highest potential impact.

Also included in this process is a **one-page Prospectus** summarizing City's priority programs and funding needs. You can use this funder-facing document to introduce the City to new grantmakers and streamline future grant applications and letters of intent.

Funding Strategy Investment

Grant Funding Strategy: \$5,000

Billed monthly over an approximate two-month period, based on defined milestones. This contract provides strategic grant leadership during the planning phase, focusing on direction and clarity rather than one-time grant writing.

Deliverables for Immediate Impact

- **1-page Prospectus:** A concise, funder-facing overview of the City's mission and priority programs
- **12-to 18-Month Funding Strategy:** A clear, actionable roadmap for grant pursuits

Timeline

We can schedule the kickoff meeting in late February. I typically complete funding research and strategy development in approximately eight weeks, with clear milestones defined throughout the process. I encourage you to schedule a meeting soon to secure your preferred kickoff date.

This Grant Funding Strategy will clearly outline which grant opportunities the City is best positioned to pursue over the next 12 to 18 months. If you choose to move forward with grant writing support, I can provide a separate pricing proposal based on the finalized Grant Funding Strategy.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I'm happy to refine this proposal based on your goals, provide a final draft for signature, and share potential kickoff dates.

I look forward to the opportunity to partner with the City of Chillicothe.



Respectfully,

Natalie Menke

Natalie Menke
Grant Strategist & Writer
Shortlist Studio, LLC

The referenced professional services terms and conditions and proposed scope of services and fees are agreed upon:

Natalie Menke
Shortlist Studio, LLC
c: 312-813-6876
natalie@shortlist-studio.com

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

Client Name (Printed):

Client Address:

City of Chillicothe

Recommended Department Head Increases - 02/23/2026

* Recommended by those who attended the last Closed Session Joint HR and Finance Committee Meeting (HR Chairman Semtner, Finance Chairman Crabtree, Mayor Hughes, Alderperson Cantwell and Alderperson Levell)

Position	Current Salary	Increase	Percentage
Police Chief	\$95,800.00	\$100,590.00	5.0%
Economic Dev. Director	\$66,000.00	\$68,970.00	4.5%
Supt. of Public Works	\$81,786.17	\$84,648.69	3.5%
Office Manager	\$80,744.09	\$84,377.57	4.5%