



REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 14, 2025

The regular meeting of July 14, 2025 was held at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers at the Government Center, 4175 Alum Creek Drive, with Mayor Angela Kirk presiding.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Boumis called the roll. Mr. Michael Flaherty – present; Mr. Robert Kramer – present; Mr. Guiles Richardson – present; Mr. Derek Varney – present; Mr. Mike Kimbler – present; Mr. Todd Gibbs – present. Also present were Gene Hollins, Esq., Law Director; Stacey Boumis, AICP, Clerk; Mike Confer, Police Chief; and, E. Rod Davisson, Esq., City Administrator.

MINUTES

Mayor Kirk called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2025 Council Committee of the Whole meeting and the June 23, 2025 Regular Meeting. Motion made by Mr. Flaherty; seconded by Mr. Richardson. Voting as follows: Mr. Richardson – yes; Mr. Flaherty – yes; Mr. Kimbler – yes; Mr. Varney – yes; Mr. Kramer – yes; Mr. Gibbs – yes. Motion carried.

ORDINANCES

First Readings

Ms. Boumis read the title of Ordinance 39 – 25: An Ordinance To Amend Section 182.012 Of The Codified Ordinances Of The City Of Obetz To Increase In The City Income Tax Rate From The Current Rate Of Two And One-Half Percent (2.5%) To A Rate Of Three And One-Half Percent (3.5 %) To Become Effective On January 1, 2026 To Provide For Safety Services, And Declaring An Emergency.

Ms. Boumis read the title of Resolution 01 – 25: A Resolution Providing For The Submission To The Electors Of The City Of Obetz, At The General Election To Be Held On Tuesday, November 4, 2025, An Ordinance To Enact An Increase In The City Income Tax Rate From The Current Rate Of Two And One-Half Percent (2.5%) To A Rate Of Three And One-Half Percent (3.5%) To Become Effective On January 1, 2026, For The Purposes Of Safety Services, And Declaring An Emergency.

Mr. Davisson discussed the Ordinance and Resolution. He stated the two things work together to put a 1% safety services levy on the ballot. This would be a 1% increase to income tax. He explained that the police department's budget has increased from \$2.5 million dollars a year to \$4 million dollars a year over the last few years. Currently the City is negotiating the police contract. It is hard to maintain the current level of service without additional funds. If residents don't pass a safety levy, there will be dramatic cuts.

Mr. Davisson stated the State of Ohio continues to reduce city revenue sources and there is a constitutional amendment being discussed that could end property taxes. Residents need to secure the safety of Obetz by supporting the safety levy. If property taxes are dissolved, everyone

will be in the income tax game next year. He stated residents should be given the opportunity to decide if they want to pay for police services. Give them a chance to vote.

Mr. Davisson stated in order to put the safety levy on the ballot, Council needs to pass the Resolution. The Ordinance is tabled until after the election. If the levy passes, then Council will adopt the Ordinance.

Mr. Davisson stated \$6 million dollars of money from Obetz citizens goes to Hamilton Township and Madison Township. The City only gets fire and EMS services from the Township for this money. A city can conform its boundaries and keep those funds. The money can then be used to pay for services citizens in Obetz get. Mr. Flaherty inquired about inside millage. Mr. Davisson stated that the 10 mils of unvoted property tax millage is split between different jurisdictions. Obetz gets 1.7 mils of the 10 mils; the rest goes to the townships, schools and county. Costs are going up everywhere. Revenue is flat; there are no new buildings. If the City must pay more for safety services, other services will need to be cut. Mr. Davisson then stated how the State proceeds may affect the City's revenue stream. He discussed the impact of the net operating loss deduction legislation adopted by the State on the City. He stated the City needs to budget more conservatively.

Mr. Davisson stated costs are going up everywhere. Revenue is flat; there are no new buildings. If the City must pay more for safety services, other services will need to be cut. Mr. Davisson then stated how the State proceeds may affect the City's revenue stream. He discussed the impact of the net operating loss deduction legislation adopted by the State on the City. He stated the City needs to budget more conservatively. If the residents want to preserve the police force in its current form, an additional funding source is needed. Increasing income tax by 0.5% doesn't keep up with expenses.

Mr. Borders, a resident, asked why wouldn't the City cut the ZucchiniFest. Mr. Davisson stated the full scope of services will be considered. Mr. Borders wanted to know what cost cutting measures the City was taking now. Mr. Davisson stated the City has enough savings for 2 years. Mayor Kirk stated the ZucchiniFest budget is set for this year. She then discussed the different buckets of money available to pay for services. She stated cuts to every service will be considered. Mr. Borders stated the police department is a necessity; other stuff is a luxury. The City needs to prioritize wants and needs. Mr. Davisson stated residents should get to decide how to spend money and what they consider wants and needs; everyone has a different opinion. Mayor Kirk stated the City has already started taking cost savings measures. Mr. Davisson stated Council decides how the money is spent. He then stated the City has done well with savings. Obetz gives away more stuff than other communities. Council will have to cut programs and services. Mr. Hollins stated the City is up against deadlines to be on the November ballot.

Heather Coffenberry, a resident, asked why the City is asking for an income tax increase and not a property tax levy. Mr. Davisson stated the funding is needed in perpetuity. Plus, the income tax increase is a bet on the City. Mr. Hollins stated income taxes are collected from people living and working in Obetz. Mr. Davisson stated people who work in Obetz will pay for the majority of

the services. Property taxes make residents solely responsible.

Heather Coffenberry asked why 1%. Mr. Davisson stated 1% will raise approximately \$6 million dollars and it will get City enough money to leave the townships and start their own fire department. Ms. Coffenberry asked with property taxes potentially going away, how will other cities handle the decrease in revenue? Mr. Davisson stated he doesn't know. The elimination of property taxes is a foreign idea. Mr. Davisson stated that it is likely that people will vote to eliminate property taxes if given the choice. Mayor Kirk stated most senior citizens will vote to eliminate property taxes because they don't understand how property taxes are used. Mr. Davisson stated schools and townships will get annihilated if property taxes are eliminated. The State legislature will continue to chip away at property taxes. Maybe we are in a world where people will take less stuff. People will get to vote yes or no. This is the most American way to determine what people want.

Ms. Coffenberry then asked how the size and budget of the Obetz police department compares to others like Groveport. Mr. Davisson stated the Groveport police budget is double; however, Groveport has a much larger city budget. The Obetz police department is small compared to other cities.

Belinda Anderson, speaking as a resident, addressed Council. She stated there are no other areas in Franklin County with a 3.5% income tax. What makes our City the one that is trying to go to 3.5%? Mr. Davisson stated that Obetz will only become 3.5% if the residents decide that is how they want to spend their money. He then stated other cities will likely move this way. There are cities in the Cleveland area that are already at 3%. He stated we see what's coming and we are just trying to protect Obetz. He then stated if the residents decide Obetz shouldn't be the first city in the region to go to a higher income tax then the City will need to figure it out but Obetz may be trying to figure it out when Hamilton Township is on for an income tax levy or the school district then that becomes disastrous for everyone. The City is hopeful that doesn't happen.

Ms. Anderson then stated she was speaking as a Hamilton Township Trustee. She stated Mr. Davisson just made a comment that Obetz residents pay a lot in Township taxes but don't get the services. She stated she wants to be on the record that the Township has never told the deputies not to help patrol Obetz. She stated Obetz told the deputies not to patrol Obetz. She then stated Obetz is not paying the Fire Department overtime to attend the Zucchini-fest or July 4th fireworks. The Township is not just taking money and not putting back out to the community. Mr. Flaherty asked Trustee Anderson how many times the Township has plowed his street or mowed the grass in the greenspace. Trustee Anderson stated yes, there are some things. Mr. Flaherty asked how much of the Township budget goes to those types of services. Trustee Anderson stated she did not know. Mr. Flaherty stated he paid \$1250 in property taxes to Hamilton Township last year. The recent safety levy cost him \$257 dollars in taxes. Trustee Anderson stated there was not a property tax increase. Mr. Flaherty then asked what services was he getting for the additional \$1000 dollars of money paid for non-police services. She stated she did not know. All the money is paid together. Mr. Flaherty stated his dad, who lives in Hamilton Meadows (an unincorporated portion of the Township) pays the same amount. She then stated Obetz residents do pay taxes

for services they don't get. She then stated there are things that Obetz residents do get. It is not the Township's choice not to provide services. Mr. Flaherty stated that residents in unincorporated areas pay the same but get more benefits and services. Trustee Anderson stated she is not disputing that fact. She stated Obetz is getting fire. Mayor Kirk stated Obetz residents are paying for fire service. Mayor Kirk asked Trustee Anderson if Obetz residents get \$6 million dollars a year worth of fire and EMS services; that is all City residents get for that money. Mr. Davisson stated no one saying that Obetz doesn't get anything for their tax money. He stated residents pay tax money to the Township and only get a few services; Obetz residents don't get all of them and that's unfair. He asked Trustee Anderson to tell him a way where it is fair for Obetz residents to pay for services they don't receive. He said he would change his tune if she could tell him that. Trustee Anderson stated it is unfair to Obetz residents. She then stated it was Obetz who chose to annex property knowing that residents would continue to pay tax money. Mayor Kirk asked for clarification regarding which property was annexed. Mr. Davisson stated the choice to annex is a necessary evolution of development. Land owners annex to get services to maximize their profits. Mayor Kirk stated Obetz residents pay the overtime because Obetz pays for the fire and EMS services. Trustee Anderson stated the Township is trying to make up for services since the Township doesn't plow Obetz roads. Mayor Kirk stated Obetz is paying an overabundance for fire and EMS since they are not getting other services. The Fire Department should want to participate in community events since they are Obetz' fire department. Mr. Davisson stated he knows Trustee Anderson is a staunch supporter of the police. She responded yes. He then stated he assumes she will be in favor of a safety levy here. He then stated he appreciates her showing up. She stated there is more to discuss but she will save it for behind the doors.

Council took a brief recess from 6:56 PM to 7:19 PM.

Second Readings

Ms. Boumis read the title of Ordinance 37 – 25: An Ordinance To Adopt The Tax Budget For The City Of Obetz, Ohio For The Fiscal Year Beginning January 1, 2026 And To Submit The Same To The Franklin County Budget Commission And Declaring An Emergency. Mayor Kirk opened the public hearing. Mr. Davisson discussed the Ordinance. The tax budget isn't the operating budget; it is the first opportunity to estimate revenue. The actual budget will be considered in November. Mr. Davisson reviewed the elements of the tax budget. He stated a tax budget is required by the County so the City can collect its inside millage. City accounting is done by fund. Each fund has a stream of revenue. The General Fund is the largest fund in the City. The other funds are smaller and limited in use. The City projects revenue and expenses. Revenue is based on last year and what has been brought in this year so far. There are \$15 million dollars estimated of general fund revenue and \$19.6 million dollars of general fund expenses. Mr. Davisson then reviewed the various funds in the tax budget. There are some funds open that are no longer needed. Mr. Kramer asked if those funds would be closed in the future. Mr. Davisson stated eventually. Mr. Davisson discussed the water fund and how Obetz provides water to the residents. He discussed the income the City receives from the JEDZ. He stated Hamilton Township was not interested in a JEDZ when approached in the past. The CIC and CVB were discussed. Those are other arrows in the quiver for getting things done. The Buckstone New

Community Authority is the way the City will collect money for improvements in that area and not on the backs of the current residents. Mayor Kirk called for a motion to suspend the rules regarding the adoption of Ordinance 37 – 25. Motion made by Mr. Gibbs; seconded by Mr. Kramer. Voting as follows: Mr. Richardson – yes; Mr. Flaherty – yes; Mr. Kimbler – yes; Mr. Varney – yes; Mr. Kramer – yes; Mr. Gibbs – yes. Motion carried. Mayor Kirk called for a motion to adopt Ordinance 37 – 25. Motion made by Mr. Richardson; seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Voting as follows: Mr. Richardson – yes; Mr. Flaherty – yes; Mr. Kimbler – yes; Mr. Varney – yes; Mr. Kramer – yes; Mr. Gibbs – yes. Motion carried.

Third Readings

No third readings.

Emergencies

Ms. Boumis read the title of Ordinance 38 – 25: An Ordinance Authorizing The City Administrator To Enter Into A Settlement Agreement With Commercial Site Acquisitions, Inc. And Declaring An Emergency. Mr. Davisson discussed the Ordinance. He stated this was a public private partnership. Both parties decided to move forward separately. The City would like to reimburse Commercial Site Acquisitions, Inc. for the engineering and traffic work they did on behalf of the City. Mayor Kirk called for a motion to suspend the rules regarding the adoption of Ordinance 38 – 25. Motion made by Mr. Richardson; seconded by Mr. Kimbler. Voting as follows: Mr. Richardson – yes; Mr. Flaherty – yes; Mr. Kimbler – yes; Mr. Varney – yes; Mr. Kramer – yes; Mr. Gibbs – yes. Motion carried. Mayor Kirk called for a motion to adopt Ordinance 38 – 25. Motion made by Mr. Richardson; seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Voting as follows: Mr. Richardson – yes; Mr. Flaherty – yes; Mr. Kimbler – yes; Mr. Varney – yes; Mr. Kramer – yes; Mr. Gibbs – yes. Motion carried.

Ms. Boumis read the title of Ordinance 39 – 25: An Ordinance Authorizing The City Administrator To Apply For And Accept Assistance From The Clean Ohio Conservation Program Fund Administered Through The Ohio Public Works Commission And Declaring An Emergency. Ms. Boumis discussed the Ordinance. She stated the City is applying for funds to restore the creek going through McFadyen Park. Mayor Kirk called for a motion to suspend the rules regarding the adoption of Ordinance 39 – 25. Motion made by Mr. Richardson; seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Voting as follows: Mr. Richardson – yes; Mr. Flaherty – yes; Mr. Kimbler – yes; Mr. Varney – yes; Mr. Kramer – yes; Mr. Gibbs – yes. Motion carried. Mayor Kirk called for a motion to adopt Ordinance 39 – 25. Motion made by Mr. Richardson; seconded by Mr. Gibbs. Voting as follows: Mr. Richardson – yes; Mr. Flaherty – yes; Mr. Kimbler – yes; Mr. Varney – yes; Mr. Kramer – yes; Mr. Gibbs – yes. Motion carried.

MAYOR'S REPORT

No questions for Mayor Kirk.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Flaherty stated Council had a Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss the admission's policy for the splashpad. Mayor Kirk does not serve on the Committee of the Whole. Her job is to enforce the rules set by Council. Mr. Kramer asked if the City was allowing people working in Obetz access to the splashpad. Mr. Davisson stated Ms. Doddroe would like another meeting to discuss this. Currently access is for residents only. He stated allowing others access takes time. Mr. Kimbler stated there is a misconception that alternatives were not considered. Mr. Kramer stated the Committee did not vote at the meeting; rather, all Council members were in agreement with how to move forward.

ADMINISTRATION'S REPORTS

Chief Confer stated Cathy Frederick's last day is Friday. He then stated he attended a neighborhood meeting at Enchanted Acres last week and residents thanked Obetz police for being in the neighborhood.

Mr. Davisson stated the City has started printing additional bricks for installation at Junction Park.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

REMARKS FROM THE AUDIENCE

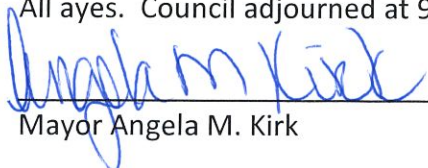
Dave Humphries, a resident, stated he was upset that Junction Park was closed for a private event. He thought it should not be closed. Mr. Davisson explained that it was closed for Cheryl's. They support the City in many ways by donating to every community event. They are also a large income tax contributor. Mr. Davisson stated he made the decision to close the park for them and it was a horrible decision. Mr. Humphries asked Council to prohibit future park closures for private events.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

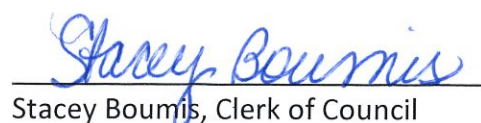
Mayor Kirk called for a motion to go into executive session under ORC 121.22(g)(1) and (8). Motion made by Mr. Flaherty; seconded by Mr. Gibbs. Voting as follows: Mr. Richardson – yes; Mr. Flaherty – yes; Mr. Kimbler – yes; Mr. Varney – yes; Mr. Kramer – yes; Mr. Gibbs – yes. Motion carried. Council went into executive session at 8:15 PM. Council returned from executive session at 9:56 PM with all six members present.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Kirk called for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Mr. Kimbler; seconded by Mr. Gibbs. All ayes. Council adjourned at 9:57 PM.



Mayor Angela M. Kirk



Stacey Boumis, Clerk of Council