

**CITY OF FORT MITCHELL, KENTUCKY
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBER
2355 DIXIE HIGHWAY, FORT MITCHELL, KY 41017
MARCH 24, 2025, 6:30 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mayor Jude Hehman called the regular council meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Hehman asked Ms. Guenther to call roll. The following council members were present: Jared Arlinghaus, Jerry Deatherage, Jeff Dietrich, Kim Nachazel, Greg Pohlgeers, and Dr. Alyson Roeding. Mayor Hehman stated that a quorum of the City Council was in attendance. Vicki Boerger arrived at 7:22 p.m.

OTHERS PRESENT

City Attorney, Olivia Amlung; City Administrator, Edwin King; City Clerk/Treasurer, Amy Guenther; Fire Chief, Dave Slusser; Public Works Director, Nick Tewes; Programs Coordinator, Joe Christofield; and Police Chief, Rob Nader.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Hehman stated that there is a typo in Resolution 2025-04; a new version is in front of the Council. Ms. Amlung will cover the revised Resolution in the Attorney's Report. Mr. Deatherage made a motion to approve the agenda with the presented change; Mr. Pohlgeers seconded the motion. Mayor Hehman asked whether there were any questions and hearing none, called for a voice vote. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The mayor stated that there are two sets of meeting minutes to approve this evening. The first minutes were from the Planning Session on February 3, 2025. Mayor Hehman asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Hearing none, Mr. Dietrich made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Deatherage seconded the motion. Mayor Hehman called for a voice vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Hehman stated the second set of minutes were for the council meeting on March 3, 2025 and asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. No corrections were noted. Dr. Roeding made a motion to approve the March 3, 2025, council meeting minutes. Mr. Pohlgeers seconded the motion. After asking if there were any questions and hearing none, Mayor Hehman called for a voice vote. The motion passed unanimously.

CITIZENS AND GUESTS

Mayor Hehman asked whether any of the guests had questions or concerns to bring before Council.

David Kiepprien of Summit Avenue would like the stop sign to be moved from one side of the street to the other or have them on both sides of the street. People are parking in front of the stop sign and he is worried that drivers cannot see the stop sign and kids could be hurt. It is difficult for him to get out of his driveway with the telephone pole on the other side of the driveway. The mayor said that he thinks this has been the situation for a long time, and no one has paid attention to it. The mayor stated that the no parking and stop sign are to be moved to the other side of the street, especially since there is also a fire hydrant in that location.

Sandy Schulte of Grace Court asked if residents could have access to Grace Court during the twelve months of construction. She is also concerned about the school buses turning around in the parking lot or turning onto Buttermilk.

Annette Pitz of Grace Court stated that residents have already lost one way out on Royal Drive and now they will be unable to drive on Grace Court. There will be only one way out. It is a very tough spot to turn left onto Buttermilk Pike. There will be people making deliveries, and there are going to be more accidents. She asked that Council consider keeping Grace Court open.

Shawn Cockrell is opposed to the closure of Grace Court. That road is used by many people on a regular basis.

The mayor stated that the development company asked City Council to consider closure due to the increased traffic on Grace Court since Royal Drive will be inaccessible. This is also the wishes of the Grace Court and BRG apartments. There are two adjoining properties owned by two separate people that own the parking lot at the end of Grace Court that people drive through. They have the right to close it themselves. There was an armed gate in that area in the past. The increase in cars has been substantial since Royal drive was closed. The city has posted signs to let people know it is the wishes of the owners to close off this area. Mr. King stated that the city is communicating with Kenton County Public Schools about the school bus route. Mayor Hehman stated that we informed Kenton County Schools that whether the city takes action, or the owners of the private property make that decision, we may close Grace Court within the next few days or weeks.

Marty Butler of Buttermilk Pike Development and apartment owners requested the temporary closure of Grace Court during the time of construction. One of the handouts depicts Grace Court and Grace Avenue. The red line on the drawing shows the proposed fence would be 60 to 100 feet back from Grace Avenue. In case of an emergency, police and fire would be able to travel down Grace Court and use a Knox box. The street going through the apartment complex is not a public street. The public street ends at the red cul-de-sac in the drawing. There is a serious concern that someone will be injured by the cars going through. It is not a two-lane road and there are many vehicles coming and going in both directions.

The mayor directed the Council, saying that it is up to them if they want to place the closure on the public street. Two things were mentioned and very clearly need to be addressed. Deliveries of Door Dash or pizza could be complicated. The second issue is the school bus route.

Mr. Butler responded that the school bus would be able to come down Grace Avenue so the students can walk up the street. Deliveries will have to come in on the south end through Buttermilk Pike. There would be a much more limited number of cars, and they would only be going to the residents of the apartment complex.

Mr. Dietrich asked whether the gate would cover the sidewalk as depicted in the picture. Mr. Butler said that the gate would just be on the paved area of the road, not over the sidewalk.

Dr. Roeding asked Mr. King what was Kenton County Public Schools' resolution? School buses cannot re-direct that traffic on Beechwood Road during school opening and closing hours, because it is gridlocked. The mayor stated that currently buses go from Grace Court to Grace Avenue, go over to Royal, then go up Grandview.

Ms. Nachazel stated that it would only affect the children in this development who would be dropped off or picked up in a different location, down by the gate. The mayor assumes that the corner of Grace Avenue and Grace Court will be the pickup and drop off spot. Ms. Schulte stated that we will have elementary schoolers such as first graders, kindergarteners, etc., being picked up. That means the buses will have to back up into one of the parking lots, which are already crowded. Dr. Roeding said that dropping off children at the other side of the gate does not sound safe.

Mr. Pohlgeers asked how many units are involved. Mr. Butler responded that there are 132, and Mr. Pohlgeers asked whether all 132 units received the letter. Mr. Butler confirmed that it was sent to every resident.

Mr. Dietrich asked whether there was any consideration to putting the gate up at the end of that street. Mr. Dietrich asked whether we know if the preference of the residents is to go out of Grace Avenue or to go out of Buttermilk.

Mr. Butler stated that they believe the most usage is through Buttermilk. Mr. Butler stated that the intent is to put a sign where people turn into Grace Court that says, "Not a Thru Street – Closed".

Mr. Deatherage stated regarding deliveries, most people use Waze and Google Maps to get around. If we do close this street, is there a way we can get them on digital maps quicker to show the closure?

Marvin Davis and JoAnn Bryant of Pleasant Ridge Avenue stated that when Beechwood and Blessed Sacrament let the students out, it is one-lane traffic. How is this going to affect the traffic on Pleasant Ridge? Mr. Davis asked whether the city plows this section when they do their sweeps. The mayor said that they do not. Will the residents have a code to the gate so they have access to go out that way? The mayor stated that the residents will not have access to that route. The gate will be used for emergency vehicles only. Mr. Davis stated that he sees lots of kids in that area and does not want to see a single kid get hurt.

Mr. Pohlgeers stated that there are going to be negative issues whatever is decided. It is important to state that the property owner has driven this conversation, and the developer agrees.

Don Brunner of BRG Apartments (the property managers for Grace Court Apartments) came forward to field questions. Ms. Bryant asked whether the city was going to put a "No Thru Traffic" sign at the corner of Pleasant Ridge and Grace Avenue, so people are alerted to that change. Mr. Brunner stated the property will take care of the fencing and some signs, but other areas would be covered by the City. Mr. Brunner stated that their sole responsibility is their residents. The road is not set up for that volume.

Ms. Nachazel stated that it is essentially traffic going through their front yards. Ms. Nachazel understands that it is going to be a challenge for parents to get their kids to and from the bus stop, but at the end of the day, this is making their front yard unsafe.

Mr. Deatherage stated that this is not a permanent closure. School is not in session for three months of the closure, so that is less time to worry about the students.

Mr. Pohlgeers stated that based on the way the resolution reads, it would be implemented temporarily, and Council can re-evaluate that resolution. If the Council determines that this is not working, Council can reopen the street. Ms. Amlung responded that it is a temporary road closure, so yes, Council can re-evaluate it if they want to. If we ask the property owners and management company to move the gate, they could close it off in the middle of the property. Mr. Pohlgeers stated that it is probably fair to say that it will be closed one way or another. The property owners and managers believe that most of the people who live in that complex would rather exit out Buttermilk Pike. The mayor asked whether Council had further questions. They did not, so the mayor opened the floor back up to the citizens, and Ms. Schulte returned to the podium.

Mr. Marvin Davis came back to the podium and asked who owns the property of the doctor's office building. Mr. Butler stated that they do not own the property, but there is an easement that has been in place since 1988 that allows traffic to go through there.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Ms. Amlung performed a reading of **Resolution 2025-03: Temporary Closure of Grace Court**. The mayor stated that Council has the resolution in front of them and asked whether there were any questions regarding that resolution. Mayor Hehman asked how this resolution could be amended if needed. Ms. Amlung responded that since it was closed by resolution, we would have to open it via resolution. Mr. Pohlgeers made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-03; Ms. Nachazel seconded the motion. Mayor Hehman called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Hehman stated to Mr. Butler that our Public Works Department would be in communication to establish a timeline and discuss communication to the residents. Mr. Butler thanked the mayor and City Council for their time. Mayor thanked the residents and guests for coming and sharing their input. The safety and bus issues were well thought out and the city appreciates those concepts being brought to Council's attention. Mr. Pohlgeers stated that this was an excellent discussion and thanked the residents for participating in the meeting.

Ms. Amlung performed a reading of **Resolution 2025-04: Moving No Parking Signs on Summit Avenue Near Avon Drive**. There was a typo in the original resolution which stated the fire hydrants are on the east side of Summit Avenue. It should indicate that the fire hydrants are located on the west side. There is a corrected version in front of you so please make that note in your consideration of passage. Mayor Hehman reminded the council that a resident had spoken in favor of this resolution at tonight's meeting. Mr. Deatherage made a motion to approve the resolution; Dr. Roeding seconded the motion. The mayor asked whether there were questions and hearing none, asked for a vote. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Ms. Amlung performed the first reading of **Ordinance 2025-01 Dissolution of the Fort Mitchell Economic Development Authority Related to the Fort Mitchell Gateway TIF**. Mr. King stated that the board was created when the initial TIF was filed for that property. That project was delayed, which was out of the city's control. There is a new project now, the Gateway Project. In amending that TIF as part of the negotiations of the development agreement, they want to include some new zoning. When the TIF was amended, it was amended to allow city staff to bring everything directly to the Council versus having a meeting with the authority and then bringing it to the Council. It allows the City to operate at the speed of business. This ordinance is a measure to amend and dissolve the board because it has not met in years and is no longer needed. The members of the board were Dr. Roeding, Mayor Hehman, Mary Burns, Kim Nachazel, Dan Rice, Mayor Paul Meier, and Brad Ramey. Mr. Ramey served as the representative for Kenton County. The mayor asked whether there were questions. There were none.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Hehman did not have additional items to report.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. King reported that on July 1, 2025, the City has the final renewal term of the waste collection and recycling contract and the City is going to opt for that renewal. This will save us a significant amount of money. The residential-based collection fee will be \$13.98 and recycling fee will be \$4.59. If the City were to put it out for a bid, it may be 25-40% higher. That is something to look ahead to at the end of 2027 when that term is over. The mayor stated that we bid that out with the City of Lakeside Park in the past and the City received a good discount because of the number of households, but their contract is a bit different from ours. The contracts must be the same for us to be partner cities when the Cities bid it out next time. The mayor is going to meet with their Mayor, Paul Markgraf, to discuss whether we can agree to contract verbiage. Fort Mitchell has the lowest cost in 3 counties due to this negotiation.

Mr. King stated that we were named a Tree City for 2024 -- that is 14 years in a row. Our Tree Board has been very diligent about this project. A few years ago, they received a grant to place small signs by the trees throughout the city, identifying the type of tree.

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Deatherage thanked the department heads for the preparation work they did to make the planning meeting successful.

DEPARTMENT HEADS REPORT

Programs and Communications Coordinator, Joe Christofield

- Mr. Christofield stated that Saturday, April 12, is our Annual Egg Hunt at General Ormsby Park from 11 am – 1 pm. The mayor will grill hot dogs and there will be food trucks, activities, and games.
- The City's recreation events are posted on our website and social media.

Public Works Director, Nick Tewes

- The salt pad is finished and ready for next winter.
- The department is getting the trucks ready for construction season.
- Mr. Vercheak has a vision for General Ormsby Mitchell Park, and we are excited to see how that park is going to look.
- The West Maple project has been assigned to Riegler, and work begins in April or May.
- The mayor signed off on the speed hump on Thompson. That will be installed by the end of April. It will have the same look and striping of the speed hump on Beechwood.

Police Chief, Rob Nader

- The flock cameras are going up.
- The police department ordered new police cars in July, they arrived in October, and they are still not ready. We hope to get the first one of the two we bought this week.

Fire Chief, Dave Slusser

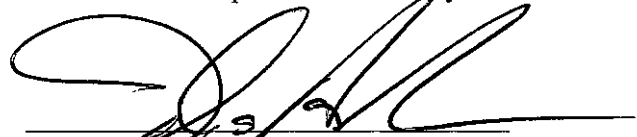
- Kayne Brown resigned and will be moving to New Orleans EMS. We thank him for his service to the Police Department and to the Fire Department.
- Within the next month or so, you will see our crews out testing hydrants. We will notify the residents in each area that they may experience low water pressure while that is going on.

City Clerk/Treasurer, Amy Guenther

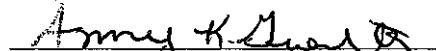
- The revenues and expenses are under budget and on target. This graph was prepared at the request of Mr. Pohlgeers, and he was appreciative.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pohlgeers made a motion to adjourn the City Council meeting at approximately 7:38 p.m. Mr. Dietrich seconded the motion. Mayor Hehman called for a voice vote. The motion passed unanimously.


Jude S. Hehman, Mayor

Prepared By:


Amy Guenther, City Clerk/Treasurer