

February 26, 2026

City of Northwood Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Northwood Committee of the Whole was called to order at 06:30 PM on February 26, 2026 in the Council Chambers and via Live Stream.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by and those in attendance were as follows: Michael Melnyk, Dean Edwards, Jim Barton, Pat Huntermark, Andrew Dickey, Terry Kretz, Pat McGaharan, and City Administrator Kevin Laughlin.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 13, 2025 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Councilor Dickey made a motion to **approve**; seconded by Councilor Kretz. **ROLL CALL: Yes:** Councilor Edwards, Councilor Barton, Council President Melnyk, Councilor Huntermark, Councilor Dickey; **No:** None; **Abstain:** Councilor Terry Kretz, Councilor Pat McGaharan
RESULT: *Passed (5-0)*

TOPICS/ISSUES

Wood County Plays Presentation

Ryan Wichman, President of Wood County Plays, presented a proposal to construct Northwood's first inclusive playground at Brentwood Park in partnership with Miracle League.

Mr. Wichman explained that Wood County Plays, founded in 2019, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building inclusive playgrounds for children and families of all abilities. The organization has successfully completed playgrounds in Perrysburg (2021), Bowling Green (2022), and Fostoria (2024, opening this spring) The proposed Brentwood Park playground would include:

Poured-in-place rubber surfacing (approximately 11,000 square feet) for full wheelchair accessibility

Separate play zones for different age groups

An accessible merry-go-round

Dual zip lines with inclusive seating options

Musical play equipment

Multiple swing types, including "friendship swings"

A large shade structure

Wheelchair-accessible, ground-level trampolines (potentially the first of their kind in the region)

The total estimated project cost is approximately \$750,000. To date, Wood County Plays and Miracle League have raised approximately \$300,000 through fundraising efforts and community support. An application has been submitted for an Ohio EPA recycled tire grant that could provide approximately \$125,000 toward the surfacing cost. The City has already allocated \$300,000 in its prior budget toward the project, which aligns with previously planned park equipment replacement costs.

Council members expressed strong support for the project, noting the popularity of similar playgrounds and the unique opportunity to pair an inclusive playground with the existing Miracle League Field at Brentwood Park.

Council Retreat

The City Administrator proposed scheduling a Council Retreat in April, likely on a weekend, to establish Council priorities, discuss strategic planning, and review potential charter considerations. With the addition of three new Council members, the retreat would help align administrative efforts with Council's goals for the year.

Members were asked to provide availability, particularly considering April vacations and spring break schedules.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion followed regarding implementation of the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan. The City Administrator noted that plan initiatives are categorized as short-, mid-, and long-term. The administration has already begun work on several short-term items, including a zoning code overhaul. Plans are underway to establish a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee in April or May, with representation from administration and Council, to begin developing the next five-year capital improvement plan. Committee members emphasized the importance of actively implementing the Comprehensive Plan to avoid past plans remaining unaddressed.

OLD BUSINESS

The Committee discussed funding considerations for the inclusive playground, including grant opportunities and previously budgeted park improvements. Parking and pathway accessibility at Brentwood Park were identified as

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future planning considerations due to anticipated increased usage. It was noted that the Miracle League Field at Brentwood Park opened in 2009, and the pairing of the field with an inclusive playground would make Northwood a unique destination within the region.

ADJOURNMENT

06:53 PM

ATTEST: Emily Popovitch
Clerk

APPROVED: Randy Kozina
Chair