

CITY OF CHARLOTTE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
111 E. Lawrence Ave., Charlotte, MI 48813 (517) 543-2750
Regular Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.
February 9, 2026

CALL TO ORDER:

By Mayor Fullerton on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Fullerton, Mayor Pro Tem Rodriguez, Council members, Fullerton, Christensen, Scott, Chin and Neumann were present. A quorum was met

City staff in attendance; Interim City Manager Pastue, and City Clerk Smith.

INVOCATION:

Pastor Pete Kroll from First Baptist Church led the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Led by Fullerton.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. January 26, 2026, Regular Council Meeting Minutes - Mayor Fullerton noted corrections on page 1 to correct Council member Chin's name and correct a statement marked as both "failed" and "carried". On page 2, a vote count needed correction from "yea 1 nay 5" to "yea 5, nay 1, absent 1". On page 7 vote count for Interim City Manager needed correction to show a unanimous vote of yay 6, absent 1.
- b. Councilmember Neumann noted his last name needed correction on page 4.

Motion by Scott supported by Chin to approve January 26, 2026, Regular Council Meeting Minutes, as amended. Motion mov

ABSENCE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Councilmember Brummette was absent due to an emergency. **Motion** by Scott, supported by Chin to excuse Councilmember Brummette. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Nicole Christensen, Charlotte resident and Eaton County Commissioner District 12 and founder/President of Friends of Eaton County Animals provided an update on their recent fundraising sale. She reported \$2,693 was raised from community donations. She explained these funds will help build their account to help build an animal shelter in Eaton County, noting that Animal Control is operating around 15% capacity. She shared that they may hold another sale during city wide garage sales in May.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Councilmember Chin requested to move items A and B from the consent agenda to the regular business agenda.

Motion by Councilmember Rodriguez, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to approve the agenda as changed. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. City Manager report

Interim City Manager Pastue reported his first week was focused on getting oriented and beginning budget work. He noted manager search proposals were due February 24, 2026. He will work with the city clerk on logistics for screening and interviews, with the goal of being selected at the March 9, 2026 meeting. He spoke about implementing a process for updating the council’s framework document and stated he will be working with dept heads to manage priorities efficiently.

b. Staff Report

No staff reports were presented.

c. Council member committee reports

Councilmember Chin reported on the Housing Committee’s recent activities. There are 3 active discussions with developers. He noted positive feedback about the city bringing back building inspections. He reported that the Brownfield Redevelopment Committee meeting lacked quorum and that they are working with the county Treasurer on the landbank to develop affordable housing. He emphasized focus on education about financing sources available for the housing projects and hopes to see activity by spring. Councilmember Chin also reported the Planning Committee meeting had no quorum.

Councilmember Scott added their diplomacy efforts with developers over the previous 18 months have paid off.

Developers are now having conversations with each other and competing for the same properties.

Councilmember Rodriguez reminded everyone that the deadline to search for firms to submit information for the city manager search is February 24, 2026. He recommended a special meeting to review the submissions.

Councilmember Neumann mentions he will miss the first meeting with Camp Frances due to work.

Councilmember Scott noted that EATRANs next meeting is Thursday at 5:30 pm at First Congregational Church.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. ~~Approve Claims & Expenditures totaling \$791,434.65~~
(moved to business item d)
- b. ~~Approve Ferric Chloride Supplier; Haviland Products Company~~
(moved to business item e)
- c. Approve Mayoral Appointments (Tom Potter)
- d. Approve Resolution 2026-05 to approve authorized signers for Independent Bank

Motion by Scott, supported by Chin to approve Consent Agenda items. Motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS AGENDA:

- a. Consider approval of resolution 2026-04 for FY 26 Build Grant Application & proposed voluntary local contribution

Councilmember Chin inquired about project details, safety for pedestrians/cyclists and what improvements are planned. DPW Director explained this is a grant application for a project on Cochran from Harris to Seminary. She indicated that it would include widening sidewalks to create dedicated space for street furniture, bicycles and pedestrians. She confirmed all improvements will be ADA compliant, including streetlights, traffic signals, mast arms and pedestrian push buttons. The DPW director clarified that even though Cochran is a state highway, the city owns all the underground infrastructure, including water mains dating back to 1886 and 13 lead service lines that need replacement.

Councilmember Rodriguez asked about funding. DPW Director explained the total cost was approx. 9.7 million, with the city proposing a voluntary local contribution of up to \$975,000. She noted they were waiting to hear if the Michigan Infrastructure Office would provide a matching grant of \$475,000 which would reduce the city's contribution to \$475,000. Funds would come from water, sewer and general fund accounts.

Mayor Fullerton emphasized this was a preliminary approval to apply for the grant, and if approved, there would still be time to review the detailed designs with public input before final decisions were made.

Councilmember Neumann asked if the striping would follow the same pattern as Lawrence and M-79 with a turn lane. Stephanie confirmed it would be a road reduction design for safer pedestrian travel and parking spaces.

Councilmember Christensen emphasized the urgency of the project, noting the age of the infrastructure dating to 1886 had exceeded its life expectancy.

Motion by Chin, supported by Scott, to approve resolution 2026-04 for FY 2026 Build Grant Application and proposed voluntary local contribution. Motion carried unanimously.

- b. Consider approval of Rural Fire Association Compensation for Vehicles & Equipment

Councilmember Chin asked how the \$65,000 compensation amount was determined. Mayor Fullerton explained it was negotiated down from an initial request of \$92,000 per year from the Rural Fire Association. He clarified the final agreement was \$65,000 for two years (\$32,500 per year).

Mayor Fullerton explained this was correcting a mistake made by the city, and the rural fire department had cooperated in reaching this agreement, which was significantly less than they could have demanded in court.

Motion by Chin, supported by Scott. Motion carried unanimously.

- c. Discuss 2026-27 Budget Calendar Draft

Interim City Manager Pastue asked about the council's desired level of engagement in the budget process. Including providing directions and reviewing the proposed budget.

Councilmember Chin suggested having council members individually reevaluate their priorities and submit their top 5-10 priorities to help guide budget allocation. He noted that many budget items like employee personnel costs, health insurance, and union contract obligations are fixed, so the discussion would focus on remaining discretionary funds and that while revenue sharing was expected to decrease, road funding would increase, resulting in a net positive for Charlotte.

Councilmember Rodriguez supported the idea of council members submitting priorities, suggesting they start with the 2024 priority list and update it based on what had been accomplished. He acknowledged that much of the budget is pre-allocated to essential services, with limited discretionary funds available.

Councilmember Scott agreed with the priorities approach and mentioned his interest in addressing process and culture issues in addition to financial priorities.

The interim City Manager offered to send each council member an email requesting their top 5-7 priorities, which he would present at the next meeting. He committed to sending the request the next day with responses due back in a week, allowing time to incorporate the information into meeting packets.

Councilmember Chin emphasized the need for a 5-year capital improvement plan and raised concerns about water rates, noting they needed annual reviews and recommendations that had not occurred in the past year.

Councilmember Christensen added that water rates would need to be addressed to avoid sudden large increases like those experienced in Eaton Rapids.

- d. Approve Claims and Expenditures totaling \$791,434.65

Councilmember Chin questioned a \$90,811.68 payment to The Shyft Group Inc. listed as “brownfield expense tax reimbursement”. The interim City manager explained this was likely a reimbursement to a developer for environmental remediation costs through tax capture, as allowed under a Brownfield plan. Councilmember Chin requested to see supporting documentation.

Motion by Councilmember Chin supported by Scott. Motion carried unanimously.

- e. Approve Ferric Chloride Supplier; Haviland Products Company

Councilmember Chin confirmed that three bids had been received. Councilmember Rodriguez asked why this is only a 1-year contract. DPW Director explained that chemical prices fluctuate making it difficult for suppliers to commit to longer term pricing. The interim City Manager added that this was standard practice for commodity purchases.

Motion by Chin supported by Scott. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comments.

STAFF COMMENTS:

No staff comments were presented.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilmember Christensen inquired about a potential salt shortage. DPW Director confirmed they had been running low but have since received a salt delivery. He mentioned he DJ'd the Aquatic Center Winter Ball for the 4th year, noting it had the largest attendance.

Councilmember Neumann stated he was adjusting to his new role and looking forward to making connections.

Councilmember Scott thanks his wife and Councilmember Christensen's wife for attending the meeting and reminded everyone of his office hours on Tuesday's 10am-12pm.

Councilmember Chin reported on several legislative updates from MML, including:

- A campground bill regarding temporary residency limitations
- The bipartisan Housing for the 21st Century Act being voted at Federal Level
- Funding for local bridge repairs
- A bill allowing destruction of drones in restricted areas
- Funding for municipal energy projects
- Proposed \$90 million relief package for senior citizens
- Potential limitations on the number of elections a city can hold

He also mentioned meeting with the former interim manager about an AI service that could help identify and apply for grants – costing either \$5K for 10 grants or \$10K for unlimited grants.

Councilmember Rodriguez stated he was happy to serve on the Airport Board and should be able to attend the Monday morning meetings regularly.

Mayor Fullerton mentioned receiving 2 media inquiries that he forwarded to the City Manager, pointing out this approach is more effective. He expressed satisfaction with how the council

meetings were running efficiently with the manager handling administrative matters.

Councilmember Chin noted the recent passing of Raymond Buffmyer, a prominent attorney and resident of Charlotte.

ADJOURN:

Motion by Councilmember Chin, supported by Scott. Motion carried unanimously. Adjourned at 8:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia A. Smith
City Clerk