

**City of Ravenswood
Common Council Minutes
April 21, 2026**

Call to Order

- **Mayor Josh Miller** called to order a special meeting of the Common Council at 7:00 P.M. on April 21, 2026 in Ravenswood City Hall.

Pledge of Allegiance

- **Mayor Josh Miller**

Roll Call

- The following members were present, **Mayor Josh Miller, Councilors Dee Scritchfield, Todd Ritchie, Jeff Koon, Eric Cullen, Amanda Slaven, and Attorney Steve Cogar. Recorder Jared Bloxton was absent**

Approval of Prior Minutes 4/7/26 & 4/17/26 (Special Meeting)

- 4/7/26 **Todd Ritchie** made a motion to approve, second by **Jeff Koon All Approved**
- 4/17/26 (Special Meeting) **Todd Ritchie** made a motion to approve, second by **Eric Cullen All Approved**
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Ravenswood Waterfront EEGF Projects

- **Welcome Center/Incubator**
Sir Speedy \$429.36
R.D. Newell & Assoc. \$110.00
- **Sand Creek Marina**
Sir Speedy \$429.36
R.D. Newell & Assoc. \$560.00
- **Pedestrian Bridge**
Sir Speedy \$429.36
R.D. Newell & Assoc. \$450.00

Dee Scritchfield made a motion to approve, second by **Todd Ritchie All Approved**

Water/Wastewater Projects

- **Water Project Draw 30**
FAMCO \$498,894.99
Thrasher \$22,780.00

- **Sewer Phase 2A Draw 29**

Thrasher	\$12,750.00
Pro Contracting	\$25,437.75
Bare Fencing	\$850.00
MOVRC	\$5100.81

Todd Ritchie made a motion to approve, second by **Eric Cullen All Approved**

Sewer Bond Ordinance- 1st Reading

Bond 1- Borrowing amount not to exceed \$3.5 million at an interest rate of 2.75% in term of 20 years. Total a little under \$5.2 million, funded with loan estimates \$2.7 million and \$2.5 million grant

Todd Ritchie made a motion to approve, second by **Jeff Koon All Approved**

Bond 2- 2 series of \$15 million, one of which could possibly be forgiven to turn into a grant; total \$65,000,000 with \$35.6 from State, Earmark \$3.5 million and a state grant of \$875,000

Todd Ritchie made a motion to approve, second by **Dee Scritchfield All Approved**

Lay the Levy FY 27

- **Todd Ritchie** made a motion to approve, second by **Jeff Koon All Approved**

Public Hearing/Lease of Welcome Center & Resolution to act upon Lease Agreement with Smokehouse Pavilion- Tabled

Todd Ritchie made a motion to table the two agenda items until another date, second by **Jeff Koon All Approved**

Due to Citizens being present to for the Public Hearing that was tabled, Mayor Josh Miller let them speak in Public Comment on the matter in case they couldn't attend the future meeting

Public Comment on Lease of Welcome Center/Incubator to Smokehouse Pavilion

- Connie Dunlap- Who would be responsible for equipment & furnishings? Will it be part of the park? How big will it be? Where is parking for restaurant? Stated she researched WV State Code about City Leasing and also contacted the Ethics Commission.
- Mark Friend- Stated someone needs to look into family income
- Gary Lawson- asked if City Ordinances had been changed that stated no alcohol permitted in parks.
- Bob Staats- **See Attached**

- Paul Icenhower- states it will cost a lot of money to only be getting \$2000/month

Golf Cart Ordinance Amendment – 2nd Reading

- **Amanda Slaven** made a motion to approve, second by **Eric Cullen All Approved**

New Ordinance- Creation of Ravenswood Special Projects Fund Account, Purpose, Qualifying Criteria- 1st Reading

- **“Ravenswood First Fund”**
- **Dee Scritchfield** commented on the item- **See Attached**
- **Todd Ritchie** – stated he was aware of monthly bank statements needed a financial consultant, the city has had increases of PEIA, Insurance, etc; City has paid some loans off, money has earned interest; stated funds do fluctuate; he supports what the mayor has offered

Public Forum

- Kathy Garrett- former council member, she feels offended by comments made about past council members; glad money is going somewhere where it is being seen; concerned about prayers at meetings, why did city change over one complaint; can the building fund info be FOIA?
- Buddy Jones- McIntosh money from FOIA request; Kim Benson was paid almost \$60,000 administrative leave pay; Who was checking Kim’s credit card?
- Mark Friend- views changed when mayor stepped on his toes; recommends 2 year term instead of 4 year term; asked mayor to resign
- Paul Icenhower- asked what city will do with the McIntosh building and NYA Hall; wants to make an offer on buildings
- Bob Staats- noticed procedures during council that public forum was moved to end of meetings after business decisions already were voted on; needs moved back to top of agenda; mayor removed council prayer, should have let council vote on it; procedures for council needs looked at
- Senator Eric Tarr- WV Senate, worked on budgets; trying to stabilize electric rates, put tariffs on data centers, seeing more people moving into WV than moving out; states with business there is always growth; takes an investment to make the infrastructure

Next Meeting Tuesday May 5, 2026 @7:00pm

Adjournment

Mayor Josh Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm via a motion from **Amanda Slaven**, second by **Eric Cullen - All Approved**

Submitted By

Megan Thompson

Josh Miller

Megan Thompson, Acting City Clerk

Mayor Josh Miller

April 21, 2026

To: Ravenswood City Council

From: Bob Staats, Former Council Member

Re: Item 7 on Agenda: "Related to the Lease of the Welcome Center/Business Incubator with Smokehouse Pavilion"

- In regards to grants that the City is receiving, they can be a great thing and the City has been obviously aggressive in pursuing and receiving grants for various projects. Grants can certainly help a city do some very good things. However, I've heard it said several times by various persons that such and such grant "didn't cost the citizens of Ravenswood anything". While I understand the intent of such statements, this is not a correct description. Any grant...state or federal...still costs all of the citizens in the state or country. I don't reside in Ravenswood but any state grants or federal grants come from my tax dollars as well as those persons who do reside in the City. Furthermore, when a grant helps the City build something or do a project, there will be future costs to the citizens of the City in the way of maintenance and upkeep, improvements, repairs, etc.
- I would also point out that the "Welcome Center" is not to be manned by personnel but rather consist of a "self serve" kiosk, etc type of unit. I feel certain that such a Welcome Center unit could be placed in a number of locations and surely would not necessitate such a large building as is being proposed.
- Also, a "Business Incubator" by definition is not intended to house a business resident for a long length of time or for a long term lease. Normally, such are to be a "nursery" of sorts to assist a startup business for 1 to 2 years.
- I had shared in a previous council meeting the WV Code that applies to requirements for a Municipality to rent or lease property. A Public Hearing is required but the code also clearly states that notice of such is to be given in a newspaper via a Class I Legal Ad. I am not aware that such an ad has been placed for this hearing.
- Lastly, I believe it is clear that many Ravenswood citizens want a Community Building to replace the one that was damaged by fire. It appears that the costs to destroy the damaged McIntosh building and NYA Hall building and to get that property back to a "public park or community gathering place" as required by the agreement with the McIntosh family will be a costly endeavor...let along the cost of a new Community Building. Could not this project and this grant not be amended to possibly be used as a Community Building?

Re: Item 12 on Agenda: "Public Forum"

- I've noticed that recently (and since council passed a new ordinance about "Procedures for Conducting Council Meetings") the Public Forum on meeting agendas has been slotted near the end of the meeting and after business items conducted by council. This is not conducive to your aforementioned commitments to "hearing the public concerns", being open to opinions, and transparent".
- There have been two speakers at recent meetings that brought up important points and information about a topic during the Public Forum but after Council had already discussed and voted on those issues or items.
- This seems to lend a feeling of not truly wanting to hear and consider what the public has to say before voting on something. As elected officials, I would think that you would be opposed to such an arrangement.

General comments:

- The Ravenswood Charter is intended to offer a "Strong Council" type of governing. The Mayor has no veto power. The Council as a whole is to be the determining body on all but day to day, routine decisions.
- Recently, the City received a complaint from FFRA ("Freedom from Religion") regarding Councilman Ritchie leading prayer at a meeting. It appears that the Mayor made the decision to comply with that request and not return question or action toward that group. Whether or not it would be wise to take such a response, I can't say, but it would seem that this should have been something brought to an open public meeting, discussed, and decided by the Council as a whole.
- The Charter does not offer a position of "Deputy Mayor" or "Chief of Staff". It does say that, in the absence of the Mayor, the Recorder will preside over meetings. It is puzzling as to why these positions have recently come into existence.
- In your recently passed "Procedures for Conducting Council Meetings" ordinance, it states that only the Mayor or 3 Council members may ask for something to be on a meeting agenda. Each of you, as elected officials by the citizens of Ravenswood...just as the Mayor...should individually be able to get an item on the agenda.
- The 4/7/26 Council Meeting agenda was available on Friday April 3, 2026. The agenda that was utilized on Tuesday April 7th was different. Items # 7 and 8 were added and discussed, read, voted upon. The Mayor even stated during the meeting that he had "just added to today" Item #8. The WV Open Meetings Act (aka "Sunshine Law") is a very important law to ensure transparent governmental actions. This needs serious attention and I believe.
- Lastly, even though a Municipality may be recognized as under WV's "Home Rule", your local ordinances can't be in conflict with WV State Code. I'm wondering if the new "Procedures for Conducting Council Meetings" (or the actual application of such) may need some attention in that regard as well as in regard to the spirit of the City Charter.

I request that my comments by made a matter of public record to be reflected in the minutes as I will give you a copy of this for your retention file.

To the Mayor and the citizens of Ravenswood:

Thank you for your recent update as to the expenditures and the balance of the recent insurance settlement related to McIntosh House. We now can confirm the concerns of citizens who believed the funds were being depleted. I shared these concerns as we saw the general fund account decreasing excessively over the past several months. I requested information on these funds but was asked to hold my request until our contracted accountant could obtain a correct fiscal report which she provided last week. (see attached report). While I appreciate efforts by the Mayor to maintain fiscal viability, I want to express my concerns openly regarding the lack of communication with council members. The Council approved these funds be moved to the general fund in a budget revision as required when the settlement was received, however, the decision to spend these funds on debts due was made without prior notification to us, the City Council.

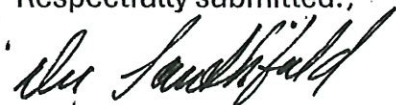
This settlement has been a matter of significant community interest as the Mayor held a public hearing to obtain feedback as to how the community would like to see these funds used.

Moving forward I would appreciate transparency regarding such critical financial adjustments before they are finalized. It is now apparent that we must make immediate cuts to achieve financial viability to include a freeze on all pay increases as approved in our recent budget.

Council needs to be informed of recommended cuts that will have an immediate impact on our general fund and day to day operations of the City. I recently provided suggestions of where cuts could be made for your consideration. Open communication is imperative to ensure Council can support measures with full understanding of their long-term impact of city services.

I will continue to support the decisions made by City Council, but I reiterate Council must be a part of this critical fiscal decision making with transparency and accountability.

Respectfully submitted.,



Dee Scritchfield, Councillor