



City of Lakewood  
City Council

Council At Large  
**Sarah Kepple, President**  
Thomas R. Bullock III  
Angelina Hamilton Steiner

Ward Council  
Kyle Baker, Ward 1, Vice President  
Bryan Evans, Ward 2  
Cindy Strebig, Ward 3  
Matt Bixenstine, Ward 4

Noticed 02/25/2026

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## PUBLIC NOTICE – FINANCE COMMITTEE

Finance Committee will meet Monday March 2, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Auditorium at Lakewood City Hall, 12650 Detroit Ave. The meeting is open to the public.

The meeting will be livestreamed on the City's website at the following link:

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[www.lakewoodoh.gov/councilvideos](http://www.lakewoodoh.gov/councilvideos)

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### PUBLIC COMMENT PROTOCOL (Updated 4/2025)

The public is invited to comment on agenda items by submitting a written comment in advance of the meeting using the eComment platform available [HERE](#). New users must create an eComment account. Committee Chairs may also accommodate in person public comment.

### *The agenda is as follows:*

Approval of the minutes of the February 9, 2026 Finance Committee meeting.

Communication from President Kepple & Vice President Baker regarding establishing a Lakewood Host Community Cannabis Fund. (*referred to Finance Committee 2/2/26*)

**ORDINANCE 15-2026** - AN ORDINANCE to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force at the earliest period allowed by law to enact Section 129.65 of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances entitled Host Community Cannabis Fund, to provide guidance regarding the use of new tax revenues related to the sale of cannabis. (*1<sup>st</sup> read & referred to Finance Committee 2/2/26*)

Communication from Finance Director Mahoney regarding Audit Committee. (*referred to Finance 9/2/25*)

**ORDINANCE 27-2025** - AN ORDINANCE to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force at the earliest period allowed by law, repealing Chapter 160, Audit Committee of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Lakewood. (*1<sup>st</sup> read & referred to Finance 9/2/25; 2<sup>nd</sup> reading 9/15/25*)

Kyle Baker, Chair  
Tom Bullock, Cindy Strebig; Members

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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*Individuals with disabilities who require accommodations for participation in meetings must request accommodations at least 3 business days ahead of the scheduled meeting. Contact Michelle Nocht at (216) 529-5906 or michelle.nochta@lakewoodoh.gov.*



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February 2nd, 2026

Lakewood City Council  
Lakewood, Ohio

**RE: Establishing a Lakewood Host Community Cannabis Fund**

Dear Colleagues,

As you know, in November of 2023, Ohio voters approved State Issue 2, the Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol Initiative, to legalize adult use marijuana. Issue 2 received extraordinary support in Lakewood, with over 81% of voters in favor of its passage.

Issue 2 established a statute by which Ohio imposes a 10 percent tax on adult use cannabis, with 36% of the tax revenue directed to the Host Community Cannabis Fund. Senate Bill 56, which passed in December 2025, maintained the host community fund and requires the state tax commissioner to distribute a proportional percentage of the excise tax to communities, such as Lakewood, that have allowed adult use cannabis sales.

The Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) began distributing nearly \$36 million of these funds, which reflect taxes collected since dispensaries were allowed to open in 2024. So far, Lakewood has received \$743,407.77 and is expected to receive approximately \$500,000 annually, so long as the City maintains profitable dispensaries within city-limits.

The attached legislation would establish a dedicated Host Community Cannabis Fund into which all funds received from the ODT Host Community Cannabis Fund payments as well as any other cannabis related revenue shall be deposited. This will allow for thoughtful deliberation about use of these funds, which were not included in the 2026 budget and thus have not yet been allocated. The ordinance envisions allocating these funds toward advancement of Council's identified public safety and accessibility capital priorities, such as Complete and Active Streets, ADA Transition Plan and creating equitable locker room space for female police officers.

We respectfully request that this legislation be referred to committee for further discussion.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kepple  
President of Council, Member at Large

Kyle Baker  
Vice President of Council

AN ORDINANCE to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force at the earliest period allowed by law to enact Section 129.65 of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances entitled Host Community Cannabis Fund, to provide guidance regarding the use of new tax revenues related to the sale of cannabis.

WHEREAS, in 2024 through Ordinance No. 41-2024 the City of Lakewood enacted legislation authorizing the sale of adult use cannabis within the City of Lakewood with the explicit understanding that the City of Lakewood would be provided with 3.6 percent of the 10 percent tax levied by the State of Ohio on all cannabis sales within the City of Lakewood by way of a host community fund;

WHEREAS, some debate occurred in the state legislature regarding a potential reallocation of anticipated host community fund dollars for other purposes, but the state legislature ultimately kept the host community fund intact by enacting O.R.C. Section 3796.40 entitled Excise Tax on Sale of Adult-Use Marijuana; and

WHEREAS, O.R.C. Section 3760.40 provides that 3.6 percent of the 10 percent tax will go to the host community cannabis fund, which is created in the state treasury, for the benefit of cities that have at least one licensed dispensary, such as the City of Lakewood. Distributions to such cities shall be based on the portion of the tax levied attributable to each city. It further provides that cities receiving funds under this division may use such funds for any lawful purpose; and

WHEREAS, O.R.C. Section 3760.40 further provides that the tax commissioner shall make these distributions by the end of each month based on tax collections from the preceding month; and

WHEREAS, as set forth in Section 2.12 of the Third Amended Charter of the City of Lakewood, this Council by a vote of at least two thirds of its members determines that this ordinance is an emergency measure and that it shall take effect immediately, and that it is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public property, health, and safety and to provide for the usual daily operation of municipal departments; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF LAKEWOOD, OHIO:

Section 1. That new Section 129.65, Host Community Cannabis Fund, of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances is hereby enacted to read as follows:

- (a) Establishment. There is hereby established a Capital Projects Fund which shall be known and referred to as the Host Community Cannabis Fund. The Director of Finance is hereby authorized and directed forthwith to take such action and to make such records as may be necessary to establish the Host Community Cannabis Fund and thereafter to show its existence and condition at all times upon the proper records of the City.

- (b) Money for Host Community Cannabis Fund. There shall be paid directly into the Host Community Cannabis Fund, when and as received, all money received by the City of Lakewood pursuant to the Host Community Fund established under O.R.C. 3796.40, from any precursor statute that allowed and collected such tax, from any future funding received from the state for the sale of adult-use cannabis, the community impact fee (if triggered) identified Chapter 779 of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances, and all money appropriated to the Host Community Cannabis Fund by Council from whatever source acquired.
- (c) Authorized Expenditures. The Host Community Cannabis Fund shall be used only for the expense of public safety related issues within the City of Lakewood, including Complete Streets and ADA Transition Plan implementation, and other capital improvements related to accessibility and equity.
- (d) Custody of Host Community Cannabis Fund. The Director of Finance shall have possession and custody of the Host Community Cannabis Fund and the supervision of all accounts with respect thereto. No further bond shall be required of the Director of Finance because of the Host Community Cannabis Fund, but the Host Community Cannabis Fund shall be under the protection of any bond that may be given hereafter by the Director of Finance.

Section 2. It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the passage of this ordinance were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all such deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements.

Section 3. This ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, property, health, safety and welfare in the City and for the usual daily operation of the City for the reasons set forth and defined in the preamble to this ordinance, and provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, this ordinance shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption by the Council and approval by the Mayor, or otherwise it shall take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

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Sarah Kepple, President of Council

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Maureen M. Bach, Clerk of Council

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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Meghan F. George, Mayor



Renee Mahoney, CPA  
Director of Finance

12650 DETROIT AVENUE 44107 216/529-6092

September 2, 2025

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

I am writing to propose a change in how the city handles its annual audit. In 2007, the city of Lakewood created a separate audit committee in response to a recommendation from the Ohio Auditor of State. The purpose of this committee, established by Chapter 160, Audit Committee of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances, was to review the city's audits and any comments from them.

I suggest that the Finance Committee take on this role instead. This seems like a more efficient way to review the city's once-a-year audit. Since the terms for the six current members of the separate audit committee are expiring at the end of this year, now would be an ideal time to make this change.

Therefore, I propose repealing Chapter 160, Audit Committee, of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances and assigning the responsibility of reviewing audits to the Finance Committee.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Renee Mahoney, CPA  
Director of Finance

Sarah Kepple  
President of Council

Tom Bullock  
Chair, Finance Committee



AN ORDINANCE to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force at the earliest period allowed by law, repealing Chapter 160, Audit Committee of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Lakewood.

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Audit Committee is to review the City's financial audits and any comments from the independent auditor; and

WHEREAS, this function can easily be absorbed by Council's Finance Committee which is more efficient than having a volunteer board for review of an annual audit; and

WHEREAS, as set forth in Section 2.12 of the Third Amended Charter of the City of Lakewood, this Council by a vote of at least two thirds of its members determines that this ordinance is an emergency measure and that it shall take effect immediately, and that it is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public property, health, and safety and to provide for the usual daily operation of municipal departments to provide for the usual daily operation of the City in that the Audit Committee should be dissolved prior to year end when the volunteer terms expire. Now therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF LAKEWOOD, OHIO

Section 1. That Chapter 160, Audit Committee, of the Lakewood Codified Ordinances, currently reading as follows:

**Chapter 160 Audit Committee**

**160.01 ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE.**

The City of Lakewood Audit Committee is hereby established to provide independent review and oversight of the City's financial reporting processes, internal controls, and the independent auditor comments. The Committee shall review financial statements, independent auditor reports and follow up on corrective actions; review the City of Lakewood's comprehensive framework of internal controls; assess the performance of the independent auditor; and to provide an independent forum to report findings of management fraud, abuse or control override to the independent auditor.

**160.02 MEMBERSHIP.**

The Audit Committee shall be composed of the Lakewood City Council Finance Committee members, two Lakewood residents appointed by City Council and four Lakewood residents appointed by the Mayor. The appointed Lakewood residents must currently or formerly have been employed in the finance industry, or serve in a finance capacity, preferable within government finance, and/or must be a recognized expert of the finance industry. Committee members shall receive no compensation for their service and shall have a point of contact in the Department of Finance.

**160.03 TERMS.**

Initially, one Council appointment and two Mayoral appointments shall be for a period of one year. Thereafter, each appointment and the remainder of all other initial appointments shall be for a period of two years.

**160.04 BYLAWS AND GENERAL RULES OF OPERATION.**

The Committee shall meet at least on a quarterly basis. The committee shall devise its own officers, governance, and place and time of assembly.

is hereby repealed.

Section 3. It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the passage of this ordinance were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all such deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements.

Section 4. This ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, property, health, safety and welfare in the City and for the usual daily operation of the City for the reasons set forth and defined in the preamble to this ordinance, and provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, this ordinance shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption by the Council and approval by the Mayor, or otherwise it shall take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

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Sarah Kepple, President of Council

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Maureen M. Bach, Clerk of Council

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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Meghan F. George, Mayor