

September 30, 2025 Emergency Meeting

Meeting minutes

Call Meeting to Order at 8:59 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 8:59 a.m. by Mayor Marla Thompson.

Roll Call

Mayor Marla Thompson completed the roll call: Alderman Genita Hill, Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Gary Lingerfelt, Alderman Allen Bumgarner, Alderman Tim Hertz, Alderman Phyllis Pennington, and Mayor Marla Thompson were all present.

Invocation

Mayor Thompson asked Town Manager James Cozart to lead the invocation. Town Manager Cozart offered a prayer, thanking God for the day and asking for wisdom in decision-making.

Items for Discussion

a. Discuss Environmental Health Concerns

Town Manager James Cozart provided an update on the environmental health concerns at Hilltop Apartments regarding the overflowing trash. He reported that the first complaint was received on September 22nd regarding a trash issue. Code enforcement opened a case the following day but had been unsuccessful in contacting Millenia Housing, the property management company located in Cleveland, Ohio.

Town Manager Cozart explained that attempts to reach the local management office at Hilltop Apartments were also unsuccessful, as there was no one present. He referred the board to the agenda packet, which contained all correspondence from Code Enforcement Officer Chad Powell regarding this case.

Code Enforcement Officer Powell provided additional details on the situation. He mentioned that he had spoken with a tenant who informed him that the local property manager had quit a couple of weeks ago, and the maintenance person had left a couple of months prior. Chad had distributed his business cards to residents, encouraging them to reach out with any issues to file a formal complaint.

It was noted that Curt Willis, the Code Enforcement supervisor, had managed to contact someone at the company's attorney's office in Cleveland, but it was unclear if there had been any follow-up.

b. Board Action as Deemed Necessary

Town Manager James Cozart requested two actions from the Board of Aldermen:

Alderman Hill asked if cleanup efforts would be immediate. Chad confirmed that a contractor was on standby and could start work that day, though the job might not be completed in one day due to the volume of trash. Chad explained that the abatement would be pursued under General Statute 168-193, which allows for summary abatement of public health conditions. He emphasized that while the action was in accordance with the law, it was important to have the board's support due to potential costs.

A motion to waive the 15-day waiting period was made by Alderman Tim Hertz and seconded by Alderman Allen Bumgarner. The motion to waive the 15-day waiting period passed unanimously.

Town Manager Cozart then asked the board to make a motion to authorize him to enter into a contract for debris cleanup.

Alderman Allen Bumgarner made a motion to authorize Town Manager Cozart to enter into a contract for debris clean up. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Gary Lingerfelt. The motion to authorize Town Manager Cozart to enter into a contract for debris clean up passed unanimously.

Alderman Genita Hill inquired about the financial implications of this action. It was clarified by Town Manager Cozart that the town would pursue legal collection processes to recoup the costs, potentially including placing a lien on the property.

Alderman Allen Bumgarner asked how the garbage at Hilltop got so bad. Chad provided additional information about the current state of the property, noting that Republic Services had already emptied some dumpsters, but one remained inaccessible. He described an enormous amount of trash surrounding the dumpsters.

The board expressed concern about the ongoing nature of the problem and discussed strategies for preventing similar situations in the future. They considered the possibility of implementing fines for repeated violations and the need for regular monitoring of the property. Code Enforcement Officer Powell advised that he would be keeping a close eye on this property and would check it weekly. Town Manager Cozart stated that in matters concerning public health, the town will do whatever we have to do to make sure this doesn't happen again.

Town Manager Cozart informed the board that the property management company had made a payment to Republic Services on Monday, September 29, 2025, following the town's intervention and backlash received on social media.

The board also discussed the involvement of the health department. It was reported that the environmental health department considered this a code enforcement issue and stated they did not deal with trash-related problems.

Adjournment

Alderman Phyllis Pennington made a motion to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by Alderman Tim Hertz. The motion to adjourn was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 a.m.

Staff in Attendance: Town Manager James Cozart, Police Chief Justin Reid, Fire Chief James Brinkley, Sgt. Brad Lowman, Code Enforcement Officer Chad Powell, Code Enforcement Officer Kevin Wyatt, Public Works Director Chris Eckard, IT Alan Bumgarner, Deputy Finance Director Denise Collins, Town Clerk Heather Minor.

Guests in Attendance: Anthony Starr, Billy Chapman