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## City Council

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## Summary

- This marks the ninth consecutive City Council meeting where residents have called upon city leaders to pass a [resolution](#) in support of a ceasefire in Gaza; more than 1,500 signatures have been collected calling for this action. During the public comment period, some people criticized city officials for not representing all constituents and said continued inaction by council members will lead to opposition during reelection season.
- City Council passed new rules for public comment.
- Council [ordinances](#) were pretty much business as usual, with a host of contract authorizations, event approvals and more.

## Follow-Up Questions

- At what point, if ever, does the council attempt to make some kind of effort to address residents' concerns on the war in Gaza?
- What exactly is different about the new public comment rules, compared to the old rules? *[Editor's note: Signal's Nick Castele [breaks down the changes.](#)]*

## Notes

Council Member Jasmin Santana was excused and all other council members were present. View the full list of council members [here](#).

With [quorum](#) achieved, the meeting was called to order at **7:01 p.m.** The agenda can be found [here](#).

## Public comment

A Gaza ceasefire resolution was at the forefront of the meeting once again, as every public commenter called on council to support a resolution. In a meeting that ran only 50 minutes, public comment lasted about 32 minutes.

Public comments were given by Kamal Alkayali, Riley Petro, Jenna Muhieddine, Yousef Khalaf, Juan C. Collado Díaz, Kayla Moss, Basma Hamid, Diana Sette and Khalid Hamdallah, who all supported a ceasefire resolution.

Alkayali, a Palestinian American whose father owns Algebra Tea House in Little Italy, said that the business and its patrons have been [targeted by racist harassment](#). “Many council members have been to Algebra, and I would like to ask you: What have we done to deserve this?” he asked. “Is it because the blood that we bleed is Palestinian blood? Is it because the flag that we fly is the flag of justice and liberation? Is Algebra Tea House also an overseas issue?”

Petro called upon the council to pass a ceasefire resolution, citing [a letter that has been signed by nearly 1,500 people](#). Petro also referenced a [November Safety Committee meeting](#), saying, “Joe Jones made his now infamous remarks that he needed to buy a gun because he was afraid that those of us coming to City Council in support of Palestine would put a bomb under his car.”

Muhieddine, Khalaf, Collado Díaz, Moss, Hamid, Sette, and Hamdallah also criticized the council’s failure to pass a resolution in support of a ceasefire. Several speakers said that if the council or Mayor Justin Bibb do not support such a resolution, they will work to oppose their reelection.

At one point, Muhieddine asked multiple times for council members and Bibb to stand up out of their seats if they condemn the killing of Palestinian civilians. *[Editor’s note: Muhieddine said no one stood up in response to her question. The city’s video does not show a view of city officials during this comment.]*

## **Legislation**

Council passed a new set of [Rules and Procedures for Public Comment](#). City Council has come under fire for potentially [limiting public comments to matters of official city business](#). That is not part of the approved changes. City Council and Council President Blaine Griffin currently face a [lawsuit](#) over shutting down a public comment last September.

Council Member Joseph Jones was marked absent on all ordinance votes.

Eight ordinances were passed under a suspension of the rules after a first reading, and 10 were passed after a second reading. There was also one resolution passed. Some

highlights from these:

- Some ordinances permitted different city agencies to work alongside consultants, [including for advising on the 2024 city budget](#).
- [Ordinance 80-2024](#) authorized the Director of Community Development to enter into one or more agreements with [The Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless](#) and [Metanoia Project Inc.](#) to facilitate seasonal winter shelter for the City's unsheltered residents during the winter season.

During reading of legislation, the audience broke into occasional chants. Around five minutes prior to the end of the meeting, the chants became continuous. Chants included "free free Palestine," "shut it down," and "pass the resolution now," among others.

Council President Griffin adjourned the meeting early at **7:51 p.m.** following the conclusion of legislation. Due to this early adjournment, no announcements or miscellaneous comments were made.

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