

## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 17, 2016

Niles City Council held its regular meeting on February 17, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers Safety Service Complex in Niles, Ohio.

The meeting was called to order by President Robert Marino, and the Clerk, Lori Kuszmaul, called the roll:

Lastic-P, Papalas-P, McNaughton-P, Steffey-P, Marchese-P, Mientkiewicz-P, Pezzano-P, Marino-P

It was moved by Steffey, seconded by Pezzano to accept the Minutes from the February 3, 2016 regular council meeting and place them on file.

Motion carried.

### REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

**FROM** The Niles City Treasurer, Income Tax Division

Monthly Receipt Totals through January 2016

It was moved by Papalas, seconded by McNaughton to accept the report and place it on file.

Motion carried.

**FROM** The Niles City Auditor

Statement of Cash from Revenue and Expense from 01/01/16 to 01/31/16

It was moved by Papalas, seconded by Steffey to accept the report and place it on file.

Motion carried.

**FROM** The Niles City Auditor

Check Audit Trail from 01/01/16 to 01/31/16

It was moved by Steffey, seconded by Mientkiewicz to accept the report and place it on file.

Motion carried.

### MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

William Santell, Canfield, Ohio. I'm the President of Local 320 Firefighter's Union. Mr. Mayor, you campaigned that your administration would be transparent. I don't believe that you're being transparent with the taxpayers when we talk about the layoffs. We know in the Police Department there's definitely three guys gone and in the Fire Department there are three guys gone. You're going around saying there are six people laid off in the City when, in fact, there's one full-time person on voluntary layoff and the other three are part-time. Can you please explain – I understand what happened. I talked to Bo Marchionte today and I talked to Mr. Merlo today. I understand how things went, but all these people here are the taxpayers and you're asking us to go out and vote, have a vote on a levy and you need to answer why there's only three real layoffs in the City.

Mayor Scarnecchia: Mr. Santell, when I went to layoff I had to ask Department Heads and wanted the most recent hires of those departments and that is what it was. There was one voluntary although that voluntary we had to call him back. He was called back yesterday because of the situation that was at the Wellness Center. There was no one there. The other ones were strictly I asked Department Heads – I didn't know everybody in the City and who they were. We just had to lay off

Mr. Santell: Why aren't Department Heads being asked to give up something? All the unions are --

Mayor Scarnecchia: The Department Heads, every time we have a meeting with them, they are being asked, and I haven't heard anything yet. I'm sure thinking about it because we asked for 10% of their pay same as we asked every Union in the city for a 10% so that we can at least have enough money to function. But I haven't heard back from the Department Heads yet, but I'm sure I will. That's all I can tell you.

Mr. Santell: The police and fire just keep giving and giving. I know we gave up at least 4% or 5% of our pay in police and fire and that's under the previous administration. I'm not going to hold you to that, but we made concessions. The dispatchers, I can't tell you how many reductions they've made. Everybody is making concessions, but Department Heads, so you guys have to come up with something because I'm not going to go out there and tell people that six people were laid off in the City when there really isn't. That's all I have.

President Marino: Thank you. Would anybody else like to address Niles City Council? Your name and address for the records?

Wanda Burns, 562 Wyoming, Niles. So that leaves four that originally were on layoffs that they are back now? Is that right?

Mayor Scarnecchia: No.

Ms. Burns: Explain that.

Mayor Scarnecchia: There is only one person that is back and he went on voluntary and we had to call him back yesterday.

Ms. Burns: Ok, so of the six --

Mayor Scarnecchia: Five are still on layoff.

Ms. Burns: -- that were laid off, beside police and fire, explain those six positions and where they are now. Are they unemployed?

Mayor Scarnecchia: They are unemployed. Yes. Five are still unemployed.

Ms. Burns: As of when? Do they come back on Monday because I'm telling you I called today and I was told four people are back and I'd like to know what funds are those coming out of?

Mayor Scarnecchia: Wanda, I don't know who you talked to, but if somebody is going to be called back it would have to be from my office.

Ms. Burns: What six positions – which positions are laid off not counting police and fire?

Mayor Scarnecchia: I can't give you the exact positions because I did it several weeks ago and I am new to the City, but we – there are still five from the service departments that are still laid off. I don't know where you got your information.

Ms. Burns: Can the Service Director answer any of that?

Mr. DePasquale: Sure. Laborer in the Water Department is laid off, laborer in the --

Ms. Burns: Full time or part-time?

Mr. DePasquale: Full time. Laborer in the --

Ms. Burns: Is the Water Department full time or part-time?

Mr. DePasquale: Full time.

Ms. Burns: Ok.

Mr. DePasquale: There's an inspector in engineering that's laid off. Full time. There's a --

Ms. Burns: And if I can show you that they are not full time?

Mr. DePasquale: You can't show me that. They are full time.

Ms. Burns: Ok. Go ahead.

Mr. DePasquale: There's a laborer in the tree trimmers that's full time and there is a laborer in the Sewer Department that's full time. And there was a part-timer in the building and zoning that was laid off and a part-timer --

Ms. Burns: How many bumped into another position.

Mr. DePasquale: Some of them bumped into other positions.

Ms. Burns: Now we're getting somewhere.

Mr. DePasquale: Some were able to bump into --

Ms. Burns: Now we're getting somewhere.

President Marino: I don't want any comments. We are going to keep this orderly.

Ms. Burns: So where is that money coming from? I heard it's coming Enterprise Funds. Yes or no.

Mr. DePasquale: There are some people that were able to bump into Light Department, which is an Enterprise Fund, but you still realize that relieves the General Fund.

Ms. Burns: I understand that, but what's going to happen when the Enterprise Fund is dwindling away and dwindling away? We promised seniors, we promised a ton of people it don't affect them and then the water, light and sewer bills go up and it does affect them. You can't dwindle away those Enterprise accounts and think we're still going to be ok when we don't have jack in the Enterprise.

Mayor Scarnecchia: Wanda, according to the Union contracts, they can bump. They are doing it by the Union contract.

Ms. Burns: I understand that, but then somebody has to go. The bottom person has to go.

Mr. DePasquale: The bottom person is going.

Mayor Scarnecchia: They're gone.

Ms. Burns: So how many people are literally gone that go up to Warren and get into the unemployment line?

Mr. DePasquale: Three.

Ms. Burns: And how many of those are part time?

Mr. DePasquale: One.

Ms. Burns: And one of those is a volunteer, correct?

Mr. DePasquale: It was a voluntary lay off, yes.

Ms. Burns: So those aren't coming out of Enterprise Funds?

Mr. DePasquale: They bumped into Enterprise Funds. That's a union deal there. We have no control over that. They are allowed to bump into that.

Ms. Burns: I understand that, but when they bump into that whoever is next, there is somebody at the bottom of that.

Mr. DePasquale: And there's a domino effect and that happened.

Ms. Burns: So how can we start at six and we're down to three? I don't understand that.

Mr. DePasquale: There were three positions that were opened that they were able to bump into and the system absorbed three people and three people are laid off.

Ms. Burns: Are the police or fire eligible to bump into another position?

Mr. DePasquale: That is a union issue. I can't tell you that. You'd have to ask. They are all individual unions. I would say no.

Ms. Burns: Ok. Thank you.

President Marino: Would anybody else wish to address Niles City Council? In the opinion of the chair there being none committee reports.

### **COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mr. Mientkiewicz: Last week we had an IT Committee meeting. The topics discussed were upgrading our city website because the website needs a lot of work to become appealing to people to become more functional to people and ideas were discussed on ways to do that. Also, one project scheduled for 2016 was discussed and that is upgrading our out of date phone system into a modern more cost efficient voice over phone system. Rough numbers were thrown out by our IT Director. He's working on a plan right now to gain true numbers and figures before those are brought out for public to bid. More information should be coming on that in the next month or so.

President Marino: Please let the record reflect that the Mayor hosted a roundtable last evening for the expressed purpose of presenting his plan. Members of council were in attendance and the discussions at the meeting revolved around the Mayor's plan and two items regarding contracts. The contract with the dispatchers and the contract with the (rent). No other business was discussed at that meeting. Per your rules we need that in the Minutes. We will now entertain a motion by Mr. Steffey to adjourn into executive session. Mr. Steffey, you have the floor, sir.

Mr. Steffey: I move that Council goes into executive session to discuss labor contract negotiations.

President Marino: Mr. Steffey, at my request would you also please permit Mr. Armeni from the State Auditor's Office to join us?

Mr. Steffey: Yes.

President Marino: Is there a second to his motion?

Mr. Papalas: I'll second it.

President Marino: It was moved by Steffey, seconded by Papalas to adjourn into executive session. Call the roll to adjourn, please.

**YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0**

President Marino: Let the record reflect council adjourned at 6:14 p.m. into executive session. Mr. Armeni, would you please join us, sir.

President Marino: Let the record reflect that council reconvened at 6:37 p.m. Would the Clerk please call the roll?

President Marion: Mr. Steffey, you have the floor, sir.

Mr. Steffey: I would like to move that we add Draft 16-16 and Draft 17-16 to tonight's Agenda.

President Marino: It was moved by Steffey, seconded by McNaughton to add Draft 16-16 and 17-16 to tonight's Agenda.  
Motion carried.

President Marino: Would the Clerk please present Draft 16-16 by caption.

### **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

#### **RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_(Draft No. 16-16)**

#### **A RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE POLICE VEHICLE MAINTENANCE ACCOUNT; AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 05-16; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

Mr. Steffey: This is basically they had auctioned some vehicles and this is money that was funneled back into the General Fund and it needs to be placed into the Police Maintenance Account.

It was moved by Steffey, seconded by Pezzano to suspend the rule requiring the three readings.

**YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0**

Rules are suspended.

It was moved by Papalas, seconded by Steffey to adopt this Draft.

**YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0**

This Draft No. 16-16 has been adopted on the 17th day of February 2016.

President Marino: Would the Clerk please present Draft 17-16 by caption.

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_(Draft No. 17-16)**

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE MAYOR'S THIRD REVISED FINANCIAL PLAN REQUIRED BY OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 118.06 FOR SUBMISSION TO THE FINANCIAL PLANNING & SUPERVISION COMMISSION FOR THE CITY OF NILES; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

Mr. Papalas: Mr. Chairman, before a motion is made I would like to make a statement.

President Marino: Of course.

Mr. Papalas: A lot has been said about the Mayor's plan and I spoke to the Mayor last night on the phone and made it very clear to him that I particularly don't envy the position that he is in. I have great respect for the Mayor and so none of my remarks concerning this are personal concerning him or anyone else in this room. It is strictly a matter of looking at our finances. Mayor Scarnecchia and I have been here for 10 years since 1981 and we may have had disagreements, but certainly we always respected each other and we always do. Our Mayor is a gentleman and he's a gentle man. He is both and I appreciate that in him. He's a family man and he has a big heart and sometimes that can be a fault. Tom, I certainly would never want to be in your position. It's the hot seat, but I need to express this again and then I'm going to make a motion and I am also going to explain to my fellow council that none of this is personal. You will find that – especially those of my colleagues who are new -- we might disagree tonight and then next month we'll be working together on an ordinance, so these things are not personal and they are not easy either. I certainly respect our dispatchers. They are probably the best we have in the area and I've always respected all of our employees. I don't want to see one laid off either. I don't want to see a fireman in danger because they don't have all of their colleagues with them to back them up. I don't want to see our citizens in danger because we don't have enough firemen or we don't have enough policemen. I don't want to see policemen going into a situation that is dangerous. These are all things that I'm taking into account and it's a situation that I haven't seen in 35 years. I've been here since 1980. Mr. Camerino was President of Council then and the first time we were in receivership with the State was no picnic either. We went through this before. So if we send the dispatchers to 911 and they keep their jobs, we would have a carryover over, according to the Auditors, of \$621,000.00. \$621,000.00. If we keep the dispatchers here, we will have a carryover – it will cost us \$293,000.00. \$105,000.00 of that cost is from the Enterprise Account.

Jill Montevadao: Those are lies. Please speak the truth.

President Marino: No. Jill, there are no comments from the audience.

Mr. Papalas: I'm taking these from the notes when we had our meeting yesterday. So if my colleagues, if you think that I'm wrong with this, you let me know and I'll stand corrected. \$188,000.00 of it is from the General Fund. So if we stress and that's what we are doing, is stressing our Enterprise Accounts, think of the things we could do with that money otherwise. The fire hydrants that need repaired. The last I heard there were 87 of them. We have a very large lawsuit facing us in the Water Department over a meter. \$350,000.00 and that lawsuit has to be decided and it will be soon. In the General Fund, we have our own problems in the Wellness Center at this point that the Mayor is working on. We have safety forces that are laid off. With the dispatchers going to 911, something I don't want to see, but in my opinion we don't have an alternative, we might be able to bring back two policemen or a policeman and a fireman. We have more people working than we have (inaudible) So at this point before we vote on this plan as it is, I want to make a motion that we amend the plan to send the dispatchers to 911. That motion is on the floor.

President Marino: Is there a second?

Mr. Mientkiewicz: Second.

President Marino: We're going to call the roll to amend the plan.

Mr. Lastic: Question. Is that correct? That we will be able to bring back police?

Mayor Scarnecchia: I'd have to study that. I couldn't tell you that.

Mr. Lastic: This is part of the original plan that we were going to go with. That would change it to this and I'm in favor of some.

President Marino: Well, I cannot tell you how to vote. All I can tell you is that if you agree with the amendment to go to 911, you will vote yes. If you do not agree with the amendment, you vote no.

Mr. Lastic: Right now, no.

President Marino: Well, the Clerk needs to call the roll.

**YEAS: 2 (Papalas, Mientkiewicz) NAYS: 5**

President Marino: The amendment is defeated. We will now act on Draft 17-16. We need a motion. Council's pleasure?

It was moved by Steffey, seconded by Lastic to suspend the rule requiring three readings.

**YEAS: 5 NAYS: 2 (Papalas, Mientkiewicz)**

President Marino: The rules are not suspended. We now either go for a 1<sup>st</sup> Reading or it lays in committee.

It was moved by Marchese, seconded by Steffey for a 1<sup>st</sup> Reading.

**YEAS: 5    NAYS: 2 (Papalas, Mientkiewicz)**

President Marino: Draft No. 17-16 has received its 1<sup>st</sup> Reading. Council's pleasure on Draft No. 18-16 on the tentative labor agreement with OPBA?

Mr. Steffey: I move that we add Draft No. 18-16 to tonight's Agenda.

President Marino: Is there a second?

Mr. Pezzano: I will second.

President Marino: It was moved by Steffey and seconded by Pezzano to add Draft 18-16 to tonight's Agenda. All in favor signify by Aye.  
Motion carried.

President Marino: Would the Clerk please present Draft 18-16 by caption.

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_(Draft No. 18-16)**

**A RESOLUTION RATIFYING THE TENTATIVE LABOR AGREEMENT WITH THE  
OPBA RANKING OFFICERS UNIT; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

It was moved by Steffey, seconded by Lastic to give this Draft a 1<sup>st</sup> reading.

**YEAS: 7    NAYS: 0**

Draft No. 18-16 has received a 1<sup>st</sup> reading.

President Marino: That concludes tonight's legislation. Next is Miscellaneous Remarks. I will reserve my remarks until the end.

**MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS**

Mayor Scarnecchia: Well, to say I'm disappointed (inaudible). We worked hard on this plan. I don't know how this will affect us with the State Auditors. We are having a meeting with them tomorrow at 4:00.

President Marino: Mayor, as a commission member I will ask consideration from the members of the commission that consideration be afforded to the City that the legislation is in motion and has received its first reading. We are going to have special council meetings. We will be setting those after everybody has had a chance to make their remarks. We have other business that needs to be tended to next week. Anything else, Mayor?

Mayor Scarnecchia: Yes. On the lighter side, we had our biggest snow fall, as everybody knows, over the weekend and I want to say I am very proud of the Street Department and the trucks that were breaking down and needed worked on. I think they did a fine job and our Service Director in keeping them going. I just wanted to congratulate them. Thank you.

Auditor Merlo: I just wanted everyone to know that there are questions about the check report, all the reports since I took office in December are now on line and tonight's reports will be up probably tomorrow.

President Marino: Thank you.

Mr. Lastic: Yes, just one comment. The sheet that we had with everyone's phone number, there are no phone numbers for anybody after 4:30. Last night I got a call at 4:55 and I did get ahold of Paul and he called a dispatcher. Is that the procedure from now on rather than call the Street Department or --

Mr. DePasquale: The dispatch handles a lot of trouble calls, electric, water, street.

Mr. Lastic: Is that how we do it?

Mr. DePasquale: That's how we do it.

President Marino: No, that's not the question. The question is when a councilman gets a call and needs assistance do you want him to call the dispatcher?

Mr. DePasquale: That would be your best bet, yes.

President Marino: Previously we called the Service Director.

Mr. DePasquale: I will give you my number and you can get ahold of me personally.

President Marino: Well, I call the Service Director. I generally expect a phone call back.

Mr. DePasquale: You can have my home phone number.

Mayor Scarnecchia: You are welcome to call me too.

Mr. Papalas: Chairman, there are a couple things I want to say. It seems that some people have taken our efforts to balance the budget personally from what I've heard and also at the same time there are some rumors that have circulated through town, so I thought I'd discuss those briefly to lay those to rest. One of them deals with an alleged close association I have with Ernie Cook who runs 911. Ernie Cook and I have no close relationship. He's the person in charge of 911. We're not close friends and I didn't get the idea of 911 from Ernie Cook. As a matter of fact, over the years, Dr. Marino and I and Mr. Lastic had shown concern over some budget issues and we had discussions with our Auditor and our Treasurer and we decided because of the questions

that existed that we needed to talk to somebody from the State. So we were successful in bringing the Auditor in. The issue of the dispatchers going to 911 came from this document that came out of Mr. Yost's office, our State Auditor. His Auditors conducted this study, a Performance Audit, that was finalized in September of 2014 and on Page 26, it strongly suggests, among other things, that our dispatchers go to 911. My thinking, we are no different than any other community that has done that. So that's where the idea came from. It didn't take somebody like Mr. Cook to show that. Another troubling rumor that came up about two weeks ago, I believe, was that a particular State Auditor and I are in a conspiracy to have the Mayor removed from office so that I can take over. Folks, trust me, that's the last job I want. You won't see me in that office and you can rest assured there is no State Auditor or any other State official who would risk his career and his reputation in a conspiracy with me. That is as farfetched as it could get. I have found that the State Auditors are very professional, very knowledgeable and they are here to help us, not to hurt us. The sooner everybody realizes that, I think the sooner we'll be able to get some work done. The last interesting rumor that concerns me, and this is what happens when you go against the grain in this community I guess, the rumors start about different people or the impugning of reputations begins, is that I have a conflict because I'm an employee of the County Engineer. I happen to be his Administrative Assistant and I'm on City Council. I started that job about two and a half years ago and immediately before I even started, we investigated to see if it was possible for me to do that and it was. So very recently because of rumors, we had another opinion given by the Trumbull County Prosecutor's Office with a written opinion. We also, in addition to that, attachments from the Attorney General's Office of the State of Ohio cited case law in which there is no conflict. I just want to put all of that to rest. The written documents exist. For those of you who still want to muddy the waters and cause controversy go look. That's really about all I have to say except that this business that I'm hearing about because really that's what it amounts to, certainly doesn't do much to pass our levy. We're all involved in that effort and I think we are all going in the right direction or we should be. I did have opposition in my last election and a great number of people supported me and helped me. When those people bring that material to my attention, they do so in a state of unhappiness. They are not happy with what they are hearing. We all have supporters here and you need those supporters. We all need those supporters to get this job done. This job of passing a levy and so I think before you say things stop a minute. Do you really mean that, really? I can assure you any of my actions, I assure you, are not personal. I have a family in this town too. Just like Mayor Tom. I would never hurt Tom. I certainly don't appreciate people trying to do that to me because my son lives here. If you really have something to say, ask me. Ask me now. What do you want to know, my shoe size, my hat size, shirt size? It's the time to ask. Thank you.

Mr. McNaughton: I had some rah rah speech all planned and then I have to scrap it. Couple things. First, I know I'm new, but I need to know right here right now if this is the way I need to expect business being done. This should not be the first time that I or anybody else here got literally a last second audible. Period. I take Mr. Papalas' comments seriously earlier when he said don't take anything personal tonight, but if I'm out there right now it's real personal. We expected to come here tonight to make an important decision. I expected to. I haven't slept much. I'm still shaking right now. Not from anger, because I take this very seriously and I think we all do. The fact that we are now going to continue on this asinine carousel to get something done in this City is embarrassing to me and it is my fervent hope in the future that we have at

least a conversation five minutes before the meeting. I hope I'm not asking too much and if I am, I apologize. Again, nothing personal, but cannot believe, I cannot believe, I have to look at Mr. Armeni sitting here and say sorry, we're still trying to figure it out. I hope Mr. Yost continues to be patient with us. I remember November of 1996, I don't know where this story is going to end up, but I took my first job out of college and I moved everything to Michigan for a radio job that at the time paid \$16,900.00. It cost more for my last year's university tuition than I made my first year, but I moved everything up there, six days a week, nights, weekends, overnight, Sunday morning. Terrible job, terrible people, but it was interesting. Four months into this job I get called into my boss' office to find out that I will not be working there two weeks later because unbeknownst to me at the time -- I'm sorry if I'm boring anybody, I apologize -- unbeknownst to me Mr. Boss owed over \$100,000.00 to the IRS. He didn't tell me that at the job interview, he didn't tell me that in my first four months. So there I was all by myself, eleven months to go on my lease, not knowing what to do. My point is that I empathize with people who are dealing with repercussions for situations that are none of their own doing for debts that have accrued by a leader of an organization that is not of their doing. I take this all very seriously. Let's get the elephant out of the room. We are here because our former Mayor was not very good at his job and we're cleaning up the mess. I am very sympathetic to people whose lives continue to be in limbo because this body cannot agree to move forward. We'll do it. We'll get there. We'll work together. We're going to get this done. I really thought tonight was the night. Thank you.

Mr. Steffey: I'd like to thank the Mayor because I know that since you've taken office you have worked very hard at trying to make a plan that is viable and lead to our success in the future. We can look back all day long. It is time to go forward. We know where we've been and I believe it is time for us to pull together, as my colleagues have said, it is ok to disagree, and I'll steal a phrase from President Marino, we disagree and not be disagreeable. I've never dealt -- every dealing I've had with the administration and my colleagues has been nothing but professional, but I'd like to say that first. The State Auditor, Mr. Armeni, said something a few months ago and it stays with me. It is time for us to pull together and stand tall. It is time for this City to stand tall again. There were parts of this plan that I'm not necessarily a fan of, but at some point we have to say there's going to be parts that you agree with and parts that you don't agree with, but for the betterment of this City, that's how we have to approach this. So I would appreciate everyone who has been patient, I'm a taxpayer too, none of us are happy with this, but I can promise you that the intent and the integrity of this body is whole and pure. Thank you.

Ms. Marchese: I have support and will still go on supporting our dispatchers staying in Niles. My reason is I look at the policemen, I talk to them, I look at our firemen, we need them, we need them there. They are the first ones before any emergency or any accident or whatever happens, we talk to them and they get (inaudible) whether its fire, police or ambulance. I think they are doing great. I think they have made fantastic cuts to our City. They are not the problem or the cause so why should they have to lose their jobs.

Mr. Mientkiewicz: I do want to thank the Mayor for his hard work on the plan. I stated in the past and I still believe that we need a cost-savings plan in place as fast as we can get it and it wasn't my intention to delay this process tonight. There is the one point that I do disagree with is probably one of -- it was the hardest decision I had to make on council so far. No doubt about

it and since I found out about it I was up for two weeks into the late hours of the night weighing my decision and thinking about. I was on the phone constantly in the last two weeks doing my research and homework and bottom line for me is it came down to dollars and cents. A cost-saving measure. Again, after those long periods of thought and research, I felt that it was more cost efficient to contract with the county all awhile receiving in my opinion safe service. We can go back and forth on doing the 911 this and Niles is that and that's not going to get us anywhere, but that's my opinion. That's my independent opinion and my independent decision. It was my opinion one hundred percent and it's just the way that I feel. Current operations in this City are not good and they are obviously not working. That is clear. If they were, we wouldn't be in this mess. Granted there were mistakes that were made in the past, but since January 1<sup>st</sup> I have seen little to no cost-saving measures when there are a lot of ways to save money. There's a lot of ways to save money and it's not just taking concessions, doing this and that. I appreciate that. No doubt about it, I appreciate it, but I feel that there's a lot of ways we can still save money in this City and those are going to be brought to the table, hopefully. I think there needs to be serious thought with restructuring our operations and again, it's not working. Bottom line, so it was my intention tonight to, I guess, to vote to send the dispatch to the county to try to solve our problems and try to implement something new. I guess the only unfortunate thing is that we are delayed once again and it's something that I don't want to see. Believe me. I think we do need a plan. I think we need the cost-efficient plan that we can come up with and it is clear from talking with the Auditors that yes, this was a good plan but there was more cost saving and more money to work with by sending the dispatchers to 911. Again, it's a very tough decision but I don't think that these kinds of decisions should be left up to the voters. I think the voters' number one responsibility now is to pass or not pass the levy and for those people to wait and see where they're at depending upon the levy is not a good thing in my opinion. It's very tough. We were elected to do our due diligence and to make the best financial decisions for this town and I think this is something that needs to be taken into consideration so with that, I hope we can get on the same page and if my colleagues want to pass it, great. If they don't, it is what it is, but I truly feel that there is definitely more cost savings by sending the dispatchers to the county 911. Thank you.

President Marino: It is my intention and right to schedule two special council meetings. I prefer they be scheduled on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of February for Agenda items because we are going to need two more readings. It would be Monday and Tuesday.

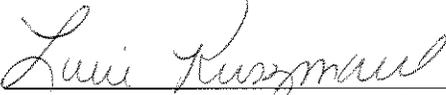
Mr. McNaughton: I have a town hall scheduled Monday night.

President Marino: Would 5:00 p.m. work for everyone? Council will meet February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 p.m. right here so we can accommodate all of you. What's Tuesday look like for everyone, the 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:00 p.m. again? So by order of Niles City Council, council will hold a special council meeting on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 p.m. in council chambers and February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:00 p.m. for any council business that shall be placed upon the Agenda. Our Auditor has some budgetary things that may need addressed for our Enterprise Funds. Relative to all of the concern, Barry mentioned my words that you have the right to agree to disagree, but not be disagreeable. I know there are a lot of opinions in this room. I, too, have mine. We need to put all of our differences aside in March. We have to come together to pass that income tax. If we don't pass the income tax, the detriment to this community is at stake. I share with people that we are at the

edge of the abyss. People say, "Oh Bob, you're so dramatic," but that's where we're at. The community is at the edge of the abyss and it if doesn't pass and the plan is floating around and I'm sure the newspapers will have it in tomorrow, there are dire, dire consequences with the failure of that income tax. There's also another levy on the ballot that doesn't get much attention, but it's equally important. That is our park levy. My children are grown. They got to enjoy the benefits of the Niles parks, the Niles Youth League, etc. and all the great things that our City does with our youth organizations. We need to put our differences aside, our personalities aside and support our community because our community is only going to be as strong as what we want. This is very very important to all of us. I'm not being dramatic. I'm just stating the way it is. So with, I think motion to adjourn is in order.

**ADJOURN**

It was moved by Steffey, seconded by Papalas to adjourn the meeting.

  
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LORI KUSZMAUL, Clerk of Council

  
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ROBERT MARINO, JR., President of Council