

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
October 18, 2023

Audio recording of full meeting will be available on line on the city's website

Niles City Council held its regular meeting on October 18, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the Niles Senior Center in Niles, Ohio.

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Robert Marino Jr., and the Clerk, Nicole Bacak, called the roll:

Julian- P, Lastic-P, Sollitto-P, Devorich-P, Marchese-P, Smith- P, Weddell- P, Marino-P

It was moved by Smith, seconded by Julian to accept the minutes from the October 4th meeting and place them on file.

Motion carried.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

FROM- Billing Office

Adjustment Reports

It was moved by Marchese, seconded by Lastic to accept, and place it on file.

Motion Carried.

FROM- Auditor's Office

Statement of cash from revenue and expense – September 2023

It was moved by Smith, seconded by Julian to accept, and place it on file.

Motion Carried.

FROM- Auditor's Office

Check report by check number- September 2023

It was moved by Smith, seconded by Weddell to accept, and place it on file.

Motion Carried.

FROM- Treasurer's Office

Income tax collections through October 14th and interest earned on deposits and cds

It was moved by Smith, seconded by Devorich to accept, and place it on file.

Motion Carried.

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

(Public comments began at 2:10 into recording)

George Kuriatnyk: Mr. Kuriatnyk wanted to comment on the flyers going around. He stated that he was getting ready to send out his flyers but was told to wait because the mayor was sending out 10,000. He will be sending out his flyers on Friday. Mr. Kuriatnyk said that President Marino was here when Scarnecchia was mayor. He believes the first fire truck the city got was due to a grant that Fire Chief Stevens wrote back then. However, on the flyer the mayor is taking credit for it. He asked if the second fire truck had been received yet and Law Director Zuzolo did not know. Mr. Kuriatnyk said the mayor is taking credit for that fire truck also. Another item on the flyer is a grant for \$350,000.00 for a splash pad. He has an email from Law Director Zuzolo saying there is no such grant.

Mr. Kuriatnyk brought up that back in 2020 when he wanted to move the council building to where the Bogden buildings are, he was told by the architects that with all of the drive by shootings it was too dangerous for council members to be there. Mr. Kuriatnyk said President Marino agreed and the mayor. Now a couple of years later, the mayor wants to put an activity center downtown and put the kids in harm's way. Mr. Kuriatnyk said the mayor talks about spending \$300,000.00 on blight. But when he comes into the city over the viaduct, there are two car lots. He says they need to look into that because there are ordinances about the number of cars they can have, and their buildings are falling apart. He also mentioned a brick house on Ann Street that has a giant hole in it. Mr. Kuriatnyk told the mayor to stop taking credit for things that other people do.

Mr. Kuriatnyk said there are about 3 weeks to go before the election and he wishes the mayor the best. He knows the mayor thinks it is a joke. Mr. Kuriatnyk said just in case the mayor does upset him, he will be running against him in the commissioner's race. He said he is not going anywhere and either him or Mrs. Slusher will own up to things. He claims he has an email from Mrs. Slusher telling him to send a personal email to her personal email after a deadline for a job was over. He said you can't do that, and it will come out.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

NONE

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION

(Legislation began at 7:17 into recording)

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 127-23)

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A THEN AND NOW PAYMENT REQUEST FOR J&S POWER LLC FOR THE EMERGENCY REPAIR OF A TRANSFORMER AT THE NILES CENTRAL SUBSTATION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

It was moved by Smith, seconded by Julian to suspend the rule requiring three readings.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Rules are suspended.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Lastic to adopt this Draft No 127-23.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

This Draft No. 127-23 has been adopted on the 18th day of October 2023.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 128-23)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSAL OF A 2004 CHEVROLET SILVERADO C1500 BY INTERNET AUCTION ON GOV DEALS AS THE VEHICLE IS NO LONGER NEEDED FOR ANY MUNICIPAL PURPOSE BY THE CITY; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Ms. Marchese made a motion to suspend at the same time that Mr. Sollitto made a motion for a first reading. Mr. Sollitto said he has received a lot of questions and concerns about suspending everything. If time is not of the essence, then he would like to go with a first reading. Ms. Marchese did withdraw her motion to suspend.

It was moved by Sollitto, seconded by Smith to give a first reading to this draft 128-23.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

This Draft No. 128-23 has received its 1st reading on the 18th day of October 2023.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 129-23)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED GENERAL FUND 101 TO THE CONTRACTED LABOR ACCOUNT FOR THE COST OF DEMOLITION OF THE THEATER BUILDING AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

It was moved by Smith, seconded by Sollitto to give a first reading to this draft 129-23.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

This Draft No. 129-23 has received its 1st reading on the 18th day of October 2023.

ORDINANCE NO. _____ (Draft No. 130-23)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING CASH TRANSFERS; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

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

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Rules are suspended.

It was moved by Smith, seconded by Devorich to adopt this Draft No 130-23.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

This Draft No. 130-23 has been adopted on the 18th day of October 2023.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

(Miscellaneous remarks began at 11:15 into recording)

Treasurer Telego wanted to let council know if they have any questions on the third quarter report that he submitted, to please reach out to him and he would more than happy to go over it with them. Treasurer Telego said we are on pace to collect more taxes this year than last year and the interest that has been earned this year with succeed last year by a lot. The reason for the increase in interest collected is because the rates are so high.

Mr. Sollitto said he knows a big part of RITA was collecting the back dues or taxes. He wanted to know where the city is now, if you take out the back collections, where we are with the operational cost. He wants to know what the difference is from when the taxes were collected by the city compared to RITA. He would like to see some numbers on that. Treasurer Telego explained that the city gets a rebate every year from RITA. With this rebate, it is less of a cost to operate the collections with RITA. It is probably saving the city over \$100,000.00 a year by

using RITA compared to what we paid when the city ran the collections. Mr. Sollitto asked if Treasurer Telego could still get some numbers together within a few meetings to share with council. Treasurer Telego said that is possible.

President Marino wanted to confirm that the city is being projected to earn approximately \$1,000,000.00 in interest. Treasurer Telego said the interest coming from the money market and the CD's is \$1,665,000.00 and the city should hit \$2,000,000.00 by the end of the year. Last year, the city only earned about \$600,000.00. The city is earning the most with the money market this year. Treasurer Telego explained the interest has tripled since 2019, not the income tax collections.

President Marino wanted to clarify Mr. Sollitto's question. He thinks that Mr. Sollitto wants clarification on the charges that RITA gives to the city. He is looking for what is the true cost to the city of Niles from RITA versus the charges for having the department with the city. Treasurer Telego said RITA charges the city 3% for the gross collections every year. The following year, RITA does a profitability analysis and gives a refund based on that. The city usually ends up with around \$145,000.00- \$150,000.00 back from RITA. He will give them a report showing this.

Mr. Sollitto said he doesn't dispute when RITA first came in, it was a mess and there was a lot of money to recover. He is concerned anytime you outsource from city to another city, state to another state, or country to China, outsourcing the privatization as a whole is something they need to look at. He wants to make sure it is apples to apples on that. If the numbers are so outrageous and you can't beat RITA, he gets it. But otherwise, if you can have a local department that is worth looking at once you look at the numbers down the road. He knows the interest rates have tripled, so they just fell into that. President Marino asked where the money goes that is earned and Treasurer Telego said the interest stays in the general fund. President Marino also wanted to confirm who was on the investment board and Treasurer Telego said it is himself, the mayor, the law director, and the auditor. He said they keep a very close eye on it.

Ms. Smith just wanted to confirm that there is an investment policy that they follow. Treasurer Telego said about a month ago, council did pass the investment policy. Treasurer Telego also explained that the city is constrained with what they can do with the money by the Ohio Revised Code. The Ohio Revised Code tells them what they are allowed to invest in. Ms. Marchese wanted to thank Treasurer Telego and his staff for bringing in more money into the city. \

Mrs. Devorich also asked how much it costs to employee RITA. Treasurer Telego said once he gets the report together, he will explain it. He again explained you take the gross collections and multiply it by 3% to get the fee that RITA charges. The following year, once they get all of their expenses together, they share the money proportionally to all of the cities that are members. President Marino explained that RITA is a COG. They redistribute the money back after they take their expenses out. He just wants to make sure the record reflects that RITA is a COG, a type of council of government.

Fire Chief Stevens reminded everyone to check their batteries in their smoke detectors and change them if necessary. Also, he believes that in the summer of 2024, they will be receiving

the new fire truck. Mayor Mientkiewicz did confirm with Fire Chief Stevens that this was the second new fire truck that was purchased for his department. Fire Chief Stevens did confirm this.

ADJOURN

It was moved by Devorich, seconded by Lastic to adjourn the meeting.



Nicole Bacak, Clerk of Council



Robert Marino Jr., President of Council