

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

October 4, 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 4, 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 Marchese, seconded by Smith to accept the minutes from the September 20th meeting and the minutes from the September 25th special meeting and place them on file.
Motion carried.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

FROM- Republic Services

Current rates and pick up information.

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

Motion Carried.

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

(Public comments began at 2:07 into recording)

George Kuriatnyk: Mr. Kuriatnyk said he was going to make this short and sweet. What was done to his son by sending an inspector to try and shut him down for cleaning the cleaning the church, and then made him pay \$800.00 to have carpet padding tested because they said it had asbestos. He was so scared, and they made him do all of this and he still hasn't been up there. President Marino stopped Mr. Kuriatnyk from continuing to speak since he was not using the microphone and was speaking to the mayor.

Katie Moran: Ms. Moran said her, and her son Joseph live at 174 Morningside Road in Niles. They are here at council this evening to see how the progress is going with solar panels for homes. They want to put solar panels in their home. She has been in contact with the mayor

about this. President Marino said he knows AMP Ohio was at the last meeting to speak on this topic. He asked Mayor Mientkiewicz if he would like to talk about this. Mayor Mientkiewicz said the city is at the completion of the study and is being sent to AMP Ohio. They did come and give council an annual update two weeks ago, as well as an update on solar panels. He is hoping to have that ordinance in front of council by year's end, along with the policy. Even though this was a long process, Mayor Mientkiewicz is happy with the progress right now. Once everything is finalized with AMP Ohio, it will be sent to council. He is hoping to start offering this at the beginning of 2024. Ms. Moran thanked Mayor Mientkiewicz for this update.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance meeting minutes - September 28th

It was moved by Smith, seconded by Lastic to accept, and place it on file.
Motion Carried.

President Marino reminded everyone that council needs to stay in compliance with the Ohio Sunshine Law. The chairmen of the committees need to turn in their committee meetings minutes to the clerk.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION

(Legislation began at 6:21 into recording)

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 125-23)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED HOSPITAL SELF INSURANCE FUND 772 TO THE SELF INSURANCE ACCOUNT FOR THE COST OF HEALTHCARE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

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

President Marino asked if there was a percentage increase to the cost of healthcare. Ms. Smith stated that at the finance meeting, Auditor Merlo said the claims are currently at \$3.1 million and is projected to hit \$4.2 million by December, and the city only budgeted for \$3.6 million. This is why the city is asking for an appropriation.

Mr. Sollitto asked if this is something they will need to raise for the future or was this an unexpected increase. Ms. Smith explained that Auditor Merlo mentioned there are a few reasons why this could have happened. People may have waited until COVID was over to catch up on

procedures. However, he does anticipate an increase next year in costs. President Marino advised council to take a serious look at this during budget hearings. Ms. Smith also stated that the administration is meeting with the healthcare committee about this.

Mr. Sollitto thinks they should build in a buffer for next year and the money would just go back if they don't use it. Mayor Mientkiewicz said they can do it either way. They can do it on the front end with the budget or have them come back to council later in the year if they need more appropriations, based on trends and claims. Mayor Mientkiewicz said there have been some plan changes adopted to try and help curb the costs. It just seems like the city is having a sick year.

Ms. Smith also pointed out they are looking into a fully insured plan versus a self-insured. President Marino said there are risks either way. He would like to have the city's broker, Mr. Zaluski, to come and talk to council once all plan adjustments have been made. Healthcare is such a substantial dollar amount, and it is increasing all over the place. It is important that they all stay in tune with the money being spent and the expenses. Ms. Marchese said it was also pointed out that it is not just employees on the plan. The rise in costs could be from a spouse or child. President Marino said they would not know that information. Council just needs to make sure that they appropriate what they need to, whether it is on the front side or back side. He would just caution anyone on speaking about anything beyond that.

Mr. Sollitto said when they plan for next year, he would like to look at going about 20% higher or so. He feels it is better to have extra up front instead of having to come back. President Marino again said he would like to see information from Mr. Zaluski on the healthcare so that they can stay in tune and ensure the city has what it needs. He thanked council for allowing him to indulge on this.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Rules are suspended.

It was moved by Marchese, seconded by Smith to adopt this Draft No 125-23.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

This Draft No. 125-23 has been adopted on the 4th day of October 2023.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 126-23)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 03-19, THE PURCHASING POLICY FOR THE CITY; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

It was moved by Lastic, 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 126-23.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

This Draft No. 126-23 has been adopted on the 4th day of October 2023.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

(Miscellaneous remarks began at 14:13 into recording)

President Marino thanked council and Mayor Mientkiewicz for having Republic Services at the meeting earlier. He thanked them for allowing the residents the chance to ask questions as well. He thinks that is healthy and also thanked Mr. Sollitto for filling in for him since he was tardy.

Mayor Mientkiewicz said the theater bids were opened by TNP (Trumbull Neighborhood Partners). The low bid was approximately \$340,000.00, which is substantially lower than what was budgeted for. The city will have a match of 25%, which will be around \$85,000.00. They are working with TNP on getting a game plan in place. He hopes to have the legislation for the match coming to council within the year.

Next, the Waddell park grant is moving along. They will be moving into the next step in this project, which is detailed design and that RFQ will be going out next week. Once this is completed, they will be coming back to council for a resolution to bid and enter into construction firms. This has been a very long and rigorous process with this grant. There has been a ton of red tape and reporting, and etc. He does want council to know that this project does continue to move and they hope to have a contracting firm this year. He hopes to be able to cut the ribbon at the splash tab on July 4, 2024.

President Marino asked if they could make a motion to excuse Auditor Merlo from the meeting. He apologized for not doing it earlier.

It was moved by Smith, seconded by all members excuse Auditor Merlo from the meeting. Motion carried.

Mr. Sollitto wanted to thank Republic Services for coming to the meeting. He also said there are a lot of new faces at the meeting, which is nice to see. He also wanted to wish Mr. Chuck


Johnstone a happy birthday. He turned 70 years old today. President Marino also wished him a happy birthday.

Mrs. Devorich said she noticed a lot of people who were perplexed that they had to hold the microphone button down while speaking. She explained that the microphones are cameras and if they were on all of the time, you would hear all of the side conversations that were going on. She noticed that today when Republic was up there talking, and council and the administration were having side conversations. This is why you have sit there and hold the button in order to talk.

Ms. Smith stated that Auditor Merlo did mention in the finance meeting that the budgets are up and live. They will be scheduling meetings with the department heads and council will be invited to those meetings.

ADJOURN

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



Nicole Bacak, Clerk of Council



Robert Marino Jr., President of Council