

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 15, 2024

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

Niles City Council held its regular meeting on May 15, 2024, 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:

Weddell- P, Johnstone-P, Sheely-P, Devorich-NP, Julian-P, Lastic- P, Sollitto- P, Marino-P

It was moved by Sollitto, seconded by Johnstone to excuse Devorich from the meeting.
Motion carried.

President Marino turned the meeting over to the mayor for a special presentation. Mayor Mientkiewicz stated that the city is part of AMP Ohio and with that comes the ability for students to be awarded scholarships. Mayor Mientkiewicz wanted to recognize a graduating Niles McKinley senior in the audience this evening. Avah Rodgers was awarded one of five scholarships from AMP Ohio. Mayor Mientkiewicz said Avah will be attending The Ohio State University in the fall to study finance. Avah is here this evening with her mother, Ashley, who works in the billing department. One of the reasons that Avah was awarded this scholarship is because a parent is currently employed by the city. Avah was presented with this \$3000.00 award earlier in the week by a representative from AMP Ohio, but they asked that she be recognized at a city council meeting as well.

President Marino congratulated Avah on behalf of all of council.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Lastic to accept the minutes from the May 1st regular meeting and place them on file.

Motion carried.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

FROM- Ohio Division of Liquor Control

Notice to legislative authority- Family Dollar Stores of Ohio, LLC

It was moved by Sheely, seconded by Lastic to accept, and refer to the police chief and safety director for their recommendation.

Motion carried.

FROM- Auditor's Office

Statement of cash from revenue and expense – April 2024

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

Motion carried.

FROM- Auditor's Office

Check report by check number – April 2024

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

Motion carried.

FROM- Paul Martin

Petition for amending zoning map.

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

Motion carried.

Law Director Zuzolo explained this was already accepted by the planning commission. Mr. Sheely also made a motion to have a public hearing for this zoning petition on June 26th at 5:15 P.M. prior to the council meeting.

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE TO ADDRESS COUNCIL FOR AGENDA ITEMS

(Public comments began at 7:31 into recording)

Dee Sebben: Mrs. Sebben had a question on the draft that was receiving its third reading today. She wanted to know what ward that the property in Howland would belong to. She was told it would be the 2nd ward.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Safety committee meeting minutes- April 17, 2024

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

Motion carried.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION

(Legislation began at 8:55 into recording)

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 62-24)

AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING THE ANNEXATION OF 31.38 ACRES OF CERTAIN PROPERTY IN HOWLAND AND VIENNA TOWNSHIPS TO THE CITY OF NILES; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

It was moved by Johnstone, seconded by Sheely to give a third reading to this Draft No 62-24.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0

It was moved by Johnstone, seconded by Lastic to adopt this Draft No 62-24.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0

This Draft No 62-24 has been adopted on the 15th day of May 2024.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 73-24)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING OF PARCELS 25-482950, 25-653260, AND 25-653261, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

It was moved by Sollitto, seconded by Lastic to give a second reading to this Draft No 73-24.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0

This Draft No 73-24 has received its 2nd reading on the 15th day of May 2024.

The following drafts will be part of the consent agenda, being brought to the floor for the first time, passed together with suspension of three readings, and as an emergency.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 76-24)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR OF NILES TO ENTER INTO THE PY 2024 CHIP PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITIES OF GIRARD, HUBBARD, AND CORTLAND FOR THE PY 2024 COMMUNITY HOUSING IMPACT AND PRESERVATION PROGRAM FUNDS (CHIP) WITH THE OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY, OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

RESOLUTION NO. ____ (Draft No. 77-24)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO OPEN A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) TO OBTAIN A GRANT ADMINISTRATOR ORGANIZATION TO PREPARE, SUBMIT, AND IMPLEMENT AN APPLICATION FOR THE FY 2024 COMMUNITY HOUSING IMPACT AND PRESERVATION (CHIP) PROGRAM WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT TO BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE FOR HOUSING PRESERVATION PURPOSES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 78-24)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DIRECT PURCHASE OF 2023 DODGE DURANGO POLICE CRUISER; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 79-24)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CHANGE ORDER FOR SHELLY & SANDS FOR THE 2024 LOCAL STREET RESURFACING; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 81-24)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING MONTHLY CASH TRANSFERS; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 82-24)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF 2025 HV507 SFA CHASSIS THROUGH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM; AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF 2024 SINGLE AXLE SNOW & ICE CONTROL TRUCK EQUIPMENT THROUGH NATIONAL PURCHASING PARTNERS; THE APPROPRIATION OF THE NECESSARY FUNDS; AMENDING ORDINANCE NUMBER 58-24; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

RESOLUTION NO. ____ (Draft No. 84-24)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR FY 2024/2025 GRANTS UNDER THE CDBG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATION PROGRAM; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Lastic to suspend the rule requiring three readings to this consent agenda.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0

Rules are suspended.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Lastic to adopt this consent agenda.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0

This consent agenda has been adopted on the 15th day of May 2024.

RESOLUTION NO. ____ (Draft No. 80-24)

A RESOLUTION TO ALLOW THE CITY OF NILES TO ADOPT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE INTERCONNECTION OF DISTRIBUTED GENERATION RESOURCES

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Sollitto to give a first reading to this Draft 80-24.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0

This Draft No 80-24 has received its 1st reading on the 15th day of May 2024.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 83-24)

AN ORDINANCE REGARDING FUNDING OF THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION OF NILES BUSINESS GRANTS

It was moved by Johnstone, seconded by Lastic to give a first reading to this Draft 83-24.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0

Law Director Zuzolo informed council that this legislation was for Mt. Carmel Church grant and Lastic and Sollitto would need to abstain. They need to rescind their vote and revote.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Sheely to amend the roll call vote and revote.

YEAS: 4 NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: 2 (Lastic and Sollitto)

This Draft No 80-24 has received its 1st reading on the 15th day of May 2024.

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE TO ADDRESS COUNCIL FOR GENERAL PURPOSE
(Public comments began at 15:51 into recording)

Prior to public remarks beginning, Law Director Zuzolo stated the Mr. Sollitto said there is a threat of pending legal action. Because of this, Law Director Zuzolo is requesting an executive session per ORC 121.22 G3 to discuss imminent litigation.

It was moved by Sollitto, seconded by Johnstone to adjourn into executive session.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0

Council adjourned into executive session at 6:15 P.M.

Council reconvened from executive session at 6:23 P.M.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0

President Marino stated that now is the time for general public comments.

Michael Krenciprock: Mr. Krenciprock had he had police officers come to his house and tell him he cannot park in the front of his house. He has a neighbor that is verbally harassing him. He wants to know what to do since the driveway has been there since before, he bought the house in 1968. He wants to know who is making the complaints and why they are doing it. President Marino said they can't tell him who is making the complaints, but he can have the law director speak to him after him. Law Director Zuzolo said he would discuss this with Mr. Krenciprock offline due to the threat pending litigation that was referred to him.

Judee March: Ms. March is requesting the following public records. She would like to know what RITA was paid for 2023 to collect taxes and what is the salary of the treasurer. She stated that she has sent two other requests and no one has responded. President Marino asked the clerk to fulfill this request and copy him and the law director on the response.

Richard Strong: Mr. Strong said there is one house in the city of Niles that does not have a driveway and it has ruts. He empathizes with the situation at that residence but there are a lot of people who have put money into their homes to build them back up. There is an alley behind the house that they can use instead of creating blight in the neighborhood.

Dee Sebben: Mrs. Sebben wanted to know who she needed to talk to about grass clippings in the street to get it taken care of and enforcing it. Law Director Zuzolo said it actually is a littering issue and she could call the police. Mrs. Sebben stated she does not want to waste the police officer's time with this. Law Director Zuzolo said she can call the housing and zoning department, or she can call him directly and he will send a letter.

Mrs. Sebben asked who took over for Mr. Crowley and Mayor Mientkiewicz said his name was Matt Durno. Mrs. Sebben asked if all of the city employees that were working from home were back to work. Mayor Mientkiewicz said everyone has been brought back a few years ago. She asked what was going to happen with the computers that were purchased for the employees and if they would be auctioned off. Mayor Mientkiewicz said they laptops are being used by the administrators.

Mrs. Sebben wanted to clarify that she needs to call the building department about grass clippings. Law Director Zuzolo said she could call them or give him the information and he would send a letter letting them know they need to stop. If they don't, they move to a citation and then there could be legal action taken.

Abigail Bickerstaff: Ms. Bickerstaff is back at council this evening to follow up on her request about being allowed to have chickens in the city limits. She wanted Mr. Sheely to respond to this. Mr. Sheely said he would have to set up a safety committee meeting with the members and have a meeting to discuss the information she sent to him. He said she did a pretty good job of putting together information and he will make sure to review it with the other members.

Next, she stated there has been talks about adding onto the city building. She thinks if they do decide to build the full offices, she would like the city to consider building an office for someone to collect income taxes and get rid of RITA. She would like to see this housed in the addition that they are considering on building. Mr. Sollitto said having the wing isn't the issue with RITA. There is plenty of space. If they get the wing, they have talked about several different facilities or offices in that space. They would not just get the wing and then get rid of RITA.

President Marino said he knows there are a lot of thoughts and viewpoints on RITA. He knows why the decision was made to move to RITA. No one likes to pay taxes, but they do a good job collecting the taxes. They also collect taxes owed to the city. The numbers pre-RITA and post-RITA, you can see substantial growth in revenue since switching. The general fund collections is what pays for your police and fire departments. He is not opposed to revisiting things with the changes in technology, etc. He knows why the city did it and it was because we needed to make sure we collected every dollar owed to the city. The city had no money. He respects people's opinions to look at it and talk about it, but they need to look at the data at the end of the day.

Aimee Cantola: Mrs. Cantola asked council if they were aware of the plan that President Marino's father came up with to clean up the benches for veteran's memorial. There are other benches throughout the city that need some tender loving care. Some families are not able to maintain the upkeep of the benches. She would like to know if city council would be able to help. She is also volunteering to come out and paint the letters on the benches. She is willing to help if council would be willing to help. President Marino said he would love to help. He thinks it is the right thing to do as long as they can find a way where they are not violating any law.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

(Miscellaneous remarks began at 38:53 into recording)


Mayor Mientkiewicz wanted to recognize firefighter Brian Morello on his upcoming retirement from the city. He wishes him the best of luck in his future endeavors. He also would like to invite everyone to the city's Memorial Day services at the cemetery. It will be on Monday, May 27th @ 11:00 A.M.

Mr. Johnstone reminded everyone that the CIC is meeting on Tuesday, May 21st at 4:30 P.M. at the Von Isley estate. Also, this Saturday, May 18th is Coffee with Council at the Von Isley Estate.

Mr. Sollitto wanted to recognize Lauren Matthews in the audience this evening. She is running for public office. Mr. Sollitto said it is very early in the process, but the public grounds committee has had a discussion with the mayor about having a Winterfest. There would be a pop-up skating rink and other vendors. They would like to run it when the tree lighting ceremony takes place.

ADJOURN

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



Nicole Bacak, Clerk of Council



Robert Marino Jr., President of Council