

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 4, 2026

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

Niles City Council held its regular meeting on March 4, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Niles Senior Center in Niles, Ohio.

Motion to amend the agenda to allow for a presentation by Trumbull County Commissioners Rick Hernandez and Denny Malloy moved by Stredney and seconded by Lastic. Motion carried.

The Trumbull County Commissioners presented on current County business and economic development. To start, Rick Hernandez gave updates on the Kimberly Clark project which is currently in the hiring process and estimates about 700 jobs. Additionally, Pine Avenue has been vacated for development of a flagship operation – which is projected to bring in about 2,000 jobs. Also, the Commissioners have been working with Foxconn, who look to employ about 1,700 employees. Rick referenced the recent CRA in Niles, stating that housing will be needed with the growth in job opportunities. Rick added that the Transportation Administrator will be retiring and would like to use this as an opportunity to meet with City administrations within the County to discuss where they see improvements in public transportation. Lastly, Rick addressed the need for a hospital as the Insight project is not expected to proceed considering they are not able to provide what ODH requires of them to carry their Medicare/Medicaid license.

President Doug Sollitto inquired about the Kimberly Clark project and wanted to hear more about the economic growth that is projected. Rick added that Kimberly Clark is in the hiring process currently for their management and higher waged roles and by the end of the year they should be fully staffed. Kimberly Clark added a transportation department to their facility that is projected to create more jobs. Ultimately, Kimberly Clark is hiring under four phases and by the completion of the fourth phase they are projected to have about 3,000 jobs in totality with the flagship operation.

Denny Malloy added that Kimberly Clark is already ahead of schedule, they have entered Phase 2 when that wasn't projected until next year. Denny Malloy voiced his concern for the spike in labor that is projected to come from Foxconn and how we can better prepare our area for that growth. Denny recognized that the Trumbull County Commissioners are looking to work closely with the City of Niles as these projects continue to grow, feeling encouraged to support these communities for the impact it will have on the coming generations of this area.

President Sollitto raised the concerns of the recent Water Advisory Board and the financial impact it would have on the City of Niles. Aaron Johnstone added that the tone of this subcommittee does not fall in line with Denny's message to work closely together with the City as they portrayed the City as predatory when it comes to rate negotiations with the other cities.

Denny stated that the Water Advisory Board was created to streamline rates to keep them as low as possible considering current disparities with water rates; Denny assured Council that no talk will be had regarding the City being forced to take actions without their own seat at the table.

Rick, agreed with Denny, adding that this board was created to oversee the operations of the sanitary division not to bully the City into a situation that would portray them in the wrong light. Rick Hernandez added that he personally does not see the County being able to set up a regionalization considering all of the communities involved and the cost of the infrastructure that would be needed to service them. He also added that this Advisory Board was also created to address the concern of spiking water rates in comparison to setting an incremental scheduled increase of rates.

President Sollitto addressed his concern for assurances that the Commissioners won't let this happen considering the financial and budgetary impact it would have. Mayor Mientkiewicz added that it is not the City's position to relinquish any part of their dealings with MVSD. Additionally, Mayor made aware of the next Water Advisory Board meeting in 2 weeks and encouraged Rick and Denny to communicate Niles' position as far as regionalization goes.

Ed Stredney reiterated the gamble Niles took when they initially created this regionalization with MVSD and how Niles continues to be forward looking when it comes to projects within the community.

Denny added that despite the need for revenue to repair the dam, he has no desire to change history and strip that away from the City. Denny stated that there can be a power struggle when it comes to water supply but he assures Council that there will not be a power struggle when it comes to the Trumbull County Commissioners and regionalization. Denny just wants to ensure that it is efficient, so it is low water costs for all.

President Sollitto thanked the Commissioners for coming and speaking and easing the angst that the City had regarding statements made at the Water Advisory Board.

Todd Waddell raised his concern about the traffic and infrastructure problems that will arise with the Kimberly Clark plant. Denny responded stating that the Commissioners worked with the Port Authority who received a grant from the Department of Development to build a new road that the trucks will be mandated to use to go through Lordstown instead of Route 422. Rick added that they have been working with the engineer to incorporate a connector road for Kimberly Clark to improve traffic flow. Mayor Mientkiewicz added that throughout the past few years of discussion around the Kimberly Clark project it has always been reiterated that the plan was to always reduce the traffic influx that would come as a result of the plant and to redirect the semi-trucks via other routes.

Auditor Giovanne Merlo addressed his concern for the recent conversations regarding property taxes and the effect they will have on cities and schools, especially schools considering a large percent of their money comes from property taxes. Denny responded that right now residents can see how much of their property tax bill is going to the school systems, which is around 70%, but he addressed the need of assistance from the State to alleviate the burden on residents, especially senior residents. Denny mentioned the petitions currently out there to get rid of property taxes altogether which would have a worse impact on the local schools and communities.

The councilmembers thanked Rick and Denny for taking the time to speak and reiterate their stance on the recent Water Advisory Board meeting. Denny thanked Council for allowing the time to speak and encouraged more of these conversations.

It was moved by Lastic, seconded by Stredney to get back to regular business.

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Doug Sollitto.

The Clerk, Abbey Lavelle called the roll:

Weddell- P, Johnstone-P, Sheely-P, Leskovec-P, Julian-P, Lastic- P, Stredney-P, Sollitto- P

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Stredney to accept and place on file the General Consent Agenda. Motion carried.

It was moved by Lastic and seconded by Stredney to suspend council rules for a 6-minute time limit for public remarks for this meeting. Motion carried.

PUBLIC REMARKS

(Public comments began at 39:16 into recording)

None.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION

(Legislation began at 39:29 into recording)

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 54-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION (CIC) TO ENTER INTO A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH OPTION TO PURCHASE WITH VON ISLEY ESTATE, LLC; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Stredney, seconded by Johnstone to give a first reading to Draft No. 54-26.

Councilmember Stredney commented on this legislation draft recognizing the collaboration between the Mayor's office, the Law Director's office and the CIC alongside the efforts of Councilmember Johnstone to bring this opportunity to fruition. President Sollitto also thanked Councilmember Johnstone for his work involved in this agreement.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 54-26 has received its first reading on the 4th day of March 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 38-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE DIRECTOR TO APPROVE AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION OF THE BRIGHT MOUNTAIN SOLAR SCHEDULE WITH AMERICAN MUNICIPAL POWER, INC. AND TAKING OF OTHER ACTIONS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Sheely to give a second reading to Draft No. 38-26

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 38-26 has received its second reading on the 4th day of March 2026.

The following drafts will be part of the consent agenda passed together with suspension of three readings, and adopted as an emergency.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 35-26)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 16-26, KNOWN AS THE AUTHORIZED STRENGTH ORDINANCE

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 43-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING MONTHLY CASH TRANSFERS

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 44-26)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR A UTILITY RATE STUDY FOR THE CITY OF NILES

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 45-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS AND ENTER INTO CONTRACT FOR THE WELLNESS CENTER TURF REPLACEMENT PROJECT

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 46-26)

A RESOLUTION AMENDING COUNCIL RULES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2027

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 47-26)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO APPLY FOR, ACCEPT, AND ENTER INTO A WATER SUPPLY REVOLVING LOAN ACCOUNT (WSRLA) AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF NILES FOR PLANNING, DESIGN AND/OR CONSTRUCTION OF WATER FACILITIES; AND DESIGNATING A DEDICATED REPAYMENT SOURCE FOR THE LOAN

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 48-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF NILES TO ENTER INTO AN ANNEXATION AGREEMENT WITH JRD HOLDINGS FOR AN EXPEDITED TYPE I ANNEXATION

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 49-26)

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A THEN AND NOW PAYMENT REQUEST FOR SUMMIT SUPPLY FOR REPAIR OF EMERGENCY WATER MAIN BREAKS

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 50-26)

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A THEN AND NOW PAYMENT REQUEST FOR LEE'S EXCAVATING FOR REPAIR OF AN EMERGENCY WATER MAIN BREAK

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 51-26)

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A THEN AND NOW PAYMENT REQUEST FOR JS BOVA EXCAVATING LLC FOR REPAIR OF AN EMERGENCY WATER MAIN BREAK

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 52-26)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF PISTOL REPLACEMENTS FOR THE NILES POLICE DEPARTMENT THROUGH STATE PURCHASING

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 53-26)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF NILES TO PUBLISH THROUGH ODOT FOR INSPECTION SERVICES FOR THE TRU SUMMIT AVE/OLIVE STREET MILL & FILL PROJECT

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

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Rules are suspended and the consent agenda has been adopted on the 4th day of March 2026.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

(Miscellaneous remarks began at 44:30 into recording)

Mayor Mientkiewicz gave a heads up that Service Line Warranties of America will be sending out their annual letters to residents for the lateral line interior plumbing program. Mayor Mientkiewicz added that another set of letters will also be going out to residents regarding potholing to satisfy EPA mandates; first round went out last year and the second round will be going out shortly. Petty Farms will be the company completing the potholing repairs. Also, the

City just submitted the \$5 million Niles Regional Waterline System Improvement Project through Congressman Joyce's Office as the 2027 appropriations were only open through March 6th.

Councilmember Johnstone wanted to spotlight Ms. Carol Pantellas for being awarded Early Educator of the Year at the Educators of the Year Honors dinner in conjunction with Youngstown Warren Regional Chamber.

Councilmember Sheely thanked the Commissioners for attending this meeting and sharing the updates with the Kimberly Clark plant. Sheely is excited to see the job growth in this area considering the job loss that not only he himself has experienced but other residents of the area over the years as different plants shut down.

Councilmember Leskovec also thanked the Trumbull County Commissioners for coming and speaking to Council tonight.

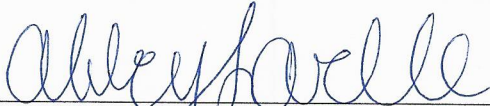
Councilmember Lastic added to Johnstone's recognition of Carol Pantellas stating that she is the first graduate of Niles McKinley to win that award.

Councilmember Stredney announced that the CIC is accepting grant applications through April 30th.

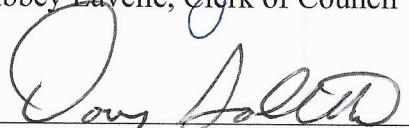
President Doug Sollitto reminded Council that we will not be meeting again until April 1, where we will be discussing zoning code updates. Sollitto also thanked the Commissioners for taking the time to speak today.

ADJOURN

It was moved by Stredney, seconded by Sheely to adjourn the meeting.



Abbey Lavelle, Clerk of Council



Doug Sollitto, President of Council