

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 6, 2026

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

Council as a whole sponsored a public hearing @ 5:00 prior to the regular meeting for a presentation by ZoneCo regarding updates to Niles Local Zoning Code as required by ORC 713.12. Audio recording of this presentation can be found on the Niles website.

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

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 Weddell, seconded by Stredney to amend the consent agenda to present a letter from an anonymous resident regarding a nuisance neighbor. It was moved by Stredney, seconded by Sheely to accept and place this communication on file. This letter will be on file with the clerk.

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

Motion carried.

PUBLIC REMARKS

(Public comments began at 3:23 into recording)

Richard Strong commented on the presentation from ZoneCo and thanked Aaron Johnstone and the other council members who expressed their opposition to re-zoning part of Robbins Ave as mixed-use commercial in order to keep it residential. Mr. Strong reiterated his concern for the potential data center in Weathersfield considering the upcoming public hearing on a moratorium. Richard Strong spoke on his opposition to a moratorium. Richard Strong also referenced Aaron Johnstone's 'excitement' for a data center when interviewed by WFMJ, when the rest of the City of Niles is not excited for it. Councilman Johnstone clarified the confusion around Bitdeer's proposed annexation and Niles' proposed moratorium. Johnstone stated that the City of Niles has already expressed their disinterest in annexing the property and the issue will remain within the Township of Weathersfield. Niles' proposed moratorium will prohibit data centers within City limits for the time allowed and Johnstone urges Council to pass this moratorium because Niles zoning regulations do not currently prohibit data centers. This moratorium is not being put in place for the Bitdeer property – it temporarily puts a halt on future data centers coming to Niles while the City updates their zoning code for a permanent restriction on data centers. Aaron Johnstone also clarified the statement misquoted by Richard Strong. Aaron is excited to explore the City's boundaries – in reference to annexations in general but this one just so happened to have a proposed data center on it.

Nicholas Hall appreciated the earlier presentation by ZoneCo but was curious why there was no reference to updating the zoning code for data center regulations considering the opposition by so many residents. Aaron Johnstone clarified that for Bitdeer specifically, only 1 small lot of the 5 they own are in Niles – the remaining 4 lots are in Weathersfield. Mr. Johnstone again referenced the moratorium that would prevent development on that 1 lot they own in Niles – even though it's not big enough for their proposed data center. James Sheely also clarified that this moratorium would prevent development on that singular lot as well as future development for property within City of Niles limits.

Mary Crain has been a long time resident of Niles and expressed her concern for the City and the lack of community engagement for children. She raised issues with the recent Park Levy that passed, the condition of streets she drives on her way to work, the lack of fireworks for the Fourth of July, and the proposed data center. Aaron Johnstone clarified with Auditor Merlo that the operating budget for the Park Department is \$1.6 million, and the levy only brings in about \$280,000 – although a small portion of what it takes to run the parks but helps make a difference in the improvements they can make to them. Aaron Johnstone also directed Mary to the proposed legislation for tonight, where Council plans to pass an appropriation for a fireworks show on the Fourth of July.

Lou Gerke raised his concern for the street behind the Red Dragon. He raised this issue two years ago and this street still has not gotten the attention it needs to fill the large potholes. Doug Sollitto directed this issue to Service Director Anthony Flarey considering the Mayor's absence at tonight's meeting. Flarey stated that alley's are lower on the list as far as street repaving. Mr. Gerke stated that this affects all of the residents on the street as well as the businesses who use this alley. Aaron Johnstone pointed out that the repaving of this alley could help the marketability of the businesses trying to sell nearby. Mr. Sollitto agreed that this would make a difference in the marketability of these businesses and asked Council if this would be something they would consider allotting money towards. Aaron Johnstone stated that he would like to present this to the Engineering department to get a ballpark quote on what this would cost before moving forward with legislation on it. Mr. Sollitto stated that Council will do some research into what this would cost and determine a plan for how to resolve this issue.

Carl Jordan gave a shoutout for the Community Clean Up with Jimmy Julian and Nicholas Hall in attendance. Mr. Jordan addressed the online comments regarding this clean up and the council member leading the clean up. Mr. Jordan expressed his distaste for residents who have negative comments to make on social media but cannot come down to help clean up their own community. There is another clean up this Saturday May 9 and Carl encouraged all the residents to take the time to come help.

Rocky Bowell, Commander of the American Legion Post 106 in Niles, also representing the VFW, addressed Council about the flags they install for Memorial Day at the graves in Niles Cemetery. Rocky addressed his need for volunteers to help direct the high school students in placing the flags on gravesites. This effort will be held on Saturday May 16th. Rocky expressed his concern for the dwindling volunteers that they have each year and he encourages the younger generation to get more involved. He appreciates any help that is offered. Auditor Merlo thanked

Rocky for his involvement in this effort and also encourages volunteers to join Rocky on the 16th. Mr. Sheely said he would recruit some of his coworkers at the plant to join. Law Director Phil Zuzolo told Rocky that he would be there to help volunteer.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION
(Legislation began at 26:24 into recording)

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 72-26)
AN ORDINANCE UPDATING CITY OF NILES PERMIT FEES AND NILES FIRE CODE FEE SCHEDULE AND CREATING NILES CODIFIED ORDINANCES 171 AND 172 FOR EACH FEE SCHEDULE, RESPECTIVELY; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Sheely to give a second reading to Draft No. 72-26.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 72-26 has received its second reading on this 6th day of May 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. ____ (Amended Draft No. 58-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF UNUSED LANDS OWNED BY THE CITY OF NILES TO TRUMBULL COUNTY LAND REUTILIZATION CORPORATION.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 66-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF NILES TO ENTER INTO A TAX INCREMENT FINANCING ("TIF") AGREEMENT WITH JRD HOLDINGS PARTNERSHIP FOR PHASE II OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TIF INCENTIVE DISTRICT; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 76-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR OF NILES TO ENTER INTO THE PY 2026 CHIP PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITIES OF GIRARD, HUBBARD, AND CORTLAND FOR THE PY 2026 COMMUNITY HOUSING IMPACT AND PRESERVATION PROGRAM FUNDS (CHIP) WITH THE OHIO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AGENCY, OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENTS; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 77-26)
AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A THEN AND NOW PAYMENT REQUEST FOR MAIN LITE ELECTRIC FOR EMERGENCY STORM DAMAGE OVERHEAD LINE REPAIRS; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 78-26)
AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A THEN AND NOW PAYMENT REQUEST FOR
CHARTER SPECTRUM FOR EMERGENCY RELOCATION OF SERVICES AND
POWER LINES; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 79-26)
A RESOLUTION TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING APPLICATIONS FOR DATA
CENTERS IN THE CITY OF NILES; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 80-26)
AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ENTER A LEASE FOR PRINTERS,
COPIERS, AND A SERVICE/MAINTENANCE CONTRACT; AND, DECLARING AN
EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 81-26)
A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE
UNAPPROPRIATED GENERAL, STREET AND SEWER FUND TO THE GASOLINE
ACCOUNT; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 82-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE
UNAPPROPRIATED CEMETERY FUND FOR REPAIR OF WIND DAMAGE TO THE
MAUSOLEUM; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 83-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE
UNAPPROPRIATED GENERAL FUND FOR CONSULTING SERVICES TO AMEND
NILES ZONING CODE FOR DATA CENTER REGULATIONS; AND, DECLARING
AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 84-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE
UNAPPROPRIATED GENERAL FUND FOR PURCHASE OF FIREWORKS IN
SUPPORT OF THE DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SQUARE RIBBON CUTTING FOR THE
FOURTH OF JULY; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 85-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE
UNAPPROPRIATED COMPUTER FUND FOR PERS; AND, DECLARING AN
EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Johnstone, seconded by Julian 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 6th day of May 2026.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

(Miscellaneous remarks began at 30:17 into recording)

Auditor Giovanne Merlo referenced the recently passed legislation, specifically the gas appropriation. Merlo stated that the budgeted amount for gas used in past years has already been used in the first 5 months of this year. The appropriation is needed considering the cost of gas currently. Additionally, working alongside council members, the City was able to secure a fireworks display for the Fourth of July despite it being pretty late in the game. He encouraged donations and sponsorships for this event.

Law Director Philip Zuzolo congratulated Abbey Lavelle, Clerk of Court, on recently passing the bar.

Service Director Anthony Flarey addressed Lou Gerke's public comment on the alley behind the Red Dragon stating that Bob Ward, head of the Street Department, will be making an effort to patch that alley within the next week.

Aaron Johnstone commented on his recent attendance to a housing symposium called Housing in the Mahoning Valley – Aligning Growth and Workforce Needs. He said it was very informative and as far as the housing concerns raised in this symposium, Niles is ahead of the curve with addressing these issues. He would like to advertise this message by partnering with local realtors and agents. Aaron also spotlighted Niles Graduation Day which is Sunday May 17th at 1:00 p.m. and congratulated all Niles graduates.

James Sheely commented on bringing back more events and community involvement that he remembers from years ago and the Fourth of July parade, car show, and firework display is just the start of that. Mr. Sheely also commented on the Street Resurfacing Program and that these streets will get the attention they need based on the funds available.

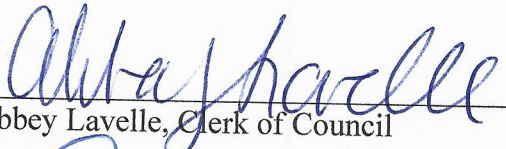
Jimmy Julian echoed Mr. Jordan's public comment about the rescheduled community clean up on May 9th at the bike trailhead.

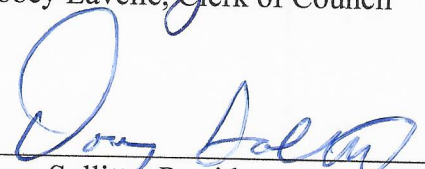
Ed Stredney commented on the CIC meeting taking place on May 7th @ 4:30 at the Niles Wellness Center and encourages attendance.

Doug Solitto addressed the legislation that passed tonight and the proposed moratorium, stating that the residents' concerns from last meeting have been heard loud and clear. Doug also wished Ed luck as he made it through the primary election. Ed Stredney commented on the way the public hearing went at the last council meeting and he appreciated everyone's decorum and respect when allowing each resident to speak.

ADJOURN

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


Abbey Lavelle, Clerk of Council


Doug Sollitto, President of Council