COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2026

Audio recording of the full meeting will be available online on the city's website or by request to the Clerk of Council

A roundtable meeting was held at 5:30 prior to the regular council meeting to discuss extending the data center moratorium for 6 more months. A public hearing will be held on December 2nd at 5:00 to discuss Zoning Code amendments to address Data Centers in Niles Codified Ordinances.

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 Lastic to accept and place on file the General Consent Agenda.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC REMARKS

(Public comments began at 1:33 into recording)

Dee Sebben questioned her utility bills and why they are getting more expensive. She brought three years of electric bills and presented different bills where shorter reading periods were just as expensive as longer reading periods. Doug asked about the usage in which she responded that yes the usage was different between the bills but when she added all of her bills together from one year they did not add up to 365 days. Dee Sebben stated that she signed a petition for the Billing Department to be audited to answer the discrepancy in reading periods and amount owed. Doug referred this to the Utilities as he doesn't understand what is going on himself as he has heard from other residents that they have also had exceptionally high utility bills. The Mayor added that the usage is what may cause the peaks and valleys in the bills as well as over the three years she has presented there has been an increase across water, sewer and electric rates so that may also explain the increase in the amount owed. Giovanne added that there has been two rate increases for electric, in 2025 and 2026. Dee added that the residents deserve to be notified of these increases.

Michael Hogan addressed council regarding a recent electric shut-off at his residence due to nonpayment but he did not receive a bill for two months. He was told by the Billing Department the lack of receiving a bill in the mail may have been due to the changeover in billing systems. Hogan stated when he went down to City Hall to resolve this electric shut-off he was not met with good customer service from the Billing Department. He added that even after he paid his bills to turn on, he still did not have power by 7:00 that night. The Mayor responded that the afternoon turn of workers for the Light Department are responsible for the turn-ons. Hogan added that the worker sent out to turn his electric on stated that Hogan was not on the turn-on list and dispatch was not aware either. He wants notification prior to an immediate shut off. The Mayor responded that he can sign up for text, paper, or email notifications. The Mayor also

stated that he should make sure his phone number is on file in order to receive robo-calls for shut offs in the future. The Mayor stated that the City is not required to give notice but they do so as a courtesy via phone number or email. Doug added that Hogan did not receive good treatment by the one billing clerk and he hopes the City looks into this issue as other residents have received similar treatment.

Abigail Bickerstaff addressed council regarding the new billing system as well as the customer service she has received from the billing department. Abigail claimed that ever since the billing system change her bills have been higher despite her household habits and usage has not changed. Aaron Johnstone questioned if there is something the City can do internally to verify there is no errors within the software causing this discrepancy with bills. The Mayor added that the meters have not changed yet, but when the City upgrades to smart meters the Billing Department will have the ability to set a reading period of 30 days to help with the issues of differing reading periods by some residents. The Mayor added that it is hard to explain any usage discrepancies because it is hard to explain how different residents habits are contributing to the bills they receive. His own usage jumped high this summer because of how hot it was. Residents should also look on their bill to see if the read was an actual or estimate. If the read is an estimate then call down to the Billing Department and they will rectify it immediately. The Mayor does not deny human error that may occur by the meter readers but again call down to the Billing Department to rectify that as well. Abigail added that her phone calls are met with sarcasm and a lack of customer service by the billing department. Doug urged City Administration to look into these issues.

Emma Kuznik addressed similar issues she has been dealing with her neighbor. Her neighbor called the cops on her for disturbing a worker who was fixing the waterline/sidewalk in front of her house. She wanted to address the treatment she has been receiving by the Niles Police Department as she has not been treated well. She wants the Mayor to address the police officers for how they are treating her and calling her crazy. Emma also added that the billing department has misread her meter in the past.

Carl Jordan agreed with the other public comments that he has noticed a change in his utility bills since the new billing system has been implemented. He has not had a bill under $200 since the changeover. Doug asked about his usage and Carl responded that his usage and habits have not changed that drastically. Doug agrees that something has to be going on but does not know where the issue is coming from. Sheely asked what part of his utilities are changing. Carl said its both electric and water/sewer that has increased on his bill but his usage has not changed. Sheely added that he is also feeling the pain but his water usage is what brought his bill up. Aaron Johnstone said to look at previous months bills and do the math to figure out the rate per utility. The Mayor added that even going back to his time on Council he remembers this time of year as having higher bills because the bills are a month behind and we are still paying for the hot months where we ran AC more than usual. He will monitor this issue and hopes everything levels out with these cooler months coming up. Doug added that the City may want to look in to reducing rates.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION

(Legislation began at 43:47 into recording)

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 180-26)
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CODIFIED ORDINANCE NO. 925.03(A) BY INCREASING THE RATES CHARGED FOR THE USE OF THE SANITARY SEWAGE SYSTEM: FOR THE YEARS 2027 THROUGH 2031; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Sheely, seconded by Stredney to give a second reading to Draft No. 180-26.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 180-26 has received its second reading on this 21st day of October 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 165-26)
AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR THE CITY FUNDED BUSINESS GRANT APPROVED BY THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION OF NILES FOR IMPERIAL GLAZING CONCEPTS INC.; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Stredney, seconded by Sheely to give a third reading and adopt Draft No. 165-26.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 165-26 has received its third reading and adopted on this 21st day of October 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 166-26)
AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR THE CITY FUNDED BUSINESS GRANT APPROVED BY THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION OF NILES FOR TJAKS HOSPITALITY LLC DBA TOMMY DOGGS; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Stredney, seconded by Lastic to give a third reading and adopt Draft No. 166-26.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 166-26 has received its third reading and adopted on this 21st day of October 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 169-26)
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 371.12 "ELECTRIC PERSONAL ASSISTIVE MOBILITY DEVICES" OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NILES; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Weddell to give a third reading and adopt Draft No. 169-26.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 169-26 has received its third reading and adopted on this 21st day of October 2026.

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 170-26)
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 373 "BICYCLES AND MOTORCYCLES" OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NILES; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Sheely to give a third reading and adopt Draft No. 170-26.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Draft No. 170-26 has received its third reading and adopted on this 21st day of October 2026.

**Before getting into the consent agenda Aaron Johnstone moved to amend Draft 186-26 for a typo in the heading, it should read 'General Fund not Technology Fund'. Aaron also commented on Draft 187-26, stating that typically we give zoning amendments three readings but this is on the consent agenda because of a purchase that is being held up. He added that it is Council's wish whether to give this draft it's three readings. Doug addressed Council if they were all in agreement with these proposals. Council agreed.

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

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 182-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION TO COMPLETE THE REPLACEMENT OF SHIELD AND MILE MARKER SIGNS ALONG U.S. 422 AND STATE ROUTE 169 IN THE CITY OF NILES, OHIO; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 183-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED POLICE AND FIRE FUND FOR PURCHASE OF A LADDER TRUCK; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 184-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION BUDGET TRANSFER; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 185-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING MONTHLY CASH TRANSFERS; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 186-26)
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED GENERAL FUND FOR THE HOUSING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

ORDINANCE NO. _____(Draft No. 187-26)
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING NILES ZONING CODE SECTION 1141; AND, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

It was moved by Johnstone, seconded by Stredney 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 21st day of October 2026.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

(Miscellaneous remarks began at 50:49 into recording)
Mayor Mientkiewicz reminded the community of the annual Halloween parade on Saturday October 31st in downtown Niles as well as a band, face painting and food vendors set up in Public Square immediately following the parade. From 5:30-7:30 will be the community trick or treat.

Auditor Merlo commented that 2027 budgets are being finalized with budget meetings to proceed next week.

Todd Weddell commented on the demolition of the flea market on 422 and thanked the City for their help in getting it done.

Aaron Johnstone commented on tonight's legislation regarding the appropriation of money for a new firetruck. He wanted to thank previous council who were involved in this as it has been a long effort in the works, and he thanked current council members for bringing it to fruition. Aaron also commented on the Niles Highschool Girls Soccer Team on their path to state championship. He urged everyone to go out and support the girls.

James Sheely commented on the utility bill discussion tonight and the hardships that result from it. He looks forward to the smart meter upgrade that will greatly reduce any human error from manual readings. The new meters will be set to 30 days, and we will no longer have those drastic differences in reading periods.

Frank Leskovec wished everyone a happy and safe Halloween, urging driver's to drive slow and trick or treaters to be careful.

Ed Stredney reiterated the importance of the firetruck purchase, adding that years ago there was no car purchasing program where the City has been able to upgrade a lot of their vehicles over the years through past and current council. He states his appreciation for the City and Council admiring how far the City has come with their upgrades and improvements projects.

Doug Sollitto commented that as the City grows so does the money that we bring in and he urges the City to stay fiscally sound when it comes to services we provide. Adding that the increase in utility bills are greatly affecting residents.

ADJOURN

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

Abbey Lavelle, Clerk of Council

Doug Sollitto, President of Council