

COUNCIL MINUTES

October 20, 2025
Council Chambers
7:00 P.M.

President Harris called the meeting to order

ROLL CALL – Mr. Marmie, Mr. Neely, Mr. Rath, Mr. Rine, Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline, Mr. Chute, Mr. Cost, Mr. Labutis

INVOCATION – Ms. Bline

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Cody & Caleb Hartings, 5th grade, McGuffey Elementary

CAUCUS – Motion by Mr. Marmie to excuse Mr. Houser, Second by Mr. Barker, Passed by acclamation

MINUTES of October 6, 2025, Motion to accept by Mr. Labutis, Second by Mr. Barker, Passed by acclamation

APPOINTMENTS

There are none this meeting.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance – **Received and Filed without objection**

Service - **Received and Filed without objection**

Capital Improvement - **Received and Filed without objection**

REPORTS FROM CITY OFFICIALS

Brenda Cooper, Tax Administrator – Income Tax Revenue Reports for the period ending September 30, 2025 - **Received and Filed without objection**

COMMUNICATIONS

Ohio Division of Liquor Control - Transfer liquor permit from Morlen Investments, LLC., 81 Calburn St., to Brewsky's Drive Thru LLC., 81 Calburn St., Newark, Ohio. - **Received and Filed without objection**

Ohio Division of Liquor Control – An application to change the stock ownership in the liquor permit for Roosters Newark Inc. - **Received and Filed without objection**

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Chris Gargus, 103 Swainford Dr., Heath, Ohio - I represent the Champions Network. We're a recovery place here in Newark, Ohio. This is our 10th year in existence. Over the last 10 years, we've helped hundreds of people find their way using a sobriety method, using Bible-based meetings and also daily contact. We actually contact these guys every day. I get between 20 and 30 calls a day from people that need help. Sometimes I'll get 10 or 15 texts a day. Sometimes instant messages. We get 20 or 30 of those a day. It's that busy because we try to really help people get through their struggles. It's all about that. So recently, in 2022, we started out in a little house over by the hotel there on 6th Street, and then we moved over to the vertical for a while. There had been a little church. We moved to Newark Faith Church, which is on 261 East Main Street across from Salvation Army back in 2022, September 2022. We partnered with a group called Summer Bloom Recovery. They're right down the

street from us. They take them right off the street. They do IOPs with them. They drug test them, and they ship them right off to help. We'll drive them to their place wherever they've got to go. We'll ship them right off to recovery that same day. We've been doing this for three years now with them. So, what happened with that is over the last two and a half, almost three years now, we've sent over 135 people into treatment since that time. We are currently daily counseling 250 individuals, and they're staying sober. They're staying clean. These are people that a lot of you all know because they've all been through law enforcement in one way. You guys probably know a lot of these people. That's who we work with on a daily basis. That's kind of like my ministry now. I used to be in youth ministry. Now I'm doing this. This is a lot different. It's a lot harder, but you know what? It's very rewarding. So, I wanted to kind of go over a little bit of the rewarding part of that. She started with a group called The Refuge. I don't know if you've ever heard of them. They're a place over in Columbus that does the same thing. They're a residential. We started with them in 2015, just partnering with them. They did a survey in 2018 called Social Determinants of Health, and it was first initiated by the World Health Organization back in 1948. The purpose of this was to survey to assess how individuals in recovery treatment are positively affecting their community through the survey that highlights each individual's current status and level of effectiveness in the community now. So, they've gone through recovery, they're on the other side, and now we're going into being back in effect in our community on a regular basis. That's the process of the survey. So, we did this with 42 of our individuals between 2024 and 2025, and here's our results. These will all mean something to you now. Forty-eight percent of them now have full-time employment. That's half of them. Seventy-one percent of them have housing stability. That means they're no longer on the street. Seventy-four percent of them have food security. So they're not, you know, begging for food, and they can do it themselves now. Fifty-seven percent of them report reliable transportation. That's a big one. That's kind of the hardest one to get a hold of, but that's a biggie. Now, this is one that saves the taxpayers the money. These last three are the big ones, okay? Seventy-six percent of them report not going to the hospital or emergency room for drug and alcohol-related reasons. That's a big one. Seventy-six percent. That's a huge number. Eighty-one percent of them have no involvement with the justice system anymore. That's these people we work with on a daily basis. Ninety percent of them are attending care and self-help groups on a regular basis. Those three numbers right there are the biggest ones that I was after, and they're the highest ones. And we're going to get better with it. From August of 2022 to September of 2025, the overdose mortality rate in Licking County has dropped 53 percent. We went from 58 to 31 to 33 and 24, and now we've only lost 10 people this year. Losing any of them is terrible, but from those big numbers to 10, that's amazing to me. So, I know I'm moving, and I know God's moving. I don't know if you believe that or not, but God moves, so you move big. Every loss is bad, but here's another big one. We lost 39 people to Fentanyl in 2022. This year, we've only lost two. That's a huge drop. So, I say this because I want to encourage you guys to know there're people out there in your corner trying to help you get this community together. I know addiction is a big one. It was the biggest thing I wanted to tackle. I wanted to go after it. I'm tenacious. I'm not going to stop until it's towards zero. That's my goal. I know that God's in this. You say what you want about it, but I know he's in it. He's caused all this and every time I need a big encounter or something to happen, boom, it shows up. We do this on a very, very small budget. But I know he's in it and I know he's doing it and I just want to report you guys, let you know what's going on. So, there you go. That's all I got.

Kim Shook, 195 Union St. - Good evening. I'm operations manager for Anew Behavioral Health, and we are opening an office here in Newark. I also personally live here in Newark. We're projecting to open an office here at the Commerce Center over on Union Street, a new approach to behavioral health. We are also offering substance use disorders for addiction and sober living homes that we will be wanting

to open approximately two here in Newark. So, we want to partner with the community and, you know, work with that for zoning and those things. It's called Anew Integrated Recovery. It's our AIR program. We'll offer substance abuse day treatment programs for those that are living in the sober house and then coming to the office to our place there at the Commerce Center for day treatment and having a house manager and those sorts of things. But on the mental behavioral health side, we offer psychiatry, nursing, therapy, and case management. Our assessments don't take too long at all, just within 24 to 48 hours for an admission for an intake to process and start treatment. So, we just wanted to let you know that we are here in the community of Newark coming to open soon here shortly in mid-November hopefully. As a partner, we'll be offering assessments, psychiatry care, individual therapy, family therapy, case management, med management, those kind of things, care coordination of care, and all ages. We can go into the school and help assist with student things like that. Thank you for my time here tonight and I look forward to working with all of you and serving the community.

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

There are none this meeting.

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

There are none this meeting.

RESOLUTIONS ON SECOND READING

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Mr. Cost, Ms. Bline, Mr. Labutis, Mr. Rath

25-60 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEWARK TO PREPARE AND SUMIT TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) A ONE YEAR USE OF FUNDS/ACTION PLAN ALONG WITH AN APPLICATION FOR FY 2026 FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS (CDBG), AS REQUIRED BY 24 CFR PART 91.220, FOR VARIOUS PROGRAMS RELATED TO HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Barker, Motion passed 9-0

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Mr. Cost, Ms. Bline, Mr. Labutis, Mr. Rath

25-61 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEWARK TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE STATE OF OHIO 2025 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND GRANT.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Cost, Motion passed 9-0

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Mr. Cost, Ms. Bline, Mr. Labutis, Mr. Rath

25-62 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEWARK TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE STATE OF OHIO BUREAU OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION FIREFIGHTER EXPOSURE TO ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS GRANT (FEEG).

Motion to adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Barker, Motion passed 9-0

Mr. Rath, Mr. Cost, Mr. Barker, Mr. Marmie, Ms. Bline, Mr. Labutis

25-63 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS, AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT/CONTRACTS, SUBJECT TO THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS, FOR THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AT WELLS PARK.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Rath, Second by Mr. Cost, Motion passed 9-0

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Mr. Cost, Ms. Bline, Mr. Labutis, Mr. Rath

25-64 A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Barker, Motion passed 9-0

RESOLUTIONS ON FIRST READING

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline, Mr. Rath

25-65 A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION.

Held until 11.3.25

Mr. Chute, Mr. Cost, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline, Mr. Rath

25-66 A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION.

Held until 11.3.25

Mr. Rath, Mr. Cost, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline

25-67 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO, ("CITY") TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO SELL APPROXIMATELY 13,760 BOARD FEET OF TIMBER LOCATED ON PART OR ALL OF PARCEL NUMBERS 054-186632-00.000/054-199158-00.000/054-189192-00.000/054-196074-00.000/054-199152-00.000, AND 055-158602-00.000 LOCATED OFF OF EAST MAIN STREET AND ECOLOGY ROW AND OWNED BY THE CITY IN MADISON TOWNSHIP, LICKING COUNTY, OHIO, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Rath, Second by Ms. Bline

Mr. Rath – Mr. President, this is a revenue generating endeavor. We are trying to get this done before the end of the year, before weather sets in.

Motion passed 9-0

Mr. Rath, Mr. Cost, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline

25-68 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE OHIO PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION - STATE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM AND TO EXECUTE CONTRACTS AS REQUIRED.

Held until 11.3.25

Mr. Rath, Mr. Cost, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline

25-69 A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING RATES FOR THE STORMWATER UTILITY SERVICE CHARGE AS AUTHORIZED BY CODIFIED ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO.

Held until 11.3.25

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Steven Smith, 237 Violet Ct. - Just want to comment that we're voting now, but early voting is underway. I want to encourage everyone who has not voted yet to be sure they do vote. The last day for voting is the first Tuesday of November. November 4th, thanks. I want to caution you that as you go

in to vote, be certain that anyone that might attempt to influence your vote as you go in, this is not allowed. There are limits to the space where people can do electioneering and the spot where they cannot, they're marked. Anyone that approaches inside those is, my understanding, breaking the law. If that happens, I would encourage you not to engage these people, but do mention it to the elections officers inside the Board of Elections for early voting. With that, I just want to reiterate that elections are one of the most important things we do as citizens. Please be sure to do it.

MISCELLANEOUS

Tricia Moore, Law Director – I just want to say thank you to Chris Gargus and Champions for what you're doing. I appreciate that. I know how hard that is having taken on Home Court, but it is good work, it's satisfying work, and God does move. So, thank you for talking about that. Ms. Shook, thank you for coming in and I'm sure we'll be talking soon. Thank you. With that, I'll pass.

Mayor Hall – I will pass this evening, thank you.

Mr. Marmie – Thank you, Mr. President. I need to call a Finance Committee meeting for November the 3rd. I want to, first of all, encourage everyone to get out to vote and make sure that you're supporting the things that are important with your community. As well as the candidates that you are wishing to move the, whether it's the city, the county, or the state forward. Also, I'm going to just comment, once again, about the finances of the City of Newark. There's an issue on the ballot that is very important and the fact that city services will be cut if it does not pass. Some of those services are things that are near and dear to our heart. When you have, you know, close to 50% of your budget goes to safety forces and you have to cut the budget, where do you think the majority is going to come from? The other thing is infrastructure, which is our second priority. Safety is first, then infrastructure. Paving could be, once again, zero dollars going towards paving. So therefore, I encourage folks to get educated and not to just listen to those that are out there stating rhetoric about how, you know, the City is just trying to pad things and spend money on things. That is not the case. We need the money to maintain our current level of service. This is not to increase services, this is to maintain our current level of service. So, making sure that folks are very aware of that. I want to give a shout out to the law director's office and she mentioned the terminology Home Court. I haven't had the opportunity to visit yet. The keyword yet. I do want to visit and make sure that I'm able to observe. But I am hearing nothing but positive and huge accolades to our law director's office and what that has done for our community, and it's greatly appreciated. I'll actually state that I scrutinized the fact that, are we going to spend a dime on this? And the answer was no. And we have not, and we benefited tremendously on the positive side, because of a lot of the reduction in expenses, like what the gentleman indicated before. So, thank you very much, appreciate what you have done, and what your folks have done, and with that, I will pass.

Mr. Neely - Thank you, I'll pass.

Mr. Rath – Thank you, I would also like to encourage everybody to vote anytime between now and November 4th, Mr. Gargus, we appreciate the work that you're doing. Those are very impressive numbers, great work, and obviously with God's blessing. We appreciate you. Please keep that up. I saw recently that we're going to be putting a roundabout on Thornwood, that is obviously in anticipation of future traffic. I'm sure that'll be welcomed and well needed. Also, in anticipation of future traffic, I would encourage you, Mr. Mayor, to open the Cherry Valley Bridge. I will also echo what Mr. Marmie said about the levy. That is definitely in great need. I'll call a Service Committee meeting for November 3rd, and with that, I'll pass.

Mr. Rine – Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to echo the levy. I think it was \$11 or \$12 per person per month, a raise, the tax. So, if that isn't worth pretty much like a Netflix subscription, if maintaining

our quality of life, if that isn't worth a Netflix subscription per month, that's kind of the way you might have to break it down to people. I think it's worth it. I would cancel mine to pay that. With that, I'll pass.

Mr. Barker – Thank you, Mr. President. I would just echo again, as Mr. Rath said, Mr. Marmie's comments on the levy and the need for it, and the fact that services will be cut, unfortunately, if it doesn't pass. It's not, as some have alluded in the media and in other places in different public meetings, it's not padding of our coffers at all. The other thing I want to mention is, Mr. Rath mentioned it, the Showman Arch Bridge. I've had a lot of calls. I have family that live over on that end and was at the Planning Commission meeting, and one of the Planning Commission members directly asked during it, this last meeting, about that bridge, because of an apartment complex that's being proposed on the other side of Cherry Valley, another commercial development. So, I would ask as well that we give serious consideration to reopening that bridge. With that, I will pass.

Ms. Bline – Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for speaking so well, Mr. Marmie. I appreciate that. The levy is very important. Again, please disassociate yourself from misinformation. Do your homework. The facts are out there. And again, thank you for speaking so well to it. I'd like to thank the volunteers that have been coming out every Saturday morning to help our seniors prepare for winter. And to help, how do I say, build community in places where it's been absent for a while. So, I want to thank them for coming out again, and again, and again. I want to thank Mr. Gargus. Has it been ten years? I had the honor of joining Mr. Gargus nine years ago, and it has been an adventure. And honestly, I've worked on both coasts and many inner cities, but I haven't seen anything that works quite like Champions does. Many have six-figure budgets with six-figure salaries, and a stack of employees a mile deep, and with a stack of expenses, but these guys get along on almost nothing. And to have these kinds of results, and again, God is blessing you. God is honoring you, and just keep going, doing great. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chute – Thank you, Mr. President. I will pass.

Mr. Cost – I'd like to thank Mr. Gargus and Ms. Shook for coming out this evening and letting us know all the incredible services they have to offer. I had the honor of attending Home Court, and it is incredible. I want to thank the law director for what they put together there. It's something I want to attend fairly regularly. It's amazing the result they're getting and how well it's being done. With that, I will pass.

Mr. Labutis – Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to thank Mr. Gargus. I always appreciate when you come in and share the statistics. Thank you for showing up every day for the past ten years and doing what you do and what your network does as well. I appreciate that. Ms. Shook, thank you for being here. Welcome to the community. I look forward to working with you. Also, I'd like to remind everybody to vote somewhere between now and November 4th. And as other members of the Council have said, support the levy because we need it for next year. With that, I will pass.

President Harris – Thank you. Has anybody ever witnessed a miracle or had a miracle happen to you in life? There was one yesterday in Cleveland! The Browns won and I wasn't there. Our next meeting is November 3rd.

ADJOURNMENT - Motion to adjourn by Mr. Cost, Second by Mr. Labutis, passed by acclamation

Jeff Harris, President of Council