COUNCIL MINUTES

February 2, 2026
Council Chambers
7:00 P.M.

President Harris called the meeting to order

ROLL CALL – Ms. Bline, Mr. Chute, Mr. Cost, Mr. Houser, Ms. Ingold, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Neely, Ms. Newman, Mr. Barker

INVOCATION – Mr. Harris

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CAUCUS - Motion by Mr. Marmie to excuse Mr. Labutis, Second by Mr. Houser, Passed by acclamation

MINUTES of January 20, 2026, Motion to accept by Mr. Barker, Second by Mr. Houser, Passed by acclamation

APPOINTMENTS

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES
Finance - **Received and filed without objection**
Service - **Received and filed without objection**

REPORTS FROM CITY OFFICIALS
Brandon Fox, Water Administrator - A list of properties being sent to county property tax lien for past due water, sewer, and stormwater bills, totaling $6,448.67. - **Received and filed without objection**

COMMUNICATIONS
Ohio Division of Liquor Control - New liquor permit for Tee Jayes Country Place Inc., 1195 N. 21st St., Newark, Ohio. - **Received and filed without objection**

Ohio Division of Liquor Control – Transfer liquor permit from Sudhir Dubey, 380 Seroco Ave., Newark, Ohio to Roadpops LLC, dba Roadpops Bar and Grill, 380 Seroco Ave., Newark, Ohio. - **Received and filed without objection**

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS
Arnold Friend, 456 Seroco Ave. - What I'd like to talk about is this last summer, the area that's closed in Raccoon Creek by the railroad bridge, you have a cement divider on one end and a cement divider by Wilson Street. Myself and some neighbors have been picking that up and cleaning that, almost making it like a park so anybody could go there, right? And you didn't have to worry about garbage and razor blades and all that stuff. And I've been cleaning the river area there. Well, I'm kind of—we're kind of beating our head against the wall because across Raccoon Creek is LEADS on Wilson, and between LEADS' fence and the railroad right there on the LEADS side, and I have nothing against the homeless, but someone is going in there. There's so much garbage coming down the hill and into the river, I can't keep up with it. I mean, I'm talking every week I'm down there getting two or three bags out of the

river. If LEADS is letting them back in there, someone needs to say something to somebody, whether it's LEADS or whoever, to help with this garbage, because it's getting down in the river and I can't catch all of it. And I know that's going into somebody's drinking water somewhere. I've talked to the EPA. When I explained it to her and sent some pictures I had, they sent information on the U.S. Soil and Conservation, because it's going on a river and into somebody's drinking water supply. So I'm looking for some help here, whether LEADS is allowing them to do this. I think, being they get public funding, they need to be held somewhat accountable to help clean up back there and to get someone to help clean up back there. I don't go on the LEADS side because I know that's private property, and I don't want to start any trouble, but I'm doing this by myself with my own trash bags and everything. I've talked to Beth Bline quite a few times. She's helped out down there and brought people to help clean it out, but if you look over from the Wilson side by the machine shop and then back at LEADS, you can see old tarps, old tents, garbage—you know, tin cans, pop bottles, everything else—coming down the hill from there into the water. I wanted to bring it up to you people so you know this is an ongoing problem. I'm just a simple guy, a retiree, trying to make a clean area where you could bring your son or daughter. I go down there; I have two dogs. I walk down there and play Frisbee—a clean place that we can go is all I'm trying to do. But I'd like to see if I can get a little help somewhere.

Tom Brunner, 419 S. 2nd St. - Hope everybody had a good holiday this year. What I'm here for—Newark used to have a parking ordinance, and if you park on the street for 72 hours in the same spot and it's not moved, your car would be marked and then be towed. If we still have that parking ordinance, why isn't it enforced? We've got a guy on Isabelle Road, 215 to be exact. He parks big trucks and trailers. I talked about this last year. He parks in there with expired tags, and nothing gets done. Well, the big truck did get towed this past week. The trailer is still sitting there with expired tags. He took and moved it forward a little bit. So if we don't have to have tags for our vehicles, why waste our money? We'll all drive on expired tags. I mean, that ain't right. I have sent things to Newark PD online. We've called. Last summer, I probably called 20 times. This guy gets by with doing everything. I don't know if he knows somebody or what, but he parks his vehicles out there with expired tags.

He parks the big trucks and trailers out there. It makes it hard—real hard—to get through, and it's uncalled for that he's running a business out of his house. That's not a commercial area; that's residential. To run a business, it has to be commercial. Also, his property looks like a city dump. He's got all this equipment sitting all over his property, back and front. He cleaned it up last year once when somebody complained, and it's right back the same way it was. So something needs to be done at 215, because we've got a state law that requires us to register our vehicles, or we get impounded or something like that. We need to start enforcing these laws and ordinances, because it's not right when people are calling and the vehicles are still sitting there and nothing's being done. Why? Thank you.

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

There are none this meeting.

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

By: Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline, Mr. Cost, Ms. Ingold, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Neely

25-49 An ordinance approving and authorizing the law director of the City of Newark or the law director's designee to take all necessary steps to annex the property, being 1.998 acres, more or less, known as 3131 Horns Hill Road, as recorded in instrument number 202212270029997; 0.546 acres, more or less, located in the Township of Newark, as identified by instrument number

202409130016055; and 1.231 acres, more or less, located in the Township of Newark, as identified by auditor's parcel number 058-290796-00.000 pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 709.16. **Held until 2.17.26**

By: Mr. Barker, Mr. Cost, Mr. Neely, Mr. Marmie, Ms. Ingold
25-50 An ordinance to assume maintenance responsibility for the full width of Horns Hill Road from Wildflower Drive until Horns Hill Road exits the municipality's limits adjacent to 2250 Horns Hill Road, Newark, Ohio 43055, and to authorize the service director to enter into all necessary road maintenance agreements with the Licking County Board of Commissioners for the maintenance of Horns Hill Road. **Held until 2.17.26**

By: Mr. Barker, Mr. Cost, Ms. Bline, Ms. Ingold
26-01 AN ORDINANCE CHANGING THE ZONING CLASSIFICATION OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY, GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS 483 RIDGE AVENUE, CITY OF NEWARK, LICKING COUNTY, OHIO, PARCEL TAX ID #054-192894-00.000, FROM THAT OF SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE RH – HIGH DENSITY ZONING DISTRICT TO TFR TWO-FAMILY RESIDENCE ZONING DISTRICT, ZONING CODE OF THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO. **Referred to the Planning Commission**

RESOLUTIONS ON SECOND READING
There are none this meeting.

RESOLUTIONS ON FIRST READING
By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Ms. Bline, Mr. Barker, Mr. Chute, Mr. Neely, Ms. Ingold
26-01 A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION. **Held until 2.17.26**

By: Mr. Barker, Mr. Cost, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Chute, Mr. Neely, Ms. Ingold
26-02 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO, TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITHOUT COMPETITIVE BIDDING, SUBJECT TO THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS, FOR THE PURCHASE OF A REPLACEMENT UTILITY BILLING SOFTWARE (UBS) FOR THE WATER, SEWER AND STORMWATER DEPARTMENTS. **Held until 2.17.26**

By: Mr. Barker, Mr. Cost, Ms. Bline, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Chute, Mr. Neely, Ms. Ingold
26-03 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE FOR THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO, TO ENTER INTO AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE LICKING COUNTY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT AND THE CITY OF HEATH FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CERTAIN IMPROVEMENTS TO THORNWOOD DRIVE KNOWN AS THE THORNWOOD DRIVE - FAYE DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT, PHASE 2 WORK. **Held until 2.17.26**

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS
Brandon Fox, Water Administrator - Good evening. I have a couple things. I want to speak to Resolution 26-02. There were a couple questions that were raised at the committee meeting the last time regarding the security of that program. So I did speak with AlphaLink, who's the city's IT provider,

on the interconnection between the City and the cloud-based software. They have no problems or concerns with the security of the system. They actually referred and said that it was very similar to how the fire department uses their 911 alert system, so no concerns there. I also looked into the scope of services for that agreement that we have with Spry Point. I had the law director's office run through that as well. There are measures in that scope of service that call out if there's a breach on either side, the City or on the Spry Point side, that we have to notify them or they have to notify us within 48 hours as well, so that we can both cooperate together to try to resolve those issues. So, just wanted to share that I did follow up a little bit with that and feel pretty confident in the system. Happy to answer any questions that might be there. Secondly, I wanted to give a shout out and a big thanks to all the water and sewer staff over the last 10 days since the snowstorm hit. Treating water is hard enough. When it starts to freeze, it becomes even harder. So, from office staff to field crews to our water and wastewater folks at the plants have done an excellent job. We've had 8 or 10 water breaks over the last 10 days, so that's not fun. Dealing with customers with frozen meters, with frozen water lines, with all the things that come associated with it. And add to it, you know, snow removal. We had folks that were out last Sunday, Monday, Tuesday helping the street department remove snow, and then we've been trucking snow out of downtown Newark to try to help clear the path for trying to get folks back to work. So, just want to give a shout out to them and tell everybody thanks for their hard work. So, thank you.

Mark Mauter, Director of Development - Good evening. I just want to give you a quick update on the PCA project. That's the largest economic development project in Licking County. Packaging Corp is the current commercial manufacturer here in Newark. They've been here a long time. They're building that new site on Thornwood Drive, all the way to the railroad tracks. I had a chance to talk with my contact from PCA last week. He's happy to report they are on time, they're on budget, and things are going well. They're pretty well under roof. They're pouring the deep areas of concrete where the really heavy manufacturing equipment is going to sit. They're doing that here this coming month. They expect new equipment to be rolling into the site in March. They are going to have all new equipment at the site. They're not going to reuse anything from 21st Street. They also feel confident that they will have new product rolling out early third quarter. So probably around August 1st is when they anticipate product rolling out on the streets. And so, it's very exciting. They're really happy to be in Newark. They're really happy with all the coordination that's taking place with the city, with the county, and the economic development incentives we were able to provide with our enterprise zone tax abatement. So, I just thought you should hear about that. If you want to see what it looks like, go to the top of Thornwood Drive right before you get to West Main Street, and you can see what 525,000 square feet looks like. It's an impressive site. They still have to get the railroad spur into the facility, but they're working on that. And we, the City of Newark, have a roundabout to build at Thornwood Drive and Faye Drive. That's going to be their primary entrance in and out for their trucking traffic. We also are going to be putting in a third middle turn lane from the roundabout going south to the railroad tracks to accommodate their truck traffic, their employee traffic, and visitor traffic. So, a lot of work to go. We need some good weather, so hopefully old man winter gets this out of the system and we can move on with bigger and better things and better construction weather. So just wanted to give you a quick update. Thank you.

MISCELLANEOUS

Tricia Moore, Director of Law – Thank you, Mr. President. I will be following up on the LEADS property. I know Property Maintenance is involved in that situation. Mr. Brunner, I will also be looking at the

property at 215 to see if Property Maintenance needs to be involved with that, or if they are involved. Please see me at the end of the next Council meeting about updates. With that, I'll pass.
Mayor Hall – I will pass this evening, thank you.
Ms. Bline – I want to thank our plow drivers. I had an opportunity to do a ride-along during the height of the storm, and it was good to learn what they encounter and how they mediate situations and try to fulfill what is desired in a timely manner. And it's very difficult, but they did a great job. Obviously, no one expected the snow that we had, that we were going to get that much accumulation, and our plow teams, they did a great job. I'd also like to thank the 2nd Ward snow shoveling teams. One is sitting amongst us. They did a great job to free residential driveways and sidewalks and they all made such a difference and it was a good time. Now there's a recent meeting with Armstrong and I really want to thank them. They have done so much to mediate community concerns in the south end and what good community partners we have in our businesses. They've taken complaints, they've really looked into them diligently to see how best they can help that community on 6th street and I really appreciate them. Mr. Brunner, I agree. It's gone on far too long. I have seen accidents where the trucks and trailers have been hit numerous times. I reported them, many citizens have reported them and it has continued. Our chief of police is waiting to speak with you after council, and I look forward to you having that conversation with him. Mr. Friend, thank you for coming. Any person can register a complaint. Any person. I appreciate the law director's intervention in this as well as property maintenance. I do not know the licensing parameters for that, for LEADS, but I do trust our law director and her wisdom in this matter. So, thank you for coming. Thank you.
Mr. Chute - Thank you Mr. President. I'll just say I want to thank the street department for all their hard work in recent weeks and they're doing a tremendous job and we appreciate everything they're doing. Director Rhodes, I appreciate him. With that, I will pass.
Mr. Cost – I also just want to thank anyone that had anything to do with plowing the streets. I think given the kind of weather we had, the amount of snow and the incredibly low temperatures, I know how hard that makes it and they just did a great job. I just want to say thanks. I'll pass.
Mr. Houser – Thank you, Mr. President. I'll just thank Brandon and the water team for all that work. I can't imagine trying to dig up water lines when it's negative degrees out, so thank you for all the work on that. That's tremendous. Thanks to the street department as well, and with that, I'll pass.
Ms. Ingold – Not only do I want to thank the street department, but I received several emails from folks or even just talked with people who said thank you, that the street department did a great job. So, know that the people who are receiving the services are appreciating what you're doing, including the people in Park Trail, Brandon. Thank you so much for getting the road open and really staying close in communication, because that allowed me to be in communication with them, and I appreciate that. But I got several great responses that everything's open there now on River Road, so thank you very much for doing that, and with that, I'll pass.
Mr. Marmie – Thank you, Mr. President. Need to call a Finance Committee meeting for February the 17th. Yes, Mr. Friend, I believe the law director has things as far as the property maintenance. I had noted here that it is a property maintenance issue and it should be addressed, but it sounds like they're already addressing it. Mr. Brunner, some things about some of the comments that you had made as far as vehicles on the street. That now is a complaint-driven thing in the city of Newark. We do not just go around looking for those. It has to be driven by a complaint, so that does have to be forwarded so someone will come out and mark the tire if it's sitting there. I'm going to tag on to something you stated at the end. It is required that if a vehicle is parked on the street or even in someone's yard, it does have to have license plates that are valid. If not, it is considered junk, and it is not an Ohio—that's a Newark thing. So again, Property Maintenance would be involved in that because

it's a junk vehicle, and junk vehicles are not authorized. You mentioned trash and things; that also is Property Maintenance. As far as running a business out of someone's home that is not zoned, that is a code—one of our codes—and that is done through the county now. So, you would have to go through the county for code enforcement as far as businesses. All right? And then finally, I just want to thank all the city workers that did so much during the snowstorm. Our street department, considering what we had, did a fabulous job. I mean, I was shocked at how quickly they got to it. I know Director Rhodes said that it might be, you know, up to a week, but they really got at it a lot quicker, and they made it safe first. That was the first priority, and then they went back and cleaned some things up. When I say safe first, I mean emergency vehicles wouldn't even have been able to respond to some of the locations. So, they did all of that, and then they went back, especially in the evenings. I also want to say that I had some constituents who said thank you for plowing and for blocking in the vehicles that are parked on the road. They appreciated it because those vehicles are not supposed to be parked there. I also want to thank the water department. I know that we had a few breaks and things, and just working in frigid temperatures and doing what they did—I really appreciate that. And with that, I will pass. Thank you.

Mr. Neely – Thank you, Mr. President. I want to thank the street department, the water department for all the work in the freezing temperatures and getting the snow cleared. I thought they did a great job. Thank you.

Ms. Newman – I'll reiterate what most everyone here said to all of the city workers. We've had to field phone calls with everything that has happened. I think it's been taxing on everyone. So, as a new council member, navigating the first big snow has been an experience. I don't know if Mr. Rhodes is still here, but thank you to him for his communication and how he gets that information out and about. I also did want to show that I did make good on a promise. There are R&M cookies in the box. About half of them are gone. There's still some there for a treat from Ward 7. I also just wanted to thank Mr. Marmie for coming to the Historic Hudson chicken noodle dinner last weekend. And also, a big thanks to the Historic Hudson Association, who donated a large chunk of their leftovers to the street department before they had to go out and do the first clearing. So, I want to thank the Hudson Association for doing that. And with that, I'll pass.

Mr. Barker – Thank you, Mr. President. Going last is always fun because everybody pretty much said everything, but I want to add a few other things. Not only did we have the street department out, but we also had the engineering department out in trucks, cemetery and parks, including some water out plowing snow. So, at any time during this event, we had at least 25 people out between different departments working on this snowstorm. So, I want to thank all of them and all those other departments for pitching in to help. I also want to thank Newark Fire and Newark Police. It probably was not fun to go out on some of those runs and calls you had, but you guys did it, and you protect us every day, and we appreciate everything you guys do. Water main breaks—I had one around the corner from my house. It was about negative 20 that day when they were working on it, and I walked down to see the guys and they were telling me about one story that actually Brandon had mentioned to me, where they literally worked, I think, over 14 hours on one break here in the city. So, it definitely was a trying time, and we appreciate all our employees and everything they do every day staying safe. I need to call a Service meeting for Tuesday, February 17th, and with that, I will pass.

President Harris – It is Black History Month, starting yesterday, and as I always do, I always give a couple quick facts. So for tonight, the first black lawyer, John Mercer Langston, was the first Black man to become a lawyer when he passed the bar in Ohio in 1854. When he was elected to the post of town clerk for Brownhelm, Ohio, in 1855, Langston became one of the first African Americans ever elected to public office in America. John Mercer Langston was also the great-uncle of Langston Hughes, the famous poet of the Harlem Renaissance. The last one is Rebecca Lee Crumpler. After working eight

years as a nurse, Rebecca began medical school at the New England Female Medical College in 1860. The school was the first in the United States to train female doctors. She graduated in 1864 and was the first Black woman to receive the MD in the U.S. At that time, only 300 of the 54,543 positions in the U.S. were women, and none of them were black. After opening a medical clinic in Boston, she treated women and children who lived in poverty, often asking no payment for services. Just a little black history facts. Our next meeting is Tuesday, because President's Day is on the 16th, do I have a motion?

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

Jeff Harris, President of Council