

COUNCIL MINUTES

February 18, 2025
Council Chambers
7:00 P.M.

President Harris called the meeting to order

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

INVOCATION – Mr. Labutis

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Frankie Martin, 1st grade, Hillview Elementary

CAUCUS

MINUTES of February 3, 2025, Motion to accept by Mr. Labutis, Second by Mr. Houser, passed by acclamation

APPOINTMENTS

There are none this meeting.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance - **Received and Filed without objection**

REPORTS FROM CITY OFFICIALS

Ryan Bubb, City Auditor – Operating report for the period ending January 31, 2025

Jill Frew, Tax Administrator's Office – Income Tax Revenue Reports for the period ending January 31, 2025

Judge B. Matthew George - 2024 Licking County Municipal Court Annual Report

COMMUNICATIONS

Alejandra Leon – Email regarding the webinar: Interim Strategies for Responding to Unsheltered Homelessness

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Mark David Frazier, 20 W. North St. - Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, members of council. I'm here today on behalf of the Historical Hudson Community Association. So, essentially there is the sewer separation project that is coming down Hudson Avenue. Will impact all of the neighboring neighborhoods as well. They prepared a letter to raise their concerns. Luckily, I've already talked to the service director and Councilman Rine. And so, we will be discussing this further. So, I want to thank the administration and members of this council for already being proactive with us. Participating in some of the open conversations

we've had at the library. But, no further ado. Dear members of Newark City Council, the Historic Hudson Community Association is dedicated to preserving and promoting the historical Hudson Avenue area in Newark. As you're aware, this area has already achieved recognition as a National Historic District by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A designation that underscores its cultural and architectural significance. The HHCA is deeply concerned about the proposed 16 North Sewer Project. While we fully support the city's efforts to improve infrastructure, we are equally committed to ensuring that the preservation of our historic landmarks and neighborhoods is not compromised in the process. Our primary concern is that the proposed sewer project could cause irreversible damage to the historical integrity of the Hudson Avenue area. The preservation of the area is vital not only for the residents, but for the entirety of the city of Newark. As it serves as a living testament to our history. We believe that the sewer project, if carried out with due consideration of its impact to the historic district, could lead to the degradation of this valuable resource. We are particularly concerned with the removal of the nearly 200 mature trees. These trees are not only integral to the visual character and charm of our historic district, but they also provide the essential environmental benefits including air, water quality improvements, storm water mitigation, and habitat for the local wildlife. The loss of such significant number of trees would be both a blow to the aesthetic and ecological health of our community. Additionally, we are concerned about the proposed removal of the brick roads and the brick sidewalks that define much of the Hudson Avenue area. These brick surfaces are intrinsic to the historic charm and architectural identity of our district, contributing not only to the visual appeal, but also to its cultural value. The loss of these irreplaceable features would fundamentally alter the character of the area, undermining the very qualities that make it a designation for the National Historic District. We respectfully request that the City Council engage the HHCA and other community stakeholders in discussions to explore alternative methods that will allow necessary utility upgrades without compromising the historic character of the district. We urge you to prioritize the preservation of the Hudson Avenue area while also addressing the city's infrastructure needs in a thoughtful and balanced manner. The HHCA is more than willing to collaborate with the City Council, preservation experts, and engineers to identify solutions that meet both the city's utility requirements and protect the area's historical value and charm. Thank you for your time and your continued effort on this council and also your consideration of this important matter. We look forward to your response and hope that we can work together and protect the legacy of the Hudson Avenue for future generations. We hope that we continue to see you in value in the keeping of our historic district. Thank you for your time.

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

There are none this meeting.

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

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

25-02 TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF NOT TO EXCEED \$1,155,000 OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING THE COST OF CHURCH STREET AREA IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIR, INCLUDING ELECTRICAL, SIDEWALK,

STREET AND STREETScape, AND ALL NECESSARY APPURTENANCES THERETO, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Barker, Motion passed 10-0

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Mr. Barker, Ms. Blin, Mr. Chute, Mr. Neely, Mr. Rath

25-03 TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF \$265,000 OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING A PORTION OF THE CITY'S COST FOR HORNS HILL ROAD SANITARY SEWER PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Barker, Motion passed 10-0

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Mr. Barker, Ms. Blin, Mr. Chute, Mr. Neely, Mr. Rath

25-04 TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF \$520,000 OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING THE COST OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE STREAMBANK PROTECTION PROJECT, INCLUDING REPLACEMENT OF THE SHEET PILE DAM ON RACCOON CREEK, SITE PREPARATION AND ALL NECESSARY APPURTENANCES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Barker, Motion passed 10-0

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Ms. Blin, Mr. Chute, Mr. Neely, Mr. Rath

25-05 AN ORDINANCE CONSOLIDATING UP TO THREE BOND ANTICIPATION NOTE ISSUES OF THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Motion to adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Barker, Motion passed 10-0

RESOLUTIONS ON SECOND READING

There are none this meeting.

RESOLUTIONS ON FIRST READING

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Mr. Barker, Ms. Blin, Mr. Chute, Mr. Neely, Mr. Rath

25-05 A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Held until March 3.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Brandon Metzger, Fire Chief – Thank you, Mr. President, members of council. I'm here tonight to share a situation that occurred yesterday. So, you may have seen on social media, we had a fire yesterday in the west end on Davis Avenue. Not all that uncommon in terms of what we do. However, had potential to be not a good day. One of our firefighters got burnt. Spent the rest of the shift off. However, was able to go home to his family. Preliminary reports don't show that anything was out of sorts. Nobody was doing anything wrong. Don't have any reason to believe that there was any intentional setting of a fire or any malice intent. Simply just an opportunity to reflect on the fact that what we do is dangerous. We train very hard. And we couldn't do that without the support of all of you. So, we ask for very expensive equipment because we need the best. We spend an absorbance amount of money on training, simply because we know that

training is going to put into place here based on our history and based on what we're prepared to do. You may not see that in some other areas. We truly have the highest trained and the best people working for this fire department. The significance of why I'm sharing this with you is our individual walked out of this house fire, so that's an extremely positive event. We'll do everything we can to learn from it. However, it is very important, and you have up to this past, continue to fund this fire department appropriately and make sure that we're hiring the best quality people that we can. And more importantly, we need to invest in them to make sure we keep them. The individual that was involved yesterday was an 11 plus year veteran of this division. That's a big deal. Not less than three weeks ago, we had 64 plus years of combined service walk out that door to retire. You know what we replaced it with? Four months on the job training. That's experience that we just can't create overnight. If this individual hadn't been experienced to know that things were getting bad and that he needed to leave along with the rest of his team, it might not have gone so well. So again, we'll take every opportunity to revisit that and learn from that because we are very, very lucky. But the ultimate point I wanted to make is we're grateful that you continue to support what we're doing, but this is just a subtle reminder that what we do is very dangerous. So, I wanted to take just a few minutes of your evening tonight to highlight that our training and our investment in our people and the protective equipment that we put on our firefighters, unfortunately, it did its job, but it did its job. And we'll take every opportunity to learn from that and become better tomorrow. So, with that, Mr. President, I appreciate it. Members of Council, have a good evening.

MISCELLANEOUS

Tricia Moore, Law Director – Thank you, Chief Metzger, and thank you to the fire department for what you do. Prayers for a speedy recovery for your career man. I'll pass.

Mr. Rath – Thank you. I just want to say thank you to Frankie for coming up and leading us on the pledge. Chief, there's no doubt that we have the best of the best here. And we do the best that we can to support you financially and otherwise, and we'll continue to do that. It's great news to hear that things turned out. It's better than what we could have. Definitely not the best, but better than what we could have. We appreciate everything that you and your staff do. Thank you. I'll call a Service Committee meeting for the 3rd of March. I will, with great anticipation, look forward to Sunday, March 9th, when daylight savings time returns. And if any of our state or federal legislators are listening, there's time to make that permanent. Please. With that, I'll pass.

Mr. Rine – Thank you. I just want to thank Mark for coming up. Couldn't have said it better myself. Bob (inaudible). It's probably a good thing he's sick. Glad you're here. Not really. Tell him I said hello. Yeah, hopefully we can come to a compromise on that. I know that the brick roads are kind of, you know, everyone has an opinion, but they do bring some historical value to our community. The trees, I know that they kind of mess with the road after a while. I think, you know, the trash trucks kind of have problems so maybe we can kind of come together with the community. We can get those pruned, you know, maybe or something so they won't leave it (inaudible) when they go by. So, with that, I just want to announce that I will not be running for re-election, mainly based on that I will be moving soon after the election. So just based on, you know, when I bought my house in 2015, that was a much different time than it is today. So even before the election, it was a much different time. So, I'm going to plan to stay in Newark, if

not closely around it. I just want to thank all of you. I know I still have a lot more time left on council, but I respect all of you and appreciate all of you. Everyone in this room, I do. With that, I'll pass. Thank you.

Mr. Barker - Thank you, Mr. President. Chief, thank you for giving that update. I appreciate you making us aware of that. If you know, we've talked many times, the fire department is crucial to our city. So, I appreciate you coming out tonight and giving us that update. With that, I'll pass.

Ms. Bline – Thank you, Mr. President. Chief, thank you. Now, you didn't mention, if that person has any outstanding needs, this is a great city. And we can come together and certainly meet whatever needs they might have. Okay, thank you. Please keep us posted. Thank you. And again, thank you for all you do. And please tell your teams thank you again. I'd like to thank the law director and NPD. They have persistently pounded away at some long-term situations in our neighborhoods, and they have come to resolution as of late. My phone has just been buzzing with gratitude. Just say, tell them thank you, thank you, thank you. You know, sometimes to my own frustration, the law doesn't move as fast as I would like it to. However, it does move. Steps are being taken and good things are happening. So, I wanted to thank you. And again, thank our great NPD. They do a great job. I wanted to thank those who are participating in Give Back Weekends. There hasn't been a week gone by that my phone, again, doesn't ring and say, Beth, what are we doing? I want to do something for the city. How can I help? How can I give back? Honestly, even if I don't know right off the hand of something to do, we find something. So, thank you to all those individuals. Newark is a great place. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chute – Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Chief Metzger, for being here. Appreciate the update. And with that, Mr. President, I will pass.

Mr. Cost – Thanks, Chief. We sure appreciate you being here. We know what kind of a job you all do, and it's fabulous. We're very appreciative. I'll pass.

Mr. Houser – Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Chief Metzger, for that update. As you were talking there and talking about the dangerous side of what you guys do, I was kind of thinking back to the little exercise you guys put on. I shouldn't say exercise. The day long of activities you had us do. You guys put us on air and we could barely make it down a hallway and around a room and not even anywhere close to the circumstances that your guys are under. Some of us on this council didn't actually make it all the way through. I remember being completely out of breath and thinking this is impossible. So, I can't imagine being in the circumstances that you're in. I certainly appreciate what your guys are doing, and the awareness you're trying to bring to us of the difficulty of the job. I don't fully understand everything they're going through because I've never experienced it, but I think we understand the difficulties, so I appreciate that. And for Colton, I appreciate all the service on the city council and everything. And certainly, wish you the best. You've got a lot of time left with us, but I wish you the best once you depart this body. And with that, I'll pass.

Mr. Labutis – Thank you, Mr. President. Chief, again, thank you for updating us. Davis is in my ward. Actually, I think as you guys were fighting that fire, I actually drove by on 26th Street and just happened to be passing by and I saw your team back there gallantly fighting that fire.

So, again, I always appreciate everything that you do. The work that you do for our city is crucial and important, and we appreciate that. We're happy to support you along the way, both

financially and otherwise. So, thanks again for everything. Appreciate the update. With that, I'll pass.

Mr. Marmie – Thank you, Mr. President. I need to call a Finance Committee meeting. Chief, I appreciate the information. I wish your man a speedy recovery. I greatly appreciate all of the firefighters on the Newark Fire Department when they put themselves in harm's way to protect the citizens of Newark. It definitely is appreciated, I know, by everybody up here on this council. And, yeah, those pieces of equipment are expensive, but well worth it. So, thank you very much. And with that, I pass.

Mr. Neely – Chief, thank you for bringing that to us. It's a good reminder for us that what you guys do is not without danger, not without consequence. Thank you for bringing that. You represent your people well. I also want to thank Mr. Frazier for bringing that to us about the HHCA. That's the first I'd heard of it. I'm a big believer in preserving our history here, so I hope we can kind of find a resolution or a common ground to save those historic elements of that area. With that, I will pass.

President Harris – Chief, thanks for bringing that to attention. It's good to know that stuff. Like Mr. Marmie said, I think we all support you guys really well. Judge George, good to see you tonight. I want everybody to remember Beth's mom in prayer. She's not doing well. If everybody could say a prayer for her and continue to remember Mr. Cost's wife in prayer. I've got five facts about Black History Month. This is my last time. I might have said this last year. I don't know. Frederick Jones invented the air conditioner in 1949, which we're all glad about that, right? Alex Miles, 1867, invented the elevator. Thomas Marshall invented the fire extinguisher, 1872. The golf tee was invented by George Grant, 1899, and a mailbox that we get all of our junk mail in was invented by Paul Downey in 1891. With that, our next meeting will be March the 3rd.

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

Jeff Harris, President of Council