COUNCIL MINUTES

November 16, 2026
Council Chambers
7:00 P.M.

President Harris called the meeting to order

ROLL CALL – Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline, Mr. Cost, Ms. Ingold, Mr. Labutis, Mr. Lemley, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Neely, Ms. Newman

INVOCATION – Mr. Labutis

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Haily Kovach, 5th Grade, Legend Elementary

CAUCUS - Motion by Mr. Marmie to excuse Mr. Chute, Second by Mr. Barker, Passed by acclamation

MINUTES of November 2, 2026, Motion to accept by Mr. Labutis, Second by Ms. Ingold, Passed by acclamation

APPOINTMENTS
Mayor Hall - Reappointing City of Newark Service Director, David Rhodes, and Newark Water Administrator, Brandon Fox, to the Newark Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), known as Newark Development Partners. Their terms will begin January 1, 2027 and will expire December 31, 2029. - **Passed by acclamation**

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

REPORTS FROM CITY OFFICIALS
Ryan Bubb, City Auditor – Operating report for the period ending October 31, 2026 - **Received and filed without objection**

Brenda Cooper, Tax Administrator – Income Tax Revenue Reports for the period ending October 31, 2026 - **Received and filed without objection**

COMMUNICATIONS
Scott Brown, Regional Liaison to the Ohio Auditor of State – Presenting the City Auditor's Office the "State Award of Distinction" for the 2025 Audit - **Received and filed without objection**

Scott Brown, Central Ohio Liaison to the Ohio Auditor of State - Thank you, Mr. President. You've given my speech. I appreciate a few moments on your agenda again this evening to celebrate, as I like to say, another job well done. My name is Scott Brown, and I serve the State Auditor as his Central Ohio Liaison. And to you, that really means that I serve as your customer service representative, and it allows me to manage our over 800 employees in a manner that answers your questions, few though

they may be, as quickly as possible. The auditor asked that I attend on his behalf this evening to present the Auditor of State Award with Distinction to the City of Newark. Our office oversees nearly 6,000 clients statewide and conducts 4,200 audits annually. This award places your organization in the top 4% of these 4,200 engagements. The Auditor of State Award is presented to local governments, school districts, and other organizations upon the completion of a financial report that meet the following criteria defined as a clean audit. The entity must file financial reports with our office by statutory due date, without extension, on a GAAP accounting basis, and prepare a comprehensive annual financial report. The audit report does not contain findings for recovery, material citations, material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, uniform guidance findings, or other questions cost. Additionally, we look at things such as ethics referrals, lack of timely report submissions, bank reconciliation issues, failure to obtain a timely single audit, findings for recovery, and public meetings and public records issues. What this all means is that the auditor's office would like to recognize the Council, the administration, and the finance department that have done an outstanding job of not watching over every dollar. This award represents all of your staff's and employees' hard work as they work constantly to attain accounting excellence. What I like to say is it truly means across your entire organization, you have the people and the processes in place that understand fiscal accountability. We especially want to recognize your auditor, Ryan Bubb, for his outstanding leadership and commitment to protecting the finances of your organization. So on behalf of the state auditor, I would like to present Newark with the 2025 Auditor of State Award with Distinction. Congratulations.
Ryan Bubb, City Auditor - Thank you very much. And just real quickly, I wish the best for you, Scott, in your future. I'm glad we could bring this home again four years in a row. I want to thank my award-winning staff of Jim Weisent, Jackie Williams, Deborah Cain, Rhonda Wilfong, Kenda Menter, and Jessica Reed. They do a wonderful job day in and day out. I want to thank everyone here again. This is four years in a row, four for four. I'm very proud of that. We're going to make it five for five next year. Thank you.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS
President Harris – Next up, we have comments from citizens. I'd like to say something tonight before you speak, Mr. Froelich. First of all, I'd like to thank you for all your service you've done over the years for Babe Ruth. You've done a great job. You've brought a lot of kids through there, and we appreciate that. Also, when you talk, you tell your side of the story. But I think it's time that we tell, as Paul Harvey would say, the rest of the story. And that story is the city has looked into what he has accused the city of doing. Nothing was found. The county didn't find nothing. The state didn't find nothing. An outside county looked into it, didn't find nothing. So, if you're here tonight to talk about Mr. Rhodes, no more personal attacks. I'm not going to have that in this council chambers anymore. You've made it personal, and enough's enough in this chambers. So if you can't come and show respect, you can talk about anything else, but the scoreboard, Mr. Rhodes, you've made it personal. No personal attacks. You can go to the paper and write about me all you want, that's fine. I don't care about that. It's just enough's enough on the personal attacks. So if you have something else to say, you're more than welcome.
Dave Froelich – You want me to go?
President Harris – As long as it's not personal.
Mr. Froelich - I don't know where you're getting all this personal stuff. I'm dealing with just plain facts.
President Harris - And the facts have been dealt. There's nothing. There's been no findings. We're not going back and forth. So, give me your name and address and speak.
Dave Froelich, 648 Woods Edge Ln. - The fact is, not what you just said. It was never investigated.

What you're asked to investigate was the fact that Rhodes, Jenkins, misled, and we ended up.
President Harris - We're not going there. No personal attacks.
Mr. Froelich - It's my three minutes, isn't it?
President Harris - It's not. It's my council chambers. No personal attacks.
Mr. Froelich - Yeah, I got three minutes. First, I'd like to thank Michael Cox, Caroline Clippinger, and Director Moore for the prompt, courteous, and professional handling of my public information requests. Coincidentally, this is fact. The scheduling conference for the city civil suit against Dave Rhodes and two of his subordinates is finally scheduled for tomorrow. Is that personal? No, it's just fact. The evidence is incriminating. So Mayor Hall, let's look at facts that warrant dismissal of David Rhodes.
President Harris - No personal attacks. One more about Mr. Rhodes, and you're done.
Mr. Froelich - I can't talk about somebody that's done something that's cost us hundreds of thousands of dollars.
President Harris - There's nothing been… Listen, this is your last time. There's nothing that's been done criminal.
Mr. Froelich - That's right. Yeah. You will not address the facts. The facts are it was determined…
President Harris - Okay, you're done.
Mr. Froelich - It was determined…
President Harris - You're done.
Mr. Froelich - That it didn't appear…
President Harris - You're done.
Mr. Froelich – To be…
President Harris – You're done. Please sit down. You're done.
Mr. Froelich – Yeah.
President Harris – You're done.
Mr. Froelich – Can't deal with the facts.

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING
By: Mr. Labutis
26-28-A An ordinance amending Section 1062.08 False Alarms and Section 1610.03 Enforcement of the codified ordinances of the City of Newark, Ohio.
Mr. Marmie – Point of order. It's 26-28A, correct?
Ms. Vensel – Yes.
President Harris – Oh, sorry. I don't have it. Thank you, Mr. Marmie.
Motion to adopt by Mr. Labutis, Second by Ms. Bline
Mr. Barker – Can we clarify what "A" we are voting on? What is "A"?
Mr. Labutis - So there were three sections in three exhibits within the original legislation. So those have been broken up into three separate ordinances. Amy, could you read what 26-28A is? That portion of it, please.
Mr. Barker - Can I ask a clarifying question? So, A would be for the false alarm section of this legislation, is that correct? And then B is the enforcement, and then C is the food truck, correct?
Mr. Labutis – Correct.
Mr. Barker - I just want to make sure everybody understands.
Tricia Moore, Law Director – The food truck inspection is also under enforcement, but I have (inaudible) which sections it refers to.

Mr. Barker – Okay. All right. Thank you.
President Harris - So, we're clear now on A, B, and C? Okay.
Motion passed 9-0

By: Mr. Labutis
26-28-B An ordinance amending Section 1062.08 False Alarms and Section 1610.03 Enforcement of the codified ordinances of the City of Newark, Ohio.
Motion to adopt by Mr. Labutis, Second by Ms. Ingold, Motion passed 9-0

By: Mr. Labutis
26-28-C An ordinance amending Section 1062.08 False Alarms and Section 1610.03 Enforcement of the codified ordinances of the City of Newark, Ohio.
Motion to adopt by Mr. Labutis, Second by Mr. Cost
Ms. Newman - I would like to table 26-28C to our December 7th meeting just to give some time. I know new copies went out with this kind of switch, but I know it was mentioned that the enforcement part is kind of getting moved around, and we have not actually seen that all together as part of C. I would like to see that all together as one full piece.
Director Moore - May I say something, Mr. President? The enforcement is split between the inspections and the food trucks. So, the food trucks would be in Section 6. So, the enforcement section is separated.
Ms. Newman - Okay.
Director Moore - So B contains one through six, and C contains six on.
Ms. Newman – Okay. I appreciate that. However, I am still a bit confused about how this all plays out, and I would still like to table until the 7th to make sure we're clear and I could get clear on that and understand what that is.
Motion to table until 12.7.26 by Ms. Newman, Second by Mr. Marmie, Motion passed 9-0

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING
By: Mr. Barker, Mr. Cost, Mr. Marmie, Ms. Ingold
26-33 AN ORDINANCE ENACTING AMENDMENTS TO NEWARK'S SEWER SCHEDULE OF CHARGES AND FEES PURSUANT TO SECTION 1040.31 OF THE NEWARK CODIFIED ORDINANCES. **Held until 12.7.26**

By: Mr. Barker, Mr. Cost, Mr. Marmie, Ms. Bline, Ms. Ingold
26-34 AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REPLACING CHAPTER 1040 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES FOR THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO REGARDING DEFINITIONS, GENERAL PROHIBITIONS ON DISCHARGES, LIMITATIONS ON WASTEWATER STRENGTH AND SEWER SERVICE CHARGES DEFINED. **Held until 12.7.26**

RESOLUTIONS ON SECOND READING
Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Mr. Barker, Ms. Ingold, Ms. Bline

26-65 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

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

26-66 A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION. **Held until 12.7.26**

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

26-67 Minor rehabilitation of pavement within project limits. **Held until 12.7.26**

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Dave Froelich, 648 Woods Edge Ln. – I'm quite frankly, I'm embarrassed (inaudible). I'm going to read from item six of this contract. The city shall pay the YMCA the sum of $30,000 per year during the term of this agreement as and for an offset of the expenses of the operation including, but not limited to the purchase of all new raw materials necessary to maintain the physical integrity of the baseball fields themselves, the purchase, repair, maintenance of equipment necessary to maintain the baseball fields themselves and other associated costs in operating the facility. Any additional expenses for raw materials, the purchase, the purchase and repair and maintenance of equipment shall be the responsibility of the YMCA. We have been paying out of our funds what was rightfully contractually obligated to the YMCA. Last year we paid $64,000. Before that, I can't tell you all of it. I know of $19,000 that we paid and another $63,000. And I would submit to you that nobody reads these contracts including the service director. This is clear. What's the purpose of having a contract where you're not going to follow these? You've made a mockery of the contract. Who in the hell is looking at this stuff? Who's looking at it? It's clear. What are we doing paying monies that are the obligation of the YMCA? And I love the YMCA, I give them $5,000 every year. But this is ridiculous. And when you don't let me talk about what's wrong, it's because you don't want to find out, then you'll have to deal with Mr. Rhodes. So I will end with this, Mr. Mayor, and say that David Rhodes has no business as a public servant and you should fire him.

Mr. Bubb - Thank you. Outside of the Auditor's Office, I did want to throw a compliment out and let council people know. I ran into some of John Kreager's folks from Water Sewer on Veterans Day, and I'll tell you what, they do a great job and really deserve a lot of just… all hours of the day they go out and fix water leaks. They had three calls out on Veterans Day, and the crews were in there and got them fixed. There was an issue on Swans Road where there was a hydrant that got hit and State Patrol was out there while it was going everywhere. The township didn't have anybody to really fix it, and the city stepped up. So, we should be really proud of that crew. They're really good people out there. John's doing a good job. And I just wanted to bring that up. Sometimes we don't really talk about that inside these chambers, but just to let council folks know that they should be real proud of the department. Thank you.

MISCELLANEOUS

Tricia Moore, Law Director – Congratulations Ryan and your office on that award again. With that, I pass. Thank you. Browns won. Sorry, Jeff.

Mayor Hall – He wasn't going to go to me until you said that, so very good. Congratulations, Ryan. Yes, working with the auditors all the time, and they do an outstanding job. And you kind of have to absorb that 4% thing because, boy, that's a little scary sometimes, but no findings. It's a pretty complex city and pretty complex financials. It's a lot of work, and to have it with no findings is phenomenal year after year, and it's pretty neat. I have accounting in the background, so it kind of makes me real happy when we do that. And we've done it for years and years. So, you should be very proud of that. Wednesday was Veterans Day, and I would tell you we had a wonderful event over at Sixth Street Park, and I want to thank Howard Long and the Licking County Historical Society that kind of sponsored that. We had bagpipes and pretty neat stuff. I mean, I would tell you, I asked the girl playing bagpipes, how long have you done this? And she said since she was 10 years old. She really went to Scotland and placed fourth in the world. Now, kind of put that perspective that you play bagpipes and you get to go to Scotland and compete. Wow, I don't know if it gets any better, and then place fourth. And she also did it with a team of women playing bagpipes, and she said they set some records. So very, very neat. I would say also on Friday, I attended a county get together out in Pataskala that had updates from the Port Columbus Airport. It is quite phenomenal. We all ought to be very proud of what this area is doing. Most of that's all paid by the airlines. They have to consent to that. Of the several hundred airports across the United States in the last 10 years, only about six of them have been built from scratch like this one's going to be. Most of them are all band-aids and rehab. So, and their fees could almost triple, but they know it's worth it because of the expanded growth in Central Ohio. So, we all ought to be proud of that. Newark is a piece of all that, and we're really proud of that as it goes that way. But that airport will be a hundred years old in 2029, and they will open it. And just to put it in perspective, a plane will pull into the old airport, disembark people, and then that plane will fill up at the new airport in one day. This is going to happen probably in January or December, will be kind of neat. So, we'll look forward to that. Keep you updated. With that, I pass.

Mr. Barker – Thank you, Mr. President. Got a couple of things. I need to call a Service Committee meeting for December 7th. Ryan, congratulations to you and your staff. We appreciate everything you guys do in your office and your service. So, thank you again. Four out of four is awesome. As everybody pretty much knows, I am president of the Courthouse Lighting Committee, and we will be having our annual Christmas Courthouse Lighting on the 27th of this month, the day after Thanksgiving. So, I'd like to invite you all to that. Festivities start at 6:15. We do have a special guest coming this year. I'm not going to say any more than that. We all know Santa comes, but there's somebody else. So, it's going to be a fun night. We already have had a ton of media attention. You know, this is a huge night for downtown Newark. We bring between, if we have decent weather, we bring about, you know, 3,000 people here. If we have really nice weather, we topped out at 6,000 people before. So, it's great for our downtown business community. The Canal Market has the Christmas market. So, it's something that I look forward to. I'm, you know, serving in my 12th year chairing that event, taking over from my dad and Tim Bub. So, it's something that we'd love to see everybody there, and can't thank Newark Police and Newark Fire enough for everything they do that night to keep the community safe. Want to wish everybody a happy Thanksgiving. And then I want to address Mr. Froelich. And of course, you know, he'll watch this. That's fine. He can write about me in the newspaper. I don't care. But he obviously doesn't care to hear from us because he leaves every time he speaks. I'm going to reiterate what President Harris said. This has been reviewed by internal, external, and state. There's no finding.

There are people online, Mr. Froelich, that are constantly asking you to stop, constantly asking you why you say the things you say, and you don't answer them. It's not true. You do not want to tarnish your reputation that you have in this community by being a professional basher of the City of Newark and that's what you're getting to. You were against our safety forces in the last election. You put a billboard out against the safety forces. I don't really understand why a citizen would do that. It's sad, and I hope that you can find some solace in realizing that you're wrong. Like we have said before, we're happy to discuss it with you if you're going to be civil, but you don't seem to be civil in any instance we have. So again, I would just reiterate, you're wrong. You can become a professional basher of the City of Newark. That's fine if that's what you want your legacy to be. That is up to you. But I agree with President Harris. That is not anything that needs to be in this chamber or in this city. And with that, I pass.

Ms. Bline - Thank you, Mr. President. Congratulations, sir. That is a great honor. And to that consistency, it's pretty great. Congratulations. I'd like to thank the Fire Department. There was a difficult incident in my neighborhood, and long story short, they saved the gentleman's life, and I'm very grateful for our safety forces. In this instance, the Fire Department, they got there just at the right time. So, I appreciate them very much. And along that note, I'd like to thank the Licking County Chaplain's Association. Unfortunately, they are only called when there's a fatality. They go all times of the night, 24/7, and go into circumstances that would be difficult for anyone. So, I am grateful for them. I've received some very good comments from families that have gone through a lot. What a great complement of chaplains we have here. So, thank you, sir.

Mr. Cost – Ryan, congratulations. Thank you for all your office does. Happy Thanksgiving.

Ms. Ingold – I'm going to say congratulations and then I'm going to remind everybody, the top 4%. That's really cool. That's hard to do. Thank you. Thank you for what you do. Happy Thanksgiving to everybody. And with that, I will say, also be safe in your driving and your hunting.

Mr. Labutis – Thank you, Mr. President. Congratulations, Mr. Bubb, and pass it on to your office as well. I know it's a team effort, but you lead them. It's a great honor to do it for four years is fantastic. I also want to wish my son a happy birthday. He's 22 today. He's getting older, not me. I need to call a Safety Committee meeting for December 7th, and I also want to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving as well. I too am looking forward to the courthouse lighting the day after. With that, I will pass.

Mr. Lemley – I congratulate Mr. Ryan. Thank you. Happy Thanksgiving to everybody.

Mr. Marmie – Thank you, Mr. President. I need to call a Finance Committee meeting for December the 7th. I, too, want to congratulate the Auditor's Office. Ryan and the entire team just does a phenomenal job. Not only the checkboxes that they were mentioning, but also just communicating, answering questions. Much appreciated. You've got a great team there. I love that you're leading in a manner that creates an open dialogue and discussion and making sure that we're aware of what's going on. It's greatly appreciated and well deserved as well. I want to also wish everyone a very happy Thanksgiving. I have a lot to be thankful for. First of all, God above, and then my family. I am blessed to have a family, have them residing in the City of Newark with me, my children, grandchildren. So, just thankful for everybody up here that I serve with and all the blessings that God has provided me. It's greatly appreciated. I'm very, very thankful for that and will be especially thankful on Thanksgiving. Miss Ingold, you know, in my line of business, that driving and hunting goes hand in hand a lot of times. And if you drive down 16, you know what I'm talking about. So, I thought that was very appropriate when you mentioned both of them together. And with that, I will pass.

Mr. Neely – Ryan, congrats to you and your staff. I'll pass.

Ms. Newman – Thank you, Mr. President. Ryan, congrats to you and your staff. It's a really big deal.

I also, on top of Mayor Hall mentioning the great Veterans Day celebration in Veterans Park, want to say thank you to Newark City Schools. Most of the middle schools do a pretty large Veterans Day celebration and I had the honor of attending the one with my daughter at Liberty, and it was just, it was really wonderful. It was a great Veterans Day. So, those two events coupled together made for a really important day in the city. I also, if folks have not been around the Seventh Ward and the Fourth Ward recently, the sewer-water separation project under full effect. There's kind of some moving road closures. I first off want to, I know Brandon's not here right now, but I want to say thank you to Brandon and his team. There's obviously a lot of high emotions running right now in our neighborhood, and as I've gone to him with any questions, he has been so incredibly responsive and fast, even driving to neighbors' houses, you know, within hours to be able to answer questions and be there. And I do want to recognize, on behalf of my neighbors, there is a bit of a collective grief with some of the changes that are happening. We're losing our tree canopy that's been there for decades. And while we know the work is needed and necessary and honestly will be generational change for our neighbors, there is a loss right now. I know for me, I've got a tree in front of my house where we watch the squirrels and the birds, and we've taken first-day-of-school pictures under it, and it's a big deal that it's going away. And so, I do just want to say, for those neighbors who are experiencing that, we hear you and we understand. There will be a tree replacement program that comes as part of this work, where neighbors will be able to select a new tree to be planted once the work is done. So, it will be a new day, but it is a little rough getting through it right now. So, just wanted to acknowledge that and again thank the city departments who are involved for being so responsive as we move through it. With that, I will pass.

President Harris - Ryan, congratulations. I think you have a staff member retiring on Friday, right? Rhonda.

Mr. Bubb – Yes, we do. Rhonda Wilfong, 32 years of service, not all with the City of Newark. She worked some with the schools and with (inaudible). She'll be retiring. But the nice thing is what we've developed in the past really five years has been office backup, so it should be pretty seamless. Jessica Reid is going to take over from our office, who we hired. And, you know, it's always important to make crucial good hires. We're ready to make that a seamless transition because payroll is very important. Thank you for bringing that up, and wish Rhonda the best. Thanks.

President Harris - Thank you, Rhonda. I'm sure she'll, I think she reads the minutes, so congratulations to Rhonda. Happy Thanksgiving, everybody. I know I say this every year, but Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday because, like Mr. Marmie said, he took about everything I was going to say. Family is important, and I like Thanksgiving because everybody has to come together. The stores are closed, and you have to be a family, and I think that's important. Don't forget the Courthouse Lighting. Once again, I can't play Santa. I've been trying to fight that for a long time, and we'll have to see what we can do about that next year. So, our next meeting is December 7th.

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

Jeff Harris, President of Council