

COUNCIL MINUTES

November 21, 2022
Council Chambers
7:00 P.M.

President Ellington called the meeting to order

ROLL CALL - Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline, Mr. Harris, Ms. Hottinger, Mr. Houser, Mr. Labutis, Mr. Lang, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Rath, Mr. Rine

INVOCATION – Ms. Bline

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Katie Suttles, 6th Grade, Liberty Middle School

CAUCUS

MINUTES of November 7, 2022, Motion to approve by Mr. Labutis, second by Mr. Houser, passed by acclamation

APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Jeff Hall - Appointing John Paul and Eddie Hunt to the City of Newark Board of Zoning Adjustment. John Paul's appointment will expire Dec. 31, 2024 and Eddie Hunt's will expire Dec. 31, 2026. Subsequent appointments will be for 4 year terms.

Mayor Hall - I would appreciate those appointments they are good qualified people to serve in those positions. **Passed by acclamation**

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance **Received and filed without objections**

Service **Received and filed without objections**

REPORTS FROM CITY OFFICIALS

Brenda Cooper, Tax Administrator's Office – Income Tax Revenue Reports for period ending October 31,2022

Ohio Division of Liquor Control - Transfer Application from Dans Family Pizza LLC, 400 W. Main St. Newark, Oh, 43055 to Malherbe Girls LLC, 400 W. Main St., Newark, Oh 43055

COMMUNICATIONS

Spencer Barker - 74th Annual Licking County Christmas Courthouse Lighting, planned for November 25th

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Steven Smith, 237 Violet Ct. - I see tonight is the second reading for the noise ordinance, and I want to express my appreciation to the members of council working on this it is really something that needed

to be done. The issue I have is with 22-43 it still has language of dba levels of 95 where there is a sign posted that you are likely to have hearing impairment. My understanding is that level is more like 85 db so with the sign they can go as high as they want as long as they don't go afoul of 22-44. The 95 db is too high. The customers have the option of leaving, the employees don't so much. I'm a musician myself, some of you probably have noticed I wear hearing aids. I had a bad ear infection when I was 14, I didn't ruin my hearing by playing loud music.

Doug Vermaaten 909 Jean Ct., Official Capacity, 975 S. 4th St - I would like to officially invite all of the Council tomorrow at 10am to Station 1 for the promotion ceremony for the new Deputy Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Captain and Lieutenant.

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

By: Mr. Labutis, Ms. Hottinger, Ms. Bline, Mr. Barker, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Harris, Mr. Rath, Mr. Houser

22-43 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 634 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO RELATIVE TO THE NOISE ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NEWARK

Motion to adopt by Mr. Labutis, second by Mr. Barker, motion passed 10-0

By: Mr. Labutis, Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline, Ms. Hottinger, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Harris, Mr. Rath, Mr. Houser

22-44 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 648.04 DISORDERLY CONDUCT OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO RELATIVE TO NOISE CONTROL IN THE CITY OF NEWARK AND DISORDERLY CONDUCT BETWEEN FAMILY OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

Motion to adopt by Mr. Labutis, second by Ms. Bline, motion passed 10-0

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

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

22-45 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE NEWARK CITY SAFETY DIRECTOR TO CERTIFY TO THE LICKING COUNTY AUDITOR, THE SUM OF \$440,515.00 INCURRED BY THE NEWARK CITY PROPERTY MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT WITH RESPECT TO PROPERTY MAINTAINENCE VIOLATIONS TO BE PLACED AS A LIEN UPON CERTAIN PARCELS OF REAL PROPERTY SITUATED IN THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO.

Held 2 weeks until 12/5/22

RESOLUTIONS ON SECOND READING

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline, Ms. Hottinger, Mr. Rine, Mr. Harris

22-97 APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION \$3,872.96 (Appropriate funds back into overtime from reimbursement of HazMat recovery incident. Appropriate funds back into Medical Supplies from the sale of three stair chairs on GovDeals)

Moition to adopt by Mr. Marmie, second by Mr. Lang, motion passed 10-0

By: Mr. Rath, Mr. Labutis, Mr. Barker, Mr. Harris, Ms. Hottinger, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Houser

22-99 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITHOUT COMPETITIVE BIDDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF FLOCK SAFETY SYSTEM AND CAMERAS

Motion to adopt by Mr. Rath, second by Mr. Labutis

Mr. Lang - I still have reservations about moving forward with FLOCK and am hoping that we can resolve some of those, however, as Mr. Marmie had pointed out in a earlier meeting all we're doing here is waiving competitive bidding because the grant money is specific to FLOCK, so I'm in favor of supporting this despite those reservations because I don't think we need to waste time and money bidding when there is only one company.

Ms. Bline - I maintain similar reservations but as far as saving money and moving forward to let our Service Director go to work on that, that's important to me, so , yes.

Motion passed 10-0

By: Ms. Hottinger, Mr. Barker, Ms. Bline, Mr. Harris, Mr. Marmie

22-100 CI APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (\$73,500.00 -(1-Equipment to be used on bike path, cemetery roadways & parks parking lots 2-Replacement of 1992 Dump truck, needs transmission, rear end, clutch, leaf springs, door & window)

Motion to adopt by Ms. Hottinger, second by Mr. Barker, motion passed 10-0

RESOLUTIONS ON FIRST READING

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

22-101 APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (\$442.45 - Appropriate Funds back into Overtime from Special Duty Coverage of Hockey Game)

Held 2 weeks until 12/5/22

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

22-104 Exp APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (\$40,000.00 - Increased demand for Legal Services)

Motion to waive the 2 day reading rule by Mr. Marmie, second by Mr. Lang

Mr. Marmie - We need to expedite this we have went over our budget on legal services in order to resupply that to get through negotiations and other issues that have occurred this year we need to put money back into that account.

Motion to waive passed 10-0

Motion to adopt by Mr. Marmie, second by Mr. Lang, motion passed 10-0

By: Mr. Rath, Mr. Marmie, Ms. Bline, Mr. Harris, Ms. Hottinger

22-106 Bridge Inspection Program Services, including, but not limited to routine inspections, element level inspections, critical findings report, fracture critical member inspections, load rating calculations and reports, weight limits posting sign recommendations, scour assessments, scour plan of actions, development of fracture critical plans, and underwater dive inspection reports if needed and declaring an emergency.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Rath, second by Mr. Barker

Mr. Rath - This has been declared an emergency by Ohio Safety to preserve health safety and welfare

Motion passed 10-0

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Matt Migliorisi, 444 S. 2nd Street - Last session I spoke about the FLOCK camera system that's intended to be implemented here in Newark and on one hand while it was good to hear some of you share the same reservations that I do, my concern about this project and the FLOCK company in particular has only increased since last time I was here. For one thing, I understand why many on the Council want this, I agree with the idea in principle. Several people I know have their own private cameras, I myself have considered this considering my wife's bicycle was stolen from our back porch within weeks of us moving to this town actually. That being said though the reality of what we're about to be entering into with this company is far more complicated than that. FLOCK system has a long history of being abused and that company itself shares a similarly dubious track record. Upon further investigation my wife and I found page after page of issues raising concerns ranging from privacy, potential data breaches and contractual verbiage that resolves them of any liability. With these concerns in mind there have been at least two studies done that we found within the last three years that show there's actually little to no empirical evidence that the cameras reduce crime in any measurable way. To quote an article from the Washington Post last year, "they offer unnecessary invasion of privacy for little gain". While apparently doing little to reduce crime in the areas they've been implemented, however, they are subject to numerous cases of misidentification. One of the most recent occurred only two years ago where a mother was handcuffed in front of her children because the system mistook her SUV for a motorcycle. One such case in 2015 rewarded the victim of a wrongful stop \$4395,000 and on and on. Beyond these issues is our Constitutional Rights too, 16 States have already passed statutes regulating these devices, some have even banned their private use, stating that if left unchecked FLOCK and other such companies could act as agents of the Federal Government and intentionally violate our 4th amendment rights. I have compiled a list with my wife of issues with relevant sources. Honestly the more you look, the more the cons outweigh the pros. For the sake of time and since all of you seem to have similar concerns I don't feel it's necessary to read every case in detail most of you probably know all this already. I will, however, share this information with any and all concerned citizens and I encourage everyone here to do their own research on this none of this is hard to find really. The bottom line here is these systems have been proven to be faulty, subject to abuse and not very effective. The obvious question to be raised here is simply this, was there really no other option? Hopefully the negotiations go well enough to assuage a lot of these concerns. To me the most troubling thing is just how ubiquitous

FLOCK has become they've quickly cast a net of interconnected cameras across the entire country both public and privately owned. It's one thing to have closed circuit cameras on your own property and quite another to have country side system of surveillance cameras which is exactly what FLOCK is seeking to do. The fact that several people expressed no concern with continually being on camera last meeting was troubling enough to me. For a taste of where this could lead if we aren't vigilant we need look no further than other oppressive regimes across the world. A lot of you are probably familiar with the facial recognition systems in China tracking peoples every move, applying social scores and these scores are capable of denying people their basic rights which we have long enjoyed here in the United States. While we're sitting here discussing these systems there are angry mobs of Chinese citizens tearing them down right now. It's easy to sit comfortably here in our great country and tell ourselves this can't happen here, however anyone paying attention over the past few years would be alarmed at how close we've comes and how quickly we got there. I'm just a concerned citizen and all I can do is give the Council the benefit of the doubt and take you at your word. It appears to me those of you in favor of this are confident in your ability to protect us and I pray that your confidence is warranted and I pray for those that come after you will remain vigilant because these are probably going to be here for a very long time.

Daniel Crawford, 163 S. 2nd Street - First and foremost, I am equally concerned regarding the privacy issues that come with those cameras. To me it's not entirely comforting to know about a system of checks and balances that is itself open to corruption. Yes I absolutely think that checks and balances is important, but we must remember that every human made institution is subject to being corrupted. It just depends on who's in control ultimately. Another thing I came up here for is to respond to what happened with last meeting and comments that were made in response to what I said was the human aspect of the homeless. I in no way shape or form want a blank check for people to commit crime. If your guilty of desecrating someone's private property, defecating in someone's yard by all means you should be held accountable for it. But, with the defecation in someone's yard, we need to look at having some kind of public restroom for people, not just for the homeless but for everyone. People go on jogs or walk around town, not everyone is able to go inside a Wendy's to use it in there. I think ultimately one of my big concerns here we don't need to look at this as one or the other, either you're in favor of cracking down on crime or in favor of helping the homeless, you can be both. I guess it's just was easy for me because of how I was raised, to be compassionate towards others, not saying there's a lack of compassion here, but in our community and all communities, it's easier to not care than it is to come out and speak about these things. I know a lot of what I say is unpopular. I don't care about that. It's very tempting at times to just stay home and shut up. There's a part of me that is very shy that just used to be quiet, but I was not raised that way and it took me a while to come out of that shell and especially when it comes to things like the homeless, the cameras or any host of issues. I know it's hard to get up here and talk sometimes, but I'm proud of anyone who can come up and overcome those fears of talking in public.

Rochelle Volen-Smith, 237 Violet Ct. - I was talking to a friend yesterday who lives close to the Mansfield area and she was telling me Mansfield has been having a lot of success with their new facility for the homeless which involves education, a place to stay and mental health help all in the same are, they got a grant and it's working really well and I suggest you look into it.

MISCELLANEOUS

President Ellington - Just to let you know, we're going to do Council comments and then we're going to go to executive session to discuss the fact finding report with our firefighters, so after we do miscellaneous, we'll have to clear the room, there won't be any decisions made during that session, but then we'll reopen, have everybody back and go from there.

Law Director Tricia Moore - Happy Thanksgiving everyone. I do take the public's concern about FLOCK very seriously and discussions will follow, ultimately, I think this is good for our City and I think the police are going to appreciate the help. We've seen good things happen in Heath and Reynoldsburg from these cameras.

Mayor Jeff Hall - Happy Thanksgiving.

Mr. Barker - Just a few things. I want to thank the Law Director and all my fellow Council Members for their support for the noise ordinance. It was 3 years ago yesterday that I was sworn in as a Council Member for the first time and that was one of the first things that was brought to me, was the noise ordinance and I'm happy that passed tonight. Thank you everyone for that. As the President mentioned during communications, the 74th Annual Licking County Christmas Courthouse Lighting is this coming Friday night, the show starts at 6:15pm, Newark Fire, glad to see everyone here tonight, will be bringing Santa Claus into town at about 6:55 that night. We are in a modified lighting this year due to construction, but hope to see everybody out. I'm hoping the weatherman is wrong of what his current prediction is . I want to thank everybody for their comments on FLOCK, I do support FLOCK, I understand their concerns, the Law Director and I have talked at length about those and I am very confident in her ability through contract negotiations with the Safety Director and Service Director on that.

Ms. Bline - I too would like to thank the Law Director and Council Persons that really supported the noise ordinance. I'd like to thank the citizens and the businesses and the venues in Columbus and in Kentucky who I know aren't listening to this right now, but so many people and so much research went into this. This was no small thing. There was a lot that had to be considered because this is a City wide ordinance, it's not targeting any one person or any one entity. I thank you for everyone's support and for your input. As far as the FLOCK cameras, thank you for coming again. There's a lot to this, but I'm grateful we have a Law Director and Service Director that are on top of this and hopefully we'll be able to put in those things that will bring a peace of mind. Hopefully the FLOCK company will be able to come back and review it and we'll be able to have an open discussion about it. I'd like to thank too all those who have come out to restore the areas of south Newark that have been left fallow for so long. It really is a humbling thing to see people come out in the cold and to put their heart and soul back into their community. As far as the homeless issue, this is a big deal and the City is moving on it, but in such a way as to employ what we have in a targeted fashion, to display compassion and move people forward, while maintaining the safety and security of the City. Indeed, I will look that up in Mansfield.

Mr. Harris - I want to thank Katie for coming in and doing the pledge tonight. I want to congratulate Jay and Cheri Hottinger for becoming grandparents. I want to wish everybody a Happy Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving is probably my favorite holiday because all the family is together. We ought to be thankful everyday not just on Thanksgiving and I have one more thing, for all my friends that are supporting that team up north, OH, go bucks!

Ms. Hottinger - I want to send my condolences to Brian Morehead on the loss of his father in law, that was a shocking thing, so thoughts and prayer are with them. I also want to thank Katie for doing the pledge. Katie is my little big sister, she was in first grade and now in sixth grade it's been almost five years so, so glad to have you here, thanks to my husband Jay for bringing her. I also want to say Happy Thanksgiving to everybody and certainly there are lots of people in need during the holidays so keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

President Ellington - Our newest 20 under 40 according to the Advocate, Mr. Houser.

Mr. Houser - I appreciate the comments on the FLOCK cameras, you gave some great examples and Heath has welcomed them successfully, there apparently have been some issues with the product and I look forward to seeing what tools we can use to deal with that. I'm very excited about the sound ordinance, thanks to all the members here who worked on that Spencer and Beth and the Law Director, I appreciate all of you for that. The Courthouse Lighting, thanks Spencer, I know everyone is always very excited about that, I know I'll be out there, my wife is always very excited when that happens so thank you for all your work on that.

Mr. Labutis - I wanted to thank our Law Director and everyone who helped out on the noise ordinance, I'm glad we could pass that, I'm looking forward to the Courthouse Lighting on Friday, I hope it does not rain, I want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving on Thursday.

Mr. Lang -

Daniel thanks for coming again, I always like hearing from you and Matt thank you both for sharing your concerns. I continue to have concerns and am hoping we can negotiate some better terms, our Law Director has been pretty transparent in bringing us in to help with that. That said, I have not heard back from FLOCK yet as far as their receptiveness to any changes we want to make with the contract so, I'm not holding my breath there, but I do share your concerns and hopefully we can at least mitigate some of that with the agreement. I would be interested in introducing some legislation regarding facial recognition, to your point Matt, I don't think that is something we should ever do with live video, so I guess we'll see on that.

Mr. Marmie - I need to call a Finance Committee Meeting for December 5th. Be ready to discuss the budget as far as the committee meetings, so that should be coming forward. I want to thank Katie for the pledge, appreciate you being here and normally the crowd is not this big, but it's all because of you. The noise ordinance and the disorderly conduct, what I love about that is we already had it on the books and all we needed to do was a few tweaks. I really like the fact that those that came before all of us did a pretty good job and I think just the times of change is what caused us to have to amend it a little bit, so we didn't have to completely reinvent the wheel. I think we have something in place that's enforceable, which is very important because ordinances without enforcement, it's just a waste of paper. So, I thank everybody for supporting that and look forward to us being able to implement the enforcement of it. Newark Catholic, Regional Champs, going to the State, two more games and we'll have them right in here. This Saturday they're going to play up in Orville at 7pm, they're going to play a really tough JFK team, it should be exciting, should not be as cold as last Saturday, but we've got two more Saturday football games and hopefully we'll have that Newark Catholic football team in here because we always recognize State Champs. I want to wish everybody a Happy Thanksgiving and I am thankful for many things, but on that day I am really thankful for gravy. It goes on everything and I love Thanksgiving Dinner.

Mr. Rath - I just want to wish everyone Happy Thanksgiving on Thursday and if you think the deer are running around crazy now, Monday starts deer gun season, so there will be thousands of people out in the woods with guns chasing them round and they'll be running around even more crazy so be careful. I'll be one of those ones chasing them. I want to give my condolences to Mr. Morehead and his family. Katie, thank you for coming and yes everybody is here just to hear you, we appreciate you being here. I'll call a Service Committee meeting for Monday, December 5th.

Mr. Rine - Going last is rough. I'd like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. FLOCK is a two year contract, I know we're not done with them yet, but it is two years, not a significant amount of time, but it's something. Hopefully they're more interactive in negotiating.

President Ellington - Now we're going to go to executive session to discuss fact finding with our firefighters. We're going to have all of Council, Council Clerk, Mayor, Law Director, Director Spurgeon and Scott Dehart will be zooming in and all of the Administration is welcome to stay.

Motion to go to executive session by Mr. Marmie, second by Mr. Lang, motion passed 10-0
Motion to come out of executive session by Mr. Mamrie, second by Mr. Barker, motion passed 10-0

President Ellington - We are out of executive session, there were no decisions made during executive session.

Mr. Marmie - Invoking Rule 11, I would like to bring Ordinance No. 22-48 forward.

President Ellington - I would agree with that.

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

22-48 AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE FACT FINDER'S REPORT RECEIVED IN CONNECTION WITH THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE CITY OF NEWARK AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS, LOCAL 109 AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Marmie, second by Mr. Lang, motion passed 10-0

President Ellington - Since 22-48 passed, we will not have to read 22-49 I did this a little out of order, is there anyone who would like to have anything to say about 22-48

Kevin Garwick, President of Newark Firefighters Local 109 - Just to clarify you guys accepted the report, correct?

President Ellington - Yes

Mr. Garwick - Obviously I want to thank all of my fellow firefighters for being here to show solidarity and support. Obviously I came tonight to find out how the ruling came out on the Fact Finders Report. Passing the report as the Council did tonight will lock in wage increases for the Fire Department. Our voting will be finalized by tomorrow. We will know whether we have a contract by tomorrow. I want to speak briefly about exactly what this report does for the Fire Department. On the surface, from an outside perspective the wage increases in this report are great. There is no question they are needed and deserved. When you look at it in the context of our situation, considering the challenges that the Newark Fire Department faces with recruitment and retention, this report will not fix the issues that we

face. We will continue to be one of the lowest paid Fire Departments in central Ohio and we will likely fall further behind central Ohio Fire Departments as the years of this contract go by. We cannot retain firefighters, six firefighters have left for higher paying jobs this year alone. In the past 5 years 23 Newark firefighters have left for higher paying jobs. That's over ¼ of our overall staff. We are hemorrhaging firefighters and it is because of the pay disparity. The raises within this report will not stop the revolving door of firefighters going out for other higher paying firefighter jobs. The only way this will stop is when the Newark Administration and City Council chooses to invest in employees of this City and pay the paired wages. We have not had this happen. It is simply not possible to obtain the level of wage increases needed to address the significant pay disparity that exists in the fact finding process. It just cannot be done by these means. It is worth noting the raises within the staff report that you all voted for were not a choice by the City Administration or the City Council. These raises were a ruling issued by a neutral third party that states you must pay these wage increases to the firefighters. You chose to accept this report instead of going to the next step of the process where we would again fight for our members and then another third party would then force the City to do the right thing. Again, after this promise our problems will still exist and they will continue to exist until public safety and our public safety officers become a priority for you and the Administration. All of you, including the Mayor and other elected and appointed officials have spoken publicly about how important public safety is and how it will be a priority to you as an elected official. Let's go over some facts and let the citizens decide how much you prioritize public safety. The current staffing level of the Fire Department is 19 which is the same that it was in 2004. Volume has increased over 50%, yet staffing remains the same. Station 4 on the East end of Newark remains closed to emergency response, therefore the entire east end of Newark and most of Ward 1 has not had fire and ems coverage in the area. Two frontline fire apparatus that we have are over 15 years old. We have no reserve fire engines, not one. We have two frontline road medics that have adjusted road mileage of over 450,000 miles each. These trucks are falling apart. The Fire Department budget has only increased \$200,000 since 2006. Station 2 on the north side of town, Ward 6 has holes in the walls and was purchased as a temporary Fire Station in 1976. It was a greyhound bus station originally, but still remains and in service Fire Station 46 years later. Lastly, your Newark Firefighters are the third lowest paid professional Firefighters of 43 Fire Departments within 40 miles of Columbus. Let me say that again. Your Newark Firefighters are the third lowest paid Fulltime Professional Firefighters out of 43 Fire Departments within 40 miles of Columbus. Even with the raises that you voted for tonight we will be the 5th lowest paid in that same area next year. Newark cannot retain Firefighters. Like I said earlier 6 firefighters left this year alone for higher paying jobs, including some with over 20 years experience and service to the City. Combines, over 60 years of service and experience walked out the door just this year for more pay. We currently have 8 vacancies on the Fire Department, there are zero applicants, not a single one. We hired zero off the last civil service exam because all of the candidates that made the final list got hired in jobs in other departments, that was before we could even hire them. No one will apply for lateral transfers, there are always opportunities at other departments that pay so much more. Our members are working 48 straight hours in most cases because of forced overtime to cover staffing shortages created by low wages. We are exhausted, overworked, spread too thin and under paid. This trajectory is unsustainable. Someone is going to get hurt or killed and the only way to fix it is to pay competitive wages for firefighters. On the other end of the spectrum, income tax collections are up 40% since 2015. This includes income created by the .5%

Safety levy. Ems billing revenue is up nearly 30% since 2015. The fire department services have not increased consistently with these trends. The Mayor, the cabinet and other appointed officials in the City received 28-30% increases over several years in 2020 because they recognize that in order to attract and retain quality employees they had to pay a competitive wage, why is it any different for the Fire Department and other City employees? The City got over \$18 million in Federal COVID Funds from American Rescue Plan. The Fire Department got just over \$250,000 to supplement overtime costs because of the staffing problem. Not one dollar other than the overtime costs went to dedicated public servants who kept the City operational during the pandemic. The police officers, street department workers, water department workers, custodial staff, tax department and so on, not one dollar went to the employees of this City, instead went to existing projects that were not affected by COVID, like sewer line projects, street paving, Chase building upgrades, City building renovation out here and \$1.5 million was spent on a temporary bridge fix problem that the City had known about for about a decade before COVID even hit. Even \$400,000 was given to a privately owned business for a demolition of a building that caught fire earlier this year. I can't say with all these considerations that the City Administration values public safety like they claim. What you folks voted for tonight was actually a much needed and well deserved pay increase for fighters. Our members may very well vote for this too. They understand that this is likely close to the best that we can do without going through the conciliation process since the Administration will not choose to pay appropriate and necessary pay increases on their own. The wage increases in this report are not enough and will not keep our firefighters here and will not attract candidates to seek employment with Newark Fire. Even with these wages increases we will still be \$25-\$30 thousand annually behind other central Ohio fire departments and our starting pay will still be one of the lowest in the area. So, if you're okay with Newark Fire being a farm system, Newark Fire being at the bottom tiers of the central Ohio fire service then continue this path forward. Make us continue to go to a neutral third party to force you guys to give us the wage increases we deserve, but if these facts bother you, if you don't want to be the lowest paid fire department in central Ohio and if you want to be the example of a City that values its employees other than the opposite, then you and the Newark Administration need to choose to invest in the employees of the City and pay us what we are worth. Until that day comes we will continue to fight for better pay and benefits, we will continue to do whatever we have to do for our members like we have done for the 140 year history of our union. Thank you and I'll see you tomorrow at the public promotion ceremony.

President Ellington - That's not what I expected. Does anyone else have anything to say or is there a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Rath, second by Mr. Houser, with that we are adjourned

Don Ellington, President of Council