

COUNCIL MINUTES

August 19, 2024
Council Chambers
7:00 P.M.

President Harris called the meeting to order

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

INVOCATION – Mr. Labutis

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CAUCUS

Mr. Marmie - Mr. President. First, I want to just state that Mr. Rath is going to be invoking Rule 21 during miscellaneous on an issue that just needs to be corrected. He'll probably explain that further when that happens, but just want to give forewarning that that's going to happen. Also, I would like to invoke Rule 11 on resolutions 24-75 and 24-76 with the agreement of the minority leader.

Mr. Cost – Yes.

Invoke Rule 11

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Mr. Rath

24-75 Exp. A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (\$200,000.00 OPT)(\$200,000.00 Health Insurance Claim Cost)

Motion to waive the two-day reading rule by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Cost, Passed 10-0

Motion to Adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Cost, Passed 10-0

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Mr. Rath

24-76 Exp. A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (\$13,520,000.00 Parking Garage)

Motion to waive the two-day reading rule by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Cost, Passed 10-0

Motion to Adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Cost, Passed 10-0

MINUTES of August 5, 2024, 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**

Service - **Received and Filed without objection**

REPORTS FROM CITY OFFICIALS

Ryan T. Bubb, City Auditor – Operating Report for the period ending July 31, 2024

Brenda Cooper, Tax Administrator – Income Tax Revenue Reports for the period ending July 31, 2024

Brandon Fox, Water Administrator – A list of properties being sent to lien for past due water, sewer, and stormwater bills, total \$7,859.19

PROCLAMATION - Mayor Hall – Saturday, August 31, 2024 as Overdose Awareness Day

PROCLAMATION - Mayor Hall – Saturday, September 7, 2024 as Licking County River Round Up Day

Mayor Hall – Proclamation, whereas Ohio Senate Bill 30 went into effect on September 7th, 2021, officially recognized on August 31st of each year, as Ohio Overdose Awareness Day. Overdose awareness is critically important in Newark, Ohio. A campaign to end overdoses, raise public awareness, and to remember the lives lost to the epidemic is happening daily. Overdose Awareness Day marks the importance of understanding the ongoing battle with the opioid epidemic that has touched so many people. Community groups, legislators, and county and state agencies across Ohio are working hard to bring this crisis under control through efforts to expand access to Naloxone, and improve access to addiction treatment. Now, therefore, I, Jeff Hall, Mayor of the City of Newark, hereby proclaim Saturday, August 31st, 2024 as Overdose Awareness Day in Newark, Ohio, in an effort to raise awareness to the disease of addiction. The local event rally will be on the 29th, and I'll let Trish talk about that. Thank you.

Trish Perry, County Coordinator, OhioCAN - For everyone who doesn't know, you can turn around and look. This is just 104 people of Licking County that have died here to substance use disorder, whether it is from overdose or from medical complications to drug overdose or to drug disease. Our event is August 29th. It is our 10th annual event. It's from 5 to 7. There will be speakers. We'll have about 26 to 28 vendors there that will include treatment providers, harm reductionists, mental health providers, sober living options. So, if you know someone that is struggling or a family member that has a child that's struggling, have them come down there. Licking County is growing daily with wonderful resources, so we need to just get the word out and let people know. This is about holding space for those that have died and is to honor those that have died. Thank you, Mayor Hall.

Mayor Hall - Lindsay is our stormwater coordinator for the City of Newark. Whereas with great pride that on Saturday, September 7th, 2024, we celebrate the 30th annual Licking County River Roundup where citizens come together to participate in a hands-on cleanup of our Licking County waterways. Over the years, this extremely effective roundup has gained great momentum. Last year, volunteers and local leaders pulled nearly 120 tires, 1,160 pounds of scrap metal, and 25,320 pounds of trash out of our county waterways and surrounding riverbanks. In collaboration with the Licking County River Roundup event, the City of Newark encourages everyone in the community, from families and organizations to public officials and senior citizens, to work together to help keep our waterways clean and preserve our natural

resources. Now, therefore, I, Jeff Hall, Mayor of the great City of Newark, hereby proclaim Saturday, September 7th, 2024, as Licking County River Roundup Day.

Lindsay, Stormwater Coordinator - Thank you. Saturday, September 7th is at Everett Park here in Newark. Last year, we had over 50 participants. Like the Mayor said, we've pulled out 25,000 pounds of trash out of Licking County rivers and waterways. So just imagine if we didn't do that every year, what it would look like. So, I encourage you to sign up if you haven't done so already. It's on the City's website on the stormwater page. It's on Facebook. It's on the Licking County stormwater page. So, there's multiple ways to sign up. It's about three hours out of your day on a Saturday. It really doesn't take that long. It's really rewarding to see what happens when we all pull together and get this stuff out of our waterways and clean up our community that we live in. So, yeah, that's all for River Roundup. And it's a really great event. I encourage you to sign up. Thank you.

COMMUNICATIONS

There are none this meeting.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Amy Shaw, 215 Elmwood Ave. - I was here a few weeks ago asking for street lights. I want to thank everybody. Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Simpson of AEP. My street is lit up to where when I stand in the same spot and took the picture, I made a shadow. That was at 3 o'clock in the morning. It's fantastic and I want to thank you.

Rochelle Volen-Smith, 237 Violet Ct. - I'd like to thank AEP for fixing the street light on our street. I would also like to suggest that the City consider trimming some of their roundabouts. There's a visibility problem particularly. The one across here, you cannot see a pedestrian, you cannot see a lower car from the other side. You cannot see a bicyclist at all. The best is being able to see a truck. So, it just needs to be lower. Thank you.

Patricia Perry, 282 N. 21st St. - Thank you again, Mayor Hall, for the proclamation. I also want to thank Licking Memorial Health Systems and Family Health Services for sponsoring this event this year, which helped us do the banners, the beautiful banners that are downtown and the billboard over on 30th St. to help get the awareness out. A lot of people here in our town struggle, but they don't know where to turn. So, with this, being able to do the things like that is really important because they drive by, see a billboard, they think, oh, I can go there, I might be able to, you know, make some contacts. The other thing I wanted to say is that our deaths decreased in Licking County for 2023, in part by the work of so many agencies and grassroots organizations getting harm reduction out to the people who need it and to educate those who struggle as well as the family members. With all the resources that we do have, and believe me, I've been doing this for 15 years, back when 211 told me heroin, we don't have any heroin in Newark, Ohio. So, I know how far we've come, and we have come a long way. And for that, I'm very proud of our community. Thank you.

Bev Shepard, 1037 Woodlawn Ave. - I have a question, a concern as a citizen about our police department. It seems like there's always an ad somewhere that we need more police officers. Any of the neighboring cities, a lot of the neighboring cities, I know their starting salary is significantly more than the city of Newark. What is being done to retain and recruit new police force to our area? Anything being done about it?

President Harris - If you stick around, someone will answer it. This is not a question and answer right now.

Ms. Shepard - Okay, thank you.

Tiffany Yeager, 453 Seroco Ave. - Myself and 109 other people who have petitioned are requesting a street survey on Seroco Avenue. We're hoping to get a four-way stop at the intersection of Mohawk and Seroco. The safety of our children and senior citizens are, you know, they're compromised every day by the vehicles that speed up and down our street. They're frequently causing damage to the cars parked along the street. Overall, the peace and safety of the neighborhood is just, it's disrupted, we'll say, by the presence of those vehicles. That's all I needed to say. Would you like these signatures?

President Harris – Sure.

Joshua Jenkins, 733 Karen Pkwy – So, the reason I come up here today is to let you council members know that I've had many people from your respective wards reach out to me. I ask that you please reach out them, not only when you're trying to gain their votes, but when you're in office. You've been elected to do something, and it's disheartening to have many citizens, I ran for the 4th Ward seat, that know the things that I've done in the community that keep reaching out to me. They've stated multiple people they've tried to call and reach out to, and they're not getting return calls back. To be honest, the only people up here on this panel that I've heard anything good about is Mr. Lang and Mr. Cost. I ask that you guys please step out into the community and be vigilant. Be there for the citizens. That's why you guys were elected. Not just to pass certain things. Not to just come in here and sit and talk about things. It's to be out there for the citizens. If you want this city to rally around you, you have to rally around it. I also ask that when we have these issues with the police department, we shouldn't have to have outcries in newspapers from multiple cities before you guys choose to charge them. This is the second officer that I know of that has gone to a high school as a resource officer, and is there to protect these children, and did things that they're not supposed to be doing, and until there was that outcry, there was nothing done. Now, I respect all of you. I appreciate everything you do, but I think you need to step out into the community a little more. You need to be out here when they're doing certain things to raise awareness, whether it be for at risk youth, whether it be for drug overdose. No matter what it is, you need to step out. I changed my life. I was an at-risk youth. I changed my life because some people stepped into my life that had a better outcome, and showed me the way. For my company, I run three distribution and five retail as Safety and Security Supervisor in the state of Ohio, because people stepped in that was at a higher advantage point, if that's how you want to look at it, and helped me. So, I'm asking you, please step out. Step into these neighborhoods where you are in their wards, and let them know, hey, we're here for you. Thank you.

Ryan Shearer, AFSCME Executive Board Local 2963 - I want to briefly talk about the healthcare situation. When I first got briefed on this I was shocked that things had gotten this bad. That the fund had gotten so low. I know this City to be very fiscally cautious, so to hear this was earth shattering. Every day about 750 people rely on that plan, so that their worst days are not the absolute end of their financial lives. That trust has been violated, and it's going to have to be earned back. The view that a lot of us have is that this is an institutional failure. It's going to require some more significant changes. A reserve sounds great, but we need to make sure that we're also doing a better job keeping track of what's going on. We know this is a repeat issue,

because the fund was bailed out in 2019 with previous people in charge. So, we need to make sure we're learning from past mistakes, and try to find ways to move forward. Thank you.

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

There are none this meeting.

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

There are none this meeting.

RESOLUTIONS ON SECOND READING

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

24-65 APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Motion to Adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Lang, Passed 10-0

RESOLUTIONS ON FIRST READING

By: Mr. Rath, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Ms. Bline, Mr. Neely

24-66 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE FOR THE CITY OF NEWARK, OHIO, TO ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE CONSTRUCTION AGREEMENT WITH OWENS CORNING INSULATING SYSTEMS, LLC, SUBJECT TO THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING A NEW BRIDGE AT RIVERSIDE DRIVE

Held until 9.3.24.

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Mr. Neely, Mr. Rath, Ms. Bline

24-67 Exp. A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Motion to waive the two-day reading rule by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Lang, Passed 10-0

Motion to Adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Lang, Passed 10-0

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Mr. Neely, Mr. Rath, Ms. Bline

24-68 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEWARK TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT LEAD HAZARD CONTROL AND HEALTHY HOMES FOR A LEAD HAZARD REDUCTION GRANT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion to Adopt by Mr. Marmie, Second by Mr. Lang, Passed 10-0

By: Mr. Marmie, Mr. Cost, Mr. Neely, Mr. Rath, Ms. Bline

24-69 APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Held until 9.3.24.

By: Mr. Rath, Mr. Cost, Mr. Marmie, Mr. Neely, Ms. Bline

24-70 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO ENTER INTO A NEW MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH THE NEWARK SPORTS AND EVENTS COMMISSION, INC., TO OPERATE THE LOU AND GIB REESE ICE ARENA AND PICKLEBALL COURTS Held until 9.3.24.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Linda Mossholder, 224 Green Meadow Dr. – First of all, I'd like to thank the Mayor again for the Overdose Awareness Proclamation. I've been a volunteer at the homeless outreach for a little over seven years, so some of the names on the back of my shirt are people I've personally known. On Saturday, we served 147 people with a meal. Not all of those people are unsheltered or victims of Substance Abuse Disorder, but some are. When you see somebody one Saturday, and then you don't see them for a couple of weeks, you automatically ask where they are. This is why this is very important to me. I think we need to be aware that people are suffering from Substance Abuse Disorder. It is a disease. It is not something they choose. I would like to personally invite everyone on Council. This is an event that holds space for people who have succumbed to Substance Abuse Disorder and their families. When someone dies, there is a grief process. Unfortunately, a lot of times people who have died from Substance Abuse Disorder face the shame and stigma rather than acknowledge that their child, their husband, their wife, their father, was a human being who was struggling. So, this is a space to honor those who have passed away and also their families. So, we hope you will come. You don't have to agree with any of our philosophies, but just come and honor those. You'll be able to hear people speak of their losses, and you will hear from those that have entered recovery. So, I invite you personally to come. Thank you.

Rochelle Volen-Smith, 237 Violet Ct. – I watch a lot of different news media, and read a lot. It has come to my attention that there is a drug that is available both through gas stations, it's known as gas station heroin. It comes under, the primary products are Crapton, and the other one starts with an "S". It's becoming known that it is addictive. Very addictive. It's surprising that such a product is available in our vape shops and in our gas stations over the counter, and that we're not doing anything about this when it's a number of people have died from this, not just in our community. It's an oversight. So, I did want to mention that. Thank you.

Steven Smith, 237 Violet Ct. – I wanted to express my appreciation for the Council passing Resolution 24-68 for seeking the funds for the abatement and research. This is a devastating problem in our community. It can lead to many long lasting, and very severe health problems. You probably all heard about the difficulties they had in Flint, Michigan. That's just the tip of the iceberg. It's everywhere. If you have a house that is, I think, older than 1975, it almost certainly has lead paint in it. The effects can be devastating and lifelong. This is a real health problem in our country. I'm very happy to see this being addressed in Newark. Thank you very much.

MISCELLANEOUS

Auditor Bubb – Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to thank you, Jon, for your service. I wish you nothing but the best. I hope you come back. Great job. You understood your role as a council person and legislator. I wish you nothing but the best.

Michael Cox, Assistant Law Director - I want to thank Councilman Lang for his service. I appreciate you.

Mayor Hall – I will do the same, Jonathan, thank you. It's been a pleasure to have you on Council. I wish you the best with your next endeavors.

Mr. Chute – I will echo the same. I wish you the best, Jonathan. It's been a pleasure to serve with you. We will miss you. With that, I will pass.

Mr. Cost – I would like to thank Jon also. I've enjoyed working with you. Maybe we'll see you back again.

Mr. Houser – Thank you, Mr. President. I'll echo the same to Mr. Lang. Wishing you the best on, like the Mayor said, the next steps, next endeavors. I wish you the best with that. I want to thank the Street Department for paving some alleys in the east end of Newark. That's been going on the last week or two and that's been good to see. With that I'll pass.

Mr. Labutis – Thank you, Mr. President. I would thank Jonathan for his service as well. We started just about the same time. You got a few months head start, but just about the same time we started. It's been a pleasure to get to know you and get to serve with you as well. I appreciate your insight on things and I wish you all the best for the future. With that, I will pass.

Mr. Marmie – Thank you. Need to call a Finance Committee meeting for September the 3rd. I have a few things. First of all, I don't know if many of you were aware, but highway patrol was out rampant in our area today. They were on their motorcycles. They were really focusing in on distracted driving and anybody who had a cell phone in their hand has over \$100 less in their pocket. So, that was occurring in our community today especially up on 21st St and Deo. Next, a couple things, Ms. Shepard, I just have to say that have faith that the administration and Council and everybody that has anything to do with it is working with making sure that our safety forces are the best and recruitment and retention are on the radar and it is definitely being looked at, worked on, and hopefully things will get better within the City for the citizens as far as our safety forces. Ms. Yeager, as far as the four-way stop, I wish you good fortune with that. I can tell you that just knowing the traffic patterns and flows there, four-way stop is probably not justifiable. The city can only do four-way stops if there's enough traffic going in both directions. The state of Ohio is one of those states that if you put a four-way stop where it is not justifiable, then actually if there is an accident that occurs at a four-way stop, then a lawsuit in which the City can be found liable could occur, so therefore, it's mandated by the traffic studies. The petitions are fantastic. We understand your concerns. Hopefully, our safety forces will improve and we'll be able to do a little bit more traffic monitoring and things like that and focus on some key areas like yours. Okay? Let's see. What is next? Let me make sure I've got everything in here. Mr. Jenkins, I don't know where your facts came from, but I dare you and I challenge you to find somebody that I have not returned a phone call or an email to. I just challenge you to do that. Not only that, I'm very heavily involved in my community. One of my block watch partners is here tonight. I get involved in the block watch not only during election, but every single block watch that I can attend, unless I have another function to go to, I'm there. As far as being in my ward, I'm constantly around my ward helping folks out. I even help folks out in other wards. To say that we're not involved in our community is just disrespectful because I'm heavily involved in this community. I'm committed to it. I don't do this up here for the pay or anything like that. I do this to make this community a better community

for my family, my friends, and all of the folks in the City of Newark. So, with that, I'll just say that one of the reasons why I do is because I mentioned my family. My son, or my grandson, today attended preschool for the first time at the new Newark Preschool out at the old State Farm Building. Yes, he did cry going in, but fortunately he cried when it was time to leave as well. So, it's all good. Finally, I also want to mention the volleyball that took place at Whitefield Showdown at Sundown was a huge success. I think all the teams that participated were just thrilled with that opportunity. It was a very neat experience. It's something that I think could grow even more so in the future. It was just super exciting. The community came together. All the schools that participated had a blast, and I look forward to next year hopefully having another one and maybe even expanding it to be a little bit larger. And then finally, this is hard. Jonathan, I've respected you so much in what you bring to the table. Your legal knowledge and just your commitment are just, I mean, you can't even measure it as far as being helpful. And more importantly, I've gained a really close friend, somebody that we can throw things up against as far as information, ideas, concerns, and I think that I'm going to miss you tremendously. I think the citizens of Newark are going to miss you tremendously. I think the administration is going to miss you tremendously, and it's because of what you do bring to the table and all the information. And not only that, but the amount of time and effort that you put in to the things that you research. A lot of folks don't get that. Realize how much time it takes and what kind of commitment you put into this position up here, but I just wanted to share that with everyone and I know that I am just, I'm grateful for what you have done. I'm blessed to have you as a friend, as a colleague, and I hope you come back soon. I really do, because I think that the city of Newark can use you in any way, shape, or form, and I know you're not going away. You're still going to be involved in things, but you will truly be missed by me and I wish you good fortune. I'm happy for you, for the reasons why you're leaving and the house that you now have, and I'm happy for your family, your kids, and I just wish you good speed and God bless you.

Mr. Neely – It's always hard to follow Doug Marmie, but I'd also like to thank Jonathan for your service. I think Doug hit it on the head when it comes to research. Always well studied, even when we do disagree, always professional, attack the position, not the person, so thank you for your service. It's a pleasure. I'll pass.

Mr. Rath – Thank you. Under rule 21, I want to bring back 24-17 up and put it on the table.

President Harris - We have a motion by Mr. Rath, second by Mr. Lang to bring it off the table.

Mr. Marmie - Point of order. It's not to bring it off the table, it's to reconsider.

Mr. Rath - I apologize. Thank you. I'd like to make a motion to amend 24-17 from that, which changes the zoning classification from general commercial district to limited commercial district. The reason we're doing this is to match the recommendation of the Planning Commission. Please tell me I don't have that reversed.

Ms. Vensel - General to limited, you're correct.

President Harris - Motion by Mr. Rath, second by Mr. Lang. Any other discussion?

Ms. Vensel – (called role)

President Harris - So 24-17A has been amended and passed.

Mr. Marmie - Point of order. That was just a motion to amend, it needs a motion to adopt.

Mr. Rath - I'd like to make a motion to adopt 24-17A.

President Harris - Motion by Mr. Rath, second by Mr. Lang.

Ms. Vensel – (called roll)

Mr. President - Now 24-17A has been adopted. We don't do that very often.

Mr. Rath - Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Marmie, for paying attention. I appreciate that. Mr. Smith, I had written this down already, but since you brought up the lead issue, I will give you credit for that. If you are a resident in the city of Newark and you have not gone to the City's website yet, the Water Department's website, given consent for them to look at your water pipes or water line from the street to your house, please do so. Any of those water lines that are or may contain lead are being replaced, and we can't do that without your consent. So, please do so. I'll call a Service Committee meeting for Tuesday, September 3rd. I'll just say, Jon, I think you're going to create a void on this council that will not be easily filled. So, simply appreciate all that you've done for us, the effort that you've put in. I hope to see you back soon and then, of course, I'd be remiss if I didn't welcome you to the most desirable ward in all of Newark to live in, the Third Ward. I appreciate you having me as a neighbor as well. With that, I'll pass.

Mr. Rine - Thank you, Mr. President. Jonathan, as a newbie, I thank you for everything that you've been able to show me. As a colleague, and a citizen, and a friend, you'll be missed. I wish I wrote something down, but like I said, as a friend, you'll be missed, so we'll see you again. With that, I'll pass.

Ms. Bline – Thank you, Mr. President. Jonathan, my first memory of you is when you were encouraging me to go out and knock on doors and do things that I was pretty shy at. I really appreciate you, and I really appreciate your willingness to spend hours and hours in legal research to be sure you had it right. We may not agree on everything, but I appreciate the rapport and the gentleman attitude you've kept. Thank you. That being said, we have a special member of property maintenance here, and I want to thank property maintenance. They do so much. When citizens don't know what to do and a problem is staring them in the face, they call property maintenance. They get this very calm voice on the phone, and she takes their complaint and does her due diligence, and property maintenance can do the job. I want to thank property maintenance for all their diligence, as well as NPD and our other safety forces. We've had to make a lot of calls recently, and they've been on the spot. I want to thank these fine residents from Seroco. Ms. Yeager, Mr. Friend, when we met in July and we were just out walking around, I found a family that was sewn together in those neighborhoods between Daniel and Seroco and Wehrle. It was amazing. What a great neighborhood. I go there at night, and I'm looking around, and I'm talking to people, and I love how people are out walking the streets. I've already spoken to Mr. Morehead about the study, and so he knows. I'll do my very best to make sure it's completed. Getting 100 signatures is no small thing, and I appreciate you guys greatly. Thank you for all your time. I'll be talking to you soon. I also have to pivot here and thank Woodman Life and Real Rescue Tree Service for going into Hope Park. We spent hours and hours working on updates, and Woodman Life sponsored breakfast and then lunch, and they paid for the paint. They paid for the trash bags, for the dumpster. They did a great job. We worked on safety issues. They picked up a lot of needles, sadly, but it's a children's area, so it needed to be done, and so I'm grateful for them sponsoring that event. That was the weekend of the 10th. Then the weekend of the 17th, just this last weekend, one of the citizens from

Jefferson, we'd been chatting for some time about a fallow property off West Main Street, and his heart to see it restored to the canal lock that it once was, and so we took first steps. So, citizens from Jefferson, West Main, and even Gainor went in, and Saturday we spent, oh gosh, probably six hours just gathering trash and picking up, how do I say, cutting down high grass and just bringing it, making it presentable because folks had gone back there, and they were setting brush fires that were literally endangering the nearby homes, and so I really appreciate these folks. Vision is something that we can laugh at somebody's idea, but it moves things forward. It's their dream. It's their community, and they see something beautiful there, and man, what a privilege it is.

President Harris - Mr. Jenkins, I don't agree with your comments. They weren't accurate. Everyone up here works hard as a councilman to help, and if you could provide names, the people that we haven't responded to, give us their names and we'll reach out to them. But you give us names and we'll be glad to do it. I want to talk about, just for a minute, about finance, the Finance Committee. I'm struggling with the insurance bills not getting paid. You know, we heard as of August 1st, we're getting into it, but we knew before August 1st. And it's costing the City a lot of money and I think just this department needs to figure out what's going on in it because it's hurting the City, it's hurting the employees. It's kind of disturbing that this has been going on and nothing's really been taken care of, so I wanted to get my two cents in about that. Jonathan, thank you, sir. Wish you the best. I know you'll be involved. I know you'll be back and we'll miss you. I wish you the best. The floor is now yours.

Mr. Lang – Thank you, Mr. President. I really appreciate all the lovely things everybody's had to say to me. I'm going to try to keep it together myself. Before I do say that, my farewells, though, I do want to mention on the insurance issue, I think it's an important one that we all up here need to remain diligent, asking a lot of questions, digging in, making sure you understand every last bit of information that's in front of you so we can figure this out because I think that's going to be an ongoing problem that's going to require everybody's attention. I wanted to provide a quick update on the cannabis zoning. For those who aren't at our Planning Commission or haven't read the minutes yet, Planning Commission made recommendation to add a two-mile buffer between dispensaries, prohibit the ability for the dispensaries to do drive-through service, and then also take dispensaries out of the industrial zones. I would expect that to be coming back to Council at our September 3rd meeting, I think, right after Labor Day. I'm in full support of the Planning Commission's recommendations. I would hope that my colleagues on Council here would support that when it comes through. Rochelle, I actually really agree with what you brought up about the gas station, the Kratom or whatever you mentioned. I think as we work through all the cannabis legislation, everybody kept talking about vape shops and these other things that are being sold in our community, and I think it's incumbent upon us to take a hard look at those activities, those substances. We can take action as a City Council to prohibit some of the things that are going on. Everybody was really worked up about vape shops and comparing dispensaries to vape shops. We're working through the dispensary, the marijuana stuff. I think vape shops deserve the same scrutiny, so I'd encourage folks to take a look at that as well. Tonight is my last meeting. As Jeff mentioned, I'm moving to what he's been telling me for years is the most desirable ward, so we're going to test that out, and I look forward to being his constituent. As I move out of the ward, I kind of want to reflect on the last seven years. I was inspired to join Council originally by my mom, who served on Village Council

when I was a kid, and she taught me that public service is not just a duty, but it's a calling. Over the years, we've achieved a lot. Specifically, in the Fifth Ward, we paved a lot of streets, we improved traffic flow with some roundabouts, we made some pickleball courts, and I think most critically, we built a new station, Station 5. The legislation that I worked on, I'm proudest of authorizing regulations to treat vaping like smoking. We did an amendment to firm up Council salaries and tie it to OPERS, and then we made an ordinance to ensure that raises for elected officials are handled transparently. We saw how that worked out just last year, having that transparency legislation. We've obviously worked hard the last few months to establish some reasonable marijuana regulations. Those aren't just achievements, they're steps towards a more practical and sensible community. I'll miss most the camaraderie, the debates we've had on this dais, tackling important issues together. Certainly, I will miss all of you, and I could go on a long list of each and every person that I would want to thank, but there's really two individuals that have become two of my closest friends since I've joined Council. You know, Jeff, you taught me the importance of boldness and staying true to your values and just being a true, honest, through and through, loyal person, and I truly value our friendship. Doug, you know, since the day I came on, you have been an absolute mentor to me, and I have looked over your shoulder. I've benefited from this seat right here. This is the best seat for a new councilman. You just watch what Doug does, and you watch the way that he approaches the job, the diligence he applies, and you can really learn from that. He really does set a high, high standard for public service, and I would encourage everybody to learn from Doug because he's a valuable, valuable commodity here on Council, and we don't know how long he will continue to be here, so we need to learn from him while he's here. You know, serving on this Council has been a personal growth experience for me, made me more comfortable speaking my mind, as people have learned, standing up for what's right. So, you know, honesty and transparency have really guided my service on Council, and I trust these principles will continue to guide this Council moving forward. So, I'm stepping down today, but I do plan to remain in Newark, and I do hope to return to Council at some point. I hope an opportunity presents itself. I have truly loved this job. Until then, I do plan to remain engaged as a citizen. Sorry, Jeff, it means I'll be calling you.

President Harris - You only got three minutes when you come to speak.

(laughter)

Mr. Lang - You know, civic duty doesn't end with office. It continues with every action we take to support our community, and so to my colleagues and those who will follow my footsteps, I offer this. Be bold, follow your instincts, speak plainly and often. This is a role of honor. Treat it as such, and don't take a single moment for granted. Thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve. It's been an honor. Thank you.

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

Jeff Harris, President of Council