

SUMMARY OF CAUCUS DISCUSSION AND MINUTES OF THE STRONGSVILLE CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD ON, MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024.

The Council of the City of Strongsville met in the Caucus Room at the Mike Kalinich Sr. City Council Chamber, 18688 Royalton Road, on **Monday, March 4, 2024, at 6:45 p.m.**

Present: Council Members: James E. Carbone, Annmarie P. Roff, James A. Kaminski, Gordon C. Short, Thomas M. Clark, Kelly A. Kosek and Brian M. Spring. **Also Present:** Clerk of Council Aimee Pientka. **Administration:** Mayor Thomas P. Perciak, Law Director Neal Jamison, and Finance Director Eric Dean.

Council President, James Carbone, called the caucus to order at 6:48 p.m.

The following Council Committees met to review legislation on the agenda:

Economic Development Committee: Chairman Clark advised Ordinance No. 2024-026 is an ordinance authorizing a job/payroll creation incentive grant for Ark Transportation LTD., a family owned business, that will bring an estimated 103 new full-time jobs by January, 2031, to Strongsville, with a total new payroll of \$8,800,000.00. Mr. Clark advised that the former Darice headquarters building will become the new global headquarters for Ark Transportation LTD. This move to Strongsville was announced by the company and posted online at: www.jobsohio.com (Jobs Ohio) and www.northeastohioregion.com (Team NEO). Suspension and adoption was recommended for this legislation.

Planning, Zoning & Engineering Committee: Councilwoman Kosek advised Ordinance No. 2024-027 is an ordinance authorizing and directing the Mayor to issue and approve Change Order Nos. 6 and 7 with Gilbane Building Company, for an increase in the contract price of \$284,524.00, and for a new total project cost of \$9,396,139.00. This would go towards tennis and pickleball court lighting and some other electrical changes for the Town Center project. Suspension and adoption was recommended for this legislation. Suspension and adoption was also recommended for Resolution No. 2024-028; a resolution authorizing the Mayor to advertise for bids for the 2024 pavement reconstruction program.

Public Service & Conservation Committee: Councilwoman Kosek advised Ordinance No. 2024-029 is an ordinance requesting participation in an Ohio Department of Transportation contract with Cleveland Freightliner, Inc. doing business as Valley Freightliner, Sterling & Western Star Trucks of Cleveland. This will be for the purchase of two (2) Western Star 47X Cab and chassis units in an amount not to exceed \$256,736.00, and will be used by the city's service department. Suspension and adoption was recommended for this legislation.

Committee of the Whole: Mr. Carbone advised Ordinance No. 2024-030 is an ordinance to employ special legal counsel and enter into a retainer agreement with Attorney Amanda E. Gordon with McDonald Hopkins LLC. This is in connection with matters relating to bond counsel services. Mr. Jamison advised that this is a project that will involve improvements to the city's municipal buildings, especially the recreation center, to see how efficiencies can be established in regards to heating, cooling, lighting and any other energy conservation. He also mentioned that Attorney Amanda Gordon, has been an attorney for 34 years with an expertise in this particular area. She will assist in picking qualified vendors and financing matters. The energy saving's costs will then be used to pay off the debt incurred for the projects. Suspension and adoption was recommended for this legislation.

Suspension and adoption was also recommended for Resolution No. 2024-031; a resolution in support of the passage of the city school district renewal levy (Issue No.25) on the March 19, 2024 ballot.

MINUTES OF THE STRONGSVILLE CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024 IN THE MIKE KALINICH SR. CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

CALL TO ORDER:

Council President James E. Carbone called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CERTIFICATION OF POSTING:

The Clerk of Council certified that the meeting had been posted in accordance with Ordinance No. 2023-182.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Council Members: James E. Carbone, Annmarie P. Roff, James A. Kaminski, Gordon C. Short, Thomas M. Clark, Kelly A. Kosek and Brian M. Spring. **Also Present:** Clerk of Council Aimee Pientka. **Administration:** Mayor Thomas P. Perciak, Law Director Neal Jamison, and Finance Director Eric Dean.

COMMENTS ON MINUTES:

The minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on February 20, 2024 were approved as submitted.

APPOINTMENTS, CONFIRMATIONS, AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS:

(None)

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Mr. Clark: Thank you President Carbone, we have two items quickly tonight. We recently had our first 2024 Economic Development meeting. This was just our organizational meeting. It was on February 26, 2024 here in Council chambers. We had great participation from those in attendance and excited to have a productive 2024 year. With that, I will move to our first ordinance under Economic Development this evening. This is Ordinance No. 2024-026; it is an ordinance authorizing a job/payroll creation incentive grant for Ark Transportation LTD. and declaring an emergency. Ark Transportation is a logistics company. It's a family owned business, currently in Middleburg Heights, that would bring 103 jobs here to Strongsville with the headquarters in ward 3 on Darice Industrial Parkway. We talked about it in caucus; but again, I appreciate everyone's support with that ordinance this evening. I will happily take any questions.

Mr. Kaminski – No question, but it's just a comment. It was a great economic development kick-off; and I had a lot of good positive comments from the folks that were participating, so great job.

Mr. Clark – Thanks for being there.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (cont'd):

BUILDING AND UTILITIES – Ms. Roff:

(No report)

PUBLIC SAFETY & HEALTH – Ms. Roff:

(No report)

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES – Mr. Spring:

(No report)

SCHOOL BOARD – Mr. Spring: For the School Board, there was a meeting on February 22, 2024; they had some recognitions for pre-school awards. A couple of students, Benny and Tasha received awards; along with Mrs. Pinzone. Also recognized for their efforts, was the 2023 girls' soccer team. They made it to the "Final Four" for the state tournament, so congratulations to them. They were all there to receive an award. Also, during the superintendent report, they had the pre-school teachers give reports basically just saying that they are growing and running out of adequate space for the students. We got the same report from the elementary schools as well; so there's challenges with space and the possibility of mobile units. The recommendation is to purchase new ones, so that is being discussed. At the next meeting, they will make their announcements there as well. Another thing...another recognition, our Treasurer, George Anagnostou and his department at Strongsville City Schools, has been awarded the "Meritorious Budget Award" by the Association of School Business Officials International for 8 straight years. It recognizes the excellence in school budget presentation including developing and analyzing presentations of the schools systems budget. Congratulations to them as well. Any other questions?

(No questions)

Mr. Spring - That will conclude my report.

FINANCE – Mr. Short:

(No report)

SOUTHWEST GENERAL HEALTH SYSTEM – Mr. Short: I did not receive the monthly update as of today, so no update there; but we will have a board meeting at the end of the month. Hopefully by next meeting, I will have our monthly update. That concludes my report, but I will take any questions.

(No questions)

COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY – Mr. Kaminski:

(No report)

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (cont'd):

PLANNING, ZONING AND ENGINEERING – Ms. Kosek: Yes, for Planning, Zoning and Engineering we have two ordinances tonight; we have Ordinance Nos. 2024-027 and 2024-028. Ordinance No. 2024-027 is a Change Order for the Gilbane Building Company related to the Town Center Project. It is actually two Change Orders totaling \$284,524.00 and bringing the total project cost to just under \$9.4 million dollars. These are for changes that we requested regarding pickleball and tennis court lighting, and some other electrical changes. I would ask that we suspend and adopt that. We also have Resolution No. 2024-028 which is to authorize the Mayor to go out and advertise for bids for our 2024 pavement reconstruction program. I would ask that we suspend and adopt that.

PUBLIC SERVICE AND CONSERVATION – Ms. Kosek: For Public Service and Conservation we have Ordinance No. 2024-029 which is to purchase two vehicles for the service department. The amount would not exceed \$256,736.00, and I would ask that we suspend and adopt that. If anyone has any questions, I would be happy to answer them; otherwise, I will send it back to Mr. Carbone.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Mr. Carbone: We have Ordinance No. 2024-030; this is a retainer agreement with McDonald Hopkins LLC to provide professional legal services. This is in connection with matters relating to bond counsel services including finance matters for our municipal building improvement projects in our city including energy conservation improvements and other general improvements. The recommendation here is going to be to suspend and adopt. Lastly this evening, we have Ordinance No. 2024-031. This is to support the passage of our school district's renewal levy which is Issue 25, that is on the ballot here for March 19, 2024. The recommendation here is to suspend and adopt. I think we have made it clear over the last...many years that we support...we support the leadership, and what everybody is doing around Dr. Ryba. The momentum that they have, and just the...where our district is performing academically and how that relates to our community, to our kids and to our family. Really, we have the momentum right now; and we want to keep that momentum. The recommendation is that we support this. Any questions for me on those two?

(No questions)

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER OFFICERS:

MAYOR PERCIAK: Well, Mr. President, good evening.

Mr. Carbone – Good evening.

Mayor Perciak – Just one announcement, the "State of the City Address" is going to be March 12, 2024. That's a week from tomorrow at the recreation center. I don't know if they are starting at 11:15 a.m. or 11:30 a.m., but I encourage everybody to be there. We will have a highlight of the financial report for the year; and some exciting news as far as the what the future is going to be, where we are going, and what we look forward to accomplish here in 2024. I ask you to attend. We have a lot of guests that are coming; and Mayors from other cities are coming just to see as to what's going on here in Strongsville. I encourage you to attend if you have the chance. Call Amy (Ferree) at the Chamber of Commerce, that ends my report.

Mr. Carbone – Always good updates at the "State of the City Address," so thank you.

**REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENTS
AND OTHER OFFICERS (cont'd):**

FINANCE DEPARTMENT – Mr. Dean: Thank you Mr. President, I hereby certify that the funds will be made available for all ordinances and resolutions requiring certification of funding, thank you.

LAW DEPARTMENT – Mr. Jamison: All ordinances and resolutions are in proper legal form; that concludes my report.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Richard Micko, 20520 Wildwood Lane, Strongsville, Ohio 44136: My name is Richard Micko, I live at 20520 Wildwood Lane. I would like to thank President Carbone, President Pro Tem Short and Mayor Perciak for allowing me to speak for a few minutes. A couple of housekeeping issues: March 19, 2024 is the election, and we do have school in session. I remind all of our voters that voting is very important; and keeping our school children safe is also very important. Just for the voters in the audience, our high school is approximately from 7:20 a.m. to 2:20 p.m.; 7:20 a.m. coming in and 2:20 p.m. coming out. Our middle school is approximately from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If anyone has ever driven between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Pearl Road, you know about the high school traffic. Our elementary schools are from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Just make sure that if you are going to vote during those times, please be patient. There is going to be a little bit of extra time for parking and things like that. That's the housekeeping issue. As many of you know, I spend too much time on the internet trying to learn as much as I can about school finances in our school district, and school districts all in Ohio. I was doing some research on public records, and I'm not picking on Solon, but I think it's important that these are public records. I found out that in 2018, the voters in the Solon school district passed a new money levy for 6.9 mills to begin collection in the year 2020. Since then, the levy has generated the following maximum amounts if everyone paid their property taxes: In 2020, it was about \$8.8 million dollars, in 2021, it was a little over \$9 million dollars, in 2022; again, a little over \$9 million dollars, and in 2023, it collected about \$9.1 million dollars. That total is \$36,123,793.02, because every penny counts. I then went to another public record and I reviewed Solon Schools' five-year forecast, also available on the internet. It shows at the end of this June, which is our fiscal year 2024, Solon schools will have \$39,051,630.00 in the bank. One way you could look at this is to say that Solon hasn't spent a single penny of that levy money on their children. How is it that Solon schools, the number one ranked school district in the State of Ohio, deposited all those tax dollars from their most recent levy in the bank? Two words - levy cycle. Two more words – financial planning. When you don't understand the levy cycle, and ignore sound financial planning, you can jump to conclusions that don't add up. I invite you, and I invite everyone in the audience, to get the facts about Issue 25 at www.ForStrongsville.com. Strongsville is in a very similar situation. All of that data has been verified by public sources. Again, it seems like it's a lot of money that isn't being spent on our students; when in fact, it's money that we are planning...not for today, but for tomorrow, the next year and the next year. We do have Strongsville's Issue 25, which is our school renewal levy, and I want to share three messages with you. What will the renewal of Issue 25 do? It will prioritize our children. It will make sure that all of the great things that our students are doing today, tomorrow and the next year, they will continue to be able to do. Just recently, on a Friday, I went to the high school and watched the boys' basketball team compete in basketball. Think about all of the hours of practice and all the hours they put in to play basketball. Instead of doing the host of other things that students today could be doing that as parents, we would find a waste of time or not valuable. They are choosing to engage in basketball.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (cont'd):

Mr. Micko (cont'd) - As soon as that game was done, I walked over to the auditorium and I listened to our Strongsville Orchestra compete. I might be a little biased, but they sound as good as the Cleveland Orchestra. Over 125 of our high school students are in various orchestras at the high school. Think of all the hours they practice an instrument; good things that our students and that our children in our community are doing. That's the kind of thing that Issue 25 enables. Issue 25 will prioritize our children and also protect our home values. At the end of the day, nobody wants to per say, pay taxes. At the same time, when you go to sell your home, you want to get the best dollar you can. A good school district is part of the puzzle along with good safety forces that will let you, as a homeowner, get the best dollar you can when it's time to sell your home. Renewing Issue 25 will protect our home values. Finally, Issue 25 will prevent Strongsville City Schools from going bankrupt. If we never renew that levy, we are predicted by 2028, sooner than the end of fiscal year 2028, to be \$14 million dollars in the hole. We can't do that by law, and we won't do that. Issue 25 will allow us to continue the positive course that the school district is currently on, maintain healthy finances, maintain healthy property values, and maintain healthy opportunities for all of our children. I want to thank all of you for the vote today. I'm looking forward to a positive vote, but thank you. Again, on March 19, 2024 or before, please vote for Issue 25 because we are all for Strongsville, thank you very much.

Mr. Kaminski – A quick request, Mr. Micko. I'm having a meeting tomorrow, is there by chance that you have extra literature that I can...?

Mr. Micko – I will get you all the literature that you need.

Mr. Kaminski – Perfect, thank you.

Mr. Micko – It's much appreciated.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Ordinance No. 2024-026 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A JOB/PAYROLL CREATION INCENTIVE GRANT FOR ARK TRANSPORTATION LTD., AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Short to suspend the rules requiring every ordinance or resolution to be read on three different days, second by Ms. Kosek. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Short, second by Ms. Kosek.

Roll Call: All ayes. Motion carries.

Ordinance No. 2024-026 ADOPTED.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS (cont'd):

Ordinance No. 2024-027 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR TO ISSUE AND APPROVE CHANGE ORDER NOS. 6 AND 7 FOR AN INCREASE IN THE CONTRACT PRICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY OF STRONGSVILLE AND GILBANE BUILDING COMPANY IN CONNECTION WITH THE STRONGSVILLE TOWN CENTER PROJECT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Short to suspend the rules requiring every ordinance or resolution to be read on three different days, second by Ms. Kosek. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Short, second by Ms. Kosek.

Roll Call: All ayes. Motion carries. Ordinance No. 2024-027 ADOPTED.

Resolution No. 2024-028 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS FOR THE 2024 PAVEMENT RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM IN THE CITY OF STRONGSVILLE, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Short to suspend the rules requiring every ordinance or resolution to be read on three different days, second by Ms. Kosek. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Short, second by Ms. Kosek.

Roll Call: All ayes. Motion carries. Resolution No. 2024-028 ADOPTED.

Ordinance No. 2024-029 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. AN ORDINANCE REQUESTING PARTICIPATION IN AN OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF TWO (2) WESTERN STAR 47X CAB AND CHASSIS UNITS, WITH APPURTENANCES, FOR USE BY THE SERVICE DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY; AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE TO DO ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Short to suspend the rules requiring every ordinance or resolution to be read on three different days, second by Ms. Kosek. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Short, second by Ms. Kosek.

Roll Call: All ayes. Motion carries. Ordinance No. 2024-029 ADOPTED.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS (cont'd):

Ordinance No. 2024-030 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EMPLOY SPECIAL LEGAL COUNSEL AND ENTER INTO A RETAINER AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TO THE CITY OF STRONGSVILLE IN CONNECTION WITH MATTERS RELATING TO BOND COUNSEL SERVICES FOR MUNICIPAL BUILDING IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN THE CITY OF STRONGSVILLE, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by Mr. Short to suspend the rules requiring every ordinance or resolution to be read on three different days, second by Ms. Kosek. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Short, second by Ms. Kosek.

Roll Call: All ayes. Motion carries. Ordinance No. 2024-030 ADOPTED.

Resolution No. 2024-031 by Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council. A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE PASSAGE OF THE STRONGSVILLE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT RENEWAL LEVY (ISSUE NO. 25) ON THE MARCH 19, 2024 BALLOT.

Motion by Mr. Short to suspend the rules requiring every ordinance or resolution to be read on three different days, second by Ms. Kosek. All members present voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion to adopt by Mr. Short, second by Ms. Kosek.

Roll Call: All ayes. Motion carries. Resolution No. 2024-031 ADOPTED.

COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS AND CLAIMS:

(None)

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Ms. Roff – Jim, if you could announce Issue 20.

Mr. Carbone – Also on March 19, 2024, there's a very important rezoned area on the corner of Royaltown Road and Pearl Road. We already acquired three properties that were rezoned last year. We are looking this year to rezone three properties that we obtained over the last couple of months. It's all going to be part of an area that will be a future site of...possibly a future site for a fire station. Anything else that you would want to add to that?

Mayor Perciak – You have covered it well, sir.

Mr. Carbone – We had great support last time; and I don't think it will be an issue this time. I think it's a great thing when you're dealing with safety in our community.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before this Council, President Carbone adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

Marialena Beach

Marialena Beach
Council Secretary

03-18-24

Date