

City of Seven Hills

Record of Minutes of the

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING HELD – APRIL 11, 2023

OATH OF OFFICE

Mayor Biasiotta administered the ceremonial Oath of Office to Justin Costanzo to fill the Council-at-Large seat vacated by former Councilmember John Kulju. Mr. Kulju resigned his Council seat due to moving out of state.

Council President Kiriazis called the April 11, 2023 Regular Council Meeting to order at 6:42 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1. ROLL CALL

Present and accounted for were Mayor Biasiotta, Director of Law Moore, Director of Finance Petrunyak, Director of Public Service and Properties Johnson, Councilman-at-Large Elliott, Councilwoman-at-Large Kelly, Councilman-at-Large Costanzo, Ward 1 Councilman Kiriazis, Ward 2 Councilman Martin, Ward 4 Councilman Morrow, Director of Public Services and Properties Johnson, Building Commissioner Grassi and Engineer Schmitzer.

MOTION to excuse Ward 3 Councilman Snitzky from tonight's meeting by Mr. Kiriazis, seconded by Ms. Kelly.

ROLL CALL: all yea

MOTION CARRIED

2. READING AND DISPOSAL OF JOURNAL – There were none.

3. CONSENT AGENDA - There were none.

4. RESOLUTIONS OF COMMENDATION – There were none.

5. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development

Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee Chair Kiriazis stated that the Committee met this evening, April 11, 2023 and the minutes from that meeting are on file with the Clerk of Council. Mr. Kiriazis said that the Committee will hold its next regular meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 2023.

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Public Works

Public Works Committee Chair Costanzo stated that the Committee met this evening, Tuesday, April 11, 2023 and the minutes from that meeting will be on file with the Clerk of Council. Mr. Costanzo said that the Committee will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, May 16, 2023.

Community Services

Community Services Committee Chair Kelly stated that the Committee met on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, and the minutes from that meeting are pending. Ms. Kelly said that the Committee will hold its next regular meeting on Tuesday, May 16, 2023.

Police and Safety

Police and Fire Committee Chair Elliott stated that the Committee last met today, April 11, 2023 and the minutes from that meeting will be on file with the Clerk of Council. Mr. Elliott said that the Committee will hold its next regular meeting on Tuesday, May 16, 2023.

Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Committee Chair Morrow stated that the Committee last met on March 25, 2023 and the minutes are pending. Mr. Morrow said that the Committee will hold its next regular meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 2023.

Rules, Ordinances, and Ethics

Rules, Ordinances, and Ethics Committee Chair Martin stated that the Committee met this evening, April 11, 2023 and the minutes from that meeting will be on file with the Clerk of Council. Mr. Morrow said that the Committee will hold its next regular meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 2023.

Finance, Civil Service, and Personnel

Finance, Civil Service and Personnel Committee Chair Kiriazis stated that the Committee last met this evening April 11, 2023 and the minutes from that meeting are pending. Mr. Kiriazis said that the Committee will hold its next regular meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 2023. Mr. Kiriazis welcomed Mark Ruda, who is a Seven Hills resident and is a member of the Parma School Board.

APPOINTMENTS AND CONFIRMATIONS

There were no appointments or confirmations.

COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS, AND CLAIMS

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There were no communications, petitions, or claims.

6. **APPOINTMENTS AND CONFIRMATIONS** – There were none.
7. **COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS AND CLAIMS** – There were none.
8. **COUNCIL OPEN TO THE AUDIENCE ON LEGISLATION ONLY** - There were none.
9. **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**
 - a. **Ordinance No. 22- 2023** - - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ACCEPT THE NORTHEAST OHIO PUBLIC ENERGY COUNCIL (NOPEC) 2023 ENERGIZED COMMUNITY GRANT.

Second Reading.

ORDINANCE NO. 22-2023 WAS READ FOR ITS SECOND READING.

- b. **Ordinance No. 24-2023** - - AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 537, OFFENSES AGAINST PERSONS, AS CONTAINED IN PART FIVE, GENERAL OFFENSES, OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF SEVEN HILLS BY ADDING NEW SECTION 537.073 TITLED “*CRIMINAL CHILD ENTICEMENT.*”

Second Reading.

ORDINANCE NO. 24-2023 WAS READ FOR ITS SECOND READING.

- c. **Ordinance No. 26-2023** - - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A LICENSE FOR ENTRY TO PERFORM DEMOLITION ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF SEVEN HILLS, OHIO, WITH THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY LAND REUTILIZATION CORPORATION, TO ALLOW CUYAHOGA COUNTY LAND REUTILIZATION CORPORATION THE RIGHT, PRIVILEGE AND LICENSES TO ENTER ON AND IN THE PROPERTIES AT 3190 ROCKSIDE ROAD AND 3250 ROCKSIDE ROAD TO PERFORM ACTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEMOLITION PRIOR TO OR FOLLOWING THE DEMOLITION OF SAID PROPERTIES.

First Reading.

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ORDINANCE NO. 26-2023 WAS READ FOR ITS FIRST READING.

- d. **Ordinance No. 27-2023** - - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT WITH GRACE HOME HEALTH AND WELLNESS LLC, JESSICA NADZAM, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING ROCK STEADY BOXING/PARKINSONS FITNESS AT THE CITY OF SEVEN HILLS RECREATION COMPLEX.
First Reading.

ORDINANCE NO. 27-2023 WAS READ FOR ITS FIRST READING.

- e. **Ordinance No. 28-2023** - - AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT WITH GRACE HOME HEALTH AND WELLNESS LLC, JESSICA NADZAM, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING ROCK STEADY BOXING /PARKINSONS FITNESS AT THE CITY OF SEVEN HILLS RECREATION COMPLEX.
First Reading.

ORDINANCE NO. 28-2023 WAS READ FOR ITS FIRST READING.

- f. **Resolution No. 02-2023** - - A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF SEVEN HILLS' PARTICIPATION IN THE ODOT ROAD SALT CONTRACTS AWARDED IN 2023; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
First Reading.

MOTION by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Kiriazis. to suspend the Rules of Council and read Resolution No. 02-2023 by title only for its first and final reading.

Roll Call: all yea.

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Mr. Martin seconded by Mr. Kiriazis to approve the emergency clause in the last section of Resolution No. 02-2023.

Roll Call: all yea

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Kiriazis to adopt Resolution No. 02-2023 as an emergency measure.

Roll Call: all yea

MOTION CARRIED

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RESOLUTION NO. 02-2023 IS DECLARED ADOPTED.

10. COUNCIL OPEN TO THE AUDIENCE.

Mr. Mark Ruda stated that he has lived on Panorama Drive since 2020 and is a member of the Parma School Board. He wants to thank Council for resolving the issue he had when he moved on Panorama Drive and all the residents are pleased.

He also addressed Council and asked if they had any questions regarding the upcoming school levy that will be on the ballot this May.

Mr. Martin thanked Mr. Ruda for coming and offering his comments on this important issue. I think that we have had good information that was distributed. He stated that he pays as much taxes as everyone else in this room. He looks on it as an insurance policy for the City and the schools. Any details that you can provide to the general public about why you are here would be fantastic. I think you need to reassure us that you are asking for a 4-mil bond levy for the high school. Mr. Ruda stated that the population of the school district has been declining and the need for three elementary schools is just not there anymore. At one time there were 26,000 in the district. Today, there are 9,000. There is a need to consolidate the schools and cannot justify the current need. It is just not there. It has been 12 years since the school has had an operating levy.

Mr. Elliott stated one of the biggest challenges is that the residents may not trust what is going on and that is the reason things are voted down. There were money issues and why should the residents of Seven Hills throw more money into the schools and why should we trust what is going on and it is not passing? Mr. Ruda stated that he was not on the Board at that time.

Mr. Elliott asked if the schools were losing a lot of kids due to the private schools' vouchers? Mr. Ruda didn't think there was a mass exit after 2020. There are just less children, and it is just demographics.

Mayor Biasiotta thanked Mr. Ruda for coming today and for making Seven Hills his home. The Mayor said that he appreciates his membership on the School Board. In your short time, you have gained a reputation for answering tough questions and I apologize because I am going to have some

Mayor Biasiotta said that people still don't understand why Parma High is going to be torn down and there is no money to rebuild. Some would say it is an asset and a building on a piece of property

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is worth more than an empty lot.

Mr. Ruda said that the Ohio Revised Code was changed in July of 2022. It states that if a building is shuttered and not used for one year or under the average pupil population, that you can't keep it vacant.

Shiloh School was closed for ten years, and those days of closing and shuttering a building are gone. The State makes sure that you sell it to a Charter School or someone else and if you want to hold onto the property you are forced to selling it or tearing it down and you only have one year. It was decided to tear it down and not sell it.

Mayor Biasiotta said that it takes one year before it necessitates to take it down and a lot can happen in that year. Mayor Biasiotta said this is not directed at your policy but questions the residents of Seven Hills have and this is an opportunity for you.

There is a 4mil levy on the ballot and it is to be used to build Parma High School. When Parma High is completed, then Normandy will be a middle school and Valley Forge will become a middle school, too. That is a 4-mil levy.

The Mayor said these are questions his residents are asking him. You mentioned that we have not had an operating levy in 12 years. So, my residents are asking me what in the next year or two and assume nothing changes at the State. Assuming the current environment is at the state, do we need to know what increments that levy will be? Do we know how many mils that operating levy or increments will be? Mr. Ruda stated the only thing to go is a renewal in 2024 or 2025 and will be a \$4-mil levy. They talked about an 8-mil, just depending on when they decide to do it.

Mayor said that earlier you said there has not been an operating levy on the ballot essentially for 12 years and we are good to 2025. That could be argumentative and in three years we will be looking at new millage and it could be anywhere from zero to eight percent, plus four percent? It would cost \$100 million to renovate the three schools.

Mr. Ruda stated that It doesn't address the rebuilding of the elementary schools which would be an additional millage. Mayor said that he is making an assumption that money would go towards Normandy and Forge to be used as Middle Schools, or it could be used towards elementary schools?

Mr. Ruda said that money would go to renovate those two schools.

Mayor asked if we would get money from the state and Mr. Ruda stated yes, that we would get \$72 million from the State, and it can only be used for building and not operating.

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The entire plan without State money was \$411 million. That was during a School Board meeting last July. The Mayor stated that it would leave \$90 million dollars that has to go to the taxpayers to finish the program. This is problematic for a community that has a majority of senior citizens. There are three cities that have very different demographics and what might be an easy decision for someone in Parma but may be difficult for a senior in Seven Hills. Our property values are higher. What costs someone \$120. will cost our seniors \$220. per year. These are difficult things and I believe the investment in public education is a good investment and I admit that our newest school in the system was opened during Lyndon Johnson's administration. These are hard facts, along with the others that I have shared. We are looking at one bond issue, one issue from zero to eight percent. The schools would get 64 percent, the County would get 24 percent and the City gets 12 cents on the dollar left to run the City. These are all very challenging and are hard issues and the others that I shared. I would like to hear more from your partners on the Board. We need more transparency between zero and the eight number.

Mr. Elliott mentioned the trust factor and hopeful we are turning the corner on that, and I will leave it at that for now. At the end of the day, the dollar and cents are quite large for our community. The Mayor thanked Mr. Ruda for coming today and for choosing Seven Hills as his home.

Mr. Martin said a new building might become more efficient and you would have less maintenance on the high school. Has the Board at any point in time formally discussed a replacement levy rather than a 12 millage? Mr. Ruda stated that they have been talking about it and we currently have four emergency levies that come up every few years for renewal. What we are trying to do is to combine two of them into one levy renewal replacement. So that every ten years you only have to vote on one renewal and when the next two come up, do the same thing. This would be instead of every two years, so that you are not constantly having a levy on the ballot. It would be combining them into one or two emergency levies. Yes, we have discussed it, but there has not been a decision.

Mr. Martin said it is an important conversation and we have a pie that needs to be cut into a thousand slices. Mr. Ruda stated that the property taxes went up an average of 20 to 30 percent and it netted us \$2 million per year. It was based on the structure of House Bill 920, and we didn't net enough money as people thought.

Mr. Elliott said that the bottom line is the rating getting better in Parma? Are the kids learning more in Parma? The ratings were pretty low before you got there. You are asking for more money, but is the product getting better?

Mr. Ruda stated that the State Report Cards are two years behind on our site. They are at a 29

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percent early literacy rate and that is early learning to third grade. By the time they get to third grade, 90 percent are proficient. It is no where we would like it to be, but it is trending in the right way, and it has been for years. We will find out next year when the report cards come out. Each week two or three schools come to the Board and make presentations.

Mr. Morrow stated he admired him for taking on the Board role and that is a lot from my perspective. There is a lot of mistrust with funds based on what happened. I do feel that people, especially younger people in Seven Hills, need to see an improved product. People do not want to pay and get it back ten years later. He stated that he is having a baby soon, but not sure he would send his child to the schools. Normandy was great when he attended. This should be the focus to balance trust within the community. How do you do that? He stated that he does not have that answer and it is an uphill battle. Again, I admire and respect you for taking on this role on the Board and it is not easy.

Mayor Biasiotta would like to give a little bit more definition to HB 920. He said that HB 920 included any tax passed after 1976, if the property values go up, the millage goes down and the taxes go down. That is a very common thing that you hear, and everything goes up.

Anything passed after 1976 the milage goes down. Everything that we passed on to my administration has been in the dollar amount and the millage goes up and down in property value.

and the millage doesn't change. The Parma Schools play a very important part in Seven Hills. The majority of our Council are graduates of the Parma School System, and the Mayor, too. We have a proud history and heritage and we come out of the schools in leadership roles. Whatever happens on May 2nd, we look forward to continuing the dialogue and partnership and working together to have a better community. Thank you for coming, Mr. Ruda

Mr. Jack Thrane 5624 Crossview Road. This question is for Mr. Ruda. I have always voted for school levies. This time I will not vote for it. I have looked at the school ratings and they are horrible.

The City of Seven Hills is below the City of Cleveland. What are we doing that allows this to happen? I don't get it. If I had children, I could send them to parochial school for the taxes that I am paying. How will they transport these kids all over the City to the schools?

One side of the street goes to one elementary school and the other side goes to a different elementary school. Does that make any sense? It bypasses the child's home, goes to the corner,

and stops. I read an article earlier this year that they were having a problem with the school bus

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routing, and they couldn't figure out how to pick up the kids. I think they need to do something with the teachers and give them a better education and do not worry about building a new building.

11. **REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR/SAFETY DIRECTOR.**

Mayor Biasiotta said that in a week we will have our first community Shred Day this year, in the back of City Hall. Our Service Department will be ready for everyone. We look forward to seeing those we haven't seen all Winter.

The March financials are in, and they are still looking pretty good. The unexpended balance in the General Fund is at \$7.9 million. This is the fund that is completely liquid and is not dedicated to any particular item. That leaves us in a good position, if we should have a recession, or to make an acquisition. We will soon discuss the truck storage garage and we have multi-million dollars in equipment that is outdoors year-round. A climate-controlled facility will protect that investment. We will plan for the future. We have been setting aside money every year since 2017 or before and that is to take care of the expenditures that we knew were coming.

Our non-general fund has considerably more in the bank. The City Newsletter that will be arriving in homes this week. It states that our total cash balance for the City in the bank is \$19.9 million. One of which we strategize and one account of \$7 million is invested in the Star Ohio Fund. The

Secretary of State and the Ohio Treasurer administer it. We are currently earning 4.76 percent on

the \$7 Million. In terms of the street's perspective, our interest income on that investment is about \$400,000. per year, depending on the street. This didn't happen overnight, and it has been over six years in the making. It took a lot of effort and teamwork from a lot of people. A good leader looks to give thanks and I am thankful to all the people who contributed.

Thank you to this Council and the previous Council that supported the vision that has helped get us to this point. A big thank you to everyone.

12. **REPORTS FROM THE DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER OFFICIALS:**

Director of Finance – Mr. Petrunyak reminded us of the deadline to file your Municipal Income e-Tax Return to RITA and it is April 18, 2023. Visit RitaOhio.com to find all the necessary information.

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Mr. Petrunyak extended congratulations to Councilman Costanzo.

Director of Law Moore - inaudible – microphone was turned off.

Director of Public Service & Properties Johnson - welcomed Councilman Costanzo.

City Engineer Schmitzer - had no report.

Building Commissioner - Grassi had no report. He did state that the Planning Commission will meet on May 3rd and there are two submittals on the Agenda. The Zoning Board of Appeals Will meet on April 12th and there are two requests on the Agenda.

Mr. Martin - asked how we are doing on the rental properties. A brief update that 17 letters last meeting were sent out on rental properties.

13. MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Elliott – asked Director Petrunyak to refresh him on the rental properties in the City. Mr. Petrunyak stated that there are 29 to 40 homes that are registered by the homeowner as rental properties. He said that he did not have the list of parcels that were not given the owner-occupied credit. The city sent out 17 letters.

Mr. Martin - said that out of curiosity and that several of us have great concerns that there is a long list, and he has not heard the total number of parcels that receive the occupied credit – inaudible.

Mr. Martin asked if there will be more than 500 parcels that will need a blanket mailing – inaudible.

Mr. Grassi said that of the 500 plus parcels that we could send them the forms with their tax mailing. Mr. Martin asked of the 500 parcels identified whether there are only 17 parcels that will receive a letter? Mr. Grassi stated that they have received the letter.

Mr. Martin feels there are more than 40 rental properties in Seven Hills. What kind of approach do we need to get valid numbers? And ensuring that non-owners occupy properties, pay their

fees, and have the appropriate inspections for the safety of our residents and that is the important

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factor. That is why communities in northern Ohio have these inspections.

Mr. Elliott said as a follow-up, do we have a list of the ones that we know are rentals and how many group homes do we have in the City? We did pass an ordinance on this about 11 years ago. and we know where they are. Mr. Grassi said the group homes are in their own category and are not in our rental codes. Mr. Elliott asked for the number of group homes in the City. Mr. Grassi did not know the exact number.

Mr. Petrunyak said that the list doesn't contain who has filed with them and or are bidding. Mr. Elliott asked if there are any Air/BnB's or is that separate? Mr. Grassi stated that like group homes they are separate. Mr. Elliott stated that he has one in his neighborhood and that there is only one car, and no one has lived there in three months. It is kind of odd how many Air-BnB's there are and in a different category.

Mr. Grassi said they include group homes, and they are in different categories.

Mr. Elliott said they are asking questions, because we have spent a lot of time on this. The residents are complaining about the rentals, and we hear there may be 500 and now we are down to 39. Seems kind of odd. How do we go about finding out the number and we are losing a lot of money on these rentals?

Mr. Grassi said the spreadsheet that was sent to Rich Petrunyak and to the County is nothing new. It is done yearly. It was a good match. It is updated every year.

Mr. Morrow asked when do people apply for the credit? He said if they don't, is it because they do not want the City to know they have a rental property? Is that what I am understanding? Mr. Grassi said he cannot speak to that. Mr. Morrow said we can we assume? Mr. Grassi said yes. They go through the database, and they get the owner-occupied credit. Inaudible. Mr. Morrow welcomed Councilman Costanzo and looks forward to working with him.

Mr. Costanza - thanked everyone for putting their faith in him and will do a good of representing the residents.

Mr. Martin - welcomed Justin Costanzo to Council and looks forward to his participation as our

new City Councilperson. Mr. Martin - said, let's shop local and eat at our restaurants. It is a big deal, and we have a limited number of businesses. We should visit them from time to time. The one closest to me is the Dairy Deli and he has treats.

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Ms. Kelly - congratulated Mr. Costanzo and she is looking forward to working with him.

Mr. Kiriazis - congratulated Mr. Costanzo and said he is a great addition to Council. He also stated that during Miscellaneous comments we will take only comments. If there are any further discussions, it will be brought up in the proper Committee meeting at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kiriazis asked if there was any other business to be discussed this evening, there being none he made a Motion to adjourn at 7:46 p.m., seconded by Ms. Kelly

Roll Call: all yea.

MOTION CARRIED

Phil Kiriazis, President of Council

Attest: _____

Judith Goslin, Clerk of Council

Date: _____