



# The City of Wickliffe

## City Council Meeting Minutes April 8, 2024

A regular meeting of Wickliffe City Council was called to order by Council President Ed Levon on Monday, April 8, 2024 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers at Wickliffe City Hall following the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following were present at **Roll Call**:

Council President	Edward Levon
Council Members	Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Salotto, Thielman
Mayor	Joseph Sakacs
Law Director	Jeremy D. Iosue
Finance Director	Chlondra Hunter
Engineer	Peter J. Formica
Service Director	Ron Strauser
Building Commissioner	Raymond Sack
Recreation Director	Timothy Stopp
Police Chief	Jonathon Bush
Fire Chief	Christopher Grossman

Excused: None

### Approval of Minutes

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Jaworski, to allow Councilpersons Bala and Salotto to abstain from voting on the minutes of the Wickliffe City Council Special Meeting/Public Hearing of March 6, 2024.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman  
No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, that the minutes of the Wickliffe City Council Special Meeting/Public Hearing of March 6, 2024 be approved as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Thielman  
Abstain: Bala, Salotto  
No: None

Motion carried. **March 6, 2024 Special Meeting/ Public Hearing meeting minutes approved.**

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Salotto, to allow Councilpersons Levon and Thielman to abstain from voting on the minutes of the Wickliffe City Council Meeting of March 25, 2024.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman  
No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Salotto, that the minutes of the Wickliffe City Council Meeting of March 25, 2024 be approved as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Salotto  
Abstain: Levon, Thielman  
No: None

Motion carried. **March 25, 2024 meeting minutes approved.**

## Reports and Communications from Mayor/Safety Director

Mayor Sakacs read his written report.

There were no questions for the Mayor.

## Reports and Communications from Director of Law

Law Director Iosue had no report for Council.

## Reports and Communications from Council President

The Planning Commission held a public hearing for the Sunset Development proposal on Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Their recommendation to Council is for Council to move forward with a Public Hearing to discuss this property. Council President Levon called for Council's Public Hearing on the property located at 29553 Euclid Avenue, Parcel # 29-A-003-0-00-027-0 at the Wickliffe Community/Senior Center at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, May 1st, 2024 per Section 1341 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe. This will be the Community's opportunity to speak for or against the rezoning of this parcel.

## Additions or Amendments to Agenda

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda.

## Administrators

### A. Police Chief (*Bush*)

The Police Chief noted all are likely aware of the shooting that occurred yesterday on East 290<sup>th</sup>. He wished to give a brief description. He read the information that was posted on Facebook (see attached). He noted Officer DiDona will likely receive a commendation for his actions related to the victim's injury. Chief Bush firmly stated there has been a lot of mis-information – it was NOT a drive-by shooting as has been noted on social media. He noted if Council has questions they should contact him directly. He will not post information regarding an active investigation on Facebook. He noted the suspect was arrested last night.

Councilperson Salotto asked if the persons involved live in the house. Chief Bush noted they do not – one person is from Tennessee.

Councilperson Jaworski asked if it was drug-related, Chief Bush stated it was not – it was two people being idiots who had guns.

There were no further questions or comments for the Police Chief.

### B. Fire Chief (*Grossman*) Written Report Submitted

Chief Grossman noted that he had nothing to report, except that there were no disruptions or excessive calls due to the eclipse today. He noted both the Police and Fire Departments were prepared.

There were no questions or comments for the Fire Chief.

### C. Finance Director (*Hunter*) Written Report Submitted

Finance Director Hunter noted March is finally closed and the General Fund Carry-over Balance is approximately \$7.8 million.

There were no questions or comments for the Finance Director.

### D. Engineer (*Formica*) Written Report Submitted

Engineer Formica had nothing to add to his Written Report.

Councilperson Gerhardstein inquired regarding the timeline for putting out the bids/specifications for Catawba Street. The Engineer noted the plan is to include Catawba on the 2024 Road Program. He hopes to have bids out in approximately 3 weeks. Councilperson Gerhardstein clarified his question to ask what the timeline would be if Catawba was bid separately as he is not in favor of completing East 296<sup>th</sup> Street, then paving Catawba; he would prefer it be completed first to avoid damaging a new street with the big trucks and the asphalt. The Engineer noted he might be able to get plans together in approximately a month, but he does not believe it would be before East 296<sup>th</sup> Street is poured. Councilperson Salotto asked Councilperson Gerhardstein why he believes Catawba's timeline should be moved up. He believes we should not send construction equipment up a brand-new street to do paving on the road at the end of the street. Engineer Formica noted he has spoken to the Service Director regarding this issue. They believe a special sand will minimize tracking. Councilperson Gerhardstein noted we will spend 1.6 million on a street only to have it damaged by the end of the summer. Council President Levon noted the \$1.6 million is for the entire project, not solely Catawba. Councilperson Bala noted there is another road that leads to Catawba if necessary. It was noted this should be written in the specifications.

Councilperson Jaworski asked if there were any updates on the Rockefeller Road intersection. Mr. Formica noted there is not – he looked at the ODOT website and there have been no new additions.

Councilperson Gerhardstein wished to inform all, in case they were not aware, that the timeline for the Ridge Road paving project has moved back from 2024 to spring of 2025.

Council President Levon noted Councilperson Gerhardstein had a good point regarding the paving of Catawba and requested the alternative route be specified in the bids.

Councilperson Jaworski inquired regarding the dredging of the pond. Engineer Formica noted the company contracted to complete the project was hoping to work on frozen ground, and the weather has not cooperated. The terrain is extremely soft and wet, causing conditions that are most unfavorable. The Service Director, Recreation Director, Engineer, and contractor met last week in an attempt to come up with a solution to the problem. It was decided that the best alternative is to extend the contract into fall in order for the ground to dry up. The contractor will “clean up”, plant grass in the disturbed area, and return in the fall to complete the project. He will bring a change order to Council to extend the contract time for this project. Councilperson Koski inquired regarding the pond; Engineer Formica noted they have already addressed this and the pond is full.

There were no additional questions or comments for the Engineer.

**E. Service Director (Strauser) Written Report Submitted**

The change order that is on tonight's agenda is for the total amount of the project. He noted the City will be reimbursed approximately half the amount from the Lake County Water Department.

Councilperson Bala asked where the City gets it's mulch. The Service Director noted they use both Green Vision and Mazzola. He noted Mazzola is easier to get into and out of, but they do use both companies. Mr. Bala would like to see the City supporting Wickliffe businesses.

There were no further questions or comments for the Service Director.

**F. Building Commissioner (Sack) Written Report Submitted**

The camper is gone from the house on Roberts where the fire occurred. They have begun to clean up, but are having difficulty with the insurance company. He noted the owner intends to sell the property.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted the Planning Commission approved a parking plan for the new Buckeye Skills gaming establishment. He asked if the business would be permitted to open before the issues that were raised at the meeting are addressed. The Building Commissioner noted that the property owner has been contacted to address the issues and stated the business (who rent the space) may open. Mr. Gerhardstein asked what the timeline is on this. Mr. Sack stated it is dependent on the opening of the asphalt plants. Councilperson Jaworski asked what happens if this is not addressed, and Mr. Sack stated that they will be taken to court. Mr. Gerhardstein noted he asked because a similar situation occurred at the corner of 290<sup>th</sup> and Euclid, and the situation there is still not resolved.

There were no additional questions or comments for the Building Commissioner.

**G. Recreation Director (Stopp) Written Report Submitted**

Mr. Stopp noted the Eclipse event today at the Community/Senior Center was outstanding! He thanked the science teachers from the schools who were there and the many others who assisted including Police, Fire, and Service. It went well and approximately 300 people attended.

Councilperson Gerhardstein inquired about the job fair listed in Mr. Stopp's report. Mr. Stopp noted they distributed job applications and have received a few back already. They are looking for lifeguards.

There were no additional questions or comments for the Recreation Director.

### **Audience Participation**

Council President Levon opened Audience Participation to those in attendance at 7:25 PM.

He noted this portion of the meeting is intended for the audience to address the Council and Mayor, not the directors. Anyone wishing to address Council should use the microphone as the meetings are being streamed on YouTube; they must be acknowledged and give their name and address for the clerk's record and will be given a five-minute maximum for their comments.

Tony Hocevar of 4903 Swevetland Boulevard, Richmond Heights, Ohio. He noted he is a candidate for the 23<sup>rd</sup> House District of the Ohio and is here to introduce himself and noted he will be available to answer any questions.

Chance Zurub of 3207 Meadowbrook noted he came to speak in support of the cease-fire Resolution that is before council. He noted his family is from Gaza. He explained that he has lost more than sixty people from his family. He noted he has not been there, but had the opportunity at one point, but complications prevented this. He noted the land that his family owned for generations is likely no longer available to his family. He explained some of the current dangerous conditions in the area. He also mentioned the large number of those who have been killed. He noted this is an opportunity to acknowledge the wrong; he asked council to pass this resolution.

David Moulton 744 Bryn Mawr, noted it is clear that some council members are against the Planning Commission's recommendation for the Wickliffe School Board Property. He noted he is a contractor. He stated the Building Commissioner and the Engineer have put in a lot of time. He also noted houses are no longer built like they were years ago. He noted beautiful houses are being built in the area and suggested council visit some of these sites. He believes these are the types of houses that should be built on the [school] property. He asked Council to vote for these [School] properties.

Dan Thomier, 29232 Ridge Road, noted he is a longtime School Board Member. He noted they have worked very hard on this project and have been forthcoming and transparent since the beginning. He stated there have been many opportunities to attend meetings and learn about what has been proposed. He is concerned that there is "dickering" regarding lot sizes, etc. He noted there was a survey done which is what the current proposal is based on. He stated he has had many people tell him "don't dare to put in apartments". He noted the School Board has always worked with the City. Sometimes it has been difficult, but it is necessary for the best of the community. He implored Council to vote yes on this proposal. He stated they [school board] have done everything that was asked of them. He is concerned that they will lose the developers who are interested. He noted passing this is in the best interest of all in the community. He noted funds from the sale of the property can only be used for capital projects (not operating to pay teachers). He noted sixty percent of the community wanted this and Council represents the community. He respects that Council members may have personal opinions, but noted they need to do what is best for the community. He noted he was unsure why a resident would have noted that there is a disconnect between Council and the School Board, but noted it is not due to the School Board, as they have been transparent, forthcoming, etc. They have spent a lot of money to get this accomplished. It doesn't make sense to him why Council would not support this. He asked how Council could deny that it is going to be positive for the City, including from the commercial standpoint along Euclid Avenue, as well as the new homes. He wants this to be complete. He noted this is our future, this is our kids.

Gail Willis, 28979 Sherbrook, wished to point out that the School Board did a lot of research. She noted they are seven years into this project and many people want homes in that area. She stated it is currently zoned institutional, and that if the schools did not care what went in there, there could be organizations that might not be desirable in that location. She stated that they do care, and they listened to the community. She noted \$500,000 homes are not Wickliffe. She noted they are interested in homes that are affordable and there are approximately six developers who are interested. She also pointed out that a developer must still come to the City with their plan, so the City does still have that power. She is unsure why anyone would be against this proposal. She suggested Council do their homework and go out and visit the other properties to see the types of homes that will go in here that are priced right. She asked if we wanted a Ponderosa, an institution, or beautiful homes that will bring families here.

Rhonda Shcarf 2541 Rockefeller Road, noted she is a lifelong Wickliffe resident and a public school teacher. She stated she appreciates the longevity of The School Board. She had not planned to speak but noted that people are trying to sway us in a certain direction. She appreciates that the Palestinian people who spoke have strong feelings, but we have Israeli people in our town who also have strong feelings. She stated she is a proponent of small local government. She also noted, with regard to the school properties, some may have differing opinions and may need time to investigate. These are neither right nor wrong; they can be refreshing. She thanked Council, the School Board, and the citizens. She understands the pressure associated with being a member of Council and the School Board and appreciates everyone's service. She suggested we cannot always be motivated by feelings, but by what is right and wrong according to the law and what is in our hearts.

Domenic Boresich, 30236 Overlook Drive, suggested, with regard to the Palestinian issue, this should be important to all of us as Americans. He related some of the horrible occurrences in

Palestine. He noted killing people and forcing people out of their homes is wrong. He noted there are many types of Hebrew/Jewish people. He stated that right and wrong are dependent on morals. He noted people deserve to stay in their homes and people should not stand by idly while people are being [removed] from their homes.

After multiple calls inquiring if anyone would like to address Wickliffe City Council and there being no reply, Council President Levon closed Audience Participation at 7:45PM.

### **Committee Reports**

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes (April 1, 2024 meeting) presented by Council President Levon

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes (April 1, 2024 meeting) presented by Council President Levon

### **Commission Reports**

Planning Commission April 4, 2024 Meeting presented by Councilperson Jaworski

Planning Commission met on April 4<sup>th</sup>, approving a parking lot plan for Buckeye Skills Center at 29310 Euclid Avenue in Town Center district. The Commission also held the Public Hearing on the zoning change for the Hunley/Sunset Development property.

### **Old Business**

There was no Old Business.

### **New Business**

There was no New Business.

### **Ordinances**

**OR2024-15** *By Title Only* An ordinance providing for the compensation and other employment provisions for the part-time firefighters of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio; and repealing any and all other ordinances or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this ordinance **SECOND READING**

**OR2024-20** *By Title Only* An ordinance amending the City of Wickliffe Zone Map referred to in Section 1341.80 of the Wickliffe Codified Ordinances rezoning four parcels owned by the Wickliffe City School District in Wickliffe, Ohio **SECOND READING**

**OR2024-25** *By Title Only* An ordinance amending Section 1305.6 entitled "Architectural Review Board" of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio **FIRST READING**

**OR2024-26** *By Title Only* An ordinance providing appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio for the period beginning January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024; and declaring an emergency

Motion by Thielman, seconded by Bala, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Ordinance 2024-26 be placed on third and final reading.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Thielman, seconded by Bala, that Ordinance 2024-26 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2024-26 adopted.**

**OR2024-27** *By Title Only* An ordinance authorizing the Director of Finance of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio to transfer a sum of money from the General Fund to various funds; and declaring an emergency

Motion by Salotto, seconded by Bala, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Ordinance 2024-27 be placed on third and final reading.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Thielman, that Ordinance 2024-27 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2024-27 adopted.**

**OR2024-28** *By Title Only* An ordinance authorizing the Mayor of the City of Wickliffe, Ohio to enter into a contract with Performance Pipelining, Inc. for the Drenik Drive Sanitary Sewer Lining Project; and declaring an emergency

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Salotto, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Ordinance 2024-28 be placed on third and final reading.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Bala, that Ordinance 2024-28 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: Councilperson Jaworski asked when the project will begin. Engineer Formica noted it will begin this summer, and has a completion date of November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2024-28 adopted.**

**OR2024-29** *By Title Only* An ordinance authorizing a Change Order to the contract with Great Lakes Crushing, LTD for the East 296th Street Improvement Project; and declaring an emergency

Motion by Salotto, seconded by Bala, the rules of Wickliffe City Council be suspended and Ordinance 2024-29 be placed on third and final reading.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Jaworski, that Ordinance 2024-29 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: None

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. **Ordinance 2024-29 adopted.**

## Resolutions

**RES 2024-03** *By Title Only* A resolution expressing unwavering support and sympathy for the innocent civilians experiencing violence in Israel and Palestine being Muslim, Jewish, and Christian and condemning all violence of any kind; affirming Wickliffe's status as a welcoming community for any religion; encouraging residents to decry any and all acts of violence both in our communities and around the globe, and express their deepest condolences to all those affected by the atrocities of the war on Gaza **THIRD READING**

Motion by Koski, seconded by Bala, that Ordinance 2024-29 be adopted as presented.

Discussion: Councilperson Koski thanked the audience members who spoke tonight in support of this resolution. She noted this legislation does not take sides. It was meant to amplify the resolutions passed by other cities around the country. It was written to sympathize and recognize the civilians who are dying from lack of food, water, and medicine. Today was the first day trucks were allowed into Gaza, however much more is necessary. Humanitarian efforts have been denied and impeded, and recently a convoy was bombed and aid workers were killed. Pope Francis has called for a cease fire and peaceful resolution to the conflict. A United Nations Director noted, "There is a moral requirement for all of us to do something when we see so many innocent people suffering. We've got to believe that by shouting on their behalf that somebody will hear and take action. If each of us stands up for what is right, our voices will be heard."

Councilperson Salotto thanked those who spoke and also acknowledged what Councilperson Koski is trying to do, noting it is very worthy and war is terrible. She noted we, as a City, have to be very careful about taking sides. Although she agrees with most of the resolution, she stated that the way this is written, the last statement unfortunately "does pick sides", picks Gaza. She noted as a City we have to put aside personal feelings. She does not believe the City should take sides. She has some issues with the way it is written, despite supporting the content/theme of the resolution.

Councilperson Gerhardstein noted he recognizes Councilperson Koski's passion and appreciates it, but does not believe the City of Wickliffe should support this or be involved with a resolution like this.

Councilperson Bala agreed, noting he agrees with the condemnation of violence, but has a question with the war on Gaza. He does not believe that all that is happening should be happening, but he does not like the last few words.

Councilperson Jaworski noted that this body has avoided resolutions like this one. He thinks it will set a dangerous precedent and we should continue to stay away from such, considering what we do doesn't change anything. He also stated he would never support a resolution that is being passed in leftist cities.

Council President Levon noted he appreciated the two gentlemen who spoke and offered first-hand knowledge about what is going on there. He believes we as elected officials should stay on the local level and focus on the residents of this city. He noted if people are truly passionate about this, they should call their Federal representatives that can help push the government to do something.

Roll Call:

Yes: Koski

No: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

Motion Failed. **Resolution 2024-29 Failed.**

## Other Legislation

There was no Other Legislation.

## Miscellaneous

Council President Levon called for a meeting of the Committee of the Whole to discuss Food Trucks to be held Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers of Wickliffe City Hall.

Councilperson Bala requested the Committee of the Whole also discuss Full Time Mayor and Term Limits, noting that it should be term limits for Mayor not Council. Council President Levon added these two topics to follow the discussion above.

## Adjournment

Motion by Gerhardstein, seconded by Bala, to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call:

Yes: Bala, Gerhardstein, Jaworski, Koski, Levon, Salotto, Thielman

No: None

Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM.

  
Clerk of Council

Council President and Presiding Officer