

CITY OF MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS, OHIO

REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 22, 2025

The Council of the City of Middleburg Heights, Ohio met in Council Chambers at City Hall on Tuesday, April 22, 2025 for the purpose of conducting a REGULAR MEETING. President of Council David Bortolotto called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:	Matthew Castelli	Mayor
	David Bortolotto	President of Council
	Tim Ali	Councilman At Large
	Bill Meany	Councilman Ward 1
	Matthew McGregor	Councilman Ward 2
	Michael Ference	Councilman Ward 3
	John Zakel	Councilman Ward 4
	Mary Ann Meola	Clerk of Council

STAFF

ATTENDING:	Santo Incorvaia	Law Director
	Jason Stewart	Finance Director
	Jim Herron	Service Director
	Chuck Bichara	Economic Dev. Director
	Mark Elliott	Recreation Director
	Briant Galgas	Fire Chief

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Ali to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 8, 2025.
Seconded by Mr. McGregor.

MINUTES
APPROVED

ROLL CALL: YEAS 6, NAYS 0, MINUTES APPROVED

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Mrs. Dani Farinacci, Manager, Middleburg Heights Animal Shelter said the shelter has been operating for about a year and she was asked to give a quick update to the mayor and members of council. She introduced some of the volunteers in the audience and said she couldn't do it without them. Mrs. Farinacci said they started with a lot of animals that were already at the shelter, some had issues be it medical or behavioral, adding that they worked through all of them. Mrs. Farinacci introduced Dr. Hart, who has been on board since last summer. She said Dr. Hart helps with all of the medical care for the animals. Mrs. Farinacci said instead of sending every animal out for every little thing, because of Dr. Hart volunteering her time we are able to do that at the shelter. She also introduced Chrissy Gilbride, who is the RVT at Polaris, teaching the pre-veterinary science program. Mrs. Farinacci said these two ladies have been so helpful and have taught her so much about medical care. Mrs. Farinacci said since school has been back in session, all of our cats are sent over to Polaris for testing for the kids to get the hands on experience. She outlined how Dr. Hart was able to take a cat a few weeks ago to Polaris and sedate him, and the kids in the program got to observe the procedure that was done. Mrs. Farinacci said the kids have also come to the shelter a few times to help us clean and to learn more about the shelter itself and the animals that are there. She said they have actually had some adoptions from families of the kids from Polaris. Mrs. Farinacci said one of the biggest things the volunteers have done is fundraising. She said approximately \$35,000

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1 was raised in a year, and said that money is being used towards the extras. Mrs.
2 Farinacci said the extras are surgeries cats might need like dental work, the
3 amputation of a tail on one of the cats, etc. She said those are types of things that
4 they don't want the city to pay for, those are things they want to pay for
5 themselves. Mrs. Farinacci said another great thing that is happening this year is
6 the fundraising is going to be a 501. She said not the shelter, but the fundraising
7 team itself. Mrs. Farinacci said Polaris also does grooming. She said some of the
8 animals that came in were a mess, and they were sent right over for the kids to
9 groom them and trim their nails. Mrs. Farinacci said they also partner with
10 Constant Companion, which is an adult day care. She said they come every other
11 Wednesday to socialize with the animals. Mrs. Farinacci also reported that on
12 every other Monday, Igloo Frozen Yogurt and Treats in Berea donates part of
13 their earnings to the shelter. She said the Shoppe in Berea did a fundraiser last
14 year for us as well. Mrs. Farinacci said one of the volunteers puts out donation
15 boxes, adding that there are 11 of them out there. She said you can donate with
16 either cash or with the QR code. Mrs. Farinacci said once of the fundraising team
17 goes non-profit, they will handle all of those. She said they have had 112
18 adoptions in the past year. Mrs. Farinacci said we do allow, thanks to the city, 18
19 and under to volunteer as long as they have a parent or guardian with them. Mrs.
20 Farinacci said the volunteers go above and beyond. She said behind the scene,
21 people don't even know they are buying things. Mrs. Farinacci said last week
22 there was a cat that needed surgery to have bladder stones removed that cost
23 \$2,000, and a volunteer walked up to her with a check.
24 Mr. Ali asked Dani how many volunteers she has now.
25 Mrs. Farinacci said there is a page on Facebook with over 70 volunteers.
26 Mr. Ali thanked Mayor Castelli for his support and said once Dani was brought
27 on board everything fell into place. He said to have a shelter that has raised
28 thousands of dollars with over 100 adoptions, 70 volunteers, a Polaris partnership,
29 a veterinarian, Dr. Hart aboard, and the cats and the dogs freely roaming around
30 in one year is outstanding. He said Dani and her team are absolutely amazing.
31 Mr. Ali said we started out wanting to have the best city shelter, and we are
32 absolutely on our way to having that.
33 Mrs. Farinacci said a lot of people come in and say that and that they get many
34 compliments. She thanked everybody, including our kennel techs, Carol and
35 Debbie.
36 Mr. Bortolotto said on behalf of City Council and the City of Middleburg Heights,
37 he thanked Dani and her team, Mr. Ali and Mary Ann as well for all of their
38 efforts.
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44 APPOINTMENTS AND CONFIRMATIONS

45 None.

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48 ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS

49 CITY PARKS, RECREATION & SERVICES COMMITTEE - MR. ALI,
50 CHAIRMAN

51 No legislation.

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54 FINANCE, TAXATION & ASSESSMENTS COMMITTEE - MR.
55 BORTOLOTTI, CHAIRMAN

56 None.

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59 LEGISLATION & RULES COMMITTEE - MR. ZAKEL, CHAIRMAN

60 No legislation.

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62 PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY & RELIEF COMMITTEE - MR. MCGREGOR,
CHAIRMAN

No legislation.

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PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE – MR. SAGE, CHAIRMAN

No legislation.

STREETS, UTILITIES & RAILROAD COMMITTEE – MR. MEANY, CHAIRMAN

No legislation.

ZONING & BUILDING CODE COMMITTEE – MR. FERENCE, CHAIRMAN

No legislation.

Mayor Castelli introduced ORDINANCE NO. 2025-23, An Ordinance to make supplemental appropriations for current expenditures and expenses for the City of Middleburg Heights for the calendar year 2025 and moved to adopt. On behalf of the mayor, Mr. Bortolotto MOVED TO ADOPT. Seconded by Mr. Meany.

ORD. 2025-23
ADOPTED
SUPPLEMENTAL
APPROPRIATION

Mayor Castelli said this supplemental includes animal care and supplies, NOPEC grant for continuing work on window replacement, as well as some LED lighting. He said in addition to that, we also have an additional amount of money for Southland Streetscape. Mayor Castelli said that is the alterations that Meijer will be making on the road. He said we are going to do the design work and ultimately do the installation with the contractor, and Meijer has agreed to reimburse the city fully for all of that work.

ROLL CALL: YEAS 6, NAYS 0, ORDINANCE NO. 2025-23 ADOPTED

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

City Parks, Recreation & Services Committee – Mr. Ali, Chairman

Mr. Ali again said he would like to thank everyone for all of their time, and all of their efforts caring for the animals.

Finance, Taxation & Assessments Committee – Mr. Bortolotto, Chairman

Mr. Bortolotto said we as city council members are very appreciative of all of the efforts that Beth Mlady has done over the past several years. He said tonight is her last meeting. Mr. Bortolotto said she will be deeply missed. He again also thanked all of the shelter volunteers for their efforts.

Legislation & Rules Committee – Mr. Zakel, Chairman

Mr. Zakel said this will be the second year, that food trucks will be Indian Creek about every two weeks. He said this is an open invite to all of the administration and council members. Mr. Zakel said it is right by the trail and will begin at 5:00 p.m.

Public Health, Safety & Relief Committee – Mr. McGregor, Chairman

No report.

Public Improvements Committee – Mr. Sage, Chairman

No report.

Streets, Utilities & Railroad Committee – Mr. Meany, Chairman

Mr. Meany said a meeting is tentatively set for May 12th at 6:00 p.m., and the new NOPEC representative will be in attendance.

Zoning & Building Code Committee – Mr. Ference, Chairman

Mr. Ference thanked all of the animal shelter volunteers for the great work that they do. He also said it has been a real pleasure having Beth around and thanked her for her professionalism and the wonderful job that she has done for the city. Mr. Ference also thanked the administration and the recreation department for the Easter Egg Hunt that was held on Saturday. He said it was a very nice event, and was very touching to see how much this meant to children of all ages. Mr. Bortolotto said the Easter Egg Hunt was fantastic.

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MAYOR'S REPORT

1 Mayor Castelli said on behalf of city council and the administration, he
2 announced the 22nd Annual Elected Officials Food Drive will be held on
3 Saturday, May 17th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. He said the last several years,
4 this has been held in front of Heinen's Supermarket. Mayor Castelli said he
5 appreciates Mary Ann's help, the other city officials, and elected officials that
6 participate in making this sure this goes off successfully. He said Mr. Bichara
7 reaches out to the businesses and said he appreciates all of their help and support
8 as well. Mayor Castelli said we have always supported the Middleburg Heights
9 Food Pantry, as well as, SCAN Hunger Center. He said Lona Gruber, who passed
10 away a few years ago, mentioned the need for supplies during this period of time.
11 Mayor Castelli said usually there are a lot of donations that come in around
12 Thanksgiving and the holidays. He said Lona felt very strongly about city
13 officials trying to do something earlier in the year and City Council jumped on
14 that. Mayor Castelli said in talking with both food banks, they have said this has
15 definitely helped financially, as well as the supplies that are received. He also
16 echoed what was said thanking the volunteers and Dani. Mayor Castelli said Tim
17 Ali told him that he had to trust him and that he would have this place filled with
18 volunteers that want to help the animals. He said the other thing that Mary Ann
19 and Tim both said, we want to represent Middleburg Heights the best way
20 possible. Mayor Castelli said when we do things, we like to do things in a top-
21 notch, professional way. He said it is everyone involved that really makes the
22 shelter as great as it is and thanked everyone for what they do. Mayor Castelli
23 said believe it or not, Summer in the City will be coming up in June. He said it
24 will be Father's Day weekend, and will be held again here at city hall. Mayor
25 Castelli said there was a lot of great feedback having it here on city hall grounds.
26 He said he looks forward to everyone participating in the Summer in the City and
27 the parade.
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32 LAW DIRECTOR

33 No report.

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35 FINANCE DIRECTOR

36 No report.

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39 RECREATION DIRECTOR

40 Mr. Elliott thanked the mayor, city council and everyone that participated at our
41 very successful Easter Egg Hunt. He thanked the Kiwanis Club and the students
42 from the high school and middle school. Mr. Elliott thanked Beth for the great
43 article, which you will see in a couple days. He said pickle ball courts open on
44 May 1st, and as the mayor mentioned we are preparing for a lot of the summer
45 activities.
46 Mayor Castelli said over 5,000 eggs were put out at the Easter Egg Hunt. He said
47 it is interesting over the last five plus years to see how this event has grown.
48 Mayor Castelli said over time, the city is transitioning to some young families.
49 He said everyone had a great time and thanked the recreation department and all
50 of the volunteers.
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54 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

55 Mr. Bichara said last week the abatement was completed on the Sears Auto
56 Center building and yesterday demolition began on that building. He said the
57 building is expected to be completely demolished by the end of this week. Mr.
58 Bichara said the debris will still be on site and will be moved off site over time.
59 He said they have already began the abatement work on the main Sears building
60 and said hopefully that will be completed within the next month, and then move
61 on to demolishing that building.
62 Mr. Ali asked if the auto center had a basement.
Mr. Bichara said no it does not.

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Mayor Castelli said once both buildings are down, which will be the next couple months, we will have many months of fill, with 140,000-160,000 square foot basement under the main building. Mayor Castelli said it is somewhere around 5,000-6,000 plus truckloads of dirt that are going to have to come there to fill it. He said he thinks it will be approximately three to four months to fill that basement.

Mr. Bichara said that is correct.

Mayor Castelli said we have been fortunate working with the Regional Sewer District, and some of the projects in a few of the other communities, and were able to get dirt in order to fill that basement. He said that helps with the overall costs of this project.

Mr. Bichara said that is actually a larger portion of the job than the actual demolition of the building itself. He said it will require approximately 100,000 cubic yards of fill to fill that building.

Mayor Castelli said it less of a demo project and more of a fill project because of how much dirt needs to be brought in to fill that so it is buildable again.

Mr. Ali asked if their project was going to start at the same time we are ready to fill.

Mr. Bichara said arrangements have already been made by our demo contractor to acquire fill dirt that has been tested and is appropriate for fill, and also cleared from an environmental standpoint as well. He said that has already been arranged between the sewer district contractor and our demolition contractor.

Mr. Ali asked if they were making a water retention area or something where they don't need the dirt.

Mayor Castelli said yes.

Mr. Ali said if that was the same timing that is unbelievable.

SERVICE DIRECTOR

Mr. Herron reminded everyone that Arbor Day is this Friday, April 25th at 12:15 p.m. at Big Creek Elementary School.

FIRE CHIEF

No report.

There being no further business, Mr. Bortolotto made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Meany. Mr. Bortolotto adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.



David Bortolotto
President of Council



Mary Ann Meola
Clerk of Council