

CITY OF MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS, OHIO

REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 28, 2026  
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The Council of the City of Middleburg Heights, Ohio met in Council Chambers at City Hall on Tuesday, April 28, 2026 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  
Dan Sage Councilman At Large  
Bill Meany Councilman Ward 1  
Matthew McGregor Councilman Ward 2 (left 6:45 p.m.)  
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 Development Director  
Rob Swanson Interim Police Chief  
Mark Elliott Recreation Director

MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Ali to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 14, 2026.  
Seconded by Mr. McGregor

ROLL CALL: YEAS 7, NAYS 0, MINUTES APPROVED

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Mr. Paul Peters, 7468 Pearl Road, said he is here in relation to the row, speaking on behalf if anyone is familiar with the garage sale going on Pearl Road. He said he was raised in Middleburg Heights and has lived here almost all his life. Mr. Peters said their interaction with the garage sale has exposed what might be bit of a lack of what to do in situations like this in our city. He was hoping we could discuss or resolve, or creatively plan solutions that might help not just this situation but for other situations to come. Mr. Peters said he lives right by garage sale guy in between Bardbury and Webster, if anyone hasn't seen it yet. He said his neighbor unfortunately is often disruptive, aggressive and violates property lines. Mr. Peters said however, he doesn't think this is his fault. He said over the past few months, when his actions have become increasingly erratic, he really doesn't think this is his fault. Mr. Peters said he thinks this is something beyond his control that unfortunately is not something our systems have been able to address or easily resolve. He said several businesses he knows have called both the police and other parties involved about him raising his voice, or acting out of turn at their facilities. Mr. Peters said other people have called the service department, as well as Councilman McGregor, including his neighbor upstairs and his dad. He was thankful for getting responses back, but said they have heard that this is being looked into, you're aware of it, and if something further happens call the police. Mr. Peters said they have called and the response is there is a court date set and then call the police. He said he respects everything that is being done, but

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unfortunately in the meantime things have still been going on. Mr. Peters said he knows he was told to take down the garage sale signs, but people are still showing up and doing the garage sale. He said this is attracting raccoons and other animals out, because he leaves his door open, etc. Mr. Peters said he is not here to rant about a fellow neighbor, in fact, he genuinely doesn't think this is his fault. He said we were told to call the police, and he has unfortunately done that a couple times. Mr. Peters said over the weekend, he chased him and a friend across the street when they were walking to Katherine's and video recorded them and started yelling at them. He said the police were called in that situation, but what happens after. Mr. Peters said he comes back home to the residence directly next to him and does a night in jail, etc. does it resolve the issue of what is going on? He said after speaking with a really helpful Officer Shamblin this weekend, he thinks there is some sort of gap of what is going on. Mr. Peters said maybe there is a reliance in the police force to do things, or as Officer Shamblin shared, it is not necessarily what the police are designed to do. He said Officer Shamblin said unless something is criminal or unless something is an emergency, there is not much that can be done to address the issue. Mr. Peters said he has a friend that is a Detective in Boulder, Colorado, and friends in Portland who said their police departments with employ mental health/medical professionals, who in times of this might be a little more equipped to address or respond to the situation. He said again when he was speaking with Officer Shamblin, who said he thinks that obviously there is a further situation that cumulative measures, such as a court date or whatever sort of punishments that might be going on evidently they are not fixing the situation, but he also said he is not able to diagnose the issue. Mr. Peters said it seems to him if we are a city interacting with these things, is there someone available with that professional knowledge or ability who is able to diagnose these situations. He said not to stand here and unnecessarily rant about a problem, but trying to be ideally proactive. Mr. Peters said maybe hiring people or looking into options to get the help that is needed before it becomes an emergency, or before it becomes something criminal or something intense that could be proactively addressed. He said he wanted to empower you all with specialty in being elected officials to use your resources to look at this. Mr. Peters said as someone that has lived here his whole life, he has seen domestic disputes among neighbors, unfortunately sometimes substance abuse or even domestic abuse against one another that again isn't criminal and it's not always the biggest emergency that our systems are set up for, but he thinks there is a gap here that ideally we can think constructively to try to resolve before things get worse. He said before people start chasing people across the street, yelling at them and trying to record them getting the police involved. Mr. Peters said he has never done this before, and thanked everyone so much for your time. He said he didn't know if you all had thoughts, or if this is an ongoing discussion.

Mayor Castelli said he completely understands, and the city has the same frustrations. Mayor Castelli said a lot is going on and he said he would like to talk about a few things because it will help everyone understand what we have done and where we are. He said Chief talked a little about resources and asked him to go into that a bit.

Chief Swanson said we've had mobile crisis go there three times. He said the first time they went out probated and went to a secure facility for two weeks and was medicated and as soon he responded he comes out and now he's not medicated and (inaudible). Chief Swanson said he called them two additional times to go out there because his behavior to your point, seems to be more and more inconsistent and we are dealing with him on a more regular basis and we are trying to deal with that. He said the problem they have the last two times they have gone out they say he's

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1 not a threat to others or himself, there is not much you can do. Chief Swanson  
2 (inaudible). He said what we are hoping for through the court, is to get a pre-trial  
3 assessment where they can have some measure of control to get him the help he  
4 needs, otherwise fining him and jail is not going to fix this, he's going to come out  
5 and do the same things before he went in. Chief Swanson said we are working that  
6 way trying to resolve the issue.  
7

8 Mr. Peters said he appreciated that and said he went to Berea Court of Common  
9 Appeals on Monday, and they said that he could speak on behalf of the situation.  
10 He said his goal, again is not to criminally do anything but to get the help he needs.  
11 Mr. Peters said it seems like there is a gap of help that we could get, someone has  
12 to be so far beyond that it becomes a medical emergency, a severe harm to  
13 someone's self. He asked if there are day to day situation resources from the city  
14 or something else before something gets so severe, or proactively before someone  
15 gets so bad that committal is an option.  
16

17 Mayor Castelli said he knows the law director wants to talk about this as well. He  
18 said you are hitting on something that is one of the biggest frustration points that  
19 he can tell you communities have across the country. He said there are some  
20 resources and said we are actually talking about working with communities in the  
21 area, and the county is actually helped test this with some communities on the east  
22 side, about having some social workers that can work along-side police. Mayor  
23 Castelli said that is something that he is interested in looking at and could help. He  
24 said you probably aren't aware of all the things that we are dealing with and  
25 managing. Mayor Castelli said he can assure you that there is a lot going on here.  
26 He said we are going to do everything that we can legally, and that is the process  
27 that we are going through right now. Mayor Castelli said you are exactly right and  
28 there is more to this then just the criminal aspect.  
29

30 Mr. Incorvaia said you have to understand the parameters of the justice system. He  
31 said everyone has individual constitutional rights and freedom. Mr. Incorvaia said  
32 everyone is entitled to due process including the garage sale person, everyone has  
33 those rights. He said but people have rights too. Mr. Incorvaia said when there is  
34 any type of action against someone it goes typically through the court, the court  
35 will then schedule and we have to prove the case against the defendant beyond a  
36 reasonable doubt. He said it takes times for due process to work through the system.  
37 Mr. Incorvaia said what individuals can do to help, if they see something to let the  
38 police know and he said he knows it's a process, sometimes it's an immediate  
39 process and they go to jail. He said typically a person in jail over a period of time  
40 there will be an arraignment, set a bond to ensure they come back to court. Mr.  
41 Incorvaia said if you see something or witness something, give the police a  
42 statement if there is a problem with a neighbor or something like that. He said  
43 secondly, each one of you has an opportunity to get a Civil Protection Order to  
44 Common Pleas Court, not the Berea Court. Mr. Incorvaia said if you feel threatened  
45 or some type of fear that you may have, you can request a Civil Protection Order  
46 with the Common Pleas Court. He said you would have a hearing, you make your  
47 presentation to the court and the court will decide if that person has to stay away  
48 from you, can't have any contact with you, can't talk to you, etc. Mr. Incorvaia  
49 said that court makes that determination. He wanted to make you aware that is an  
50 option that you also have. Mr. Incorvaia said it is frustrating all of us, because you  
51 may feel the brunt of some of the activity that goes on there, and said he has to tell  
52 you that we will feel it here at city hall. He said we are not immune to the type of  
53 concern that each of you have. Mr. Incorvaia reiterated that in this country there is  
54 individual rights, freedom and due process.  
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1 Mayor Castelli said hypothetically because he doesn't want to talk about anyone's  
2 individual medical issues, we don't want to talk about that, but hypothetically one  
3 of the challenges is to someone maybe required or need to take their medicine. He  
4 said if they are not taking it, how do we make sure that is happening. Mayor Castelli  
5 said even if we had let's say a social worker, they are not going to be able to be  
6 there all the time to ensure that whatever is causing a problem is being managed.  
7 He said that's where we would hope that the family and others would participate  
8 and care, and again he is not talking about any individual. Mayor Castelli said  
9 hypothetically, these are the things that we need to look at. He said he can assure  
10 you in regards to some of the frustrations that everybody is having right now, and  
11 that we are having as well along with you, it is going through a process and that  
12 process is going unfold. Mayor Castelli said we are going to ensure that any home  
13 in a way that we all as Middleburg Heights residents know is not reflective of our  
14 community, no matter who it is, is going to have to clean it up. He said that process  
15 is going on right now and there is a variety of things that we are looking at, even  
16 outside of the court system. Mayor Castelli said the one thing that we want to do,  
17 is always ensure that we follow the appropriate legal process, because if we do that  
18 we know that we are going to come to a positive outcome. He said if we don't  
19 follow the proper process, that's where things can unfortunately get skewed and  
20 maybe the issue that could be resolved ends up not getting resolved or takes even  
21 longer. Mayor Castelli said we are following a process that we know is ultimately  
22 come to a positive conclusion, at least for some of the concerns that we see. He  
23 said we understand the frustration, we get it and we are upset about it as well.  
24 Mayor Castelli said this is a high priority for us as a community.

25 Mr. Peters said he appreciates that, but one other thing he wanted to talk about is  
26 ideally it isn't just fixing just one situation. He said it would be alternative  
27 situations that he said he has come across on instances of domestic disagreements,  
28 things that legally are technically allowed, and he also wants to appreciate  
29 everyone's sort of liberty for their own place, they are on private property. Mr.  
30 Peters but when maybe substance issues happen, that's not necessarily a criminal  
31 issue, but if someone isn't getting the help that they need is there anything beyond  
32 the law, other resources, other opportunities to provide that kind of help before  
33 something becomes an emergency, before it needs to be taken care of by the legal  
34 system. He really doesn't want to be here to complain about one guy, but to try and  
35 find help for that maybe gap in between before something gets legal.

36 Mayor Castelli said we agree, and there are some resources out there and he knows  
37 the chief can go through a variety of them. He said one of the challenges is they  
38 have to be willing to take on those resources. Mayor Castelli said he can tell you  
39 as a community, and the county and other agencies, there is a reason that there is  
40 so many non-profits out there to try and help people, because a lot of times people  
41 won't help themselves. He said they need to take that responsibility too. Mayor  
42 Castelli said what we need to do as a community, and as much as we would like to  
43 be involved and help everybody's individual situation, there is only so much we  
44 can do as well. He said we have to look at the law and make sure that it is enforced.  
45 Mayor Castelli said that is what we are going to continue doing and we are going  
46 to continue to provide those options. He said if the court requires something, and  
47 again in any situation and those are things that we do encourage, then they may be  
48 required to get treatment or help. Mayor Castelli said there is something that we  
49 are looking at, and he said the county has tested a program and has social workers  
50 help with the police, and they do have to deal with a lot day in and day out. He said  
51 we completely understand, he said he is not going to promise something that we  
52 cannot deliver on today. Mayor Castelli said he can tell you that it is being managed  
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1 and is going to take a little time, but we are going to get to a positive result that you  
2 guys will see in the near future.

3 Mr. Peters said he looks forward to that, and thanked everyone in the meantime.  
4 He said he looks forward to hearing how we might be able to address that gap  
5 between emergency and the day to day.

6 Mr. Ali said we have been getting bombarded with phone calls from residents, and  
7 nobody likes to go through this, unfortunately with the legal process. He said from  
8 what he understands, the landlord was also in court.

9 Mr. McGregor said he didn't show up.

10 Mr. Ali said the landlord never showed and asked about next steps.

11 Mr. Incorvaia said the landlord has to come in front of the court before it can do  
12 anything. He said there is a process, we are taking a look at where under the law,  
13 but outside it is the court's jurisdiction to try to get the property cleaned up. Mr.  
14 Incorvaia said we are looking into that and there is a notice provision that of certain  
15 facets that we have to look at to make sure that we comply with the law.

16 Mr. Ali asked if the landlord could we subpoenaed to court.

17 Mr. Incorvaia said the landlord was. He said most people get a summons to court  
18 or a subpoena to court you show up. Mr. Incorvaia said more and more people are  
19 not showing up, or maybe they don't remember or have something else going on  
20 that causes them to not show up.

21 Mayor Castelli said in this situation, he asked Mr. Incorvaia if there has been bench  
22 warrant.

23 Mr. Incorvaia said he hasn't been able to confirm that.

24 Mayor Castelli said to add to this, another area that the residents can help us, and  
25 again this is a high priority for us, if anyone wants to fill out a statement/affidavit  
26 of their concerns and complaints about what they are seeing, all of that information  
27 is being provided to our prosecutors and that is being presented at these court cases.  
28 He said his assistant, Judi is in the back and we do have statements if people want  
29 to fill those out they can if they are frustrated and want to be heard. Mayor Castelli  
30 said we certainly are going to handle it, and he said trust him there is an awful lot  
31 that goes on and there is a lot that we have had to deal with ourselves individually  
32 because of the positions that we are in. He said he is not going to go into details on  
33 that. Mayor Castelli said we are going to continue to move forward to manage it,  
34 but that certainly would help us if you would want to fill out those affidavits to be  
35 presented in court. He said he would be happy to meet with you guys after, if you  
36 would like to talk through what that looks like and how that works. Mayor Castelli  
37 said you are also welcomed to follow up periodically and he would be happy to  
38 keep you in the loop on where we are at. He said there is somethings that we have  
39 shared with you today, but we haven't talked about all of the things that are going  
40 on. Mayor Castelli reiterated that the affidavit process would absolutely help us so  
41 the court knows it's not just the city that has these concerns, it is the residents as  
42 well.

43 Mr. Peters said that is helpful, and said they will explore that option. He said his  
44 main point was if something like this happens in the future, the only option is the  
45 affidavit and the potential court thing.

46 Mayor Castelli said no, that's not what we have said. He have been very clear that  
47 there are multiple options and there is help that we get from outside agencies and  
48 the county. Mayor Castelli said he can tell you that there is a lot that has happened,  
49 and the chief has gone over a snippet of that. He said there is a point where  
50 individuals have to take responsibility for their own actions, and the government  
51 can't always be on top of every single thing that is happening. Mayor Castelli can  
52 said we can only follow the law, and can only make requests sometimes. He said  
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1 we do provide those resources, which include health department resources, crisis  
2 management through the county and we have explored all of that. Mayor Castelli  
3 is that something that we as taxpayers want to bring on to manage every situation  
4 in our community, he said as mayor he doesn't know that we have all of those  
5 resources and said he has looked at all of that and said can we really provide  
6 everything for every situation. He said we are going to look into the social work  
7 and something that we have talked with Brook Park about and some other  
8 neighboring communities because everybody is facing these challenges. Mayor  
9 Castelli said he is going to be very honest with you, this is very upsetting to him.  
10 He said he was born and raised in Middleburg Heights, and knows what our  
11 community is like. Mayor Castelli said that is not reflective of our community and  
12 it is not acceptable. He said sometimes people may not always be able to control  
13 their own actions, but there is a point where it is not acceptable and we need to  
14 move forward with what our ordinances and laws allow us to do and that is what  
15 we are doing. Mayor Castelli said we are going to continue to move forward with  
16 that. He said any support we can get from the public would be appreciated. Mayor  
17 Castelli said this has been a very complex situation that we've had to manage. He  
18 said if you have ideas on these resources that you think are beyond some of the ones  
19 that he has mentioned, he is certainly happy to listen to that and to see if we can  
20 explore it. Mayor Castelli said there are other resources that we have explored,  
21 because we do understand, the big picture no matter who we are talking about that  
22 if there are health issues and mental illness issues, how do we manage that so we  
23 get successful outcomes. He said countrywide, this is one of the biggest challenges  
24 that communities are facing. Mayor Castelli said he's happy to continue to  
25 communicate with everybody involved, and happy to communicate with you after  
26 the meeting if you guys would like to regroup.

27 Mr. Ali asked if the landlord didn't show, would there be another court date.

28 Mr. Incorvaia said it is up to the court, the court has some options they can issue  
29 another court date or they can issue a warrant. He said he believed that maybe a  
30 warrant was issued but he has not been able to verify that on their docket. Mr.  
31 Incorvaia said it doesn't mean that it hasn't happened but sometimes it takes a day  
32 or two to get to the docket.

33 Mr. Ali said he knows that he heard a bench warrant, and asked if that means it's a  
34 full blown warrant or is it going to be if got pulled over he would be brought in.

35 Mr. Incorvaia said it's pretty much the same, typically the way it gets resolved is  
36 when someone is stopped or pulled over there is some type of police contact.

37 Mr. Ali said right now, this could really drag on.

38 Mayor Castelli what he wants to make sure is clear, there is a process to all of these  
39 things. He said because we have been managing this appropriately, it is opening  
40 up the doors potentially to some other processes and that is being looked at right  
41 now. Mayor Castelli said maybe we be able to address at least some of the concerns  
42 before even the next court date. He said that is something our building department  
43 and legal department are working on right now. Mayor Castelli said he wanted to  
44 make it very clear, he is going to follow the right processes because that is what  
45 will ultimately get us to the most positive conclusion. He said we need to be  
46 judicious and smart with how we are managing these things.

47 Resident came forward that didn't identify himself and said he owned the property  
48 next door and said he was cited for weeds and that he had so many days or so many  
49 weeks to take care of this. He said Mr. Ali came out and looked at it and said he  
50 doesn't see a problem here. The resident said then there was a problem with a tree  
51 on his property and said the tree on the tree lawn was dead. He said a report was  
52 done, the tree came down by itself. The service department came at four o'clock  
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1 in the morning and asked why he is being asked to do things and was given weeks  
2 to take care of a problem.

3 Mayor Castelli said he understands, and doesn't blame him for feeling that way.  
4 He said the difference is you are a responsible person and you care about your  
5 community and probably address things, or Mr. Ali addressed it. Mayor Castelli  
6 said there is a point, where no matter what the situation is and he is talking just in  
7 general, if there is a violation and someone doesn't address it or it isn't resolved, it  
8 then goes through the court just like any other situation. He said that's what time  
9 and said it is frustrating to us too. Mayor Castelli said if it was up to him, he likes  
10 things addressed immediately.

11 The resident said he inherited the property and took it over when his parents passed  
12 away, and was thrown into becoming a landlord. He said he knew all about the  
13 property but was given a certain amount of time to take care of it. He said we are  
14 looking at weeks versus years and asked when we went to court against the  
15 neighbor as to if it was this year, last year, or four years ago.

16 Mayor Castelli said we are in court now.

17 The resident asked when court action was first started.

18 Mayor Castelli reiterated that we started now.

19 Mr. McGregor said over the winter you couldn't see the stuff on his yard, there  
20 were very little things. He said the process started right when the weather broke.

21 Mr. McGregor said he reached out to building and Mr. Brian Joyce, who is an  
22 inspector, who went right over there and started the process. He said this got to  
23 court quicker than he expected it to. Mr. McGregor said the neighbors, obviously  
24 are upset about it. He said the video stalking is bothering a lot of people because  
25 there was a gentleman that one of his posts, jaywalked to get away from the resident  
26 and said he was turn that person in on the video six or eight times or whatever. Mr.  
27 McGregor said the frustration is there and the judicial process is slow. He said he  
28 would like to continue to see that the landlord is held accountable on a daily basis,  
29 and that the tenant is held accountable on a daily basis for not complying to the  
30 cleanup date that was given which he believes was March 25<sup>th</sup>, or April maybe.

31 Mr. McGregor said then so that this to add to the affidavits that you send over there  
32 are a continuing record to be sent to the courts. He asked if that is something that  
33 we can continue, is that something that comes from the law department, police,  
34 service. Mr. McGregor asked if this could be a daily visit.

35 Mr. Incorvaia said each day it is not taken care of and there are code violations it  
36 constitutes judicial complaint.

37 Mr. McGregor said so it's just a matter of this day it wasn't cleaned up again, this  
38 day it wasn't cleaned up again.

39 Mayor Castelli just to make sure it's clear, he said there has been a lot of work on  
40 this property for years and we have all had concerns. He said in general what  
41 happens is, if there is improvement and you go to court, sometimes someone get a  
42 small fine and that's it and nothing else happens. Mayor Castelli said what we want  
43 to make sure is done is that we are getting all of the information, doing this  
44 comprehensively so we get a successful outcome because we don't want this to  
45 continue. He said again, we are going to continue to move in an appropriate process  
46 to make sure everything is handled, but ultimately we want to come to a positive  
47 outcome. Mayor Castelli said what we are doing is going to lead us to that positive  
48 outcome.

49 Mr. McGregor said he does know that both neighbors on either side have had  
50 maintenance. He said he thought Mr. Peters had a new roof put on and the roofer  
51 was threatened and will not go back unless there is a police escort. Mr. McGregor  
52 said the sewer department on the other side was also threatened and they won't go  
53 finish a job because of that. He said he would like to be able to tell those residents  
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1 to tell those workers that need to have the police to have them there and present  
2 when and if things need to be fixed. Mr. McGregor said those things need to be  
3 fixed and these residents need to be able to have those people come and fix that  
4 stuff without feeling any threat.

5 Mayor Castelli said Mr. Peters was told that.

6 Mr. McGregor said he did tell you that and had Predey to come back to do any roof  
7 work or fixing it, that you are to call the police so he could come and help.

8 Mayor Castelli said that was offered.

9 Mr. McGregor said the other thing is the box truck, and said that is way larger than  
10 anything is allowed in a driveway in the city, plus the advertisement of the garage  
11 sale on it to begin with that brings everybody's attention so they are going to try to  
12 stop. He said someone complained that they almost got in an accident because  
13 someone tried to stop on Pearl of all places to go shop. Mr. McGregor said he would  
14 like that to be added to the complaint if it is not part of it, besides the cleanup and  
15 harassment.  
16 harassment.

17 Mayor Castelli said that is all part of it.

18 Mr. Santo Berardi, said it is the same property. He said the clothes in the middle  
19 of the yard keeps getting higher and higher and asked if it is the city's problem to  
20 go pick up that kind of mess up. Mr. Berardi said where he lives is a lot of older  
21 people and they are all saying the city just isn't going to do anything. He asked if  
22 there was any way you could put anything on Facebook to let anybody know that  
23 you are working on it. Mr. Berardi said he knows it's delicate.

24 Mayor Castelli said my assumption is at some point the tenant may put something  
25 out there.

26 Mr. Berardi said because everybody tells you to call the police department, service  
27 garage, but they already know about it.

28 Mayor Castelli said he understands the frustration, and people don't always know  
29 everything that is going on. He said he can tell you there is an awful lot going on,  
30 and that process is moving forward. Mayor Castelli said he wants to be strategic  
31 and smart. He said if people are frustrated they should be, and he gets it. Mayor  
32 Castelli said that's where he thinks honestly where you can help us, is filling out  
33 those affidavits and allowing us to say this is not just the city. He said that is really  
34 what the argument is that it's the police, and it's the building department, it is just  
35 them. Mayor Castelli said we certainly can ask people to follow the docket, and  
36 said he is happy to have anyone call him and he will go through exactly what the  
37 process is. He said we will get to a positive outcome here, he said he can tell you  
38 that. Mayor Castelli said and we are going to make sure that happens. He said  
39 could be put something out there, we have to decide what makes sense and what is  
40 appropriate. Mayor Castelli said he is happy to talk to Santo, not that Santo this  
41 Santo.

42 Mr. Berardi said another thing is that he put spotlights on his truck, now you can  
43 see them from anywhere.

44 Mayor Castelli said there other things that have happened even here, even with us  
45 individually. He said there is a lot to go on, and said you may want to allow us to  
46 manage this. Mayor Castelli said we are doing a good job and this will get resolved.

47 Mr. Berardi said he was told not to go anywhere near the place.

48 Mayor Castelli said he would tell you to allow us to manage this appropriately, and  
49 we will get to a positive outcome.

50 Mr. Berardi said they like to walk, and they walk all the time. He said his wife  
51 wanted to go to the Social Security office, and he said he isn't walking and doesn't  
52 know what this guy is capable of doing.  
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# CITY OF MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS, OHIO

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1 Mayor Castelli said if you guys are ok, he would be happy to meet with you  
2 afterwards and we could talk through it and maybe he could give you a little bit  
3 better understanding of kind of where we are and what's next.

4 Mr. Jim Curtis, 6734 Fry Road, said the problem that he has in his backyard, it is I-  
5 71. He said now that temperature is better, people are out driving their cars, and  
6 motorcycles and said it is crazy back there. Mr. Curtis said it wasn't as bad last  
7 year, but now it has gotten a lot worse. He said he isn't a social media guy, but his  
8 son is on social media all the time and said these guys are making a joke out of this.

9 Mr. Curtis said they are saying to get on at Bagley Road and it's clear all the way  
10 to Snow Road, get off at Snow Road and it's just back and forth with wheelies and  
11 said this goes to 3:30 a.m. He said you have to be aware of this, it is a big problem.

12 Mr. Curtis said not only just the noise, but said someone is going to get really hurt.  
13 He said he knew in the past, a police officer was injured up there. Mr. Curtis said  
14 he doesn't know what the solution is. He said in Newburg Heights, they sit up on  
15 the bridge, like our Sheldon Road Bridge to radar and catch them at the exit ramps.  
16 Mr. Curtis said it has never been as bad as it is now.

17 Mayor Castelli said he appreciates the feedback and from a traffic management  
18 standpoint, we want to make sure we are managing the whole city. He said he  
19 would ask the chief to look into this to see what we could do. Mayor Castelli asked  
20 if the times are late at night.

21 Mr. Curtis said it's all day long, he said they know that no one sits up there. He  
22 said Brook Park isn't sitting up there. Mr. Curtis said he has a business in Brook  
23 Park and lives in Middleburg Heights, he said they know the police don't sit up  
24 there anytime. He said he knows it's a tight area there, and knew one of the officers  
25 had gotten hurt before up there. Mr. Curtis didn't know if State Highway Patrol  
26 could be called and they could sit up there, or put a dummy car up there. He said  
27 it doesn't matter when it is, but it is especially at night.

28 Mayor Castelli said there is a plan for traffic management.

29 Chief Swanson said our traffic officer is up there a lot, and writes hundreds of  
30 tickets on I-71 northbound.

31 Mr. Curtis asked if it was from Bagley to Snow Road.

32 Chief Swanson said through the whole stretch, he will make his loops throughout  
33 the day and his shift. He said they could definitely do some special attention to  
34 maybe make a more visible presence up there which might slow them down.

35 Mr. Curtis said the weekends are really bad.

36 Chief Swanson said the problem they have, especially with some of the younger  
37 kids that are doing these things, they are intentionally trying to bait us into chasing  
38 them, which chasing a motorcycle is going to end one way. He said there has also  
39 been a discussion regarding drones to try and get plates that way with the troopers.  
40 Chief Swanson said we are talking to them to hopefully partner with them to do  
41 something with this.

42 Mr. McGregor thanked Mr. Curtis for coming up. He said we talked about this at  
43 the safety committee meeting and then at the last meeting that we had there were  
44 some residents that had some concerns. Mr. McGregor said he had read that the  
45 Ohio

46 Highway Patrol was going to be using drones statewide in some areas, and he said  
47 the chief was going to reach out to them, which is a safer measure in terms of  
48 tracking the speeding and that sort of thing. He said because you don't have a high  
49 speed chase, and you don't have an officer get injured like we did before. Mr.  
50 McGregor said we aren't going to chase motorcycles all over, the drones will be in  
51 a certain area and thought this was an experiment he believed. He said they are  
52 trying to see if that works and it would be safer for everybody. Mr. McGregor said  
53 our officer that does those tickets has gotten awards every year in the state or the  
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1 county for the number of tickets that he has written because he is very diligent. He  
2 said he hears it primarily from six or seven until about ten, and especially around  
3 noon until whenever on the weekends.

4 Mr. Curtis said that Mr. Ali knows, he is a big car guy. He said he operated a race  
5 track for 34 years and said he loves cars and loves that noise. Mr. Curtis said he  
6 has a couple of cars himself, but said he wants to go home at night and relax. He  
7 said they can't even leave their windows open. Mr. Curtis said he knows they are  
8 building some homes back there off of Benedict and he thinks there has only been  
9 a couple of them sold, and he said he didn't know if that had something to do with  
10 it. He said it has gotten worse, and you are being baited because they want you to  
11 come after them.  
12

13 Mr. Ali asked Mr. Curtis what time he thought was the worst.

14 Response was from around 8:00 to midnight.

15 Mr. Ali asked if the chief to put this on special attention and keep someone up there  
16 for a while until we get these people. He asked if a flock camera would help that  
17 situation.  
18

19 Chief Swanson said no.

20 Mayor Castelli said plus, we wouldn't be able to do that on I-71, they can't be put  
21 on the highway.

22 Mr. Curtis asked what if a car was parked up there, which might deter them a little  
23 bit. He said they are going to figure out no one is in it, but knew other cities had  
24 done that in the past.  
25

26 Mayor Castelli said the chief will look into this and will work with the officers to  
27 see what we can do.

28 Mr. Ali asked if Brook Park's mayor could be contacted too to see if they could  
29 put someone up there.

30 Mayor Castelli said he would be happy to have that conversation and said that  
31 would be up to him and their police force.  
32  
33

34 Mr. Dave Dacek, 7675 Ragall Parkway, said he is a proud member of your  
35 Middleburg Heights Fire Department. He said tomorrow will be his last shift,  
36 adding that he had a great career here in Middleburg Heights. Mr. Dacek thanked  
37 the members of council and said this city brought him in 30 years ago and was also  
38 the union president. He said he appreciated all the conversations that he had, and  
39 said he also coached with Councilmen Ali, Sage and Meany when their children  
40 were young. Mr. Dacek thanked the mayor and Finance Director Stewart for their  
41 patience during union negotiations. He said he is still a resident and isn't going  
42 anywhere, but again wanted to say thank you to all of you.  
43

44 Mayor Castelli and members of council wished Mr. Dacek the best, and thanked  
45 him for his passion and his years of service.  
46

47 Mr. Matt Cole, 15800 Bagley Road, said he is currently the union president for the  
48 fire department. He thanked Dave Dacek for his years of service and said on June  
49 12<sup>th</sup> after the Summer in the City parade, stop by at Teamz to have a drink with him  
50 and the rest of the guys.  
51

52 APPOINTMENTS AND CONFIRMATIONS

53 None.  
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56 ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS

57 CITY PARKS, RECREATION & SERVICES COMMITTEE – MR. ALI,

58 CHAIRMAN

59 No legislation.  
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FINANCE, TAXATION & ASSESSMENTS COMMITTEE - MR. BORTOLOTTI, CHAIRMAN

No legislation.

LEGISLATION & RULES COMMITTEE - MR. ZAKEL, CHAIRMAN

No legislation.

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

No legislation

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE - MR. SAGE, CHAIRMAN

No legislation.

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

No legislation.

ZONING & BUILDING CODE COMMITTEE - MR. FERENCE, CHAIRMAN

Mr. Ference introduced ORDINANCE NO. 2026-31, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS ZONING CODE AND PLACED ON FIRST READING AND REFERRED TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION.

Mayor Castelli introduced RESOLUTION NO. 2026-32, A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF ROBERT I. SWANSON AS POLICE CHIEF FOR THE CITY OF MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS AND MOVED TO ADOPT. On behalf of the mayor, Mr. Bortolotto MOVED TO ADOPT. Seconded by Mr. Ference.

Mayor Castelli said he is very excited to be moving forward with the confirmation of our next Police Chief, Rob Swanson. He has been working in our community for years and has done a great job as an officer, a detective, lieutenant and as a deputy chief, which he currently holds and he has for several months been acting as our chief and deputy chief at the same time. Mayor Castelli said ultimately we had a time process that we had to wait, before we could put this vote up before city council. He said we are not doing a swearing in at the council meeting, he said that has to happen after May 1, 2026. He said we will let council know when that swearing in will take place. Mayor Castelli said Rob is going to work with the department and his family to try to figure out the best time to do the swearing in. He said there will be more information on that to come. Mayor Castelli told Rob before they move forward, this is his last chance to back out. He said what he really appreciates about our next chief, Rob Swanson, is that he moves quickly on a lot of different topics and it's consistent on how he likes to move on things, saying that they have been working really well together.

Mr. Ali thanked Rob, and said he always answers the phone and returns phone calls quickly and added how much they appreciated that.

Mr. Ference thanked Chief Swanson for his excellent service up to this point. He said this appointment is very well deserved and he looked forward to having Rob as our chief.

Members of council extended their congratulations to Chief Swanson.

Mayor Castelli said they did go through an extensive process, and he wanted to let the residents know about this process was that we have a lot of very

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3 well trained officers and supervisors that were ready to take on the position of chief.  
4 He thanked Chief Tomba for all his efforts and work to ensure that we have that  
5 kind of trained officers. Mayor Castelli said that made it very easy for him to select  
6 from within.  
7

8 ROLL CALL: YEAS 6, NAYS 0, RESOLUTION NO. 2026-32 ADOPTED

9  
10 Mayor Castelli introduced ORDINANCE NO. 2026-33, AN ORDINANCE  
11 AMENDING SECTION 127.17 "PART-TIME KENNEL ASSISTANTS" OF  
12 THE MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS CODIFIED ORDINANCES AND MOVED  
13 TO ADOPT. On behalf of the mayor, Mr. Bortolotto MOVED TO ADOPT.  
14 Seconded by Mr. Sage.

15 Mayor Castelli said this item was discussed with city council at the finance  
16 committee meeting. He said what this does, is that it allows us bring on part-time  
17 kennel help if we need it. Mayor Castelli said it doesn't mean that we have to do  
18 it, but allows us to do so depending on what is happening at the kennel.

19 Mr. Ali thanked his colleagues for this support. He said we have over one hundred  
20 volunteers, and said this person is going to helping out juggling those volunteers.  
21 Mr. Ali said we have had over a few hundred dogs and cats that were adopted out  
22 to their forever homes, and also a countless amount of animals that were returned  
23 to their families when their pets got loose.  
24

25 Mayor Castelli said if we move forward with this, this individual will also be able  
26 to help us with animal control just in case we pick up an animal and we want another  
27 resource to be able to work with the police officers to make sure that animal is taken  
28 care of for that evening until animal control can come in. He said this provides  
29 another resource when animal control is not available.  
30

31 ROLL CALL: YEAS 6, NAYS 0, ORDINANCE NO. 2026-33 ADOPTED

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34 COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

36 No report.  
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39 Finance, Taxation & Assessments Committee – Mr. Bortolotto, Chairman

40 Mr. Bortolotto said this morning he attended Big Creek Elementary School, along  
41 with Mayor Castelli, Mr. Bichara and our service department. He said we went  
42 there to celebrate Arbor Day and we were all met by the principal and the entire  
43 class of wonderful students. Mr. Bortolotto said with the help of our awesome  
44 service department, we all pitched in to plant a tree for Arbor Day. He said the first  
45 grade class gave city council a bucket with several herbs in it. Mr. Bortolotto read  
46 what was on the bucket which read as follows: "Dear City Councilmember, thank  
47 you for making our city beautiful, teaching us to be helpful and for sowing seeds  
48 of kindness. We grow better together!" He gave the planter to the clerk to put in  
49 the council office. Mr. Bortolotto said that was very nice and a great way to start  
50 the morning. He said secondly, he spent last week in the City of Baltimore,  
51 Maryland attending the 2026 National Prostart Invitational Competition. Mr.  
52 Bortolotto said this consisted of 48 Culinary Vocational Schools competing for a  
53 championship. He said there were over 400 students in attendance from 48 states.  
54 Mr. Bortolotto said our very own Polaris Culinary Team won 3<sup>rd</sup> place, out of 48 in  
55 this national convention. He said these students had one hour to cook an appetizer,  
56 a main meal and dessert from scratch and were judged on many levels. Mr.  
57 Bortolotto commended our five culinary students and their instructor Chef Chris  
58 Olszewski on this impressive national win. He said this was just another way that  
59 Polaris Vocational School makes our city looks great.  
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3 Legislation & Rules Committee – Mr. Zakel, Chairman

4 No report.

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

7 No report.

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10 Public Improvements Committee – Mr. Sage, Chairman

11 No report.

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

14 No report.

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16 Zoning & Building Code Committee – Mr. Ference, Chairman

17 No report.

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20 MAYOR'S REPORT

21 Mayor Castelli thanked Mr. Bortolotto for covering Arbor Day today. He added  
22 that the principal at Big Creek spoke to a lot of her colleagues in other communities,  
23 and she said there are not a lot of cities that do this with their schools. Mayor  
24 Castelli said the principal was very thankful that we come out and do this every  
25 year. He said in addition, the principal mentioned that Big Creek Elementary was  
26 awarded a Blue Ribbon School, and said that is a great honor and fantastic for the  
27 residents that live here in Middleburg Heights. Mayor Castelli said there are some  
28 other honors that are coming and said we would do an e-newsletter in the near future  
29 to let the public know some of the great work that is happening at Big Creek  
30 Elementary School. He said the kids provided their herbs to the mayor's office and  
31 the service department as well. Mayor Castelli said they recited a poem that took  
32 us through the process of being a seed and into a tree. He said they really do a  
33 wonderful job there and we are really happy to work with Big Creek Elementary  
34 School.  
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39 LAW DIRECTOR

40 No report.

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42 FINANCE DIRECTOR

43 No report.

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46 RECREATION DIRECTOR

47 Mr. Elliott said recreation wise, they are really gearing up for summer. He said the  
48 event calendar is out, and you will now see a lot of the kids practicing on the  
49 ballfields. Mr. Elliott said soccer is underway and the outdoor pool is being  
50 prepped. He said they are also starting to get information out for Summer in the  
51 City.  
52

53 Mayor Castelli said former Mayor Elliott/current Recreation Director Elliott will  
54 be attending the groundbreaking for the new Browns Stadium. He said he was  
55 invited as well, and the reason he wanted to bring this up is because we have been  
56 working quite a bit with Brook Park and the Cleveland Browns. Mayor Castelli  
57 said he knew council was aware of this and said we pushed for a traffic study to  
58 take place and to be paid for by the Cleveland Browns on Bagley and Engle. He  
59 said that was identified as an area this will probably be impacted if not game day,  
60 certainly event times. Mayor Castelli said the Browns did agree to pay for this and  
61 they did finalize that study. He said he would be meeting with Brook Park, the  
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2  
3 engineers and the Browns to go through that study to make sure Middleburg  
4 Heights is not forgotten as this process moves forward. Mayor Castelli said there  
5 are three things that he keeps talking to the Browns and Brook Park that we need  
6 to keep focused on, which is infrastructure, traffic management and safety forces.  
7 He said ultimately, who is going to pay for that. Mayor Castelli said we are going  
8 to continue to make sure Middleburg Heights has a seat at the table. He said he  
9 wanted to thank Mayor Orcutt for ensuring that Middleburg Heights does have a  
10 seat at the table, and also the Cleveland Browns for the conversations that they have  
11 had with himself and the City of Middleburg Heights. Mayor Castelli said he will  
12 keep you up to date. He said the next stage that he is going to be recommending is  
13 that himself, Mr. Herron who has been part of many meetings and we are going to  
14 start including our chiefs as well to really look at what that means from does that  
15 mean from a safety forces standpoint as we go into the future.

16  
17 Mr. Bortolotto said we are really blessed to have Mr. Elliott here.

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20 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

21 Mr. Bichara said as city council knows, the city has been awarded a \$50,000 grant  
22 from Cuyahoga County to install new ADA compliant playground equipment at  
23 our city park. He said we held a public hearing regarding the grant round last week  
24 and said it was very well attended. Mr. Bichara said it was decided to pursue  
25 additional grant funding for additional ADA playground equipment. He said they  
26 will be bringing that authorizing legislation to council in the near future. Mr.  
27 Bichara thanked members of council for their support.

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30 SERVICE DIRECTOR

31 Mr. Herron told members a Redbud Tree is what was planted at Arbor Day.

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34 POLICE CHIEF

35 Chief Swanson recognized Officer Joshua Porter for his outstanding service and  
36 dedication as a member of the Northeast Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force. He  
37 said in the beginning of 2024, Officer Porter initiated an investigation into Darren  
38 Lassiter, also known as "King Dinero" for sex traffic offenses throughout northeast  
39 Ohio. Chief Swanson said Officer Porter's professionalism and persistence  
40 contributed to Lassiter's 2025 indictment on multiple felony charges including  
41 trafficking persons, compelling prostitution, promotion prostitution, rape, felonious  
42 assault, aggravated robbery, robbery and grand theft of a motor vehicle. He said in  
43 March 2026, during a two-week jury trial in Cuyahoga County Common Pleas  
44 Court, Officer Porter provided critical testimony that helped Lassiter's conviction  
45 and subsequent sentence of life in prison without parole for 43 ½ to 49 ½ years.  
46 Chief Swanson said his efforts reflected exceptional commitment to justice,  
47 brought meaningful accountability for victims of human trafficking, and  
48 exemplified the highest standards of the Middleburg Heights Police Department.  
49 He said when you listen to this, you have no idea of the hundreds of hours that  
50 would go into a case like this. Chief Swanson also thanked Officer Porter's wife,  
51 because she has to support him through this because there is a lot of hours, overtime,  
52 etc. adding that it is a whole family affair.

53  
54 Mayor and members of council applauded Officer Porter.

55  
56 Officer Porter said he surprisingly he isn't good at talking, and said this is a group  
57 effort and it is a lot of time, but it's the support of the chief, the force, and his family.  
58 He said he never thought he would be able to do that, it was a team effort with a lot  
59 of help. Officer Porter said it starts with the chief, the support of the mayor and all  
60 of council. He said he wished his kids were as well as behaved as Zeke. Officer  
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1 Porter said it wouldn't be possible without the team, adding that Jason is on the task  
2 force with him and has done surveillance and helped with the warrant. He said he  
3 got the letter today and again extended his thanks, but said it is a collective unit.  
4 Officer Porter said the sentence was great and he never would have imagined he  
5 was part of something like that. Officer Porter said bringing everybody together to  
6 work as a team has been his favorite part.

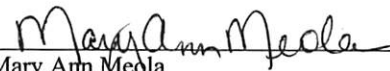
7 Mayor and members of council again applauded Officer Porter.

8 Mayor Castelli said we are very fortunate to have the caliber of officers that we  
9 have in Middleburg Heights. He again thanked Officer Porter and the rest of team  
10 for what they do.

11 Mr. Sage said the services in the city are absolutely phenomenal. He said he has  
12 known Mr. Dacek for years and they have coached against each other, with each  
13 other, our kids and our boys. Mr. Sage said Officer Porter, Zeke, the entire task  
14 force, Chief Swanson, our service department and recreation department are  
15 phenomenal. He said when he gets to know people from other cities surrounding  
16 us, they are like wow you guys have a lot going on. Mr. Sage said yes, we do have  
17 some issues here and there and as long as you all know that the administration is  
18 addressing those in the best and right way for the city. He said he is super proud to  
19 be part of this community, and it's because of the Dave Dacek's and the Josh  
20 Porter's and the men and women on the street that makes this an awesome  
21 community to live in. Mr. Sage again extended his thanks.  
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27 There being no further business, Mr. Bortolotto made a motion to adjourn.  
28 Seconded by Mr. Meany. Mr. Bortolotto adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.  
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34 David Bortolotto  
35 President of Council  
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39 Mary Ann Meola  
40 Clerk of Council  
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