

**City of Maple Heights  
Regular Council Meeting Minutes**

**Maple Height Senior Center**

**February 1, 2023**

**MEETING CAUCUS**

Council President Jackson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following Council Members present: Shenett, Jones, Tatum, Anderson, Madden, Trojanski and Agee. Also present were Law Director Frank Consolo, Police Chief Todd Hansen, Fire Chief Vito Kavaliunas, Human Services Director Linda Vopat, Finance Director Tinita Tillman, Service Director Tony Ciresi, Planning and Development Director Joe Duffy, City Engineer Ed Hren and Council Clerk Leonette Cicirella Johnson. Mayor Annette M. Blackwell was absent and excused.

Mr. Jackson said Councilman Tatum from District 3 will have the Innovation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance for tonight's meeting. He said if there were no objections, the Addendum would be added to the Agenda for tonight's meeting. There were no objections. Mr. Jackson said there were Minutes to be approved, one (1) Communication from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control and one (1) Council Committee Report from the Community Life and Education Committee.

Moving to the Legislation on the Agenda, Mr. Jackson said **Resolution No. 2023-07** authorizing an agreement with 14900 Broadway Avenue LLC for the sale of the building and property located at 14900 Broadway Avenue for development and rehabilitation for a purchase price of \$10,000.00 will be on Second Reading. He asked Mr. Duffy to discuss this legislation.

In response, Mr. Duffy said the Administration will be asking that this legislation be withdrawn at this time, given the new information that had been presented after the last Council Meeting. He said the Administration needed additional time to review and process this new information.

Mr. Jackson asked if there were any questions or comments from Council.

Councilwoman Jones asked if the vacant lot next door to this property had been in the family of the gentleman who said at the last meeting that he was also interested in this property for his business. Ms. Jones said she thought the City policy was that a family member could not benefit from a land sale concerning a foreclosed property. Ms. Jones said the City had demolished the building that was on this property and it would need to be determined if there was some familial relationship.

Councilman Shenett thanked Mr. Duffy for the additional information and asked if perhaps this legislation would best be discussed in the Housing and Economic Development Committee.

Ms. Jones said that as Chair of the Housing Committee she thought it would be better if the Administration handled this situation. Ms. Jones said the Administration would know the rules that had been historically applied in foreclosure cases, specifically that the property could not be sold to a family member. Ms. Jones suggested that if the property would be transferred to a relative that they be made responsible for the City's demolition costs.

Mr. Duffy said the Administration will review all the pertinent information regarding this matter and reiterated the Administration's request that this legislation be withdrawn at this time.

Councilwoman Anderson said she was curious about the second potential buyer and asked how close was the City to closing the deal presented to Council. She said it was a question of fairness.

In response, Mr. Duffy said that with regards to the prior history of the property, the City had been in communication with the second individual in November and December. Mr. Duffy said this individual was the veterinarian next door who had been using the building to house cats. Mr. Duffy said the building was inspected by a Building Inspector and that the City felt that the property was being squatted.

With regards to the other potential buyer, Ms. Anderson asked how far along was the negotiation process to which Mr. Duffy responded that the negotiation process had gone pretty far. Mr. Duffy said his office has been in contact with this buyer throughout these developments and that he understood the City's position and need to be equitable.

Mr. Jackson asked if there were any other questions or comments on this legislation. There were no other questions or comments.

Mr. Jackson said **Ordinance No. 2023-09** would authorize application and acceptance of an AFG Grant by the Fire Department and asked Fire Chief Kavaliunas to discuss this legislation. He asked the Fire Chief if Fiscal Year 2022 was correct to which Fire Chief Kavaliunas responded in the affirmative. The Fire Chief said this particular AFG grant was always one (1) year behind.

Fire Chief Kavaliunas said this AFG Grant from FEMA was for operations and safety equipment and that this year the Fire Department would be requesting funding for new communications equipment and meters to detect natural gas and carbon monoxide levels. The Chief said the communications equipment included new headsets to replace the current headsets that were last purchased in the 1990's and needed to be updated. He said the meters to be ordered would allow one to be kept on each fire truck.

The Fire Chief said the Fire Department kept the award amount within the \$50,000.00 range to keep the City's 10% match requirement to \$5,000.00.

Mr. Jackson asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Jackson asked the Fire Chief if the Fire Department had the matching funds in their budget to which Fire Chief Kavaliunas responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Shenett asked if this legislation needed to be passed on emergency to which the Fire Chief responded in the affirmative. Fire Chief Kavaliunas said he was requesting that it be passed on emergency since the grant application deadline was February 10, 2023 and a copy of the legislation needed to be included with it.

Moving to **Ordinance No. 2023-10** approving a purchasing card policy to be added to the City's financial policies and procedures, Mr. Jackson said this legislation had been discussed at Monday's Committee of the Whole Meeting. Mr. Jackson asked Finance Director Tillman if the Administration was requesting that this legislation be passed on emergency, to which Ms. Tillman responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Shenett said he did express his concerns at the Committee of the Whole Meeting to have sufficient time to review this policy.

In response, Ms. Tillman said because of limitations with some vendors the City has been hampered in purchasing some of its supplies. She said certain vendors were not accepting check payments. She said it was up to Council however, to consider passage on emergency or not.

Mr. Shenett said he would prefer time to consider this policy and review it in more detail.

Councilman Tatum said Council had sufficient time to review this legislation since it was only eight (8) pages long and part of those pages were pictures.

Councilwoman Agee asked Mr. Tatum if he knew what purchasing cards were to which Mr. Tatum responded in the affirmative and said he was prepared to vote on this legislation.

Mr. Consolo said the legislation could be placed on First Reading, but asked Council to pass it as soon as possible.

Mr. Jackson polled Council with regards to voting on **Ordinance No. 2023-10**: Ms. Jones said she was prepared to vote; Ms. Anderson said she was ready to vote; Councilwoman Madden said that if a Councilperson had some type of reservation about a piece of legislation to be able to make an honest decision about it, they should be given this time. Ms. Madden said she was not prepared to vote; Councilman Trojanski said he was ready to vote tonight; Ms. Agee said she was not ready to vote. Mr. Jackson said since there were insufficient votes to pass this legislation on emergency it would be on First Reading.

Mr. Jackson asked City Engineer Ed Hren to discuss **Resolution No. 2023-11** authorizing a contract for the Detention Center – Phase III Overall Conversion Project.

Mr. Hren said this project will use ARPA funding that the City received in the amount of \$50,000.00 for additional work on the Police Department Locker Room Expansion Project. Mr. Hren said the bids for this project had been received and it was determined that there was one (1) bidder who fell within the project cost estimate of \$95,000.00 as determine by Cal Singleton, the architect for this project. Mr. Hren said the bid amount was \$93,245.00 and that he would recommend that Council accept this bid and award the contract accordingly. He also requested that Council pass this legislation on emergency so the City could proceed with this project as soon as possible given the grant deadline.

Mr. Jackson asked if there were any questions on this legislation. There were no questions.

Mr. Jackson said Police Chief Hansen had also discussed this Project in detail at Monday's Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Mr. Jackson said **Resolution No. 2023-12** will authorize the Community Life and Education Committee to expend public funds and accept private donations for 2023 community events. He asked if there were any questions on this legislation.

Mr. Shenett asked if this legislation needed to be passed on emergency to which Mr. Jackson responded in the affirmative. Mr. Jackson said this Resolution needed to be passed on emergency at tonight's meeting since the first event will be held in February.

Mr. Jackson asked if there were any other questions or comments before the Caucus Meeting will be adjourned.

Mr. Shenett asked Mr. Consolo about the status of the liquor license application for 16939-41 Broadway Avenue that was listed on the agenda for tonight's meeting.

Mr. Consolo said it was the position of the City that there was insufficient information regarding the applicant to request a hearing at this time. Mr. Consolo said if Council did want to request a hearing that would be done by a Motion on the floor.

Ms. Jones said she would make this motion.

Mr. Consolo said Council will need four (4) or more affirmative votes for this motion to pass.

Mr. Shenett asked for clarification that the motion would only be to request a hearing on this matter so the vote would be "yes" if a hearing was wanted, to which Mr. Consolo responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Consolo advised Council that the City would still have recourse in the future should problems arise after the granting of this liquor license. He said procedurally the Motion to request a hearing could be done during the Communications section of the Agenda.

Mr. Jackson said there was one (1) Expenditure over \$25,000.00 for review at tonight's meeting and asked if there were any questions from Council. There were no questions from Council.

There being no other questions or comments, the Caucus Meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

### **REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL**

Council President Jackson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following Council Members present: Shenett, Jones, Tatum, Anderson, Madden, Trojanski and Agee. Also present were Mayor Annette M. Blackwell, Law Director Frank Consolo, Police Chief Todd Hansen, Fire Chief Vito Kavaliunas, Human Services Director Linda Vopat, Finance Director Tinita Tillman, Service Director Tony Ciresi, Planning and Development Director Joe Duffy and Council Clerk Leonette Cicirella Johnson. City Engineer Ed Hren was absent and excused.

Councilman Timothy Tatum gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Council Clerk Leonette Cicirella Johnson called the roll.

**ADDENDUM:** There being no objections, the Addendum was added to the Agenda for tonight's meeting.

**MINUTES:** Mr. Trojanski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Shenett, to approve the Regular Meeting of Council Minutes of January 18, 2023.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Shenett: Yes; Ms. Jones: Yes; Mr. Tatum: Yes; Ms. Anderson: Yes; Ms. Madden: Yes; Mr. Trojanski: Yes; Ms. Agee: Yes. The motion passed by the vote of seven (7) ayes to zero (0) nays.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** There was one (1) Communications for tonight's meeting:

From the Ohio Division of Liquor Control:

Notice regarding an application for the issuance of a new class "D5" liquor permit (Permit No. 3729391) from HEIRCLE LLC dba HEIR BAR & LOUNGE at 16939-41 Broadway Avenue, Maple Heights, Ohio.

Mr. Jackson said this liquor license application had been discussed by Council at Monday's Committee of the Whole Meeting. At this time Mr. Jackson asked if there were any other questions or discussion by Council.

There being no other discussion, Mr. Jackson asked for a Motion to request a hearing on the issuance of a new class "D5" liquor permit (Permit No. 3729391) from HEIRCLE LLC dba HEIR BAR & LOUNGE at 16939-41 Broadway Avenue, Maple Heights, Ohio.

So moved by Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. Trojanski.

ROLL CALL on the Motion to request a hearing: Mr. Shenett: No; Ms. Jones: Yes; Mr. Tatum: No; Ms. Anderson: Yes; Ms. Madden: No; Mr. Trojanski: Yes; Ms. Agee: No. The motion failed by the vote of four nays to three (3) ayes.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** There was one (1) Council Committee Report for tonight's meeting.

***Community Life and Education Committee***

Ms. Anderson, Chairwoman of the Community Life and Education Committee, announced that the Community Life and Education Committee will be sponsoring a Local Black History Month Event on Saturday, February 18, 2023 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Maple Heights Library, Second Floor. Ms. Anderson said this Event will recognize local African Americans in Cleveland and the surrounding communities.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**Fire Department** – Fire Chief Vito Kavaliunas said the Fire Department calls to date were 487 and that on January 31<sup>th</sup> at 8:14 a.m. the Fire Department responded to a fire at the McDonald's on Broadway Avenue. He said the fire was contained to the kitchen area. The Fire Chief said repairs were in progress and that McDonald's planned to reopen as soon as possible. He said no injuries reported.

The Fire Chief reported that on January 23<sup>rd</sup> Mayor Blackwell administered the Oath of Office to FF Cadet Thomas Post. He said FF Post was currently attending his 40 Hour Orientation and will be assigned to the "C" shift.

Fire Chief Kavaliunas concluded his report by stating that the Fire Department was currently processing one (1) more additional Fire Cadet to fill the vacancy the Department still had.

**Law Department** – Law Director Mr. Frank Consolo said he had three items to report to Council at tonight's meeting:

- 1) He has been notified by the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections that the deadline for Charter Amendment issues to be sent to the Board of Elections will be March 3, 2023 for issues to be included on the May 2, 2023 primary ballot.

Mr. Consolo said one of the issues to be presented again will be to clarify the timing of elected officials pay increases, so legislation will be presented to Council at the February 15<sup>th</sup> meeting for this proposed amendment.

- 2) The issue of group homes in the City had been discussed with the Administrative Staff. Mr. Consolo said he had also talked with other Law Directors and it has been determined that group homes were permitted by Ohio law.

Mr. Consolo said municipalities were limited in dealing with group homes and cannot attempt to license or limit them. He said the City still wanted to know of any group homes that may be operating in the City to make sure they were operating in a safe, legal manner.

- 3) The various departments in the City will be working on the issue of condos in the City and some of the problems regarding these properties. Mr. Consolo thanked Ms. Jones for her work in this area and said that it has been determined that many of the condos in the City were not legal condos since they had not been registered as condos and did not have HOA's, bylaws, or regulations.

Mr. Consolo said the City unfortunately cannot do much since these are private properties but has been trying to help the owners. Mr. Consolo said he would ask Council to let him know if there were any condos in their respective districts so the Law Department will be able to check the legal status of these properties.

**Police Department** – Police Chief Hansen reported that the calls for service have been in the mid-80’s per day, with a couple of days over 100. He reported that the most serious case involved a Bedford Police Department call at which the MHPD provided mutual assistance. He said the BPD Detective Bureau was investigating a shooting in which two (2) Maple Heights juveniles had been shot.

The Police Chief announced that two (2) new Police Cadets had completed their field training and will be out on patrol.

Police Chief Hansen said the Police Department has also restructured its Patrol Officers section with two (2) LTs to increase the number of Officers on patrol and increase visibility on the streets. He said the Detective Bureau will continue to be run by a LT.

**Human Services Department** – Human Services Director Mrs. Linda Vopat announced that deadline to pay property taxes will be February 9<sup>th</sup> and that money was still available to assist property owners to pay past due property taxes or go onto payment plans. Mrs. Vopat said residents in need of these services can contact the Human Service Department.

Mrs. Vopat also announced that starting this Friday, February 3, 2023, a Grief Recovery Program will be held at the Senior Center from 10:30 a.m. to Noon. She said this will be an eight (8) week program that will be conducted by a University Hospital psychotherapist. She said there was still time to sign up for this program.

Mrs. Vopat also announced that the AARP income tax service for residents 55 years old and older will be available again this year at the Senior center. Mrs. Vopat advised residents to call the Human Services Department to schedule in-person appointments or residents could choose to drop off their tax information and pick up the completed tax forms.

Lastly, Mrs. Vopat announced that The Cleveland Clinic will be partnering with the City of Maple Heights to improve infant and maternal health. She said Marymount Hospital will be opening a Women’s Center on Transportation Boulevard to offer this assistance, including the use of OB/GYN Navigators and postcard initiatives to assist new mothers and babies to 6 weeks of age.

**Finance Department** – Finance Director Ms. Tinita Tillman was not available to present a report.

**Service Department** – Service Director Mr. Tony Ciresi said the number one call for the Service Department was trash and that everyday he had Service Department staff out picking up bulk items or illegal trash, especially at some of the condos. Mr. Ciresi said the City’s former Animal Warden has been out issuing trash citations for violations regarding trash being out too early, trash cans not returned after pick-up and illegal dumping.

Mr. Ciresi reported that since the last Council Meeting the Service Department has been out about eight (8) times for snow removal or to salt the streets and that the Service Department has used about 2,500 tons of salt to date.

Mr. Ciresi also reported that he has had two (2) trucks out every day for cold patch road repair work.

Mr. Ciresi concluded his report by stating that he will be working on updating the City's microphone system to alleviate the problem of feedback from cell phones, etc.

**Planning and Development Director** -- Planning and Development Director Mr. Joe Duffy reported that according to the 2022 Akron Cleveland Association of Realtors Annual Report 59% of the homes in Maple Heights were owner-occupied while 41% were rental properties. He said the median listing price for the year was \$115,000.00 and the median home value estimate went up almost 8.7% to \$122,000.00 in the calendar year. Mr. Duffy said there was good news in the report that the housing market was still appreciating or normalizing back to pre-2008 foreclosure crisis levels, although not as aggressively due to inflation and rising interest rates when compared to 2021.

Mr. Duffy said he wanted to remind residents that the property tax deadline for 2022 will be February 9, 2023 and that assistance was still available for homeowners already struggling with property taxes. He said grants of up to \$10,000.00 were still available through June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Duffy concluded his report by stating that the City will be co-hosting a Career Hiring Fair and Employer Expo with Ohio Means Jobs at the Garfield Heights Civic Auditorium on Thursday, February 23, 2023 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. He said this event will be open to the public and there will be resume coaches and direct facetime with the largest employers in Garfield Heights and Maple Heights. Mr. Duffy said marketing materials for this event will be shared once they have been finalized by the staff of Ohio Means Jobs.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS:**

Mr. Ozell Dobbins III residing at 19608 Longview Avenue, Maple Heights, said he was here to talk about the City's grass cutting program. Mr. Dobbins said under Mayor Lansky there were seven (7) landscapers all from Maple Heights, one per district, and then in more recent years the landscapers were capped at a certain amount of money. He said now the City was looking at a big landscaping company contract that the City will pay more for. Mr. Dobbins said this was not the right way to take care of the people.

In response, Mayor Blackwell said the City did not make money on the grass cutting program since the City paid the grasscutters, but couldn't collect from the property owners.

The Mayor said the recommendations for this year's grass cutting program had not been decided yet. She said there were a number of issues with the past programs including the invoicing and the integrity of some of the companies.



**LEGISLATION:**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-07**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH 14900 BROADWAY AVENUE LLC FOR THE SALE OF THE BUILDING AND PROPERTY LOCATED AT 14900 BROADWAY AVENUE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION FOR A PURCHASE PRICE OF \$10,000.00, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

This Resolution was withdrawn by the Mayor.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2023-09**

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND FIRE CHIEF TO APPLY FOR, AND IF AWARDED, ACCEPT, WITH MATCHING FUNDS OF 10% OF THE AWARD, A FISCAL YEAR 2022 ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT (AFG) FROM THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) FOR OPERATIONS AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

Mr. Shenett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski, to suspend the rules and pass this Ordinance on emergency. Mr. Jackson asked if there were any questions or discussion on this legislation.

There being no questions or discussion, Mr. Jackson asked for the vote to suspend the rules and pass this Ordinance on emergency

ROLL CALL on the motion to suspend the rules and pass this Ordinance on emergency: Tatum: Yes; Anderson: Yes; Madden: Yes; Trojanski: Yes; Agee: Yes; Shenett: Yes; Jones: Yes. The motion passed by the vote of seven (7) ayes to zero (0) nays.

Mr. Jackson asked if there was any discussion on this Ordinance. There being no additional discussion, Mr. Jackson asked for the vote for passage on emergency.

ROLL CALL on the vote for passage on emergency: Tatum: Yes; Anderson: Yes; Madden: Yes; Trojanski: Yes; Agee: Yes; Shenett: Yes; Jones: Yes. The motion passed by the vote of seven (7) ayes to zero (0) nays. The Resolution passed on emergency and will become law upon the Mayor's signature.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2023-10**

**AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A PURCHASING CARD POLICY TO BE ADDED AS EXHIBIT 10 TO THE CITY'S FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

This Ordinance was on First Reading.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-11**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE DETENTION CENTER – PHASE III OVERALL CONVERSION PROJECT IN THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

Ms. Jones made a motion, seconded by Mr. Trojanski, to suspend the rules and pass this Resolution on emergency. Mr. Jackson asked if there were any questions or discussion on this legislation.

Mayor Blackwell said there had been different names for this project because of the evolution of it. She said it started as the Police Department Locker Room Expansion Project, but now with the ARPA funding more expansion work could be done. The Mayor said this was the reason for the different phases of this project.

Mr. Jackson asked if there were any other questions or discussion. There being no other questions or discussion, Mr. Jackson asked for the vote to suspend the rules. On the motion to suspend the rules and pass this Resolution on emergency, all voted aye, none opposed, the motion passed.

Mr. Jackson asked if there was any discussion on this Resolution. There being no additional discussion, Mr. Jackson asked for the vote for passage on emergency.

ROLL CALL on the vote for passage on emergency: Tatum: Yes; Anderson: Yes; Madden: Yes; Trojanski: Yes; Agee: Yes; Shenett: Yes; Jones: Yes. The motion passed by the vote of seven (7) ayes to zero (0) nays. The Resolution passed on emergency and will become law upon the Mayor's signature.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-12**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COMMUNITY LIFE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE TO EXPEND PUBLIC FUNDS AND ACCEPT PRIVATE DONATIONS TO HOST THE FOLLOWING 2023 COMMUNITY EVENTS: BLACK HISTORY EVENT; HEALTH & WELLNESS & MENTAL HEALTH FAIR; SUMMER FESTIVAL/EVENT; FALL EVENT; AND HOLIDAY EVENT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

Ms. Anderson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tatum, to suspend the rules and pass this Resolution on emergency. Mr. Jackson asked if there were any questions or discussion on this legislation.

Mr. Shenett said he wanted to thank the Finance and Law Departments for with Council to help streamline the process for elected officials to give-back to the community. He said this was a great tool.

Mr. Jackson asked if there were any other questions or discussion. There being no other questions or discussion, Mr. Jackson asked for the vote to suspend the rules. On the motion to suspend the rules and pass this Resolution on emergency, all voted aye, none opposed, the motion passed.

Mr. Jackson asked if there was any discussion on this Resolution. There being no additional discussion, Mr. Jackson asked for the vote for passage on emergency.

ROLL CALL on the vote for passage on emergency: Tatum: Yes; Anderson: Yes; Madden: Yes; Trojanski: Yes; Agee: Yes; Shenett: Yes; Jones: Yes. The motion passed by the vote of seven (7) ayes to zero (0) nays. The Resolution passed on emergency and will become law upon the Mayor's signature.

**EXPENDITURES OVER \$25,000.00:**

Mr. Jackson said there were two (2) Expenditure over \$25,000.00 and thirteen (13) Disclosures of Purchase Orders over \$10,000.00 for review at tonight's meeting. He asked if there were any questions or discussion regarding the **List of Expenditures over \$25,000.00**. There were no questions or discussion. There being no questions or discussion, Mr. Shenett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tatum, to approve the **List of Expenditures over \$25,000.00**.

ROLL CALL on the motion to approve the List of Expenditures: Shenett: Yes; Jones: Yes; Tatum: Yes; Anderson: Yes; Madden: Yes; Trojanski: Yes; Agee: Yes. The motion to approve passed by the vote of seven (7) ayes to zero (0) nays.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Blackwell said she was very pleased with the success to reduce black infant mortality in the City of Maple Heights. She said the Women's Center on Transportation Boulevard and Pregnant with Possibilities, a new resource center for pregnant woman and families opening soon on Southgate Park Boulevard, will help address this issue of infant mortality. The Mayor said Pregnant with Possibilities will be offering education programs and supplies to mothers and families with young children.

Mayor Blackwell also announced that the City will be participating in a Kindness Challenge and had been notified that Home Depot in Maple Heights had recently donated light bulbs to the Maple Heights City Schools for the schools "Light the Way" program. The Mayor said the light bulbs will be distributed to residents so they can turn their front porch lights on to help children get to school safely. Mayor Blackwell said the Service Department picked up the light bulbs. She said under the Kindness Challenge the City will get points for kind or generous acts.

Mayor Blackwell said cities received a memo from Governor Mike DeWine to advise them of the raise in the Local Government Fund (LGF) from 1.66% to 1.70%. The City was also advised that there was legislation pending in the Ohio House of Representatives to repeal the state income tax.

The Mayor said Governor DeWine has also proposed that the State absorb the costs of a new updated 911 system and has also proposed \$40 million for a Police Training Fund.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS:**

**Councilman Timothy Tatum, District 3** thanked everyone who attended the coat and club giveaway on Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at the 360 Barber Shop at 5170 Dunham Road.

Mr. Tatum announced that on February 20<sup>th</sup> there will be a celebration of Black History Month at the Senior Center with Dr. Terry Webb as the speaker and also Rep. Darnell Brewer.

**Councilwoman Dana D. Anderson, District 4** said the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland offered legal assistance to individuals on a wide range of issues. She said for more information people can check out the Legal Aid Society website at: [www.laslev.org](http://www.laslev.org).

**Councilwoman Tanglyn Madden, District 5** asked to be excused from the meeting.

**Councilman Richard Trojanski, District 6** said that 45 small businesses attended the Meet and Greet for District 6 Businesses on Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Trojanski thanked the Mayor and Mr. Duffy for attending from the City and also Ms. Claudia Castillo from Castillo Enterprises, Ms. Felicia Townsend-Ivey, SBDC Director, the Urban Legal of Greater Cleveland and Ms. Ilasha Jackson, Branch Manager of the Maple Heights Dollar Bank. He said it was important for these small businesses to meet local leaders, learn about programs that were available to them and expand their business network.

**Councilwoman Edwina Agee, District 7** – No Report.

**Councilman Stafford L. Shenett, District 1** said he was excited about the Grand Opening for ABA Hair Braiding Salon in District 1 that was held on Wednesday, January 25, 2023 at the salon located at 6156 Dunham Road in the Turney/Dunham Plaza. He thanked the Mayor and Mr. Duffy for attending this event. Mr. Shenett said the business will be planning another event in the Spring.

Mr. Shenett said he was also excited about another business that may be coming to District 1 and thanked Mr. Dufy with his assistance in this matter.

Mr. Shenett announced that the Annual Districts 1 and 7 Combined Block Watch Meeting will be held on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Maple Heights Library, Large Meeting Room from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Shenett concluded his report by stating that he was very sad to hear about the shooting near District 1 and that one of the 13-year-old males succumbed to his injuries. Mr. Shenett said he would continue to pray for the family of this young person and that one of his top priorities was to keep the residents safe.

**Councilwoman Toni Jones, District 2** announced that there will be a Housing and Economic Development Committee Meeting on Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Council Chambers.

Ms. Jones announced that there will be an Advice Clinic held this Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Warrensville Heights Library. Ms. Jones said this will be a free civil clinic so individuals should bring any necessary documents with them.

Ms. Jones said property tax assistance was still available for eligible property owners for tax amounts less than \$10,000.00. Ms. Jones said these grants allowed property owners to include the present tax bill with any current arrearage. She said applicants must be homeowners and fall within the income guidelines. Ms. Jones said funding can go up to \$12,000.00 for families with children. She said residents could contact her or Mrs. Vopat regarding this program.

Ms. Jones said there was another benefit available for Senior homeowners under the Homestead Exemption Program which reduced the value of the home by \$25,000.00 for tax purposes. Ms. Jones said homeowners 65 years old and older with incomes up to \$36,000.00 were eligible for this program. She said this income cap did not include Social Security benefits. Ms. Jones said the Homestead Exemption was also available for individuals with disability. She said residents could contact her or Mrs. Vopat or Mr. Duffy regarding this program.

**Council President Ron Jackson** asked everyone to look out for their elderly neighbors when the snow falls and get someone to help them clear their driveways and walks so there can be access to their properties.

There being no further business to come before this Council, Council President Jackson thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Passed: February 15, 2023

ATTEST:

S/S Leonette Cicirella Johnson  
Leonette Cicirella Johnson, Clerk of Council