

**NORTH RIDGEVILLE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
MINUTES OF
SPECIAL MEETING JULY 30, 2003**

CALL TO ORDER 10:00 A.M.

President of Council David Gillock: I'd like to call this Special Meeting of the North Ridgeville Municipal Council to order. Would the Clerk please read the notice.

READING OF NOTICE

Clerk of Council Chuck Norris read the notice of the Special Council meeting in full as on file in the office of the Clerk of Council as it relates to T 92-2003, a resolution declaring it necessary to levy an additional tax for the purpose of providing for the payment of salaries of permanent police personnel and providing and maintaining equipment used directly in the operation of the Police Department.

ROLL CALL

Present were Council Members Nancy Buescher, Allen Swindig, Josanne Pagel, Bernadine Butkowski, Denny Johnson and President of Council David Gillock. Also, present were Mayor Deanna Hill, Safety-Service Director Jim Johnson, Engineer Larry Griffith, Auditor Chris Costin and Clerk of Council Chuck Norris. Absent were Law Director Eric Zagrans.

SPECIAL MEETING

T 92-2003 A RESOLUTION DECLARING IT NECESSARY TO LEVY AN ADDITIONAL TAX FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FOR THE PAYMENT OF SALARIES OF PERMANENT POLICE PERSONNEL AND PROVIDING AND MAINTAINING EQUIPMENT USED DIRECTLY IN THE OPERATION OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Third Reading

motion by Mayor Hill to adopt. 2nd by Swindig.

President Gillock: Is there any discussion? Mayor Hill.

Mayor Hill: I think in our two meetings we have made it quite clear from the Mayor's office, from the Administration, that we feel that this levy is absolutely necessary to put on the ballot to allow people to do what they do best, and that is to vote on it. That's where their voice is heard.

Council Member Swindig: I was going to say that I am not necessarily supporting this two mill levy, but I think it's up to the people to decide whether they want it or not. Thank you.

Council Member Olesen: If you bear with me for just a minute or two please. I've lived in this community a long time. Did a school levy back in the seventies of 9.5 mills that lost like five times. We told the community what the need was back then and we told it hard. We said we'd never do another school levy again. We passed it and a few years ago at the hospital, in the 1980's, department heads were told you've got to cut budgets. The healthcare noose is tightening from the governmental controls. We said we can't do it, but we did it. When we finished, we found out it wasn't so bad. Today we have people in this City who have lost their homes to foreclosures and we

have some on the brink of foreclosures. I think that suddenly we're telling them we're out of money. We need you to pass a levy. I think this will forestall any actions that we can take to save some money and take a better look at it next year. This came out of the blue for a lot of people and I cannot support it for those reasons. Thank you.

Council Member Buescher: With the economic downswing right now, I believe we owe it to the people to look into making financial adjustments within the system before asking for a tax increase from the people. Thank you.

Council Member Butkowski: I go along with the economic things the way they are now. Everyone is getting reductions in their salaries, if they aren't losing their jobs. If they are getting neither of those, their businesses are on the brink or doing that or closing down permanently. I think our economy is leveling off and possibly turning around, but if we start doing as many cuts as we possibly can, we can still put this on the ballot in December, which I don't like. A special election would have to be an extreme emergency to do. We have those options left to us. It's only July and we can start doing the cuts and hopefully we won't have to do that. The economy will start to turn around and we could weather it out without another tax levy. We are one of the highest, if not the highest, property tax in the County. We just can't do it to the people that are living here now.

Mayor Hill: Yes, the economy is in a down turn. We understand that. We also understand that we have many months before the November election to try to get our house into better order and to sell this levy. The bottom line question here is, are people going to have the opportunity who lives in this City to make the decision? As it stands, if Council does not put it on the ballot, they are denying people the right to make that decision.

Council Member Olesen: I just would like one comment here. I appreciate the efforts of the Administration. They're doing the job that we expect them to do. They are trying to protect their workers. They're trying to protect the City. Lord knows we value the workers of this City. We get our streets plowed in the winter and those things are vital to us. But as I've indicated before, I don't think it has a chance unless we tell people what the need is and why it occurred and what we can do to help it, help alleviate the problem.

Council Member Buescher: I basically agree with that.

Mayor Hill: I'll say it again. It is not a question whether people will support it at this point. We've got several months to do some work and make some changes, if possible. It's still the bottom line question as it was with Center Ridge widening. Give people the opportunity to make that decision. Otherwise, by not putting it on the ballot, you are denying them their best and loudest say on this issue and others. That is yes or no.

Council Member Buescher: I believe that City Council has a very serious responsibility to see what it can do within the system, as I've said before, before we take this to the people. We have other opportunities, as Mrs. Butkowski pointed out, to take this to the ballot but, I think we should work and see what we can do in advance of that. Thank you.

Council Member Butkowski: I think the average citizen that lives here in North Ridgeville that I've talked to realize that, as the City grows, the expense is also increased. I don't think there is anybody that wouldn't give us that, but they have to look at their own household expenses just as

all of us have to. If there's no more money coming in, they can't afford to even vote for something like that. There's no one that's going to vote for something like that who has been tightening and tightening their belt so that they can survive this downturn that we've had. They aren't going to vote for it even though they realize we do need it. They need things in their own homes, too, that they are putting off until they have an increase in funding, too.

Council Member Swindig: Yes, I have one very serious problem. We sat down at a Finance meeting, listened to our Auditor, made a decision to go ahead with this, and then when it comes to the time to vote for it to put it to the people, these people do not want to give the people a chance to vote on it.

Mayor Hill: Talking to some of your friends or some of your neighbors is not the same as allowing people to vote. Council Member Butkowski said that she has talked to a few people and they won't vote for it. That is not the same as every resident who is registered to vote having the opportunity to say it with their loudest and best voice, and that is at the ballot box.

Council Member Buescher: With the reference to the Finance Committee meeting, what Mr. Swindig says is basically true, however, this is a very serious decision to make at one meeting and it shouldn't have been made at one meeting. You get around and you talk to the people and you get a feel of what's going on in the community before you make these decisions. You just don't do it in one meeting. Thank you.

Council Member Swindig: Mr. Chairman, that's happened on more things than one this year, that they decide they're going to do something at a Committee meeting and then turn around and change it the next day. You're elected to give representation to the people. You're representing the people by giving them a chance to vote on whether or not to raise taxes.

Council Member Johnson: Mr. President, much has been said about giving the people a chance, an opportunity to vote. It's more of an obligation, the way I see it, and putting this obligation on them at this point is not something I'm willing to do. I think we should do our homework first and then, if need be, obligate them to vote.

Mayor Hill: Mr. President, that's absolutely incorrect. That does not put an obligation on people to vote for a levy. It gives them the opportunity to vote.

Council Member Johnson: Mr. President, I didn't say an obligation to vote for or against. I said an obligation to vote.

motion by Pagel to call the vote. 2nd by Butkowski

President Gillock: Take the roll on calling the vote

Yes, 2 No, 4 (Buescher, Olesen, Butkowski, Johnson) Abstain, 1 (Gillock)

President Gillock: Discussion can continue.

Council Clerk Norris: Motion fails by a vote of two ayes, four nays and one abstention.

Council Member Pagel: I respectfully ask the members to call for the vote because there doesn't appear to be any new testimony or new information coming forward. Thank you.

President Gillock: Is there any other discussion? If not, please call the roll on the adoption.

Yes, 1 No, 5 (Buescher, Pagel, Olesen, Butkowski, Johnson)

Abstain, 1 (Gillock)

Clerk of Council Norris: Motion fails by a vote of one aye, five nays and one abstention.

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ADJOURNMENT

President Gillock: Is there a motion to adjourn?
motion by Pagel to adjourn

President Gillock: Meeting is adjourned.

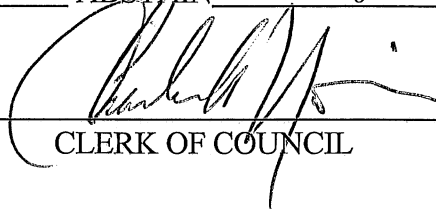
Meeting adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

MOTION Butkowski 2ND Johnson DATE September 2, 2003

YES 7 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0



PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL



CLERK OF COUNCIL