

VILLAGE OF BRATENAHL  
10300 BRIGHTON ROAD  
BRATENAHL, OHIO 44108  
(216) 383-0468

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

APRIL 20, 2022  
6:08 p.m. p.m.

MAYOR JOHN LICASTRO  
KEITH BENJAMIN  
JOYCE BURKE-JONES  
TRACY HOEFLING  
TOM McDONALD  
ROD TAYLOR

DAVID J. MATTY, ESQ.  
NANCY L. MOLNAR, RPR, CLR

3

1 recap of those numbers and then we have a request  
2 for Council to consider.

3 So, Kimmy, what's your last name?

4 MS. LOVANO: LoVano. L-O, capital

18:09:13 5 V-A-N-O.

6 MAYOR LICASTRO: Everyone calls her  
7 Kimmy.

8 MS. LOVANO: That's right. I tried to  
9 go by Kim for a while but I got overruled by my  
10 friends and family.

18:09:28

11 I do have materials for anyone here  
12 that's interested.

13 MAYOR LICASTRO: You're not going  
14 through all this, are you?

18:09:40

15 MS. LOVANO: No, I'm not. I'll leave  
16 these right here. Is there a best place for me  
17 to stand?

18 So my name is Kimmy LoVano. I work at  
19 the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. We are your  
20 neighbors right down the street. We're actually  
21 building another facility, a new community food  
22 distribution center even closer to here. It's at  
23 East 140th and Coit right behind the Federal Job  
24 Corp. We'll be neighbors with the Federal Job

18:09:53

18:10:06 25 Corp.

2

1 MAYOR LICASTRO: Should we move right to  
2 Committee of the Whole? Do we need a break?  
3 Thank you.

18:08:22

4 So we have two items on the Committee of  
5 the Whole. I'll call the meeting to order.  
6 Thank you. And my conscience here, and ask you  
7 to call the roll, please.

8 MS. COOKS: Mr. Benjamin?

9 MR. BENJAMIN: Here.

10 MS. COOKS: Ms. Burke-Jones?

11 MS. BURKE-JONES: Here.

12 MS. COOKS: Ms. Hoefling?

13 MS. HOEFLING: Here.

14 MS. COOKS: Mr. McDonald?

15 MR. McDONALD: Here.

16 MS. COOKS: Mr. Taylor?

17 MR. TAYLOR: Here.

18 MAYOR LICASTRO: So, Jeff, we're going  
19 to save you for last. We're going to ask Kimmy  
20 to come forward. She's with the Food Bank, which  
21 is our neighbor on 156th Street. We had a  
22 Mayor's meeting there earlier this month. And  
23 they shared some really startling numbers about  
24 how much they're lacking with cutbacks in SNAP  
25 and other factors. Kimmy will give us a brief

18:08:43

18:08:56

4

1 So I wanted to come and give a quick  
2 update on the Food Bank, our work, what we're  
3 seeing right now and what we're anticipating over  
4 the months to come, because right now what we're  
5 seeing is a perfect storm. And that's something  
6 that we need help from everyone to respond to  
7 that storm that's coming.

18:10:16

8 So for folks who have not been to the  
9 Food Bank before, we operate as a hub and spokes  
10 model. We have partners throughout Northeast  
11 Ohio. We operate in six counties. Cuyahoga is  
12 obviously our largest kind of geographic partner  
13 in terms of people. We have more than 600  
14 partners here in Cuyahoga County.

18:10:29

18:10:42

15 A lot of those partners are places like  
16 food pantries, hot meal sites, shelters, but also  
17 kids programs, places like libraries and schools,  
18 places where kids go after the school day or  
19 during the summer months when school's not in  
20 session. We work with a lot of senior apartment  
21 buildings to get food to seniors who are in need.  
22 And we work with just every organization that you  
23 can think of where there are already people  
24 there. We try to find people where they are,  
25 instead of making everyone come to us to get

18:10:51

18:11:08

1 help. Definitely that helps that spokesmodel.  
 2 Now, what we're seeing throughout the  
 3 pandemic, we had to change the way that we  
 4 operate. We've had to adapt. We've had to be  
 5 creative. We've gotten a lot of those  
 6 flexibilities from our partners at the federal  
 7 level, from our partners at the state level, that  
 8 allowed us to do things like providing  
 9 grab-and-go meals to kids where we can give out  
 10 three to four meals at once so that kids don't  
 11 have to keep coming back to a site throughout the  
 12 week.  
 13 I grew up with a single mom. When my  
 14 mom was at work during the day, I couldn't  
 15 necessarily leave the house at the age of 11 to  
 16 walk to a site to get meals to pick up. It's  
 17 very flexible. It's a great way to reach kids  
 18 who do need the help. The reality is a lot of  
 19 that flexibility is coming to an end with the end  
 20 of the public health emergency this summer.  
 21 So what we're seeing at the Food Bank  
 22 right now, we're continuing to see incredibly  
 23 high numbers of people that need help with  
 24 emergency food. In 2020, we served one in four  
 25 people in Cuyahoga County at an emergency food

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1 program. That means they went to a food pantry  
 2 or a senior market to get help. That does not  
 3 include any of the kids programs where kids can  
 4 go pick up a meal to take home. So one in four  
 5 people turn to emergency food assistance.  
 6 We're still seeing, even though things  
 7 have gotten better, about one in five people  
 8 throughout Cuyahoga County that need help at some  
 9 point during the year. Most people actually only  
 10 get help about three or fewer times during the  
 11 year from the Food Bank. It's just a way to get  
 12 over a hurdle, somebody with lost wages,  
 13 employment, et cetera.  
 14 So that is what we're doing right now.  
 15 If you've been on 90 on a Thursday afternoon,  
 16 you've seen us at the muni lot. If you've ever  
 17 not known what's happening at the muni lot on  
 18 Thursday afternoons, that's the Food Bank. We're  
 19 continuing to see very high numbers there. About  
 20 2,300 households are served there on every single  
 21 Thursday. And that's in addition to all the work  
 22 being done by our network of more than 1,100  
 23 partners. And those partners are throughout  
 24 Northeast Ohio. I think I started -- we serve  
 25 Cuyahoga County. We also go all the way out to

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1 the Pennsylvania border, out to Ashtabula, Lake  
 2 and Geauga and then down to Ashland and Richland  
 3 counties as well.  
 4 So one of the -- really what we talked  
 5 about at our Mayors and City Managers meeting and  
 6 what I wanted to share with everyone today is  
 7 just what we're expecting to come in the months  
 8 ahead. We have seen the expiration of the  
 9 enhanced child tax credit. About four million  
 10 additional kids fell into poverty in the month of  
 11 January when that credit expired.  
 12 We are also looking at the loss of --  
 13 it's called SNAP Emergency Allotments. And SNAP  
 14 Emergency Allotments have just given additional  
 15 dollars for people to spend exclusively on food  
 16 during the pandemic. Now, when the public health  
 17 emergency expires this summer, in Cuyahoga County  
 18 we're looking at a loss of about 54 million meals  
 19 over the next year because that one benefit  
 20 expires. And that's something that to be frank  
 21 at the Food Bank, we will do everything in our  
 22 power to respond, but it's going to be incredibly  
 23 tough.  
 24 We are facing a lot of the same  
 25 challenges that folks here are facing, that I

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1 face when I go to the grocery store, the increase  
 2 in food costs. We are seeing food prices up by  
 3 about 25 percent. And since we buy food by the  
 4 millions of pounds, that adds up really quickly.  
 5 Things like peanut butter, it used to cost us  
 6 about \$1 per pound, I believe. Now it's up to  
 7 \$1.50. When you buy food, again, by the millions  
 8 of pounds, it adds up very fast.  
 9 So that's something that we're working  
 10 to prepare for at the same time that we've seen  
 11 our federal food, which is American grown food  
 12 from farmers across the country, we've seen that  
 13 food go down by 70 percent. And that's at the  
 14 same time we're having to purchase more and more  
 15 food. Our money is not going as far. And as you  
 16 can imagine, there is a level of donor fatigue.  
 17 A lot of people have been giving and giving and  
 18 with inflation and rising food and fuel costs, a  
 19 lot of folks just don't have as much to give.  
 20 So that is what we're seeing in the  
 21 months ahead. For the folks who have the packet,  
 22 I just printed out some additional information  
 23 that I wanted to be sure that I shared with you  
 24 today. There is a map in that packet that shows  
 25 where people live that are accessing emergency

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1 food programs throughout Cuyahoga County if  
2 you're interested in seeing where a lot of the  
3 need is within our community.

4 To be clear, we serve people at or below  
5 200 percent of the federal poverty line. So in  
6 order to get food from the Food Bank or one of  
7 our partners, that is the income that you have to  
8 go by. That's a federal and state requirement  
9 that we follow.

10 MAYOR LICASTRO: Kimmy, do you want to  
11 talk about your funding source?

12 MS. LOVANO: Sure. We receive funding  
13 through a number of sources. A lot of our  
14 funding comes through private donations. We also  
15 get a lot of food, as I mentioned, from the  
16 Federal Government. That is all food that is  
17 purchased by the government from American  
18 farmers. A lot of that is surplus food. That  
19 makes up about 30 percent of the food that we  
20 give out. About 20 percent is given out through  
21 the State of Ohio. It's food that would  
22 otherwise be plowed under or end up in the trash.  
23 It's food where, for example, a zucchini that's  
24 misshapen, a tomato that has a scratch on it. It  
25 could be apples that are too small and too yellow

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1 that you and I when we go to the store to buy,  
2 but they taste just as good, they're just as  
3 nutritious as apples that you buy at the store.

4 That food would otherwise be plowed  
5 under if not for this program. And farmers are  
6 able to get about 20 cents per pound. It's  
7 called the Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program,  
8 and about 20 percent of our food comes through  
9 that. The rest of the food that we get we have  
10 to actually go out and purchase or it is donated  
11 to us.

12 Right now one of the really great ways  
13 to help, folks have probably heard of Harvest For  
14 Hunger. And Harvest For Hunger is our annual  
15 spring campaign where we ask everyone in our  
16 community to give what they can in order to make  
17 sure that people have the food and the resources  
18 that they need. And that is a campaign that just  
19 started about a month ago and will be going  
20 through the month of June.

21 MAYOR LICASTRO: So at our meeting, Rick  
22 Bain, who is the Mayor of Pepper Pike, asked  
23 communities to see if they can help fill the  
24 shortfall of funds to help fill the shortfall of  
25 meals. It's our understanding that ARPA money

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1 can be used for this purpose. Rick asked for  
2 every community to consider \$10,000. I discussed  
3 this with Ms. Cooks and we feel that we can use  
4 5,000 of the \$120,000 in ARPA money to donate to  
5 this important entity we have on our doorstep.

6 So I ask Council to consider a donation  
7 of \$5,000. We can either discuss it further or  
8 if you're willing we can have a motion to approve  
9 that at this moment.

10 MR. McDONALD: So move.

11 MS. BURKE-JONES: Second.

12 MAYOR LICASTRO: Any discussion? Mr.  
13 Matty.

14 MR. MATTY: The only thing I would like  
15 to advise Council of and Kim did, she hit on it,  
16 but I don't know that she stress it enough. From  
17 my office window in the North Point Tower on  
18 Thursdays, if you think this pandemic and food  
19 issue is done, when they start to distribute  
20 food, people -- it's either 12 or 1:00 that you  
21 start. People start to line up two hours ahead  
22 of time. When they start to distribute food from  
23 that muni lot on the South Marginal, all the way  
24 down to South Marginal to the bridge that people  
25 have to cross to come off the freeway onto the

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1 freeway ramp, cars are backed up to collect food.  
2 MR. McDONALD: All the way to 55th  
3 Street.

4 MR.MATTY: All the way to 55th Street.  
5 And then on the ramp coming off the freeway, on  
6 the freeway themselves, they have to post police  
7 cars there so people don't hit the people that  
8 are standing in that line. That's how bad the  
9 situation is in our community.

10 MAYOR LICASTRO: 54 million meals short.  
11 All right. Any further discussion on the motion?  
12 All in favor of the motion?

13 AYES: 5.

14 MAYOR LICASTRO: Anyone opposed? Kimmy,  
15 your passion is obvious. Thank you for coming  
16 here tonight. The check is in the mail.

17 MS. LOVANO: Thank you. It was an  
18 honor. Thank you so much. If you have any  
19 questions or if you want to come see our new  
20 facility that we're putting up in your backyard,  
21 please reach out directly to me. The Mayor has  
22 my information. I would love to share our  
23 project with everyone. I really think, as you  
24 said, I mean, it's heartbreaking to see the line  
25 of cars and we need all the help we can get, so I

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1 really appreciate it. Thank you, Mayor. Thank  
2 you very much.

3 MS. MEADE: When will it open?

4 MS. LOVANO: Our new distribution  
5 center, fingers, toes, everything crossed, over  
6 the late summer, early fall that is if supply  
7 chain doesn't get in the way. And something I  
8 didn't talk about, but you can find more  
9 information in our packet. Our current facility  
10 will be a community resource center that opens  
11 next year in 2023. Thank you.

12 MAYOR LICASTRO: Thank you. Thank you,  
13 Council, for your consideration and generosity.  
14 It's money for a great cause.

15 Mr. Meyers, you are up.

16 MR. MEYERS: Good evening. So I'm here  
17 to give an update. First off, I am officially a  
18 resident of Bratenahl. I bought a house in  
19 Haskell. (Applause.)

20 MAYOR LICASTRO: When he told me that,  
21 my first reaction was register to vote.

22 MR. MEYERS: The second was I can't wait  
23 to tax your income. (Laughter.)

24 MAYOR LICASTRO: That was the first  
25 thing I said, taxing your income.

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1 MR. MEYERS: So we're excited to be part  
2 of the community. So we had our last steering  
3 committee on the 7th. And what we've been doing  
4 since then is we've presented 13 different  
5 conceptual diagrams of different options. We  
6 were able to narrow that down to seven at that  
7 meeting with a very spirited discussion/debate by  
8 all the steering committee members. And I  
9 encourage that. Everybody gets to have a voice  
10 and we had a really good discussion about several  
11 different ideas and options and opportunities.

12 We completed the programming exercise  
13 for the wants, what we actually would want.  
14 We're now looking at what's actually absolutely  
15 needed so we can have a comparison between the  
16 two. We're also doing that.

17 Our engineers are in the process of  
18 evaluating this facility and evaluating the old  
19 high school at Bratenahl Center, so we're doing  
20 that. Our next steering committee is this  
21 Tuesday actually, the 26th. We are hoping to  
22 start our community meetings in May sometime.  
23 That's a quick update of where we are. Open for  
24 questions, of course.

25 MAYOR LICASTRO: Let me reiterate, we're

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1 looking at renovating current facilities,  
2 updating them. We're looking at different sites  
3 if we do build new. We're looking at repurposing  
4 buildings if possible. I know Jeff is talking to  
5 developers to see if these properties have value  
6 for Council to consider. So really we're still  
7 all options on the table, but the way we got from  
8 13 to 7 was we've got to be cognizant when we go  
9 to the ballot box we can't ask for too much.

10 I gave him a hard number I think is  
11 reasonable. If we get into millage that exceeds  
12 six or seven or five, it's just not going to  
13 pass, because certainly it's a burden on all of  
14 our residents, especially those on fixed incomes.  
15 So we hope to further hone down and come up with  
16 maybe four or five concepts, which we'll then  
17 bring to Council, which we'll bring to a public  
18 meeting where we'll do a green dot, red dot,  
19 which one resonate, understanding that we do not  
20 have unlimited funds to spend. And again, for  
21 those who want to save buildings, all options are  
22 still on the table.

23 MR. MEYERS: That's correct. The way we  
24 evaluated the 13 concepts is we come up with a  
25 rating matrix with several criteria that we

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1 graded each of the 13 on. And we narrowed it  
2 down to the top seven and that's where we are.

3 MR.MATTY: Jeff, are you on schedule?

4 MR. MEYERS: I wrote that down because I  
5 knew you were going to ask. We are on schedule  
6 for the contract that you have given us.

7 MR. MATTY: Good.

8 MR. MEYERS: And the tasks are up to  
9 date. We're on schedule.

10 MAYOR LICASTRO: And having VAA  
11 architects on the room is very helpful. Again,  
12 they've toured and are touring the current  
13 facilities. We're going to get there. What  
14 we're trying to do is ask every possible question  
15 so when the time comes we have every answer. Why  
16 did you consider this or why didn't you consider  
17 that. It's pretty complicated and it was not  
18 difficult to get staff to move from what they  
19 want to what they need. Two different topics. I  
20 want to applaud the staff for being reasonable  
21 and frugal. Any questions for Mr. Meyers?

22 Pat, we see your hand. Anything from  
23 Council? It's going to start to really ramp up  
24 in the next few weeks. Again, we have to attest  
25 this to the ballot, I think it's August 6th, I

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1 believe.

2 MS. COOKS: August 10th.

3 MR. BENJAMIN: August 10th.

4 MAYOR LICASTRO: August 10th. The

18:24:53 5 veteran knows.

6 MR. BENJAMIN: Just did it today.

7 MAYOR LICASTRO: So we're going to get

8 there. I'm confident we'll present to the

9 public. It will resonate. It will be

18:25:04 10 compelling. And hopefully we'll get the support

11 of the voters.

12 Ms. Meade, you had a question?

13 MS. MEADE: Two questions. First on the

14 tax levy, is it going to address all three

18:25:14 15 buildings solutions or are we to expect if there

16 is some kind of ultimate solution for one

17 location, it's only going to address one location

18 and the residents won't know what's happening to

19 the other two buildings?

18:25:31 20 MAYOR LICASTRO: No. No, no, so we're

21 not there yet. We have to hone down on that.

22 What we hope to offer is a definitive solution to

23 our facilities that will last the next 50 to 100

24 years. We can't kick this can down the road

18:25:46 25 anymore. We have a firewall in '23, with a note

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1 which will need a significant paydown in '23. So

2 once we hone in on a concept, it will be because

3 of input from the steering committee, from

4 Council and from the residents.

18:26:00 5 MS. MEADE: But it will address all the

6 buildings in question, it just won't be

7 piecemeal?

8 MR. McDONALD: One solution.

9 MAYOR LICASTRO: One solution that

18:26:08 10 addresses everything.

11 MS. MEADE: And then my second question

12 is for the public meetings, it sounded like

13 you're just going to present from the steering

14 committee and employees what the best of all of

18:26:20 15 those meetings were from, but let's say the

16 public has different ideas, more ideas, will

17 those be factored in or is it too late and the

18 public just gets to make comments about what's

19 presented and it's kind of a done deal?

18:26:33 20 MR. MEYERS: Quite the opposite than the

21 latter. What we want to do is get community

22 input before we make the final decision. We will

23 have many, a handful of options that we'll be

24 asking for people to weigh in on. We'll be

18:26:48 25 having several different visual listening

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1 opportunities at that, so we'll be taking a lot

2 of input. I always say -- I think I said this in

3 this group, we are here to challenge the

4 administration, the police department, the

18:27:01 5 community center, the people that work here.

6 We're here to hear the community, because

7 ultimately this documents we're putting together

8 will make a direct recommendation. And that

9 document needs to speak to the community.

18:27:14 10 Without the community involvement, it cannot

11 speak to the community, so it's very important

12 they're involving. We're waiting for the right

13 timing.

14 MAYOR LICASTRO: For example, what

18:27:22 15 dropped off the radar are things that just were

16 not affordable, were just too costly or they

17 weren't practicable. They didn't address the

18 needs, so those were low-hanging fruit, but we're

19 determined to do this right and be definitive in

18:27:36 20 what we do with these facilities going forward.

21 Mr. Orel, you had a question?

22 MR. OREL: Yes. When you first came

23 here, you said there were going to be -- I think

24 you said there were going to be three public

18:27:46 25 meetings. Is that still your plan?

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1 MR. MEYERS: Yeah, we plan on having up

2 to three public meetings depending on how the

3 turnout is. So if we get good turnout at the

4 first two, then we'll probably have a third. If

18:28:02 5 we get a diminishing, then we might only have

6 two.

7 MS. MEADE: What's a good turnout?

8 MAYOR LICASTRO: He really can't judge

9 that.

18:28:07 10 MR. MEYERS: I cannot.

11 MAYOR LICASTRO: He doesn't live here.

12 We'll make a determination.

13 MS. COOKS: Yes, he does. (Laughter.)

14 MR. MEYERS: Mid-May.

18:28:18 15 MAYOR LICASTRO: If we get 10 people,

16 it's not cross-section. We hope to get a couple

17 hundred people to attend and buy in, because a

18 well-informed populous gets it and what we decide

19 we think will resonate if they're informed.

18:28:34 20 Again, we're trying to answer every question

21 prior to them being asked.

22 Anyone else? Jeff, keep up the good

23 work. We will see you next Tuesday.

24 MR. MEYERS: Thank you, Mayor. Thank

18:28:47 25 you, neighbors.

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1 MS. HOEFLING: Congratulations.  
 2 MAYOR LICASTRO: We're thrilled to have  
 3 you. He did that after we started the process,  
 4 so he must have liked something about us.  
 18:28:56 5 MR. MEYERS: Well, one of the steering  
 6 committee members asked me why I didn't live in  
 7 Bratenahl yet, said I know of a house. We went  
 8 and looked at the house and eight days later we  
 9 closed on the deal.  
 18:29:05 10 MAYOR LICASTRO: Congratulations.  
 11 That's putting your money where your mouth is.  
 12 MR. MEYERS: We weren't even looking for  
 13 a house.  
 14 MAYOR LICASTRO: That ends this agenda.  
 18:29:17 15 MS. COOKS: Approval.  
 16 MAYOR LICASTRO: I need approval of the  
 17 minutes from last month if someone will make a  
 18 motion to do so.  
 19 MR. McDONALD: So move.  
 18:29:25 20 MR. TAYLOR: Second.  
 21 MS. BURKE-JONES: Second.  
 22 MAYOR LICASTRO: Discussion? All in  
 23 favor of the motion?  
 24 AYES: 4. Nays: 0.  
 18:29:30 25 MR. BENJAMIN: Abstention. I was  
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1 absent.  
 2 MAYOR LICASTRO: Thank you, Mr.  
 3 Benjamin. So we're actually on time. I'll ask  
 4 for adjournment of the Committee of the Whole.  
 18:29:42 5 MR. McDONALD: So move.  
 6 MR. BENJAMIN: Second.  
 7 MAYOR LICASTRO: All in favor?  
 8 AYES: 5. NAYS: 0.  
 9 (Meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.)  
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CERTIFICATE

1  
 2  
 3  
 4 I, Nancy L. Molnar, do hereby certify that  
 5 as such Reporter I took down in Stenotypy all of  
 6 the proceedings had in the foregoing transcript;  
 7 that I have transcribed my said Stenotype notes  
 8 into typewritten form as appears in the foregoing  
 9 transcript; that said transcript is the complete  
 10 form of the proceedings had in said cause and  
 11 constitutes a true and correct transcript therein.  
 12  
 13  
 14  
 15 *Nancy L. Molnar*  
 16 Nancy L. Molnar, Notary Public  
 17 within and for the State of Ohio  
 18  
 19 My commission expires July 15, 2023.  
 20  
 21  
 22  
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 24  
 25