

CITY OF STRONGSVILLE, OHIO

ORDINANCE NO. 2024 – 204

By: Mayor Perciak and All Members of Council

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AN INCREASE IN THE HOURLY RATES FOR SPECIAL LEGAL COUNSEL IN CONNECTION WITH ONGOING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND LABOR RELATIONS MATTERS, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

WHEREAS, since 2010, the City of Strongsville has retained Attorney Jon M. Dileno to provide professional legal services to the City in connection with various collective bargaining and labor relations matters; and

WHEREAS, at this time, the special counsel, Jon M. Dileno, has requested an increase in the hourly rates charged to the City for his services; and

WHEREAS, the City's Law Director has recommended that due to the continuing need for special outside legal services with regard to ongoing collective bargaining and labor relations matters, it will be necessary, and in the best interest of the City, to provide for an increase in hourly rates charged to the City, as set forth in the letter from Attorney Jon M. Dileno attached hereto as Exhibit A.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF STRONGSVILLE, COUNTY OF CUYAHOGA AND STATE OF OHIO:

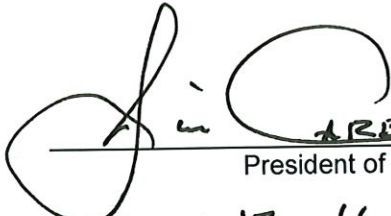
**Section 1.** That the Mayor be and is hereby authorized to provide for an increase in the hourly rates for special legal counsel, **ATTORNEY JON M. DILENO**, in connection with ongoing collective bargaining and labor relations matters, as set forth in the letter attached hereto as Exhibit A.

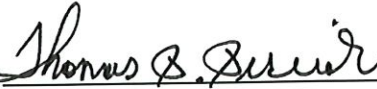
**Section 2.** That the funds for the purpose of such services and said agreement have been appropriated and shall be paid from the General Fund, Fire Levy Fund, and the Street Construction Maintenance & Repair Fund; and the Director of Finance be and is hereby authorized and directed to issue payment in accordance with the terms and conditions of such proposal and agreement.

**Section 3.** That it is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the adoption of this Ordinance were adopted in an open meeting of this Council; and that all deliberations of this Council, and any of its committees, that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements.

**Section 4.** That this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, property, health, safety and welfare of the City, and for the further reason that the continuation of such special legal services is immediately necessary in order to protect the legal interests of the City and provide ongoing representation to the City in pending collective bargaining and labor relations matters, and to conserve public funds. Therefore, provided this Ordinance receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor; otherwise from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

CITY OF STRONGSVILLE, OHIO  
ORDINANCE NO. 2024 - 205  
Page 2

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President of Council  
Date Passed: 12 16 2024

Approved:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Date Approved: Dec. 16, 2024

Attest:   
Acting Clerk of Council

	<u>Yea</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Carbone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
Clark	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
Kaminski	<u>absent</u>	_____
Kosek	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
Roff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
Short	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
Spring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____

Ord. No. 2024-204 Amended: \_\_\_\_\_  
1<sup>st</sup> Rdg. 12/16/24 Ref: \_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> Rdg. suspend Ref: \_\_\_\_\_  
3<sup>rd</sup> Rdg. suspend Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

Public Hrg. \_\_\_\_\_ Ref: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted: 12/16/24 Defeated: \_\_\_\_\_

# DILENO LAW, LLC

14100 Ryan Drive | Walton Hills, Ohio 44146 | Phone: 216-789-9013



**Jon M. Dileo**  
Attorney at Law  
jmd@dilenolaw.com

December 5, 2024

## VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Neal M. Jamison, Law Director  
City of Strongsville  
16099 Foltz Parkway  
Strongsville, Ohio 44149  
[neal.jamison@strongsville.org](mailto:neal.jamison@strongsville.org)

RECEIVED

DEC 05 2024

LAW DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF STRONGSVILLE

**RE: Engagement Letter – Dileo Law, LLC**

Dear Neal:

I am writing as a follow up to my email of last week wherein I had requested a \$25/hour increase to our hourly attorney and paralegal rates effective January 1, 2025. I am also attaching a revised engagement terms document for your review. As noted in my prior email, the last increase to our rates occurred in February of 2022. I want to reiterate that it continues to be an honor and privilege to represent the City of Strongsville, and I greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

The terms of this engagement letter and the attached Standard Terms of Engagement will govern our representation. Absent an express written agreement to the contrary, the terms of our engagement set forth in this letter and the Standard Terms of Engagement will apply to matters which we agree to undertake on your behalf.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, our fees will be based on the time devoted to a matter by each attorney, law clerk, paralegal, and other legal assistants at their respective hourly rates in effect at the time the services are performed. The hourly rates are based on such considerations as the skill required to perform the particular services, and the experience, reputation and ability of the lawyers performing the services. My rate is \$315 per hour. If by virtue of my association with another law firm, work is performed by a partner level attorney, that hourly rate is \$315 per hour. Under like arrangement, associate level attorneys will be billed out at \$255 per hour and paralegals and law clerks at \$150 per hour. In addition, we will review each invoice to ensure that the work performed is commensurate with the fees billed.

In addition to our fees, we will be entitled to payment for disbursements and other charges incurred in performing services as more particularly described in the Standard Terms of Engagement. Fees, disbursements, and other charges will be billed monthly and are payable within thirty (30) days of receipt.

EXHIBIT A

December 5, 2024

Page 2

Please review the terms of this engagement letter carefully, as well as the terms set forth in the Standard Terms of Engagement. If you agree to these terms, please confirm your agreement by way of a responsive email.

On behalf of Dileno Law, LLC., I again thank you for the privilege of representing you and for your consideration of this revised fee schedule. I look forward to continuing to serve your interests.

Very truly yours,

DILENO LAW, LLC.



Jon M. Dileno

JMD/sh  
Enclosure

## STANDARD TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

This is a supplement to our engagement letter dated December 5, 2024. The purpose of this document is to set out additional terms of our agreement to provide legal services. Because these additional terms of engagement are a part of our agreement to provide legal services, you should review them carefully and should promptly communicate to us any questions concerning this document. We suggest that you retain this statement of additional terms along with our engagement letter for your records.

### Scope of Representation

We will at all times act on your behalf to the best of our ability. Any expressions on our part concerning the outcome of the representation, or any other legal matters, are based on our professional judgment and are not guarantees. Such expressions, even when described as opinions, are necessarily limited by our knowledge of the facts and are based on our views of the state of the law at the time they are expressed. In retaining us, you recognize that all legal matters involve risks. We cannot and have not made any promises or guarantees to you about the outcome of the representation, and nothing in these terms of engagement shall be construed as such a promise or guarantee.

Upon accepting this engagement on your behalf, we agree to do the following: 1) provide legal counsel in accordance with these terms of engagement in reliance upon information and guidance provided by you; and 2) keep you reasonably informed about the status and progress of the matters we are handling for you.

To enable us to provide effective representation, you agree to do the following: 1) disclose to us, fully and accurately and on a timely basis, all facts and documents that are or might be material or that we may request; 2) keep us apprised on a timely basis of all developments relating to the matters we are handling for you that are or might be material; 3) attend meetings, conferences, and other proceedings when it is reasonable for you to do so, and where it may be required by a court or other tribunal; and 4) otherwise cooperate fully with us.

It is our policy that the person or entity that we represent is the person or entity that is identified in our engagement letter and does not include any affiliates of such person or entity (*i.e.*, if you are a corporation or partnership, any parents, subsidiaries, employees, officers, directors, shareholders, or partners of the corporation or partnership, or commonly owned corporations or partnerships; or, if you are a trade association, any members of the trade association). Accordingly, for conflict-of-interest purposes, we may represent another client with interests adverse to any such affiliate without obtaining your consent.

It is our further policy that our representation is limited to performance of the services described in the engagement letter and does not include representation of you or your interests in any other matter.

After the completion of the matter, changes may occur in the applicable laws or regulations that could have an impact upon your future rights and liabilities. We always strive to keep our clients updated on matters on which we have been retained. However, unless you engage us after completion of the matter to provide additional advice on issues arising from the matter, the firm has no continuing obligation to advise you with respect to future legal developments.

If, during the course of our engagement, we send you a letter or other written communication advising you about a Federal tax issue, you may notice a statement toward the end saying that our advice may not be relied upon for the purpose of avoiding penalties that may be imposed. (That legend will appear on every e-mail or fax that we send even if there is no tax issue involved.) This does not mean that we have not carefully considered the advice we sent to you. Rather, it is intended to enable us to render that advice in a cost-efficient manner. Rules recently adopted by the Treasury Department require that in the absence of such a legend, any tax advice must be given only in a full-blown, formal legal opinion. Like all law firms, if we were to issue a formal opinion, we would need to follow certain prescribed procedures. In most cases, the cost to our clients would exceed the value received if we were to follow those procedures. In any case where we think that a formal opinion may be appropriate, we will discuss the matter with you.

#### When We Bill

For performing legal service, my rate and the rate of partner-level attorneys of Dileno Law, LLC, or with whom Dileno Law, LLC is affiliated is \$315 per hour. The rate for associate-level attorneys is \$255 per hour and for paralegals and law clerks is \$150 per hour. We will send you a bill each month for the services performed during the previous month. This bill will also include out-of-pocket expenses. These are described below. For matters that are covered by insurance, we will perform legal service at the hourly rates and per the other conditions prescribed under the coverage terms of your policy, or otherwise as directed by the insurance carrier.

We want our clients to be satisfied with both the quality and cost of our services. We therefore encourage our clients to discuss with us any questions relating to fees for our services. We will make every effort to provide you with bills in a format that meets your needs.

#### How Fees Will Be Set

We will keep accurate records of the time we devote to your work, including conferences (both in person and over the telephone), negotiations, factual and legal research and analysis, document preparation and revision, travel on your behalf, and other related matters. We record our time in units of one tenth of any hour.

The hourly rates of our lawyers may be adjusted annually to reflect current levels of legal experience, changes in overhead costs, and other factors. Such adjustment will not occur without your consent. We are often requested to estimate the amount of fees and costs likely to be incurred in connection with a particular matter. Whenever possible, we will furnish such an estimate based upon our professional judgment, but always with a clear understanding that it is not a maximum or fixed-fee quotation.

#### Retainers

If we have agreed to a retainer, it is further agreed that we have a security interest in that deposit. Retainers are usually considered to be unearned advances. They are placed into trust accounts, usually placed in pooled interest-bearing trust accounts governed by rules adopted by the bar associations in the

jurisdictions in which we practice. All accruing interest is paid to a charitable fund established by those bar associations. The need to replenish the retainer is a condition of our continued work and is set forth in the Engagement Letter itself.

#### Disbursements and Other Charges

In addition to our fees, we will be entitled to payment or reimbursement for disbursements and other charges incurred in performing services such as photocopying, messenger and delivery, overnight delivery and air freight, computerized research, videotape recording, travel (including mileage, parking, air fare, lodging, meals, and ground transportation), long distance telephone, telecopying, word processing in special circumstances, courts costs, and filing fees. To the extent we directly provide any of these services, we reserve the right to adjust the amount we charge at any time or from time to time, and the charge will approximate our cost. Unless special arrangements are made, fees and expenses of consultants and professionals (such as experts, investigators, witnesses, and court reporters) and other large disbursements will not be paid by our firm and will be the responsibility of, and billed directly to, you or you will be asked to advance to us an estimate of those costs.

#### Payment of Invoices

Our invoices are payable within 30 days of receipt. Any amounts not paid within 30 days will be subject to a late charge at the monthly rate of one-percent (1%). In the event that a bill remains unpaid past the due date, the firm may discontinue services. If we represent you in a pending litigation, we may seek to withdraw as your counsel. Whether or not we elect to discontinue representation, if collection activities become necessary, we will be entitled to seek reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of collection.

#### Conflicts of Interest

It is unavoidable that from time to time conflicts of interest develop between or among our clients, or between clients, or former clients, and prospective clients we wish to represent. In these situations, we are required, if we are authorized to do so, to disclose the conflicts to our clients, former clients, and prospective clients and consult with them and to obtain the clients' or former clients' consents before we may proceed. We wish to confirm that you agree that you will promptly and in good faith consider our requests for consent.

#### Termination

You shall have the right at any time to terminate our services and representation upon written notice. Such termination shall not, however, relieve you of the obligation to pay for all services rendered and disbursements and other charges made or incurred on your behalf prior to the date of termination.

We reserve the right upon reasonable notice to cease performing work and to withdraw from the representation (a) with your consent, (b) for good cause, or (c) for any other reason permitted or required by law. Good cause may include your failure to honor the terms of the engagement letter, your failure to pay amounts billed in a timely manner, your failure to furnish deposits for fees and costs or to otherwise provide

a requested advance for fees and costs, or any fact or circumstance that would in our view, impair an effective attorney-client relationship or would render our continuing representation unlawful, unethical or unreasonably burdensome. If we elect to do so, you must take all steps necessary to free us of any obligation to perform further, including the execution of any documents (including forms for substitution of counsel) necessary to complete our withdrawal, and we will be entitled to be paid for all services rendered and disbursements and other charges made or incurred on your behalf prior to the date of withdrawal.

#### Record Retention

At the conclusion of a matter we often undertake to review the file and discard extra copies of documents. We then send the balance of the file on that matter to an off-site facility for storage at our expense, unless a client requests us to deliver the file to it. To minimize the file storage expense, we reserve the right, subject to your contrary direction, to retain files for only ten years and to destroy all older files to the extent practicable; provided that we use our reasonable efforts to review old files and retain original legal instruments such as notes, leases, mortgages, deeds, stock certificates, marital equitable distribution agreements and other items of obvious value. If you wish to handle the disposition of files in a different manner, please let us know. Otherwise, we will proceed as set forth above.

#### Communications and Confidentiality

In the course of our representation of you, we have a duty to preserve the confidentiality of our communications with you and other information relating to the representation. However, you and we need to recognize that all means of communication are, to some degree, susceptible to misdirection, delay or interception. E-mail and cellular telephone communications present special risks of inadvertent disclosure. However, because of the countervailing speed, efficiency, and convenience of these methods of communication, we have adopted them as part of the normal course of our operations. Unless you instruct us to the contrary, we will assume that you consent to our use of e-mail and cell phone communications in representing you.

#### Marketing Matters

Our firm has a public web site that may identify some of our clients and publicly disclosed transactions and other legal matters we have handled. In addition, we develop various marketing, advertising, and informational materials from time to time that contain similar information. You agree that we may publicly identify you as a client of Dileno Law, LLC.

#### Insurance

You agree to immediately determine whether insurance coverage is or may be available with respect to the subject matter of the engagement and to promptly provide notice to any insurer that may provide coverage. If an insurer pays any portion of our charges, you agree that you will remain responsible for payment of any amounts billed by us but not paid by the insurer, unless we have agreed otherwise in writing.