

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 12, 2015

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Strazdas at 7:35 p.m.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Pastor Ron Hansen of Pathfinder Church of Portage gave the invocation and City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Nasim Ansari, Richard Ford, Patricia M. Randall, Claudette Reid and Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson and Mayor Peter Strazdas. Also in attendance were City Manager Laurence Shaffer, City Attorney Randy Brown and City Clerk James R. Hudson.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion by Ansari, seconded by Reid, to approve the Special and Regular Meeting Minutes of April 28, 2015, and Budget Work Session Minutes of May 5, 2015, as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0 with Mayor Pro Tem Pearson abstaining from approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 28, 2015.

\* **CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Strazdas asked Mayor Pro Tem Pearson to read the Consent Agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson asked that Item F.5, FY 2015-16 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, be removed from the Consent Agenda. After discussion, it was determined that the reason for the removal was to allow Councilmember Ansari to abstain owing to his being a member of the Board of Directors of the Portage Community Center. With that, the item remained on the Consent Agenda with the record to reflect Councilmember Ansari abstaining from Item F.5, FY 2015-16 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program owing to his being a member of the Board of Directors of the Portage Community Center.

Councilmember Reid asked that Item F.4, ADP Workforce Now Hosted Time and Attendance Services Pricing Agreement, and F.6, Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting on Tuesday, May 26, 2015 – Information Only, be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Consent Agenda motions as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0 with Councilmember Ansari abstaining from Item F.5, FY 2015-16 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program owing to his being a member of the Board of Directors of the Portage Community Center.

\* **APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF MAY 12, 2015:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of May 12, 2015. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

**PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 CITY BUDGET:** Mayor Strazdas opened the public hearing on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2015-2016 City Budget and the tax rate of 10.9256 mills required to support the proposed budget. He pointed out that there is no public hearing on the tax rate as there is no tax increase and no Truth in Taxation public hearing is necessary. He indicated that City Council would not be voting on the budget at this meeting, but at the next meeting. He deferred to City Manager Larry Shaffer, who thanked Mayor Strazdas and indicated that the \$68 million proposed budget impacts all of the funds of the City and includes a flat rate increase on the millage rate which still leaves the City in the bottom 25% tax rate of all comparable cities in the State. He announced that a number of initiatives are proposed in the General Fund, including: environmental stability, the enhanced arts and culture profile, increases in productivity applications within the organization, revisions in how we administer many of the programs. He extended his deep appreciation to city staff who have devoted hundreds of hours to the production of this budget, including Deputy City Manager Rob Boullis, Finance Director Bill Furry, Deputy Finance Director Lauren VanderVeen, and his finance team. He also thanked City Council for at least a dozen hours of work in special session to review each and every item

within the budget. He expressed his pride in the budget and reflected that there are many changes and still incorporates a significant amount of stability. Discussion followed.

Mayor Strazdas pointed out that the budget process went very well and thanked the City council for their efforts and mentioned the improved economy and its role in the process and explained. He pointed out that the City tax base has been favorably increased this year, plus this budget holds the line with all millages. He spoke in favor of the 24% Fund Balance and any funds above that will be used to retire debt and to build roads. He thanked staff for some of the small things that are being brought back such as the canoe livery and the arts and entertainment. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Ford commended Mr. Shaffer for his flexibility, but lamented the loss of the Tax Stabilization Fund because it could be utilized to support arts and cultural programs in the future. He also spoke in favor of the investments in technology since they will provide savings in the future.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson concurred with the comments on technology by Councilmember Ford and commended Mr. Shaffer, especially his efforts “back and forth” in response to Council’s interest in street improvements in the best interest of the citizens.

Councilmember Ansari concurred with all comments thus far and pointed out that there will be a savings of approximately \$300,000 owing to the organizational changes recommended by Mr. Shaffer.

Councilmember Randall recognized that it is a good time for the economy; things are improving; and, the real change in City Hall is the leadership of Larry Shaffer and Rob Boulis, who she feels are responsible for the internal changes that the community is only now beginning to realize, for example, eliminating duplicate departments and the annual cost savings of over \$300,000. She expressed her appreciation for the flexibility of City Council in order to make changes reach the people Councilmembers have been elected to serve and, as a result, shows stability, also.

Councilmember Reid reflected on the budget process as a good “back and forth” with a lot of discussion, a lot of long discussion. She stressed the importance of the process for Council; and that this was the first time Council had gone through this process with Mr. Shaffer. She reflected positively on the changes based on input provided; she cited the Mayor’s reference to using some of the available funds for debt reduction; and she explained that some of the debt is in the form of bonds, so the ways of reducing this debt are limited. As a result, the City is paying for things up front without incurring debt, and she said that this is reflective of a change in the way the City is doing business in a lot of situations. She noted that the only reason the City can do this is because of the past practice of being responsible and conservative, and Council is building on this tradition.

Mayor Strazdas summed up and listed technology changes, debt reduction and residential street improvements as line item highlights within the budget. Discussion followed. Mayor Strazdas opened the public hearing for comments from the public.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Motion by Randall, seconded by Reid, to move the final budget decision to the next Regular City Council Meeting on May 26, 2015. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

## **REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION:**

### **\* PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT - SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS:**

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve a professional services contract with All City Management Services, Inc., for school crossing guards for a two-year period in the amount of \$56,084.40 annually and authorized the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**\* EQUIPPING OF THREE POLICE PATROL VEHICLES:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$30,000 for services to outfit three Chevrolet Caprice vehicles as police patrol vehicles by Emergency Vehicle Products, a sole source vendor. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

\* **CONTRACT RENEWAL - STATE SYSTEMS RADIO:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to renew a contract to lease space on radio towers from State Systems Radio, Inc., for a period of five years with a monthly lease payment of \$1,420 for the first year and a three percent annual increase thereafter, and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**ADP WORKFORCE NOW HOSTED TIME AND ATTENDANCE SERVICES PRICING AGREEMENT:** Councilmember Reid provided a summary of the request and asked if there was a rationale or information for not putting this contract out for bid. Mr. Shaffer deferred to Deputy City Manager Rob Boulis, who indicated that the City has ADP as the payroll service provider and the proposed software acquisition works with the ADP Software which promises to save the expenses that would be required to customize and make some other software fit and have the support of one software company instead of multiple companies. In answer to Councilmember Reid, Mr. Boulis was remiss to indicate that there is no other company that could adapt to ADP because software companies can be pretty versatile, but he indicated that there are costs and challenges with those necessary adaptations with the software companies with which he is familiar. He pointed out that this software is supported by the same software company; the reports blend together; no customization is necessary; and, this acquisition makes for a much simpler process.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Ansari, to approve the three-year pricing agreement with ADP, Incorporated, for electronic time and attendance software and hosting on behalf of the City of Portage at a cost of \$54,772 for the first year, \$34,095 for the second year and \$34,776 for the third year and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract on behalf of the city. Discussion followed. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

\* **FY 2015-16 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program FY 2015-16 Annual Action Plan element of the Consolidated Plan and authorize the City Manager to submit the application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING ON TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2015 – INFORMATION ONLY:** Councilmember Reid referenced the ten (10) items identified at the last Council Retreat to be discussed at a Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting. She noted that Council has discussed seven (7) of the items and referred to Item 2 of Materials Transmitted of May 12, 2015, received on the dais earlier in which Mr. Shaffer indicated that the topics of *Aging Infrastructure* and *Long-Term Financial Stability* had been sufficiently addressed as part of the budget review sessions. She indicated that Council has not had the opportunity to address the remaining items to be discussed that were planned for three more meetings and that some discussion is still necessary. She consented that financial stability was certainly discussed at the Budget Sessions, but not in a long term, philosophical way, only with regards to what needs to be done in the next fiscal year. She proposed taking any follow up information regarding *Aging Infrastructure* and take them together with what Council identified as needed to ensure long term financial stability as a COW session.

Next, Councilmember Reid indicated her support for the additional topic cited by Mr. Shaffer, *Public Safety Long-Term Planning*, focusing on the topics of body cameras, firefighter certification and social interaction with members of the community who are sensitized to police performance in the field as an additional COW topic and explained. Discussion followed regarding everyone's calendar.

Mr. Shaffer indicated that it may make sense to delay discussion until the Fall, close to the time of the audit, owing to the better understanding and clarity of the unappropriated fund balance, and offered the month of September as an option unless the Council wishes to have the discussions in the Summer.

Councilmember Reid thought the audit in November and the Strategic Planning in November naturally go together. She expressed her opinion that Council should discuss the topics of *Aging Infrastructure* and some philosophical aspects of *Long-Term Financial Stability* prior to making those decisions, not at the same time, and asked for time in between the two in order to “process.” Mayor Strazdas concurred and asked for input to the City Manager with any thoughts regarding this matter.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to accept the Communication from the City Manager suggesting the City Council forego setting a Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting on Tuesday, May 26, 2015, and that a Committee of the Whole (COW) Meeting be set for Tuesday, June 9, 2015, to address *Public Safety Long-Term Planning*. Councilmember Ford offered a friendly amendment to change the date to Tuesday, June 23, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. to provide the opportunity for Councilmember Reid to attend. Councilmember Reid concurred. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

\* **MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEETINGS:** City Council received the minutes of the following Boards and Commissions:

Portage Park Board of March 4, 2015.

Portage Human Services Board of March 5, 2015.

Portage Public Schools District Advisory Council of April 16, 2015.

Portage Planning Commission of April 16, 2015.

#### **COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT:**

**CENTRAL COUNTY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (CCTA):** Councilmember Urban provided a brief update of the election activities surrounding the millage request from CCTA for the ballot on August 4, 2015 Special Election. He mentioned that Executive Director Sean McBride provided some initial education information materials for review and comment for ideas on additional materials or inclusions as the August 4, 2015 Special Election approaches. He indicated that the CCTA also discussed holding info sessions in various municipalities and organizations and have already reached out to the Portage Senior Center Director for an appropriate date. He noted that the CCTA recognized that the election starts four weeks from now when the first absentee ballots will be sent out. He summed up and revealed that there is a separate campaign committee set up to support this millage request. He indicated that the CCTA Meeting next week will be for the purpose of further discussion of the educational portion since the CCTA cannot advocate for their millage request, they can only educate and explained.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to receive the Central County Transit Authority Report from Councilmember Urban. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

\* **APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to appoint Sami Ahmad, Jawad Aqeel, Aiyla Arif, Ali Arif, Ben Behrens, Grace Beverage, Amanda Boelman, Eli Cartier, Cortney Chow, Joseph Flanagan, Anna Heystek, Tanvi Khurmi, Sameen Khurshid, Lily Kitagawa, Blue Koffron, Anjana Krishnan, Ashwin Kumar, Sachin Kumar, Mary Kuras, Benjamin Miller, Sophie Morin, Lindy Nebiolo, Molly Ryan, Daniel Saba, Nicholas Schumacher, Arya Shembekar, Tanvi Shembekar, Simran Singh, Omar Thaj, and Ali Thomas, Jr. to the Youth Advisory Committee, Daniel Saba as Youth Participant to the Environmental Board, Sameen Khurshid as Youth Participant to the Human Services Board, Molly Ryan as Youth Participant to the Park Board and Ali Arif as Youth Participant and Blue Koffron as Alternate Participant to the Senior Citizens Advisory Board with terms ending June 30, 2016; reappoint Betty Lee Ongley with term ending October 1, 2021, James Graham with term ending October 1, 2020, Mike Stoddard with term ending October 1, 2018, Norm Terry with term ending October 1, 2017, and Joshua Hill with term ending October 1, 2016, and

appoint Larry DeShazor with term ending October 1, 2019, and Paul Summers with term ending October 1, 2015, to the Local Officers Compensation Commission; reappoint Ed Sackley with term ending May 31, 2018, to the Public Media Network Board; reappoint Richard Bosch, David Felicijan and Wayne Stoffer with terms ending May 31, 2018, to the Planning Commission; reappoint Peter Carlson and Gary Gilchrist with terms ending June 1, 2018, to the Construction Board of Appeals; appoint Chadwick Learned with unfulfilled term ending February 28, 2017, and John Byrnes with unfulfilled Alternate term ending February 28, 2017, to the Zoning Board of Appeals; and appoint Jessie Duniphin with unfulfilled term ending December 31, 2017, to the Historic District Commission. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

## **OTHER CITY MATTERS:**

**STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL:** Councilmember Ansari said he attended the Senior Expo in Mattawan and a Heritage Month Recognition in Lansing, and indicated State Senator Margaret O'Brien was at both gatherings.

Councilmember Reid indicated that the Council of Governments (COG) Meeting is at 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 20, 2015, at the Kalamazoo Road Commission, and David Artley will do a presentation on State and Federal Grants and how to get them; and the Chamber of Commerce and COG are sponsoring a Listening Post from 8 a.m. until 9 a.m., Friday May 15, 2015, at the Hampton Inn to discuss the topics of interest, especially, "State Roads, What do we do now?"

Councilmember Ford shared his experience with his Bike Week activities, including a ride with the Mayors and a flat tire.

Councilmember Randall reminded everyone that Kalamazoo Bike Week is still ongoing with a bike planning session and how to build the biking infrastructure, bike friendly laws, etc. at the KRESA main office on Milham Avenue on Saturday, May 16, 2015, and the Ride of Silence at 6 p.m., tomorrow, as a tribute to honor cyclists who have been injured or killed while cycling which begins at Millennium Park.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson highlighted the Special Meeting held earlier to interview applicants for the Youth Advisory Committee and Youth representation on the City Council Boards and Commissions. He mentioned that Portage is very fortunate youth and adults who volunteer their time, talent and energies in service to the City through participation on Boards and Commissions.

Mayor Strazdas concurred with Mayor Pro Tem Pearson and indicated that Portage actually has an increase in interest from citizens to provide input and serve unlike some cities in Michigan. He referred to the Mayor's Bike Ride as being fun despite the weather. He also thanked Councilmember Ford for attending the Southwest Michigan caucus where representatives from multiple counties had community dialogue regarding future policies and future things that can be done with the community. He credited Southwest Michigan First for their efforts and said he is looking forward to a product coming out of that discussion as a broader community. He recalled the feedback he has gotten from citizens regarding Portage roads and the "tone zone" and noted that he can tell there is progress with or without the passage of the Proposition 1 question that was on the May 5, 2015 Election ballot. He mentioned some of the challenges with the road reconstruction in Portage and the renewed focus on neighborhood streets. He expressed kudos to City Council and the Administration for their response to what is being talked about around town because citizens are saying they want better roads.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

James R. Hudson, City Clerk

**\*Indicates items included on the Consent Agenda.**