

CITY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

May 24, 2011

CHECK REGISTER

- ◆ Approved the Check Register of May 24, 2011, as presented.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- ◆ Accepted the public comments on an ordinance amendment to approve the 2011 Amended Tax Increment Finance Plan for the 2011 Amended Development Plan for development area in the City of Portage Downtown Development Authority, and moved to take final action on the ordinance on June 28, 2011.
- ◆ Adopted Resolution No. 3 for the Trade Centre Way Relocation Project #997-R, directing the preparation of the special assessment roll, and adopted the Resolution of Intent to issue bonds and authorized publication of the Notice of Intent.

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS

- ◆ James Pearson, 3004 East Shore Drive, indicated that 40% of the households in Michigan either lost a job or took a pay cut and asked that City Council consider cutting the salaries of city employees as did the Portage Public Schools Board of Education. City Manager Maurice Evans pointed out that the city employees have not had a pay increase in three years, that the city has done a good job and is not under duress. Mr. Pearson also asked City Council to take a volunteer pay cut, suggested a 50% pay cut and asked for their opinion on this matter.

REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

- ◆ Approved the Catholic Family Services Funding Agreement of the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Human Services Funding Allocations of the General Fund and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).
- ◆ Approved the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Budget and adopted the General Appropriations Act Resolution and the Salary and Wage Resolution.
- ◆ Supported the substitution of the West Centre Avenue (Shaver to Oakland) project for the Romence Parkway (Lovers Lane to Sprinkle) project in the 2011-2012 Major Street Reconstruction Program.
- ◆ Confirmed the appointment of Richard White as the City of Portage Director of Public Safety – Police/Fire Chief.
- ◆ Approved the \$35,000 grant amendment to the Michigan State Housing Development Authority for the North Portage Home Buyer Purchase Rehabilitation Program and authorized the Mayor and City Manager to execute all documents related to the amendment in the event the request is awarded.
- ◆ Adopted a Resolution amending the Program Guidelines for the Youth Advisory Committee and Appointments of Youth Participants to City Boards and Commissions.
- ◆ Confirmed the reappointments of the City Manager to the Portage Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors.
- ◆ Received the communication from the City Manager regarding the response to comments of Mr. David McGavin as information only.
- ◆ Received the communication from the City Manager regarding the Lexington Green Drainage Channel/Ditch response as information only.
- ◆ Received the communication from the City Manager regarding the April 2011 Summary Environmental Activity Report as information only.
- ◆ Received the Department Monthly Reports.

BID TABULATIONS

- ◆ Approved a contract with Michigan Paving and Materials Company to provide reconstruction to selected local streets and asphalt surface repairs to isolated sections of major streets in the not-to-exceed amount of \$638,707.09; the added expenditure of \$156,279.79 for additional street repairs at unit pricing within this contract; and, authorized the City Manager to execute all documents related to this contract on behalf of the city.
- ◆ Approved a three-year contract with Renewed Earth, Incorporated, to provide yard waste recycling services in a total amount not to exceed \$309,000 and authorized the City Manager to execute all documents related to this contract and subsequent renewals on behalf of the city.
- ◆ Awarded a contract to the low bidder, Peters Construction Company, for the construction of the 2011 Storm Drainage Improvements in the not-to-exceed amount of \$134,257.17 and authorized the City Manager to execute all documents on behalf of the city.

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS

- ◆ State Representative Margaret O'Brien indicated that the State will be adopting the State Budget for the first time before June 1st in 50 years. She indicated she always talks about Portage being proactive at the Capitol Building with the foresight to make hard decisions to privatize services to save money, to be in a very healthy position with no risk of a Fiscal Emergency Manager, to be able to pave streets and to be able to maintain infrastructure. She cited some of the shortcomings of the early 1990's when the State spent down the Fund Balance, the increase in the number of State employees and said once you do a one-time gimmick such as spending down the Fund Balance, there is structural deficiency in your budget that will be extremely hard to overcome. She praised the floating dedicated millage as many cities across the state wished they had one where you only levy the amount needed to provide the service. She recognized

that hard decisions are never popular, but that City Council is not here to be popular, only to be proper stewards of the tax dollars of the City of Portage; and, she thanked them for their service and recognized the importance of diversity of opinions as an opportunity to learn valuable lessons.

- ◆ In response to James Pearson, 3004 East Shore Drive, Mayor Strazdas indicated that he would be assisting members of City Council to work through any conflicts they may have.
- ◆ David McGavin, 611 South Shore Drive, objected to having a third leaf pick-up as this was not approved by the voters, only two pick-ups and objected to the reference to the average increases being six and seven dollars as those with more expensive homes will pay more. He agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Sackley, as did Mayor Strazdas, that this discussion should have taken place earlier in the process and that citizens with financial expertise do live in Portage and could come forward to contribute. Mayor Strazdas reminded him that the budget sessions are advertised, but if there are no issues, people do not typically attend the detailed budget work sessions. Mayor Strazdas agreed that citizens should be involved early on in the process and thanked him for that comment.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER

- ◆ City Council and Mayor Strazdas expressed condolences and heartfelt sorrow to the family, friends and colleagues of recently deceased City of Kalamazoo Public Safety Officer Eric Zapata.
- ◆ Councilmember Randall extended congratulations to all graduating students, reminded everyone of the upcoming Memorial Day Parade and wished everyone a safe and happy holiday weekend.
- ◆ Councilmember Bailes offered respect to his neighbor, 20-year Air Force Veteran, Master Sergeant Mike Raversky, and recognized the services of all who fought for the freedom of this country and that they not be forgotten in commemoration of Memorial Day.
- ◆ Councilmember Urban commented on Item F.2, the substitution of the West Centre Avenue (Shaver to Oakland) project for the Romence Parkway (Lovers Lane to Sprinkle) project, and congratulated Richard White and his appointment as the City of Portage Director of Public Safety – Police/Fire Chief. Also, as an example of good stewardship of the public money, he cited the fact that the City of Portage will spend fewer dollars on health benefits in Fiscal Year 2011-2012 than in Fiscal Year 2004-2005, which reflects a 13% increase per employee over the last six years, and he complimented Benefit Services Director Patti Thompson for her work in this area.
- ◆ City Manager Evans complimented State Representative Margaret O'Brien for her work in Lansing and for the State presenting an early budget for approval and the tough decisions and work being done at the State level. He commended those from the Administration who helped him with the work for the last nine months on the budget, specifically, Deputy City Manager Brian Bowling, Finance Director Daniel Foecking and Deputy Finance Director Pat Fitnitch. He thanked City Council for their support on confirming Richard White and his appointment as the City of Portage Director of Public Safety – Police/Fire Chief and for their support on the budget. Discussion followed.
- ◆ Mayor Pro Tem Sackley indicated he has lived in the City of Portage for thirty-three years, loves this city and is very passionate about the City of Portage. He said it can be easy to characterize passion for anger. He reflected that Margaret O'Brien has only been in office for four months, but knows she has been a participant in the budget process, and elected officials are expected to be quick learners. He acknowledged that there is always the opportunity to amend the budget and that there are learned people in the community who could help with the process. He referred Mr. David McGavin to Item F.7, and confirmed that Mr. McGavin received the supplemental information provided to City Council regarding his questions. He pointed out that City Council can also amend the budget and welcomed any suggestions to reduce the General Fund expenditures as the other funds are off of the table, realizing that some of the rhetoric may have something to do with this being an election year for City Council. He thanked everyone for all of their participation in the budget process this year, apologized that there was not a unanimous vote on the approval of the budget and indicated that consensus is not a "dirty" word. He referred to State Representative O'Brien and the times she moved him to vote with her on matters that were important to her. He applauded her ability to bring people of diversity together and for her passion that hopefully has never been construed as anger.
- ◆ Mayor Strazdas focused on the 9.5 mills as a herculean task to not move that rate up and still provide the services with fewer employees and complimented City Council and the Administration for making this possible. He expressed best wishes to Councilmember Reid as she is on her honeymoon in northern Michigan and congratulated Councilmember Campbell on her speaking engagement with the graduating Community Education students. He polled City Council regarding which of the Councilmembers would be attending the Memorial Day Parade and who wished to walk and who wished to ride on a surrey.

COMPLETE MINUTES OF EACH CITY COUNCIL MEETING ARE AVAILABLE ON THE CITY WEBSITE AT PORTAGEMI.GOV, IN CITY HALL AND IN THE DISTRICT LIBRARY. MINUTES OF CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST FROM VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS.