

# **DRAFT**

## **LOCAL OFFICERS COMPENSATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FROM AUGUST 20, 2015**

The Meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

The following members were present: Larry DeShazor, James Graham, Joshua Hill, Betty Ongley, Mike Stoddard, Paul Summers and Norm Terry. Staff Liaison Adam Herringa was also present.

### **SELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND SECRETARY**

Motion by DeShazor, seconded by Graham, to appoint Betty Ongley as Chairperson of the Local Officers Compensation Commission. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Motion by Graham, seconded by Terry, to appoint Josh Hill as Secretary of the Local Officers Compensation Commission. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Approval of the June 3, 2013 Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Hill, seconded by Stoddard, to approve the June 3, 2013 Meeting Minutes as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 2 to 0 with DeShazor, Graham, Stoddard, Summers and Terry abstaining.

### **STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS**

There were no statements offered by citizens.

### **NEW BUSINESS – REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL AND MAYOR SALARIES**

Chairperson Ongley shared her belief serving on City Council is a form of public service and that Councilmembers should not be using their role for the paycheck. She also referenced the need to compensate City Council and pointed out the compensation received by members of the Kalamazoo City Commission. Mr. Hill spoke and shared his opinion that the salaries of City Council should be viewed in the long term.

Mr. Summers shared that he has lived in Portage for two years and inquired how much growth (such as economic and population) there has been in the community over the past few years. Mr. Graham responded and shared that there has been little population growth but some economic growth, especially within the last 18 months or so. Mr. Graham then shared that he viewed service on City Council as a form of volunteerism and raised the philosophical question of compensation and public service. He continued by stating that he does not believe there has been a significant increase in the demands of City Council over time but that the compensation offered does not equate with the time Councilmembers must spend to be effective.

In response to a question of Mr. Summers, it was discussed that Councilmembers use the stipend for such things as childcare coverage, an occasional meal, etc.

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Mr. DeShazor stated that the compensation is more a symbol of appreciation for the work and time Councilmembers put in and shared that he felt comfortable with current compensation levels. Mr. Graham shared that he does not like the thought of people running for office for the salary and then cited the higher levels of salary received by members of the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners. He concluded by stating that he would like to see compensation levels remain unchanged.

Motion by Graham, seconded by DeShazor, to approve the proposed LOCC report and recommend that there be no change to the compensation of members of the City Council and the Mayor and submit the report to the Portage City Council for review.

Mr. Hill expressed support for the motion and shared that there are still many people in the community who are unemployed or underemployed.

Mr. Terry shared his agreement with the general discussion and with the motion. He also offered his support for giving strong consideration to providing an increase in two years.

Mr. Stoddard shared that he has businesses in Portage and that things are looking up but that challenges remain. He continued by stating that, in preparation for the next meeting of the LOCC in 2017, the committee look at indicators such as population growth, economic growth and other key indicators when determining whether to increase compensation. Mr. Summers concurred with Mr. Stoddard and indicated his support for the motion.

Mr. Graham inquired as to the last few times city staff received pay increases and in what percentage. Mr. Herringa shared the information to the best of his recollection. Mr. Graham then stated that staff had gone several years between pay increases and that he believed City Council should follow, but not immediately. He continued by stating that he would like to see another year or two of increases for staff before increasing the compensation of City Council.

Ms. Ongley shared that Portage Public Schools are doing better financially, the Library is doing well and that, generally speaking, things are looking up. Discussion followed regarding assets in the community.

Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Following some minor revisions to the report, meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

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Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk