CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 24, 2018

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Randall at 7:00 p.m. At the request of Mayor Randall, the City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Chris Burns, Richard Ford, Lori Knapp, Claudette Reid, Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson and Mayor Patricia Randall. Also in attendance were City Manager Larry Shaffer, City Attorney Randy Brown and City Clerk Adam Herringa.

At the request of Mayor Randall, Father Stan Witek of St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church provided the invocation and, following the invocation, City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATIONS: Mayor Randall issued a National Arbor Day proclamation and a proclamation declaring April 2018 Fair Housing Month in the City of Portage.

CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Randall shared where the public can access the meeting agenda and asked if any Councilmember or anyone in the audience would like an item removed from the Consent Agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson asked that Item A.4 (Public Media Network) be removed from the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Reid asked that items A.10 (Kalamazoo County ID Program) and A.11 (March 2018 Environmental Activity Report) be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 10, Budget Workshop Session of April 17 and Pre-Council Meeting Minutes of April 23, 2018. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF APRIL 24, 2018: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of April 24, 2018. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

SETTING OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED CITY BUDGET: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to adopt the Resolution setting a public hearing on May 8, 2018 for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Proposed City Budget and the proposed 2018 tax levy. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 17 of Resolution Book #47.

THREE-YEAR REPLACEMENT LABOR AGREEMENT WITH PPOA: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a three-year replacement labor agreement with the Portage Police Officers Association in accordance with an Act 312 Arbitration Award. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MDOT CONTRACT FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF WEST CENTRE FROM 12TH STREET TO OAKLAND DRIVE: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to approve Contract #18-5099 between the Michigan Department of Transportation and the City of Portage for reconstruction of West Centre Avenue from 12th Street to Oakland Drive and adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to sign all documents related to the project on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 19 of Resolution Book #46.

J. L. HUDSON DRIVE/SOUTH WESTNEDGE AVENUE TRAFFIC SIGNAL: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to Award a construction contract to Severance Electric, Incorporated, of

Kalamazoo, Michigan, in the not to exceed amount of $314,877.50 for J. L. Hudson Drive/South Westnedge Avenue Traffic Signal and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF ROMENCE ROAD, OAKLAND DRIVE TO CONSTITUTION BOULEVARD: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to award a contract in the amount not to exceed $117,480 to Abonmarche Consultants, Incorporated, to perform engineering services for the reconstruction of Romence Road, Oakland Drive to Constitution Boulevard and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MDOT CONTRACT FOR INSTALLATION OF FLASHING WARNING BEACON AT OAKLAND DRIVE/VANDERBILT INTERSECTION: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to Approve Contract #18-5136 between the Michigan Department of Transportation and the City of Portage for installation of an overhead flashing warning beacon at the Oakland Drive/Vanderbilt Avenue intersection and adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to sign all documents related to the project on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 21 of Resolution Book #46.

DEPARTMENTAL MONTHLY REPORTS: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to receive the Departmental Monthly Reports. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to receive minutes of the Park Board of January 3 and February 7, Youth Advisory Committee of March 5, Environmental Board of March 14 and Portage Public Schools Board of Education of March 26, 2018. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to receive the Materials Transmitted of April 10, 2018 as information only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Mr. Shashin Kothawala, 6914 Northstar, Kalamazoo, informed City Council that he was the owner of Crystal Car Wash on Portage Road. He shared that he was late on his sewer bill payment and asked City Council for a waiver on the late penalty. City Manager Shaffer stated that he would be happy to meet with Mr. Kothawala to review and discuss his situation. Mr. Shaffer stated that he would be reluctant to advise City Council to waive any penalty fees until he has an opportunity to meet with the business owner. Mayor Randall inquired as to the amount of the late fee and Mr. Kothawala responded that it was $550.00. Mayor Randall inquired if City Administration has the authority to waive the fee or if it takes City Council action. Mr. Shaffer stated that it would have to come back to City Council for a waiver but informed Mr. Kothawala that if he signed up for automatic payments he may be able to waive the fee administratively. Mr. Shaffer shared that he recognized Mr. Kothawala's business utilizes a significant amount of water and sewer and has been in business and paid taxes for many years.

COMMUNICATIONS:

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS: At the request of Mayor Randall, Councilmember Burns read the meeting schedule for the record. Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to receive the Calendar of Meetings. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

ANNUAL PARK BOARD UPDATE: At the invitation of Mayor Randall, Park Board Chairperson Tim Earl provided the annual update on the activities, goals and objectives of the Park Board. Mr. Earl highlighted a change to the structure of the Park Board with the implementation of subcommittees for each event. Mr. Earl informed City Council that the annual Recycled Art in the Park event has been moved to October and will be managed by City staff. Mr. Earl next reviewed upcoming Park Board events scheduled for the summer. Mr. Earl also shared that the Park Board has established a bicycle advisory subcommittee with one of the goals of the committee being to increase the bicycle friendly rating of the City from bronze to silver. Mr. Earl concluded by informing City Council that the Friends of the Parks organization is nearing the achievement of becoming a 501(c)(3). Becoming a not-for-profit, he stated, will help with fundraising activities. Mayor Randall thanked Mr. Earl for his report and complimented the Park Board on expanding and engaging with citizens in the community. Mayor Randall commented that mid-May is bike week nationally and there are a few events planned in the community in this regard. Councilmember Reid inquired as to the new date for Recycled Art in the Park. Mr. Earl stated that he did not know at this time. Councilmember Burns asked Mr. Earl to inform City Council when the Friends of the Parks organization achieves non-profit status in case some may want to donate. Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to receive the annual Park Board update. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT FOR MICRO-BREWERIES AND BREWPUBS: At the request of Mayor Randall, Mr. Shaffer introduced Chris Forth, Acting Director of Community Development, who reviewed the origin and summarized the rationale for the proposed ordinance amendment. Mr. Forth explained that while the original applicant who started the process for this ordinance amendment has withdrawn his application, City Administration views the proposed amendment as a method to encourage business development. Councilmember Reid inquired as to the provisions around seating, food provisions and definition of a “restaurant.” Mr. Forth explained that the provision of snacks would not meet the qualifications of a restaurant. Rather, a restaurant is better defined as a place where a patron can obtain a meal. Mayor Randall opened the public hearing and Ms. Andrea Stork, 1515 Dogwood, inquired if liquor licenses are capped in the community or if there could be an unlimited number of brewpubs. Mr. Forth indicated that he could not specifically respond to the question but explained that separation requirements from establishments such as religious institutions would apply. Mr. Forth stated that there are limitations related to Class C Liquor Licenses but is less certain about brewpubs and microbreweries. Ms. Stork inquired as to the difference between a brewpub and microbrewery. Mr. Forth explained that a license for a brewpub is issued in conjunction with a Class C, Tavern, B-Hotel, or A-Hotel license. With regard to a microbrewery, he explained that such a license can be issued to a brewer provided the brewer manufactures no more than 60,000 barrels per year. Councilmember Urban inquired as to the size of a microbrewery that is capable of brewing 60,000 barrels per year. For reference, Mr. Forth stated that Latitude 42 in Portage has a Microbrewery License and manufactures around 18,000 barrels per year. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to adopt Ordinance Amendment #17/18-B, Micro-breweries and Brew-pubs. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Ordinance recorded on page 457 of City of Portage Ordinance Book No. 12.

WATER AND SEWER RATES FOR FY 2018-2019: Mayor Randall shared that this item was on the agenda of the prior City Council Meeting and inquired if City Council had any questions for staff. There being none Mayor Randall opened the public hearing. There were no questions or comments from the public. Motion by Knapp, seconded by Reid, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote motion carried 7 to 0. Motion by Knapp, seconded by Reid, to adopt the recommendation that the sewer commodity rate remain at $4.60 per 1,000 gallons of metered water; recommendation that the water commodity be decreased to $3.14 per 1,000 gallons of metered water; recommendation that adjustments be made to the sewer and water base quarterly charges as noted in the 2018 Utility Rate Financial Study; recommendation that the new rates become effective on July 1, 2018; and recommended water and sewer franchise area fees and other service fees and charges as outlined in the 2018 Utility Rate Financial Study. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolutions recorded on pages 23 and 29 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 47.

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA:

WITHDRAWAL FROM PUBLIC MEDIA NETWORK: At the request of Mayor Randall, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson explained that his support of the proposed withdrawal from the Public Media Network (PMN) consortium is based on a variety of factors such as changing technologies, the cost and labor involved in utilizing PMN equipment, competition with smartphone capabilities, ease with which people can stream and broadcast on the Internet, a letter received from a former City of Portage appointee to the PMN Board of Directors which included a variety of reasons to leave PMN, etc. Mr. Pearson explained that he viewed a contractual relationship with PMN as more cost-effective than the current relationship and highlighted that modern communication methods can be two-way and measurable. He concluded his comments by expressing his support for terminating the relationship and expressing belief that ending the relationship with PMN will open up new and better communications with citizens.

Councilmember Urban shared some of his history with cable access in Portage and stated that one of the key components of cable access is to afford anyone the opportunity to learn how to utilize equipment, borrow equipment, produce videos and have air time. He shared his belief that there is a social justice component associated with cable access television. Mr. Urban stated that he understands how things have changed and why people may no longer find cable access useful or efficient. However, Mr. Urban continued, Portage has residents that have not cut cable and do not have high speed internet. He continued by stating that the future related to cable access in Portage is unclear should the City decided to leave PMN. Mr. Urban shared that he understands a contract with PMN may be pursued but he is not aware of any consortium members that operate under contract and questioned whether PMN would be interested in such a contract. Mr. Urban also questioned what leaving PMN would mean as it relates to cable access broadcast requirements. Mr. Urban continued by asking what a City of Portage channel would look like, who would carry it, what the programming would be, whether it would be streamed and how legal requirements could be met. He questioned the vision for the future, what type of access the public would be given to provide content for broadcasting and explained that he has family and friends who don’t have high speed internet and watch City Council Meetings over cable television. He queried whether this would still be possible. Mr. Shaffer responded by stating that there is no plan for any lapse in the broadcast of City meetings regardless of how the transition away from PMN is manifested. Councilmember Urban inquired if City meetings would still be available via cable television providers and Mr. Shaffer responded in the affirmative and stated that he expects a smooth transition away from PMN. Mr. Shaffer explained that cable access services may be performed in-house or via a contractor and that there are issues that will need to be overcome. However, Mr. Shaffer stated the goal is to provide every service currently provided by PMN with the exception of lending equipment and sponsoring education seminars. Mr. Shaffer questioned the demand to borrow equipment and for educational seminars and stated that he believes the City has the resources to provide a quality service. Mr. Shaffer explained that the resources for cable access come from cable subscribers and the City has a duty to utilize these resources efficiently. He shared that the amount currently provided to PMN, approximately $380,000 annually, is not a good use of resources. Mr. Shaffer stated that the City has a good relationship with PMN but that he believes the City can make more efficient and better use of the financial resources. Mr. Shaffer continued explaining his recommendation to leave PMN by stating that a recent revelation for him is when PMN discussed providing broadcast services to Kalamazoo County at a fraction of the cost paid by the City of Portage. He continued by stating that, during his four years with the City, he has been inclined to stay with PMN in an effort to demonstrate a commitment of regional participation. However, he stated he now believes the costs associated with staying are too dramatic to ignore. Mr. Shaffer continued by stating PMN is doing well financially, has a solid fund balance and that he believes now is a good time for the City of Portage to leave PMN and work to expand services especially in the field of social media.

Councilmember Urban inquired if citizens and organization will still have access to scheduling broadcast times. In response, Mr. Shaffer stated that this is one area that will be reviewed to determine need. He explained that the City has three channels available which include one each dedicated to public, education and government. Mr. Urban commented that when public access started the idea was to provide citizens with access to television and that government use was minimal and, arguably, the least important. Mr. Urban explained that, prior to joining PMN, the City worked with Portage Public Schools to provide cable access services. However, due to a variety of issues, the City decided to join PMN. Mr. Urban continued by stating that he finds it difficult to rationalize stepping away from a consortium related to cable access services based in part on cost while at the same time entering the consolidated dispatch effort at a cost of over $750,000. Mr. Urban made the point that cable access provides a local voice for all citizens and organizations. He expressed discomfort with leaving PMN without having a clear path forward and stated that he could not support leaving PMN without a solid plan in place.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson stated that the City did not join PMN until 2010 and that PMN has had difficulty getting citizens to produce shows in general regardless of whether the citizen lives in the City of Portage. Councilmember Ford shared that he is glad the City is looking into making this change. He stated that technology is ever-changing and people can now produce high quality videos and broadcast them with their phone and a You-Tube account. With regard to the $380,000 that is currently provided to PMN, Councilmember Ford inquired as to the anticipated cost of the City providing its own cable access services. Mr. Shaffer estimated the cost to be between $120,000 and $150,000. Mr. Shaffer continued by stating that he is a proponent of consolidation but it must make sense for a community to participate. Councilmember Burns expressed agreement with Councilmember Ford and stated that he views leaving PMN as an opportunity to provide better services at a lower cost. Mr. Burns shared that the City collects between $850,000 and $900,000 annually related to cable television fees and questioned what the cost savings from moving away from PMN would be used for. Mr. Shaffer responded that it would be used for activities related to the City website and expanding the City's social media footprint.

Councilmember Reid shared that she has served on the PMN Board of Directors for many years and is familiar with the challenges they face. She continued by stating that many residents continue to get content from cable television and pointed out that taxpayers are not subsidizing cable access services. Rather, cable access is funded by fees paid by cable television subscribers. These fees, she stated, support not just broadcast services but also job training and skill building. She pointed out that citizens who have taken advantage of PMN's offering have gone on to careers in broadcasting. She questioned if residents would still have access to such offerings and raised concerns about leaving PMN without knowing what would replace it. She stated that leaving PMN will reduce services for residents and questioned whether the move could be considered a tax increase since the City intends to utilize funding currently provided to PMN for other things. Councilmember Reid pointed out that, to collect the cable subscriber fees, the City must be able to provide 8 hours of non-repeated programming per day. She questioned whether and how the City would meet this requirement. Ms.

Reid also questioned whether students in Portage would be able to access Education for Employment (EFE) and Education for the Arts (EFA) offerings.

Councilmember Reid continued by questioning how the City will coordinate with Portage Public Schools and whether the public will continue to be given access to broadcast content. Without such access to the public, she questioned whether it would be right for the City to utilize the subscriber fees. She stated that You Tube is not the same as television and made the point that cable access provides the opportunity for many voices to be heard. With regard to the issue of the PMN contract with Kalamazoo County, Ms. Reid pointed out that the County does not get franchise fees and therefore wasn't eligible to be a part of the consortium. Furthermore, she stated that Kalamazoo County asked for more programming and, in response, PMN explored a fee-based option.

Councilmember Knapp pointed out that EFE and EFA are managed by the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) and therefore questioned the notion that access to Portage students would be limited. Ms. Knapp stated that the issue of whether to remain with PMN has been under review and consideration for months and questioned what would be gained by postponing a decision. She stated that she views these circumstances as an interesting opportunity for the City of Portage and how the City presents itself to the world. She emphasized the importance and value of quality and consistency. Mayor Randall stated that, regardless of whether it is considered a fee or a tax, it is paid for by Portage residents. She shared her belief that these funds can be used by the City to deliver other and better products. In addition, she emphasized that the City Manager stated there would be no interruption in broadcasting service to our public. This is important, she stated, because there are residents that do not have internet or computer access. She shared that she has long had a concern about this particular service as compared to other services provided by the City that are put out for competitive bid. Mayor Randall pointed out that the City has never been able to get a good understanding of how many people are actually tuning in to watch City meetings. She continued by stating that PMN had recently informed City Council that it would cost $20,000 to get such viewership numbers. She stated that spending $20,000 out of the $380,000 to gauge viewership would go a long way in helping to convince her of the need to stay with PMN. Mayor Randall shared that the City has enthusiasm for reaching out and better engaging citizens via social media and other tools. She concluded by stating that taking advantage of new opportunities and moving away from PMN will make the City more transparent and up-to-date.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to authorize the City Manager to notify Public Media Network (PMN) that the City of Portage intends to withdraw its membership on or after July 1, 2018.

Mary Roscoe, 1122 Schuring Road, expressed appreciation to City Council for their time and her appreciation for the services provided by PMN. She explained that PMN gave her an opportunity to explore her creative side and she views PMN as "the best kept secret in our community." She asked that City Council, rather than looking to sever ties, look at how to get more people involved in PMN. Ms. Roscoe made the point that You Tube is new on the scene and a for-profit company while cable access has been around since the 1970's. She expressed hope that, should the PMN relationship end, the City will develop a replacement that provides her an opportunity to access equipment and training.

Victor Ledbetter, 9318 Oakview Drive, shared that he had two sons take advantage of PMN offerings and, as an example, made videos of high school football games. Additionally, he explained that he and his wife are currently taking classes every Wednesday and shared how he was currently utilizing skills and equipment from PMN. He asked that the City make an effort to publicize PMN offerings more.

Councilmember Urban reiterated that there are lots of unknowns related to authorizing the City Manager to leave PMN. He would like to have a plan in place to replace PMN and know how such issues as access for broadcast time, availability of equipment, training, etc. will be addressed. With regard to the argument about cost-effectiveness to citizens, Mr. Urban made the point that the City decided to allow the entire City to be taxed to support bus service because such a service is an economic tool and a social justice tool, not because so many Portage residents use the bus. He stated that the City took the action related to busing because it was the right thing to do. He stated that he is proud the City joined PMN because it was the right thing to do and he believes it is premature to take the action being recommended. Councilmember Reid shared that she recognizes the way people get content is changing and that the number of cable subscribers and related fees may significantly decrease. However, Ms. Reid pointed out that the number of cable subscribers in Portage has actually increased over the last few years. Given this, she stated, the viability of cable access is not in immediate danger. She stated that 40% of fees are currently provided to PMN leaving 60% that can be utilized for efforts related to, for example, social media. She concluded by stating that it doesn't have to be an either/or sort of thing and the City can take its time to be better informed and more clear before making a decision on PMN. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 2 with Councilmembers Reid and Urban voting no.

KALAMAZOO COUNTY IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM: Councilmember Reid stated that she pulled this item from the Consent Agenda so that citizens can learn more about this new service and how it will be accepted by the City of Portage. City Manager Shaffer explained that Kalamazoo County recently adopted an ID card program with one of the goals being to provide an ID card to those individuals who may be limited in their ability to otherwise obtain identification. With the ID card, Mr. Shaffer stated, a citizen will be able to access a variety of services and benefits that might not otherwise be available to them. He continued by stating that the City has discussed this program in the past and City staff are happy to endorse the program and will accept the Kalamazoo County ID card as a legitimate form of identification. Mayor Randall pointed out that the ID program will kick off on May 3, 2018, at the Kalamazoo County Administration Building. Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to receive the communication from the City Manager regarding the Kalamazoo County Identification Program as Information Only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MARCH 2018 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT: Councilmember Reid pointed out that the Environmental Report referenced that the 2017 Annual Report related to groundwater monitoring was provided to the City on March 7, 2018. She asked for a verbal synopsis of this Report. Mr. Shaffer summarized that groundwater levels fluctuate in our City and there is approximately a 5 foot difference in groundwater levels between the low and the high and that the City is currently at record high levels. Mr. Shaffer shared that he spoke with Director of Transportatino and Utilities Kendra Gwin who described the City as a "tilted table" with the high end being the northwest corner being higher than the southeast corner with groundwater issues being more pronounced in the southeast portion of the City. He pointed out that, when reviewing charts in the report, there is wide fluctuation in water levels. Mr. Shaffer informed City Council that the City has contracted with Fishbeck, Thompson and Carr to study the groundwater situation in the Black Forest Drive neighborhood. In response to a request from Councilmember Reid, Mr. Shaffer stated that he would be happy to provide a copy of the report to City Council. Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to receive the March 2018 Environmental Report as information only. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Knapp shared that she attended a meeting of the Kalamazoo County Public Arts Commission and the Commission has been asked to help find a home for the recently dismantled "Fountain of the Pioneers" sculpture that was in Bronson Park in Kalamazoo. Ms. Knapp shared that there was also a presentation from Mattie Jordan-Woods of the Kalamazoo Northside Association who discussed the impact of public art in revitalizing community on the north side of Kalamazoo.

Councilmember Reid shared that she recently attended a meeting of the Environmental Health Advisory Council in which the recent flooding in the City of Kalamazoo was discussed. Ms. Reid also shared that planning for future flooding and response efforts was also discussed. Ms. Reid continued by sharing that another topic of discussion was hoarding and the related health, safety and psychological concerns. Ms. Reid continued on and shared that the third thing discussed at the meeting was the high water table. In closing, Ms. Reid shared that the topic of waste related to medical marihuana facilities will be discussed at the next meeting.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid to receive the City Council Committee Reports. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Urban asked Councilmember Reid to provide information as to the date, time and location of the next meeting of the Environmental Health Advisory Council. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson shared that the meeting will be held on June 13th at 9:00 a.m. with the location to be determined.

Councilmember Reid stated that she is disappointed City Council voted to leave PMN and she would like to work with the City on replacing PMN to provide a broad and complete opportunity to continue to provide access to residents. Ms. Reid commented that she recently attended the American Occupational Therapy Association Conference and is happy to return to spring weather

Councilmember Knapp cautioned residents to be mindful while driving since, with the improved weather, there are more children and people utilizing the streets.

Councilmember Burns commented that City Council approved rate reductions on water and sewer at this meeting which should save the average resident around $30 per year. He encouraged residents to use ten of these dollars to get a Kalamazoo County ID. Mr. Burns stated that the success of the ID program resides on those individuals who already have ID but decided to get another. He then thanked local businesses who agreed to offer a benefit to patrons who present a Kalamazoo County ID. Mr. Burns stated that while he supported the withdrawal from PMN he appreciated the valid concerns that were raised. He stated his hope that these concerns can be addressed.

Councilmember Ford commented that he thought good things were going to result from the Committee of the Whole Meeting that was held earlier in the evening. He stated that he was happy to hear about the Communications Plan and that he looks forward to the launch of the new city website.

Mayor Randall addressed the Arbor Day proclamation and pointed out that for the first time in her tenure on City Council a tree planting ceremony was not held. She pointed out that the City Hall area where the tree planting occurs is getting full. Mayor Randall shared that the Youth Advisory Committee's Greenathon event was canceled last weekend due to the weather but that good homes were found for the seedlings including the Portage Central and Portage Northern Gardening Clubs and the Gull Lake Partnership. She also shared that 500 trees would be planted this upcoming weekend at the Gourdneck Lake State Game Area. Mayor Randall shared that a recent City Council Meeting to review the proposed 2018-2019 City Budget went well and invited residents to attend a second session on the budget coming up on May 1st. Mayor Randall complimented the Parks and Recreation Department for exploring opportunities to engage residents of all ages and cited a recent event related to reptiles that drew around 300 people as evidence. Finally, Mayor Randall shared that she, along with the City Manager and Mayor Pro Tem, recently toured the Air Traffic Control Tower at the Kalamazoo International Airport. She shared that the Federal Aviation Administration was consolidating air traffic control and the tower at the Kalamazoo airport would be utilized to cover much of mid and west Michigan. She concluded by stating that the current number of air traffic control jobs at the airport would expand from 20 to 50 to 60.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

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Adam Herringa, City Clerk