

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 4, 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.

Mayor Randall asked for a moment of silence in honor of all denominations or personal beliefs and in recognition of the life of President George H.W. Bush. Representatives of Boy Scout Troop 287 led the audience and City Council in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

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. Councilmember Reid asked that Item A.4, Landscape Bed Maintenance and City Hall Leaf Removal, 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 minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 20 and Pre-Council Meeting of December 3, 2018. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF DECEMBER 4, 2018: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of December 4, 2018. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

BOARD AND COMMISSION INTERVIEW SESSION: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to set a Special Meeting on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, beginning at 5:15 p.m., to interview Board and Commission applicants. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

HILL 'AN' BROOK CURB AND GUTTER – RESOLUTION NO. 1: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to adopt Resolution No. 1, accept the City Manager Report and request preparation of Resolution No. 2 for the Hill 'An' Brook Drive and Merryview Drive Curb and Gutter Project #999-R. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

CHARITABLE GAMING LICENSE FOR PORTAGE NORTHERN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to Adopt the Resolution for Charitable Gaming License recognizing Portage Northern Women's Basketball, Inc. (d.b.a. "Portage Northern Women's Basketball Boosters"), as a nonprofit organization in the City of Portage. 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 September 5 and Youth Advisory Committee of October 15, 2018. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Mr. Mark Anthony Martin, 10519 Dandale, expressed several concerns. His concerns included motorists texting while driving, the functionality of the traffic signal at the intersection of Oakland and Shaver, the recent reduction from 4 lanes to 2 lanes along a portion of Portage Road and the need for city employees to treat citizens with respect and dignity in particular employees involved in the management of the Fire Division. Mr. Martin elaborated on each of these topics and shared

that he is a former longtime chair of the Park Board for the City of Portage.

Mr. David Pike of the Portage Northern Women's Basketball Boosters confirmed and thanked City Council for approving the designation of the organization as a Nonprofit in the City of Portage. He inquired and was informed that the signed resolution would be available at the Office of the City Clerk.

Dr. Monifa Jumanne, 6156 Independence Drive, spoke and shared her history and experience as a civil rights activist along with how she came to live in the City of Portage. She explained that her granddaughter inspired her to approach City Council several years ago regarding the need for the city to observe the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Dr. Jumanne advocated for the city to take steps to honor the contributions of African Americans and to take steps to ensure that all people are treated with equality. She expressed concerns with how she has been treated by city staff and city officials. She also shared that she has not received justice for the treatment she has received. Dr. Jumanne next asked City Council the following questions: 1) what is the African American population of Portage; 2) How many African Americans are in leadership positions with the City of Portage; 3) What are two holidays important to African Americans besides the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday and Black History Month; 4) What are two concerns of the African American population in Portage; and 5) When City Councilmembers last attended a cultural event sponsored by, or in community with, African Americans. Dr. Jumanne concluded by stating the focus should be on equality in the City of Portage, not "diversity" and "inclusion."

COMMUNICATIONS:

COMMUNICATION FROM SENIOR SERVICES, INC.: Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to receive Communication from Tauhric Brown of Senior Services Inc. expressing support for the capital campaign to build a larger Senior Center in Portage. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

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

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA:

LANDSCAPE BED MAINTENANCE AND CITY HALL LEAF REMOVAL: Mayor Randall asked Councilmember Reid to begin discussion on this item. Councilmember Reid expressed concern with the increase in the contract cost and with the fact that only one bid was received. She shared her understanding that there was a potential for a second bid but that bid was not received on time. Councilmember Reid then expressed concern with the number of contracts being presented to City Council for which only a single bid was received. She shared her belief that, given the timeframe of the contract and potential for other bidders, this would be a good contract for which to go out for a rebid. Motion by Reid, seconded by Urban, to reject all bids before the City Council and rebid the contract for landscape bed maintenance and leaf removal at City Hall.

In response to an inquiry from Councilmember Urban, Director of Public Services Rod Russell shared that the current vendor was interested but did not submit their bid on time. He continued by speculating that it may be more lucrative for landscaping companies to focus on residential properties. He also informed City Council that the current vendor and proposed vendor were the only two companies that bid on the contract the last time it was offered. In response to a query, he shared that the Department of Public Services has not reached out to other companies to inquire why they did not bid. He explained that such action would be better handled by the Purchasing Division and questioned the amount of time that might be spent looking into why a company did not bid on this project.

City Manager Shaffer raised several concerns should the City Council vote to rebid the

contract. He explained that the outcome would be uncertain and either a higher bid or no bid could be the result. He also shared that it is his understanding landscaping companies are reviewing contracts now to get a schedule created for next year. Mr. Russell commented that this contract included landscaping and not just mowing which may have had an impact on the companies willing to bid.

Councilmember Ford inquired and Mr. Russell confirmed that the last contract for this work was a flat rate and did not include annual increases. He also shared that the late bid was not received and therefore never opened. Councilmember Ford expressed opposition to rebidding the contract given that the bid of the winning vendor is now public information. He then commented that, if the last contract was issued in 2015, a 12% increase seems reasonable given inflation.

Councilmember Burns commented that the same two potential vendors bid the last time and Public Services Director Russell affirmed that Irish Ayres Enterprises has performed similar work for the city after being the low bid for other contracts and is a reliable vendor.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson commented that the overall cost increase between the current and proposed contract is \$4,000. He continued by pointing out that the last contract was agreed to around 2015 and the proposed contract will not expire until 2021. Given this, he shared his belief that it is not worth the effort to rebid the contract.

Councilmember Reid reiterated her concern that the City has only secured single bidders on several recent contracts. She questioned why this is the case and speculated if there is something amiss in the attractiveness, scope and/or size of the contracts. She concluded by stating that City Council must be good financial stewards and the failure to secure multiple bids is detrimental to this ability.

Mayor Randall pointed out that many landscaping contractors may not be looking for contracts as they have plenty of business. She also shared her understanding that there is a manual labor shortage and vendors may not have the staff needed to handle multiple contracts. Mayor Randall concluded by questioning the fairness to the winning bidders should the city rebid contracts for which only one or two bids are received.

Upon a roll call vote on the motion to reject all bids and rebid the contract for landscape bed maintenance and leaf removal, motion failed with Mayor Randall, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson and Councilmembers Burns, Ford, Knapp and Urban voting no and Councilmember Reid voting yes.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Ford, to award a three-year contract in the annual amount of \$39,780 for the period of fiscal years 2018-2019 to 2020-2021 to Irish Ayres Enterprises, LLC for landscape bed maintenance of twenty-four city properties and leaf removal at City Hall, and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to this action on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 1 with Councilmember Reid voting no.

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Mr. Mark Anthony Martin, 10519 Dandale, spoke and shared that he is involved in building and trades. He informed City Council that finding general laborers and contractors is difficult at this time. He also shared that he is familiar with the landscaping business and his understanding is that companies are struggling to find enough workers to meet demands. He shared his belief that younger generations are less willing to get involved in manual trades let alone meet and maintain safety requirements.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Reid thanked Mr. Martin for his insight. She reiterated that she is less concerned about contract costs than with only getting single bids and not knowing whether we are paying too much or too little.

Councilmember Burns shared that he, along with Councilmember Knapp, attended a meeting with Southwest Michigan First at which business site selectors were present. Mr. Burns shared that the site selectors were complimentary of city staff and he expressed optimism as new jobs come online in Portage. He reminded City Council to drop off gifts for the family they adopted so they can be taken to the Portage Community Center (PCC) and invited City Council to participate in a gift wrapping party at PCC.

Councilmember Ford shared that he attended a legislative update sponsored by Southwest Michigan First. He informed City Council that “Small Cell Antennas” and PFAS were topics of discussion. He concluded by sharing that he attended the tree lighting ceremony with his son and complimented city staff on the event.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson encouraged viewers and the audience to avoid the holiday hustle and bustle and stop by City Hall to check out the holiday train display. He shared that the display is courtesy of Peg Giem, spouse of the late Seth Giem who was responsible for the Train Barn which had been located on the Giem property in Portage.

Mayor Randall reviewed the tree lighting ceremony and thanked Councilmembers Burns, Ford and Knapp for reviewing the “I Love Portage” essays and selecting the winners. Mayor Randall next shared that the city continues with the leaf pickup program despite inclement weather, encouraged residents to check the city website for additional leaf pickup information and thanked the Department of Public Services for their recent leaf pickup and snowplowing efforts. Finally, she informed the public that there is an upcoming “Holiday Market” at the Portage Senior Center and thanked city administration for encouraging such events.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Adam Herringa, City Clerk