

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 26, 2019

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Randall at 7:00 p.m. The following members were 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, the audience observed a moment of silence to honor all religions and personal beliefs and in appreciation of the excellence of Portage Public Schools. Following the moment of silence, City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Randall shared that today was the annual Mayor and City Council for the Day Program and asked City Clerk Herringa to swear in the students who were voted Student Councilmember for the Day and Student Mayor for the Day. City Clerk Herringa administered the Oath of Office to Student Mayor Abigayle Kelly. He then administered the Oath of Office to Councilmembers Riya Chaudhary, Angela Postula, Michael Verduzco, Kalina Dusenbery, Malia Sinkler and Jace Plew. The Student Mayor and Student Councilmembers took their seats at the dais.

At the request of Student Mayor Kelly, the City Clerk called the roll for the Student Councilmembers with the following members present: Riya Chaudhary, Angela Postula, Michael Verduzco, Kalina Dusenbery, Malia Sinkler, Jace Plew and Student Mayor Abigayle Kelly.

PROCLAMATION: The Student Mayor and Student Councilmembers read aloud and Mayor Randall issued a proclamation in recognition of and celebrating Portage Public Schools.

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. No items were removed. Motion by Ford, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Ford, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Pre-Council Meeting Minutes of February 25, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF FEBRUARY 26, 2019: Motion by Ford, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of February 26, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

BUDGET REVIEW SESSIONS: Motion by Ford, seconded by Knapp, to establish April 16 and April 30, 2019 from 5:00 to 8:30 p.m. as the dates for review of the proposed Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

FINAL PLAT FOR OAKLAND FARMS NO. 2: Motion by Ford, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Final Plat for Oakland Farms No. 2, 9810 Oakland Drive with the condition that street trees be installed, public sidewalks and the walkway to the State Game Area be constructed, and the public streets be milled and resurfaced by September 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

SMALL CELL DISTRIBUTED ANTENNA SYSTEM LICENSE AGREEMENT: Motion by Ford, seconded by Knapp, to approve the Small Cell Distributed Antenna System License Agreement between the City of Portage and New Cingular Wireless, PCS, L.L.C. (AT&T), 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 7 to 0.

MDOT CONTRACT FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF ROMENCE ROAD (OAKLAND TO CONSTITUTION): Motion by Ford, seconded by Knapp, to approve Contract #19-5031 between the Michigan Department of Transportation and the City of Portage for reconstruction of Romence Road from Oakland Drive to Constitution Boulevard 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.

REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF 30 CITY OF PORTAGE SIGNS: Motion by Ford, seconded by Knapp to award a construction contract to Valley City Sign Company of Comstock Park, Michigan, in the amount of \$141,060 for removal and replacement of 30 City of Portage building identification, park identification and wayfinding signs at various locations throughout the city, and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents related to the contract on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Motion by Ford, seconded by Knapp, to receive the Youth Advisory Committee of January 7, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Dr. Romeo Phillips, former Councilmember and resident of 1983 Brighton Lane, shared that he is speaking to promote the annual City of Portage Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., celebration. He shared that the event will be held the evening of March 8th at the Air Zoo and feature Tuskegee Airman Lt. Col. Alexander Jefferson. Dr. Phillips shared some of the story of the Tuskegee Airman and Lt. Col. Jefferson in particular. He then shared that the Mattawan High School Choir would be performing and encouraged all residents to attend. City Manager Shaffer thanked and complimented Dr. Phillips for his commitment to the community and for the work he has done in support of the annual Martin Luther King, Jr., celebration events.

Mayor Randall provided a synopsis of the annual Mayor and City Council for the Day program. She then invited the Student Mayor and Councilmembers to share their thoughts and experiences related to the program. The Student Mayor and Councilmembers provided feedback related to the event, what they found beneficial and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn about local government. Mayor Randall thanked Portage Public Schools leadership and staff for their support of this program.

COMMUNICATIONS:

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS: Motion by Ford, seconded by Knapp, to receive the Calendar of Meetings. Upon a roll call, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Burns shared that he recently attended a meeting of the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA). He stated that the CCTA is reviewing the pension plan for active and retired bus drivers and related pension plan fund. In addition, he shared that the CCTA is engaged in labor negotiations with the bus drivers' union. Councilmember Burns next shared two stories regarding the extra mile that staff of Kalamazoo Metro Transit took during the recent extremely cold weather. Mayor Randall shared a similar positive story regarding how bus drivers were helping those waiting in the extreme cold regardless of whether the individual

had enough fare. Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to receive the report. Upon a voice vote, motion carried.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Urban expressed disappointment that he was unable to participate in the Mayor and Council for the Day Program. He expressed support for the program and shared that, in his youth, he was unfamiliar with local government but got involved in Portage via signing up for the Park Board. He encouraged the youth to get involved in their community as soon as they can and cited serving on a city board or commission as an example.

Councilmember Reid shared that the Mayor and Council for the Day program is one of her favorite events and expressed regret that she was unable to participate in the program due to a job conflict. Councilmember Reid next shared details regarding an upcoming event of the Kalamazoo County Substance Abuse Task Force at which the 2018 Community Report will be released. She then shared that this Task Force works to address youth substance use/abuse in the community. Councilmember Reid shared that she recently attended an event sponsored by Kalamadoodle and shared some details about the event. She continued by stating that, at this event, she was introduced to a calligraphy club called the Kalamazoo Pen Dragons Calligraphy Guild. Councilmember Reid shared that this group will be holding the “Treewhispers Exhibition” at the Kalamazoo Nature Center at which hundreds of pieces of handmade paper will be displayed. The paper will be decorated in a manner related to trees that could include such things as drawings and quotes. Councilmember Reid challenged the Portage City Council to participate and encouraged others to do so as well.

Councilmember Knapp stated that she would accept Councilmember Reid’s challenge. Councilmember Knapp next thanked all participants in the Mayor and Council for the Day program and expressed support for the program and admiration for the participants. She expressed optimism that all of the participants will become future community leaders. Councilmember Knapp thanked city staff for the work they do to keep residents safe especially in the recent inclement weather.

Councilmember Burns cited the recent extremely cold temperatures and expressed gratitude for the efforts of the community to come together and support those in need. He next shared that he attended a recent discussion regarding a “small home” development project in Kalamazoo and expressed support for the City of Portage exploring something similar to help promote affordable homes. Next, Mr. Burns accepted the challenge by Councilmember Reid and issued his own challenge to City Council. He stated that he is looking to get a team together in support of the Housing Resources, Inc., “Walk to End Homelessness” in March. He provided details about the event and encouraged City Council, students and members of the audience to consider participating. He concluded by thanking the students who participated in the Student Mayor and Council for the Day program and encouraged them to stay involved.

Councilmember Ford thanked City Administration for their work in addressing the recent inclement winter weather. Mr. Ford shared that budget hearings were upcoming in April and shared that the March Board of Review for tax appeals was upcoming. He encouraged residents who were concerned about their taxes and/or assessments to contact the Office of the City Assessor to discuss or arrange an appointment with the Board of Review. Councilmember Ford concluded by thanking and congratulating the students in the Mayor and Council for the Day program.

City Manager Shaffer also thanked and congratulated the students. He stated that they provide energy and inspiration and expressed optimism that the event was a positive experience. He concluded by thanking and complimenting Portage Public Schools Superintendent Mark Bielang and staff for their commitment to citizens and students.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson commented that he enjoys how discussions with students at the annual Mayor and Council for the Day event seems to predict the future. He highlighted prior discussions with students about a stadium at Portage Northern as an example. He shared that he is looking forward to next year's event and learning more about what actions City Council will be taking in the future.

Mayor Randall complimented the City Manager for his leadership and dedication during the recent winter weather to ensure that the business of the city continued. She next shared that she attended the "State of the State" address by Governor Gretchen Whitmer and that it made her appreciate the non-partisan nature of the Portage City Council. She next shared that she saw Governor Whitmer at the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Culinary School at which the Governor discussed her support for secondary education. Mayor Randall informed City Council that she and City Manager Shaffer met with Kalamazoo County Commissioners Tracy Hall and Julie Rogers to help cultivate relationships between the City of Portage and Kalamazoo County. Mayor Randall acknowledged and complimented the City Manager and the Office of the City Assessor for receiving a perfect score from the State Tax Commission. She stated that this does not mean that the Office of the City Assessor is perfect and encouraged taxpayers who have a disagreement to reach out to the Office of the City Assessor. She stated that the Office of the City Assessor may be able to remedy their concern and, if not, she encouraged taxpayers to meet with the Board of Review. Finally, Mayor Randall expressed gratitude and appreciation for the Mayor and Council for the Day program and the students that participated. She stated that the students are a testament to the heart of the community which is strong schools and even stronger families.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting Sine Die at 7:43 p.m.

Adam Herringa, City Clerk