

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM AUGUST 22, 2017

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Strazdas at 7:30 p.m.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Pastor Joan Herbon of Lord of Life Lutheran Church, gave the invocation and City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, the Deputy City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Richard Ford, Patricia Randall, Claudette Reid, Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Nasim Ansari and Mayor Peter Strazdas. Councilmember Jim Pearson was absent with excuse. Also in attendance were City Manager Larry Shaffer, City Attorney Randy Brown and Deputy City Clerk Adam Herringa.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Ansari, seconded by Ford, to approve the August 8, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0. Motion by Randall, seconded by Reid, to approve the August 21, 2017, Pre-Council Meeting Minutes. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 4 to 0 with Councilmembers Reid and Urban abstaining.

* **CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Strazdas asked Councilmember Ford to read the Consent Agenda. Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to approve the Consent Agenda motions. Councilmember Reid asked that Item F.7, Report from the Local Officers Compensation Commission, be removed from the Consent Agenda. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

* **APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF AUGUST 22, 2017:** Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of August 22, 2017. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARING:

FEMA EXPANSION – IDD #55: Mayor Strazdas thanked FEMA for continuing to expand in Portage and for being a good corporate citizen. Mayor Strazdas asked City Administration to provide an overview of the request and Director of Community Development, Vicki Georgeau, detailed the nature of the expansion, the impact it will have on the tax base and community, the number of jobs to be added and retained and shared the history of other FEMA expansion projects. Ms. Georgeau reviewed the zoning of adjoining properties and the overall percentage of the Portage tax base that is being abated.

At the request of the Mayor, Mr. Jeffrey Huffman, CEO of FEMA, 1716 Vanderbilt, highlighted the work done at FEMA and its focus on advanced electrohydraulics. Mr. Huffman shared that the company is employee-owned and recognized numerous employees that were present in the audience. Mr. Huffman also shared that “FEMA” stands for “Force Equals Mass times Acceleration,” which is Newton’s second law of motion. Mr. Huffman provided a history of the company, detailed the work it performs and shared a video regarding these topics. Mr. Huffman shared information pertaining to a second site designated for expansion near Otsego High School and the commitment of the company to the environment.

Councilmember Reid shared that, at the time of the last tax abatement request, she was able to tour the FEMA facilities and expressed her amazement at the advanced manufacturing that was taking place. She inquired if there would be a loss of jobs if FEMA further automates manufacturing. Mr. Huffman replied that he does not see automation as a threat to jobs and that job loss, via automation, would not occur at FEMA. To the contrary, Mr. Huffman stated that additional automation would result in more and better jobs.

Mayor Strazdas shared that the type of manufacturing engaged in by FEMA is “clean” and that neighbors do not need to be concerned about pollution related to the work performed at FEMA. Mr. Strazdas praised FEMA for their long record of being good corporate citizens of Portage.

Mayor Pro Tem Ansari, Councilmember Randall and Councilmember Urban shared in complimenting FEMA for the work they do and for their track record in the City of Portage. It was also emphasized that FEMA is one of those corporate citizens doing amazing work that many in the community know nothing about.

Motion by Randall, seconded by Reid, to adopt Resolution No. 2-17, expanding Industrial Development District No. 55 for 1716 Vanderbilt Avenue, and Resolution No. 3-17, setting a public hearing on the Industrial Facilities Exemption Certificate application for FEMA Corporation on September 12, 2017. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0. Resolutions recorded on pages 401 and 405 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 46.

REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION:

PROVISION OF AMBULANCE SERVICE: City Manager Shaffer reviewed the history of ambulance service in the City of Portage and provided the rationale behind his recommendation to transition to a single ambulance service provider and for that provider to be Pride Care. Mr. Shaffer highlighted the Request for Proposals (RFP) process that was utilized and how the bids were reviewed. Mr. Shaffer thanked both ambulance providers, Pride Care and Life EMS, for their many years of service to the community. Director of Public Safety, Nick Arnold, spoke in support of the recommendation of the City Manager and provided additional detail on the RFP process and on the data that was collected and utilized as part of the process. Director Arnold expressed confidence in the review process, determination to recommend moving to a single ambulance provider and selection of Pride Care to be the provider. He concluded by sharing that the Department of Public Safety staff involved in the RFP review were unanimous in their recommendation to select Pride Care.

Councilmember Randall inquired if, in an instance in which a resident has a pre-existing contract with Life EMS, whether the Department of Public Safety would honor the request that Life EMS respond instead of Pride Care. She continued by inquiring if, by making such a selection, there could be a delay in response. The Assistant Fire Chief, Stacy French, stated that Pride Care would honor any Life EMS contracts. However, he continued, a Life EMS ambulance could respond if the response time were within established protocols. The potential is there, for a response to take longer than if Pride Care were the ambulance company that was dispatched. Mr. French clarified that, if the incident involved a serious injury, the closest ambulance company would be dispatched. In response, Councilmember Ford inquired if the closest ambulance would be dispatched, how the provision of ambulance service in the community would be different than it is now. Assistant Fire Chief French replied that there would be very little difference.

Councilmember Reid inquired if, during the data collection phase involved in the determination to go with a single provider, the two companies knew they were being measured. Director Arnold responded in the affirmative and emphasized, in response to an additional query from Councilmember Reid, that Pride Care would honor Life EMS pre-paid contracts.

Mayor Strazdas inquired what impact the move to a centralized dispatch would have on a single ambulance provider in Portage. Mr. Arnold replied that the answer to the question is unknown but emphasized that he did not foresee any major difficulties in this regard. Mayor Strazdas followed up by asking whether eliminating the current ambulance provider system would eliminate competition between the two providers and result in less quality service as a result. City Manager Shaffer stated that the existing system has been in place for two decades but a major problem has been the ambulance providers staffing up and down to handle a one month on/one month off system. He continued by stating that under this rotational system the City had very little influence or control over standards and expectations. By moving to a single provider, Mr. Shaffer continued, the City is in a better position to implement standards and hold the provider accountable. Furthermore, he stated, the ambulance provider can be assured of a continuous flow of call volumes and income.

Mr. Strazdas inquired as to any penalties should the performance of Pride Care lapse. Director Arnold explained that the contract included provisions for minor and major performance lapses and that, ultimately, the contract could be terminated.

Councilmember Urban expressed a desire to have received more details of the proposals submitted by Life EMS and Pride Care. Mr. Urban then referenced the response times of the two companies and pointed out that neither company seems to be meeting the response time protocols as established by the Kalamazoo County Medical Control Authority. In response to his statement and related question, Assistant Fire Chief French explained that the response time protocol was recently increased to 10 minutes by the Medical Control Authority and explained why the increase occurred.

Mayor Strazdas inquired, as it relates to the cost of ambulance service provided to residents, if voting in favor of the contract tonight would result in rate increases tomorrow. Director Arnold responded that a rate increase would not occur and Assistant Fire Chief French clarified that there is a provision in the contract regarding rate increases and that such increases could only occur with review and approval by City Administration. City Manager Shaffer pointed out that much of the cost associated with an ambulance call is covered by MediCare.

Councilmember Randall asked about metrics other than response times, in particular patient outcomes and survival rates. At this point, Mayor Strazdas invited Dr. William Fales, Executive Director of the Kalamazoo County Medical Control Authority to speak. Dr. Fales shared the history of ambulance providers in Portage, discussed his strong and long held belief that a single ambulance provider is the best course of action for both the City of Portage and all of Kalamazoo County and that what is being discussed is unique in the country in that City Council is talking about the provision of a critical service involving little to no tax subsidy. Dr. Fales responded to earlier questions of City Council and explained the rationale for the recent increase in response time protocols. He continued by stating that the provision of ambulance service is not simply a ride to the hospital but rather the provision of advanced quality care. In response to the question of Councilmember Randall, Dr. Fales explained that it is difficult to determine what percentage of a patient's overall outcome can be directly related to care provided by the ambulance although it becomes easier in cases involving cardiac arrest.

John Pinkster, Director of South Operations for Life EMS, spoke on behalf of the company and shared that they will continue to provide quality care to Portage residents. Mr. Pinkster questioned the reciprocity of Pride Care honoring Life EMS contracts and emphasized that while people tend to talk about response times, a better focus is on quality of care and survival rates. Mr. Pinkster informed City Council that the CEO of Life EMS, Mark Meijers, was in contact with City Manager Shaffer to review the bid process and how proposals were scored.

Bill Mears, CEO of Pride Care, spoke in support of a single ambulance provider in Portage and of his belief that it will provide a better service to residents. He emphasized the responsiveness of Pride Care and stated that Pride Care would honor contracts that residents may have with Life EMS. He continued by saying that, while Pride Care and Life EMS may be competitors, the EMS technicians on the street do not act as competitors. Mr. Mears concluded by emphasizing the many years of service of Pride Care to the Portage community and that he is looking forward to the future.

Councilmember Urban inquired what the impact would be on Pride Care if they failed to get the City of Portage contract. Mr. Mears replied that changes would have to be made in the company but that the company would remain solvent.

Mr. James Stephanak, 10725 Cora Drive, shared that he is Chairman of the Board for Priority Health Insurance and emphasized the importance of quality of outcome when it comes to ambulance service. He asked that City Council ensure that the contract being discussed include provisions by which additional performance metrics may be added.

City Manager Shaffer stated that he views the provision of ambulance services as a team approach involving the Department of Public Safety, the ambulance provider and the Kalamazoo County Medical Control Authority and shared that there are provisions in the contract to allow for the introduction and modification of performance standards and metrics. In response to a query from Councilmember Reid, he stated that the contract allows the City to establish standards and be in a more

affirmative position since, under the current system, the City has little ability to set expectations or hold anyone accountable.

Mayor Strazdas thanked Life EMS and Pride Care for their professionalism and complimented the Kalamazoo County Medical Control Authority on their assistance throughout this process.

Motion by Randall, seconded by Ford, to award a contract to Pride Care Ambulance of Portage, Michigan, for the provision of ambulance service in the City of Portage for a period of three years, with the option for five one-year renewals, 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 6 to 0.

* **PURCHASE OF VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT:** Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to authorize the purchase of 22 vehicles and pieces of equipment as noted through the State of Michigan MiDEAL and the National Joint Powers Alliance purchasing programs at a total cost of \$1,115,547.19 and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to these purchases on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

* **ICE CONTROL SALT PURCHASE:** Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to award a contract to Detroit Salt Company in the amount of \$39.52 per ton for 1,800 tons of ice control salt at a total cost of \$71,136 for early delivery; Detroit Salt Company in the amount of \$43.99 per ton for 1,500 tons of ice control salt at a total cost of \$65,985 for seasonal back-up on an as-needed basis; and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to these purchases on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

* **PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES ORDINANCE FOR SELINON PARK – FIRST READING:** Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to accept for first reading an amendment to the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) ordinance for Selinon Park, a 74-unit multiple-family residential development proposed by Selinon Park Limited Dividend Housing Association Limited Partnership at 1521, 1603 and 1615 East Centre Avenue, and take final action on September 12, 2017. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

* **FINAL PLAN FOR THE WOODLANDS AT AUSTIN LAKE (PHASE III):** Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to approve the Final Plan for The Woodlands at Austin Lake (Phase III), 4301 Branch Avenue, subject to MDEQ approval/permit to discharge storm water into the regulated wetland; Consumers Energy approval to install street and trail improvements within their easement area; and the width of the cul-de-sac street (Sassafras Trail) be widened from 24 feet to 28 feet, and a six-foot trail connection be provided to the future Austin Lake Trail. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

* **FINAL PLAN FOR MERCANTILE BANK:** Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to approve the Final Plan for Mercantile Bank at 2301 West Centre Avenue. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

REPORT FROM THE LOCAL OFFICERS COMPENSATION COMMISSION: At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Councilmember Reid spoke and pointed out that the report provided by the Local Officers Compensation Commission (LOCC) did not include information related to the stipend provided to City Councilmembers electing to use electronic devices. In an effort to ensure transparency, Councilmember Reid stated that members of City Council may receive a \$50 stipend per month for cell phone usage and \$75 per month for utilizing an electronic device for a total of up to \$1500/year.

The Chairperson of the LOCC, Betty Lee Ongley, 8620 Tozer Court, former Mayor of the City of Portage, provided the rationale for the LOCC recommending a pay increase at this time and pointed out that the LOCC took into consideration the compensation currently received by City Council which included the stipends for technology usage. Attorney Brown opined that the LOCC is charged with determining the salary for City Council, not compensation as a whole. Councilmember Randall stated that cost savings related to the use of electronic devices were mentioned in budget sessions and inquired

if those savings were being realized. City Manager Shaffer confirmed that, although not recently calculated, savings related to staff time, paper, courier services, etc. related to the production of electronic agendas were being realized. Former Mayor Ongley expressed her appreciation for the use of technology and for saving taxpayer dollars.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Ansari, to receive the report from the Local Officers Compensation Commission. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

* **JULY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY REPORT:** Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to receive the July Environmental Report as information only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

* **SMALL DISTILLERS LICENSE – LATITUDE 42:** Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid to To recommend approval by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) of the Small Distiller Liquor License Application from Latitude 42 Brewing Company at 7842 Portage Road. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 407 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 46.

COMMUNICATIONS:

CITY MANAGER SALARY REVIEW/EVALUATION COMMITTEE: Mayor Strazdas expressed the need for the City Manager Salary Review/Evaluation Committee to convene. Motion by Ford, seconded by Ansari, to convene the City Manager Salary Review / Evaluation Committee and request a recommendation no later than November 7, 2017 as to compensation for Fiscal Year 2017-2018. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

* **MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEETINGS:** City Council received the minutes of:

1. Zoning Board of Appeals of July 10, 2017;
2. Portage Public Schools Regular of July 17, 2017; and
3. Planning Commission of August 3, 2017.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL: Councilmember Ford shared that the Environmental Health Advisory Council met recently and received a presentation at the meeting on herbicides from Michigan State University Extension and discussed making a recommendation to the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners regarding rates for non-potable wells that produce at less than 70 gallons per minute.

BID TABULATIONS:

* **ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SECTIONS OF WEST CENTRE AVENUE AND OAKLAND DRIVE:** Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to award a contract to the low bidder, Wightman & Associates, Incorporated, in an amount not to exceed \$246,400 to perform engineering services for the reconstruction of West Centre Avenue from 12th Street to Oakland Drive and Oakland Drive from West Milham to I-94 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 6 to 0.

OTHER CITY MATTERS:

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Randall thanked the Department of Public Safety for their support in providing an escort for a bicycle ride recognizing the bicyclist that was recently killed on Portage Road.

City Manager Shaffer expressed appreciation to the Department of Parks and Recreation for a successful Summer Entertainment Series and shared his enjoyment of the “Glenn Miller Band” and “The Odyssey” concerts.

Mayor Pro Tem Ansari shared that he went to the same concerts as the City Manager and is of the opinion they are best he has attended.

Mayor Strazdas shared that over 2,000 people attended the Glenn Miller Band concert and that he has recently attended many ribbon-cutting ceremonies in the business community. He expressed support for the business community in Portage and for the City working with small business owners in the permitting and approval processes.

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED:

* **MATERIALS TRANSMITTED:** Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to receive the Department Monthly Reports. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk

***Indicates items included on the Consent Agenda.**