

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 7, 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 support of those who struggle with mental illness.

Following the moment of silence, City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATION: Mayor Randall invited Mr. Scott Anderson of Kalamazoo HOPE to read a proclamation recognizing May as “Mental Health Awareness Month.” Next, Mr. Anderson shared that he was the founder of Kalamazoo HOPE and the goal of the organization is to address stigma, discrimination and self-stigma as it relates to mental illness in the community.

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, Redevelopment Ready Communities, be removed from the Consent Agenda. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended including the “Calendar of Meetings” under the “Communications” section of the agenda. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 23, Budget Review Session of April 30 and Pre-Council of May 6, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF MAY 7, 2019: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of May 7, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

EXPANSION OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT NO. 82: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to accept the application to expand Industrial Development District No. 82 to include 8065 Merchant Place to facilitate an industrial tax abatement for the Stryker Corporation at 3800 East Centre Avenue, and adopt Resolution No. 1-19 establishing a public hearing on the expansion of Industrial Development District No. 82 to include the property addressed as 8065 Merchant Place on May 21, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program FY 2019-20 Annual Action Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing elements of the Consolidated Plan and authorize the City Manager to submit the application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

LOCAL STREETS RECONSTRUCTION CONTRACT: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to award a construction contract to Northern Construction Services of Niles, Michigan for the 2018 Local Streets Reconstruction Phase 2 Program in an amount not to exceed \$1,703,135.30 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.

MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to receive the minutes of the Portage Public Schools Board of Education Committee of the Whole of March 11, 2019 and Historic District Commission of April 10, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COMMUNICATIONS:

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 BUDGET AND TAX LEVY: Mayor Randall invited City Manager Shaffer to begin discussion and review the proposed budget. Mr. Shaffer thanked city staff for their efforts in crafting the budget and reviewed the total budget amount, budget for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and how the CIP and proposed budget compare with the previous year. Mr. Shaffer emphasized that the increase in the CIP reflects investments in infrastructure, especially roads. Mr. Shaffer next shared that at the last Budget Review Session City Council expressed a desire to see a reduction in the millage rate in the proposed budget. Mr. Shaffer shared that staff reviewed the proposed budget and identified reductions that would result in a decrease of 1.67%. He then reviewed the specific reductions. Mr. Shaffer commented that City Administration has made a good faith effort to reduce the budget and he is proud of the budget that is being presented. Mr. Shaffer concluded by stating that the proposed budget, for the first time in recent memory, is balanced in that proposed revenues are equal to proposed expenses.

Mayor Randall thanked Mr. Shaffer for his comments and opened the public hearing. There being no member of the public asking to speak, motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Mayor Randall shared that City Council was just learning about specific reductions in the proposed budget. She reviewed the budget process utilized by City Council and shared that the proposed budget is checked line by line. She also stated that a priority of City Council is to lower the millage rate. Mayor Randall shared that City Administration had been looking at staffing delays and reductions in the arena of public safety to reduce the budget. However, she indicated that Councilmember Urban had expressed strong reservations about using cuts and delays in public safety personnel. She stated that she shares those same reservations and emphasized that she and the City Council put public safety as a top priority. In response to an inquiry, Mr. Shaffer confirmed that the proposed reductions will not have an impact on personnel. Councilmember Urban confirmed his opposition to a budget that incorporated cuts to public safety personnel or hiring delays.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson pointed out the health of the local economy and recent major industrial developments. He commented that given the fiscal health of the community, City Council felt a millage reduction was appropriate and thanked City Administration for following through. Councilmember Reid expressed appreciation for the work of City Administration. She pointed out that citizens may not see a reduction in their tax bill due to increased property valuations. She continued by sharing that while City Council cannot control valuation, it can control the millage rate. Ms. Reid pointed out that another priority of City Council is to lower debt and reduce bonding for projects. Councilmember Reid inquired what CIP projects were being altered as part of the effort to

reduce the cost of the proposed budget. Mr. Shaffer stated that staff is in the process of finalizing the alterations but the changes would likely involve delaying park expansions.

Councilmember Ford stated that the General Fund Millage has been at 7.5 mills for as long as he has been on City Council. He stated that he is pleased to see it being reduced.

REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITIES: Mayor Randall invited Mayor Pro Tem Pearson to begin discussion. Mr. Pearson shared that the “Redevelopment Ready Communities” program is sponsored by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and that he is pleased the City of Portage is getting involved. He shared that this is great news and invited Mr. Shaffer to share more about the program. Mr. Shaffer summarized the program and explained that it involves a community implementing best practices when it comes to economic development. He then reviewed the process for getting certified by the MEDC as a Redevelopment Ready Community and where the City of Portage is in the process. At the invitation of Mr. Shaffer, Director of Community Development Vicki Georgeau provided additional information about the program and steps the city has taken and will take to gain certification. She highlighted that one of the primary challenges will be in identifying three potential redevelopment ready sites. Ms. Georgeau concluded by stating that gaining certification will put Portage in position to receive State funding for economic development efforts.

Councilmember Reid inquired as to whether the report from the MEDC and other information would be made available online. Ms. Georgeau responded in the affirmative and shared that the city is exploring ways to gather and incorporate citizen input into this process. She also indicated that prior public input efforts, such as Portage 2025, will be included in the city’s efforts to gain Redevelopment Ready certification. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to adopt a resolution authorizing the implementation of recommended actions necessary to attain Redevelopment Ready Communities certification from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Mayor Pro Tem Pearson shared that he attended a meeting of the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority Finance Committee at which discussion was focused on securing long-term funding for the Dispatch Authority. Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to receive the Council Committee Report as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Reid reminded residents that openings are available on a variety of City of Portage Boards and Commissions and encouraged people to apply. She continued by sharing that she is a member of the Kalamazoo County Environmental Health Advisory Council and has been asked to encourage residents to visit the Kalamazoo County website and participate in a survey to help establish budget priorities. Finally, she encouraged the public to attend one of the upcoming open houses for the 2767 Stryke Force Robotics Team. She shared details about the open houses and encouraged area youth to consider joining the team.

Councilmember Knapp commented that with the arrival of spring there is a lot happening in the community such as the opening of the Farmers Market, an open house of the Garden Lane Water Treatment Facility and road construction projects. She encouraged residents to visit the City of Portage website and Facebook page for construction updates. Ms. Knapp concluded by stating that she, along with Mayor Randall, attended the annual awards ceremony for the Department of Public Safety. She commented that the event was a great opportunity to recognize the exceptional efforts of our public safety professionals.

Councilmember Burns reminded everyone that Sunday is Mother's Day.

Councilmember Ford thanked City Council and staff for their hard work and commitment over the last month as numerous evening meetings were held.

Mayor Randall shared that she had a very busy past couple of weeks that included participating in the Kalamazoo Child Abuse and Neglect Council awards ceremony, attending the Department of Public Safety awards ceremony, recording a podcast with City Manager Shaffer for Stryker employees, attending the Senior Citizen Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, attending the National Day of Prayer event with Councilmembers Knapp and Reid at First Reformed Church, attending a dinner recognizing retiring public safety officers and dispatchers and attending an Eagle Scout Court of Honor ceremony. Mayor Randall shared that this coming Saturday is the beginning of "Bike Week" in Kalamazoo County and invited residents to participate in related activities. She concluded by complimenting City Council for their work related to the budget and expressed appreciation for the efforts of staff.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Adam Herringa, City Clerk