MINUTES FROM THE PRE-MEETING
OF THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL
OF JUNE 10, 2019

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Councilmembers Chris Burns, Lori Knapp and Claudette Reid joined via the conference phone line. Mayor Patricia Randall, Councilmember Richard Ford and Councilmember Terry Urban were absent with excuse. Also in attendance were City Manager Larry Shaffer, Deputy City Manager Rob Boulis and City Clerk Adam Herringa.

With regard to Item A.3, Repairs to Garden Lane Multi-use Trail and well house access road, Councilmember Reid inquired as to how much of the trail and road will be repaired. City Manager Shaffer stated that he would research and respond.

With regard to Item A.4, formation of the Portage Public Safety Foundation, Councilmember Reid inquired as to telephone solicitations and whether forming this foundation would result in an increase in calls. City Manager Shaffer stated that there would not be a relationship between those organizations calling for donations and the proposed Public Safety Foundation. Deputy City Manager Boulis shared his understanding that national organizations are responsible for those solicitations and not unions or other organizations directly affiliated with Portage Public Safety. He questioned whether any funds donated as a result of those telephone solicitations actually end up benefitting the Portage Department of Public Safety. Councilmember Reid expressed her skepticism as well.

Councilmember Knapp commented that a stated purpose of the Portage Public Safety Foundation is to raise funds for such items as another K-9 unit. She asked why use the tactic of fundraising instead of the General Fund? City Manager Shaffer responded that the public is willing to support efforts to donate to public safety, especially canine units. Mr. Shaffer continued by stating that the Public Safety Foundation will also engage in the process of seeking out grants.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson inquired as to the genesis of the plan for a Public Safety Foundation and who might be on its Board of Directors. Mr. Shaffer responded that the idea originated with Chief Armold and that, as of this moment, a slate of potential boardmembers has not been identified. However, he continued, boardmembers would have some affiliation with the Portage Department of Public Safety. Councilmember Reid inquired who will determine boardmembers and how will they be selected. Mr. Shaffer stated that the Department of Public Safety would, at least initially, be largely responsible.

With regard to Item A.5, inter-governmental agreement with City of Kalamazoo, Councilmember Reid stated that she learned about the proposed agreement via the media. She expressed her surprise at learning about the proposal and questioned the $84,000 cost and whether it would be sufficient. She continued by asking why the amount wasn't specified in the agreement. Mr. Shaffer stated that the three individuals to be hired as crime analysts would be hired by the City of Kalamazoo. He stated that the salary and benefit rates are determined by Kalamazoo but that the City of Portage would contribute an annual lump sum. Councilmember Reid expressed skepticism as to whether $84,000/year would be sufficient.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson inquired if the position funded by the City of Portage would be a sworn officer. City Manager Shaffer responded in the affirmative. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson echoed the skepticism of Councilmember Reid as to whether $84,000 is a realistic figure to match the terms of the proposed agreement. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson next inquired if this was an on-going amount and relationship. Mr. Shaffer stated that it would be for a three year period. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson inquired if this was tantamount to hiring a fourth police officer as only three were authorized in the adopted FY 2019-2020 budget. He then inquired where in the proposed budget the $84,000 was denoted. Mr. Shaffer disagreed with the characterization that this was a fourth officer and stated that funds were not included in the proposed budget. Rather, unexpended funds from the current fiscal year would be used. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson next inquired, as it relates to the proposed three crime analysts, how they will be scheduled, how much will be focused on Portage and if he could be provided with a proposed schedule. Mr. Shaffer explained that the agreement is a collaboration and that there would not be a single designated person responsible for analyzing crime in Portage. Rather, he stated, all three analysts would analyze crime regardless of boundaries and share information with both public safety entities.

Councilmember Knapp expressed disappointment that she had to learn about this proposal via the media and asked that such information be communicated with City Council in advance. Councilmember Knapp inquired about the proposed agreement as it compares to the summary provided in the item on the Agenda. She stated that the summary of the agreement and the agreement itself are different. She expressed concern with accountability to Portage and how much focus crime in Portage would receive. She asked for additional information on methodology and how priorities will be determined. She continued by inquiring as to potential termination of the agreement and whether there would be any type of refund. Mr. Shaffer stated that this is an agreement to collaborate and not a contract. The agreement, he stated, is to fund an intelligence bureau that doesn't stop at the border between Kalamazoo and Portage. Crime, he stated, is not exclusive to a single entity and this intelligence bureau would share information between Kalamazoo and Portage on a daily basis. Operational details, he stated, would be documented as procedures and protocols are finalized. Ultimately, he stated, the City of Portage can terminate the agreement should it become necessary.

Councilmember Reid commented as to the pension and healthcare offered by the City of Kalamazoo to employees. She stated that costs associated with this proposal are absent from the Agreement. Mr. Shaffer stated that this is an Agreement for the two entities to collaborate regarding an item of common concern. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson expressed discomfort with the Agreement as it is open-ended as to responsibilities. City Manager Shaffer stated that he would reach out to the City of Kalamazoo to get something in writing which better caps and defines the arrangement. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson inquired why it cannot be included in the Agreement? Mr. Shaffer stated that the formation of inter-governmental agreements is governed by state statute. Such agreements, he stated, do not get into great detail. Next, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson commented that the City of Portage is being asked to pay one-third of the personnel costs of this program. He asked if one-third of the crime between the two communities was in Portage. Mr. Shaffer responded in the negative but stated that the

border between the two communities is not well defined when it comes to criminal activities. Mr. Shaffer concluded by reiterating that he would work with the Kalamazoo City Manager to get costs and additional details in writing.

With regard to Item A.7, Rezoning of 129 Boston Avenue, Councilmember Reid asked if this rezoning had been previously proposed. In response, Mr. Shaffer responded in the affirmative and stated that both the Planning Commission and City Administration are opposed. He stated that the Planning Commission voted unanimously to deny but that the applicant desired to bring the matter before City Council anyway.

With regard to Item A.8, Brownfield Redevelopment Incentive Policy, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson asked for clarification and for City Administration to articulate the primary changes from the current policy. Mr. Shaffer stated that the revised policy would create a revolving incentive fund that could assist future brownfield redevelopment efforts. The revised policy would also eliminate the step of bringing initial brownfield applications to City Council prior to administrative review. Councilmember Reid inquired if, by changing the policy, additional dollars would need to be placed into the fund. Mr. Shaffer responded in the negative and stated that funds captured under the new policy could be used to assist in studying brownfield potential, contamination levels, etc.

Councilmember Reid pointed to the Kalamazoo County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and the Portage Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and inquired if, by altering the policy, competition between the two entities would result. Mr. Shaffer stated that revising the policy would give Portage another incentive tool that could be used in support of smaller projects. Councilmember Reid inquired when, under the revised policy, the public would have an opportunity to give input. City Manager Shaffer stated that the matter would ultimately come before City Council and the public is always afforded an opportunity to give input. Councilmember Reid inquired if there is an opportunity for public input at the Planning Commission level and Mr. Shaffer stated that he was uncertain. Ms. Reid continued by stating that, under the current policy, the public is informed and can provide input at the outset of the project. Mr. Shaffer responded that, under the revised policy, City Administration has an opportunity to gather and provide information along with speeding up the process. Councilmember Knapp inquired if a similar Brownfield Redevelopment Incentive Policy was common across municipal governments and Mr. Shaffer responded in the affirmative.

With regard to Item A.9, Fireworks at Ramona Park, Councilmember Reid inquired if there are any provisions regarding traffic control and questioned when guests could arrive and if the park would be closed at some point. Mr. Shaffer stated that a traffic plan had been developed between the Portage Department of Public Safety and Portage Rotary. He confirmed that the park would need to be closed at some point during the day for event setup but would reopen at 6:00 p.m. In response to an inquiry regarding notice to neighbors about the event, Mr. Shaffer confirmed that Portage Rotary had mailed out letters and that no objections had been received in response.

With regard to Item A.11, Brownfield Redevelopment Plan Amendment, Councilmember Reid noted that the agenda item references contamination at the site. She inquired if there has been any remediation. Mr. Shaffer stated that remediation efforts would occur as part of the

Brownfield program. Councilmember Reid asked that the remediation efforts be made more explicit and Mr. Shaffer stated that a formal plan has not yet been created but that he would research and respond as to what is being remediated.

With regard to Item A.12, Unpaid Water and Sewer Charges, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson noted that a neighboring rental property to his house was listed. He speculated that it is likely the renters had not paid the water and sewer bills and the owner is likely unaware. Mr. Shaffer commented that it is not unusual for such a circumstance to occur and the failure of renters to pay their bill is often an issue for landlords.

With regard to Item A.14, Fire Code Amendment, Councilmember Burns inquired if it is still accurate to say that Portage has the most restrictive fireworks ordinance allowed. Mr. Shaffer stated that the proposed changes will comport with the strictest provisions allowed under state law. Mr. Shaffer pointed out that the state law regarding fireworks was recently modified. Councilmember Reid asked that the agenda item more explicitly state that it involves regulating fireworks. Councilmember Knapp inquired if the ordinance would take effect in advance of the 4th of July and Mr. Shaffer responded in the negative. He stated that an emergency ordinance was considered but that the planned approach allows more time for education and will not take people by surprise. Councilmember Reid inquired if the fireworks store, Jake's Fireworks, had been contacted regarding the proposed ordinance changes. Mr. Shaffer responded in the negative but stated that he could ask the Director of Public Safety to contact the business.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Pro Tem Pearson adjourned the meeting at 8:39 a.m.

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Adam Herringa, City Clerk