

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 19, 2019

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Patricia Randall at 7:00 p.m.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to honor all religions and personal beliefs and in recognition of the service and sacrifice of Officer Zorro of the Portage Police Division.

Following the moment of silence, Boy Scout Troop 244 and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

OUTGOING COUNCIL:

ROLL CALL: The City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Chris Burns, Richard Ford, Lori Knapp, Claudette Reid, Terry Urban and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson and Mayor Patricia Randall. Also in attendance were City Manager Joseph La Margo, City Attorney Randall Brown and City Clerk Adam Herringa.

PROCLAMATIONS: Mayor Randall invited Officer Jordan Wentworth and members of the Department of Public Safety forward to receive the Resolution of Remembrance for Officer Zorro. Public Safety Director Nick Arnold commented that Zorro was a member of the family and made them all better. He thanked Kalamazoo Public Safety and Western Michigan University Public Safety for supporting the department in their time of need.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ford, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 5 and Pre-Council Meeting Minutes of November 18, 2019, as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

BOARD OF CANVASSERS REPORT: City Clerk Adam Herringa reviewed the Board of Canvassers Report for the November 5, 2019 City General Election. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to receive the Board of Canvassers Report of the final results of the November 5, 2019 City General Election as approved by the Kalamazoo County Board of Canvassers as information only. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL: Councilmember Burns expressed appreciation for the support of the community and level of turnout for a local election with several uncontested races.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson commented that over 1,000 jobs are coming to Portage and pledged to support efforts to improve public transit and affordable housing in the community. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson continued by stating his intention to work to improve the Lake Center Business District and to support efforts to construct the Portage Community Senior Center.

Councilmember Ford echoed the thoughts of Councilmember Burns and Mayor Pro Tem Pearson. He commented that the city made great progress over the past few years and he is excited for the future.

Councilmember Knapp offered formal congratulations to those who were reelected. She commented that it is a pleasure to serve and her time on City Council is moving fast. She concluded by stating that while much has been accomplished she is looking forward to greater things.

Councilmember Urban offered his congratulations and gratitude for everyone who is continuing to serve.

Mayor Randall commented that the city has been making great progress and the City Council has been working well together. She stated that her focus for the next term will be the on-going

transition to a new City Manager, affordable housing, the Community Senior Center and enhancing and redefining the Crossroads Mall.

ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE OF RETIRING CITY COUNCIL: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to adjourn City Council Sine Die. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

NEW COUNCIL:

OATH OF OFFICE AND SEATING OF MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS: City Clerk Adam Herringa administered the Oath of Office to Chris Burns, Richard Ford and Jim Pearson as Councilmembers and to Patricia M. Randall as Mayor.

SIGNING OF THE CITY COUNCIL CODE OF ETHICS AND VALUES POLICY: The Mayor and Councilmembers signed the Ethics and Values Policy.

SEATING OF MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS: At the invitation of the City Clerk, the Mayor and City Council took their respective seats at the dais. Mayor Randall called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. and City Clerk Herringa called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Chris Burns, Richard Ford, Lori Knapp, Jim Pearson, Claudette Reid and Terry Urban and Mayor Patricia Randall. Also in attendance were City Manager Joseph La Margo, City Attorney Randy Brown, and City Clerk Adam Herringa.

ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO-TEMPORE: City Clerk Herringa reviewed the process for selecting the Mayor Pro Tem and Mayor Randall entertained nominations for the position. Councilmember Burns nominated Councilmember Pearson and Councilmember Reid nominated Councilmember Urban. There were no further nominations. City Council then completed and signed their respective ballots for Mayor Pro Tem. The City Clerk collected and read aloud the results of the selection. Councilmembers Reid and Urban selected Councilmember Urban. Councilmembers Burns, Ford, Knapp, Pearson and Mayor Randall selected Councilmember Pearson. Councilmember Pearson was selected by a vote of 5 to 2. Mayor Randall congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Pearson on his election to Mayor Pro Tempore and Mayor Pro Tem Pearson stated that he is looking forward to his next two years on City Council.

ADOPTION OF RULES OF ORDER AND PROCEDURE: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Reid, to approve the Rules of Order and Procedure as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 1 with Councilmember Urban voting in opposition.

CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Randall shared where the public can access the meeting agenda and asked if any Councilmember or anyone in the audience wanted to remove an item from the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Reid removed Item B.7.b. Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF NOVEMBER 19, 2019: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of November 19, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR 2020 LOCAL STREETS RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to award a contract to perform engineering services to Abonmarche

Consultants, Inc. for the 2020 Local Streets Reconstruction Program in an amount not-to-exceed \$231,990 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.

PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AT 9224 PORTAGE INDUSTRIAL DRIVE: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to approve the purchase of 3.82 acres of land plus a 5,239 square-foot permanent easement addressed as 9224 Portage Industrial Drive owned by J&H LLC for the construction of a northern entrance to the Eliason Nature Reserve, 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.

BS&A ANNUAL LICENSING AND SOFTWARE MAINTENANCE: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to approve payment of the annual licensing and software maintenance services fees with BS&A, Incorporated, at a total cost of \$53,147 and authorize the City Manager to execute all related documents on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

JANITORIAL SERVICES CONTRACT: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to award a contract to Clean Complete Janitorial Services for cleaning maintenance of park facilities and public rental properties for the annual cost of \$45,885 with the option of four one-year renewals, 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.

MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to receive the minutes of the Portage Public Schools Board of Education Committee of the Whole Work Session of October 14, Special Meeting of October 21 and Regular Business Meeting of October 28, and Historic District Commission of October 2, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED: Motion by Knapp, seconded by Ford, to receive the Materials Transmitted from November 5, 2019. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS AND GUESTS REGARDING NEW CITY COUNCIL: Kalamazoo Mayor David Anderson, 513 Stuart Avenue, Kalamazoo, congratulated all of those who were elected and expressed hope that Kalamazoo and Portage can work together to address issues of mutual interest. He commented that government needs to do the work of the people and that, while not always exciting, it is work that must be done.

Former Portage Mayor James Graham, 4222 Squire Heath, offered his congratulations to City Council on the election and welcomed City Manager Joe La Margo to Portage. Mayor Graham commented that, in the recent past, he has been disappointed in the City Council. However, he continued, he believes the recent and current City Council has been doing great work and making tremendous strides on behalf of the community. The fact that everyone ran unopposed, he stated, is a testament of the good work that is being done. He concluded by stating that he believes Mayor Randall to be the most effective Mayor the city has ever had and thanked her for the time she spends working on behalf of the citizens of Portage.

COMMUNICATIONS:

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

REGULAR BUSINESS:

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AUTHORIZATION: Mayor Randall deferred to Councilmember Burns to initiate discussion on this item. Councilmember Burns reviewed the reason why the item is on the agenda and why it is critically important for the City of Portage to act regarding the issue of refugee resettlement. He stated that Portage is the first community in the area to address this issue and continued by sharing his and his wife's deeply personal journey related to refugee resettlement. He concluded his statement by asking "if not here, where; if not us, who; and if not now, when?" Councilmember Urban shared his commitment and personal relationship with refugee resettlement in Portage. Mr. Urban concluded by affirming his support for Portage taking action to allow continued refugee resettlement in Portage.

Ms. Jane Trejo, resident 4619 Fox Valley Drive and employee of Bethany Christian Services which is engaged in refugee resettlement efforts, spoke and shared the current status of refugee resettlement efforts in the United States. She shared that refugee resettlement efforts in Portage have been going on for close to twenty years and thanked City Council for their consideration of allowing such efforts to continue. In response to an inquiry from Councilmember Urban, Ms. Trejo noted that the Governor of Michigan had taken action to allow resettlement efforts but affirmation from Kalamazoo County had yet to be obtained. In response to an inquiry from Councilmember Reid, Ms. Trejo reviewed the timing of obtaining and submitting written authorization for resettlement efforts to continue. Councilmember Reid stated her support and noted that resettlement efforts in Portage have been on-going and this action will simply allow such efforts to continue. Mayor Randall commented that Bethany Christian Services has been a part of the life of her family for years and commented regarding the positive impact they have on the world. Motion by Burns, seconded by Reid, to authorize the Mayor to sign a letter to Secretary Mike Pompeo of the United States Department of State consenting to refugee resettlement in the City of Portage. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PURCHASE OF TRAFFIC SIGNAL POLES, MAST ARMS AND ASSEMBLIES: Mayor Randall deferred to Councilmember Reid who asked that the item be removed from the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Reid shared that she had been contacted by a resident who was inquiring about the need to replace the traffic signal poles and mast arms and inquired as to the anticipated life of such poles and mast arms. City Manager La Margo deferred to the Director of Transportation and Utilities, Kendra Gwin. Ms. Gwin stated that the average life is between 20 and 25 years. These particular poles, she stated, had been in place for 16 years but that one traffic pole had recently failed at the intersection of Shaver and Westnedge. Ms. Gwin noted that sections of South Westnedge are scheduled to undergo reconstruction and now is the optimal time to also replace the signal poles as installation costs will be reduced and construction activities can all be completed at the same time.

Councilmember Urban inquired if there are different design types and Ms. Gwin shared that there are only three manufacturers of traffic signal poles in the United States and that each traffic signal pole is designed for its designated intersection. Ultimately, she stated, all traffic signal poles are similar in design. Councilmember Ford inquired if the poles are warrantied and Ms. Gwin shared that they have a two-year maintenance bond. Mayor Randall inquired if the signals would include LED lights and noted they do not melt snow that may obscure the signal. Ms. Gwin stated that signal blockage occurs as a result of a driving snowfall and that Severence Electric is responsible for cleaning them off when the need arises. Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns, to award a contract for the purchase of traffic signal poles, mast arms and assemblies for traffic signal upgrades on South Westnedge Avenue to Maico Industries of Ellsworth, Kansas in the not-to-exceed amount of \$305,491

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.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

HAMPTON CREEK WETLAND PRESENTATION: Mayor Randall introduced the item and invited representatives of the engineering firm Fishbeck to the podium. Mr. Brian McKissen, Senior Civil Engineer, and Elise Tripp, Senior Environmental Scientist, provided a presentation to the City Council and the audience regarding their recent study of flooding and the Hampton Creek Wetland Area. They reviewed their initial design proposal, challenges and current status of the Hampton Bog water system. They concluded by reviewing the next steps in their design process such as meeting with representatives of the State of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy.

Following the presentation, Mayor Randall noted that the presentation was also provided at a Special City Council Meeting and that numerous residents attended. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson inquired as to the differences in pH levels of the various water bodies and how this might be addressed. Mr. McKissen pointed to the inclusion of a limestone bed to help mitigate pH concerns. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson and Mr. McKissen reviewed how to best make the case to EGLE to garner their support. Ms. Tripp noted that there are additional buffering techniques that could be implemented to help satisfy the concerns of EGLE.

Councilmember Ford inquired as to the potential cost and City Manager La Margo noted that \$1 million was being placed in the Capital Improvement Plan. Councilmember Burns inquired as to efforts to identify water levels below which the bog could not be drained. Mr. McKissen reviewed their methodology in identifying traditional high, average and low water levels of the bog. Mayor Randall then reviewed water levels that had been shared in the previous presentation. Councilmember Reid asked about the correlation between groundwater levels and bog levels. Mr. McKissen noted that groundwater in this area flows south towards Portage Creek. He stated that groundwater and bog levels should remain at similar levels. He noted that draining of the bog would result in a corresponding decrease in adjoining groundwater.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Burns to receive the presentation by the firm Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber regarding the Hampton Creek Wetland Area. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Burns provided an update on a meeting of the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA). Mr. Burns shared details regarding a planned millage request and why the request is necessary. Mr. Burns next referenced a program to allow Kalamazoo students free access to public transit and unintended consequences that have impacted the Transportation Center in downtown Kalamazoo. He noted that the service would be suspended for students between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. for the time being while the situation is reviewed. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson stated that the CCTA based the millage request on significant community input and Councilmember Reid inquired as to the nature of the millage and reduction in funding from the State of Michigan. Councilmember Burns and Mayor Pro Tem Pearson reviewed how the millage would be administered.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson shared details regarding a meeting of the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority (KCCDA) Finance Committee and the KCCDA proper. He shared that they are working on finalizing a method by which to fund dispatch operations that will likely include a millage request. Next, he indicated that the KCCDA is looking to locate a communications tower and that Portage Fire Station No. 2 is under consideration.

Motion by Knapp, seconded by Reid to receive the Council Committee Reports. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Reid wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and good time with friends and family.

Councilmember Knapp shared that city crews are working on the leaf pickup program following its suspension for the recent snowfall. She asked residents and motorists for their patience. Ms. Knapp also shared that she attended a reception of the Michigan Townships Association along with Mayor Randall, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson and City Manager La Margo. She stated that the reception was informative and a good opportunity to interact with local township officials. She concluded her remarks by thanking Deputy City Manager Rob Boulis for all he has done to support the City of Portage and wished him well in his retirement.

Councilmember Burns recognized Deputy City Manager Boulis for his contributions and stated that Mr. Boulis helped to guide the city and City Council through difficult times. He wished him well in his retirement. Mr. Burns next thanked City Council for their support of the refugee resettlement program.

Councilmember Ford thanked the audience for attending the meeting and recognized Public Safety and other city employees who attended the meeting. Mr. Ford thanked Mr. Boulis for his guidance and service during tense times on the City Council and for working so well with former City Manager Larry Shaffer. Councilmember Ford concluded by thanking his wife and son for coming to the meeting.

City Manager La Margo congratulated City Council on the election and stated that he is blessed to work with dedicated staff and a supportive City Council. He thanked Mr. Boulis for his knowledge, passion, dedication and commitment and wished him only the best in retirement. Mr. La Margo concluded by stating that information related to the Fishbeck presentation would be placed on the city website.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson shared that six years ago both the City Manager and Deputy City Manager retired at approximately the same time and Mr. Boulis stepped forward to lead the city during this time. He thanked Mr. Boulis for all of his work and congratulated him on his retirement.

Mayor Randall also wished Mr. Boulis the best in retirement. She reviewed his history with the City of Portage and shared that he has always been trustworthy and steadfast. She thanked him for his assistance and guidance throughout several transitions in the city and encouraged him to remain a part of the Portage community. Mayor Randall next thanked Kalamazoo Mayor Anderson for attending the meeting and expressed optimism at the ability to work together. Mayor Randall wished former Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby Hopewell the best and wished much success to Mayor Anderson. She concluded her comments by wishing everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

Adam Herringa, City Clerk