

**MINUTES FROM THE PRE-MEETING
OF THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL
OF DECEMBER 16, 2019**

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

With regard to Item A.4, Councilmember Reid expressed concern that the purchase did not go to bid, citing the department's preference for the vendor who facilitated the purchase in 2015. She requested further justification for continuing to pursue the single vendor. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson noted the five-year replacement schedule for the equipment and asked whether the city simply discards the old equipment after five years of use or if the equipment is re-sold on a secondary market or recycled. Deputy City Manager Herringa responded that staff would research and respond.

With regard to Item A.6, Councilmember Reid noted the Parks and Recreation non-resident per person softball team fee was eliminated but the resident team fee is recommended to increase to \$40 per team. She asked for further clarification as to how this was determined. Councilmember Reid then expressed concern with the Farmers Market daily vendor table rental rate increase from \$15 to \$20 with the intent to motivate vendors to become seasonal vendors at a lower annual rate. She stated that she would like to see an increased focus on gaining quality vendors or seek alternatives to encourage regular participation while continuing to build the Farmers Market program. She cautioned against comparing the Portage Market to the established Bank Street Market in Kalamazoo. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson agreed with Councilmember Reid's points, suggesting to maintain the seasonal rate at \$15.00.

Councilmember Reid further inquired regarding the Special Assessment rates. She noted that the majority of the rates appear to be increasing by approximately 4.75%, but then highlighted that the water rate for commercial properties is proposed to increase only 3.7% and the sewer leads rate has a proposed 6.35% increase. Councilmember Reid asked for additional background as to how these increases are calculated. Deputy City Manager Herringa responded that staff would research and respond.

With regard to Item A.7, Councilmember Reid asked whether the proposed ordinance language could be more straightforward by pre-determining the winter weather dates instead of utilizing the judgment of two department directors in waiving water fees and shut off delays. City Manager La Margo responded that the ordinance was drafted with the intent to assist those residents that cannot afford a water shut off during the colder months, but also prevent others from simply shirking responsibility for their winter water bill.

Mr. La Margo offered to eliminate the notation of the individual months from the draft ordinance in an effort to simplify the language. Deputy City Manager Herringa noted that the proposed ordinance was set for first reading and modification would still be possible.

ADJOURNMENT: Following a summary of the meeting, Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:26 a.m.

Erica L. Eklov, Deputy City Clerk