

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 15, 2020

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The regular meeting was held virtually as permitted by PA 228. Mayor Patricia M. Randall, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson, and Councilmembers Chris Burns, Lori Knapp, Vic Ledbetter, Claudette Reid, and Terry Urban were present. All members participated virtually from Portage, Michigan. Also in attendance were City Manager Joe La Margo, Assistant City Attorney Rob Thall, Deputy City Manager Adam Herringa, Deputy City Manager Mike Carroll, and City Clerk Erica Eklov.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to honor all denominations and reflect upon anticipation of the COVID-19 vaccine by Pfizer Inc. and pride for the local Pfizer workforce. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATIONS: Mayor Pro Tem Pearson read the proclamation honoring the Pfizer Corporation. Councilmember Knapp read the resolution honoring Representative Iden and Councilmember Burns read the resolution honoring Representative Hoadley. Representative Hoadley, via WebEx, thanked the City Council for the recognition.

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. Councilmember Reid removed Item A.7. Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 1, 2020, and Pre-Council Meeting of December 14, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF DECEMBER 15, 2020: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of December 15, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

2021 FEE SCHEDULES: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to adopt the: 2021 Freedom of Information Act fees, 2021 Recreation and Park Facility fees, 2021 Community Development and Building Permit fees, and 2021 Special Assessment Rates. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COMMUNITY SENIOR CENTER GUARANTEED MAXIMUM PRICE: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the proposed Guaranteed Maximum Price of \$10,806,981 with American Village Builders (AVB) for construction of the Charles and Lynn Zhang Portage Community Senior Center. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

VEHICLE PURCHASES - COOPERATIVE PURCHASING: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to authorize the purchase of eight vehicles as noted through the State of Michigan MiDEAL and Sourcewell Purchasing Programs at a total cost of \$278,324 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 7 to 0.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION – 2005 WEST MILHAM AVENUE: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the purchase of property addressed as 2005 West Milham Avenue in the amount of \$162,750 and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

S. WESTNEDGE AVENUE MICROSURFACING PROJECT - BID TABULATION: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to award a contract to perform engineering services for the microsurfacing of South Westnedge Avenue from Mall Drive to Trade Centre Way to Fleis & Vandenbrink of Kalamazoo, Michigan, in the amount not-to-exceed \$96,500 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.

MIDWEST FASTENER CORPORATION PA 198 APPLICATION - 9031 SHAVER ROAD: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to accept the application for an industrial tax abatement from Midwest Fastener for property located at 9031 Shaver Road, and adopt Resolution No. 1-20 establishing a public hearing to: 1) establish Industrial Development District No. 93 and 2) set a hearing for an Industrial Facilities Exemption Certificate at 9031 Shaver Road on January 12, 2021. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MICHIGAN PURE GREEN LLC APPEAL OF MARIHUANA DENIAL: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to grant the request for an appeal of an Adult-Use Retail application from Michigan Pure Green, LLC, for 9017 South Sprinkle Road. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

SPECIAL MEETING FOR BOARD AND COMMISSION APPLICANTS: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to set a Special Meeting on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, beginning at 5:30 p.m., to interview Board and Commission applicants. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

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

MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to receive the minutes of the Environmental Board of November 11, 2020, and Human Services Board of November 12, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED: Motion by Reid, seconded by Ledbetter, to receive the Materials Transmitted of December 15, 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Mr. Ron Clifton (3420 East Shore Drive) expressed concern for traffic speeding along East Shore Drive. He cited speed limit differences from the adjacent roads of Cox's Drive and Zylman Avenue, noting a recent traffic accident at the intersection of East Shore Drive and Cox's Drive. Mr. Clifton relayed prior assistance from the Police Division for speed monitoring in the area but stated more action was needed. Following his comments, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson and Councilmember Knapp stated they also had similar concerns with traffic speeding in the area as fellow Austin Lake residents. City Manager La Margo stated he would follow up with Mr. Clifton, as well as the Police Division and Transportation & Utilities Department.

COMMUNICATIONS:

COMMUNICATION FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD REGARDING A CLIMATE CHANGE RESOLUTION: Mayor Randall introduced the item and asked the City Administration to provide a summary on the matter. Deputy City Manager Herringa provided background on prior staff meetings with Ms. Deirdre Courtney Nieves on behalf of the Environmental Board. Mr. Herringa noted the City Administration was requesting direction from City Council regarding the Environmental Board's desire for the city to take more visible and aggressive measures to combat climate change, especially the proposed proclamation of a climate emergency.

Mayor Randall then introduced Ms. Nieves, who provided background on the Environmental Board's efforts to address climate action. Ms. Nieves highlighted the city's recently published Annual Report and its explanation of the city's green initiatives to date. She asked for the City Council to recognize climate change, further identify the climate crisis, and bring measures to address this issue to the forefront. Ms. Nieves closed by stating that the current crisis with COVID-19 and climate change were interrelated.

Environmental Board Chair Thomas Shaffer also spoke on behalf of the Environmental Board's efforts to address climate matters and highlighted relations between climate change and ecological issues like recent mosquito-transmitted diseases.

Councilmember Burns thanked the members of the Environmental Board and relayed that citizens consistently express climate and environmental concerns to him. He stated his desire for City Council to work with the City Administration to set goals to combat climate matters. Councilmember Burns relayed City Council's historical trend to avoid such emergency declarations but stated that now may be the time.

Councilmember Reid noted the Environmental Board's proposed emergency resolution also cites action measures that would entail costs the city must take into consideration with the budget. She further highlighted the lack of consensus in the general population for acknowledging climate change and expressed hope the Environmental Board could assist with increasing support in Portage for the issue.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to refer the communication from the Environmental Board to the City Administration and request feedback on funding and improvements, as well as language on recommendations to make and ask this be accomplished with an initial report back to City Council by the second Regular Meeting in January 2021. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Following the vote, Councilmember Urban cautioned that such a response may take more time to formulate and that it would be an ongoing project requiring fiscally responsibility.

COMMUNICATION FROM PATRICIA THOMPSON REGARDING CITY HEALTH INSURANCE

AGREEMENTS: Motion by Burns, seconded by Reid, to receive the communication from Patricia Thompson regarding city health insurance agreements. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

IDD NO. 90 FOR 6501 PORTAGE ROAD (KENCO) - IFT TRANSFER: Mayor Randall opened the public hearing. Deputy Director of Planning, Development & Neighborhood Services Chris Forth summarized the proposed Industrial Facilities Tax Certificate Transfer, noting the recommended conditions for approval. Mayor Randall requested clarification on the time remaining on the abatement. Deputy Director Forth confirmed four years are remaining. Councilmember Burns inquired on the proposed use for the facility under Stryker's ownership. Deputy Director Forth responded that the current use of the building by Kenco to support logistics operations for Stryker would continue. Matthew VanDyke, representative for the Stryker Corporation, spoke on behalf of the project, thanking City Council and staff for their expedient efforts on the proposed transfer. Councilmember Reid stated she was glad Council was able to complete this review quickly to maintain this business in Portage. Mayor Randall echoed Councilmember Reid's gratitude and requested the City Manager keep Council updated on the status of the property and exemption transfer. Motion by Burns, seconded by Knapp, to close the public hearing. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Reid, to approve Resolution No. 1-20 for the transfer of the Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate from Kenco Logistic Services, LLC to Stryker Corporation for Industrial Development District No. 90 at 6501 Portage Road subject to the above conditions, and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents on behalf of the city. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

FIRST WATCH SOLUTIONS INC.: Councilmember Reid explained that she had removed the item from the Consent Agenda due to the costs entailed with purchasing the product as opposed to pursuing the subscription option. She stated that the subscription option for the software appeared to be a better option for updates and requested clarity on the staff recommendation; otherwise, she planned to recommend referring the item back to the City Administration for further review.

Senior Deputy Fire Chief Stacy French responded, stating that the software maintenance agreement includes all enhancements and upgrades as part of the purchase. He further stressed that the software would assist with the Division's national accreditation.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson asked Senior Deputy Chief French whether the Portage Fire Division had consulted with surrounding agencies to join the purchase of the software. Senior Deputy Chief French confirmed inquiries had been made but other agencies did not respond with interest since they were not accredited and required to keep such records. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson then asked whether staff had contacted the Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch Authority regarding the software purchase. Senior Deputy Chief French responded that staff

had not, because other Kalamazoo area fire chiefs do not have the administrative support or financial backing for this kind of software.

Councilmember Urban asked Senior Deputy Chief French to give a summary regarding the software's functionality. Senior Deputy Chief French stated the First Watch software communicates with other database software platforms utilized by the Fire Division in real-time and gives immediate feedback on deficiencies or issues to better improve performance.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Urban, to authorize the expenditure of \$136,139.24 for data collection, monitoring, and analysis software to First Watch Solutions Inc., and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Knapp provided an update regarding the Portage Community Center Advisory Board. She stated that the Portage Community Center (PCC) had recently mailed its annual giving requests and will receive a two-and-a-half match from a local donor. Councilmember Knapp also highlighted the PCC annual holiday programs, modified to meet COVID-19 restrictions. She closed with an update on the ongoing renovations and landscaping.

Councilmember Burns provided an update regarding the Central County Transportation Authority Board (CCTA). He relayed that the bus system annually participates in bus advertising in order to defray costs by about \$40,000 to \$50,000. Councilmember Burns stated that the CCTA had approved a contract with a new advertising vendor with a more regional focus that would now defray costs up to \$120,000.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to accept the Council Committee Reports as presented. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER:

Councilmember Burns stated it had been a pleasure to work with Council this year, wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season. He was grateful for the Pfizer Corporation's work on the vaccine and is looking forward to progressing out of the pandemic.

Councilmember Knapp stated that it had been an interesting year and thanked the Pfizer Corporation and its employees for their efforts to fight COVID-19. She then acknowledged the Parks and Recreation Department for the holiday displays and encouraged everyone to find ways to visit the displays safely. She then wished everyone safe and happy holidays.

Councilmember Ledbetter stated that the holiday season, no matter the type of holiday, could find people suffering mentally, promoted contacting Gryphon Place (211) for assistance, and checking on loved ones. He then expressed excitement for the Pfizer vaccine but cautioned criticism of skeptics and medical distrust, highlighting the historical Tuskegee experiments as an example. Councilmember Ledbetter closed by wishing everyone a happy holiday season.

Councilmember Urban noted it has been a long and tough year and he is celebrating the Pfizer vaccine. He stated he was proud of Portage but that it was still a long road ahead and encouraged everyone to remain vigilant with masks. He then thanked City Manager La Margo, Department Heads, and staff for maintaining city services throughout the pandemic. Councilmember Urban expressed appreciation for City Manager La Margo being new to the job and handling operations well. He closed by wishing everyone a happy holiday season.

Councilmember Reid stated she was proud to be a Portager in light of Pfizer's vaccine news with the positive image and recognition for Portage. She thanked everyone at Pfizer for its efforts. Councilmember Reid then thanked Representatives Hoadley and Iden for their service. She then highlighted the city survey available online and encouraged everyone to participate. Councilmember Reid closed by encouraging people to have a happy holiday season but maintain safety protocols, modifying traditions to accommodate COVID-19.

City Manager La Margo wished everyone a happy holiday season and thanked the Public Information Office, Department of Public Works, and the Technology Services Department for their assistance with the December 1st annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. He then thanked the Council and staff for their support over the last year. Mr. La Margo responded to Councilmember Ledbetter's earlier comment, noting that staff would promote the contact information for Gryphon Place on city outlets. He closed by thanking Pfizer and was proud to have the facility located in Portage, noting city banners had been placed echoing that same message.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson stated that 2020 had ended on a high note with Pfizer's vaccine development, creating pride in Portage. He closed by noting City Council had been a great working group over the last year and he was looking forward to 2021.

Mayor Randall began by complimenting the publication of the first Annual City Report, relaying where the Report could be reviewed by the public. She relayed her visit with the Trolley and Santa Claus for the prior weekend's Parks Department program that had a great turnout. Mayor Randall then congratulated Detective Randy Dylhoff on his recent retirement and 38-year service to the city. She then acknowledged the passing of Portage Public School Board member Joanne Willson and her contributions to the city's youth. Mayor Randall acknowledged the accomplishment of Pfizer and the support from the citizens. She then noted 2020 had been a great working year, with the positivity of Council and City Manager La Margo as the new City Manager. Mayor Randall closed by wishing everyone a Happy Holidays.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk