MINUTES FROM THE PRE-MEETING
OF THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL
OF JANUARY 11, 2021

Mayor Patricia Randall called the virtual meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Councilmembers Chris Burns, Lori Knapp, Vic Ledbetter, Claudette Reid, and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson also joined virtually. In compliance with Michigan Public Act 228, the Mayor and Councilmembers disclosed their virtual participation from Portage, Michigan, except for Councilmember Reid attending from Pentwater, Michigan. Councilmember Urban was absent with excuse. Also in attendance were City Manager Joseph La Margo, Deputy City Manager Mike Carroll, Deputy City Manager Adam Herringa, and City Clerk Erica Eklov.

Mayor Randall began by reviewing the Proclamations, noting a pending addition of a proclamation recognizing Portage Public School Board of Education member Joanne Willson.

With regard to Item A.2, Accounts Payable Register, Councilmember Knapp requested an update regarding the project related to Check No. 14349 for Angling and Meredith Reconstruction. She then inquired about Check Nos. 315462 and 315602 for "Community Image Builders" totaling over $22,000 and the related contract or project. City Manager La Margo stated he would research and respond.

With regard to Item A.3, Phase 2 of Pennridge Trail, Councilmember Reid noted the City Manager's Report and attached subdivision plan differed with the installation of trees and berm landscaping on the west side along the railroad. She also inquired who would be performing snow removal and maintenance on the emergency access road. City Manager La Margo confirmed the homeowner's association would be maintaining the road. Deputy City Manager Carroll confirmed the City Manager's Report description of the proposed landscaping was correct. Councilmember Reid requested that a corrected plan document be provided.

With regard to Item A.4, Taxation Ordinance Amendment, Councilmember Reid inquired whether the ordinance amendment was related to COVID-19 relief or a permanent revision. City Manager La Margo confirmed the proposed amendment was to be permanent after a review of citizen concerns showed a modification of procedures would not burden staff. He noted the due date remains the same, only the internal handling will change. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson thanked staff for looking into the matter.

With regard to Item A.5, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park Artwork, Councilmember Reid inquired about the funding source. Deputy City Manager Herringa responded that the sculpture was part of a previously approved Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project. Mayor Randall inquired whether the City Administration planned for a public unveiling in 2021. Mr. Herringa confirmed. Councilmember Burns inquired about the discrepancy with the lowest bid. Mayor Randall noted the project design was open to the responding artists and as such, dictated the price.

With regard to Item A.6, Towing Contract Audit, Mayor Pro Tem Pearson requested that City Council be provided the full audit findings following completion, citing concerns with towing pricing after the 2015 car pileup on I-94. Councilmember Reid inquired whether the City Administration had contacted Jamie Graham of Crossroads Towing regarding the audit, noting his former towing concerns. City Manager La Margo responded that the city is recommending the audit as a general measure to ensure procedures are being followed due to varied complaints. Mr. La Margo stated he planned to provide the full audit results and would confer with the Auditor as to whether Mr. Graham would be contacted. Deputy City Manager Carroll stated any citizen concerns received to date had been included in the audit scope. Mayor Randall highlighted complaints she had received from the early

January 2021 ice storm and associated I-94 accident closure. She inquired how long the highway had been closed for that event and possible measures to address the issue. City Manager La Margo stated he would research and respond.

With regard to Item A.7, 2021 March Board of Review, Mayor Randall requested clarification regarding the plan for the Board of Review appointments and interviews. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson inquired about the interview's start time. City Clerk Eklov relayed the sequence of events planned for the Board of Review members and composition.

With regard to Item A.8, 8833 Shaver Road Raze Order, Councilmember Reid requested clarification regarding a potential purchase offer on the property. City Manager La Margo responded that staff has corresponded with the owner about the property since 2017 and there appears to be no plan to remediate the property at this time. Mr. La Margo stated the city would abate the blight and place a lien on the property, which would need to be addressed by any future owner. Deputy City Manager Carroll relayed the information regarding the property ownership to date. Mayor Randall requested staff provide additional history regarding ownership and property sale efforts. City Manager La Margo confirmed he would research and respond.

ADJOURNMENT: Following a summary of the meeting, Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:44 a.m.

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Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk