

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 9, 2021

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:01 PM. 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, except for Councilmember Reid who was attending from Pentwater, Michigan. Also in attendance were City Manager Joe La Margo, City Attorney Catherine Kaufman, 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 reflect on how diversity enriches the Portage community. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATIONS: At the request of Mayor Randall, Councilmember Knapp read the Proclamation honoring Chinese New Year 2021.

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. Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of January 26, 2021 and Pre-Council Meeting minutes of February 8, 2021. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF FEBRUARY 9, 2021: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of February 9, 2021, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MICROSOFT LICENSING RENEWAL: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve a one-year renewal of the Microsoft Open Value Subscription Agreement with CDW-G, in the amount of \$77,417.08 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.

LOCAL 2290-4 (UAW) CONTRACT: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to approve the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), Local 2290-4 Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period of February 10, 2021 to June 30, 2024 and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the same. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

MINUTES OF BOARDS & COMMISSIONS: Motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to receive the Minutes of the Planning Commission of October 1, 2020; Planning Commission of November 5, 2020; Youth Advisory Committee of December 14, 2020; Human Services Board of

January 7, 2021, and Planning Commission of January 21, 2021. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

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

COMMUNICATIONS:

PRESENTATION OF THE 2020 PORTAGE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY: City Manager La Margo summarized the annual Community Survey process and introduced the National Research Center as the coordinator of the Portage Community Survey, noting it was the vendor's first time conducting the survey for Portage. Mr. La Margo stated that the National Research Center was the foremost survey facilitator for the International City/County Management Association. He then introduced Erin Caldwell from the National Research Center to present the findings of the 2020 Community Survey for Portage.

Ms. Caldwell began by thanking her associates at the National Research Center, as well as Public Information Officer Mary Beth Block for their efforts on the survey. Ms. Caldwell then presented the highlights of the 2020 survey, noting that 1,700 households were randomly selected with a twenty-four percent response rate. She described the Facets of Community Livability on which respondents were surveyed and noted the only poor rating related to the future outlook of the economy and the fiscal health outlook for household income. Ms. Caldwell stressed that such a response was expected with a survey conducted during a pandemic and stated the remainder of the ratings were overall positive. Ms. Caldwell then presented on each survey facet.

Following Ms. Caldwell's presentation, Mayor Randall inquired whether a twenty-four percent response rate was typical. Ms. Caldwell responded that Portage's response rate was slightly higher than average, noting that typical response rates are between fifteen and thirty percent of households surveyed. She relayed that the National Research Center is finding survey rates are declining as a whole due in large part to the decline of household phone line usage as an available mode of survey. Councilmember Burns highlighted the response rate differences between age groups and requested Ms. Caldwell explain how she weighted the responses. Ms. Caldwell responded that statistical weighting is part of survey best practices to ensure the results are representative of the community and noted several measures performed to produce the information. Councilmember Reid noted the survey results also included responses from the citizens that chose to visit the website and take the survey online, which would not have been part of the randomly selected group. She inquired how these responses factored into the results, noting she had not observed any notable differences. Ms. Caldwell stated she would need to further research to respond. Councilmember Reid then noted the nationwide benchmarks used for comparison by the National Research Center and asked whether the range could be narrowed from a national sampling to a surrounding geographic region and comparably sized jurisdictions for better assessment. Ms. Caldwell responded that a narrowed research sample is an additional contract option should the city desire to pursue it. City Manager La Margo noted that the survey results would be posted on the city website the following day for public viewing.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Knapp, to receive the presentation of the 2020 Portage Scientific Community-Wide Survey. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

KALAMAZOO COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

REPRESENTATION: Mayor Pro Tem Pearson commented on his prior service on the Kalamazoo County Environmental Health Advisory Council (EHAC), including as Chair. He noted that he was part of the EHAC when Councilmember Reid was appointed as representative for the City of Portage. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson stated that Ms. Reid was always well prepared for the EHAC meetings, and he expressed support for her re-appointment.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Knapp, to confirm the re-appointment of Councilmember Reid as the City of Portage representative to the Kalamazoo County Environmental Health Advisory Council. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

PROPOSED RESOLUTION DECLARING A CLIMATE CRISIS: Mayor Randall thanked Deputy City Manager Herringa and the Environmental Board for their efforts in crafting the Resolution for the City Council and then summarized the prior discussion regarding climate change as it related to the City of Portage. She thanked the Environmental Board and the community for their leadership in bringing this matter to the forefront. Following the invitation by the Mayor, Councilmember Urban read the Resolution into the record. Mayor Randall stated she looked forward to measurable goals and changes following the formal adoption of the Resolution.

Motion by Urban, seconded by Burns, to adopt the Resolution declaring a Climate Crisis. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Burns provided an update regarding the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA). He stated that the Kalamazoo County Sheriff provided an update on safety monitoring at the downtown Transit Center at the recent meeting in light of the new contract with the Sheriff's Department to provide this service. Councilmember Burns noted that the City of Kalamazoo Public Safety Department was previously contracted for security patrol of the Transit Center, which proved problematic in light of the responsibility of patrolling the surrounding city as well. Councilmember Burns confirmed the new contract with the Sheriff's Department proved to be a good arrangement and would be continued. He then provided an update on the Bronson Bus to Work program collaboration between Bronson Health System and the CCTA, noting it would be extended following a positive response. Councilmember Burns outlined that the program includes a cost-sharing arrangement with Bronson Healthcare and encouraged City Council to expand a similar arrangement with the area's other large employers. Mayor Pro Tem Pearson echoed support for expanding the program as well. Mayor Randall inquired who is in charge of clearing bus shelters of snow in light of the recent weather. Councilmember Burns responded that the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority is responsible and confirmed he had previously stressed the matter and would do so again.

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

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Carolyn Peshak (6745 Shoreham) urged City Council to adopt a new housing ordinance to reduce housing discrimination. She noted a similar ordinance adopted by the City of Kalamazoo in the fall of 2020 as an example. Ms. Peshak closed by suggesting Councilmembers attend an upcoming Kalamazoo anti-discrimination workshop, once the date was announced. Mayor Randall asked Ms. Peshak to relay the date of the workshop, once it was announced, to the Offices of the City Manager or City Clerk. Ms. Peshak confirmed she would.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Burns stated he was pleased with the community survey results and noted select aspects, such as the economy and employment rates, were beyond the city's control. He expressed hope that the New Year and COVID-19 vaccine efforts will bring the numbers back to pre-COVID levels.

Councilmember Reid began by thanking City Council for recommending her re-appointment to the Kalamazoo County Environmental Health Advisory Council. She then encouraged the public to continue efforts to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, as well as continue adherence to safety measures and protocols. Councilmember Reid expressed hope that the return of students to face-to-face instruction would improve the overall outlook and economy.

Councilmember Ledbetter highlighted a recent article he had read in which Waco, Texas was celebrating the appointment of its first black female police chief. He recalled former Councilmember Dr. Romeo Phillips, former Portage Police Officer Elton Thomas, and Portage Fire Chief George Sheets who were the first black persons in those roles. Councilmember Ledbetter stated the first of their kind could be in the position to break barriers, as well as be isolated without peers to engage.

City Manager La Margo relayed that staff had uploaded the community survey to the city website during the meeting. He further highlighted the city website with links to COVID-19 vaccination information. Mr. La Margo closed by thanking the Department of Public Works staff for their excellent efforts in clearing city roads during the recent snow events.

Mayor Randall began by thanking Councilmember Knapp for presenting the inaugural Chinese New Year Proclamation, noting the Proclamation would be provided to Charles and Lynn Zhang for their annual Chinese New Year celebration. She encouraged the public to bring additional distinctive proclamations forward for Council consideration. Mayor Randall then noted the upcoming National 2-1-1 Day on February 11th and highlighted Gryphon Place in Kalamazoo. She provided an update for the city's ongoing Black History Month Friday speaker series. Mayor Randall then commended staff and volunteers with the Portage Senior Center for a public mask drive that distributed 450 masks earlier that afternoon. Mayor Randall closed by wishing everyone a Happy Valentine's Day.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk