

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 21, 2025

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Regular Meeting to order at 06:00 PM in the Council Chambers at Portage City Hall.

ROLL CALL: Councilmembers Victor Ledbetter, Nicole Miller, Terry Urban, Jihan Young, and Mayor Patricia Randall were present.

ABSENT: Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson and Councilmember Chris Burns.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Pat McGinnis, Chief Operating Officer Adam Herringa, Chief Development Officer Peter Dame, City Attorney Catherine Kaufman, and Deputy City Clerk Tammy Durian.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to reflect on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., his teachings, and continue to work toward becoming a community in which all citizens are valued and respected for their contributions. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATIONS:

Black History Month: Councilmember Jihan Young read the proclamation.

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS:

1. Nate Niewoonder (5198 12th Street), representative of Best Way Disposal, provided a brief background of Best Way Disposal's history in the area. Mr. Niewoonder discussed the Request for Proposal (RFP) the city released for citywide residential waste Collection and recycling services, sharing some points of concern and expressing the need for clarification regarding specifics in the RFP.
2. Brandy Van Horn (100 Old Wentworth Place), representative of Best Way Disposal, also discussed the Request for Proposal (RFP) and echoed many of Mr. Niewoonder's points.

CONSENT AGENDA: Mayor Randall shared where the public can access the meeting agenda and asked if any would like an item removed from the Consent Agenda. Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to approve the City Council Meeting Minutes of the Board & Commission Interviews and Regular Meeting of January 7, 2025. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

Accounts Payable Register: Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of January 21, 2025, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

Three-Year Renewal of Assessing Services Contract: Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to approve a three-year renewal contract with WCA Assessing for city assessing services for \$515,631 in year one, with increases in years two and three, and authorize the City Manager to execute all related documents. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

Annual Microsoft Licensing Purchase: Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to approve the purchase of the annual Microsoft licensing in the amount of \$89,946.84 from Insight Public Sector 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 5 to 0.

Revision to Purchasing Ordinance: Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to accept the amendment to Division 2, Article 5 "Purchases and Sales" in the City of Portage Code of Ordinances for first reading and set a second reading with final adoption for February 4, 2025. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

2025 Board of Review Recommendations: Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to adopt the resolution setting the schedule for the 2025 Board of Review and approve the compensation rate for the Board of Review meetings and training. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

Poverty Exemption Guidelines for 2025: Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to approve the resolution determining policy and guidelines which the Board of Review will use when deciding whether to grant poverty exemptions pursuant to Public Act 253 of 2020. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried to 0.

Approve 2025 - 2026 Goal Statement: Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to approve the 2025-2026 Goal Statement. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

Minutes of Boards & Commissions: Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to receive the minutes of the Human Services Board of December 5, 2024. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

Calendar of Meetings: Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to receive the Calendar of Meetings as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Annual Report from the Youth Advisory Committee: Aanya Goel, Ell Johnson, and Kathrine Li from the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) presented the annual report on the activities and efforts of the committee in the community, including city board and Council interactions, volunteer and outreach efforts, increasing environmental awareness, and bolstering social media presence. Fellow YAC member Dalen Ekola-labra was also present. Councilmembers complimented the YAC and inquired about recruitment and social media efforts.

Motion by Miller, seconded by Young, to receive the Annual Report from the Youth Advisory Committee for 2024/2025. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Adoption for the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code Amendment: City Manager McGinnis noted this is the second reading and final adoption for the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code Amendment.

Motion by Young, seconded by Ledbetter, to adopt the proposed ordinance amendment to the Code of Ordinances and the adopted 2021 International Property Maintenance Code. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

Exclusive Hauler Ordinance Proposal: City Manager McGinnis noted this is the second reading and final adoption for Chapter 58 - Solid Waste of the City of Portage Code of Ordinance amendment. He also recognized that the City of Portage has released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for citywide residential waste collection and recycling services and is currently receiving inquiries. He explained the process. Councilmember Urban referenced the billing for waste haulers and asked to modify Section 2E-1, the fee schedule and billing, in the ordinance. Discussion ensued and Attorney Kaufman offered a minor modification to the billing language that would not require the ordinance to return to a first reading.

Motion by Urban, seconded by Young, to adopt the ordinance to amend Chapter 58 - Solid Waste of the City of Portage Code of Ordinances as presented with the exception of Section 2E-1, striking "in the previous quarter" at the end of Section 2E-1 to read "The contractor shall send a quarterly invoice by regular mail or other means as approved by residential property owners to residential site for which services are rendered in the city."

Councilmember Urban further discussed the RFP and ordinance, providing comments on bulk waste pickup. Mayor Randall also mentioned billing and annual payment.

Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Urban encouraged residents to look after their neighbors and animals due to the cold temperatures.

Councilmember Ledbetter recognized the celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, and commented on the phenomenal MLK Celebration event he attended at Western Michigan University featuring Bakari T. Sellers. Councilmember Ledbetter then shared that he and Councilmember Young had an opportunity to host the Portage Connect podcast with the featured speaker for the 2025 Black History Month Presentation on February 1st, Jackie Joyner-Kersey, noting her amazing story.

Councilmember Miller promoted the Youth Advisory Committee's (YAC) Winter Snow Party at Oakland Drive Park on February 1st from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. and provided the YAC's Instagram handle, Portage_YAC. Lastly, she congratulated Councilmember Young who will be honored on January 30th at the Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Annual MLK Beyond the Dream Celebration – Protecting Freedom, Justice and Democracy event.

Councilmember Young reminded residents not to park on the streets, leave space between cars, and be mindful of first responders when driving in the snow. She also highlighted the Portager and noted Portage services and events including Portage Road 360, Food Scraps Recycling Program, Portage Pocket Pay and reminded residents to continue to patronize small businesses. Councilmember Young also recognized the City Hall Martin Luther King, Jr. display and encouraged folks to come and learn about Dr. King's life and legacy.

City Manager McGinnis thanked all of City staff for work attendance and efforts during the inclement weather.

Mayor Randall likewise thanked employees for their dedication during the inclement weather. She also acknowledged the contract renewal with WCA Assessing, noting established uniform assessments in the City of Portage. Mayor Randall recognized Councilmembers Ledbetter and Young for their interview with WZZM Channel 13 News highlighting the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Exhibition at Portage City Hall. Next, she shared the importance of celebrating cultures and encouraged the public to attend the Chinese New Year (the Year of Snake) event at Chenery Auditorium in Kalamazoo. Mayor Randall then thanked the City Council for their representation and attending The State of Economic Development Southwest Michigan program presented by Southwest Michigan First. She closed with an invite for the public to stop by to warm up at City Hall and the Senior Center.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 6:56 PM.

Tammy Durian, Deputy City Clerk

