

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 11, 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 Chris Burns, Victor Ledbetter, Nicole Miller, Terry Urban, Jihan Young, and Mayor Patricia Randall were present.

ABSENT: Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Pat McGinnis, Chief Operating Officer Adam Herringa, Chief Development Officer Peter Dame, Assistant City Attorney Seth Koches, and City Clerk Erica Eklov.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to recognize National 211 Day and the services provided. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance with the assistance of Cub Scout Troop 289 of Portage United Church of Christ.

PROCLAMATIONS:

National 211 Day: Sarah Mead, Director of Marketing & Advancement, from Gryphon Place, read the proclamation.

Jihan Ain Young MLK Beyond the Dream Celebration: Mayor Randall and the Councilmembers included an additional proclamation, read by Councilmember Miller, honoring Councilmember Young's recent commemoration by the Kalamazoo Valley Community College as one of six local "racial equity change agents".

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: None.

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. Councilmember Burns removed item A.3 (Ordinance Amendment Section 2-252).

Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the City Council Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 21, 2025. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Accounts Payable Register: Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of February 11, 2025, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

New Polling Location Resolution: Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to adopt the Resolution designating the Calvary Chapel of Kalamazoo Valley Church at 5331 S. Sprinkle Road as a polling location for the City of Portage. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Quit Claim Deed to Portage Public School District: Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to authorize the City Manager to execute a quit claim deed to the Portage Public Schools District for two parcels at Woodland Elementary School. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

West Lake Weed Management – 2025 to 2029 Application Program: Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to adopt Resolution No. 1, accept the City Manager Report, and request preparation of Resolution No. 2 for the West Lake Management Program Special District No. 025-Q. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Solicitor Permit Denial Appeal: Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to receive the communication from Ms. Rishelle Hartman of Weed Man Lawncare appealing the denial of a Solicitor's Permit and schedule a hearing for the denial on February 25, 2025. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Closed Session to Discuss a Matter of Property Acquisition: Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to meet in Closed Session immediately following "Statements of City Council and City Manager" of the regularly scheduled City Council Meeting of Tuesday, February 11, 2025, pursuant to MCL 15.268 Sec. 8(d). Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Minutes of Boards & Commissions: Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to receive the minutes of the Human Services Board of January 9, 2025. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Materials Transmitted: Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to receive the Materials Transmitted of January 13, 2025. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Calendar of Meetings: Motion by Burns, seconded by Ledbetter, to receive the Calendar of Meetings as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA:

Proposed Amendment to Citizen Advisory Board Attendance Ordinance: Councilmember Burns explained that he removed the item from the Consent Agenda due to concerns regarding the proposed absence stipulation amendment as it pertained to those boards and commissions meeting less frequently than three times a year. Mayor Randall acknowledged similar concerns brought up by Councilmember Urban prior to the meeting and requested the City Manager to elaborate on a potential amendment to the proposal.

City Manager McGinnis noted Councilmember Urban's Pre-Council question that expressed concern that a single absence from a member of an infrequently assembled board would adversely affect membership. Clerk Eklov relayed the proposed amendment language from the Pre-Council responses. City Manager McGinnis expounded that recent attendance issues spurred the discussion about amending the ordinance and policy.

Councilmember Urban discussed potential emergencies that could cause a member's unexpected absence and highlighted boards that had members appointed by outside organizations. He supported adding the proposed language giving the City Council the final judgment for those matters.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Young, to amend the proposed changes to the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 1, Article 7, Section 2-252 - "Attendance at meetings" to include "Exceptions to this policy may be granted by City Council on a case-by-case basis." Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Urban, to receive for first reading the proposed amended ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 1, Article 7, Section 2-252 - Attendance at meetings. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

City Manager McGinnis inquired about including the revisions to the associated Council Policy for Appointments to Boards & Commissions. Clerk Eklov responded that the policy would mirror the ordinance and the revisions would be included with the second reading.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Revision to Purchasing Ordinance: At the Mayor's introduction, City Manager McGinnis highlighted the proposed revisions to the purchasing ordinance. He noted that cost of living increases led to the change in the staff purchasing thresholds. Motion by Burns, seconded by Young, to accept the amendment to Article 5, Division 2, "Purchases and Sales" in the City of Portage Code of Ordinances. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: Councilmember Burns provided an update regarding the Kalamazoo Central Transit Authority. He relayed recent discussions concerning federal funding.

Councilmember Young provided an update regarding the Portage Community Center Board. She highlighted the organization's upcoming May Golf Outing fundraiser.

Motion by Ledbetter, seconded by Urban, to receive the Council Committee Reports as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Urban had no comment.

Councilmember Ledbetter thanked Jackie Joyner-Kersey for headlining the Black History Month event. He then acknowledged the Tuskegee Airmen squad from World War II as part of Black History Month and discussed their history.

Councilmember Miller relayed her visits to the Portage Public Schools' indoor walking events. She also praised the Jackie Joyner-Kersey and the Black History Month event. She then highlighted the Youth Advisory Committee and its recent Snow Party event and snowplow naming efforts. Councilmember Miller closed by noting Discover Kalamazoo's "sport court" measures.

Councilmember Young began by thanking the Council for their proclamation. She relayed her attendance at Jaqua Realtors' "State of the Region" event and its updates. Councilmember Young then advised that the impending winter weather might affect the Small Business Town Hall event by Southwest Michigan First, and then highlighted local salon, A'vie (1416 W Milham). She closed with a mention of the Portage Public Schools' "Battle of the Books" event.

Councilmember Burns invited the public to attend the upcoming Portage Road 360 Planning and Design Initiative event at the Zhang-Portage Senior Center.

City Manager McGinnis commented regarding lobbying state and federal officials as part of the upcoming Michigan Municipal League's CAPCON event in Lansing. He then highlighted the recent meeting between himself, Mayor Randall, several other local officials, and Senator Elisa Slotkin to discuss local issues and concerns, including recent federal funding announcements.

(Mayor Randall noted a point of order by Clerk Eklov, who highlighted that the second reading for Item A.3 was scheduled for the Regular Meeting of March 11, 2025.)

Mayor Randall began by thanking the Cub Scout troop for participating. She then acknowledged Councilmembers Ledbetter and Young for their work with the Black History Month event. Mayor Randall also acknowledged the recent Chinese Lantern Festival held at the Senior Center and its popularity. She also recognized the recent passing of former Councilmember and County Commissioner John Zull, as well as former Mayor Betty Lee Ongley's 99th birthday. Mayor Randall closed by noting the forecasted winter storm and responsive efforts.

ENTERED CLOSED SESSION: 6:42 PM.

RETURNED FROM CLOSED SESSION 7:53 PM.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM.

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk