# CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM JULY 8, 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, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson, and Mayor Patricia Randall were present.

**ABSENT:** None.

**ALSO PRESENT:** City Manager Pat McGinnis, Chief Operating Officer Adam Herringa, Chief Development Officer Peter Dame, City Attorney Catherine Kaufman, and City Clerk Erica Eklov.

At the request of Mayor Randall, the audience observed a moment of silence to reflect on the devastation caused by the July 4 flooding in Kerr County, Texas. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PROCLAMATIONS:**

**National Day of Summer Learning:** Clerk Eklov read the proclamation. Regina and Alexis of the Kalamazoo Youth Development Network youth cabinet were able to address the Council following Petitions and Statements of Citizens.

**Disability Pride Month:** Kelley Kellis, CEO of the Disability Network of Southwest Michigan, read the proclamation.

**PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS:**

1. Alan Loveridge (23965 88th Ave, Marcellus) initially spoke about potential improvements to wayfinding and signage. He then spoke about potential service add-ons for single waste hauling.
2. Jason Mikkelborg (6834 Manhattan Street) noted his prior run for County Commissioner and efforts to assist veterans getting free entry to county parks. He thanked the City Manager for helping provide veterans with free entry to city parks. He then stated his opposition to a single hauler for waste services in the city, citing potential job losses, declining service quality, and unforeseen consequences from government incursion in the free market.
3. Les Minor (2514 East Shore Drive) requested clarity regarding property along East Shore Drive owned by Dale Kraker. Mr. Minor then suggested a co-op program for area teens to perform yard maintenance at city parks.
4. Richard Locke (1902 Vickery Rd) stated his concerns with design aspects of the Portage Road 360 project. He also questioned if citizen feedback at meetings was being taken into consideration.
5. Greg Miller (232 Cedarview Drive) began by noting that the City Council and City Manager had previously answered many of his questions, but he remained opposed to a single waste hauler collection model. He stated his support of Best Way Disposal following bad experiences with other area disposal companies. He asked for clarity about pricing management in the waste hauling contract.
6. Alan Hopkins (10510 Sudan Street) spoke regarding a vacant, decrepit home at 10520 Sudan in need of maintenance. He noted it was his third year working to resolve this matter privately and had been unsuccessful trying to purchase the property from the owner. Additionally, he spoke to the need for a greater police presence on Osterhout. Following the Mayor's inquiry, Mr. Hopkins stated he desired feedback regarding the staff's review of the property.

**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 Young, seconded by Burns, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to approve the City Council Meeting Minutes of the Committee of the Whole and the Regular Meeting of June 24, 2025. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Accounts Payable Register:** Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of July 8, 2025, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Budget Amendment for purchase of 7716 South Westnedge Avenue:** Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to approve a budget amendment to use $541,612.80 in excess General Fund balance to fund the purchase of 7716 South Westnedge Avenue, via a transfer from the General Fund to the Capital Improvement Fund, 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.

**Closed Session to Discuss a Personnel Matter and Litigation:** Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to meet in Closed Session immediately following the regularly scheduled City Council Meeting of Tuesday, July 8, 2025, to discuss two separate matters: a personnel matter under Sec. 8(1)A of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, and the settlement strategy relating to pending litigation under Sec. 8(1)E of the Michigan Open Meetings Act. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**Calendar of Meetings:** Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to receive the Calendar of Meetings as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**Brownfield Redevelopment Plan Amendment No. 15, American Village Development II, LLC (1075 Bacon Avenue):** Mayor Randall introduced the item and asked the City Manager to provide an overview. The City Manager explained the scope of the project and at the Council's invitation, Jon Hallberg, Deputy Director of Economic Development and staff liaison for the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA), provided a brief presentation regarding the proposal by American Village Development II, LLC. He highlighted the conditions the BRA added to the agreement with the developer, including sidewalk improvements and a ten-year timeline for development. The Mayor highlighted that Michigan's brownfield designation had been recently expanded to include certain housing development activities as a tool for local governments to promote housing development.

Mayor Randall opened the public hearing at 6:40 PM. As there were no comments, motion by Urban, seconded by Young, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0. This was then followed by a motion by Young, seconded by Urban, to approve the American Village Development II, LLC, Brownfield Redevelopment Plan Application, with Brownfield Redevelopment Plan Amendment No. 15, for McConley Cove at 1075 Bacon Avenue. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Stanwood Crossings Declaration of Easements and Protective Covenants:** Mayor Randall introduced the topic.

Councilmember Urban expressed support for some of the recent revisions, but displeasure over others. He reiterated that the Stanwood Crossing development and property owners should not held to higher standards than other city residents. He questioned why the City Administration used the term "household" and not "family," noting that the city's Non-Discrimination Ordinance already defined "family". He urged consistency but declined to recommend additional revisions to the Community Land Trust documents.

Councilmember Miller commended city staff for listening to the Council and being responsive, particularly in removing some of the expensive requirements placed on potential homebuyers. She highlighted the compromises that went into developing the document and while she was dissatisfied with some of the smaller details , she noted these could be changed later as a self-sustaining land trust and closed by expressing her overall support of the project.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Young, to approve the Stanwood Crossings Declaration of Easements and Protective Covenants and direct 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.

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None.

**STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER:** Councilmember Urban highlighted the Disability Pride Month proclamation and stressed that disabilities are not always visible He reminded the community to be mindful when interacting with others.

Councilmember Ledbetter echoed Councilmember Urban's comments and relayed his experience with the KVCC Police Academy and disability awareness while serving the community. He closed by emphasizing the importance of respecting others.

Councilmember Miller related her meeting with the 415th Civil Affairs Alpha and Delta Companies, who act as liaisons between the military and local government. She also noted that the companies are seeking additional ways to integrate their training with the city. Councilmember Miller thanked Disability Network of Southwest Michigan for attending and raising awareness of various disabilities in the community and highlighted the organization's presence at the Kalamazoo Farmer's Market and possibility of their attendance at future Portage Farmer's Markets.

Councilmember Young spoke regarding the devastating floods in Texas and the impacts of natural disasters. She emphasized extending compassion to those affected, reminding residents of the compassion Portage received after the 2024 Tornado. She then congratulated the South and West Portage Little Leagues for their recent baseball wins. Councilmember Young relayed that the city brush collection program would begin later in the month and extended an open invitation to anyone with concerns regarding the single waste hauler proposal to attend the presentation slated for the July 22, 2025, Regular Meeting. She closed by highlighting the upcoming Public Safety Showcase on July 29 and 30 as a chance to meet public safety officers.

Councilmember Burns provided a reminder to late arriving audience members that City Council meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. with one opportunity for public comment. He also reminded the audience that the Council as well as the plan to hold a closed session before adjourning.

City Manager McGinnis congratulated the Finance Department for receiving the Certification of Excellence from the Association of Public Treasurers of the U.S. and Canada for their work on the city's investment policy. He then congratulated the Parks Department, highlighting that, per Discover Kalamazoo, Ramona Park was the third most-visited attraction in Kalamazoo County. He also noted Bicentennial Trail park had a high number of visitors as well. City Manager McGinnis closed with comments on the aforementioned 415$^{th}$ Civil Affairs Companies would be assisting with continued tornado clean-up efforts.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson had no additional comment.

Mayor Randall highlighted the opening of the new Stubble & Stache barbershop and bar , which hired staff displaced from Jude's Barbershop, following its destruction during the 2024 tornado. She noted the July 10 Concert in the Park show. Reflecting on the devastating floods in Kerr County, TX, she thanked previous City Councils and City Administrations for investing in the emergency alert systems.

**RECESSED TO CLOSED SESSION AT 7:03 PM.**

**RETURNED FROM CLOSED SESSION AT 8:34 PM.**

Following the Closed Session, the Council acted on matters discussed during the session as follows:

**Settlement strategy relating to pending litigation under Sec. 8(1)E of the Michigan Open Meetings Act:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Young, to authorize the City Administration to settle a worker's compensation claim as discussed in closed session and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents on behalf of the city.

**Personnel matter under Sec. 8(1)A of the Michigan Open Meetings Act:** Motion by Pearson, seconded by Burns, to, as part of the City Manager's annual performance review, award City Manager McGinnis a 3.5 percent salary increase, from $220,500 to $228,211; award the City Manager a $5,000 performance bonus; and approve a minor change to Item G in the City Manager's retirement package.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Randall adjourned the meeting at 8:36 PM.

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk