

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM AUGUST 26, 2025

Mayor Patricia Randall called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 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, 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 patience and safety as children and teachers return to school. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS:

1. Alan Loveridge (23965 88th Avenue, Marcellus) suggested the City make a website that would allow citizens to collaborate in solving local issues.
2. Leah Owens (State Streets) expressed displeasure with the single-source waste hauler program, citing cost calculations for her household. Ms. Owens also stated that she was concerned about the recycling program being disbanded. Mayor Randall responded with information that the city's recycling program is funded via the existing recycling millage, which will continue the program.
3. Les Minor (2516 East Shore Drive) urged the City Council to consider a public education program on the single-source waste hauler program. He thanked Councilmember Urban for suggesting tabling the item and questioned some of the decision-making process. He closed by stressing that the Council needed to better communicate the supposed benefits of the program.
4. Bret Hamlin (6784 S. Westnedge Avenue) introduced his business, Championship Martial Arts Portage, which had recently opened in the area.
5. CJ Gustafson (8117 Sprinkle Road) expressed concerns about abuse of employee benefits, noting her observations of Public Works Director Rod Russell using a city vehicle for non-approved purposes. She states that she had requested information regarding city policies to clarify but found the answers to her questions insufficient. Ms. Gustafson said she is a city resident and wants her taxpayer dollars used correctly.

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 6 to 0.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to approve the City Council Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 12, 2025. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Accounts Payable Register: Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of August 26, 2025, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Purchase of Ice-Control Salt: Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to award a contract to Detroit Salt for the early delivery of 3,300 tons of ice-control salt at \$68.86 per ton, totaling \$227,238, and for a seasonal back-up of 1,000 tons at \$72.58 per ton, totaling \$72,580, to be supplied on an as-

needed basis, and authorize the City Manager to execute all related documents on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Local Officers Compensation Commission Report: Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to receive the report from the Local Officers Compensation Commission. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Board and Commission Interviews: Motion by Young, seconded by Burns, to set a Special Meeting for Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. to Review Board and Commission Applicants. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

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

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

COMMUNICATIONS:

Presentation by Kalamazoo Metro Transit Executive Director: Kalamazoo Metro Executive Director Sean McBride provided an update regarding the Kalamazoo County Transit Authority (KCTA) and the more urban Central County Transit Authority (CCTA) systems. Curtis Aardema, chair of both Authorities, was also present.

Councilmember Miller asked for more information on the zones used by MetroLink, a rideshare service, and navigating between them. Director McBride elaborated.

Councilmember Young inquired why bus passes offered to Kalamazoo Public High School students are not offered to Portage Public High School students. Director McBride noted the Foundation of Excellence, based in the City of Kalamazoo, reimburses the KCTA, so it would require partnerships in Portage to be able to provide such services to Portage students.

Councilmember Burns noted the partnership with the Portage Zhang Senior Center, providing members with free trips to get groceries as well as to and from PZSC events.

Councilmember Ledbetter inquired how the staff gathered the citizen needs survey data. Director McBride explained that they surveyed people directly from bus riders.

Councilmember Urban noted that the city as a whole paid for the millage and asked why the MetroLink service did not include all the southern Austin Lake area. Director McBride explained MetroLink was still operating as a pilot program and that a millage proposal on the November 4, 2025, ballot would allow the service to expand and cover the area.

Mayor Randall inquired about a route with the KRESA Career Connect Campus area, and Director McBride responded with ridership figures. Mayor Randall then asked about plans to serve airport travelers, to which Director McBride explained current options and potential future expansions.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Young, to receive the presentation from Executive Director McBride. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

REGULAR BUSINESS AGENDA:

Closed Session Recommendation: Mayor Randall introduced the item, briefly explaining the nature of the rationale for the closed session. Motion by Burns, seconded by Young, to enter into Closed Session immediately following "Statements of City Council and City Manager" of the regularly scheduled City Council Meeting of Tuesday, August 26, 2025, to consult with its attorney regarding trial or settlement strategy pursuant to MCL 15.268 Sec. 8(e), "because discussion in open session may have a detrimental financial effect on the litigation or settlement position of the City (City of Portage v. Eastshore LLC et al, case number 2024-0160-CC)." Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmembers Burns, Ledbetter, and Miller had no comments, nor did City Manager McGinnis.

Councilmember Urban spoke regarding a recent news article with a misleading headline about city funding for a new County-led family homeless shelter. Councilmember Urban stated that the City of Portage supported the County's original proposal and associated request for the Residence Inn location; however, he clarified that the new location proposed for the former Country Inn & Suites did not include Portage as part of the arrangement. Councilmember Urban noted that the city's original funding agreement had expired, and in turn, was never asked to contribute to the new location.

Councilmember Young began by congratulating Champion Martial Arts on their recent opening and by highlighting the YWCA Women's Equity Luncheon. She then referred to the upcoming Portage Northern and Portage Central High Schools football game and her and Councilmember Miller's competition, which includes a collection for 12 Baskets in the City Hall lobby. She also noted the upcoming October Board and Commission interviews, encouraging citizens to apply for a city board. Councilmember Young closed by thanking her neighbors for utilizing the city's Block Party permitting process to host such an event recently.

Mayor Randall congratulated the construction projects that finished just before the start of the school year. She then wished everyone a safe and happy Labor Day holiday. Mayor Randall closed by echoing Councilmember Urban's comment regarding the County's housing assistance project, noting that Portage pays 23 percent for every dollar spent at the county level.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Randall recessed the Regular Meeting at 6:56 PM, and the City Council moved into Closed Session. City Council returned from Closed Session at 9:17 PM.

Mayor Randall adjourned the Regular Meeting at 09:18 PM.

Erica L. Eklov, City Clerk

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