CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 10, 2017

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Strazdas at 7:30 p.m.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Pastor Richard Hertsel of the Centre Avenue Community Church of God of Portage gave the invocation and City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Richard Ford, Jim Pearson, Patricia M. Randall, Claudette Reid and Terry Urban, and Mayor Peter Strazdas. Mayor Pro Tem Nasim Ansari was absent with excuse. Also in attendance were City Manager Laurence Shaffer, City Attorney Randy Brown and City Clerk James R. Hudson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2016, as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to approve the Pre-Council Meeting Notes of January 9, 2017, as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 3 to 0 with Councilmembers Reid, Ford and Urban abstaining.

* **CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Strazdas asked Councilmember Urban to read the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Reid asked that Item F.1, Building Access and Video Surveillance, and F.2, Website Rebuild Project - Professional Services, be removed from the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Randall asked that Item F.4, 2017 March Board of Review, be removed from the Consent Agenda. Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve the Consent Agenda motions as amended. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

* **APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF JANUARY 10, 2017:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of January 10, 2017. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

CHOPIN AVENUE AND MOZART STREET WATER MAIN PROJECT #317-W: Mayor Strazdas introduced this item and asked City Manager Shaffer for comment. Mr. Shaffer deferred to Director of Utilities Chris Barnes, who reviewed the item, cited the location of the proposed sanitary sewer project and offered the use of the map previously contained in a past Council Agenda Packet to assist Council. He mentioned that Council adopted the Resolution of Necessity on December 6, 2016, for the project, listed some of the benefits to be derived, and noted that there is no mandatory water hook-up, so the wells on the properties can remain for household use and/or lawn watering where appropriate. He reminded Council that the bases of the charge to the property owner are front footage and water service with the front footage capped at 80 feet and the charge per foot at $38.77; he also indicated that the 1 ¼ " lateral to hook up to water service is $1,235. He indicated that the property owners were provided the information that these charges can be financed over 20 years and that construction is contemplated to commence during the Spring 2017 Construction Season.

In answer to Councilmember Randall, Mr. Barnes responded that the life expectance of water lines depends on the soil and how the pipes are bedded; he then reflected that since 1970-72, Portage has used duct-a-liner water main pipes for replacement and for new construction which lasts 80-100 years, whereas in the past cast iron pipes were used by most communities that last about 50-75 years and he said that breaks appear often in cast iron sections.

Mayor Strazdas opened the public hearing for comments from the audience and hearing none, he entertained a motion to close the public hearing.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Randall, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0. Discussion followed.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to adopt Special Assessment Resolution No. 5 for the Chopin Avenue and Mozart Street Water Main Project #317-W, confirming the Special Assessment Roll. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 299 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 46.

PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Gordon Smith, 2312 Holly Avenue, who indicated he was pulled over by a Police Officer on December 21, 2016, and mentioned the Michigan Court of Appeals decision that overturned the transportation of Medical Marijuana. He alleged that the Police Officers did not know that they were using incorrect discretion, and he said that the Police Sargent inferred that he would proceed with a *nolle prosequi* or that he would "nolle the case." He indicated that the next day he received a call that the misdemeanor for illegal transportation (of Medical Marijuana) was obviously incorrect, so he spoke with a Portage Police Lieutenant who told him owing to Federal Statute, he cannot return the substance. So, he expressed his frustration with the process and mentioned that he had Attorney Joshua Colbert for legal representation. Discussion followed. Mayor Strazdas took the suggestion of City Attorney Randy Brown that the matter could be addressed with a meeting of the City Manager, the Police Department and the City Attorney's Office. Motion by Reid, seconded by Randall, to refer the matter to the City Attorney and the City Manager. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0. Discussion followed and Mayor Strazdas asked Mr. Smith to contact the Office of the City Manager to schedule the meeting.

REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION:

BUILDING ACCESS AND VIDEO SURVEILLANCE INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE: Mayor Strazdas deferred to Councilmember Reid, who read the request and stated her objections that this proposed purchase was brought to Council without the use of the bidding process as a single entity providing the information, and the cost for products and services. She stated that when she asked why the purchase was not subjected to the bidding process, the response was that this is for a professional service under Portage Code of Ordinances, Section 2-172 - Exceptions to competitive bidding requirement. "Bidding will not be required in respect to contracts for professional services. In any other case where competitive bidding clearly is not practical or where no advantage would result to the city by requiring competitive bidding, the city council, upon the written recommendation of the city manager, may execute contracts without competitive bidding." She argued that the installation of a building access and video surveillance system does not rise to the level of professional service and explained that professional service is traditionally considered services such as attorneys, consultants, etc. She commented that she considers this a technical service, albeit an important service. She complained that she had no information regarding whether this bid is valid, is high, is low, nor whether it is great or not without competitive information to review. She explained her findings through her own research online concerning companies that provide these products and services. She surmised that this purchase should be submitted for bid rather than provide one entity that can provide these products and services.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, City Manager Larry Shaffer provided a brief overview of the project and the history of the efforts over the last twenty years with regard to a building access and video surveillance system. He noted that six or seven different vendors have been utilized during that time resulting in a hodge-podge system of surveillance cameras, management of those cameras and access to all of the Portage facilities. He stressed that this particular contract consolidates all of the camera systems of all of the Portage government buildings, automates all of the major doors throughout the community, allows remote management of the system, and provides a security camera system and recording system that monitors this activity. He noted that Engineering Protection Services (EPS) is already a vendor used by the City in a number of different applications and has brought on new systems for the Treasury Department and a couple of other venues within the City and have worked very well for the City. He reviewed the request, reviewed the plethora of equipment and services involved, and explained that this is the coordinated, consolidated approach that can provide the most efficient and effective system. He reflected that much of the current system procured over the last twenty years is either inoperable or obsolete, and he explained that the advantage of this system is that it takes care of all of the security needs in the City buildings with one felled swoop. He expressed his appreciation and respect of the power of the bid process, but reminded Council that the bid process speaks to just cost, and not to the effectiveness necessary to meet the goal of the Portage community. He deferred to Director of Technology Services and Community Marketing Devin Mackinder, and asked him to speak of the particulars, the process utilized to create the recommendation for securing a comprehensive surveillance system. Also, he asked him to review the negotiations conducted on behalf of the City with this proposed purchase that is part of the Capital Improvement Program Budget as approved by City Council.

Mr. Mackinder differentiated EPS from all other vendors since they are not an "off the shelf" provider and are instead a very reputable designer, installer and maintainer of surveillance systems for larger entities such as colleges, municipalities, County Sheriff Offices and jails. He also indicated that EPS recently received a bid award from the State of Michigan for a very large project. He likened the process used for this purchase as very similar to the process used for the data storage project approved by City Council last year. He explained that the City brought a nearby company that would do a great job, give top quality treatment, and provide services at a reasonable price. He explained why it is important to have a company that has the certifications to design, install and maintain the surveillance system. He also mentioned that it does not happen very often where there are already several different vendors available here, similar to the BS&A purchase, from which to choose. He touted that in this case the City had six such vendors, but the goal of the IT Department is to consolidate to singular systems where feasible. He explained that some of the benefits of this goal are to have systems that are easier to maintain; that are easier to support; that have less people and time involved; that results in less time spent going through the purchasing process; where there are fewer contracts being sent to the City Attorney for approval as to form, etc. He indicated that, as a goal, staff reviewed in thorough detail all of the systems currently with the City with the intent of consolidating into one of the systems.

Mr. Mackinder listed EPS, Approved Protection and Severance Electric as probably the top three vendors considered, gave comparisons and praises regarding each of them, and disclosed that the Department conducted a small scale project review of each of them over one and a half years as a "test" to help in the decision-making. He settled on EPS because over the duration of the "test" they provided a flawless execution of their smaller scale project implementation; they knew what they were doing; and, their system worked very well and the quality of the product far exceeded expectations. After a lengthy discussion and consideration of the bid option with staff and the Administration, he cited the reason for not going out for bid was because this was an expansion of a top quality system already in place through a trusted vendor that has been with the City for a decade or more starting with the fire alarm system. He emphasized that EPS can respond to Portage needs in only fifteen minutes. He maintained that this avoids breaking up the project by bidding the services separately which affords the opportunity for failures, finger-pointing later on, and an eventual need for staff to somehow clean up the mess after the fact. He repeated that this purchase is an expansion of a top quality system already in place for a year and a half, and is very much the same process used for the data storage project approved by City Council last year where staff did their due diligence by reviewing several professional service designers, had them develop that design; and, their installers who were part of the engineering process installed the system.

Councilmember Reid indicated that it was her expectation that the project would not be broken up and that the Request for Proposal (RFP) would require the bidder to provide the products and services needed for the entire project. She concurred EPS is a good company and that this is a good goal for the City, but she stressed the need to be good stewards of the City finances. She contended that this is not a case that cannot be bid and it does not appear that it is a case where there are not any other entities that can provide this service, and she stressed the need to do due diligence and explained. Also, she said that by bringing a bid forward, it ties the hands of Council because it is not possible now to go to the bid process because one entity has been identified that can meet the needs and has already said what they are going to charge for the products, services and maintenance; as a result, this puts that company in a disadvantage. Mr. Mackinder indicated he did not think this precludes the City from going out to bid and, if it is the pleasure of Council, the Administration could do that. Discussion followed and Mr. Mackinder gave his assurances that the process utilized followed the purchasing ordinance and, owing to the many, many layers of technical requirements, he considers this is a professional services contract request.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Mr. Shaffer discussed the BS&A Software as the operational software for the City that began with the property Assessor Module, then the Cemetery, Finance, Treasury and Community Development Building Modules. He indicated that it is a comprehensive platform with modules that become attached and pointed out that it becomes cheaper and effective for the City to utilize software packages that operate off of one single platform. He also referenced the landscape of thousands of institutions that have made automation mistakes because the systems are complicated and managing the processes can be very intricate; so, being good stewards not only means making sure the money spent is the smallest amount, but also that there is value for that money. He indicated he preferred to be in a position to give Council assurances that the system will work and not have to come back to Council and say the funds invested in a surveillance system were not spent wisely because the system is inoperable.

Mayor Strazdas expressed his sense that City Council feels that there is a need for this system and believes that EPS is a good company. He advocated getting together with the Administration on going out to bid on the few mega dollar City purchases; moreover, if the Administration feels the contract is for professional services and wishes to invoke the ordinance, then Council needs to be “on the same page” with that process. Mayor Strazdas reinforced his trust in the process used by Mr. Mackinder, but noted there appears to be a “disconnect” among the Administration and some of the Councilmembers over whether this constitutes a professional services contract or not. He advocated using the Committee of the Whole or at a Retreat to discuss a benchmark amount and/or what constitutes a professional service.

In answer to Councilmember Ford, Mr. Mackinder indicated that the City would be hosting the data, but EPS does have the capability of hosting the data, so the City could assign that to them. Councilmember Ford asked if there was a crossover that would allow the retention of the traffic cam data, and Mr. Mackinder indicated that that is a Severance Electric’s System and is a closed system that is newer, really good and working quite well, so he did not want to interfere with it. He indicated that the traffic system is the only one he could not include in the consolidation and, at the direction of Mayor Strazdas, that he would research the question of storage capability of the data of that system. Councilmember Reid concurred that if there is a question of going to bid, even if the choice is single source, that the matter should come to City Council, first, before there are numbers attached to the product or service of the entity in order to determine the best practice to be used. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Urban complained that this is about the fifth time that a *fait accompli* has been brought to Council where a number is presented to Council making it difficult to bid. He referred to past discussions with the Administration to bring it to Council beforehand and this is the same answer as before, so the question becomes when is it going to stop, when is Council going to “put their foot down” and when are we going to ask for that bid. Councilmember Urban referred to the “test” set and asked why more vendors were not tested. Mr. Mackinder indicated that EPS was already a vendor on site; he was looking for a vendor to perform a myriad of services; he analyzed the six vendors performing services for Portage; and, in trying to be a good steward for Portage citizens and staff, Department Budgets, etc., he took the six vendors currently on site with an interest in consolidating them into one. Out of the six vendors on site, he determined EPS could do the job, and he asked them to work on a plan which took many months to develop. In the process he found that a lot of the systems were not even working and, for two of them, the vendors did not even exist anymore. He again outlined all of the logic in consolidating into one vendor that he mentioned earlier, and the steps he took with EPS to ensure their ability to bring about a quality solution. He explained that he tested them by having them provide a small scale product, vetted them as a company, plus made sure they were going to provide a proper product and service before moving on to the larger scale. He reflected that he felt he and his team were performing a service for the community and felt fortunate that he had this rare opportunity where he had this many vendors on site to do the comparison. He stressed that if this were not the case, he would definitely request $10,000 to $15,000 to have a vendor design the system just as EPS did for the City, then go out for bid on it. He listed the benefits of doing it this way and explained that there are 600 pieces and parts to this system, and it's going to run the same five years from now as it is today. Discussion followed.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, motion by Pearson, seconded by Ford, to approve the purchase and installation services of a building access and video surveillance system at a cost of $280,000 and a five-year service contract in the annual amount of $53,400, from Engineered Protection Services, Incorporated, and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to this action on behalf of the city. Councilmember Pearson praised Mr. Mackinder by saying he does an outstanding job, and explained that he and Council are "penny pinchers" and recognized his frustration. He said he was glad the matter was off Consent because he can now appreciate all of the work performed by EPS. He concurred that this is a good topic for the Retreat, and told Mr. Mackinder that he respected his time and talent, but Council and the Administration are all interested in saving money and thanked him.

City Attorney recognized that the professional service part of the Ordinance read by Councilmember Reid could be ambiguous, and indicated that professional service is usually regulated and licensed by the State, requires an abundance of specialized study as opposed to generalized study, so there are certain requirements for professional service. He said there is no definition in the City Ordinance that he can find, nor is there one in an Administrative Order for which he is aware. As a result, he contended Council could arguably approve this on the basis of no advantage would result to the city by requiring competitive bidding, or it would not be practical to go to bid since Mr. Mackinder laid out that argument in his presentation.

Councilmember Randall made the comparison of going to three architects when building a house, but not being concerned with how much time is spent on each design plan; and, maybe incorporating the three plans into one plan to create a very custom design plan. With technology changing so quickly, she asked if any of this will be obsolete in five years and will the City be looking at this level of expenditure every five years. Mr. Mackinder said what he is trying to avoid is to have to come back in five years and replace the entire system. He recognized, however, that needs change in this area and obviously technology continues to change. He said this proposal does allow for changes either wholesale or with individual pieces and the parts to a degree, except for the unknowns in technology in five years.

Mayor Strazdas recognized this as a process issue, and he asked staff to be thinking about a reasonable benchmark for a discussion on this matter where above a certain dollar amount, there will necessitate discussing and learning about the nuances of the project, when to bid or not bid, and the reasons to choose one or the other, or when to choose a "between" path. Discussion followed and Mayor Strazdas called for the question. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 1. Yeas: Councilmembers Ford, Pearson, Randall and Urban and Mayor Strazdas. No: Councilmember Reid.

WEBSITE REBUILD PROJECT – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES: Mayor Strazdas deferred to Councilmember Reid, who reviewed the request and analysis. She noted that she herself has completed a rebuild of a website for her professional association and reviewed the credentials of CivicPlus as a top 100 capable website rebuilder. She surmised that that means there are 99 other companies that could have presented a bid, so she expressed her difficulty in understanding why this purchase was not subjected to bid. She explained that the vendor can perform this service remotely and does not have to be on site for this, for example. At the request of Mayor Strazdas, City Manager Shaffer indicated that this purchase was acquired utilizing a cooperative purchase agreement through the Government Savings Agency (GS&A), a cooperative purchasing authority, which is allowed by City Ordinance. Through her experience as a purchaser for her agency, Councilmember Reid objected because she said everyone has a GS&A price, but this does not always mean this is the best value for the City of Portage and all entities that work with municipalities are going to have a GS&A price. Mr. Shaffer reflected that GS&A satisfies the ordinance requirements; CivicPlus has provided web page services to over 2,400 communities across the country; CivicPlus provided the Portage web page service, so they know Portage and staff knows their employees. He indicated value can be measured in not only efficiency or the lowest price, but also in quality or the best value for the dollar, and he confirmed his recommendation.

Mayor Strazdas recognized this as a process to show value, and Councilmember Ford asked that Mr. Mackinder speak to the no-cost rebuild of the external city website after 48 months of continuous service ($45,900 value) and what that entails. Mr. Mackinder reflected that this is his fourth rebuild since 2002, explained that rebuild costs are on a scale of $40-50,000 and that the City of Portage is not being gauged based on his past experience as a website developer himself and the per hour cost. He referenced paragraph four of the City Manager Communication dated January 10, 2017, in the Council Agenda Packet where all of the reasons for choosing CivicPlus over the other top municipal service providers are iterated, and where CivicPlus was "the only vendor able to provide all of the desired professional services at a low cost similar to the previous three website rebuilds, plus the ability to offer additional cost-saving options." He also highlighted that CivicPlus offered a free rebuild of the internal city intranet site with an estimated value of $15,000, plus a no-cost rebuild of the external city website after 48 months of continuous service with an estimated value of $45,900. He pointed out that the City is rebuilding the site every four years because of the new technological features that enhance communications with Portage citizens and that help Portage do business as a municipality.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, motion by Ford, seconded by Pearson, to approve the city website rebuild project with professional development services provided by CivicPlus to include a one-time amount of $49,500 for the rebuild, an annually renewable maintenance and support in the amount of $5,000 per year, with a five percent increase beginning in year three, and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to this action on behalf of the city. Councilmember Reid again contended that this purchase should have gone through the bidding process and noted there are many entities that can provide this type of service. Although she did not question that CivicPlus will do a good job rebuilding the site, she expressed her frustration that she has no alternatives to make a comparison. She argued in favor of the bid process laid out in the City Ordinance in order to determine the best value. She recognized that value is not just measured in dollars and that value can be "what you get for your money," but she indicated that there is no way to make a proper evaluation because Council does not have the information. Mayor Strazdas concurred in part on a lot of her points, advocated the matrix used for engineering services or other such matrices in order to layer in all aspects of a project, and explained that the goal of Council and the Administration is the same - to get the best value for the best product. He reiterated that this matter is one that is properly addressed at the Council Retreat.

Mr. Mackinder confirmed that the cost of past bids for a website rebuild were all within $5,000 of this cost price in response to Councilmember Randall.

Mayor Strazdas called for the question, and upon a roll call vote, motion carried 4 to 2. Yeas: Councilmembers Ford, Pearson and Randall and Mayor Strazdas. No: Councilmembers Reid and Urban.

***　HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM – INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve a contract with Kalamazoo County to provide hazardous waste collection services at the Household Hazardous Waste Center for Portage residents for the 2017 calendar year in the amount of $41,000 and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

2017 MARCH BOARD OF REVIEW: Councilmember Randall described the item and indicated that she was really moved by the six returning Board of Review Members during the earlier interview session at 5:30 p.m. She noted their dedication, their passion and their willingness to serve as members. She said she noticed that there was not a lot of enthusiasm for serving as an Alternate

Member as well because each of them wanted to be a part of the process. She explained that past practice for City Boards and Commissions would have all of them reappointed since they have had good attendance, have followed the rules and have served the City well. With that, she affirmed that all of these members deserve reappointment. She indicated that all but one of the members wanted twenty minute segments for appointments, explained that there is no way to know how many homeowners will file an appeal, and noted that the newly appointed Assessor adjusted 85 appeals last year before going to the Board of Review. Discussion followed. She cited the school millage as a possible surprise to some homeowners that may cause more of them to question their taxes. She indicated that the Assessor found great consistency with the two pods last year and explained. Lastly, she explained that having three Board of Review Members and two Alternate Members in a room when the homeowner comes before them for an appeal is very intimidating, and having only three Regular Members would be more appropriate. Discussion followed.

Mayor Strazdas concurred for two reasons, first, because there are six people with good experience and second, two pods gives the Assessor some flexibility if Council allows the release of one of the pods should the number of appeals goes down and explained. Mr. Shaffer concurred.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to adopt the resolution setting the dates and times for the 2017 March Board of Review, approve the use of two three-member pods for the 2017 March Board of Review with terms ending January 31, 2018, and appoint Patrick Buckley, Carol Eddy, Justin Gish, Keith Hearit, Lori Knapp and Leonard Lamberson. Discussion followed. At the request of Mayor Strazdas, motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to amend the motion and give staff the flexibility of eliminating one of the groups if very few people participate (in the appeal process), and to identify which three members are in each pod at the January 24, 2017 Regular City Council Meeting and which pod would be eliminated if very few people participate. Councilmember Reid indicated that last year when the numbers were down, she expressed her preference for one pod for reasons of consistency and she reflected on the high quality candidates who even asked for homework to review the appeals ahead of time in order to be prepared. She contended that this enthusiasm has to be balanced against citizen expectation of consistency between the two pods and explained. She strongly stressed giving staff the flexibility of eliminating one of the groups if very few people participate. Discussion followed. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 299 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 46.

COMMUNICATION:

PUBLIC MEDIA NETWORK: Mayor Strazdas deferred to Mr. Shaffer, who deferred to Council Representative Reid, who is the Chair of Public Media Network (PMN). Councilmember Reid highlighted her communication contained in the Public Media Network FY 15-16 Annual Report found in the City Council Agenda Packet. Councilmember Urban asked a question outside of the report of how is the fact that AT&T is no longer selling the U-verse product, assuming it will go away, going to affect PMN, as Direct TV is not a contributor. Councilmember Reid indicated that this will cost PMN about 25% of its revenue from this source type, so the budget process will have to be modified since it would change the ways things are done and explained.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, motion by Urban, seconded by Ford, to receive the verbal Public Media Network FY 15-16 Annual Report from Councilmember Reid. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

* **MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEETINGS:** City Council received the minutes of the Portage Planning Commission of December 1, 2016.

NEW BUSINESS:

* **APPOINTMENTS TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to appoint John Byrnes, Jay Eichstaedt and Natalie Rowe as Members of the Zoning

Board of Appeals with terms ending February 28, 2020, and Scott Chu as an Alternate Member with term ending February 28, 2020, and Veronica Portis as an Alternate Member with term ending February 28, 2018 to Zoning Board of Appeals. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

OTHER CITY MATTERS:

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Reid restated her goal of getting the bid process question addressed at the Council Retreat. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Randall praised the Department of Public Services for their snowplowing efforts and recognized City Assessor Ed VanderVries, who was still in the audience and had sat through the entire meeting. She expressed her appreciation for his efforts to get the tax roll fair and equitable and the fact that the tax notices will go out February 10, 2017, three weeks before the State deadline which allows homeowners ample time to educate themselves regarding the valuation of their homes.

Councilmember Pearson concurred with Mayor Strazdas that Council does not have to be unanimous in everything, and when Council disagrees, it is because of how best to save money for the citizens of Portage.

City Manager Shaffer acknowledged Chris Barnes and his team who conducted a community meeting last evening with the neighbors along Angling Road to discuss the proposed water and sewer Special Assessment. He indicated that PMN recorded the meeting and it will be uploaded onto the City website so potential participants in that project who wished to see the meeting, but could not attend can still view it. Secondly, he acknowledged and thanked the Department of Public Services snow plow team for their great job performance during some very dicey weather.

Mayor Strazdas indicated that Mayor Pro Tem Ansari is out of town, but the Community Diversity Event on February 18, 2017, Fetzer Center, Western Michigan University, will have a couple of individuals who will share a story about an uncomfortable situation experienced in our community as requested by Councilmember Urban. Discussion followed.

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED:

* **MATERIALS TRANSMITTED OF DECEMBER 20, 2016:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to receive the Materials Transmitted of December 20, 2016. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

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James R. Hudson, City Clerk

***Indicates items included on the Consent Agenda.**