

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 9, 2026

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson 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, Kathleen Olmsted, Jihan Young, and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson were present.

**ABSENT:** Mayor Patricia Randall.

**ALSO PRESENT:** City Manager Pat McGinnis, Chief Operating Officer Adam Herringa, Chief Development Officer Peter Dame, Assistant City Attorney Josh Thall, and Deputy City Clerk Tammy Durian.

At the request of Mayor Pro Tem Pearson, the audience observed a moment of silence to reflect on recent events in Iran and to honor the fallen soldiers. Following the moment of silence, the City Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **PROCLAMATIONS:**

**Swearing In of Fire Division Therapy Dog, Flora:** Deputy Clerk Durian administered the oath for Flora, accompanied by Public Safety Director Wolfe and Firefighter Laroe. Following the swearing in, Public Safety Director Wolfe shared that Portage Public Safety partnered with Hounds and Company for food and Shaver Road Animal Hospital for veterinary services. Flora was purchased by the Portage Public Safety Foundation and trained by Firefighter Laroe with the assistance of Warrior Canine. Public Safety Director Wolfe then introduced Firefighter Laroe to provide a brief overview of the program. Flora will offer post-incident stress debriefing with firefighters, providing comfort not only to public safety personnel but also to other municipalities and schools. Councilmember Miller presented Flora with a welcome basket and welcomed her to the community. Councilmember Ledbetter applauded the program, noting the need for this service in the public safety profession. Mayor Pro Tem highlighted that the school system and the Senior Center also have therapy dogs.

### **PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS:**

1. Terry Tessari, 6047 Marlow, spoke on city ordinances, changes in ordinances, and ballot initiatives.
2. Elizabeth O'Dell, Kalamazoo Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, asked for follow up on addressing policy issues regarding health care inequities. Gloria Foster, Social Action Chair, inquired about mental health policies and shared that their chapter serves Kalamazoo County and the City of Portage. She asked what the organization could do to support elected officials.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Pro Tem Pearson shared where the public can access the meeting agenda and asked if any would like an item removed from the Consent Agenda. Motion by Councilmember Olmsted, seconded by Councilmember Ledbetter, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Councilmember Olmsted, seconded by Councilmember Ledbetter, to approve the City Council Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 24, 2026. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Accounts Payable Register:** Motion by Councilmember Olmsted, seconded by Councilmember Ledbetter, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of March 9, 2026, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Emergency Replacement of Traffic Signal Pole and Mast Arm:** Motion by Councilmember Olmsted, seconded by Councilmember Ledbetter, to approve payment to Severance Electric Company, Incorporated, Kalamazoo, Michigan in the amount \$83,381 for the emergency replacement of a traffic signal pole and mast arm 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 6 to 0.

**Angling Road Reconstruction - Bid Tabulation:** Motion by Councilmember Olmsted, seconded by Councilmember Ledbetter, to award a construction contract for the Angling Road Reconstruction project to Rieth Riley Construction Company, Incorporated, Kalamazoo, Michigan in an amount not to exceed \$1,937,379.28; approve a budget transfer of \$150,000 from the completed Angling Road Micro Surface Project to the Angling Road Reconstruction Project; and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contracts on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Construction of the Phase II homes of Stanwood Crossings and budget amendment:** Motion by Councilmember Olmsted, seconded by Councilmember Ledbetter, for the Stanwood Crossings Workforce Housing project at 9617 Portage Road to authorize the construction of the second phase, twelve additional houses of the Stanwood Crossings Workforce Housing project; authorize the City Manager or designee to enter into construction agreements for each house; and approve an additional budget amendment of up to \$500,000 in excess Capital Improvement Fund balance to support this project. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**MLCC Local Government Resolution for Erb Ventures, Inc. (8340 Portage Road):** Motion by Councilmember Olmsted, seconded by Councilmember Ledbetter, to adopt the Local Government Approval Resolution for an Off-Premises Tasting Room License for Erb Ventures, Inc. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Board and Commission Interviews:** Motion by Councilmember Olmsted, seconded by Councilmember Ledbetter, to set a Special Meeting for Tuesday, May 26 at 4:00 p.m. to review Board and Commission Applicants. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

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

#### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

**2025-2026 Youth Advisory Committee Update:** Aanya Goel, Katherine Li, and Kate Elias 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 outreach, increasing environmental awareness, and bolstering social media presence. Fellow YAC members were also present. Councilmembers complimented the YAC and recognized their integration with other boards.

Motion by Councilmember Ledbetter, seconded by Councilmember Burns, to receive the Annual Report from the Youth Advisory Committee for 2025/2026. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**Water/Sewer (Utility) Rate Study Committee - Citizen Appointment:** Mayor Pro Tem Pearson explained the Water/Sewer Rate Study Committee and introduced Steve Rodia as the citizen appointment.

Motion by Councilmember Burns, seconded by Councilmember Miller, to appoint Steve Rodia as the second citizen-at-large representative to the City Council Water/Sewer (Utility) Rate Study Committee. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

#### **COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Councilmember Burns provided an update for the Central County Transportation Board Authority (CCTA). He relayed there will be a millage question on the August 2026 ballot to support the Kalamazoo Transportation millage. He encouraged residents to visit the Kalamazoo Metro website for information on services.

Motion by Councilmember Young, seconded by Councilmember Miller, to receive the Council Committee Report as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0.

**STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER:** Councilmember Olmsted explained the Waste Management (WM) invoice, noting residents are billed quarterly rather than monthly. She then promoted the KRESA Career Connect Campus, which supports trades within Kalamazoo County. Lastly, she commented on ticks, noting that ticks can carry Lyme disease and reminding residents to perform tick checks.

Councilmember Ledbetter recognized and wished everyone a happy International Women's Month. He also reminded motorists to watch for motorcycles. Councilmember Ledbetter then encouraged residents to contact the City of Portage if they have any concerns with WM and commented on the process used for the bidding on a single-hauler contract and the companies involved.

Councilmember Miller reported attending several meetings with the ice rink feasibility team and supporters of the project. She noted that Kalamazoo Optimist Hockey Association (KOHA) has hosted town halls to address the future of local ice rinks. A study was also published stating the critical need for recreational ice arenas. Councilmember Miller then asked residents to contact City Hall with WM concerns and thanked them for their patience. She also encouraged residents who call WM to use the WM number dedicated to Portage residents.

Councilmember Young thanked the Youth Advisory Committee, the members of Kalamazoo Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority for attending the council meeting, and the citizens for their public comments. She announced that the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan held their annual bake-off benefit and that she was honored to join Councilmember Miller as a judge. She then offered condolences to those affected by the recent tornados in the area, thanked volunteers, encouraged donations, and highlighted that the tornado warning siren system is the first Saturday of every month at 1:00 p.m. Next, she touched on the opioid grant and an opioid education event featuring Becky Savage. Lastly, she discussed activities highlighted in The Portager, including the Portage Road 360 Phase 1 Construction Open House.

Councilmember Burns welcomed Steve Rodia to the Water/Sewer (Utility) Rate Study Committee and shared the importance of the committee. He also welcomed Flora to Public Safety and directed the public to the Portage Public Safety Foundation who provided the funding. Councilmember Burns then commented on the need for community effort for sheet ice.

City Manager McGinnis recognized Doug Rings from WM in the audience and commented on the number of calls received and response time for WM, encouraging the public to sign up for yard waste services and to call City Hall with any WM concerns. He also noted the volunteers and community efforts for the recent tornados.

Mayor Pro Tem Pearson began by expressing his views on the single-hauler system and the upcoming election. He explained the pricing and competitive bidding process, shared a billing example, and encouraged the public to compare the new bills with those from the previous year.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Pro Tem Pearson adjourned the meeting at 6:49 PM.

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Tammy Durian, Deputy City Clerk