

**MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL PRE-MEETING
OF THE PORTAGE CITY COUNCIL
OF AUGUST 21, 2017**

Mayor Strazdas called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. The following Councilmembers were present: Mayor Peter Strazdas and Mayor Pro Tem Ansari. Councilmembers Richard Ford, Patricia Randall and Claudette Reid were present via the conference phone line. Councilmembers Jim Pearson and Terry Urban were absent with excuse. Also in attendance were City Manager Larry Shaffer, Deputy City Manager Rob Boulis and Deputy City Clerk Adam Herringa.

Councilmember Randall inquired, as it related to Item F.1., whether Mr. Mears of Pride Care Ambulance would be present at the City Council Meeting. City Manager Shaffer responded in the affirmative. Councilmember Ford raised the question of those residents in Portage who have a preferred ambulance provider and what impact going with a single provider would have on such circumstances. Mr. Ford continued by inquiring if residents could register their preferred ambulance provider with the City. Mr. Shaffer responded that, yes, the City is planning to provide a method by which residents can register their preferred ambulance provider. He shared that registration details would be forthcoming in the *Portager*. In response to a question, Mr. Shaffer stated that he would have information available for immediate release to the media should City Council vote in support of going with a single ambulance provider. Councilmember Reid inquired how individual pre-paid ambulance provider contracts would be handled. Mr. Shaffer responded by stating that Pride Care Ambulance would honor any Life EMS contracts. Deputy City Manager Boulis concurred but indicated that the reverse may not be true. Councilmember Reid inquired what would happen if Pride Care was unable to take a call. City Manager Shaffer shared that there is a mutual service provision similar to the current situation that if Pride Care cannot take the call, it would roll over to Life EMS. Mayor Strazdas asked what would happen if Pride Care was not meeting the requirements of the contract. Mr. Shaffer explained that many aspects of performance are measured and that regular meetings will be held to evaluate performance. Mr. Shaffer continued that there is a termination clause in the contract if the provider fails to meet expectations.

In reference to Item D.1., Councilmember Reid pointed out that, should the tax abatement be granted, 4.07% of the city's total taxable value will be abated. She inquired what level of abatement for a community is viewed as prudent. City Manager Shaffer replied that the tax base of the City is extremely strong and varied and economic indicators for Portage are strong. In some communities, he continued, a higher abatement percentage could be viewed as problematic but that this is not the case in Portage. Councilmember Reid inquired as to the abatement percentage as it pertains exclusively to the industrial portion of the tax base (excluding residential and commercial). Mr. Shaffer replied that the information would be provided.

As it related to Item F.6, Councilmember Reid inquired why so many banks seem to be locating in the City and whether we might be looking at numerous empty former bank buildings in the future. Mr. Shaffer replied that, although he has no direct knowledge as to why banks are locating in Portage, he shared that, according to conversations with a local developer, the banking industry views many branch offices as a permanent type of advertising for their business. He continued by stating that, while there may not be much foot traffic in and out of a given bank, the mere presence of the bank is viewed as a way to induce more customers.

With regard to Item F.7, Councilmember Reid inquired if the Local Officers Compensation Commission (LOCC) was aware of the electronic device stipend afforded City Councilmembers. Mr. Shaffer replied that information regarding the stipend was provided to members of the LOCC. He continued by sharing that the Chairperson of the LOCC, Betty Ongley, referenced the stipend and viewed it as a cost of doing the business of being a member of the City Council. Councilmember Reid asked for City Council to be provided information on which members of City Council have been receiving a stipend and how much each individual has received.

In reference to Item L.1, Councilmember Reid stated that the two road projects included in the item are for differing sections of roadway and wondered why they were bid together. City Manager Shaffer replied that it was bid in this manner for ease of contract administration and Deputy City Manager Boulis replied that the goal of combining projects is often to try to get a lower overall bid.

ADJOURN: Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 8:15 a.m.

Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk