

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 7, 2017

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

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, Father Ken Schmidt of St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church gave the invocation and the audience then recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

At the request of Mayor Strazdas, the City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Richard Ford, Jim Pearson, Patricia M. Randall, Claudette Reid and Terry Urban, Mayor Pro Tem Nasim Ansari and Mayor Peter Strazdas. Also in attendance were City Manager Larry Shaffer, City Attorney Randy Brown, City Clerk Adam Herringa and Assistant to the City Manager Mary Beth Block.

PROCLAMATIONS: On behalf of the employees of the City of Portage City Manager Shaffer recognized Mayor Strazdas for his many years of service to the Portage community, the last twelve of which as Mayor. Mr. Shaffer presented Mayor Strazdas with the City Flag that had been flying over City Hall during the last several months of the Mayor's service and a commemorative clock. Mayor Strazdas shared that he was honored and humbled and commented that the work accomplished during his service as Mayor would not have been possible without the efforts of citizens, staff and fellow members of City Council.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Randall, seconded by Ansari, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 24, 2017, as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 6 to 0 with Councilmember Ford abstaining.

* **CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Strazdas asked Mayor Pro Tem Ansari to read the Consent Agenda. Motion by Ansari, seconded by Urban, to approve the Consent Agenda motions as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

Mayor Strazdas stated that City Council met in closed session prior to this meeting to conduct the annual performance review and evaluation of the City Manager. Mayor Strazdas asked that Item H.1, Closed Session, be moved to New Business and that the Item be considered as the City Manager Salary Review/Evaluation Committee Recommendation. There being no objection, the item was moved to New Business and renamed.

* **APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF NOVEMBER 7, 2017:** Motion by Ansari, seconded by Urban, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of November 7, 2017. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION:

* **MDOT CONTRACT FOR TRAFFIC SIGNAL UPGRADE WORK AT THE PORTAGE ROAD AND STRYKER WAY INTERSECTION:** Motion by Ansari, seconded by Urban, to approve Contract 17-5491 between the Michigan Department of Transportation and the City of Portage for the city share of improvements for the traffic signal upgrade work at the Portage Road and Stryker Way intersection, adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to sign Contract 17-5491, and authorize the City Manager to sign all other documents related to this project on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 415 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 46.

* **\$75,000 BUDGET TRANSFER FOR NEW GATEWAY SIGNS:** Motion by Ansari, seconded by Urban, to approve a \$75,000 budget transfer from the General Fund to the Capital Improvement Fund to construct six new city gateway signs. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **FINAL PLAN FOR WHISPER ROCK CONDOMINIUM (PHASE 11):** Motion by Ansari, seconded by Urban, to approve the Final Plan for Whisper Rock Condominiums (Phase II), 2275 West Centre Avenue. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

* **FINAL PRELIMINARY PLAT (ENGINEERING PLANS) FOR THE OAKS (PHASE 1):** Motion by Ansari, seconded by Urban, to approve the Final Preliminary Plat (engineering plans) for The Oaks (Phase I), 4800 Bishop Avenue. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

CLOSED SESSION: Mayor Strazdas stated that City Council met in closed session prior to this meeting to conduct the annual performance review and evaluation of the City Manager. Mayor Strazdas asked that Item H.1, Closed Session, be moved to New Business and that the Item be considered as the City Manager Salary Review/Evaluation Committee Recommendation. There being no objection, the item was moved to New Business and renamed.

* **MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEETINGS:** City Council received the minutes of:

Historic District Commission and Historic District Commission Historic District Study Committee Meeting Minutes of October 4, and Historic District Commission Special Meeting of October 18, 2017.
Portage Planning Commission of October 19, 2017.

NEW BUSINESS:

CITY MANAGER SALARY REVIEW/EVALUATION COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION: Mayor Strazdas explained that the purpose for the Special Meeting immediately preceding this meeting was to conduct the annual appraisal of the performance of the City Manager. He shared that the City Manager received an overall rating between *Far Exceeds Expectations* and *Exceeds Expectations*. Mayor Strazdas reviewed the process by which City Council conducts the performance evaluation and stated that the City Manager Salary Review/Evaluation Committee worked diligently to assemble a compensation package based on the performance of the City Manager and the compensation received by executives in comparable communities.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall to increase the base compensation of the City Manager 11% to a total of \$150,000 annually, award a \$5,000 bonus for receiving a rating of 1.62, increase the car allowance to \$700 per month and increase vacation to 35 days annually.

Councilmember Ford stated that, as it relates to the performance of the City Manager, the City Manager executes City Council priorities and effectively manages City finances as evidenced by budget surpluses.

Mayor Strazdas explained the scoring system for evaluating the City Manager and stated that he believes the City Manager is doing a very good job. Mayor Strazdas then explained why he believed the recommended compensation package was appropriate.

Councilmember Reid stated that she recognized the City Manager had completed large projects over the past year, citing developments by Stryker and Pfizer as examples, but stated that a larger bonus would be more appropriate than an 11% increase in the base salary. She continued by stating that an 11% increase is unprecedented and she preferred a smaller increase in the base salary of 5% while using a bonus to reach the proposed \$155,000.

Councilmember Pearson shared his opinion that Mr. Shaffer is an exceptional City Manager and that a City Manager who has performed in such excellent fashion over a three-year period should be appropriately compensated. Councilmember Pearson cited the efforts of the City Manager related to the financial health of the City, residential developments and industrial developments as evidence of the positive performance of Mr. Shaffer. Mr. Pearson also highlighted the at-risk nature of the City Manager position as support for the proposed compensation package.

Councilmember Randall reviewed the time and effort spent by the City Manager Salary Review/Evaluation Committee in conducting the performance review and in crafting the proposed compensation package. Councilmember Randall continued by saying that she believes the current compensation of the City Manager is too low and attributed this to circumstances surrounding his initial hiring as Acting City Manager. She cited an improved bond rating for the City, budget surpluses, efficiencies in City Hall and efforts to speed up development projects as evidence of Mr. Shaffer's performance.

Councilmember Urban stated that employees do not receive 11% increases in salary unless there is a corresponding change in title, responsibilities, education or similar. He stated his belief that such an increase is inappropriate.

Motion by Reid, seconded by Urban, to amend the original motion to state "to amend the increase to 5% which would make the base salary \$141,892 and provide a bonus of \$13,108 which would make the total compensation package be the same as the proposed package at \$155,000 total." Councilmember Reid shared her rationale for the amended motion and her belief that her amended motion offers a more prudent way of compensating the City Manager. Upon a roll call vote, motion failed 2 to 5 with Councilmembers Reid and Urban voting in support and Councilmembers Ford, Pearson and Randall, Mayor Pro Tem Ansari and Mayor Strazdas voting in opposition.

There being no further discussion, the City Clerk called the roll for the original motion. Motion carried 5 to 2 with Councilmembers Reid and Urban voting no. City Manager Shaffer thanked City Council for their generosity and recognition. Mr. Shaffer then expressed his gratitude for City staff and recognized their efforts in making the work of the City possible. Mr. Shaffer shared that he is looking forward to working with the new City Council over the next twelve months.

BID TABULATIONS:

* **THREE-YEAR LEASE OF EIGHT PANASONIC TOUGHBOOKS:** Motion by Ansari, seconded by Urban, to approve the three-year lease of eight (8) Panasonic CF-33 Toughbooks through Capital Advantage Leasing of Grand Rapids, Michigan, at a leased price of \$29,806 and authorize the City Manager to execute all related documents on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

OTHER CITY MATTERS: At 8:00 p.m., the City Clerk, Adam Herringa, excused himself to attend to the election that was being held and the closing of the polls. Assistant to the City Manager Mary Beth Block, replaced Mr. Herringa for the remainder of the meeting.

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS: Ms. Shea Wetzler, 1983 Katie Court, expressed concern with flooding in her backyard. Ms. Wetzler reviewed the history of the flooding situation and her efforts to get the situation resolved. She expressed concern that developments along and involving Portage Creek may be the cause of the flooding problems. Based upon a meeting with the City Manager, Ms. Wetzler expressed optimism that the City will be able to help resolve the situation but spoke to let City Council know about her situation. City Manager Shaffer shared that the City would investigate the situation and report back to City Council and Ms. Wetzler on the findings. Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to refer this matter to City Administration for review and report back to City Council when available. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Ford congratulated City Clerk Herringa and the Youth Advisory Committee on receiving a Keep Michigan Beautiful Award.

Councilmember Urban provided an update on the activities of the Gourdneck Lake Governmental Lake Board and recognized City Manager Shaffer, City of Portage staff and Schoolcraft Township officials for their efforts in helping facilitate the work and weed control projects of the Gourdneck Lake Governmental Lake Board over the past summer. Councilmember Urban also reported that residents seem happy with the weed control efforts.

Councilmember Reid shared information related to a bicycle safety open house that was held in Council Chambers by State Senator Margaret O'Brien and State Representative Brandt Iden. Councilmember Reid stated that the open house was a good opportunity to listen to concerns related to bicycle safety and positive information was shared.

Councilmember Randall stated that she also attended the forum on bicycle safety and shared her belief that more can be done to enhance safety for cyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorized trail users. Councilmember Randall highlighted the importance of education in promoting safety.

Mayor Pro Tem Ansari congratulated all candidates for office for having the courage and commitment to run.

Mayor Strazdas also commended all of the candidates who ran for office. Mayor Strazdas offered his congratulations to all who are elected and wished them the best success. He offered his full support for the City Council and expressed his hope that City Council will work together for the benefit of the community. Mayor Strazdas expressed his support for youth in the community and highlighted the value of the Youth Advisory Committee. Mr. Strazdas shared that youth represent the future of the City and that we must invest in them. Mayor Strazdas asked that City Council give young people opportunities to become excellent citizens and thanked City Clerk Herringa and City Manager Shaffer for their efforts to support youth in the community.

MATERIALS TRANSMITED: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Adam Herringa, City Clerk

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