

City of Portland

Portland, Michigan

Minutes of the City Council Meeting

Held on Tuesday, February 16, 2016

In Council Chambers at City Hall

Present: Mayor Barnes, Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck, Council Members Fitzsimmons, Baldyga and Johnston; City Manager Gorman; City Clerk Miller; Police Sergeant Ludwick; Police Officer Patterson; Ambulance Director Phil Gensterblum; Paramedics Zach Waltersdorf, Jake Schafer, Nathan Lay, Dave Donbrock, and Nick Martin; Nolan Chapman with the Department of Public Works; and Tim Krizov with the Wastewater Department

Guests: Jon Moxey of Fleis & VandenBrink; Retired Paramedic Kim Patrick-Chapman; Mr. & Mrs. Spedoske; Kathy Parsons; Denise Barnes; Deric Gress; Dominick Silvio and Christina Ramsey of WOW!

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Mayor Barnes with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Kim Patrick-Chapman.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by VanSlambrouck, to approve the Proposed Agenda as presented.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, VanSlambrouck, Baldyga, Johnston, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Under the City Manager Report, City Manager Gorman stated that the plans for Old School Manor are 80% complete. City staff met with representatives of The Woda Group last week. The City has no anticipated concerns at this time. The Woda Group is still working through administrative issues with SHPO. Their plans utilized almost the entire building at 306 Brush St. They expect to begin construction soon with a potential completion date before Christmas.

City Manager Gorman reported that he received a call from CB Richard Ellis, representatives for Sparrow, stating that discussions are moving forward for a development in Portland.

City Manager Gorman stated that Spectrum has also shown interest in having a presence in the Portland community.

Goodwill is scheduled to open in May or June and will also feature a workforce development office. They would like to set up a focus group to see how this can best serve the community. City Manager Gorman stated that he will work with them to achieve optimal results.

Council Member Baldyga inquired about the timeline for McDonald's reconstruction.

City Manager Gorman stated his contact with McDonald's says progress in moving forward. They have not actually bought the property at the corner of Grand River Ave. and Bridge St. but are working through the details of the sale. They expect to begin construction this spring.

City Manager Gorman stated the Kent Street Improvement Project will begin after the school year ends. Removal of trees for the project will begin soon.

Jon Moxey of Fleis & VandenBrink gave an update and provided information on the Kent Street Improvement Project. The project has been awarded to CL Trucking, Inc. The tree removals required for the project must be complete by April 1st per Federal regulation due to bat habitation. There are a total of 100 trees in the project corridor. There are 18 marked to be removed. There are an additional eight trees marked to come down due to poor health and an additional eight that need to be removed for proper sidewalk placement.

Mayor Barnes commented that Portland is proud of its trees and is a Tree City USA. He further stated that there is concern with the removal of trees in the Kent St. corridor. They are picturesque but the City also has to be concerned with the walkability of the community. It has been the City's practice to plant trees compatible with the curb lawn with street projects are done.

Mr. Moxey stated that the older trees have overgrown the sidewalk. Trees with a caliper of 3 – 4" will be replanted.

City Manager Gorman stated that careful consideration has been given to tree removals for this project.

Under Presentations, Denise Barnes presented a packet of information to Council outlining her concerns with Wow! service including poor reception, rate hikes and the loss of a local Lansing broadcast.

Dominick Silvio of Wow! addressed the concerns of the community in regard to the change of local broadcasting in Portland from the Lansing market to the Grand Rapids/Kalamazoo market. He stated that the market areas are set by the Nielson Company and Wow! made a business decision to follow the same service area as others in the area. Notifications were sent to their customers. The rate increases that customers have experienced are the cost of doing business. Programming costs continue to increase dramatically. They continue to fight these costs in Washington D.C. Wow! has replaced power supplies and implemented status monitoring and have seen a reduction in service calls from 2014 to 2015 in Portland. They have also made narrow cast upgrades which will increase bandwidth capability, residents won't have as much of an issue with internet speed. They have also upgraded 5,500 ft. of coaxial cable and 2,500 ft. of fiber cable. After the tornado in Portland, they worked diligently to get their plant back up and donated water to the community.

Council Member Johnston asked what it would take to get a Lansing channel back in Portland.

Mr. Silvio stated that they can't go back now.

Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck expressed his concern with the change to a Grand Rapids/Kalamazoo market rather than Lansing. He further stated that the Wow! corporate structure doesn't understand this area and its needs.

Mr. Silvio stated the decision is about the designated market areas.

Kathy Parsons stated there is no law or regulation that Wow! has to follow the market areas and this is only a business decision by Wow! She further stated she would be willing to pay more in order to have local programming.

Mrs. Spedoske asked if Wow! is the only cable company available in Portland.

Mayor Barnes commented that the State has taken away the ability for local communities to make the decision.

Mrs. Spedoske asked who the next person in charge at Wow! is that this issue can be taken to.

Mr. Silvio stated that he doesn't know who the next person to complain to is.

Council Member Fitzsimmons stated that Portland has no local coverage and that hopefully the message will be passed on.

Mayor Barnes presented a proclamation to Kim Patrick-Chapman, paramedic with the Portland Ambulance Department, honoring her retirement after more than 25 years of service to the City of Portland.

Under New Business, the Council considered Resolution 16-07 to confirm the Mayor's appointment of Charles Dumas to the Board of Light & Power.

Motion by Baldyga, supported by VanSlambrouck, to approve Resolution 16-07 confirming the Mayor's appointment to City Boards and Commissions.

Yeas: Baldyga, VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Johnston, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by Baldyga, to go into Closed Session as permitted by the Michigan Open Meetings Act to discuss strategy connected with negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement at the end of the meeting.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, Baldyga, VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Fitzsimmons, to approve the Consent Agenda which includes the Minutes and Synopsis from the Regular City Council Meeting held on February 1, 2016, payment of invoices in the amount of \$62,767.31 and payroll in the amount of \$88,533.61 for a total of \$151,300.92.

There were no purchase orders over \$5,000.00.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Baldyga, Johnston, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Under City Manager Comments, City Manager Gorman stated that the Portland United Methodist Church will have their first service back in their building on Sunday, February 21st after it was damaged by the tornado on June 22, 2015.

City Manager Gorman noted that the Presidential Primary will be held Tuesday, March 8th. Polls will be open from 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

The Council adjourned to Closed Session at 7:58 P.M.

The Council returned from Closed Session at 8:40 P.M.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by Baldyga, to adjourn the regular meeting.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, Baldyga, VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Barnes, Mayor

Monique I. Miller, City Clerk