

City of Portland

Portland, Michigan

Minutes of the City Council Meeting

Held on Monday, May 18, 2020

Via Zoom Meeting ID# 876 8728 8495

Pursuant to Michigan Governor's Executive Orders 2020-15 and 2020-21

Present: Mayor Barnes, Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck, Council Member Fitzsimmons, Johnston and Sheehan; City Manager Gorman; Finance Officer Tolan; City Clerk Miller; DDA Director ConnerWellman

Guests: Kathy Parsons; Robert Lathers of The Beacon

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

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

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Johnston, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

There was no public comment.

Under City Manager Report, City Manager Gorman noted that the Pension Waiver Application submitted by the City of Portland was approved. The Protecting Local Government Retirement and Benefits Act was made law in 2017 to preserve public employee pension and healthcare benefits through the establishment of minimum funding levels. The Act requires that pensions meet a 60% funding level. The City of Portland was recently notified that its funding level through the Michigan Municipal Employee Retirement Systems is 59%. The City requested a waiver to establish a deficit elimination plan based on certain criteria. The City has already taken significant steps well before this legislation to address pension funding and is currently in year 3 of a 20-year plan to be fully funded.

City Manager Gorman suggested the next City Council meeting be held in the Council Chambers at City Hall. He noted that despite the pandemic the Council has been able to have in person meetings while meeting the social distancing requirements but has been doing its due diligence and meeting via Zoom instead.

The Council members concurred.

City Manager Gorman stated that City staff is all back to work. They are working a limited schedule in order to take advantage of the Federal Work Share Program. Taking advantage of this program is saving the City significant amount of money in wages.

City Manager Gorman further noted the Farmers Market plans to open in June and that as of this time the 4th of July fireworks will be held as scheduled. Due to the Governor’s Executive Orders the VFW will not hold the Memorial Day parade this year.

The Bridge Street Realignment Project was ahead of schedule but recent rains have caused some delay. The project is still on schedule.

Under New Business, the Council considered Resolution 20-30 to approve a proposal from Fleis & VandenBrink in the amount of \$10,000.00 to conduct a Water Reliability Study as required every 5 years per Public Act 399, the Safe Drinking Water Act. The last study done for the City of Portland was in 2015.

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Fitzsimmons, to approve Resolution 20-30 approving a proposal from Fleis & VandenBrink to conduct a Water Reliability Study.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Johnston, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 20-31 to approve a proposal in the amount of \$68,400.00 to provide construction engineering services for the Grand River Avenue Small Urban Improvement Project.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by VanSlambrouck, to approve Resolution 20-31 approving Fleis & VandenBrink’s proposal to provide construction engineering services for the Grand River Avenue Small Urban Improvement Project.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 20-32 to approve temporary benefit adjustments, as allowed by MERS, to the definition of a day of work/hours in a month to earn service credit and definition of compensation. The City has made some adjustments to staffing, including a reduction in hours, to maintain essential services and comply with the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” directive and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Johnston, to approve Resolution 20-32 approving the temporary modification to benefit provisions and approving, authorizing, and directing the City Manager to sign same.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Fitzsimmons, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 20-33 to approve an agreement, for approximately \$5,000.00, with the Ionia County Road Department to perform work on Cutler Rd. between Grand River Avenue and the City limits.

Motion by Sheehan, supported by VanSlambrouck, to approve Resolution 20-33 approving an agreement between the City of Portland and the Ionia County Road Department to perform road work on Cutler Road between Grand River Avenue and the City limits.

Yeas: Sheehan, VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Johnston, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 20-34 to revise Council Policy 77-1 concerning cemetery rules and regulations to update rates and clarify times for cemetery lot sales and arrangement notifications.

Motion by Johnston, supported by Fitzsimmons, to approve Resolution 20-34 to revise Council Policy 77-1 concerning cemetery rules and regulations.

Yeas: Johnston, Fitzsimmons, VanSlambrouck, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by VanSlambrouck, to approve the Consent Agenda which includes the Minutes and Synopsis from the Regular City Council Meeting on May 18, 2020, payment of invoices in the amount of \$83,028.80 and payroll in the amount of \$93,362.18 for a total of \$176,390.98. There were no purchase orders over \$5,000.00.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Under City Manager Comments, City Manager Gorman noted that ConfluxCity Brewery and Fabiano's received grants in the amount of \$4,500 and \$7,500 through the Michigan Small Business Relief Program via The Right Place in Grand Rapids.

DDA Director ConnerWellman provided an update on Portland area businesses and how they are faring through the COVID-19 pandemic.

City Manager Gorman reminded residents to mow their lawns.

A 5K "Going the Social Distance" race sponsored by the Nazarene Church was held over the weekend of May 15th to the 17th. Participants ran independently and reported their own results.

City Manager Gorman stated there an incident that was reported as a fire in one of the City's electric vaults but was actually smoke produced by overheated wires while work was being done. This required a short outage while crews repaired the damage.

Under Council Comments, Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck stated the Portland Area Fire Authority met last week. They reviewed their budget and general purchases to be made.

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

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, Johnston, VanSlambrouck, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None
Adopted

Meeting adjourned at 7:44 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Barnes, Mayor

Monique I. Miller, City Clerk