



City of Portland

Portland, Michigan

Minutes of the City Council Meeting

Held on Monday, June 3, 2024

In the City Council Chambers at City Hall

259 Kent St., Portland, MI 48875

Present: Mayor Barnes, Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck, Council Members Fitzsimmons, Johnston, and Sheehan; City Manager Gorman; City Clerk Miller; Finance Director Tolan; Electric Superintendent Davlin; Police Chief Thomas; DDA Director ConnerWellman

Guests: Ryan Honsowitz and family; Police Officer Chris Walker and Portland Police Officers; Firefighter Jake Schafer, Chief Krizov and Members of the Portland Area Fire Authority; Residents of Edgemont Apartments; Patrick Bowland, CEO & General Manager of the Michigan Public Power Agency; Frank Walsh of Walsh Municipal Services; James Freed of Pivot Group; Hovita Smith; Christina Pauken, Mike Judd; Kathy Parsons, Denise Barnes, Erin Gorman, Ken and Angie Gensterblum

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

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by Johnston, to approve the proposed Agenda.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, Johnston, VanSlambrouck, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Under Public Comment, both James Freed, Pivot Group, and Frank Walsh, Walsh Municipal Services, introduced themselves and provided information on their companies and scope of services in providing their assistance in the upcoming search for a new City Manager.

Under City Manager Report, City Manager Gorman provided an update on the Kent Street Construction Project and noted the project is well ahead of schedule and is on track to finish late Summer/early Fall. The Electric Department will begin placing conduit this week. The plaza project at 103 E. Grand River Ave. is expected to go to bid soon with construction to begin in August. Construction on the river crossings will take place after the 4th of July and should be finished by mid-August.

Under Presentations, Mayor Barnes presented proclamations to DPW/Cemetery Employee Ryan Honsowitz, Police Officer Chris Walker, and Firefighter Jake Schafer recognizing their heroic efforts during the fire at Edgemont Apartments on January 5, 2024.

Portland Area Fire Authority Chief Krizov recounted the events and details of the fire on January 5, 2024, explaining how heroic the actions of each individual were.

Police Chief Thomas commended each of the individuals and emphasized their heroic efforts and their humility in accepting praise and awards.

Chief Thomas and Chief Krizov presented awards to Ryan Honsowitz, Officer Walker, and Firefighter Schafer.

Patrick Bowland, CEO and General Manager of the Michigan Public Power Agency (MPPA) provided an overview of the functions of the MPPA.

There was a discussion.

DDA Director ConnerWellman presented her report on Downtown activities.

Under New Business, City Manager Gorman stated that after 10 years of service to the City of Portland he is resigning to move on to pursue other interests and to spend time with his family. He thanked the City Council for their leadership and noted his pride in the work that has been accomplished during his tenure. He thanked City Staff and noted that Portland has the best staff in the State and further noted the accomplishments would not have happened without them. He thanked his wife and family and noted the fond memories they will hold.

City Manager Gorman stated his last day will be Monday, August 12, 2024, but will use vacation time for most of July until his last day.

Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck stated the last 10 years have gone quickly and noted the remarkable investment that has been made in Portland. He stated he hates to accept the resignation but appreciates having been part of the journey.

Council Member Johnston thanked City Manager Gorman for his 10 years of service. She noted he turned difficult times into opportunity and was always available to the community.

Council Member Fitzsimmons noted his pride in all the projects and things accomplished under City Manager Gorman and appreciates everything he has done. He further wished him all the best in the future.

Council Member Sheehan stated it will be hard to find another City Manager that will work at the same pace and noted that he will be missed.

Mayor Barnes stated the City is better off because of City Manager Gorman. Better relationships have been established with our neighbors and excellent Department Heads are in place. City Manager Gorman will leave a legacy in that he performed his functions with heart, has been well thought of and accepted, and there will be no way to replace him. He noted his gratefulness for his heart and abilities and wished him all the best.

Under the Discussion of City Manager Selection Process and Transition – Consulting Firms/Interim City Manager Mayor Barnes noted there are two consultants present tonight that are well thought of in the industry with proposals to help in the process of selecting a new City Manager.

Mayor Barnes noted the ground rules in the basic rules of governance and stated there is a line between the City Council, in providing guidance and policy, and the day-to-day operation of the City. The City Council, guidance side of government, should not get involved in the day-to-day operations. The City Council has one decision and that is who will administer the operations of the City and has been fortunate to have hired City Manager Gorman.

Mayor Barnes stated the Council now needs to make the decision to hire the next right person and needs help in doing so.

Mayor Barnes asked if the Council members had any thoughts or comments against hiring a consultant.

There were no thoughts or comments expressed by the Council.

Mayor Barnes stated that shortly after City Manager Gorman announced his resignation the Council received a proposal from the Pivot Group and then shortly after from Walsh Municipal Services. Mayor Barnes stated he provided copies of the proposals to the Council, went through the proposals in detail, and spoke with each of them yesterday on the phone. Mayor Barnes noted both representatives are present tonight and his feeling the Council is ready to decide based on information provided by each.

James Freed, of Pivot Group, thanked the Council for the opportunity in this unique position to replace a City Manager with the caliber of City Manager Gorman. It will take a team approach to recruit well for this position. Portland is a very desirable community and is a good sell to potential candidates.

Frank Walsh, of Walsh Municipal Services, thanked Finance Director Tolan for her time and stated she was very engaging and easy to work with. He further explained his method of recruiting. He noted their firm is aggressive and would include City staff in the decision making, three-tier process. He noted their use of matrix system process with a reach beyond the State of Michigan.

Mayor Barnes noted that a Closed Session has not been held to discuss this issue and the Council has had an opportunity to review the proposals from both the Pivot Group and Walsh Municipal Services.

Mayor Barnes made a motion the City of Portland should accept the proposal from the Pivot Group and opened the floor for discussion.

There was no comment from the Council members.

Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck noted that based on his reading and research he is comfortable with that decision.

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Fitzsimmons, to accept the proposal by the Pivot Group.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Johnston, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Mayor Barnes noted in terms of the need and person to serve as Interim City Manager, along with the timeline, all need to be hashed out. He will be the point of contact with Pivot Group.

Mr. Freed noted that whether the need for an Interim City Manager is needed or not, he has a list of individuals that could fill that roll. He will begin working with the Mayor immediately to start the process.

Mayor Barnes confirmed with Mr. Freed that internal candidates can apply.

Mr. Freed further noted he will send a form to the Council and senior staff to get their input on the development of the candidate profile, which should be complete in 10-14 days with the position to be posted within 14-20 days.

Finance Director Tolan noted that in discussion with Mayor Barnes last week he had mentioned the need to talk with the other Council Members regarding the need for an Interim City Manager and asked if that had taken place. She further noted that if Mayor Barnes had met with Mr. Freed himself, then that is not involving the other Council Members.

Mayor Barnes stated Mr. Freed will present a plan that will facilitate anyone internal or external interested in pursuing the position.

Finance Director Tolan questioned if the need for an Interim City Manager had already been determined without discussing with the Council.

Mayor Barnes noted the City Council is all present.

Finance Director Tolan stated none of the Council has discussed or stated their opinion on the issue.

Mayor Barnes asked if any of the Council Members had anything else to say on the issue.

Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck stated the City is in need of an Interim City Manager, there a few weeks before one needs to be in place and will take the recommendation of Pivot Group for both internal and external candidates.

Finance Director Tolan asked Mr. Freed, if in his professional opinion, if there is an Assistant City Manager that person would be qualified to serve as Interim City Manager.

Mr. Freed stated that it depends on the situation and that he will have those conversations with the City officials. Per the State Constitution and the City of Portland Charter the decision as to who will be the next City Manager lies solely with the City Council.

The Council considered Resolution 24-44 to approve an extension to the Exclusive Marketing Agreement with Martin Commercial Properties, Inc. to sell City owned property located at Grand River Ave. and Cutler Rd.

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Sheehan, to approve Resolution 24-44 approving, authorizing, and directing the Mayor to sign an extension to the Exclusive Marketing Agreement with Martin Commercial Properties, Inc. to sell City owned property.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Sheehan, Fitzsimmons, Johnston, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 24-45 to approve the Fourth Amendment to the First Amended Joint Fire and Emergency-Services Agreement to provide authorization to finance the purchase of a 2024 CSI Emergency Apparatus Pumper-Rescue fire truck.

Motion by Sheehan, supported by VanSlambrouck, to approve Resolution 24-45 approving, authorizing, and directing the Mayor and Clerk to sign the Fourth Amendment to the First Amended Joint Fire and Emergency-Services Agreement.

Yeas: Sheehan, VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Johnston, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 24-46 to approve the Board of Light and Power's recommendation to designate the Electric Superintendent, Todd Davlin as the Member Authorized Representative with the Michigan Public Power Authority.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by Johnston, to approve Resolution 24-46 approving the Board of Light and Power's recommendation to designate the Electric Superintendent, Todd Davlin as the Member Authorized Representative.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, Johnston, VanSlambrouck, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 24-47 to approve payment in the amount of \$317,724.00 to F&V Construction for work performed for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project.

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Fitzsimmons, to approve Resolution 24-47 approving payment to F&V Construction for work performed for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Project.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Johnston, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Johnston, to approve the Consent Agenda which includes the Minutes and Synopsis from the Regular City Council Meeting on May 20, 2024, payment of invoices in the amount of \$185,715.64, and payroll in the amount of \$147,138.25, for a total of \$332,853.89. A purchase order to Kendall Electric in the amount of \$6,986.14 for street light wire for the Kent Street Improvement Project was also included.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Fitzsimmons, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Under Communications, Mayor Barnes noted the process for board appointments and the applications included that will be considered for appointment at the June 17, 2024, Council meeting.

Under City Manager Comments, City Manager Gorman presented a graphic explaining the reason and method for tree trimming in the rights-of-way by the Department of Public Works.

City Manager Gorman reminded residents that rocks are not compost and as such should not be dumped in the compost area at Bogue Flats.

The 4th of July Parade will be held on the 4th of July and will follow the Homecoming Route from Thompson Field to Portland High School.

Under Council Member Comments, Council Member Sheehan noted the 4th of July Parade will begin at 10:00 A.M. There has been a lot of interest already.

The fireworks will be held Friday, June 28, 2024, at Bogue Flats.

Council Member Johnston noted the recent passing of Amy Kahn, who brought awareness to the City of Portland with her classification of "Portland Strong" after the tornado.

Mayor Barnes noted the activities that took place on Memorial Day and thanked Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck for his role.

Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck stated the Annual Chicken Dinner, hosted by the VFW, was a success.

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

Yeas: Johnston, Sheehan, VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Barnes

Nays: None
Adopted

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Barnes, Mayor

Monique I. Miller, City Clerk