



City of Portland

Portland, Michigan

Minutes of the City Council Meeting

Held on Tuesday, September 2, 2025

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 Dymczyk; City Clerk Miller; DDA Director ConnerWellman; Police Chief Thomas

Guests: Kathy Parsons

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

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by VanSlambrouck, to approve the proposed agenda.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

There was no Public Comment

Under City Manager Report, City Manager Dymczyk reported on public safety concerns regarding scaffolding located at 170 and 172 Kent Street. There is a valid permit on file for the work at these properties. He is reviewing the existing ordinance to ensure it properly addresses safety concerns and community needs.

The Planning Commission will meet on Wednesday, September 10, 2025. True Family Dental is pursuing a parking lot expansion and Edgemont Apartments is seeking final site plan approval to rebuild the apartment building that was destroyed by fire.

City Manager Dymczyk described the review process of the August 13, 2025, power outage, noting that staff has been working to improve communication efforts during outages. Improvements include strengthening phone trees, preparing communication statements in advance, and developing maps to better communicate affected areas.

He reported on the city's safety committee meeting, highlighting the emphasis on the city's safety program and industrial safety.

The work on the Plaza at 103 E. Grand River Ave. continues. The DDA has approved using remaining contingency funds to add amenities including a large evergreen tree, two maple trees, and a shade sail to enhance the community gathering space.

City Manager Dymczyk and the DPW Director completed a preliminary review of the Divine Highway Bridge replacement engineering plans, with public communication about the detour and project plans expected this month.

Under Presentations, DDA Director ConnerWellman presented the report on downtown activities.

Under New Business, the Council considered Resolution 25-57 to approve an Agreement for Professional Assessing Services with Kara Dougherty.

City Manager Dymczyk noted that Kara Dougherty has been the city assessor for the past three years, providing excellent service at a part-time capacity. He highlighted several changes to the new contract, including a 5% increase from the last year of the previous contract to the first year of the new one, followed by 3% increases in subsequent years. He noted that Ms. Dougherty is now a Level 3 assessor (up from Level 2), and the new agreement specifies one office day per week rather than 16 hours. The agreement also provides for coverage by her husband (who is also in the assessing field) if she is unavailable, rather than having the clerk assume those duties.

Mayor Barnes commented on Ms. Dougherty's excellent work, particularly with the Board of Review, noting that she ensures members receive proper training for their challenging role.

Motion by Johnston, supported by Sheehan, to approve Resolution 25-57 approving, authorizing, and directing the Mayor to sign an Agreement for Professional Assessing Services with Kara Dougherty.

Yeas: Johnston, Sheehan, VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 25-58 to approve the second of two payments for the interconnect fee, in the amount of \$142,500.00, for the Grant Street Substation Project. Consumers Energy will construct interconnect facilities from their 46kV sub-transmission system to the new substation.

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Fitzsimmons, to approve Resolution 25-58 approving the second of two payments for the interconnect fee for the Grant Street Substation Project.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Johnston, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 25-59 to approve the purchase of a Viper Recloser and associated equipment from G&W Electric Company, in the amount of \$50,858.00, for the Grant Street Substation Project.

Motion by Sheehan, supported by Johnston, to approve Resolution 25-59 approving the purchase of a Viper Recloser and associated equipment for the Grant Street Substation Project for the Electric Department.

Yeas: Sheehan, Johnston, VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 25-60 to approve payment to Farabee Mechanical, Inc., in the amount of \$78,519.38, for repairs to the Nordberg and Fairbanks Morse engine generators at the Electric Department.

Motion by Fitzsimmons, supported by Sheehan, to approve Resolution 25-60 approving payment to Farabee Mechanical, Inc. for repairs made to the Nordberg and Fairbanks Morse Engine Generators at the Electric Department.

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, Sheehan, VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Barnes

Nays: None
Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 25-61 to approve a Contracted Services Agreement with Dorsey College to provide tuition discounts for Portland Ambulance employees.

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Johnston, to approve Resolution 25-61 approving a Contracted Services Agreement with Dorsey College to provide tuition discounts for Portland Ambulance employees.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Fitzsimmons, Sheehan, Barnes
Nays: None
Adopted

Motion by Johnston, supported by Sheehan, to approve the Consent Agenda which includes the Minutes and Synopsis from the Regular City and the Closed Session Council Meeting held on August 18, 2025, payment of invoices in the amount of \$339,044.44 and payroll in the amount of \$175,480.90 for a total of \$514,525.34. Purchase orders to Trojan Technologies in the amount of \$5,986.45 for UV Light Kits for the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Joint Michigan Apprentice Program in the amount of \$6,000.00 for tuition fees for Kyle Enz were also included.

Yeas: Johnston, Sheehan, VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Barnes
Nays: None
Adopted

Under City Manager Comments, Mayor Barnes initiated a discussion about recent safety concerns, referencing the recent school shooting in Minneapolis. City Manager Dymczyk expressed sadness about the situation and noted that the city is reviewing its emergency response protocols. He mentioned having attended a two-day training on mass casualty incidents, where he heard from mayors and administrators who had dealt with similar situations, including officials from Dayton and Orlando. He noted the importance of supporting first responders and improving safety measures, including the glass enhancement at City Hall. The City Manager acknowledged the tragic nature of such events and the administrative challenges that follow, emphasizing the need to develop contingency plans.

Mayor Barnes expressed appreciation for the Police Chief's work and highlighted the importance of school safety. He mentioned ongoing discussions about improvements to the police department facilities, including evidence storage, interview rooms, and addressing plumbing issues.

Under Council Member Comments, Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck announced that the VFW would be starting their meal season with Mexican Night on Friday, September 5, 2025, from 5-7 PM. He also highlighted that September is Suicide Awareness Month, and on September 12, 2025, the VFW's burger night would donate all proceeds to suicide prevention efforts in the community and schools, addressing concerns about youth suicide.

Mayor Barnes mentioned that the suicide hotline number is 988, which Council Member Johnston clarified is a crisis hotline that can assist with various mental health issues, not only suicide prevention.

Council Member Johnston commented on the success of Community Day, noting the great weather and high attendance. She shared that her daughter was the backup to perform the national anthem at the vintage baseball game, dressed in 1860s attire and playing a period-appropriate horn despite finding it challenging to learn.

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

Yeas: Johnston, Sheehan, VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Barnes
Nays: None

Adopted

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Barnes, Mayor

Monique I. Miller, City Clerk