



City of Portland

Portland, Michigan

Minutes of the City Council Meeting

Held on Monday, September 15, 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; Police Chief Thomas

Guests: Kathy Parsons; Cena and Roy Schneider

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

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

Yeas: Fitzsimmons, Sheehan, VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

There was no Public Comment

Under City Manager Report, City Manager Dymczyk reported meeting with Friends of the Red Mill regarding Wi-Fi installation at the Red Mill Pavilion. Vendors at the farmers market and other events have been experiencing issues with processing transactions when there are large crowds, as their mobile hotspots are unreliable in those conditions. The city is exploring options to provide Wi-Fi service at the pavilion, with costs potentially passed through to pavilion rentals. Mr. Dymczyk noted that the cost details are still being evaluated, and the service would have a "winter mode" during non-active months.

There was discussion.

City Manager Dymczyk attended a Michigan Public Power Associates (MPPA) meeting on September 10, 2025, with the Electric Superintendent Davlin. He explained that the electric industry is experiencing a dynamic period, and MPPA is working on a software update to better manage investments and improve market information.

He also attended the Middle of the Mitten Managers meeting on September 10, 2025, which provided an opportunity for collective learning and problem-solving with peers.

City Manager Dymczyk reported he is currently working on several zoning matters including a resident with a request to build a pole barn, and a business inquiry about a vacant parcel on Grand River Ave. that has both Grand River corridor overlay and highway district restrictions.

City Manager Dymczyk reported that the listing for the city's 50-acre parcel at 1800 East Grand River has expired. He is having conversations about the current market conditions and expectations for return, with plans to relist the property soon.

City Manager Dymczyk reported the Portland Area Municipal Building (PAMA) is experiencing plumbing and flooring issues that are affecting police operations. Chief Thomas arrived on a Monday to find her office flooded when a drain disconnected from the kitchen sinks upstairs. She and her staff had to remove ceiling tiles to address the water damage. City Manager Dymczyk noted this is an ongoing issue in the multi-jurisdictional building, and the city is working with plumbers to find a solution without completely redoing the 1980s-era bathroom facilities. The floor tiles in the building are also raising and coming loose.

Chief Thomas provided information on the problems that are occurring.

Mayor Barnes expressed concern about the working conditions, particularly since the police department needs to secure evidence and maintain proper facilities. Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck suggested filing an insurance claim to address the issues promptly.

There was discussion.

Council Member Fitzsimmons, who serves on the PAMA Board, explained that the building has a five-member board (two from the city, two from Portland Township, one from Danby Township), which limits what can be done without board approval. He indicated they would address this at the upcoming meeting on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, to establish emergency repair procedures.

City Manager Dymczyk reported the Planning Commission met on September 10, 2025, and approved two items:

1. Edgemont Apartments at 240 Charlotte Highway received conditional site plan approval to increase from 24 to 32 units (24 one-bedroom and 8 two-bedroom units), pending a civil engineer's review of stormwater management.
2. Tru Family Dental at 155 Rowe Avenue was approved to increase parking from 19 to 26 spaces to accommodate their business growth from 8 to 14 employees and from 112 to 250 weekly visitors.

City Manager Dymczyk reported that city flags were at half-staff over the weekend due to the tragedy in Utah. The city has formalized its policy for lowering flags, ensuring that when the governor or president issues a proclamation, all city properties will comply.

City Manager Dymczyk noted he attended the VFW Burger Night on September 12, 2025, to raise funds for suicide prevention efforts in the community and schools. He enjoyed the event and engaging with the community.

There were no presentations.

Under New Business, the Council considered Resolution 25-62 to approve payment to Fleis & VandenBrink in the amount of \$30,888.02 for construction engineering services for the Divine Highway Bridge Project.

Motion by Johnston, supported by Sheehan, to approve Resolution 25-62 approving Fleis & VandenBrink's invoice for construction engineering services for the Divine Highway Bridge Project.

Yeas: Johnson, Sheehan, VanSlambrouck, Fitzsimmons, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

The Council considered Resolution 25-63 to amend the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Motion by VanSlambrouck, supported by Fitzsimmons, to approve Resolution 25-63 to amend the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

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 and the Closed Session Council Meeting held on September 2, 2025, payment of invoices in the amount of \$568,786.02 and payroll in the amount of \$155,426.34 for a total of \$724,212.36. There were no purchase orders over \$5,000.00.

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Fitzsimmons, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

Under City Manager Comments, City Manager Dymczyk noted that the collective bargaining agreements for both POLC and GELC were included in communications. He explained there had been a delay between when the tentative agreements were approved and when the contracts were executed due to the time needed to gather signatures. He mentioned they've made notes to shorten this window for future contract renewals.

Under Council Member Comments, Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck noted the VFW burger night fundraiser raised \$874.45 for the school's suicide prevention program.

He also announced an upcoming fundraiser at the September 19, 2025, Portland High School football game for the Backpack for Bellies program. Those who donate items such as canned pasta, instant oatmeal, granola breakfast bars, ramen noodles, or fruit snacks will receive free popcorn. Donations can also be made online via QR code.

Mayor Pro-Tem VanSlambrouck also expressed interest in helping communicate information about the upcoming Divine Highway bridge closure. City Manager Dymczyk confirmed he will discuss communication efforts at the progress meeting scheduled for the next day.

Mayor Barnes raised a concern about residents potentially needing to park vehicles on both sides of the Divine Highway Bridge during construction to maintain their daily routines. City Manager Dymczyk acknowledged this concern and said he would follow up with the City Engineer about designating parking areas and addressing other logistical questions. He emphasized the importance of early public communication about the project timeline and detour routes, especially for local businesses and their employees.

Mayor Barnes noted that September 17, 2025, marks the anniversary of the U.S. Constitution's presentation in 1787 and acknowledged its enduring importance and flexibility. He also recognized the tragedy in Utah where Charlie Kirk was killed, stating that such violence is unacceptable.

Council Member Johnston shared the Portland High School marching band attended the Rockford Band Invitational on Saturday and took third place. She noted that being invited to the event was an honor, and praised the band director, Mr. Sulecki, and the supportive community around the marching band program.

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

Yeas: VanSlambrouck, Johnston, Fitzsimmons, Sheehan, Barnes

Nays: None

Adopted

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Meeting adjourned at 7:42 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Barnes, Mayor

Monique I. Miller, City Clerk