

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, June 7, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting was held as an electronic meeting under the authority of the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976) as amended by PA 254 of 2020.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Patrese Griffin
Eric Cunningham
Jeanne Hess
Erin Knott
Chris Praedel
Jack Urban

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

All members present indicated they were physically located in the City of Kalamazoo.

Also present were City Manager James Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and Deputy City Clerk Shelby Moss.

Invocation

Pastor Kenny Bryant delivered the invocation.

Adoption of the Agenda

By unanimous consent the City Commission adopted its meeting agenda with the following change:

Commissioner Urban requested that Item G-3, approval of a contract with Kalamazoo Oil for biodiesel, be moved to the Regular Agenda.

City Manager Ritsema announced a virtual City Commission retreat would take place on Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss future City Commission priorities.

Citizen Comments

When an opportunity was given for general citizen comments, the following people addressed the City Commission:

Mark Sloan, City resident, expressed support for the enforcement of park rules in Bronson Park.

Jeremy Terpening, City resident, expressed concerns regarding property maintenance issues in the Vine Neighborhood and the need for City enforcement.

Dick Shultz, non-resident, expressed concerns regarding homelessness, the lack of affordable housing, and the need for transitional housing. Mr. Shultz expressed support for spending stimulus dollars to address these issues.

Al Dixon, Co-Chair of ISAAC Anti-Racism Task Force, thanked Commissioners who attended the October 22, 2020 meeting to show their support for the work of social justice. Mr. Dixon expressed support for the continued work to develop antiracist policies that benefit the community.

Maggie Adams, City resident and ISAAC Anti-Racism Task Force member, thanked Kalamazoo Defender Executive Director Josh Hilgart and Kalamazoo

County Prosecuting Attorney Jeff Getting for meeting with ISAAC to answer questions regarding their antiracism work, education, training, wellness, trust and transparency in their respective offices.

Jeff Messer, City resident, expressed concerns regarding virtual meetings and requested the City Commission return to meeting in-person.

Ashante Collin, Co-Chair of the ISAAC Anti-Racism Task Force, thanked those that attended the October 22, 2020 workshop and thanked Vice Mayor Griffin, Commissioner Cunningham, County Commissioner Veronica McKissack, County Treasurer Thomas Whitener, and Representative Christine Morse for attending the final ISAAC anti-racism event on May 20, 2021. Ms. Collins requested the attendees share what they had learned with their communities.

Shona Espinoza, City resident, expressed concerns regarding elected officials not doing their job to protect City residents from violence, racism, and poverty.

Consent Agenda items were presented as follows with a recommendation to approve the items with authorization for the City Manager to sign on behalf of the city:

- approval of an extension of the Asphalt Paving Materials contract with Rieth-Riely Construction Co. in the amount of \$996,000.
- approval of a contract extension with Wolverine Solutions Group for utility Billing, Painting & Mailing Services in the amount of \$125,905.12.
- approval of a sole source purchase order with Vista Analytical Laboratories in the amount of \$170,423 for PFAS testing, as part of the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport PFAS Response event.
- approval of a contract with Peters Construction for the 2021 Sun Valley Drive Improvement Project in the amount of \$655,541.12.
- approval of a professional services agreement with Hurley & Stewart in the amount of \$110,000 for the Sun Valley Drive Improvements engineering construction services.
- approval and acceptance of an easement with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy for Parcel #06-32-379-003 owned by the City of Kalamazoo in conjunction with the Sun Valley Reconstruction project.
- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** confirming the 2021 Assessment Roll.
- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** approving the request of the Downtown Development Authority to levy a tax rate of 1.9638 mills.
- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** granting a Payment in Lieu of Taxes to Harrison Circle Limited Dividend Housing Association Limited Partnership for Harrison Circle located at 525 E. Ransom Street (06-15-269-353).

Citizen Comments

Consent Agenda

Resolution 21-28

Resolution 21-29

Resolution 21-30

Resolution 21-31

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** approving the 9th Amendment to the City's Revised Brownfield Plan to support redevelopment of the site at 619 Porter and 315 E. Frank Streets.

Resolution 21-32

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** approving the Second Amendment to the Scattered Site Infill Housing Brownfield Plan for scattered site infill projects at eleven parcels in Vine, Eastside, and Northside neighborhoods to support home ownership opportunities.
- approval and acceptance of a revocable license with Echols, LLC to utilize portions of the Water Pump Station 3 property for vehicular parking.
- approval of an exchange agreement for innerduct utilities between the City and AACD.net.
- authorization for the City Manager to sign an "Authorization for a Change in the Standard Lighting Contract" with Consumers Energy.
- approval of a Snow Melt System Easement with 234 WEST CEDAR, LLC and PARK@CEDAR, LLC for the 400 Rose St. Phase II Project.
- approval of a Sidewalk Easement with 234 WEST CEDAR, LLC and PARK@CEDAR, LLC for the 400 Rose St. Phase II Project.
- approval of an Encroachment Easement with 234 WEST CEDAR, LLC and PARK@CEDAR, LLC for the 400 Rose St. Phase II Project.
- approval of a request from the Kalamazoo Growlers to publicly display fireworks at Homer Stryker Field on June 18, July 2, July 3, August 7, and August 13, 2021.
- approval of the following reappointments to boards and commissions:
 - the re-appointment of Sidney Ellis to the Water Systems Advisory Council for a term expiring on December 31, 2023.
 - the re-appointment of Vern Johnson to the Water Systems Advisory Council for a term expiring on December 31, 2022.
 - the re-appointment of Nancy Stoddard to the Water System Advisory Council for a term expiring on December 31, 2023.
 - the re-appointment of Steve Walsh to the Water Systems Advisory Council for a term expiring on January 1, 2022.
- approval of the Mayor's appointments of Rachel Bair to the Economic Development Corporation and Brownfield Redevelopment Authority Boards of Directors for a term expiring on March 31, 2025.
- approval of the recommendation to hold until June 21, 2021 consideration of the sale of 738 Harrison Street to Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services for the price of \$500.00.

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to approve the consent agenda requests and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents on behalf of the City.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

Regular Agenda items were considered next.

Public Services Director James Baker presented on the benefits of biodiesel and thanked City Manager Ritsema for his leadership and the City of Portage for their partnership to make the pilot program a reality. Director Baker stated the pilot program would run for one year to implement any necessary problem-solving measures and address any issues, with the hopes of returning to the City Commission with a full-scale biodiesel implementation program.

In response to questions from Commissioner Urban, Director Baker explained the history of biodiesel and the role of Exxon's refineries.

Commissioner Hess thanked Director Baker on behalf of the Environmental Concerns Committee for this step towards a greener and environmentally friendly fleet.

In response to questions from Mayor Anderson, Director Baker explained the current pilot program was for the heavy-duty fleet vehicles, but the city was exploring opportunities for biodiesel and electric light-duty fleet vehicles.

Commissioner Urban, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, moved to approve a contract with Kalamazoo Oil for a pilot term contract for biodiesel in the amount of \$125,000.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety Chief Vernon Coakley delivered a presentation entitled *Victim Advocate-Social Services Coordinator*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

Commissioner Cunningham expressed support for proposed position as it met a need in the community and could be funded without additional resources to the KDPS budget.

In response to questions from Commissioners, Chief Coakley stated the person in the role would advocate for those suffering from substance abuse and guide them community resources that could assist them. Chief Coakley stated the coordinator

Consent Agenda
(cont'd)

Regular Agenda

2021-00
Contract for
Biodiesel Fuel

2021-00
Position Allocation
for a Social Services
Coordinator

2021-00

Position Allocation
for a Social Services
Coordinator (cont'd)

could have resources available to help those who were behind on child support. Chief Coakley stated the position would be filled in the next six months.

Commissioner Hess expressed support for the coordinator position.

In response to questions from Vice Mayor Griffin, Chief Coakley stated social service community organizations had expressed support for this position, which could provide advocacy for community resources and aid in training KDPS officers on the resources available, so they know how to help someone in need. Chief Coakley stated he was open to suggestions on the job description and welcomed input from community organizations currently performing social service work. Chief Coakley explained current KDPS Community Police Officers were sent for Neighborhood Liaison Training to receive special training on situational mitigation techniques.

Vice Mayor Griffin spoke about the need for a link between KDPS officers and social services, but she questioned whether City funds would be better spent supporting an organization that was already doing the work of counseling and victim advocacy, because they were the experts. Vice Mayor Griffin expressed concerns regarding the limits of having one person doing this work rather than an organization that could respond 24 hours a day. Vice Mayor Griffin expressed support for redirecting the funds to an organization such as the YWCA or ISK who had experts already doing this type of work.

City Manager Ritsema clarified this position would help to build the bridge between the outside organizations and KDPS. City Manager Ritsema stated it was not an either/or, but a both/and situation, and this position would help coordinate and build the infrastructure in the City organization to better serve those in need.

In response to questions from Commissioner Praedel, Chief Coakley clarified the position would be coordinating and connecting individuals to social services, not necessarily providing the counseling services themselves. Chief Coakley highlighted the work of the Mobile Response Crisis Team provided by Family & Children Services in Kalamazoo County and the work of Integrated Services of Kalamazoo when KDPS has had to call upon them. Chief Coakley stated this position would be available to follow up with those in crisis to make sure they have the rescues they need after an incident.

Commissioner Praedel expressed concern for the mental health of youth involved in traumatic situations and the need for 24/7 support services. Commissioner Praedel remarked on the mental health crisis in our country and the mental health crisis among first responders, and he hoped they received the support and services they needed to address their issues.

Commissioner Urban requested the Chief return to the City Commission 6 months after the position was filled to provide an update on what KDPS had learned and what was still needed.

Commissioner Cunningham stated the person in this position should be able to identify processes in KDPS that may need to be tweaked or changed, such as low touch but high impact opportunities to provide more assistance and capacity. Commissioner Cunningham requested a work session regarding KDPS union contact negotiations, and he stated he would be having conversations with the City Attorney's Office regarding prosecutions.

Mayor Anderson confirmed KDPS had been having conversations with ISK about having a crisis response team available 24 hours a day. Mayor Anderson described the mission of the proposed Social Services Coordinator positions as giving a “warm handoff” in order to connect individuals to community resources.

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to approve an FTE allocation for the new position of Victims Advocate/Social Services Coordinator.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

An opportunity was given for public comments on the adoption of an ordinance to amend Chapter 24 of the Kalamazoo City Code regarding Pawnbrokers, Secondhand Dealers and Junk and Recycling Dealers, but no comments were offered.

Commissioner Hess, seconded by Commissioner Urban, moved to adopt an **ORDINANCE** to amend Chapter 24 of the Kalamazoo City Code regarding Pawnbrokers, Secondhand Dealers and Junk and Recycling Dealers.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

Policy Items were considered next.

Commissioner Cunningham introduced and read into the record a resolution supporting the For the People Act (H.R. 1/S.1):

WHEREAS, the citizens of Michigan deserve to have their voices heard at the ballot box, including equitable access to ballots and a reformed campaign finance system that no longer allows out-of-state dark money donors to influence elections; and

WHEREAS, state constitutional amendments to end partisan gerrymandering and to strengthen voting rights and ballot access were submitted to, and approved by, Michigan voters as Proposal 18-2 and Proposal 18-3 respectively at the November 6, 2018 general election; and

WHEREAS, current state legislative efforts in Michigan put ballot access at risk for vulnerable populations and walk back many of the popular reforms that have resulted in historic turnout in Michigan elections; and

WHEREAS, elected officials should be truly representative of their constituencies, which can be achieved by requiring equitable and easier access

2021-00

Position Allocation
for a Social Services
Coordinator (cont'd)

2021-00

Ordinance 2031 re:
Pawn Brokers,
Secondhand Dealers,
and Recycling
Dealers

Resolution 21-33
Supporting the *For
the People Act*

Resolution 21-33
Supporting the *For the People Act* (cont'd)

to the ballot box through federal standards around early voting, absentee voting, and redistricting; and

WHEREAS; dark money and out-of-state donors have overtaken public discourse surrounding Michigan elections, a problem solved by requiring political groups to disclose their largest donors and improving transparency in digital and other advertisements; and

WHEREAS; loopholes in our campaign finance framework and weak ethics requirements have opened the door for corruption in government and allowed foreign governments to sway the opinions of voters; and

WHEREAS, the modernization of the voting process, and elimination of voter purging, would support local election officials in administering safe elections while at the same time easing the registration and voting process for Michigan residents; and

WHEREAS, the reforms included in the For the People Act are needed to ensure safer and more reliable voting standards, end the influence of dark money in Michigan elections, and restore ethics and accountability within our government at all levels.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED, that the Kalamazoo City Commission on this 7th day of June, 2021 does hereby support the For the People Act (H.R. 1 / S.1), a transformative federal legislative package of voting rights, anti-corruption, and ethics reforms that will ensure every vote is counted and every voice is heard; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to all elected officials representing the City of Kalamazoo at state and federal levels of government.

Commissioner Cunningham stated democracy was dealing with challenges from individuals attempting to suppress votes by limiting ballot access. Commissioner Cunningham stated the For the People Act supported the elimination of “dark money” and gave individuals the right to vote free from systematic barriers.

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Urban, moved to adopt a **RESOLUTION** supporting the *For the People Act* (H.R. 1/S.1)

Prior to the vote on the motion, Commissioner Urban expressed support for the resolution, and he stated this federal legislation was vital to the health of the country’s democracy.

Commissioner Praedel expressed support for the resolution and thanked Commissioner Cunningham for bringing it forward.

Commissioner Knott expressed support for the resolution and stated next steps should included sending the approved resolution to the City’s elected representatives.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

Commissioner Knott introduced a resolution opposing Michigan Senate Bill 218 (SB 218) and explained the bill prohibited transgender student athletes from participating in sports. Commissioner Knott stated trans-students should have the same opportunities to participate in school activities as their cisgender peers and that blanket bans were harmful and discriminatory. Commissioner Knott concluded this Senate Bill was a solution in search of a problem.

Commissioner Hess provided a portion of the presentation delivered during a Senate committee hearing on Senate Bill 218 regarding quality education, dignity and equity for all students. Commissioner Hess reported the City of Detroit had adopted a similar resolution. Commissioner Hess's presentation notes were filed with the papers for this meeting.

Commissioner Knott suggest the City Manager's Office be instructed to send a communication to Senator Theis, the Committee on Education and Career Readiness, Senate and House leadership, and to the Governor's Office.

Commissioner Knott, seconded by Commissioner Urban, moved to adopt a **RESOLUTION** Opposing Michigan Senate Bill 218 (SB 218).

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

Next, an opportunity was given for miscellaneous comments and concerns of City Commissioners.

Commissioner Knott thanked her fellow Commissioners for adopting the resolution opposing Michigan Senate Bill 218. Commissioner Knott observed the meeting agenda did not include a proclamation recognizing the month of June as Pride Month. Commissioner Knott reminded individuals and corporations that supported the LGBTQIA community that the work was not done after the celebration, and she questioned what real changes they were supporting, such as the Equality Act, modifications to the Elliot Larson Civil Rights Act, or to working to end conversion therapy. Commissioner Knott stated there was still real policy work to be done to ensure equality for all.

Commissioner Praedel congratulated all the recent 2021 graduates and wished them luck in their next endeavors. Commissioner Praedel remarked on the 53rd City Commission having only 10 meetings left before the municipal election, and he hoped their impact on the community during the final months would be monumental.

Resolution 21-33
Supporting the *For the People Act* (cont'd)

Resolution 21-34
Opposing Michigan
Senate Bill 218

City Commissioner
Comments

City Commissioner
Comments (cont'd)

Commissioner Hess expressed great appreciation for her fellow Commissioners and stated the City of Kalamazoo was a city that supported education. Commissioner Hess urged the community to seek educational opportunities and practice kindness.

Vice Mayor Griffin congratulated all the recent high school and college graduates and thanked educators for their hard work and dedication. Vice Mayor Griffin thanked Commissioner Knott, Commissioner Hess, and Commissioner Cunningham for their leadership. Vice Mayor Griffin asked staff to follow up with Jeremy Terpening, thanked the ISSAC representatives for calling in, and stated she was looking forward to additional ISSAC trainings. Vice Mayor Griffin expressed hope that the City would consider the redistribution of funds for those absorbing other's roles.

Mayor Anderson expressed concern regarding recent shootings and noted June 4th was "wear orange day" to honor victims and survivors of gun violence and to call attention to the crisis that took more than 100 lives each day. Mayor Anderson invited the community to participate in a march on Tuesday, June 8th to stand against gun violence.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelby Moss
Deputy City Clerk

For City Commission approval on September 7, 2021

Approved by: _____

David F. Anderson, Mayor

Dated: September 7, 2021