A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, November 15, 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.

Roll Call

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Don Cooney
Qianna Decker
Jeanne Hess
Stephanie Hoffman
Esteven Juarez
Chris Praedel

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, Deputy City Manager Jeff Chamberlain, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and City Clerk Scott Borling.

Invocation

The invocation was given by Pastor Bret Laird of Calvary Bible Church.

Proclamations

2021-00

Commissioner Decker proclaimed November 27, 2021 *Small Business Saturday – City of Kalamazoo*.

2021-00

Commissioner Hess proclaimed November 20, 2021 *Transgender Day of Remembrance*. Amy Hunter, Executive Director for OutFront Kalamazoo, received the proclamation.

Adoption of the Agenda

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

Commissioner Juarez requested that a discussion about returning to in-person meetings before the end of the year be added to the agenda under New Business.

City Manager Ritsema requested that Item G-12, authorization of a settlement with Nathan Dannison, be moved to the Regular Agenda. City Manager Ritsema stated he was making this request on behalf of a person who had emailed him.

Public Comments

Next, when an opportunity was given for general public comments, the following people addressed the City Commission:

Shona Espinoza, City resident, expressed concerns about the City's treatment of unhoused people and offered remarks about the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission not being a good solution for the homeless.

Richard Stewart, City resident, asked that the former DHS site on Stockbridge Avenue not be used for temporary emergency housing, and he suggested Mayors' Riverfront Park and the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds as alternatives.

Taylor, a Kalamazoo resident, spoke about the need for permanent housing for the homeless rather than more shelters.

Public Comments (cont'd)

Chris Carter, City resident, expressed opposition to locating a homeless shelter on the Stockbridge Avenue property, and he requested an opportunity for public input on this issue.

Jeff Messer, City resident, asked that Item G-7, purchase of a digital evidence system, be moved from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda. Mr. Messer requested information on the use and contents of the digital evidence system. Mr. Messer offered comments on the approval and use of surveillance technology by the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS).

Mr. Collins, a Kalamazoo County resident, stated the City should offer solutions to the homeless rather than telling them to leave.

Kay, a Kalamazoo resident, spoke about those experiencing houselessness and asked the City Commission to take action to address this problem.

Zachary Lassiter, City resident, asked that item G-12, authorization of a settlement with Nathan Dannison, be moved from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda and that the Commission discuss the City Manager as a liability to the City. Mr. Lassiter urged people to be safe regarding COVID.

Alex spoke about the resignation of Mayor Anderson and City Manager Ritsema.

Ray Sweeney, City resident and a member of the ISAAC Housing Task Force, welcomed the new City Commissioners.

Monica Washington-Padula, City resident, stated she was a protester at the encampment, and she expressed disappointment with how KDPS officers treated the houseless, especially those who were black/ indigenous/people of color (BIPOC).

Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda items were presented as follows with a recommendation to approve the items and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents on behalf of the city:

- approval of a one-year contract with Alexander Chemical Corp. for the purchase of fluorosilicic acid in the amount of $113,700. **2021-00**

- approval of a three-year contract extension with Passport Labs, formerly known as Complus Data Innovations, for parking management services in the amount of $114,000. **2021-00**

- approval of a one-year contract extension with Student Haulers for the removal and disposal of trash, nuisances, and garbage collected during the enforcement of various city ordinances (15A, 22-3, 22-4 and 22-5) in the amount of $120,000. **2021-00**

- approval of change orders 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8 with Cornerstone Construction Management for the Farmers' Market Improvement Project in the amount of $145,381.60, resulting in a new total contract amount of $3,914,381.60. **2021-00**

- approval of a sole source purchase with the Michigan Department of Transportation for installation of a traffic signal and mast arm at the **2021-00**

	intersection of Harrison Street and East Michigan Avenue in the amount of $181,207.11.
2021-00	- approval of a one-year contract extension with Solenis LLC for the purchase of Cationic Emulsion Polymer K144L in the amount of $287,738.86.
2021-00	- approval of the purchase of a new 100’ rear mount aerial platform from Spartan Emergency Response through the Sourcewell cooperative purchasing program in the amount of $1,292,745.
2021-00 Resolution 21-62	- adoption of a Notice of Intent **RESOLUTION** for the issuance of 2022 Water Supply System Revenue Bonds in an amount not to exceed thirty-seven million dollars ($37,000,000).
2021-00 Resolution 21-63	- adoption of a Notice of Intent **RESOLUTION** for 2022 Wastewater System Revenue Bonds in an amount not to exceed twenty-four million dollars ($24,000,000).
2021-00 Resolution 21-64	- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** authorizing the City Manager to sign an *Authorization for a Change in the Standard Street Lighting Contract* with Consumers Energy for the W. Michigan Avenue/Howard Street intersection.
2021-00	- acceptance of a grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation for maintenance and improvements to Mayors' Riverfront Park in the amount of $45,810.40.
2021-00	- approval of the minutes from the City Commission meeting on November 8, 2021.
2021-00	- approval of a recommendation to hold until December 6, 2021 consideration of the purchase of 830 N. Rose, 826 N. Rose, 822 N. Rose, 812 N. Rose (pending titlework), 110 W. Frank, 801 N. Burdick, 809 N. Burdick, 819 N. Burdick, 901 N. Burdick, 903 N. Burdick, and 907 N. Burdick Streets for the creation of housing as it relates to the homeownership new construction infill strategy, for a sales price not to exceed $164,500.
2021-00	- approval of a recommendation to hold until December 6, 2021 consideration of the purchase of 912 N. Rose, 908 N. Rose, 122 Darden Ct., 119 Darden Ct., 818 N. Rose, 814 N. Rose, 811 N. Burdick Streets to be utilized for the creation of housing as it relates to the homeownership new construction infill strategy, for a sales price not to exceed $5,000.

Commissioner Hess, seconded by Commissioner Praedel, 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 Decker, Hess, Hoffman, Juarez, Praedel, Vice Mayor Cooney, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

Regular Agenda items were considered next.

Regular Agenda

2021-00
Purchase of a Digital Evidence System

Information Technology Director Tim DuBois stated the proposed digital evidence system would consolidate multiple evidence systems that were becoming obsolete. Director DuBois stated the new system would enable information sharing and would provide significant cost savings.

Public Safety Captain Christopher Franks stated the proposed system would consolidate multiple evidence systems, replace obsolete systems, and allow for information sharing with the City Attorney's Office and other agencies.

Public Safety Chief Vernon Coakley indicated video data was saved for 60 days and then written over.

In response to questions from Commissioner Praedel, Captain Franks stated the new system was not an expansion of any surveillance system; rather, it would pull together existing data and evidence. Captain Franks confirmed the new system would save KDPS $283,000 over five years.

Vice Mayor Cooney, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to approve a five-year contract with NICE for the purchase of a digital evidence system in the amount of $853,682; and approval of an amendment to the General Fund Budget in the amount of $140,000 to cover the cost of the first year of the contract.

Prior to vote, Commissioner Decker expressed support for the motion and noted the new digital evidence system would improve efficiency and support the IK2025 strategic goals.

With a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Decker, Hess, Hoffman, Juarez, Praedel, Vice Mayor Cooney, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

2021-00
Authorization of a Settlement with Nathan Dannison

In response to a question from Mayor Anderson regarding the proposed authorization of a settlement with Nathan Dannison, City Attorney Robinson stated he had no additional comments beyond the information in the agenda report provided in the City Commission packet.

In response to a question from Commissioner Praedel, City Attorney Robinson clarified the settlement would cover the attorney fees for Mr. Dannison; the mediation fee was covered by the City Attorney's Office budget.

In response to a question from Commissioner Juarez, City Attorney Robinson stated it was his recommendation that the City Commission approve the proposed settlement.

Commissioner Juarez, seconded by Commissioner Decker, moved to authorize a Settlement Agreement reached with Nathan Dannison through a facilitated mediation process voluntarily entered into by the parties.

2021-00
Authorization of a Settlement with Nathan Dannison (cont'd)

Prior to a vote on the motion, Commissioner Praedel stated it was unfortunate that money needed to be spent on a settlement, but it was necessary so that staff and the Commission could focus on important, major issues. Commissioner Praedel indicated his vote on the motion would be a reluctant "yes".

With a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Decker, Hess, Hoffman, Juarez, Praedel, Vice Mayor Cooney, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

New Business

An item of new business was considered next.

2021-00
Discussion re: a Return to In-Person City Commission Meetings

Commissioner Juarez spoke about the need for the City Commission to meet in person, and he asked that the Commission start meeting in person before the end of the year.

Vice Mayor Cooney expressed support for a return to in-person City Commission meetings before the end of the year.

Commissioner Praedel noted the City Commission would need to start meeting in person after December 31st, and he asked what needed to be done to enable in-person meetings. Commissioner Praedel stated just as many people who were disenfranchised by virtual meetings would be disenfranchised by a return to in-person meetings. Commissioner Praedel stated the City needed to be figuring out how to conduct in-person meetings for when they would be required to starting in January.

Commissioner Decker stated the City Commission needed to be at City Hall and visible to the community, with protocols in place for safety.

Mayor Anderson commented on the need to be thoughtful about spaces and venues that would be friendly to having safe meetings. Mayor Anderson asked City Manager Ritsema for an update on planning and logistics that were in place for a return to in-person meetings.

City Manager Ritsema indicated the City was ready to resume in-person City Commission meetings, and he reported the following COVID protocols were in place: Plexiglas was installed on the dais, masks were required in City Hall, social distancing would be enforced, and portable air purifiers were in place in the City Commission Chambers. City Manager Ritsema recommended the Commission receive call-in comments on a live basis, rather than having recorded comments, which was labor intensive for City staff.

City Attorney Robinson stated the City Commission would need to take the following actions to return to in-person meetings before the end of the year: 1) repeal the local state of emergency; 2) amend the City Commission Rules to return to the 2020 meeting protocols; 3) amend the City Commission Rules to eliminate remote participation; and 4) add language to the City Commission Rules to permit call-in public comments. City Attorney Robinson raised the question of how a mask requirement would be enforced, and he recommended that Commissioners remove their masks when speaking so the hearing impaired could read the speaker's lips.

2021-00
Discussion re: a Return to In-Person City Commission Meetings (cont'd)

Mayor Anderson suggested the City Commission ask the City Attorney and City Manager to bring actions for returning to in-person meetings to the City Commission on December 6th.

In response to a question from Commissioner Praedel, City Attorney Robinson stated the City Commission could take effective action on December 6th – two meetings would not be necessary. City Attorney Robinson noted it would be a challenge to have call-in public comments with the pre-COVID comment rules that allowed for both general comments and comments on individual agenda items.

By consensus, the City Commission directed the City Attorney and City Manager to present action items on December 6th to enable a return to in-person City Commission meetings.

In response to a question from City Manager Ritsema, City Attorney Robinson stated he assumed Commissioners wanted to continue holding Committee of the Whole meetings, and he would incorporate CoW meeting parameters with the other City Commission Rule changes.

Commissioner Comments

Finally, an opportunity was given for miscellaneous comments from City Commissioners.

Commissioner Juarez stated part of moving Kzoo forward together was continuing to show up and have the conversations. Commissioner Juarez stated the Commission would work hard to build trust and dialogue with the community. Commissioner Juarez asked the community for grace and mercy.

Commissioner Hess remarked that she had met with each new Commissioner individually. Commissioner Hess highlighted the skilled trades education program at Bible Baptist Church. Commissioner Hess stated she and Commissioner Decker had attended the 185th anniversary celebration at First Baptist Church, and she thanked Historic Preservation Coordinator Sharon Ferraro for her presentation on Kalamazoo's history. Commissioner Hess noted she had attended the ISAAC annual banquet. Commissioner Hess urged people to keep their sidewalks clear of snow, and she invited people to the Holiday Parade on November 20th and Tree Lighting Ceremony on November 26th.

Commissioner Praedel announced the draft 2022 budget would be released by December 1st, and he urged people to participate in the budget process. Commissioner Praedel remarked on the passing of John Hillard and expressed support for continuing Committee of the Whole meetings. Commissioner Praedel spoke about the gravity of the COVID-19 pandemic and stated history would judge the City for how it responded. Commissioner Praedel expressed thanks for the opportunity to be a City Commissioner and serve with his colleagues.

Commissioner Decker thanked City staff who were working to onboard the new Commissioners and remarked on the 185th anniversary celebration at First Baptist Church. Commissioner Decker spoke about the need to ensure the City's budget and spending continued to be aligned with IK2025.

Commissioner Hoffman acknowledged she had not said much but noted she was listening and observing. Commissioner Hoffman stated she wanted her words to be passionate and impactful when she did speak. Commissioner Hoffman asked the community to hold Commissioners accountable.

Commissioner Comments (cont'd)	Vice Mayor Cooney offered remarks on the life of John Hillard. Vice Mayor Cooney noted the City Commission would be taking an action at its next meeting to address homelessness. Vice Mayor Cooney commented on a recent event sponsored by ISAAC, which featured a presentation by Michael Eric Dyson. Mayor Anderson stated he was glad to be serving with this group of Commissioners and remarked that holding public office was a sacred trust. Mayor Anderson commented on the importance of agenda items G-9 and G-10, which were notice of intent resolutions for water and wastewater bonds. Mayor Anderson highlighted the current issue of the *Excelsior* newsletter and its feature on Kalamazoo Public School's "unsung heroes" – the non-teaching staff. Mayor Anderson recognized community members who had recently passed away: John Hilliard, Ken Horton, and James Green.
Adjournment	The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: ____________________________

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