

Roll Call

The Kalamazoo City Commission met as a Committee of the Whole on Monday, March 21, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Don Cooney
Jeanne Hess
Stephanie Hoffman
Esteven Juarez
Chris Praedel

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Qianna Decker

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

Commissioner Excused

Commissioner Hess, seconded by Commissioner Hoffman, moved to excuse the absence of Commissioner Decker. With a voice vote the motion passed.

Public Comments

Next, an opportunity was given for general public comments.

In Person Comments

Mark Kraai, City resident, referred to a recent communication he had sent to Commissioners regarding people sleeping and keeping their belongings on the North Kalamazoo Mall. Mr. Kraai asked the City to make and enforce rules prohibiting sleeping on the Mall (including grassy areas), leaving bags unattended, and littering. A copy of Mr. Kraai's correspondence was filed with the papers for this meeting.

Call-In Comments

None

2022-00

Presentation: Foundation
for Excellence Look
Forward

Steve Brown, Foundation for Excellence Manager, delivered a brief presentation entitled *2022 Year Look Ahead*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hess, Mr. Brown provided the following information:

- the focus of the Foundation for Excellence (FFE) Board since its inception had been to build the backbone of the FFE through the establishment of solid policies, sound fiscal practices, and a track record of good approval processes. This work-to-date would be important as the FFE transitioned to endowment funding for the 2023 budget year.
- the FFE Board had three mandatory meetings each year, in April, August, and October.
- new members would be seated at the April meeting, and roles and responsibilities would be clarified through the selection of officers and committee members.

- the work of the board for the rest of the year would be to approve the 2023 budget and endowment grant.

Commissioner Praedel stated the FFE website was good and had been helpful in showing residents the impact of FFE funding. In response to questions from Commissioner Praedel Mr. Brown provided the following information:

- the FFE Annual Newsletter was sent to all occupied residences in the City and over 100 community partners; there were plans to place the next newsletter in waiting rooms around town.
- with the last community survey, knowledge of the FFE was at 60%, up from 40%. Information about the relationship between the City organization, Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 (IK 2025), and the FFE was readily available, but it was a lot of information to take in for people who were leading busy lives.
- the implementation of enhanced communication efforts would depend on the capacity of communications staff. However, 75% of Kalamazoo residents preferred to receive information from the City in paper form.
- funding requests for both one-time projects and on-going programs were handled through the special request process. On-going programs did not acquire an entitlement status; it was important to evaluate these programs on an annual basis for impact and to make sure the environment and needs had not changed.
- there had been discussions about various ways to handle the potential tension between one-time funding requests and multi-year projects/programs, but multi-year funding requests had not grown to the point where the ability to fund one-time request was diminished. It was not a material question.

In response to questions from Mayor Anderson, Mr. Brown stated the FFE website was complete. Mr. Brown explained the FFE webpages were some of the most recently created on the City's current website, so they were up-to-date and easily transitioned to the new website platform. Mr. Brown indicated City Commissioners could help with transparency and communication about the FFE by being familiar with the City's budget and how funds were being spent. Mr. Brown offered to give Commissioners copies of the FFE Annual Newsletter for distribution.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Cooney, Mr. Brown stated the City did not need to respond to the 2021 TIME Magazine article about the FFE. Mr. Brown noted the FFE's primary audience and accountability relationship was City of Kalamazoo residents, and the primary accountability criteria was whether FFE spending was in alignment with the IK 2025 Strategic Vision and Master Plan.

Deputy City Manager Chamberlain reviewed the strategic calendar and highlighted the following upcoming meeting topics and agenda items:

April 4th

Committee of the Whole: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion update; presentation by the YWCA on Cradle Kalamazoo

2022-00

Presentation: Foundation
for Excellence Look
Forward (cont'd)

Review of Strategic
Calendar

Review of Strategic
Calendar (cont'd)

Business Meeting: multi-million-dollar contract for the Northside lead service line replacement project

April 18th

Committee of the Whole: Development 101 (review of the City's processes for development projects)

May

Committee of the Whole: WMU orientation (building the relationship between WMU and the City Commission)

June

Committee of the Whole: review of the draft Sustainability Plan

City Manager Ritsema stated a community benefits agreement with Graphic Packaging would be presented to the City Commission sometime in April.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hess, Community Planning and Economic Development Director Rebekah Kik stated it was her understanding the Sustainability Plan would be discussed at a Committee of the Whole meeting before going to the Commission for approval at a business meeting.

Commissioner
Comments

Next an opportunity was given for comments from City Commissioners.

Commissioner Praedel thanked Mr. Brown for his presentation and addressed complaints about the FFE. Commissioner Praedel noted there was an expectation that the well-to-do should pay their fair share, and that's what FFE founders were doing. Commissioner Praedel stated the FFE was one of the most transparent foundations in the country.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

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