

	A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, January 4, 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 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 Jim Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and City Clerk Scott Borling.
Adoption of the Agenda	By unanimous consent the City Commission adopted its meeting agenda as presented.
2021-0001 Statement on Systemic Racism	City Manager Ritsema read the following statement regarding systemic racism: Racism is a painful part of American history. Systemic racism, unfortunately, is deeply rooted not only within our country, but within our cities and all our present-day local government institutions, including the City of Kalamazoo. Despite legislation meant to correct racial inequities, challenges remain, and the trauma, and intersected, toxic impacts caused by systemic racism are endured daily by people of color in our community. The City of Kalamazoo is committed to governing intentionally to create equitable and inclusive outcomes for everyone in Kalamazoo. This commitment begins with understanding and acknowledging the truth of our past, and the harms that the City of Kalamazoo has historically played in creating and sustaining systemic racism. At the City of Kalamazoo, we are committed to this anti-racism journey which will require courageous and continuous leadership and must be informed by the trauma caused by systemic racism, past and present. We hope to work collaboratively with our community and community organizations focused on realizing transformational change for racial equity. We understand that words are not enough, and we must demonstrate our commitment to transformational change with credible action to change policies, promote community healing and increase trust, and ensure community members are treated fairly and are truly valued. So later in this meeting, the City Commission will be asked to approve a contract to hire a consultant to perform the City's first diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment. The assessment results will be used to inform

our first DEI plan which will help us continue in areas where we are strong and strengthen areas where we are weak. Also, as part of this plan we will develop an antiracist task force to work alongside our Director of DEI to make sure all areas of the organization are on this journey.”

2021-0001

Statement on Systemic Racism (cont'd)

Commissioner Knott expressed support for Dorla Bonner, the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, but she remarked the City Manager’s statement rang hollow after the action the City Commission took on December 21st, when City Manager Ritsema revealed that former Public Safety Chief Karianne Thomas had been let go back in September. Commissioner Knott stated the adoption of a watered-down resolution on December 21st failed to address the issue with the City Manager and was continuing to cause harm, especially to black and brown residents. Commissioner Knott stated the City Commission’s action demonstrated it was not willing to do hard work, and she questioned whether the community could trust that the anti-racism statement was a commitment and not just words. Commissioner Knott questioned what the City Commission would do to rebuild trust with City employees and the community as it supported Director Bonner.

Commissioner Cunningham expressed frustration that it was 2021 and the City was just now doing some of the basic groundwork to address diversity, equity, and inclusion. Commissioner Cunningham stated the contention between communities of color and the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS) had existed his whole lifetime, and although there had been some forms of action over the years, there had not been dramatic, immediate change. Commissioner Cunningham stated there needed to be new standards to define what behavior was acceptable and unacceptable, and accountability to hold people to those standards. Commissioner Cunningham noted there had been public hearings regarding the events in June and August, but he was impatient with the process. Commissioner Cunningham stated he wanted change in the City organization, and he wanted it to be sincere from the top down. Commissioner Cunningham thanked the City Administration for starting the journey but stated it would be hard to believe the apologies until there were results. Commissioner Cunningham encouraged Public Safety Chief Coakley to keep doing the work and doing what was right, even if there were negative consequences.

Commissioner Urban spoke about the need for accountability and encouraged people to not lose heart, even though the work might not be pleasant.

Vice Mayor Griffin indicated the statement was appreciated but late. Vice Mayor Griffin asked what the City Commission was going to do to regain the trust of the community after the action taken on December 21st. Vice Mayor Griffin stated Commissioners were talking a lot about accountability, but when there was an opportunity to hold people accountable the Commission did not do it. Vice Mayor Griffin stated the City Commission had the opportunity to hold someone accountable and build trust in the community, and it failed. Vice Mayor Griffin questioned how the Commission would move forward so that the City Manager’s statement on structural racism was an action and not just a statement.

Commissioner Hess read a definition of “racism” from the book *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*. Commissioner Hess stated she was unsure if Kalamazoo would be able to overcome systemic racism, but the City would work at it. Commissioner Hess offered remarks on the intersectionality of education and equity and expressed her commitment to supporting education.

2021-0001

Statement on Systemic
Racism (cont'd)

Commissioner Praedel thanked City Manager Ritsema for calling this work an “anti-racism journey” and noted there would be bumps in the road, things done wrong, and hopefully more things done right. Commissioner Praedel stated the December 21st City Commission meeting was not the Commissioners’ best, but he expressed his commitment to moving forward in a positive direction and to the journey ahead. Commissioner Praedel thanked Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director Dorla Bonner for her work.

Mayor Anderson expressed agreement with the City Manager’s statement but said the proof would be in the work that was done.

2021-0002

Public Hearing re: the
FY2021 Budget

At 7:26 p.m. Mayor Anderson opened a public hearing to receive comments on the Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Budget for the City of Kalamazoo.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Steve Vicenzi provided a brief overview of the Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Budget. CFO Vicenzi reported the overall budget of \$213,892,050, which included a General Fund budget of \$68,301,379 and \$62.6 million for capital improvements across all funds. CFO Vicenzi indicated the Fund Balance was projected to be 19% through the duration of the current Five-Year Fiscal Plan.

When given an opportunity to offer comments on the FY2021 Proposed Budget, the following people addressed the City Commission:

Emily Demorest, City resident, thanked Vice Mayor Griffin and Commissioner Knott for voting against Commissioner Urban’s motion regarding the City Manager on December 21st. Ms. Demorest thanked the City Commission for including Community Benefit Agreements in the proposed budget. Ms. Demorest requested that the City Commission have a robust discussion about these agreements and who would be eligible to receive tax incentives.

Parker James, non-resident, expressed disappointment that half of the budget was for KDPS rather than housing, community development, and diversity/equity/inclusion. Mr. James asked the City Commission to reconsider their priorities.

David Benac, City resident, stated KDPS was damaged and dysfunctional, and he expressed opposition to KDPS receiving half of the City’s budget. Mr. Benac stated the budget presentation was a product of disinformation and did not contain enough details.

Tanema Clinton, City resident, questioned why the City was giving tax breaks to new businesses and why the City was allowing construction in a flood plain. Ms. Clinton asked the City to fix the storm sewers so water would stop backing up into residents’ basements.

Joe Byers, City resident, stated the proposed budget failed to change anything about KDPS and did not address the climate emergency, homeless camps, and the housing crisis.

A City resident stated it was baffling to see the City budget for 2021 virtually unchanged from 2020, and he asked the City Commission to defund KDPS and address the homeless camps.

At 7:41 p.m. Mayor Anderson closed the public hearing.

Mayor Anderson announced the FY2021 Proposed Budget would be presented to the City Commission for adoption on January 19th.

At 7:41 p.m. Mayor Anderson opened a public hearing to receive comments on Substantial Amendments to the 2019-2023 Consolidated Plan and 2019 Action Plan Substantial Amendment as required by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Tami Rey, Chair of the Community Development Act Advisory Committee (CDAAC), and Community Development Coordinator Venessa Collins-Smith delivered a presentation entitled *PY2019 Cares Act-3 Public Hearing*, which provided an overview of the CARES Act-3 allocation from HUD, which was related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mayor Anderson recognized Ms. Rey as a newly elected County Commissioner.

In response to a question from Commissioner Cunningham, Ms. Collins-Smith stated she did not have figures for HUD funding received by the City over the past five years, but there was pattern of substantial, year-to-year funding decreases. Ms. Collins-Smith stated the City was limited in what it was able to do in the area of housing.

Mayor Anderson noted the City received more HUD funding in 2020 than usual because of the federal CARES Act, which was a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to adopt the Substantial Amendments to the 2019-2023 Consolidated Plan and 2019 Action Plan Substantial Amendment as required by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and authorize the Director of Community Planning and Economic Development to sign all documents required by HUD.

Prior to a vote on the motion an opportunity was given for members of the public to comment on the Substantial Amendments to the 2019-2023 Consolidated Plan and 2019 Action Plan Substantial Amendment, but no comments were offered.

Commissioner Cunningham thanked City staff and the members of CDAAC for their work. Commissioner Cunningham noted the City of Kalamazoo was unique in allowing residents to have input on how Community Development Block Grant and HOME funding was used.

Vice Mayor Griffin thanked the members of CDAAC and City staff for their hard work.

Commissioner Hess thanked the members of CDAAC and City staff for their hard work. Commissioner Hess asked about the funding sources for the purchase of the Knights Inn and when people would start being housed there.

In response to Commissioner Hess, Lisa Wilcutt, Vice President of Lockhart Management Consulting, stated the purchase of the property would happen on January 14th. Ms. Wilcutt stated fundraising for renovations was on-going, and renovations were scheduled to begin in June and be completed by October. Ms.

2021-0002

Public Hearing re: the
FY2021 Budget (cont'd)

2021-0003

Public Hearing re:
Substantial Amendments
to the Consolidated Plan
and the 2019 Action Plan

2021-0003

Approval of Substantial
Amendments to the
Consolidated Plan and
the 2019 Action Plan

2021-0003

Approval of Substantial
Amendments to the
Consolidated Plan and
the 2019 Action Plan
(cont'd)

Wilcutt stated outreach teams from Integrated Services Kalamazoo (ISK) were making contact with people living in encampments to see who might be eligible for housing at the Knights Inn.

In response to a question from Commissioner Praedel, Ms. Wilcutt clarified the Knights Inn property would have 60 units. Ms. Wilcutt stated the number of individuals the units would serve had not been determined.

At 8:01 p.m. Mayor Anderson closed the public hearing.

With a roll call vote the motion passed 5-0 with 2 abstentions.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Praedel* and Mayor Anderson**

*At the time of the vote, Commissioner Praedel provided the following explanation for his abstention: "I am going to take another abstention on this one just cause it's related to CDBG and work-related to Community Homeworks."

**At the time of the vote, Mayor Anderson provided the following explanation for his abstention: "I will be abstaining on this because I'm a long-time member of the LIFT Foundation, so I'm definitely involved in this undertaking. I have no financial relationship with it in any way. I am a volunteer on the LIFT board, but because of that I will be abstaining on this vote."

(This amendment was approved on March 7, 2022)

2021-0004

Public Hearing re: an
Ordinance to Rezone
902, 912, and 920 W.
North Street, and 715
Woodward Street

At 8:02 p.m. Mayor Anderson opened a public hearing to receive comments on an ordinance to rezone 902, 912, and 920 West North Street and 715 Woodward Street to Live Work 1 (LW1) from Residential Multiple Family (RM15).

City Planner Christina Anderson provided an overview of the proposed rezoning, which would allow for the redevelopment of four properties where fires had destroyed the structures in June of 2020.

In response to a question from Commissioner Praedel, Chief Coakley stated the fires were determined to be the result of arson, but much of the evidence was destroyed in the fires.

An opportunity was given for public comments on this item, but no comments were offered.

At 8:07 p.m. Mayor Anderson closed the public hearing.

2021-0004

Ordinance 2021
Rezoning 902, 912,
and 920 W. North
Street, and 715
Woodward Street

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Praedel, moved to adopt an **ORDINANCE** to rezone 902, 912, and 920 West North Street and 715 Woodward Street to Live Work 1 (LW1) from Residential Multiple Family (RM15).

Prior to a vote on the motion, Commissioner Cunningham commended the tenacity and hard work of the property owners to rebuild after the fire, and he thanked the City Administration and the Mayor for supporting this work.

Vice Mayor Griffin noted City Commission had received an email from one of the property owners, Twala Lockett-Jones, who supported the proposed rezoning.

Commissioner Urban stated the cooperation of the property owners among themselves and with the City could be a model for future redevelopment projects in distressed neighborhoods.

Mayor Anderson spoke about the fire, which was closed to his house, and the work being done to rebuild.

With a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

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

Dorothy Appleyard, City resident, stated she was disillusioned by the lack of response or acknowledgment from City Hall to citizen inquiries and concerns. Ms. Appleyard asked that the City Commission: 1) immediately review policies for communication and activate necessary changes to enhance authentic public conversations; and 2) ensure strict compliance with the Open Meetings Act by holding meetings and work sessions that were open to the public.

Shona Espinaza, City resident, stated she was displeased with many things that happened in 2020, and she remarked that Mayor Anderson and City Manager Ritsema seemed to disrespect the Commissioners of color. Ms. Espinaza stated City leadership needed to be held accountable for all their wrongdoings in 2020, especially their response to the protests.

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 sole source purchase with Jett Pump & Valve LLC for the Purifil Dry Scrubber Conversion Kit & Media, in the amount of \$250,216.56.
- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** approving the Amended Act 381 Brownfield Plan for Scattered Site Infill Housing in the City of Kalamazoo.
- approval of an *Amendment to the Brownfield Grant Contract* for the 615 Holdings Redevelopment Project between the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and the City of Kalamazoo Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, and authorize the Brownfield

2021-0004

Ordinance 2021
Rezoning 902, 912, and
920 W. North Street,
and 715 Woodward
Street (cont'd)

Public Comments

Consent Agenda

2021-0005

2021-0006

Resolution 21-01

2021-0007

Consent Agenda (cont'd)

Redevelopment Authority Board Chairperson to sign the amendment documents.

Commissioner Hess, seconded by Commissioner Urban, 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

Regular Agenda items were considered next.

2021-0008

Contract with the Michigan Public Health Institute for a DEI Assessment

Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Dorla Bonner thanked City Manager Ritsema for his statement on systemic racism and expressed support for that statement. Director Bonner stated it was the City's goal to make DEI a part of the organizational culture, and the first step was to conduct an internal equity assessment to learn where the City was strong and where it was weak with regard to DEI. Director Bonner indicated the results from the assessment would be used to develop the City's first Equity Plan.

In response to a question from Commissioner Urban, Director Bonner stated the final report from the DEI Assessment would be made public.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hess, Director Bonner stated the assessment and report should be completed by late summer. Director Bonner indicated she would work with Assistant Public Safety Chief Victor Green and others on the Equity Plan once the assessment was done.

In response to a question from Commissioner Praedel, Director Bonner stated the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) submitted the proposal that was most responsive to the City's needs. Director Bonner noted MPHI was very familiar with the Midwest region.

Vice Mayor Griffin thanked Director Bonner for her work. Vice Mayor Griffin remarked that the City did not need to spend six figures to figure out what everyone already knew. Vice Mayor Griffin observed that systems change was difficult, and the City's efforts needed to be more than just words.

Commissioner Urban, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to approve a contract with Michigan Public Health Institute to conduct the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Assessment in the amount of \$145,330.10.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

2021-0009Final Report of the
First Amendment
Assembly Sub-
Committee (cont'd)

Deputy City Manager Laura Lam presented an overview of the work of the First Amendment Assembly Sub-Committee and its final report. Deputy City Manager Lam stated the key deliverable along with the report was a communication strategy, which prescribed interaction with a variety of audiences before, during, and after an event. Deputy City Manager Lam stated another deliverable was the creation of a landing page on the City's website to support people who wanted to exercise their first amendment rights. Deputy City Manager Lam described an iterative process for the continuous review of the communication strategy, and she stated conversations with the community would be on-going. Deputy City Manager Lam indicated there was a lot of research on best practices dealing with the use of force and First Amendment assemblies, and the City would be reviewing this research to see what practices might work in Kalamazoo. Deputy City Manager Lam noted the independent review by the O.I.R. Group was still in progress, and there were multiple listening sessions scheduled in the month of January. Deputy City Manager Lam remarked that the Sub-Committee's report represented a lot of work compressed into a short amount of time, and she thanked the Sub-Committee, City staff, and stakeholders who had provided input through focus groups.

Commissioner Cunningham observed there was a continuous breakdown in communication at all levels during the First Amendment assemblies of the previous summer. Commissioner Cunningham recommended the creation of a citizen work group to give input on how the community wanted to be policed, and he suggested the City Commission host a work session on this topic. Commissioner Cunningham noted that in the past all operational decisions had been made within the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS) and did not include the community. Commissioner Cunningham encouraged KDPS to stay engaged with the community and validate their voices. Commissioner Cunningham questioned how the City Commission could take responsibility for being proactive in this area.

Vice Mayor Griffin stated the report and recommendations had been a long time coming, and it remained a work in progress. Vice Mayor Griffin commended Deputy City Manager Lam for making the sub-committee process successful. Vice Mayor Griffin stated the report and recommendations offered a good direction towards a space where there was communication, transparency, and a path forward.

Commissioner Praedel thanked Deputy City Manager Lam, Vice Mayor Griffin, and Commissioner Cunningham for their work. Commissioner Praedel thanked stakeholders for being willing to participate in focus groups, and he thanked them for pressing the City to not just listen to people but to act on what they heard. Commissioner Praedel expressed his commitment to ensuring the review of the City's policies and practices in this area remained a living, on-going process. Commissioner Praedel noted Public Safety Policy 430 on First Amendment Assemblies would be revised based on additional research and the results of the O.I.R. Group report.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hess, Deputy City Manager Lam explained the report included next steps and milestones, the first of which was the independent review by the O.I.R. Group. Deputy City Manager Lam stated there was work that was on hold as the City was waiting to get the results of the independent review. Deputy City Manager Lam indicated the City would share updates as it received information from the external review, started to hit project milestones, and made updates to policies and procedures.

2021-0009
Final Report of the
First Amendment
Assembly Sub-
Committee (cont'd)

Commissioner Praedel stated the City's proactive response to the evolving situation around the November election was one of the best instances of citywide communication in 2020. Commissioner Praedel noted this coordinated response to potential events and unrest surrounding the election was an early application of what Commissioners and staff were learning through the work of the Sub-Committee.

Mayor Anderson thanked Deputy City Manager Lam, Vice Mayor Griffin, and Commissioners Cunningham and Praedel for their work, and he noted their work was now handed back to the City Commission.

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Praedel, moved to endorse the First Amendment Assembly Sub-Committee final report and direct the City Manager to pursue next steps identified in the report and provide periodic updates at future City Commission Business meetings.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

City Commissioner
Comments

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

Commissioner Urban clarified that both percentages for the KDPS budget were correct: the KDPS budget was 50% of the General Fund budget and 15% of the total City budget.

Commissioner Cunningham wished everyone a "Happy New Year" and wished "Happy Birthday" to his cousin, Kendrick Taylor. Commissioner Cunningham noted it was a City Commission election year, and he encouraged candidates to pay attention to the City budget.

Commissioner Hess thanked Deb Droppers for trying to create a festive atmosphere downtown for New Years. Commissioner Hess offered remarks on the importance of community.

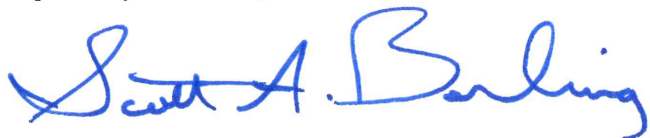
Vice Mayor Griffin stated she was looking forward to a year of systems change.

Mayor Anderson expressed condolences to the family and friends of a young man who was shot and killed on New Year's Eve. Mayor Anderson spoke about the work of first responders. Mayor Anderson encouraged people to read the Foundation for Excellence Annual Report for 2020, and he noted much of the FFE's work addressed long-term solutions to gun violence. Mayor Anderson urged people to be resolute, to work together, and to not chase every news story in 2021.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Amended minutes approved on: March 7, 2022