

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, May 15, 2023 at 7:01 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

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

Invocation

The invocation, given by Pastor Caleb Williams, Milwood United Methodist Church, was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Proclamation
2023-22-01

Commissioner Decker proclaimed May 21-27, 2023 *Public Services Week*. Public Services Director James Baker and representatives from the Public Services Department received the proclamation.

Director Baker introduced the following Public Services staff: Deputy Director Teresa Johnson; Division Managers Valetta Sellers-Evans, Joe Bonhomme, Jim Cornell and Anthony Ladd; Field Managers Lorenzo Hoskin, Chris Smith, and Chris Nelson; Wastewater Superintendent Steve Helmer; Administrative Support Manager Wendy Burlingham; Assistant City Engineer Anna Crandall; and Forestry Supervisor Brian Labelle. Director Baker also introduced Maria Isabel Amorin Cabrera, a global innovator in water and wastewater materials and technology from Guatemala, who was working with the Public Services Department as a Fellow in the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative, sponsored through Global Ties Kalamazoo.

Director Baker referenced a document entitled *Public Services Division 2022 – May YTD 2023 Awards and Recognition* and a flyer with dates and times of upcoming facility tours, presentations, and truck displays. Copies of these documents were filed with the papers for this meeting.

Adoption of the Agenda

By unanimous consent the City Commission adopted its meeting agenda as presented.

Communications

City Manager Ritsema presented the following communications:

- the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) would be hosting two town hall meetings regarding their recently released air quality health consultation report. The first meeting would take place at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 18th at Mt. Zion Baptist church; the second meeting would take place at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 24th at Urban Alliance.

City Clerk Borling provided a brief report on the May 2nd election and noted approximately 790 ballots were cast in person on Election Day, compared to almost 5,000 absentee ballots that were tabulated by the Absent Voter Counting Board. City Clerk Borling commended his staff for their hard work.

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

In-Person Comments

Joel Schoonbeck, City resident, spoke about a sewage back up in his home on Valentine's Day and read the initial response from the City's claims adjuster. Mr. Schoonbeck stated the response was unacceptable, as it indicated a timely response, or any response, from the City was not guaranteed. Mr. Schoonbeck stated he had sent an email to Commissioners in April but had only received a response from Commissioner Decker. Mr. Schoonbeck requested that Commissioners read his email and respond.

Ray Sweany, City resident, spoke about the need for compassion towards the homelessness and expressed concern that Housing Resources Inc. might sell their pod homes and abandon that project.

Jeff Messer, City resident, spoke about the Rank MI Vote petition drive to place a question on the November ballot. Mr. Messer reported they were close to having the number of signatures they wanted to submit, and he announced locations and times where petitions would be available for people to sign. A copy of Mr. Messer's written remarks was filed with the papers for this meeting.

Ben described an incident where a Public Safety Officer told him to leave a Kalamazoo Public School Board meeting, and he spoke about various types of protest as being his only course of action.

Call-In Comments

Tina McClinton, City resident, asked the City to address flooding in her neighborhood.

Kelly Doyle, City resident, asked what the City was going to do about recent drug overdoses noted some cities were installing Narcan vending machines. Ms. Doyle asked City leadership to talk about their plans for addressing air quality issues and Graphic Packaging.

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

- approval of a sole source agreement with Alfred Benesch & Company for technical assistance with the implementation of Lucity, Central Square Enterprise Asset Management System in the amount of \$115,476.
- approval of a one-year contract extension with Goodyear for tires and tubes for KDPS and Public Services in the amount of \$128,000.
- approval of a purchase order with SWT Excavating, Inc. for the 2023 New Water Service Installation Project in the amount of \$863,911.11.
- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** approving a request from the Downtown Development Authority to levy a tax rate of 1.9638 mills.

Public Comments

2023-22-02

Consent Agenda

2023-22-03

2023-22-04

2023-22-05

2023-22-06
Resolution 23-23

2023-22-07
Resolution 23-24

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** confirming the 2023 Assessment Roll.

2023-22-08

- adoption of the updated 2023 Emergency Operations Plan for the City of Kalamazoo and authorize the Mayor and City Manager to sign the Letter of Promulgation.

2023-22-09

- approval for the City of Kalamazoo to rejoin the Southwest Michigan First Council of 100.

2023-22-10

- approval of the Mayor's appointments and reappointment to the Civil Rights Board:

- the appointment of Jen Hsu-Bishop for a term expiring on March 31, 2026.

- the reappointment of Madison Lukeman for a term expiring on March 31, 2026.

- the appointment of Cathryn Phason for a term expiring on March 31, 2025.

2023-22-11

- approval of the following appointments to the Environmental Concerns Committee:

- the appointment of Thomas DeWhirst for a term expiring on January 1, 2026

- the appointment of Rachel Jongle for a term expiring on January 1, 2026.

2023-22-12

- approval of the minutes from the City Commission meetings on March 20, April 3, April 17, and May 1, 2023.

Commissioner Hoffman, seconded by Commissioner Juarez, moved to approve the consent agenda requests and authorize the City Manager to sign all related 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

Regular Agenda items were considered next.

2023-22-13
Contract Extension for
Sewer Rehabilitation by
Lining

An opportunity was given for public comments on a contract extension with Corby Energy for sanitary sewer rehabilitation by lining in the amount of \$1,011,302, but no comments were offered.

Commissioner Praedel, seconded by Vice Mayor Cooney, moved to approve a one-year contract extension with Corby Energy for sanitary sewer rehabilitation by lining through the Cooperative Purchase National IPA cooperative purchasing program in the amount of \$1,011,302.

Prior to a vote on the motion, Commissioner Praedel, thanked staff for putting this on the Regular Agenda. Commissioner Praedel stated this was an example of the City using new technologies.

With a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

Management Services Director and Chief Financial Officer Steve Vicenzi provided an overview of two contracts with Wayne County Appraisal d/b/a WCA Assessing for assessing and Assessor of Record services.

In response to questions and comments from City Commissioners, CFO Vicenzi and Andrew Falkenberg, Regional Assessing Manager with WCA Assessing, provided the following information:

- to meet the requirements of state law there is a continual process of assessing, with the goal of appraising 10% or more of the properties in the City each year.
- Aaron Powers is a partner with WCA Assessing. The City Commission appoints him as the City Assessor to comply with City Charter requirements.
- information on WCA Assessing's employee demographics can be provided, along with information on the company's work in the area of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
- Michigan has fewer Level 4 Assessors than jurisdictions that need them. As a result, many Level 4 Assessors work for multiple jurisdictions on a part time or contractual basis.
- WCA Assessing has at least five Level 4 Assessors, and the company encourages its employees to maximize their certification levels.

An opportunity was given for public comments on a contract extension with Wayne County Appraisal d/b/a WCA Assessing for assessing services in the amount of \$1,208,172.13, but no comments were offered.

Commissioner Hess, seconded by Commissioner Decker, moved to approve a three-year contract extension with Wayne County Appraisal, LLC d/b/a WCA Assessing for assessing services in the amount of \$1,208,172.13.

With a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

An opportunity was given for public comments on the appointment of Aaron Powers as City Assessor under the provisions of Charter Section 51; and approval of a three-year contract extension with Wayne County Appraisal, LLC d/b/a WCA Assessing for City Assessor and Assessor of Record services in the amount of \$394,523.87, but no comments were offered.

2023-22-13

Contract Extension for Sewer Rehabilitation by Lining (cont'd)

2023-22-14

Contract for Assessing Services

2023-22-15

Appointment of City Assessor and Contract for Assessor of Record Services

2023-22-15

Appointment of City Assessor and Contract for Assessor of Record Services (cont'd)

Commissioner Juarez, seconded by Vice Mayor Cooney, moved to approve the appointment of Aaron Powers as City Assessor under the provisions of Charter Section 51; and approve a three-year contract extension with Wayne County Appraisal, LLC d/b/a WCA Assessing for City Assessor and Assessor of Record services in the amount of \$394,523.87.

With a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

2023-22-16

Contract for Gasoline, Diesel, and Biodiesel Fuel

Director Baker provided an overview of the City's biodiesel fuel program.

An opportunity was given for public comments on a contract with Kalamazoo Oil Inc. for gasoline, diesel, and biodiesel fuel for the not-to-exceed amount of \$1,100,000, but no comments were offered.

Commissioner Hess, seconded by Vice Mayor Cooney, moved to approve a one-year term contract with Kalamazoo Oil Inc. for gasoline, diesel, and biodiesel fuel for the not-to-exceed amount of \$1,100,000.

With a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

2023-22-17

Resolution 23-25
Approving MDOT
Contract 23-5104 for
the Whites Road
Construction Project

In response to a question from Commissioner Praedel regarding the Whites Road watermain and roadway construction project, Director Baker confirmed the project was scheduled to begin in late summer with completion in 2024. Director Baker advised that the construction schedule could change, as staff needed to meet with the contractor to confirm the schedule.

An opportunity was given for public comments on a contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation for the Whites Road watermain and roadway construction project between Oakland Drive and Westnedge Avenue, but no comments were offered.

Commissioner Hoffman, seconded by Commissioner Decker, moved to adopt a **RESOLUTION** approving a contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation for the Whites Road watermain and roadway construction project, between Oakland Drive and Westnedge Avenue, in the amount of \$3,619,086.

With a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

City Manager Ritsema highlighted upcoming Parks and Recreation programs and events:

- May 17th – a Bike Rodeo at Mayors' Riverfront Park
- May 24th and June 1st – community input sessions at Milham Park for the Milham Park Master Plan
- June 9th – the start of Lunchtime Live on Fridays at Bronson Park (through September 1st)
- June 7th – the opening of Kik Pool (closes on August 13th)

City Manager Ritsema recognized the following Parks and Recreation employees:

- seasonal employee James Ingraham, for stepping up during a staff shortage to take responsibility for the maintenance of a group of parks, including Milham and Crane Parks
- Parks and Recreation Program Coordinator Pete Aerts for his 20-year service anniversary with the City

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

Commissioner Hoffman announced Housing Resources Incorporated (HRI) had emergency rental assistance funds available. Commissioner Hoffman stated the deadline for applications was May 26th, and the funds needed to be expended by June 30th. Regarding her questions about WCA Assessing and DEI, Commissioner Hoffman stated the City had committed to do DEI work and needed to ask its partners where they were on the DEI journey.

Commissioner Decker reported she had talked to students recently about jobs at the City, and she suggested an event where students could visit City facilities and find out about the different jobs and careers that were available. Commissioner Decker expressed excitement about the City's renewed partnership with Southwest Michigan First, and she spoke about her work with community partners to promote the City. Commissioner Decker invited residents of the Westnedge Hill Neighborhood to a block party at Crane Park on June 3rd and noted an element of the event was establishing the Westnedge Hill Neighborhood Association so work could begin on a neighborhood plan.

Commissioner Hess reported on recent meetings and events she had attended, and she highlighted upcoming community events. Commissioner Hess addressed Tina McClinton's concerns and recommended a recent, hour-long podcast on Public Media Network where Jack Urban and Director Baker discussed flooding in Kalamazoo. Commissioner Hess noted just the design work for a solution to address flooding in the City would cost \$10 million. Commissioner Hess commended Community Planning and Economic Development Deputy Director Christina Anderson for leading a series of community meetings about proposed zoning changes. Commissioner Hess thanked students at Woodward Elementary School for creating over 100 cards for Public Safety Officers.

Commissioner Praedel remarked on his visit to the Water Reclamation Plant as an elementary school student, and he indicated this visit was the beginning of his interest in the work of the City. Commissioner Praedel encouraged people to attend the Public Services facility open houses next week. Commissioner Praedel thanked

City Manager's Report

Commissioner
Comments

Commissioner
Comments (cont'd)

Commissioner Hoffman for raising the issue of appointee evaluations at the last meeting. Commissioner Praedel reported that he, Commissioner Hoffman, and Commissioner Hess would be meeting with Human Resources Director Shelly Dusek next week to start discussing the evaluation process. Commissioner Praedel offered remarks on the MDHHS air quality report and the work the City had done on its own initiative to address odors coming from the Water Reclamation Plant. Commissioner Praedel stated the City Commission was determined to handle this issue the right way. Commissioner Praedel stated corporate citizenship was about making the community a better place, doing the right thing for the community, and doing more than the bare minimum.

Commissioner Juarez remarked on Mother's Day and wished a blessing on all Kalamazoo mothers. Commissioner Juarez spoke about gun violence and noted June was Gun Violence Awareness Month. Commissioner Juarez encouraged people to attend an anti-gun violence rally sponsored by ISAAC on June 5th in Bronson Park. Commissioner Juarez stated there were many groups doing good work to address gun violence, but the impact of this work would be limited unless everyone in the community was involved. Commissioner Juarez stated everyone on the dais felt the impact of Graphic Packaging, and he encouraged the community to attend the MDHHS town hall meetings. Commissioner Juarez stated the community needed to come together on this issue and speak as one voice. Commissioner thanked people for their prayers while he was in the hospital with a serious infection, and he remarked on the brevity and value of life.

Vice Mayor Cooney highlighted the following elements of the MDHHS air quality report: 1) the amount of hydrogen sulfide in the air created a public health hazard; 2) the average concentration of hydrogen sulfide regularly exceeded the safe concentration standards; 3) regular exposure to hydrogen sulfide could cause respiratory effects for people with asthma; 4) because high hydrogen sulfide levels were almost constant, the affected community was constantly subject to stress; 5) children were at greater risk; and 6) the Northside Neighborhood met or exceeded the 80th percentile on the Environmental Justice Index for the entire United States, which meant the neighborhood experienced more environmental justice violations than 80% of the neighborhoods in the country. Vice Mayor Cooney took exception to the recommendations in the MDHHS report (stay inside, manage stress) and stated the pollution needed to stop. Vice Mayor Cooney stated the situation was a public health emergency, and it was unacceptable that people in the community were living in this condition.

Mayor Anderson stated he was blessed to serve with everyone on the City Commission. Mayor Anderson remarked on the City's efforts to address odors coming from the Water Reclamation Plant. Mayor Anderson spoke of the environmental legacy of the paper industry and stated every Commissioner was personally committed to prioritizing the City's response to the MDHHS report. Mayor Anderson lamented the shootings that happened on Mother's Day and stated the community could not be characterized by gun violence. Mayor Anderson commended Public Safety Officers for their work and for facing trauma and death every day.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

DRAFT