

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, November 21, 2022 at 7:00 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 Bishop Daniel S. Cunningham from the Empowerment Center, was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introduction of Guests

Mayor Anderson recognized Jim Hess, Kevan Hess, and Dwight Quinn, Principal of King Westwood Elementary School, who lead and supported the Breakfast of Champions mentoring program for 5th grade boys at King Westwood. Mayor Anderson recognized the following participants in the program:

Lavelle Guess
Max Mehne
Miles Solis
Isaac Mitchell
Zahir LaBarre
Amos Hayner
Reid Reffet
Joaquin Fischer
Jordan Nabors
Tanner Tarnutzer
Zeke Johnson
Kayden Lillard

Mr. Mitchell thanked Mayor Anderson for speaking to the group and presented a signed picture of the group to him.

Adoption of the Agenda

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

Communications

City Manager Ritsema reported the ad hoc committee for the City Attorney search had met with Jeff Mueller from the Michigan Municipal League on November 9th to review the top three candidates. City Manager Ritsema announced there would be a public meet-and-greet on November 30th from 4-6 p.m. and public interviews on December 1st at 9:45 a.m., 11:15 a.m., and 1:00 p.m.

City Manager Ritsema stated he had no new information on the investigation of Public Safety Chief Vernon Coakley, and he emphasized the importance of conducting an investigation that was thorough and fair to everyone involved. City Manager Ritsema stated he would share the findings of the investigation as soon as they were available.

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

In-Person Comments

The following people expressed concerns and/or opposition regarding the proposed redesign of Bronson Boulevard and requested that the City solicit more input from residents:

John Allen, City resident (A copy of Mr. Allen's written remarks was filed with the papers for this meeting)

John Bartels, City resident

Kyle Keiser, City resident

Mike Nave, City resident

Melissa Brown, City resident,

Mary Kay Norman, City resident

Call-In Comments

A City resident expressed opposition to poles and green grass in the streets.

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 contract with Morgan Composting for professional compost site removal & maintenance in the amount of \$136,500.
- approval of a three-year agreement with Zhang Financial LLC for investment consulting services in the amount of \$558,000.
- approval of a lease agreement with S&K Properties for 248 North Kalamazoo Mall which will be used by the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety for the period of December 1, 2022 - November 30, 2025, in the amount of \$55,800.

Commissioner Hoffman, seconded by Commissioner Decker, 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

City Manager Ritsema introduced Public Services Director James Baker who provided an update on the status of the City's leaf pick-up service after delays caused by recent snowstorms. Director Baker demonstrated an interactive map on the City's website showing the areas where leaf pick-up had already occurred and where it would be taking place in the coming weeks.

Public Comments

2022-46-01

Consent Agenda

2022-46-02

2022-46-03

2022-46-04

City Manager's Report

City Manager's Report
(cont'd)

Commissioner Praedel suggested the leaf pick-up schedule be rotated so the same areas did not get picked up last every year.

In response to a question from Mayor Anderson, Director Baker stated City crews might be back to doing leaf pick-up as early as Wednesday.

Commissioner
Comments

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

Commissioner Juarez apologized for his recent absences and stated he had been going through a lot. Commissioner Juarez thanked community organizations for giving out food baskets for Thanksgiving. Commissioner Juarez stated Kalamazoo would be a great community if people took better care of each other.

Commissioner Decker stated she was glad to see young people attending the recent National League of Cities conference. Commissioner Decker asked City Clerk Borling to send Mr. Allen's remarks to Neighborhood Activator Jae Slaby. Commissioner Decker highlighted the Westnedge Hill Neighborhood Association and stated they were looking for board members. Commissioner Decker urged neighborhood associations to contact Neighborhood Activator Slaby about creating neighborhood plans.

Commissioner Praedel thanked Jim Hess and noted people did not need credentials or wealth to build into the lives of young people. Commissioner Praedel remarked on the investment and impact of the summer youth programs. Commissioner Praedel wished his son "Happy Birthday." Commissioner Praedel made comments about the lease for the downtown Public Safety substation. Commissioner Praedel recognized and thanked people who would be working through the Thanksgiving holiday.

Commissioner Hess expressed gratitude to Public Safety officers for working through the holiday and to Public Services employees who were dealing with early winter storms and leaf pick-up. Commissioner Hess stated the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services was in the final stages of preparing its air quality report, and she noted any enforcement action would come from the Michigan Department of Energy, Great Lakes and the Environment. Commissioner Hess announced there would be a community Thanksgiving service on Wednesday, November 23rd at Mount Zion Baptist Church. Commissioner Hess remarked that she, Deputy City Manager Jeff Chamberlain, and CFO Steve Vicenzi had met with elected officials from South Africa to talk about public finance. Commissioner Hess thanked Cindy Hunter from First Congregational Church for bringing the Jason Max Ferdinand Singers to Kalamazoo for a Bach Festival concert.

Vice Mayor Cooney offered comments about a TED Talk on the subject of identity featuring Brian Stevenson. Vice Mayor Cooney stated people talked about the importance of liberty and justice for all, but they did not act accordingly.

Mayor Anderson recognized the presence of his daughter Erica. Mayor Anderson thanked Maple Hill Auto Group for sponsoring the Kalamazoo Holiday Parade and announced the annual tree lighting ceremony would take place this coming Friday. Mayor Anderson noted the Transgender Day of Remembrance was yesterday, and he expressed condolences to victims of LGBTQ shootings in Colorado Springs.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

DRAFT