

Roll Call

A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Tuesday, January 3, 2023 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
Chris Praedel

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Esteven Juarez*

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

Commissioners Excused

Vice Mayor Cooney, seconded by Commissioner Hoffman, moved to excuse the absence of Commissioner Juarez. With a voice vote, the motion passed.

*Commissioner Juarez arrived at 7:01 p.m.

Invocation

The invocation, given by Pastor Christopher Engelsma from Covenant United Reformed Church, was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of the Agenda

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

2023-02-01

City Manager Ritsema asked that Item G-3, a Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo grant for Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS), be removed from the agenda so there could be more discussion with the new KPS administration.

Public Comments

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

In-Person Comments

Jack Urban, City resident, spoke about the arrangements for the departure of former Public Safety Chief Vernon Coakley. Mr. Urban stated the City missed an opportunity to have a “truth and reconciliation forum” to bring healing and raise awareness in the community.

Hannah Marcon, City resident and Student Body Vice President at Western Michigan University (WMU), expressed support for the FY 2023 budget and the proposed restructuring of West Michigan Avenue.

Jeff Messer, City resident, spoke about the Public Safety substation at 248 North Kalamazoo Mall and questioned whether the City was making lease payments when the space was not being occupied or renovated.

Wendy Fields, City resident and President of the Kalamazoo Metropolitan Branch of the NAACP, stated she had not read the entire investigative report concerning former Chief Coakley, but she had concerns and questions around his termination and the way it happened. Ms. Fields stated the City Manager was not honest about when he had received the report, and she could not trust him anymore. Ms. Fields urged the City Commission to hold him accountable.

Call-In Comments

None

At 7:14 p.m. Mayor Anderson opened a public hearing to receive comments on the Fiscal Year 2023 Proposed Budget for the City of Kalamazoo.

City Manager Ritsema reported the City Administration was recommending an allocation of \$125,000 for a planning process to consider how the City might address early childhood education. City Manager Ritsema stated \$60,000 would come from unused American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and \$65,000 would come from the General Fund. City Manager Ritsema noted a communication had gone out to Commissioners to address some of their budget questions.

In response to a question from Commissioner Decker, City Manager Ritsema confirmed that the \$65,000 from the General Fund would not be taken from funds allocated for youth programming.

In response to a question from Commissioner Praedel, City Manager Ritsema stated the allocation of funds came with a good faith commitment to continue this work, and he stated staff would engage the Youth Development Subcommittee for assistance.

Mayor Anderson noted the City was near the end of the budget process, and there had been several public discussions of the budget already.

An opportunity was given for public comments on the FY2023 Proposed Budget, but no comments were offered.

City Manager Ritsema stated the resolutions to adopt the budget would be presented to the City Commission for adoption at its next meeting on January 17th.

At 7:19 p.m. Mayor Anderson closed the public hearing.

At 7:19 p.m. Mayor Anderson opened a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed 2021 Kalamazoo Mall Sidewalk Maintenance Assessment.

Commissioner Decker thanked the City Clerk for sending out hearing notices with response cards, and she thanked the businesses that responded. Commissioner Decker stated businesses should have input with this process, and she encouraged businesses to send back response cards the City makes them available.

When an opportunity was given for public comments on a resolution approving the 2021 Kalamazoo Mall Sidewalk Maintenance Assessment at a per front foot cost of \$13.570, the following people addressed the City Commission:

Jeff Messer, City resident, asked why the property owner response cards had not been included in the agenda packet for the meeting.

At 7:23 p.m. Mayor Anderson closed the public hearing.

Public Comments
(cont'd)

2023-02-02

Public Hearing re: the
FY2023 Propose Budget

2023-02-03

Public Hearing re: the
2021 Mall Maintenance
Assessment

2023-02-03

Resolution 23-01
Approving the 2021
Kalamazoo Mall
Maintenance Assessment

Commissioner Decker, seconded by Commissioner Praedel, moved to adopt **RESOLUTION** #4, for the purpose of approving the 2021 Kalamazoo Mall Sidewalk Maintenance Assessment at a per front foot cost of \$13.570.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

Consent Agenda

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:

2023-02-04

- approval of a contract extension with Premier Lawn and Snow for the 2023 Property Maintenance of Riverside and Mountain Home Cemeteries in the amount of \$285,890.

2023-02-05

- approval of a Support Services Agreement with the Central County Transportation Authority (CCTA) for a three-year period beginning 10/01/2022 and ending on 09/30/2025 in the amount of \$550,644 for the first year, and increasing each subsequent year.

2023-02-06

- approval of a Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo High Impact Fund agreement in the amount of \$195,000 for family and employer engagement services from Southwest Childcare Resources through the Tri-Share Project.

2023-02-07

Resolution 23-02

- adoption of a **RESOLUTION** recognizing the Kalamazoo County Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Council as a non-profit organization operating in the community for the purpose of obtaining a charitable gaming license.

2023-02-08

- approval and acceptance of an easement agreement with Bogan Developments LLC, the owner of 315 East Frank Street, to permit the City to install a public sidewalk along the west side of North Pitcher Street between East Frank and Myrtle Streets.

Commissioner Hess, seconded by Commissioner Hoffman, 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

*At the time of the vote, Commissioner Praedel abstained from voting on Item G-6, an easement agreement with Bogan Developments.

Regular Agenda

Regular Agenda items were considered next.

An opportunity was given for public comments on an ordinance to amend the Pension Ordinance regarding a Deferred Retirement Option Plan, but no comments were offered.

Commissioner Hoffman, seconded by Vice Mayor Cooney, moved to adopt an **ORDINANCE** to amend the Pension Ordinance regarding a Deferred Retirement Option Plan.

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 an **ORDINANCE** to amend Article X of Chapter 2 – Employee Retirement System, but no comments were offered.

Vice Mayor Cooney, seconded by Commissioner Decker, moved to adopt an **ORDINANCE** to amend Article X of Chapter 2 – Employee Retirement System.

With a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

Items of unfinished business were considered next.

Mayor Anderson opened a discussion regarding the appointment of Commissioners to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee.

Commissioners Decker, Hoffman, and Hess volunteered to serve on the Subcommittee.

Commissioner Juarez, seconded by Commissioner Praedel, moved to create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee composed of Commissioners Hess, Hoffman, Decker.

Prior to a vote on the motion, Commissioner Hoffman thanked staff for being willing to do this work.

With a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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

NAYS: None

2023-02-09

Ordinance 2059 re: a Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP)

2023-02-10

Ordinance 2060 re: a Amendments to the Pension Ordinance

Unfinished Business**2023-02-11**

Creation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee

Commissioner
Comments

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

Commissioner Decker recognized City staff for their work on the proposed budget. Commissioner Decker spoke about walkability, connectivity, and the importance of making streets safe, especially for college students. Commissioner Decker asked City Manager Ritsema to talk about the timeline of events related to Chief Coakley's separation. Commissioner Decker stated she was honored to attend the inauguration of Governor Whitmer on January 1st and pointed out the insignia for the inauguration was designed by KRESA.

Commissioner Praedel pointed out that changes to West Michigan Avenue were made in response to student advocacy, and he thanked the Public Services Department for seriously studying this issue. Commissioner Praedel thanked staff for their work on the 2023 budget. Commissioner Praedel acknowledged the benefit of using ARPA funds for infrastructure, but he emphasize the need to invest in people, as it was people who were really impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioner Praedel urged the City to invest its ARPA funds in ways that led to sustained benefits rather than creating "cliffs" for the funding recipients. Commissioner Praedel remarked that the City needed to keep moving forward for DEI with effort and focus. Commissioner Praedel commended staff who worked the Christmas snowstorm to keep streets clear. Commissioner Praedel stated another murder had taken place, and he recognized that while the statistics were declining, each statistic was a person.

Commissioner Hess thanked City workers who kept the streets and sidewalks safe during the holidays. Commissioner Hess remarked on the upcoming Martin Luther King Jr. Day events. Commissioner Hess commented that nobody "won" in the situation with former Chief Coakley, but the City had learned forgiveness, grace, and bravery through the process. Commissioner Hess thanked people who worked to put in place policies that addressed the issues that were raised.

Commissioner Hoffman provided details for local events connected to the National Day of Racial Healing on January 17th.

Vice Mayor Cooney thanked WMU students for attending and speaking. Vice Mayor Cooney spoke about the need for the City to use its resources to improve people's lives. Vice Mayor Cooney stated the City could be a national model.

Commissioner Juarez thanked staff for working diligently on the budget and thanked the new DEI Director. Commissioner Juarez stated the Chief Coakley situation was hard and noted he had brought up the idea of reconciliation. Commissioner Juarez offered remarks about the challenges of 2023 and the need for people to take care of themselves mentally and work together to meet the challenges and remain resilient.

Mayor Anderson stated the City Commission had a unified vision. Mayor Anderson remarked on the murder that took place on New Year's Eve and highlighted the need for the City to adapt its approach to address younger and younger victims and performers of gun violence.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

Approved by the City Commission on: _____

DRAFT