

	A special work session of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Saturday, February 6, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. in the Metro Transit Governing Board Room, located at 530 N. Rose Street. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the City Commission's Priorities for 2016-2017.
Roll Call	COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Mayor Bobby Hopewell Vice Mayor Don Cooney David Anderson Erin Knott Matt Milcarek Shannon Sykes Jack Urban COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None
Communications	Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and City Clerk Scott Borling.
Introductory Remarks	An opportunity was given for general communications, but none were offered. City Manager Ritsema introduced facilitator David Wheatley, who made introductory remarks, reviewed the agenda, and highlighted meeting best practices.
Discussion of Teamwork and Communication Tools	Mr. Wheatley opened a discussion of "Tools for a New Team." Mr. Wheatley distributed and reviewed a card describing the "Four Choices of Leadership," and "What Great Teams do Great." Discussion followed. Mr. Wheatley reviewed various communication tools used by the City Commission and City Administration and asked for feedback. A record of this feedback was recorded on a Mindjet diagram, a copy of which was filed with the papers for this meeting. Commissioner Sykes noted her small group meetings had not been set up yet. Commissioner Urban stated attendance at small group meetings was not good, and he expressed a desire for more dialogue with fellow Commissioners so that he could understand their perspectives and motivations. Commissioner Urban indicated he did not like people calling in to meetings, as he could not read their body language and facial expressions. Commissioner Urban stated he felt that Commissioners who were not on the Administrative Committee were "second class" Commissioners. Commissioner Urban remarked it would be better to have all Commissioners hearing the same information at one time. Commissioner Milcarek remarked that having Administrative Committee meetings and multiple small group meetings was inefficient and not an effective use of everyone's time. Commissioner Anderson stated some communication tools were working well, like the weekly email updates.

Commissioner Sykes reported communication between individual Commissioners and the City Administration was going very well, but communication between Commissioners was another question. Commissioner Sykes stated there were tools for communicating main points from Administrative Committee meetings with the rest of the Commission.

Discussion of
Teamwork and
Communication
Tools (cont'd)

Commissioner Anderson stated there were rules to follow regarding communications, such as the Open Meetings Act, and he noted the rules were different for communications between Commissioners and staff compared to communications between Commissioners. Commissioner Anderson indicated the small group meetings needed to get started.

Mayor Hopewell stated new Commissioner orientation needed to happen and acknowledged that scheduling Commissioners for meetings could be difficult.

Commissioner Urban stated he wanted to know more about the strategy, planning, and framing of issues before they appeared on a City Commission agenda for a decision.

Mayor Hopewell remarked that the framing of issues was done by staff in many cases.

Commissioner Anderson commented that it was in the Administration's best interest to make sure all Commissioners were well informed about issues, and it was in Commissioners' best interest to have good communication with each other. Commissioner Anderson stated all Commissioners were personally involved in community activities and advocacy apart from their roles as Commissioners.

Vice Mayor Cooney stated the old Committee of the Whole meetings were a waste of time, as there was usually no discussion about agenda items. Vice Mayor Cooney indicated small group meetings worked better to foster discussion but agreed there needed to be more sharing of the results of those meetings.

Mayor Hopewell suggested it might be helpful to have more work sessions on significant topics, like lead and the racial profiling study. Mayor Hopewell stated he was expecting Commissioners to do the work they committed to doing during their campaigns, and he trusted them to communicate with other Commissioners when that work was relevant to the work of the Commission.

Commissioner Urban suggested work sessions on the following topics: Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo, noise and the noise ordinance, prisoner reentry, revenue, and lead.

City Manager Ritsema commented that the Administration tried to communicate and address issues in a proactive manner, but sometimes the City found itself in a reactive mode. City Manager Ritsema also suggested that the Commission needed to understand the campaign platforms of individual Commissioners vis-à-vis the greater good.

Recess

Meeting recessed at 10:12 a.m.
Meeting resumed at 10:23 a.m.

Expectations of
Working Together

After the meeting resumed Mr. Wheatley led a discussion among the Commissioners regarding expectations for working together, which resulted in the following ideas/suggestions:

- use the communication tools already available
- use work sessions more, as both a proactive and reactive strategy for dealing with issues
- make a deliberate attempt to take part, as a City Commission, in community input/visioning sessions hosted by other organizations and community partners
- share key points, issues, observations, etc. with the other Commissioners after attending events
- bring up work session ideas under the New Business section on the Business Meeting agendas
- do not surprise Commissioners with New Business items; communicate about these prior to a meeting
- all Commissioners can submit information to the City Manager's Office for inclusion in the weekly informational email messages

City Attorney Robinson noted it was fine for all Commissioners to attend public meetings, but they needed to make sure they did not engage with each other at these meetings or deliberate. City Attorney Robinson also advised Commissioners to be careful with "Reply to All" emails that could create a situation where they were deliberating as a group, which would be a violation of the Open Meetings Act.

In response to a question from Commissioner Sykes, City Attorney Robinson explained extra work sessions could be scheduled in two ways: special meetings could be held as long as a notice was posted at least 18 hours in advance; and the Commission's annual meeting schedule could be amended to add work sessions if they were going to be held on a more regular basis.

Mr. Wheatley noted the Administrative Committee was comprised of the Mayor, the Vice Mayor, and the City Commissioner who received the third highest number of votes, but with recent changes to the method for electing the Mayor and Vice Mayor the old formula would not really work. Mr. Wheatley requested input from Commissioners regarding how the Administrative Committee should be structured after the 2017 election and offered as an option that the Administrative Committee could be comprised of the Mayor, current Vice Mayor, and immediate past Vice Mayor.

By consensus the City Commission agreed that following the 2017 municipal election the Administrative Committee should be comprised of the Mayor, current Vice Mayor, and immediate past Vice Mayor.

Review of 2015
Priorities

City Manager Ritsema noted the results for the 2015 City Commission Priorities were highlighted in the meeting packet, and he stated that for the sake of time he was not going to review them in detail.

Mayor Hopewell reported that most of the 2015 work on Priority 5 - Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo (SPK) had revolved around job creation, and now the work was moving into the realm of Families. Mayor Hopewell described pilot programs and connections that had been developed with various community partners. Hopewell reported there would be an item on the February 15th City Commission agenda to accept funding for a pilot program for middle schoolers. Mayor Hopewell also reported there was a funding opportunity that would make the summer youth employment program more of an apprenticeship.

Vice Mayor Cooney reported he was working with several organizations in the community to focus on meeting the needs of prisoners who had served their time and were now reentering the community. Vice Mayor Cooney stated students from Western Michigan University were developing a needs assessment for these former prisoners and their families. Vice Mayor Cooney also reported he was working with community organizations to build and expand on existing youth programs.

City Manager Ritsema reviewed the projected General Fund deficits for 2017-2021 and highlighted the recommended revenue options from the Blue Ribbon Revenue Panel.

In light of the projected budget deficits, Commissioners offered the following observations and suggestions:

- the City would still need new revenue even if expenditure reductions were made.
- Commissioners and staff need the budget deficit information in a simple format, so they can paint a picture for residents.
- the City needs to create a timetable showing when the different revenue options "kick-in."
- perhaps the City should use focus groups, since different segments of the community would react differently to different program reductions.
- the City should spend its time talking about growing the community – what the City would do with more revenue – rather than talking about severe program cuts – what the City would stop doing.
- the City needed to explain the choice that would need to be made between new revenue and program eliminations because the community did not really understand what would happen if there was no new revenue.
- the City of Pontiac balanced its budget each year, but they ended up with no police department.
- it was time to ask what the Countywide Law Enforcement Millage funded, and why.
- a \$19 million expenditure reduction over 5 years would be not be good; the City had done a good job of not "crying wolf" to citizens, but it was time to tell the truth.
- the Revenue Panel's recommendations that had question marks next to them really were not recommendations.

Review of 2015
Priorities (cont'd)

Review of
Revenue Panel
Recommendations
and Process for
Moving Forward

Review of
Revenue Panel
Recommendations
and Process for
Moving Forward
(cont'd)

City Manager Ritsema suggested the City Commission officially "receive" the Revenue Panel's report at a future meeting and that a work session be scheduled to review revenue options and develop a process to get community input.

Deputy City Manager Chamberlain noted that \$5 million in recurring, annual expenditure reductions would be 10% of the City's General Fund budget, and this level of reductions did not account for new initiatives or inflation.

In response to a question from City Manager Ritsema, Management Services Director Tom Skrobola reported the ongoing, annual savings from the Early Retirement Initiative was \$4.5 million for the General Fund.

Commissioner Urban asked whether the Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 community visioning process could be used to support the community input process for a revenue discussion.

Commissioners Sykes and Knott noted the point of Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 was to encourage participants' creativity and vision for the community, and they expressed concern that linking this process with the revenue question could create barriers to brainstorming.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 12:00 p.m.
The meeting resumed at 1:02 p.m.

Developing a Shared
Community Vision

When the meeting resumed Mr. Wheatley compared the art of delegation to a football field, where the end zone was the result to be achieved, the boundaries were the rules for how to get things done, and the 10-yard lines were check-in points along the way to achieving the desired result. Discussion followed regarding the delegation of authority and responsibility between City Commissioners and the City Manager, and Commissioners and City staff. Mr. Wheatley noted that organizational alignment around priorities had a "shelf life" that required periodic check-ins.

Community Planning and Development Director Laura Lam delivered a presentation on "Developing a Shared Community Vision," which included the topics of Vision Alignment, the Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 Framework, Master Plan Themes, Strategic Vision Guiding Principles, and a Strategic Calendar and Framework. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

In response to a question from Commissioner Urban, Director Lam clarified that anyone could be part of a work group, including community members and staff. Director Lam stated the work groups were giving input regarding their respective areas as well as feedback on the process itself.

Commissioner Milcarek stated it would be important for the workgroups to be informed about decisions made between meetings (after a legal review of a proposal, for example), and the reason behind those decisions.

At 1:36 p.m. small groups of Commissioners, staff, and citizens were formed to discuss the development of a shared community vision and answer the following questions:

- What do we like about the strategic vision development process?
- What is missing from the strategic vision process?
- What questions do we have?

The entire group reconvened at 2:35 p.m.

Spokespersons for the small groups shared the groups' answers to the above questions, which were documented in MindJet diagrams that were filed with the papers for this meeting.

By consensus the City Commission expressed agreement with the process for developing a strategic vision that was presented by Director Lam.

Next, an opportunity was given for closing comments by Commissioners and staff.

Mayor Hopewell noted many non-residents cared about the City, and he stated it would be interesting to get input from residents of neighboring jurisdictions like Kalamazoo Township and the City of Parchment.

Commissioners Milcarek and Sykes agreed that non-residents were stakeholders too and expressed support for getting input from neighboring communities.

Deputy City Manager Chamberlain suggested joint Planning Commission meetings with the townships as a natural way to get input from neighboring communities.

Commissioner Anderson read the following general comments that were made in his discussion group: City spending was still out of control; citizens were not able to get information into the City Commission packets; there was support for a work session about revenue; there were concerns about the process for citizens being appointed to City boards.

Next, an opportunity was given for general citizen comments.

Richard Stewart, City resident, expressed concern that citizens were not allowed to have the same meeting packet as Commissioners and indicated he had difficulty reading the packet made available to citizens, due to the small font. Mr. Stewart stated he was not aware there was an Administrative Committee, and he requested that the membership of the Committee be at least four Commissioners, so the meetings would need to be public. Mr. Stewart asked City Manager Ritsema why he needed two Deputy City Managers. Mr. Stewart expressed disappointment with Priority Based Budgeting (PBB).

Developing a Shared
Community Vision –
Small Group
Discussions

Closing Comments

Citizen Comments

Citizen Comments
(cont'd)

Mattie Jordan-Woods, City resident, suggested the community engagement strategy needed a more clear identification of ethnic/minority groups. Ms. Jordan-Woods suggested the titles of the Deputy City Managers be made more descriptive to clarify their roles. Ms. Jordan-Woods predicted the City would lose employees if it continued to give them three times the work they were capable of doing.

Tim Graham, City resident, stated revenue generation must be a top priority for the City, and he indicated the Commission needed to have a work session on revenue soon. Mr. Graham stated the work session needed to include an open dialogue on a variety of issues, including sustainability and a new collective vision for the City, without which a determination of revenue needs would be incomplete.

Commissioner
Comments

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

At the request of Mayor Hopewell and in response to a question from Mr. Stewart, City Manager Ritsema explained he saw a lot of work to be done when he became City Manager, so he created two deputy positions: one for strategic planning and communications; and one to oversee operations. City Manager Ritsema noted the positions previously held by Deputy City Managers Chamberlain and Moore were not filled, which resulted in cost savings.

Commissioner Sykes stated the short answer to Mr. Stewart's question was "No," the City Manager's Office could not get the work done with fewer staff. Commissioner Sykes commented on citizens' ability to request records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Commissioner Sykes noted the PBB Community Results were not ranked or listed in any particular order. Commissioner Sykes agreed with Ms. Jordan-Woods that the community engagement strategy needed to identify the racial and ethnic groups in the community.

In response to Commissioner Sykes, City Attorney Robinson clarified that minutes were not kept for Administrative Committee meetings, but a person could file a FOIA request for documents related to the Committee.

Mayor Hopewell stated it was the City Manager's prerogative to build his team as he saw fit, and it was commendable that he did so while reducing costs. Mayor Hopewell recommended the PBB Community Results be listed alphabetically in future presentations and publications to put an end to the discussion regarding prioritization. Mayor Hopewell requested that staff not publish a meeting packet that was unreadable. Mayor Hopewell stated people would have personal biases, but those biases should not drive the community discussion. Mayor Hopewell thanked Mr. Wheatley for a meeting process that was done well.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on March 7, 2016

Approved by: _____
Bobby J. Hopewell, Mayor
Dated: March 7, 2016