

Roll Call

A special meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, June 10, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at City Hall, 241 West South Street. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the acceptance of an easement related to The Kalamazoo Creamery project and interview candidates who have applied to fill the vacancy on the City Commission.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor Bobby J. Hopewell
Vice Mayor Erin Knott
David Anderson
Don Cooney
Jack Urban

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Eric Cunningham*

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

Commissioner
Excused

Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Cooney, moved to excuse the absence of Commissioner Cunningham. With a voice vote the motion passed.

2019-0210
Sidewalk Easement for
the Kalamazoo
Creamery Project

An opportunity was given for public comments on an easement for sidewalk purposes along Portage Street from the Kalamazoo Creamery Limited Dividend Housing Association Limited Partnership, but no comments were offered.

Vice Mayor Knott, seconded by Commissioner Cooney, moved to approve an easement for sidewalk purposes along Portage Street from the Kalamazoo Creamery Limited Dividend Housing Association Limited Partnership and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents on behalf of the City.

With a roll call vote this motion passed.

AYES: Commissioners Anderson, Cooney, Urban, Vice Mayor Knott, Mayor Hopewell

NAYS: None

2019-0211
Interview of
Candidates to Fill the
Vacancy on the City
Commission

Mayor Hopewell reviewed the process for interviewing City Commission candidates:

- Commissioners had submitted 11 interview questions to the City Clerk prior to the meeting.
- the order of the interviews was determined by random draw.
- candidates would be sequestered until their interviews.
- each candidate would have two minutes to make an opening statement.
- Commissioners would ask each candidate the same questions. Candidates would have 90 seconds to answer each question.
- each candidate would have 90 seconds to make a closing statement.

Mayor Hopewell noted the City Commission would receive public comments after all candidates had been interviewed. Each person would have two minutes to speak. Mayor Hopewell explained that voting would be by written ballot to eliminate Commissioners being influenced by other Commissioners' votes. Commissioners would put their names on their ballots for the record, and the City Clerk would display the results on the video screens.

Commissioner Urban suggested Commissioners did not need 11 questions to determine the best candidate.

*Commissioner Cunningham arrived at 6:06 p.m.

Commissioners reviewed the interview questions and selected questions 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11 as the questions to ask the candidates.

The City Commission interviewed the following candidates to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of former City Commissioner Shannon Sykes:

John McNeill
Megan Buwalda
Esteven Juarez
Patrese Griffin
William Wells

Commissioners asked each candidate the following questions:

1. In your opinion, what are the biggest issues facing the City of Kalamazoo that the City Commission should be working to address? What would you like to see the City of Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo metropolitan area be in 20 years? (asked by Commissioner Urban)
2. What is the City's overall budget for 2019? What is the General Fund Budget? (asked by Vice Mayor Knott)
3. How do you plan to involve residents in decision-making processes in our city? (asked by Commissioner Anderson)
4. What strategy should the City follow to end/alleviate intergenerational poverty? (asked by Commissioner Cooney)
5. What point of view will you bring to the City Commission that will help ensure that our decisions are wise and balanced? (asked by Commissioner Cunningham)
6. What was your participation in the IK2025 process, and what is your understanding of the IK2025 Strategic Goals for the City? Do you support these goals, and if so, how will you work to move forward the community's vision? (asked by Commissioner Anderson)
7. What is the primary purpose of the Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence? What are some of the ways the FFE supports that purpose, as specified in its founding and organizational documents? (asked by Commissioner Cunningham)
8. The Human Rights Campaign issues an annual Municipal Equality Index that examines how inclusive municipal laws, policies, and services are of LGBTQ people who live and work there. Cities are rated based on non-discrimination laws, the municipality as an employer, municipal services, law enforcement, and the city leadership's public position on equality.

2019-0211

Interview of
Candidates to Fill the
Vacancy on the City
Commission (cont'd)

2019-0211
Interview of
Candidates to Fill the
Vacancy on the City
Commission (cont'd)

Public Comments on
the Candidates

In Michigan 11 cities are ranked, and Kalamazoo's 2018 score is 74/100, which is behind cities like Ann Arbor, Detroit, E. Lansing, Ferndale, Grand Rapids, Lansing and Traverse City. Recognizing that you might not be familiar with the scoring criteria and metrics, what would you propose as a Commissioner to do policy wise and/or administratively to improve Kalamazoo's score before the next report is published in the fall of 2019? (asked by Vice Mayor Knott)

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

Nehemiah Scudder, City resident, stated good judgement of character was a more important characteristic for Commissioners than other skills or qualities.

Ed Genesis, City resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin.

Alicia Penning, City resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Alisa Parker, City resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin.

Mattie Jordan-Woods, City resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin.

Edward Griffin, Jr., City resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin.

Mary Garcia, City resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Ryan Griffin, City resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin.

Jennifer Juarez, City resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Jessica Ledesma, non-resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Alejandro Rodriguez, non-resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Belen Moreno-Aguilar, City resident, unidentified person expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Karina Martinez-Villanueva, City resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Shawn O'Bryant, City resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin.

Ariel Juarez, City resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Jorge Rodriguez, City resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Jonathan Steele, City resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Pat Vinge, City resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin.

Cathryn Phason, non-resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin.

Antonia Kennedy, non-resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez.

Adam Juarez, non-resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez. Jeff Messer, City resident, expressed support for John McNeill. Tobi Hanah-Davies, City resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin. Jackie Garcia, City resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez. Stephanie Moore, City resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin. Scott Goodwin, non-resident, expressed support for Esteven Juarez. Stacey Ledbetter, non-resident, expressed support for Patrese Griffin.	Public Comments on the Candidates (cont'd)
City Clerk Borling distributed the first ballot and tallied the results after Commissioners had cast their votes. On the first ballot Patrese Griffin received five votes and John McNeill received one vote: Commissioner Anderson selected Patrese Griffin Commissioner Cooney selected Patrese Griffin Commissioner Cunningham selected Patrese Griffin Commissioner Urban selected John McNeill Vice Mayor Knott selected Patrese Griffin Mayor Hopewell selected Patrese Griffin Having received affirmative votes from a majority of the City Commission, Patrese Griffin was appointed to the vacant seat on the City Commission. In response to a question from Mayor Hopewell, Ms. Griffin indicated she would like to take the oath of office immediately because her mother-in-law was present.	First Ballot
City Clerk Borling administered the Constitutional Oath of Office to Commissioner Griffin.	Oath of Office
Ed Genesis presented and affixed to Commissioner Griffin a pin with the City seal. Next, an opportunity was given for general public comments, but no comments were offered.	Public Comments
Finally, an opportunity was given for miscellaneous comments from City Commissioners.	City Commissioner Comments
Commissioner Anderson remarked on the impressive group of applicants and candidates. Commissioner Anderson stated it was comforting to know there were such committed people in the City. Commissioner Cunningham urged all of the applicants to stay engaged in the work of the City. Commissioner Urban explained that he voted for John McNeill to minimize the Commission's influence on the municipal election in November.	
The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.	Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on September 3, 2019

Approved by: _____
Bobby J. Hopewell, Mayor
Dated: September 3, 2019

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