

## Roll Call

A regular meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Monday, June 21, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting was held as an electronic meeting under the authority of the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976) as amended by PA 254 of 2020.

## COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson  
Vice Mayor Patrese Griffin  
Eric Cunningham  
Jeanne Hess  
Erin Knott  
Chris Praedel  
Jack Urban

## COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

All members present indicated they were physically located in the City of Kalamazoo.

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

## Invocation

The invocation was given by Pastor Chuck Moerdyk from North Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo.

Proclamation  
2021-00

Commissioner Hess read a proclamation for *St. Luke's Diaper Bank Distribution of One Millionth Diaper*. Allie VanHeest, Board Chair, and Sarah Koestler, Executive Director, received the proclamation.

## Adoption of the Agenda

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

Commissioner Hess requested that Item G-11, a Memorandum of Agreement with Kalamazoo Public Schools for the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS) to provide School Resource Officer (SRO) services for the 2021-2022 school year, be moved to the Regular Agenda.

## Communications

City Manager Ritsema noted statewide COVID restrictions were being lifted on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, and he reported staff would present a recommendation to the City Commission on July 6<sup>th</sup> for a return to having in-person public meetings. City Manager Ritsema stated it was anticipated the first in-person City Commission meetings would be the second set of regular meetings in July.

City Attorney Robinson reminded people that fireworks were generally prohibited except for the period June 29<sup>th</sup> through July 4<sup>th</sup> between 11:00 a.m. and 11:45 p.m. City Attorney Robinson noted there was a fine of up to \$1,000 for the use of fireworks outside these dates and times or on public property, including schools and parks.

Mayor Anderson noted the City could not prohibit the use of fireworks during the times indicated by the City Attorney.

2021-00  
Public Hearing re: a  
DWRP Loan Application

At 7:10 p.m. Mayor Anderson opened a public hearing to receive comments on a resolution approving a Project Plan for Water System Improvements and designating James J. Baker, P.E., as the authorized project representative.

Public Services Director James Baker delivered a presentation entitled *North Kalamazoo Lead Service Line Replacements*. A copy of the slides from this presentation was filed with the papers for this meeting.

In response to a question from Commissioner Cunningham, Director Baker explained how City crews restored lead service line project sites with topsoil and grass seed when the work was complete.

Commissioner Cunningham stated the City had replaced the water service lines at his parent's house, and the area that had been excavated was now covered with weeds, not grass.

Director Baker Observed that regrowing a lawn could be difficult, and he indicated the grass seed mix the City used was contractor grade, so it might not match the grass on site. Director Baker stated City crews would reseed a job site if the original grass seed did not take.

Commissioner Knott stated her water service lines were replaced in April, and the crew that did the work was very good. Commissioner Knott reported the excavated area was now full of weeds and not grass and remarked the weeds were high enough to qualify for a nuisance violation from the City.

Director Baker urged people who were experiencing issues with grass not growing at a job site to call the 311 Call Center and request the area be reseeded.

In response to questions from Commissioner Praedel, Director Baker explained the City was able to get interest rates with the Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRf) loans that were lower than rates in the regular bond market, and with the DWRf program there was an opportunity for loan forgiveness. Director Baker noted with a DWRf loan the City could draw down the funds as needed to pay the contractors, which would delay the accrual of interest.

Commissioner Praedel reminded people that elevated lead levels in children were the result of environmental factors in homes and not just lead water lines. Commissioner Praedel urged people who lived older homes to have their children tested for lead.

In response to a request from Vice Mayor Griffin, Director Baker stated he would work with the Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED) to ensure that code enforcement staff were aware of the areas where lead service lines were being replaced and lawn restoration was in progress.

Commissioner Praedel noted the Consent Agenda included a contract for traffic signal upgrades at the Westnedge Avenue/South Street intersection, and he asked Director Baker to comment on this work.

In response to Commissioner Praedel, Director Baker stated the Westnedge Avenue/South Street intersection had been studied for years, and the data showed a high occurrence of cars failing to stop for red lights. Director Baker indicated the City was taking advantage of grant funds to implement best practices from the Federal Transit Administration and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Mayor Anderson thanked Director Baker for his comprehensive report and his work to improve the water and wastewater utilities.

**2021-00**

Public Hearing re: a  
DWRf Loan Application  
(cont'd)

**2021-00**

Public Hearing re: a  
Resolution Approving a  
DWRP Application  
(cont'd)

In response to a question from Mayor Anderson, Director Baker stated this was the third City project that was being funded through the DWRP program.

Mayor Anderson noted the project cost of \$20 million would be spread across all the users of the water system.

An opportunity was given for public comments, but no comments were offered.

At 7:45 p.m. Mayor Anderson closed the public hearing.

**2021-00**

Resolution 21-35  
Approving a DWRP  
Application

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Praedel, moved to adopt a **RESOLUTION** approving a Project Plan for Water System Improvements and designating James J. Baker, P.E., as the authorized project representative.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

## Public Comments

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

Shona Espinoza, City resident, urged Mayor Anderson to not run for re-election and asked City Manager Ritsema to resign.

Jeremy Terpening, City resident, commented on neglected properties owned by AIM Property Management and asked that the City Commission, CPED, and the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety keep on top of neglectful property owners.

Dorothy Appleyard, City resident, spoke about her unsuccessful attempts at two-way communication with City officials. Ms. Appleyard expressed support for electing local representatives by ward rather than at-large.

Frances Vicioso, City resident, spoke about the SRO agreement and questioned whether there was data to support the positive benefits claimed in the agenda report. Ms. Vicioso stated there was no need for SRO's in schools.

Ebony Hemphill, City resident expressed opposition to the SRO agreement.

## Consent Agenda

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

**2021-00**

- approval of a three-year contract with Trace3 through the MiDeal cooperative purchasing program for the purchase of Cisco Smartnet Licenses in the amount of \$347,386.59.

**2021-00**

- approval of a three-year contract with CDWG through the MiDeal cooperative purchasing program for the purchase of Microsoft licenses in the amount of \$260,704.45.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - approval of a contract extension with Consumers Concrete Corporation for ready mixed concrete in the amount of \$440,500, plus an estimated \$50,000 for appropriate charges.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 2021-00                     |
| - approval of a contract with Severence Electric Co, Inc. for traffic signal upgrades to the intersection of South Street and Westnedge Avenue in the amount of \$123,105.07.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 2021-00                     |
| - approval of a 24-month contract extension with Constellation New Energy - Gas Division, LLC in the amount of \$750,000 for natural gas to be used to heat selected City facilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 2021-00                     |
| - approval of a contract with Denny's Excavating for the construction of LaCrone Park Splash Pad in the amount of \$421,077.05.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 2021-00                     |
| - first reading of an ordinance to rezone properties generally located south of Paterson Street, east of Edwards Street, north of North Street, west of Verburg Park/Walbridge Street from Limited Manufacturing (M1) to Live Work 1 (LW1) and Live Work 2 (LW2) and from Residential Mixed Use (RMU) with Riverfront Overlay District 1 and Natural Features Protection Overlay to Limited Manufacturing (M1) with Natural Features Protection Overlay District; and schedule a public hearing for July 6, 2021. | 2021-00                     |
| - first reading of an ordinance to rezone 203, 207 and 211 Wall Street from Commercial Office (CO) to Live Work 1 (LW1); and schedule a public hearing for July 6, 2021.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 2021-00                     |
| - first reading an ordinance to establish First Baptist Church at 315 West Michigan Avenue as a single resource local historic district; and schedule a public hearing for July 6, 2021.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 2021-00                     |
| - adoption of a <b>RESOLUTION</b> approving five new Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ) Homestead Applications in the Vine Neighborhood.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 2021-00<br>Resolution 21-36 |
| - approval of a request from the Kalamazoo Country Club for a permit to publicly display fireworks at 1609 Whites Road on Sunday, July 4th (with a rain date of July 5th) and Friday, July 9th.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                             |
| - approval and acceptance of an easement with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy for Parcel #06-32-379-003 owned by the City of Kalamazoo in conjunction with the Sun Valley Reconstruction project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 2021-00                     |
| - approval of the sale of 738 Harrison Street to Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services for the price of \$500.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2021-00                     |
| - approval of the appointment of Dr. James Melliush to the Environmental Concerns Committee for a term expiring on January 1, 2024.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 2021-00                     |
| - approval of the minutes from the City Commission meetings on August 17, September 8, September 21, October 5, October 26, November 2, November 16, December 7, December 14, and December 21, 2020; and January 4, January 19, February 1, and March 13, 2021.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 2021-00                     |

**2021-00**

- approval of a recommendation to postpone until July 6, 2021 consideration of a resolution approving the sale of 510 Phelps Avenue to Sherah Berry for \$1,000.

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to approve the consent agenda requests and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents on behalf of the City.

With a roll call vote this motion passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

Regular Agenda

Regular Agenda items were considered next.

**2021-00**

Memorandum of Agreement with Kalamazoo Public Schools for a School Resource Officer

Public Safety Chief Vernon Coakley provided an overview of the School Resource Officer program. Chief Coakley stated every effort would be made to foster community relations, and if there were behavior issues with students the officer would work with school staff/administration regarding the behavior. Chief Coakley reported the specific officer for this assignment would be chosen based on department policy and the current collective bargaining agreement. Chief Coakley stated the SRO would be trained in crisis intervention and would participate in the anti-bias, anti-racism, and cultural awareness and other training provided by Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) for their staff. Chief Coakley indicated this position would be funded by the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS) on an annual basis, and he noted the MOA could be terminated by either party with a 30-day notice.

In response to questions from City Commissioners, Chief Coakley and City Attorney Robinson provided the following information:

- the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was the same for both Loy Norrix and Kalamazoo Central High Schools.
- the SRO agreement was in the agenda packet for this meeting and had been included in the agenda packets in prior years.
- the proposed SRO agreement was different from previous agreements and was the result of negotiations with KPS.
- In terms of the KDPS and Kalamazoo Township officials would meet regularly with KPS, and the SRO would meet regularly with the Principal of Loy Norrix.
- the SRO position was filled through a "Chief selection" process.
- the current SRO, Eric Epps, had a heart for this work and wanted this assignment.
- KDPS did not have any data from the schools regarding the SRO. KDPS had the ability to track arrests from the City side, but that would not be an area of focus.

- the request for an SRO had come from KPS, and KPS would be paying for the SRO through the terms of the agreement.
- KPS used both their own resources and resources available through KDPS, such as Pastors on Patrol, to address student behavior.
- Loy Norrix Safety Chief (Praedel comment)
- the KPS School Board had approved the proposed MOA.
- Chief Coakley would be responsible for ensuring Officer Epps was equipped, trained, and ready to do the work.
- the SRO would not make an arrest without the presence of the building principal or campus safety chief, and the SRO would not interview a student during the school day unless a school administrator was present.
- KPS had discretion over what information was reported to KDPS.
- KDPS received calls for service directly from schools for situations that required a law enforcement response, even though an SRO may be present.

Vice Mayor Griffin expressed strong concerns about mandatory information reporting, the school-to-prison pipeline, and the criminalization of student behavior that could be handled through the school disciplinary process rather than the criminal justice system. Vice Mayor Griffin stated she wanted more time to consider this item if significant changes had been made to the MOA.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Griffin, Chief Coakley stated it would not be a problem to postpone action on this item until the next meeting.

Commissioner Praedel urged KPS and KDPS to use the Mobile Crisis Response Team to address mental health issues.

Commissioner Urban suggested an experiential study to see what happened on a case-by-case basis to students who had interactions with the SRO or Community Resource Officer. Commissioner Urban stated there was a climate of fear in the public schools that was behind the use of SRO's.

Commissioner Cunningham expressed support for deescalating conflict in ways that did not involve the judicial system, and he stated putting an SRO in a school automatically involved the judicial system. Commissioner Cunningham noted, however, it was naïve to think there would not be criminal activity in the schools. Commissioner Cunningham stated he would rather have an officer who knew a student be the one to engage that student rather than any on-duty officer who might respond to a call from the school. Commissioner Cunningham stated he would like to see the MOA. Commissioner Cunningham spoke about the need to build relationships between the black community and law enforcement, and he described a program he had created with Big Brothers, Big Sisters to pair kids with brothers and sisters at KDPS. Commissioner Cunningham expressed support for having an officer in the schools, but he indicated he wanted to see a definition of success, performance data, and benchmarking against other jurisdictions with SRO's. Commissioner Cunningham stated he wanted to know how the officer was being mentored and coached on a day-to-day basis. Commissioner Cunningham stated

**2021-00**

Memorandum of  
Agreement with  
Kalamazoo Public  
Schools for a School  
Resource Officer  
(cont'd)

**2021-00**

Memorandum of Agreement with Kalamazoo Public Schools for a School Resource Officer (cont'd)

having checks and balances was important, and relationship building would improve long-term trust. Commissioner Cunningham encouraged Chief Coakley and the City Commission to keep communicating about what the City was doing in this area. Commissioner Cunningham stated Officer Epps needed to be supported through this process.

Commissioner Hess explained that she pulled this item from the Consent Agenda because she was aware of community sentiment regarding SRO's. Commissioner Hess thanked her fellow Commissioners for their feedback and for their willingness to work with Chief Coakley. Commissioner Hess asked that the SRO be considered an educator and that he be held accountable with data.

Commissioner Urban stated Officer Epps needed to have a good experience with this assignment so that he did not get discouraged or burned out.

Commissioner Praedel noted that KPS wanted an SRO, and if the City did not provide an officer the school district would look somewhere else. Commissioner Praedel thanked Chief Coakley for hearing the concerns of the Commission. Commissioner Praedel commented on the mental health crisis in the country and the need for more mental health services, but he stated he wanted protection for students if a dangerous person entered a school.

Chief Coakley indicated he had heard the City Commission and the community, and he stated he would work collaboratively with all partners.

Mayor Anderson remarked that Chief Coakley's approach to the SRO was based on both community concerns and his personal values and expectations for KDPS officers and their role in the community.

Motion to Postpone

Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Vice Mayor Griffin, moved to postpone until July 6, 2021 consideration of a Memorandum of Agreement with Kalamazoo Public Schools for the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety to provide School Resource Officer services for the 2021-2022 school year.

Prior to a vote on the motion, Commissioner Hess noted the proposed MOA was in the agenda packet for this meeting, and she questioned what information was needed before the next meeting.

Vice Mayor Griffin stated she requested the postponement so there could be clarity on the MOA for both herself and the community. Vice Mayor Griffin questioned whether there was a way to incorporate Commissioner Cunningham's suggestions around benchmarking and defining success.

City Attorney Robinson noted the MOA was a three-party agreement between the City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Township, and Kalamazoo Public Schools. City Attorney Robinson explained this MOA was different from prior MOA's because it was more detailed and addressed several of the items Chief Coakley had discussed. City Attorney Robinson indicated a person could attempt to compare the proposed agreement with prior agreements, but a comparison would be difficult as the proposed agreement and prior year agreements were very different.

Commissioner Urban expressed support for the motion to postpone and stated the community should look more closely at the MOA. Commissioner Urban stated the

postponement presented an opportunity to clarify the Commission's expectations for Chief Coakley and to document the expectations for the SRO.

Commissioner Praedel noted the question was not whether Loy Norrix would have an SRO; if the City Commission did not approve the agreement, KPS would find someone from another jurisdiction to fill the position.

With a roll call vote the motion to postpone passed unanimously.

AYES: Commissioners Cunningham, Hess, Knott, Praedel, Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson

NAYS: None

City Manager Ritsema requested clarification on the work that needed to be done on this item prior to July 6<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Anderson encouraged Commissioners to communicate with the City Manager as quickly as possible after the meeting and let him know what questions they want answered and what information would help them make a more informed decision at the next meeting.

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

Commissioner Urban remarked that funding for the Knights Inn renovation was not complete, and this gap might keep the work from starting on time. Commissioner Urban questioned what the City and the community could do to support the project. Commissioner Urban suggested that someone start a Go Fund Me campaign so people could be involved in the project with small donations.

Commissioner Cunningham announced Run This Town Kalamazoo was collaborating with other community organizations to get men out to Mayors' Riverfront Park for a weekly run/walk/jog event on Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Praedel noted there was a survey available on the City's website for the public to give input regarding the use of federal stimulus funds. Commissioner Praedel encouraged people to be aware of Public Services crews working in and near the streets. Commissioner Praedel recognized Charles the security guard at City Hall for his good work and for taking hot cocoa to volunteers who were planting flowers in Bronson Park on a cold morning.

Commissioner Hess spoke about ways people could support the work of the St. Luke's Diaper Bank, and she stated this project was an example of the power of one person's idea.

Vice Mayor Griffin requested a copy of the previous MOU with Kalamazoo Public Schools for School Resource Officer services. Vice Mayor Griffin requested staff follow-up with Mr. Terpening regarding his concerns about rental properties. Vice Mayor Griffin encouraged the public to continue writing, calling, and reaching out to Commissioners, and she apologized to people who had not received responses to their comments and questions. Vice Mayor Griffin noted she had taken the "Stop the Bleeding" training through Bronson Hospital, and she encouraged other people to take this training.

**2021-00**

Memorandum of Agreement with Kalamazoo Public Schools for a School Resource Officer (cont'd)

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner  
Comments (cont'd)

Mayor Anderson recognized Kalamazoo in Bloom and the other volunteers who planted flowers in Bronson Park and around City Hall. Mayor Anderson remarked on the passing of Wendy Field's mom. Mayor Anderson reported he had participated in a Juneteenth event at the Arcadia Festival Site on Saturday. Mayor Anderson commented on the major fire at an abandoned building on Mills Street on Father's Day, and he remarked that KDPS was better when officers were from the community and had relationships with members of the community. Mayor Anderson spoke about Keturah Orji, who set a new record in the triple jump at the Olympic Trials.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling  
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on September 7, 2021

Approved by:

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David F. Anderson, Mayor  
Dated: September 7, 2021

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