

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON
CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 26, 2018
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

1. Call To Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Tammy Gilroy, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call:

Mayor Tammy Gilroy, Mayor Pro-tem Sandy Whelton, Council Members Daniel Rhines, John Bisard, Noah Belanger, Jeffrey Weiss, and Kent Hall. Absent: None.

Also Present: Interim City Manager/City Treasurer Rachel Piner, City Clerk Holly Thompson, City Attorney Timothy Perrone, City Engineer/DPW Director Scott DeVries, Police Chief Bob Young, JFM Productions, School Superintendent Adam Spina, Farmers' Market Manager Marlene Epley, and citizens Leo Sheets, Earl Wolf, Jeff Gorsline, Kate VanAllsburg, Jane Reagan, and other members of the public.

4. Approval of Agenda:

Motion by **Bisard**, second by **Weiss**, to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

5. Audience Participation:

Leo Sheets commented he is a Professional Engineer, Land Surveyor, Builder, and Mechanical Contractor. He referred to the discussion of the Council regarding the nominations of the City Manager. He referred to the comment regarding the Council setting policy and the strong City Manager issue. He takes umbrage to Council saying the previous Council was dysfunctional. He's worked in all of these positions in Williamston. Council claims this is a business friendly community- not so much. What would your customers say about you? Council pats McKenna on the back and tells them what a great job they're doing and on this side, not so much. McKenna increased their fees to the residents and they're patting Council on the back and it makes them feel great. Council allows McKenna to rape and pillage the citizens of Williamston. Things are so much better now because of the transparency between the City Manager and Council. He stated Council goes into the back room before meetings and discusses items and confirms all week long through phone calls and the internet how Council is going to vote.

Adam Spina distributed information and informed Council the Williamston Schools are going to ask for a millage increase of the Sinking Fund to work on the safety and security enhancements at all of the schools. He expects this to be on the August ballot for consideration.

6. Council Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2018:

Motion by **Weiss**, second by **Bisard**, to approve the March 12, 2018 Council minutes as

presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

7. Accounts Payable:

The accounts payables totaled \$91,267.24 with reference #'s 70045-70086.

Motion by **Belanger**, second by **Hall**, to approve the accounts payables as presented, reference #'s 70045-70086 for a total of \$91,267.24. Yes: Weiss, Rhines, Gilroy, Whelton, Hall, Bisard, Belanger. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8. Action Items

8a. Appointment of Brenda Bartkowiak to the Board of Review for a Term to Expire 01/01/20:

Motion by **Bisard**, second by **Belanger**, to appoint Brenda Bartkowiak to the Board of Review for a term to expire 01/01/20. Yes: Rhines, Gilroy, Whelton, Hall, Bisard, Belanger, Weiss. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8b. Street Banner Program:

No action taken.

8c. DNR Grant Resolution:

Motion by **Weiss**, second by **Rhines**, to approve the Resolution for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant. Yes: Whelton, Hall, Bisard, Belanger, Weiss, Rhines, Gilroy. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8d. Action on Results of City Manager Second Interviews:

Motion by **Hall**, second by **Bisard**, to offer the position to Corey Schmidt and have the contract negotiated with the Interim City Manager and City Attorney. Yes: Hall, Bisard, Belanger, Weiss, Rhines, Gilroy, Whelton. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8e. Sewer Fund Budget Amendment:

Motion by **Belanger**, second by **Hall**, to approve the budget amendment to #590 Sewer Fund as presented for sludge hauling. Yes: Bisard, Belanger, Weiss, Rhines, Gilroy, Whelton, Hall. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8f. Schedule Budget Work Session:

Motion by **Belanger**, second by **Rhines**, to schedule a budget work session for Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. Yes: Belanger, Weiss, Rhines, Gilroy, Whelton, Hall, Bisard. No: None. **Motion passed.**

9. Discussion Items

9a. Testing for Plastic Pollution in the Red Cedar River:

Engineer DeVries reported he has received a request from the Ingham County Conservation District to test in the Red Cedar River for plastic pollution. The impacts of plastic pollution in the environment is not widely known and the testing would be

collecting very fine particles of plastics for research.

Michelle of the Ingham County Conservation District commented they are looking to see what types of plastics are in the river and how bad the pollution is. Williamston is ideal as a testing site with the head waters of the river and the school involvement in river testing. The testing would be performed monthly in 3-4 locations over the course of three years. They are looking for Williamston to cooperate with the testing efforts.

Council was supportive of the testing with the stipulation of informing the public and appropriate safety is used while testing.

9b. Final Farmers' Market Ad Hoc Committee Report:

A final Farmers' Ad Hoc Committee report was submitted for Council review.

Mayor Gilroy reviewed that in 2016 Council approved an ad hoc citizens committee for the farmers market, with the purposes of increasing their volunteer base, to offset the hours of the market manager, and increase fundraising to offset expenses vs revenue. They have accomplished their original goals. Their term of expiration is May 2018 and if the committee is extended, they must come up with new goals. The farmers' market is an entity of the City.

Jane Reagan reported the Farmers' Market had 60 volunteers for the last market season. The Ad Hoc Committee was asked to make the market self-sustaining and they were able to make that happen last year. Two years ago the DDA cut funding for the farmers' market and two days later the market manager was fired. The Council ended up reinstating the market manager and took over funding for the market. Council also created the Ad Hoc Committee and they have met every month for the past two years. They are requesting the Ad Hoc committee be extended for another year to support the market manager and create goals for the market.

Council suggested the market become a 501c3 to become its own entity.

Jane Reagan commented most farmers' markets across Michigan are funded through cities. The market is a huge benefit to the City.

Council questioned that if the farmers' market went from a city entity to a non-profit, could people on assistance no longer use that assistance at the market. Jane Reagan said yes, that was her understanding.

Councilmember Whelton stated that Manager Epley is the only one able to accept nutrition assistance cards – you have to be qualified in order to accept cards.

Manager Epley stated that the supplemental nutrition assistance and senior project are all federal programs administered by the State and the USDA federal program. The USDA writes the farm bill and the farm bill mandates that it be done the way we are doing it here.

Councilman Hall commented the Farmers' Market Manager was not fired. The funding was cut by the DDA and therefore the position was no longer able to be funded.

Councilman Rhines questioned what the committee sees the role of a farmers' market commission would be.

Jane Reagan said they have drafted a purpose and actions and memberships and that draft document was submitted to the City attorney.

Councilmember Whelton commented she hates to see the possibility of losing good people and volunteers.

Council asked what is preventing the farmers' market from moving on as an outside committee if not given ad hoc status. Reagan felt this was very insulting, felt this was very important part of City and it seems like this would be a high priority to Council.

Councilman Weiss asked what the statistics are for the nutrition assistance programs. He commented the market has done great, is successful and self-sufficient. He felt they are ready to grow and become their own entity.

Manager Epley will provide him with the nutrition assistance information. She stated the costs of insurance if they were on their own would be cost ineffective. The market benefits the City. The market wouldn't have a guaranteed venue. When City Councils change, so do attitudes, sentiments. Manager Epley stated she has experience with this with the Library Foundation. When the Library Foundation had money that was put into the City's general fund and the Library Foundation was told the money would be there for them, when Council changed, the next Council reneged on this. She appreciates the positive sentiments, but she cannot count on this five years from now.

Mayor Gilroy asked the Ad Hoc Committee to provide their goals and objectives for the market committee to continue for another year. She also asked for a breakdown of the nutrition assistance programs.

Jane Reagan said that everyone is invited to the Farmers' Market Ad Hoc Committee tomorrow at 1 pm, in Council Chambers.

Manager Epley said that for the first two years, it was only her and her husband running the market; this Ad Hoc Committee has really elevated the farmers' market to what it is today.

11. Department Head Reports

11a. Interim City Manager:

Interim City Manager Piner submitted a written report for Council review. She added she met with LEAP this morning regarding development in Williamston and it was an

excellent meeting. There was discussion about the Redevelopment Ready Community program and she is planning to finish the training.

11b. Police Chief:

No report.

12. Audience Participation:

Mayor Gilroy called for public comments at this time and there were none.

13. Council Member Comments:

Councilmember Whelton thanked Interim Manager Piner, and Clerk Thompson for doing a great job.

Councilman Belanger commented it is his 35th wedding anniversary today.

Councilman Bisard commented there needs to be more education with the public on the WOW! agreement.

Councilman Hall commented he received a \$21,000 grant from Home Depot to work on Memorial Park. They are planning to have a work day but he's unsure of how much will get done.

Mayor Gilroy thanked Council for going through the City Manager interview process. She looks forward to hearing back from Interim Manager Piner on how the contract is going.

14. Adjournment:

Mayor Gilroy adjourned the Council meeting at 8:17 p.m.

***Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Holly M. Thompson, City Clerk

Tammy Gilroy, Mayor

Date Approved: _____