

**ROCEEDINGS
OF
CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024, 7:00 P.M.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL.**

Mayor DeVore called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and City Clerk Sue Ullery called roll.

Present: Mayor DeVore, Councilmember Leah Groves, Councilmember Eric Bartkus, Councilmember Jim Salzwedel, Councilmember Marty Chambers.

Absent: None.

Present: City Manager Michael Burns, City Clerk Susan Ullery, Chief of Police Chris Hurst, Lowell Light & Power General Manager Charlie West, DPW Director and Assistant City Manager Rich LaBombard.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Mayor DeVore moved Fire Budget to Item B.

- Approval of the Agenda as amended.
- Approve and place on file the minutes of the January 16, 2024, Regular and Closed City Council meeting.
- Authorize payment of invoices for \$532,749.23.

IT WAS MOVED BY GROVES and seconded by CHAMBERS to approve the consent agenda as amended.

YES: Councilmember Groves, Councilmember Salzwedel, Councilmember Bartkus, Mayor DeVore, and Councilmember Chambers.

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

3. **CITIZEN COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

Perry Beachum who resides in the City of Lowell suggests that the public attend Coffee with Council to be able to bounce ideas off council members and to get an understanding of how the City works. Beachum voiced his concern with the City auditors explanation of the water/sewer's negative balance due to depreciation. Would like to see the City keep on top of that. Then Beachum explained a mistake the city staff made with his water payment not posted on time and that his bill he received in the mail was not accurate because of it, had to wait until Monday to understand what happened. Stated the last time, it was Lowell Light & Powers mistake but that the city staff needs to do a better job.

4. **OLD BUSINESS.**

There was none.

5. **NEW BUSINESS.**

a. Lowell Area Historical Museum Annual Report.

Lisa Plank presented the Museum's Annual Report and explained that it has been a good and very busy year.

b. Fire Budget.

Cory Velzen, the Interim Fire Chief, presented the Fire Budget with a spreadsheet and explanation of changes and cost increases.

City Manager Michael Burns confirmed the increase in expenses and that they are needed.

c. Affordable Housing Plan.

City Manager read his memo explaining he would like to have more affordable housing for the City and then introduced Brooke Osterman, the Executive Director from Housing Next.

Brooke Osterman, then provided several types of resources that are available to our community, explained zoning reform can be something we can do at the local level. This would entail smaller units, smaller lot sizes, accessory dwelling units. There is also a Kent County Municipal Grant Program for this. There is also state and local resources. Outside of that, we have Gap financing also called the Revolving loan fund. TIF can be used for all residential Grant opportunities through MICHDA.

City Manager Michael Burns stated one of the nice things is that the entire City of Lowell is under Brownfield Authority. They will be coming to the DDA and the Planning Commission next week.

d. Request to Purchase New Police Cruiser.

Chief of Police Chris Hurst read his memo requesting to order a new 2025 police cruiser with the extended warranty that will be paid for and accepted in July of 2024.

IT WAS MOVED BY SALZWEDEL and seconded by CHAMBERS to approve the request for the Lowell Police Department to order a new 2025 police cruiser that will be accepted into the inventory after July 1, 2024 with the total cost \$64,074.50 including the up-fit.

YES: Councilmembers Groves, Mayor DeVore, Councilmembers Salzwedel, Councilmember Chambers and Councilmember Bartkus.

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

e. LGROW Memorandum of Understanding.

City Manager Michael Burns read his memo regarding the Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds (LGROW), an agency of the Grand Valley Metro Council that has been working toward the State Designation of the Lower Grand River Water Trail.

IT WAS MOVED BY CHAMBERS and seconded by GROVES that the Lowell City Council approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Lower Grand River Water Trail and LGROW and

presented.

YES: Councilmember Salzwedel, Councilmember Bartkus, Councilmember Chambers, Councilmember Groves and Mayor DeVore.

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

f. Sanitary and Storm Sewer Cleaning and Inspection.

Assistant City Manager/DPW Director Rich LaBombard read his memo regarding Sanitary and Storm Sewer Cleaning and Inspection.

IT WAS MOVED BY CHAMBERS and seconded by SALZWEDEL that the Lowell City Council approve an increase to the service contract with Plummer's Environmental Services in the amount of \$10,779.75 for the work proposed.

YES: Councilmember Bartkus, Councilmember Chambers, Councilmember Groves, Mayor DeVore and Councilmember Salzwedel.

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

g. Resolution 02-24 Industrial Facility Tax Credit Public Hearing – King Milling.

IT WAS MOVED BY GROVES and seconded by DEVORE to approve the Resolution 02-24 as presented.

YES: Councilmember Chambers, Councilmember Groves, Mayor DeVore, Councilmember Salzwedel and Councilmember Bartkus.

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

6. **BOARD/COMMISSION REPORTS.**

Councilmember Bartkus stated he missed the Historic Board, because he attended the PFAS meeting which was time well spent, but going from the minutes from the Historic Board, the item on hand was that Brent Slagell is working on the old Larkins restaurant and he had at first ask the Michigan Economic Development Corporation for help in turning that into a boutique hotel and that didn't go well, so he has resubmitted his request to them to change that to retail on the first floor and apartments on the second floor. Looking to replace all the glass and doors and soda blast all of the brick for the building.

Councilmember Salzwedel stated LCTV Fund Request will close this Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. So if you have not gotten your request for funding get it in by then and then we will be meeting Saturday the 24th of February to discuss who is going to receive those funds.

Councilmember Chambers has Planning Commission next Monday and DDA this coming Thursday.

Mayor DeVore stated he will be at DDA Thursday and Fire Authority is February 15, 2024.

7. **BUDGET REPORT.**

There were no comments.

8. **CITY MANAGERS REPORT.**

- Addressed the audit comment made by Beachum and explained loss and how calculated.
- Addressed the water-billing mistake and assured the City Staff is competent.
- Ware Rd - 3 samples – tested 39 wells, there have been no detections of PFAS in them.
- Received word last week that the Alden Nash project received \$17.5 million for the wastewater expansion. We estimate that is about 50% of the cost. Good news is we had positive meetings the last two weeks with the Township, so there are a lot of moving parts and we are working on it.
- Did a podcast with former Councilman Yankovich and the 1st day, there were 4,000 hits.
- In the process of getting in a grant application for Riverside Drive with Kent County. The City is eligible for CDBG Funds.
- Eric Bartkus being new to council ask many questions but has helped point out something to me. In the taxable values and bonding information, I looked at that and realized since I came here in 2016, we have seen in that eight year period, a 50% increase in taxable value in the City. This is significant and I am going to investigate it further to what other cities have increased.

9. **APPOINTMENTS.**

Susan Pomper and Teresa Mundt on Parks & Rec will continue.

Eric Bartkus will represent Council on the LARA committee.

10. **COUNCIL COMMENTS.**

Councilmember Chambers stated the museum does a great job and they allow him to hang the old showboat sign in his store. His store has the Museum's ABC calendars for sale and they are for sale at the museum as well.

Councilmember Bartkus, thanked City Manager Michael Burns for answering all of his questions and taking time to help him learn. Bartkus thinks he is doing a great job. Enjoyed his ledger article Burns did as well. If you are a citizen and have questions, feel free to email any of us.

11. **ADJOURNMENT.**

IT WAS MOVED SALZWEDEL and seconded by CHAMBERS to adjourn @ 8:24 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

Mike DeVore, Mayor

Sue Ullery, Lowell City Clerk

