

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held January 19, 2021

Mayor Favale called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at the East Grand Rapids Community Center and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. She announced the meeting was also being held electronically as allowed by the recent amendment to the Michigan Open Meetings Act in response to the COVID-19 crisis. She invited any citizen attending by computer or phone to ask questions or offer comments during the public comment times.

Present in Person: Commissioners Hamrick and Mayor Favale

Present Virtually: Commissioners Arendshorst, Hecksel, Pachla and Walters

Absent: Commissioner Duncan

Also Present: City Attorney Huff; Interim City Manager LaFave; Finance Director Seath; Public Safety Director Herald; City Clerk Brower; Recreation Supervisor Fasbender

2021-08. Mayor Favale asked that a withdrawal contract with MERS be added to the agenda for consideration.

2021-08-A. Arendshorst-Hamrick. That a Defined Benefit Plan Withdrawal and Asset Transfer Agreement with MERS of Michigan be added to the agenda.

Yeas: Arendshorst, Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 6

Nays: -0-

2021-09. Peter Ricketson, 6356 Durham Rd (Whitehall) stated he was a bus driver for the Rapid and was concerned about the organization's policy of allowing riders to not wear a mask if they state they have a medical condition.

2021-10. Commissioner Hamrick appreciated the rescheduling of the meeting to observe the Martin Luther King holiday yesterday.

Commissioner Walters spoke about local government's role in addressing racial inequality and asked the city commission to find ways to address the issue more actively. Commissioner Arendshorst agreed.

Commissioner Pachla spoke about the need to continue engaging citizens in all decisions and plans.

Mayor Favale announced the start of the #9PMROUTINE to encourage residents to bring in valuables, lock their homes and vehicles and turn on lights to deter crime. She also announced the next blood drive would be held on January 26.

Mayor Favale and Interim City Manager LaFave presented a plaque to City Attorney Huff recognizing his 35 years as city attorney and thanked him for his dedication and commitment to the city.

2021-11. Resolution supporting veteran's transportation pilot through Disability Advocates of Kent County.

2021-011-A. Hamrick-Pachla. That a resolution supporting a pilot program organized by the West Michigan Veterans Coalition, Feonix/Mobility Rising, Disability Advocates of Kent County and the Kent County Veterans Services to provide transportation for veterans and their families be adopted as attached in Exhibit "A."

Yeas: Arendshorst, Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 6

Nays: -0-

2021-12. MERS Defined Benefit Plan Withdrawal and Asset Transfer Agreement.

Finance Director Seath explained the agreement was one of the last steps involved in closing the defined benefit plan with the Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS) and establishing an independent plan for administration of the employee defined benefit pension plan.

2021-012-A. Pachla-Arendshorst. That a Defined Benefit Plan Withdrawal and Asset Transfer Agreement with MERS of Michigan be approved as attached in Exhibit "B."

Yeas: Arendshorst, Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 6
Nays: -0-

2021-13. Hecksel-Pachla. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2021-013-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held January 4, 2021.

2021-013-B. Payroll disbursements of \$405,579.49; county and school disbursements of \$590,768.60, and total remaining disbursements of \$222,024.98.

Yeas: Arendshorst, Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 6
Nays: -0-

2021-14. Staff members updated the city commission on several of the FY 2020-21 goals and objectives.

Finance Director Seath reported the Retirement Health Savings Program has been implemented and the transition to a new Assessor has been completed.

Public Safety Director Herald gave an update on the training scheduled for the coming weeks to implement the new body cameras and on the efforts to reduce overtime spending while maintaining staffing levels in case of emergencies.

Interim City Manager LaFave announced that 70% of the city's streets and sidewalks were at a PASER rating of "good/fair" to "excellent" thanks to the funding provided by the streets and sidewalk millage approved by voters in 2015. He also provided information on the condition of the water and sewer systems.

Acting Parks & Recreation Director Fasbender updated the commission on the Reeds Lake Trail signage that would be installed in the spring, including a QR code that people could scan to find nearby amenities.

2021-15. Mayor Favale reopened the meeting for public comment. No public comment was received.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until February 1, 2021.

Karen K. Brower, City Clerk

Attachments: A – Resolution supporting veterans transportation pilot program
B – MERS Withdrawal and Asset Transfer Agreement

Attachments listed above are available for inspection at the office of the City Clerk.