

**CITY OF WIXOM  
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2023**

Mayor Beagle called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Present:**

**Mayor:** P. Beagle  
**Deputy Mayor:** T. Rzeznik  
**Councilmembers:** P. Behrmann  
K. Gottschall  
T. Gronlund-Fox  
P. Sharpe  
R. Smiley

**AGENDA CHANGES:**

Councilmember Gottschall requested the addition of New Business #3 - Discussion of the Road Millage. He also requested that the Parks and Recreation Minutes of April 10, 2023 be removed from the Consent Agenda and added as New Business #4.

**MINUTES:**

**CM-07-108-23:** Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Gronlund-Fox and Gottschall to approve the Regular City Council meeting minutes of July 11, 2023.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** (None)

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

There were no public comments at this time.

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORTS:**

**1.) Departmental Monthly Report – June 2023**

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik noticed today that the lot at Beck Road and West Road was being cleared and he didn't see anything in the Economic Development Report. He wondered if someone was expanding on the northeast corner. Mr. Benson explained that was a new development approved by the Planning Commission last year, Safety Storage.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**CM-07-109-23:** Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Gottschall and Behrmann to approve the Consent Agenda as presented which included:

- 1.) Approval to receive and file:
  - a.) Planning Commission Minutes – June 5, 2023

- 2.) Recommendation to Approve the Designation of Deanna Magee as the 2023 Municipal Employees Retirement System Officer Delegate and that a Delegate Certification Form Listing her Name be Forwarded to the Municipal Employees Retirement System for the 2023 Annual Meeting
- 3.) Recommendation to Accept a Permanent Sidewalk Easement Along North Wixom Road at 1856 Hopkins Drive
- 4.) Recommendation to Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the Closure of Pontiac Trail Between Old Wixom Road and Wixom Road from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM on September 23, 2023 for the DDA-Sponsored Wixom Block Party Event

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** (None)

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1.) **Recommendation to Authorize a Three Percent Increase to the Rates/Fees under the Five-Year Agreement with Hubbell, Roth and Clark of Howell, Michigan as the Engineer of Record for the City of Wixom, Effective Upon Council Approval**

**CM-07-110-23:** Moved and seconded made by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik and Councilmember Gronlund-Fox to authorize a three percent increase to the rates/fees under the Five-Year Agreement with Hubbell, Roth and Clark of Howell, Michigan as the Engineer of Record for the City of Wixom, effective upon Council approval.

Mr. Sikma explained that HRC's work was mostly reviewing plans for Building and Zoning. They also do some of our sidewalk work and they are the engineer of record for the City. They also do the engineering for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. This was for general construction and does not include the work they would potentially do for the roads because we bid those out. They also do our stormwater inspections. He noted that this was routine under the contract.

Councilmember Behrmann said he was fine with the increase but not the timing. He felt this should have been done during the beginning of the year. He indicated that if we do the increase now, he wouldn't want to see another increase in January as the contract would suggest. Mr. Sikma stated that he didn't anticipate that happening. Councilmember Behrmann noted that he would turn down an increase request if it came to Council in five months.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik commented that when we did the comparison with the other general engineering bids, he recalled HRC was one of the lowest in 31 categories for their hourly rate. He thought the 3% as a cost of living increase was fair and within the limits of the contract.

Councilmember Sharpe wondered if the 2023 schedule that was including in the report reflected the 3% increase over the 2022 rates.

Nancy Faught, from HRC, confirmed that it did represent the 3% increase over 2022. She mentioned that those were their maximum rates. Sometimes they have an opportunity where a less experienced person might be able to work on a project. Councilmember Sharpe clarified that sometimes they might use a supervisor who may charge a higher rate. Ms. Faught said that was correct. When people are newly promoted, they are not at the higher rate. They might have 15 years experience to get to that classification, but they might not have the experience of the 30-year person.

Mayor Beagle appreciated the work that HRC does for us. This was basically a cost of living increase and he could fully support it.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**2.) Recommendation to Authorize Participation in the 2023 Tri-Party Program for the Resurfacing of Grand River from Napier Road to Wixom Road, Total Project Cost of \$5,428,118, Approve the 2023 City Tri-Party Contribution of \$163,867 and Authorize the Mayor to Sign the Cost Participation Agreement**

**CM-07-111-23:** Moved and seconded made by Councilmember Gronlund-Fox and Deputy Mayor Rzeznik to authorize participation in the 2023 Tri-Party Program for the resurfacing of Grand River from Napier Road to Wixom Road, total project cost of \$5,428,118, approve the 2023 City Tri-Party contribution of \$163,867 and authorize the Mayor to sign the Cost Participation Agreement.

Mr. Sikma said that this recommendation came from the Road Commission of Oakland County (RCOC). They have been working on the development of Grand River from Napier Road to Wixom Road on the south side of Wixom. We plan to straighten out the road so we have ingress/egress in multiple areas. He said that we have had public hearings at the City for that last fall. They have prepared the documents and they have a contractor in place. They are now looking for our support through the Tri-Party Program. They also acquired federal grant money in the amount of \$4.4 million for this project. The remaining \$900,000 would come from a shared grant, with our share being \$163,867.

Mayor Beagle wondered if they could do the work at night like they did when they resurfaced Wixom Road. Mr. Sikma said they may not be able to work at night on this project. There were some road closures that were included with this and they have prepared Twelve Mile Road for some of those. They will limit the road closures for a very short time period and he said we have the width so we will be able to

navigate around the construction. He said he would ask if they could do the work at night, but this was their project.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik stated that during the public input session, we talked to RCOG about the possibility of putting a second left turn lane there. Eastbound Grand River at Beck Road has two full lanes that turn left and our intersection is more complex. He wondered if that was still a possibility or if that was completely ruled out. Mr. Sikma replied that for this project, it has been ruled out. Last summer, they put in a dedicated left turn from Grand River onto Wixom Road going north. That changed the way traffic moves through there considerably. Since then, safety studies did not show that it was needed. Also, there are some easements there that would make that corner more difficult. Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked if there was an opportunity for the City to put no left turn signs up out of Sam's Way or other areas. Mr. Sikma thought we could do that on Sam's Way. He thought there were no left turns going out of McDonald's and Burger King. Mayor Beagle didn't think there was a no left turn out of McDonald's if you are coming off Grand River. Mr. Sikma said the intention was to have everybody funnel out onto Grand River.

Councilmember Gottschall asked when the project was slated to begin. Mr. Sikma said it was planned for this fiscal year. He was expecting them to begin this fall with the prep work and then pave in the spring of 2024. Councilmember Gottschall asked if that would affect traffic and Mr. Sikma replied that it might affect it on a temporary basis but it wouldn't be a three-week shutdown.

Mayor Beagle hoped that when the work started, we would do a good job of communicating with our residents about the timelines.

Councilmember Gottschall asked what the coordination was like with the State as it relates to the I-96 work. Mr. Sikma understood the eastbound traffic would open in August and they may close westbound next summer. Councilmember Gottschall wanted to make sure we weren't adding to the traffic issues that everyone already has. He hoped we could try to stress the night work with them. He thought we were one of very few states that only work during the day.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

### **3.) Discussion of the Road Millage**

Councilmember Gottschall commented that the hard deadline was approaching for ballot questions being submitted to the State for the November election. He spoke with the City Manager about what the goal was of Council in terms of timing for the November or February ballots. Next fall we should probably have the special operating millage. He wanted to get an idea of what everyone's thoughts were on the timing for this millage.

Mayor Beagle thought this was discussed previously and that we had decided to put that on the February ballot. That would give us time to do a thorough job with the PASER ratings and the exact amount we should request.

Deputy Mayor Rzeknik said the expiration of that millage is 2026 and the last date for the ballot language would be July of 2025. It seemed premature to him to put two millage proposals on one ballot. He thought we did put this one off until next year.

Councilmember Behrmann didn't want to be putting a new millage on a ballot when we were asking for a renewal of an existing millage. He would hate for the existing millages that we rely upon to get turned down when there was some kind of movement against an increase all together. He remembered that Council was looking for more information on the PASER rating and the dollar amount that would be needed. Until we have that information, he wasn't sure how we could decide what the increase should be.

Councilmember Gronlund Fox agreed with Councilmember Behrmann. She knew we asked for that additional information and she didn't remember when that was to be provided. We were also waiting on information from the Finance Department as far as what those numbers would look like.

Councilmember Smiley wondered what Administration's take was on this. Mr. Brown thought this was Council's discretion but he understood we wouldn't proceed at this November election. We could do this in February. He said they would be able to get a PASER update, which would be done in August. It wasn't just the millage renewal but also three Charter Amendments on this November's ballot. If we wait until the February 2024 ballot, the earliest deadline date would be October 5<sup>th</sup>, which gives us plenty of time to put together that information.

Mr. Benson said that we are looking at three different millages over the next couple calendar years. The operating millage would need to be on either the August 2024 or November 2024 ballot and the local roads would need to be the November 2025 ballot.

Councilmember Sharpe said that Councilmember Gottschall knows how much he likes surprises at the dais. Based on the lack of any data, he couldn't support even talking about whether or not he wanted to do anything in November. His answer would be no for any tax language.

Councilmember Gottschall said this wasn't intended to be a discussion of what the number was. The City Manager seemed to think some members of Council wanted to hold this over for a future election, but he didn't recall the Council ever coming to a concrete decision on that. The point of this discussion was to clarify how we wanted to proceed.

Mayor Beagle remembered talking about this and all agreed that we should be taking action, but he thought all agreed we had enough on the November ballot and that this should wait until sometime in 2024 after we have the updated PASER ratings and numbers from the Finance Department.

Councilmember Smiley appreciated Councilmember Gottschall keeping this in the forefront. There was no harm in a light chat about it.

#### **4.) Approve to Receive and File the Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes of April 10, 2023**

Councilmember Gottschall indicated that there were a few comments in the minutes as it relates to the new trail, The Loop, around the City Hall campus. There was discussion of working with a landscape architect to put in some different grasses, a water feature and a restroom. He thought the water feature and restroom were unnecessary. He thought Mr. Sikma's crew spent enough time dealing with the pond. He also said that we have public buildings with accessible bathrooms. He wanted to see if that caught anybody else's attention. It feels that we are going overboard on something that was mentioned to just be a walkway.

Mayor Beagle asked Ms. Magee if she was trying to get grants for those items. He didn't think those items were set in stone. Ms. Magee said that those were just ideas that were thrown out as possibilities and nothing was set in stone.

Mr. Benson added that the DDA has talked about the need for public restrooms somewhere in the downtown. He noted that the City Hall and Community Center bathrooms are closed at night during most events. Ms. Magee said the Police Station was the only building open. Many people talked about the need for restrooms in the downtown area at the Joint Meeting.

Mr. Brown stated that County Commissioner Raman came to him about an opportunity for some potential funding source through the County for improvements within the City. We thought it might make sense for something in association with events and activities that would benefit both the DDA and the City, like the Tree Lighting Ceremony or the Downtown Dazzle Program. They submitted the addition of more lighting features at City Hall or on the trail. He was notified recently that we were approved \$10,000 from the County.

Councilmember Behrmann reminded everyone that these minutes were from the April 10, 2023 meeting, which was four months ago. He was all for whatever we can do to make the park better, but he did not want to expand it. He was all for whatever we can do to make our path better, but it has to make financial sense to do it. Since these minutes were from April, he was sure a lot had changed in the last four months.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik clarified that when we achieve our RRC certification, that will open the door for additional grant opportunities. Mr. Benson replied yes, as will the update to the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. In regard to the Civic Center

discussion, the DDA has been involved in the improvements to the Library park. We will be taking the additional pad, expanding it slightly, and making improvements there. The Oakland County grant allows for improvements generally to the interior and exterior of the Senior Center. These things have been building on each other and they will all come back to City Council before they get implemented.

Mayor Beagle asked when we would get the results of the Parks and Recreation survey. Ms. Magee said that the results came in last week and they were very positive. The summary from our Planning firm was very detailed. Our five-year Master Plan already contains many of the requests made from the community. As always, there were also a few wild ideas. She said that the Council will be getting a copy of that report soon.

Councilmember Gottschall said that in regards to the Civic Center and public restrooms, whether it be by grant or not, his concern was not who would pay for it; it was if we needed restrooms on the City Hall campus. He didn't think so. He knew people were spending time with the architect and committees discussing these things. If it wasn't something Council would want, we shouldn't have people spending time on it. As it relates to Mack Park, he said the minutes indicate the new clock wouldn't be installed until there was a plan for the Renton properties. He asked where we were at with the clock. Ms. Magee said we have the clock and it is ready to be installed. We are in the process of getting the pavilion installed. It was a process that should happen pretty soon. Mr. Brown said that it would not be delayed due to the Renton property.

**CM-07-112-23:** Moved and seconded by Deputy Mayor Rzeknik and Councilmember Smiley to receive and file the Parks and Recreation Commission minutes of April 10, 2023.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

County Commissioner Ajay Raman wanted to provide the Council with some County updates. He knew the City Manager had shared the news regarding the sponsorship that we were able to get through the County for Downtown Dazzle. Regarding the transit, tomorrow the Economic Development Infrastructure Committee and the Finance Committee will both be meeting to discuss the expansion of the People's Express service. He sits on both of those committees and anticipated that everything should be smooth sailing moving forward. The plan was to not only expand the routes, but take down some of the barriers and the hours of operation. The contract is set to be implemented for 28 months through December 2025. Their hope was that this would dovetail into the plan for the SMART millage and Oakland County-wide transit. The final approval would happen at the next meeting of the Board of Commissioners. He said that they did get approval for the reimbursements to all of the cities, villages and townships for the money that has been spent during 2023. Recently, we had a Veterans Food Distribution event at Lyon Oaks. It was very well attended with over 200 veterans and their families. Commissioner Raman said that Oakland County is partnering with Wayne County and Macomb County to

sponsor a research study to gauge resident feedback on their level of broadband service. He thought a lot of our residents were struggling as far as having reliable, consistent, robust broadband service. The first step was to collect data from area residents and they want to make sure they get enough feedback to find out where the areas of opportunity are. This survey was set to close at the end of July but he thought it would be extended slightly. He hoped to encourage our residents to participate in this survey because this feedback will help to improve their service. Lastly, he mentioned the Multi-Chamber Mixer set for tomorrow at the Suburban Showplace with the Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, the West Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce, the Farmington Chamber of Commerce and the Novi Chamber of Commerce.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked if the broadband survey was on our website. Mr. Brown said that it should be on the website, email blast, and signs around City Hall.

#### **CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS:**

Mr. Brown said there were six employees celebrating work anniversaries during the month of August. Their years of service range from two years to 21 years. He thanked and congratulated all of them. He indicated that Karen Darling, the Planning Secretary, has completed the Citizen Planner Program and earned her Certificate from Michigan State University – Extension. Also, that Department has received multiple kudos from local residents over the last month for the services we provided. He congratulated all of them and thanked them for their high-quality services.

Mr. Benson indicated that he will be looking to schedule a City Council Study Session to talk about the next steps of the Renton Project. He was thinking about holding this meeting on August 8<sup>th</sup> prior to the regular Council meeting.

#### **COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

**Councilmember Smiley** wished Mr. Brown a happy birthday.

**Councilmember Gottschall** had no comments.

**Councilmember Behrmann** thanked the Fire Department for their Camp 911. His daughter has been coming home very excited each day she has attended this five-day event. It wasn't sold out and he hoped we could do a better job of promoting it in the future.

**Councilmember Sharpe** had no comments.

**Councilmember Gronlund Fox** thanked and congratulated those employees celebrating work anniversaries. She thanked and congratulated Karen Darling for obtaining her certificate. She thanked the employees in the Construction and Development Services Department. She said that she has had a couple neighbors ask her about the weeds at Potter Road and Wixom Road. It is difficult to see down



Wixom Road and she hoped someone could cut them back. Mr. Sikma said that he would take a look at that.

**Deputy Mayor Rzeznik** shouted out Officer Evans who left a friendly reminder that his garage door was left open overnight. He thought that was a nice service that our Police Department did as a security reminder. He noted that there were more issues with the railroad again this past weekend. He hoped we would be getting some response regarding them blocking the intersection of Wixom Road and Pontiac Trail. He noticed we were in our eighth week with the pavers on pallets at the Cemetery by the Columbarium. He asked for an update. Mr. Sikma said that he had conversations with him last week. Every time he gets a day that he is planning to get out there, it rains. He is waiting for dryer weather.

**Mayor Beagle** congratulated all the employees that are celebrating work anniversaries and Karen Darling for completing her Planning certificate.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Buck  
City Clerk

Approved 8-8-2023
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