

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 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: (None)

MINUTES:

CM-10-152-23: Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Sharpe and Gronlund-Fox to approve the Regular City Council meeting minutes of October 10, 2023.

Vote:

Motion Carried

CORRESPONDENCE:

- 1.) Memo Regarding the Employee Assistance Program Rollout

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

There were no public comments at this time.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORTS:

1.) Departmental Reports – September 2023

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik noticed the list for the FOG (fats, oils and greases) sampling was quite extensive for September and there were no exceedances for the second month in a row. Mr. John said that was correct. They are done on quarterly basis, so the next one will be done in November.

Councilmember Sharpe had concerns about all of the projects on the Parks and Recreation Commission. He communicated with Ms. Magee earlier in the day and he wanted to thank her for the quick response. He thought it was satisfactory. There are a lot of big projects this year.

Councilmember Gottschall noted that the Economic Development report mentioned meetings with the property owner at Beck and Pontiac Trail now that Wings Etc. and Rite Aid were closed. We also have the CVS at Charms and Wixom Road gone. He didn't think a single store would move into the Rite Aid or CVS stores. He asked if there was anything the Council could be doing to be helpful or proactive to make

sure things get turned around quickly. Mr. Benson said the trend we have been noticing was that these 1990 strip malls don't seem to be doing as well especially with what was happening to the pharmacy market. It will be a challenge that we will have to look at as a community. He planned to have that conversation during the next Master Planning process or even sooner with the Planning Commission. All of those properties are zoned B2 so they all fall under the same permitted uses. He asked what were the uses we want to see or the creative things we have to look at to incentivize potential redevelopments or to fill those spaces. He thought we needed to keep an eye on it. Councilmember Gottschall said it was concerning. We want to see how we can future-proof our City. Flint, and even Wixom, had car companies that have gone away. He didn't know how we bounce back without some significant changes. A restaurant may be taken over by another restaurant, but that has always been a pretty high turnover unit anyway. We won't get another anchor where Rite Aid is. This was not just a Wixom issue. The entire country has these strip malls. Maybe there was another use for the CVS at Charms and Wixom Road, but it was going to be tough. He thought anything the Council could do would be appreciated.

CONSENT AGENDA:

CM-10-153-23: Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Gronlund-Fox and Smiley to approve the Consent Agenda as presented which included:

- 1.) Approval to receive and file:
 - a.) Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes – July 10, 2023
 - b.) Planning Commission Minutes – September 18, 2023
- 2.) Recommendation to Approve the 2024 City Council Meeting Schedule and Authorize the City Clerk to Post this Schedule as Required by Section 5(2) of the Open Meeting Act (Public Act 267 of 1976)
- 3.) Recommendation to Set a Public Hearing for November 14, 2023 to Solicit Input Regarding the Utilization of the 2024 Community Development Block Grant Program Allocation in the Amount of \$49,095

Vote:

Motion Carried

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: (None)

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1.) Recommendation to Award the Bid for Fire Station Upgrades and Facility Improvements to Schonscheck, Inc., of Wixom, MI in an Amount not to Exceed \$127,845 from Fire Facility Improvements Account #411-336-979.353 and Authorize the Necessary Budget Amendments**

CM-10-154-23: Moved and seconded made by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik and Councilmembers Behrmann to award the bid for Fire Station upgrades and facility improvements to Schonscheck, Inc., of Wixom, MI in an amount not to exceed \$127,845 from Fire Facility Improvements Account #411-336-979.353 and authorize the necessary budget amendments.

Chief Geistler said he identified the fact that they were operating an area in the building (restrooms and changing areas) with something that was designed in the 1990s. With our current staffing, we really need to expand that to accommodate more than one bathroom. He wanted to upgrade to two bathrooms with an additional bedroom.

Mayor Beagle mentioned that some of these improvements were because we have female firefighters now.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked how many sleeping quarters we had. Chief Geistler replied that we currently have three and we were hoping to add one more. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked what our staffing level was now and he replied that we have a total of 18 firefighters. He added that a lot of the full-time firefighters are also paid on-call firefighters and he was still hoping to increase those numbers in the coming weeks.

Councilmember Sharpe commented that this looked very solid with three solid bids, a local contractor and someone we have used before on the Fire grounds. This looked like a good project to him and he supported it.

Vote:

Motion Carried

- 2.) Recommendation to Accept the Proposal from Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc., of West Bloomfield, MI for Design Engineering Services to Assist in Design and Bidding for the Installation of a City Hall Generator for a Cost Not to Exceed \$35,700 from Other Facility Improvements Account #411-283-974.322**

CM-10-155-23: Moved and seconded made by Councilmembers Smiley and Gronlund-Fox to accept the proposal from Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc., of West Bloomfield, MI for Design Engineering Services to assist in design and bidding for the installation of a City Hall generator for a cost not to exceed \$35,700 from Other Facility Improvements Account #411-283-974.322.

Mr. Sikma explained that this was for assistance in getting a contractor to install the generator we purchased from Wolverine last May. It takes about eleven months to get the generator so it is time to get a contractor in line. He said we started the bid process and quickly discovered there were quite a few unanswered questions on our end. He thought HRC could help them answer those questions. They will assist us in getting the right contractor.

Councilmember Sharpe said that we ordered a 200-kilowatt natural gas generator. We are preparing a pad for a 200-kilowatt natural gas generator and the first thing HRC is going to do for us is make sure 200 kilowatts is big enough. Mr. Sikma said that they have confirmed that already. Councilmember Sharpe wanted to take that

line item off of their bid. He knew he was being petty and he knew there was more to it than that.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik wondered if wiring would have to be replaced. Mr. Sikma said that there were two different switch gears that would be combined into one. We use a pull-behind generator for the City Hall side of the building. The 200-kilowatt generator will be able to support the entire building and it will be automatically powered when we lose power. Because of 911 calls to the Police Department, we have to have continuous electrical connection. We will use the portable generator so they can remove the old 35-kilowatt generator we have behind the Police Station. Deputy Mayor Rzeznik confirmed that the electrical work would be focused on the switch gear and not internal to the wall. Mr. Sikma said that there would probably be recommendations, but he didn't anticipate that.

Councilmember Behrmann said he didn't have an issue with us hiring HRC to do this because it appeared it needed to be done. His only concern was that we didn't know about this when we ordered the generator. If we are spending \$35,000 in engineering to see what upgrades we are going to have to do to the building to accommodate the new generator that we already purchased, one could only assume that at the next meeting we will be asked to approve \$100,000 for the electrical work to accommodate this generator. He thought these were things we should have known when we agreed to purchase the generator. He didn't believe that was part of the conversation back in May that we were going to have to spend several thousand dollars to get the building up to par to accept this generator. Mr. Sikma said that there were multiple ways of purchasing generators and the recommendations he received were to buy it separately. He felt we would not get the 10-15% markup from the electrical contractor when we bought it. Councilmember Behrmann thought that made sense but felt we should have known there would be additional costs associated with it. He didn't envision that there would be another \$200,000 to hook it up, but we have already ordered it and it will be better than bringing a temporary generator to City Hall. He knew it made more sense to have one on site that powered up everything.

Mayor Beagle asked Mr. Darga from HRC what it was going to cost to do the work that Mr. Sikma just described. Mr. Darga thought it may be about \$50,000. He would get back to the Council once the number was determined.

Councilmember Gottschall said that when he read this initially, it bothered him a little bit. He thought we were just doing it in the reverse order from what we would expect. It wasn't like we would have escaped any of this. He noted that the report stated, "As previously explained, the purchase did not include installation or interconnection." It might feel out of order but he didn't have an issue with it.

Mr. Darga added that there was a long wait time for a generator.

Councilmember Sharpe suggested that rather than preliminary sizing for \$2,000, perhaps it should read, "fit the plan to a 200-kilowatt generator." He thought it should say what we need and then make 200 kilowatts fit it. We don't need the

lights running during power outages. Maybe that was something we could take off the circuit to get a 200-kilowatt generator to work for us. The proposal said, "HRC will begin by reviewing the building loads and confirming that the 200-kilowatt generator is adequately sized for the building and existing building loads." That should have been two years ago. Mr. Darga said that when they looked at the drawing that they had, something was flipped and the numbers weren't adding up. The first thing they needed to do was look at that to make sure it was adequate. Councilmember Sharpe asked if we could give HRC \$2,000 less and take that line item off his quote. Mr. Darga said yes.

Councilmember Sharpe remembered that when we purchased the generator, it didn't include installation and wiring. He asked if the \$215,000 budget was all in. He recalled the generator was \$180,000. Mr. Sikma said that we worked with an electrician to get that number. He said that the generator was \$120,000 and we were still within the budget.

Vote:

Motion Carried

3.) Recommendation to Authorize the Purchase of Fourteen Armor Express Razor II Ballistic Vests, Load Bearing Vest Carriers and Peripherals from On Duty Gear, LLC of Clinton Township, Michigan for \$14,280 from Body Armor Account #411-301-980.371

CM-10-156-23: Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Smiley and Gronlund-Fox to authorize the purchase of fourteen Armor Express Razor II Ballistic Vests, Load Bearing Vest Carriers and Peripherals from On Duty Gear, LLC of Clinton Township, Michigan for \$14,280 from Body Armor Account #411-301-980.371.

Chief Langmeyer stated that our current body armor will expire in early 2024. They warranty them for five years; at the end of the five years, it has to be replaced. We are reaching that time. These are the same vests that we are currently wearing. The officers like them because they are light-weight and comfortable. The vests look professional. On Duty Gear has the State of Michigan bid for these vests and he was requesting permission to purchase 14 of them. He noted that they have been approved for the Bulletproof Vest Grant Program through the Department of Justice so they will be receiving 50% back for each vest. The turnaround time is usually three to four months.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik remembered about ten years ago, Armor Express was having some issues with the UV interaction. He wondered if any improvements had been made during the last five years that would suggest they have a longer life. Chief Langmeyer said that they stay at five years. He said it was Second Chance that had a lot of issues. They were using a substance called Xylene but that didn't last. Everybody then went back to Kevlar, which was what these vests are made of.

Councilmember Smiley questioned the 50% reimbursement. Chief Langmeyer said that we have already been awarded the grant. Everybody's grants were approved

at the same time so he wanted to purchase these as soon as possible to get ahead of Detroit and the Michigan State Police.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox was glad to see we provide external vests. She asked if the officers had a choice. Chief Langmeyer said that they do have a choice. They are issued the internal carriers which he prefers when they are at dress events (funerals, etc.), but on a day-to-day basis, they wear the external carriers. They are better on their backs and they don't have issues from wearing all of that gear on their waist.

Councilmember Sharpe compliment Chief Langmeyer on the proposal. He loved the data and the footnotes. It was real data rather than just talk. He thought it was nice to see data-driven decisions.

Vote:

Motion Carried

4.) Request for Approval of the 2024 Calendar Year Proposed Operating Budget for the Commerce, Walled Lake and Wixom Trailway Management Council

CM-10-157-23: Moved and seconded by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik and Councilmember Behrmann to approve the 2024 calendar year proposed operating budget for the Commerce, Walled Lake and Wixom Trailway Management Council.

Mr. Brown said this was a standard required approval from the local governing bodies. He noted that the name of this Council will change soon since Walled Lake has withdrawn. He thought this would happen at the end of 2023 or early in 2024. The total revenue was \$142,000 and total expenses were \$60,000. There was a beginning surplus of about \$95,000 and at the end of the proposed budget, it drops to about \$82,000. We still have \$10,000 contributions from the two remaining communities, Commerce Township and the City of Wixom. We feel it is important to have a healthy fund balance for anything that might be unforeseen. Many years down the road we will also have to repave the Trail.

Councilmember Gottschall thought the repaving and striping was each municipality's individual responsibility now that everything was done. Mr. Brown said that the maintenance was each municipality's responsibility but when it is time to repave it, it may be a different situation. Councilmember Gottschall wondered where this would end. He asked what work the Trailway Council had left to do. He said they were being presented and asked to approve a budget that wasn't balanced. That didn't seem right to him. That was including \$20,000 in contributions from Wixom and Commerce Township. He said we want to preserve the surplus but we are eating into it every year. In five or six years we are going to be out of money. He asked what the ultimate goal was of the Trailway Council. Mr. Brown explained that there were fundraising activities that the Trail Manager will be undertaking to create sustainable sources of funding to supplement these kinds of

expenses; it was called the forward fund. We do receive donations to supplement the funding from the communities. The expenses include \$20,000 for the Trailway Manager's time, insurance, attorney costs, invasive species, etc. Councilmember Gottschall said he wanted to know what the ultimate goal was of the Council. If nothing changes in five or six years, we are out of money unless we want to start contributing more than \$10,000. We need to start fundraising so we aren't passing unbalanced budgets.

Mr. Benson said part of what Commerce and Wixom gets is extra capacity to go after grant funding or programming for the Trail. Most successful trails do have some sort of management group to help provide the attention. The intent was to put resources toward investing.

Mr. Brown added that it also keeps us involved from an administrative standpoint. Both Commerce and Wixom have representatives on the Trailway Council. It is on us to make sure that we maintain this important resource in a way that keeps it ongoing and in good condition. He thought that was the purpose of the money that is being spent. The expenses are such that we are eating into it a little bit. As time moves on and we feel it is not a good situation, we would increase the contributions from the communities.

Councilmember Gottschall didn't want to get out of the Trailway Council. He was looking into the future as far as the goal of the Trailway Council. He thought we needed to get the message across to start getting more fundraising going rather than our communities kicking in.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik said he has had many conversations with the Trailway Manager. There is a lot of activity going with the forward fund right now. It was set up temporarily through the Rochester Community Foundation. There was a mechanism to contribute to it and several people have. The Friends of the Trail is a very active group right now. He thought the end goal would be to create something similar to the Traverse Area Regional Trail (TART) which is self-funded.

Councilmember Behrmann wondered, now that Walled Lake has left, if we were leaving their portion out and they weren't getting striped. He wanted to confirm that we weren't doing anything in Walled Lake since they left the Council. Mr. Brown thought that was correct but he would doublecheck. Councilmember Behrmann remembered that they would treat it as a park. Mr. Brown said it was made clear to Walled Lake that the maintenance would be on them.

Mr. Brown commented that there was a final portion of funds that are attributable to each of the communities. Walled Lake will be getting a check shortly. There is a piece of the surplus that was being allocated to Walled Lake to fund maintenance.

Vote:

Motion Carried

5.) Recommendation to Approve Equity Adjustments for Library Employees as Recommended by the Library Board of Trustee's Personnel Committee and by the Wage and Salary Committee

CM-10-158-23: Moved and seconded by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik and Councilmember Gronlund-Fox to approve equity adjustments for Library employees as recommended by the Library Board of Trustee's Personnel Committee and by the Wage and Salary Committee.

Ms. Dickson stated that based on their agreement, the Library was coming to the City for some equity adjustments. She said they have seen prevailing salaries increase so this would help to retain employees and hire new employees at a competitive rate. They had an instance where the minimum and maximum salaries have increased two years in a row. They had newer staff who are continuously bumping up against the bottom of the salaries. In the event she hires a new librarian, that person would be paid the same as someone who has more experience and higher quantity of work. The Personnel Committee met and reviewed the data from the Library of Michigan and a Detroit Regional survey to see where adjustments were appropriate. They came up with the five adjustments noted and met with the Wage and Salary Committee. She said that there was no impact to the City's budget as the Library pays 100% of their wages.

Councilmember Sharpe thanked Ms. Dickson for the thorough report. There was a lot of good data.

Vote:

Motion Carried

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

One student from Lakeland High School was present to fulfill her AP Government requirement.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Mr. Brown said that there were 12 employees celebrating work anniversaries during the month of November. Their years of service ranged from one year to 13 years. He thanked and congratulated all of them.

Mr. Benson stated that we have released the Renton RFO today. We will now start the publicity tour. Also, the Oakland County Community Showcase is this Friday.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilmember Gronlund Fox congratulated the employees celebrating work anniversaries and she thanked them for their service to the City. She reminded everyone to vote on November 7th.

Councilmember Sharpe asked Mr. Benson about his meeting with MDOT regarding right-of-way and easements. Mr. Benson said that it was a positive meeting. It was possible to do but it was a cumbersome project for MDOT to determine when they have excess property and what they are willing to do with it. They tell you up front that it takes a year to get a section of right-of-way from them. The same applies for excess property. In the particular case of the Beck Road right-of-way, they had the idea of asking MDOT what they were doing with the rest of the property and if they would be interested in releasing it. He wasn't sure if Council's approval was necessary if we were just trying to get them to move it. He said they were receptive.

Councilmember Gottschall saw the LinkedIn post regarding the Renton RFO. He noticed that the map outline left out the elementary school side. Mr. Benson promised him that they highlighted the school in the original document. Councilmember Gottschall thought there was a very nice adaptation for dealing with the weather during the Fire Department Open House. It was still a good time and he thought the obstacle course was a big hit. He was sad we had to cancel the Panther Hunt, but the weather didn't want to cooperate at all. He noted the Planning Commission meeting minutes that were relevant to the Council's last meeting discussion. He thought it might have been nice to have had those minutes as a draft. It looked like three members of the Planning Commission weren't at the meeting and the minutes were dominated by two individuals. It seemed like there was a group of seven on City Council who have been elected by the public who want it one way and there were two members of the Planning Commission who want it another way. It was difficult for him to stomach. It didn't look like they fully understood why we want to develop that property. They thought it would hold back redevelopment where the bank and Little Caesar's were. He stated that if they wanted to redevelop, they would have done so by now. In reading that after the last meeting's frustrations and discussions, it shed a light on maybe we do have to have another joint meeting. It seemed like we are on opposite ends of the spectrum for where downtown moves from here. Some members of the Planning Commission are not wanting to move things forward unless it looks identical to what we have or the old time feeling. He didn't think it would look like an 1800 downtown building if they develop the Little Caesar's area. He thought they would want something more modern. He knew we would have the Design Committee, but that was a small collection of people. It might be helpful to have everyone in the same room. It was disheartening to him to read those comments.

Councilmember Smiley mentioned that a week from today was Halloween. He reminded everyone to be careful of the children. Also, two weeks from today is Election Day and he hoped it went smooth with no issues for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

Councilmember Behrmann expressed his children's gratitude to the Fire Department. It was nice the way it was set up indoors. He also thought it was nice to walk through the Fire Department and see all of the lockers filled. The trick or treating downtown was very well attended. There were a lot of people out and it was nice to see downtown busy for that event.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik thanked Chief Geistler and the Fire crew. His granddaughter enjoyed the Open House so much that she went through the obstacle course five times. It was nicely organized. He said that the pavers at the Columbarium looked great. The benches were next. He was glad the work got completed before the snow flies. Halloween was coming and he reminded all to watch out for the little ones. Get out and vote on November 7th.

Mayor Beagle congratulated and thanked all of the employees who were celebrating work anniversaries. He thanked Chief Geistler for allowing him to burn some hamburgers and hotdogs. Not only was it nice to see all of the lockers full, but it was nice to see all the firefighters there with smiles on their faces and enthusiasm to show the public what we have there. He appreciated everything that Chief Geistler did. Don't forget to vote. He mentioned that the Clerk gave the Council a summary of absentee ballots issued so far. There have been 2,026 ballots issued with 917 of those returned to date.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Buck
City Clerk

Approved 11-14-2023
