

**CITY OF WIXOM  
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 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(Excused)

**AGENDA CHANGES:** (None)

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

- 1.) Public Hearing to Solicit Community Input Regarding the Utilization of the 2024 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Allocation**

Mayor Beagle read the Rules for Public Speaking at a Public Hearing. He then opened the Public Hearing at 7:03 p.m.

Melani Robinson, representative of St. Vincent DePaul, said that they help people in this community with food, rent, utilities, rides, moving expenses, etc. No need is foreign to St. Vincent DePaul. She asked for a share of the CDBG funds. Rent has skyrocketed recently and they have been inundated with requests for help. They have helped 17 families in the last two and a half months, mostly Wixom families.

Kathy Wormsbacher, Western Oakland Meals on Wheels, commented that they serve over 50 homebound seniors with 1,500 meals a day. They are funded for one meal per day. The funding that they asked for will help to provide extra meals. She noted that they are a daily check-in for the seniors. They are out Monday through Friday and they keep emergency contact information on file. They are trying not to have a wait list so they seek the community for extra funding to be able to continue.

Susan Erspamer, Executive Director of Hospitality House, thanked the Council for their previous support. She said that their need was increasing as well. Hospitality House is a client-choice pantry, which means when you come to the pantry you are given a grocery cart to shop the shelves to pick the food of your choice. They treat people with dignity and respect while cutting down on food waste. Clients are able to shop twice a month. With cuts in government assistance and the increase cost of living, their numbers have doubled. Last year at this time they had about 750 households and they are now at 1,500. She said that they provide services in

Oakland and a little of Wayne Counties. The support that they get from Wixom allows them to continue what they have been doing since 2001 and it will help to meet the increased demand. She thanked the Council for their support in the past and asked to be considered this year.

With no further comments, Mayor Beagle closed the Public Hearing at 7:11 p.m.

**MINUTES:**

**CM-11-159-23:** Moved and seconded by Deputy Mayor Rzeknik and Council-member Gronlund-Fox to approve the Regular City Council meeting minutes of October 24, 2023.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** (None)

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

There were no public comments at this time.

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORTS:**

**1.) Fire Monthly Report – September 2023**

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox noticed the response times were up a little higher than what we would like. She guessed that was because of the different construction projects. Chief Geistler said that was correct. The requirements for the State of Michigan and Oakland County is 6 minutes 90% of the time. With the sink hold, the railroad tracks being closed and the construction on I-96, it has been hard on their times. Those times will be coming down.

Councilmember Behrmann noted that even with all the construction, our response times have been quicker now than they were this time last year. Chief Geistler commented that had to do with the full-time staffing that was added since January. Councilmember Behrmann said that even with all those issues in September, the Department was still improving.

**2.) Police Monthly Report – September 2023**

Councilmember Gottschall saw that the Assaults, Larceny and Malicious Destruction of Property rose. He asked if there were any particular incidents that spanned a few of the categories. Lieutenant Bradley replied that there were five or six vehicles that were broken into so that brings the numbers up a little. Some of the Larcenies and Malicious Destruction of Property were the same event and they got categorized two ways – Larceny and Malicious Destruction of Property. Most of the assaults were domestic assaults. Councilmember Gottschall confirmed that a few of the incidents played into both of those numbers increasing. Lieutenant Bradley said that was correct. There were at least three incidents that were recorded in at least two different categories. Councilmember Gottschall asked if he was seeing a concentration of anything right now, like theft from vehicles. Lieutenant Bradley

said that there is still a lot of theft of catalytic converters, but not as bad as they used to be.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**CM-11-160-23:** Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Gronlund-Fox and Sharpe to approve the Consent Agenda as presented which included:

- 1.) Approval to receive and file:
  - a.) Library Board Minutes – September 25, 2023
  - b.) Planning Commission Minutes – September 18, 2023
- 2.) Recommendation to Accept the Water Main Easement Granted by Yuken America, Inc. Located at 49178 Alpha Court, Wixom, MI for the Sum of One Dollar (\$1.00)
- 3.) Recommendation to Set a Public Hearing for December 12, 2023 to Solicit Community Input Regarding the 2024-2028 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** (None)

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1.) **Recommendation to Authorize the Submittal of the 2024 Community Development Block Grant Program Allocation in the Amount of \$49,095 with \$3,682 for Emergency Services, \$3,682 for Disabled Services and \$41,731 for Civic Center Improvements**

**CM-11-161-23:** Moved and seconded made by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik and Councilmember Behrmann to authorize the submittal of the 2024 Community Development Block Grant Program Allocation in the amount of \$49,095 with \$3,682 for Emergency Services, \$3,682 for Disabled Services and \$41,731 for Civic Center Improvements.

Ms. Magee explained the Block Grant Program provides funds for the purpose of renovating older homes, revitalizing neighborhoods, providing human services and rebuilding community infrastructure that benefits low to moderate income residents. Qualified projects must be located in census tracts that are occupied by low to moderate income individuals and families that meet HUD's standards and guidelines. In Wixom, we have two census tracts and both are located south of Pontiac Trail. Federal regulations considering these funds require public hearings to receive comments, recommendations and requests from individuals that seek funding for these funds. The total allocation is \$49,095.

Councilmember Gottschall asked what the reason was for halving the cap. Ms. Magee replied that Oakland County had achieved more of their projects so they had less money for public services. It was a County decision. Councilmember Gottschall asked if we were still getting the same amount that we have in the past and now we can give less out to the charities, or if we were bringing in less than we were.

Ms. Magee said it was about the same, but we can't give as much to the charities. It was about half of what we had been allocated in the past. Councilmember Gottschall asked if that translated to us retaining more money for our own projects and she said yes. Council can choose to not fund public agencies, but past Councils have tried to fund what they could. Councilmember Gottschall thought this meant we were retaining more of it. He asked if she saw an avenue for us to have another funding source within the City so we can keep our rotation going. Right now, we are cutting out one agency. If we wanted to keep things the way they were, he wondered if there was another budget item to still donate like we have been since we are keeping more money from the Block Grants. Ms. Magee said that Council could create that if they would like. We currently have one item that is currently funded from our Operating Budget for LAYA. Council could choose to separate a line item to separate those agencies in the future. Councilmember Gottschall appreciated that. It was something that he would be interested in. He thought Administration could look into finding some budget amendment to fix the County's poor decision making.

Mayor Beagle thought we could do something like that but that we would have to wait until the budget process. Mr. Brown thought it would depend on the dollar amount but he didn't think they were talking about anything beyond what we had done in the past. He wouldn't be concerned about that. It was a matter of whether the Council wanted to make that funding decision. Mayor Beagle thought it was something we should look into.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox said she would support Councilmember Gottschall's request.

Councilmember Sharpe confirmed that we have always rotated the agencies and they were talking about getting up to last year's level. Councilmember Gottschall replied yes. Councilmember Sharpe said he supported that.

Councilmember Behrman said that all five of the organizations that have applied and that we have historically rotated our funding are deserving organizations. It has always been painful in the past when we had to cut two out, but we always had a chart that we followed to rotate the funds. It was disappointing that the County made this decision to decrease the revenue. He completely supported giving as much money as we can within the constraints of the County to the two organizations that have been recommended. He was not saying that we as a City shouldn't look at contributing to the other organizations, but he wondered if Councilmember Gottschall was asking for a budget item from our General fund to support these organizations. Councilmember Gottschall said it would be from the General fund but realistically it was being offset by the extra CDBG funding that we are retaining that we used to give out. The City ends up retaining more than it normally would because we have had to cut in half what we are giving out. To him,

it was a zero-based budget. Councilmember Behrmann said he would like to see more information on what other municipalities were doing before we decide to just give money away. He said he was totally fine with this item and he apologized that we couldn't give money to everyone.

Deputy Mayor Rzeknik mentioned that we do look at what surrounding communities are doing. We do try to spread the love. That was something we have been doing for ten to twelve years and it has worked out well. He said he would support looking into some other funding mechanism.

Mayor Beagle suggested drafting a letter supported by Council asking the County to reconsider how they do this. Our hands are tied on this. We have great organizations that really need our support and we can't help them. Every year the CDBG rules change. Maybe it was time that they overhaul the system even if it means we take less for the City.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**2.) Recommendation to Approve the 2024 Municipal and Community Credit Contract with the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation in the Amount of \$16,093 and Authorize the Mayor to Sign the Contract**

**CM-11-162-23:** Moved and seconded made by Deputy Mayor Rzeknik and Councilmember Gronlund-Fox to approve the 2024 Municipal and Community Credit Contract with the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation in the amount of \$16,093 and authorize the Mayor to sign the contract.

Ms. Magee said that SMART funding was used for transportation service. There have been a series of actions that have led to the Oakland County Transit Program with Peoples Express. It was being recommended that the Council approve the 2024 Municipal and Community Credit Contract for SMART. The contract will follow through with the prior commitment to transfer our Municipal Credits from SMART to Peoples Express. The funding amount allocation for 2024 was \$16,093 which was consistent with the prior year's allocation. She added that Council will have to approve this contract on an annual basis.

Councilmember Gottschall understood we agreed to do this, but this seemed like an unnecessary step. The County steals money from our residents through property taxes and gives it to SMART to pass off to one of their partners. Council has to vote on it when they hold the money the entire time. He asked if anyone had pointed out to them that they can just do it since we have already agreed to it.

Mr. Brown explained that the Municipal Credit money was an established practice with SMART providing it to local communities. He thought that hasn't changed and no one has checked into changing that. They will continue to dole out this money to communities like Wixom. We agreed at the August 8<sup>th</sup> Council meeting to have an

Interlocal Agreement with Oakland County where we will take that Municipal Credit money and give it to Peoples Express to offset the reimbursement that would be required from Oakland County's public transportation millage. He understood where Councilmember Gottschall was coming from, but it was not as simple. The Municipal Credits were governed by a lot of details that would be difficult to unravel.

Councilmember Gottschall thought it might be worth discussing it with them. It was part of their ongoing incompetence with the whole plan to begin with. He thought they might be able to address that in the meantime.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**3.) Recommendation to Accept Hubbell, Roth & Clark's Proposal for Design Engineering Services for Gunnar Mettala Park Improvements for a Total Not to Exceed \$69,080**

**CM-11-163-23:** Moved and seconded by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik and Councilmember Gronlund-Fox to accept Hubbell, Roth & Clark's proposal for design engineering services for Gunnar Mettala Park improvements for a total not to exceed \$69,080.

Ms. Magee said it's been in their Capital Plan to make improvements to Gunnar Mettala Park. It was their desire to replace the comfort station building with a slightly larger building that included an equipment room, replace the walking path to make it ADA compliant, and install shelters near the tennis courts and trailhead. The scope of the project included preparation of plans and specifications, bidding, a topographical survey, site drawings, building drawings and demolition of the existing comfort stations.

Councilmember Gottschall noticed HRC mentioned the City received grant funding in 1988 for the current comfort stations and advised the City to find out if grant money had to be returned to the State considering grants usually had a 40-year encumbrance. Ms. Magee double checked with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and was told they allowed a range of 20-40 years for a building considering the deterioration. Additionally, due to the fact they were not using grant funding on the new building, it became irrelevant.

Councilmember Sharpe asked what trailhead would the pavilion be located. Ms. Magee said it would be where the Michigan Airline Trail entered Gunnar Mettala Park.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked what material would be used for the walking path. Ms. Magee said asphalt.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

#### 4.) **Recommendation to Approve the Amended Bylaws of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority**

**CM-11-164-23:** Moved and seconded by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik and Councilmember Gronlund-Fox to approve the amended Bylaws of the Wixom Downtown Development Authority.

Ms. Cloutier said the DDA wanted to amend the 2017 bylaws considering the board no longer functioned in the same capacity. They reviewed the bylaws and compared them to other communities and provided the updates they saw fit.

Councilmember Behrmann noticed revisions regarding attendance and removal from the board. He asked if that had been an issue with the DDA. Ms. Cloutier said attendance had become a small concern and although removal hadn't been an issue they thought it best to put it in the bylaws. Councilmember Behrmann asked if the board members understood that if this passed, they could be removed if they didn't attend the meetings regularly. Ms. Cloutier said all the members understood.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik was happy to see attendance was going to be part of the bylaws so the members understood the expectation before they threw their hat in the ring.

Mayor Beagle thought the attendance was an issue in the past but not with the current members. He approved the attendance being part of the bylaws.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

#### 5.) **Recommendation to Approve the Purchase of Professional Services for Branding, Logo and Signage Development Services from Guide Studio of Cleveland, Ohio for a Cost Not to Exceed \$60,000 with Funding Allocated from Economic Development Account #101-257-956.325 and DDA Special Studies Account #248-729-956.481 and Authorize the Mayor to Sign the Agreement**

**CM-11-165-23:** Moved and seconded by Councilmember Sharpe and Deputy Mayor Rzeznik to approve the purchase of Professional Services for Branding, Logo and Signage Development Services from Guide Studio of Cleveland, Ohio for a cost not to exceed \$60,000 with funding allocated from Economic Development Account #101-257-956.325 and DDA Special Studies Account #248-729-956.481 and authorize the mayor to sign the agreement.

Mr. Benson said one of the primary objectives from the adoption of the Economic Development Strategy was to better formalize a cohesive City, DDA and Parks and Recreation brand for identifying the City of Wixom. During the budget, funds had been allocated for these services by the City and the DDA. They drafted and released a request for proposals for branding services and after reviewing the 8

proposals, they decided Guide Studio of Cleveland, Ohio was best suited for their needs. He said Guide Studio had experience with providing services to similar communities and they could perform all the services within one firm. He stated the DDA approved Guide Studio and agreed to put forth \$30,000 toward the project. He hoped that Council would approve the overall project and the allocation of \$30,000 of City funds.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox noted the proposal timeline was 6 months. She wondered if it was their desire to get a plan back to Council before the next budget. Mr. Benson said the branding and logo would probably fall within the 6 months but the signage package would probably get implemented over multiple years.

Councilmember Sharpe really liked the package from Guide Studio. He felt they had the right team interviewing the firms and was happy to see this coming to fruition.

Councilmember Gottschall was hopeful that the end product would be a reimagining of what they currently had.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik thought the proposal from Guide Studio was very well laid out.

Mr. Benson said they thought it was best to form an ad hoc committee for this project. He said if anybody was interested and had experience, he would appreciate them contacting him to be part of the committee.

Councilmember Behrmann thanked them for moving forward with this as it's been a long time coming. He thought Guide Studio proved to be a good company after reviewing their packet and noticed how many municipalities from Michigan they had worked with.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Russ Meredith, 378 Fletcher, commended Councilmember Gottschall and Mayor Beagle for their mission this evening in trying to find a way to help the service organizations support the neediest members of the community. This was the kind of thing he liked to see come from the dais.

**CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS:**

Mr. Brown provided statistics regarding the November 7, 2023 General Election in Wixom compared to the same election from two years ago. He mentioned the early voting numbers were very low but the experience should prove helpful as we go into the 2024 election cycle. He congratulated the Clerk and Deputy Clerk on the smooth election. He wished Councilmember Sharpe a happy birthday, and asked everyone to support the local business and shop local.



**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

**Councilmember Sharpe** thanked Ms. Magee for the communication regarding the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as it was exciting to see such creative ideas. He congratulated Councilmembers Behrmann, Gottschall and Smiley for winning the election. He looked forward to working with them over the next two years.

**Councilmember Gronlund-Fox** congratulated her fellow Councilmembers on a well-run race.

**Councilmember Gottschall** said it was nice seeing all the ballot proposals pass as it helped clean up the way the City had been running for a while. He was pleased to see the first proposal (gender neutral terms within the Charter) pass but it was disheartening to see how close it was. He believed it showed how sick the national media was making our country and society, for something as simple as changing the word "he" to "the office of the Mayor" somehow turned into something controversial. He thought it was a very unnecessary distraction that this Country has with a preoccupation with who people are, and that was holding us back from our true potential. As an elected official, it was sad to see that was what people were worried about. The lesson to take from this was when we put proposals on the ballot, we needed to be more concise with the wording and offer a better explanation to the public. He thought we had good information out there for the safety path millage but the other amendments fell by the wayside.

**Councilmember Behrmann** congratulated his fellow Councilmembers that won the election. He congratulated the Mayor on his new two-year term and thanked the Wixom voters for their support. He was worried there wouldn't be a lot of people voting in person once he saw the number of absentee ballots that were issued but there was quite a stream of people voting on Election Day. Many of them approached him and offered their opinions on certain items. The number of people willing to pass the sidewalk millage really proved that the residents still wanted to invest in the community and infrastructure. He thought that was a positive thing and hoped they could continue that positivity with the upcoming road millage. He thanked the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their work on the election.

**Deputy Mayor Rzeznik** said congratulations to the Mayor, Council and Library Board Members. He said he'd traveled all around the world and noticed they would have a 70% turnout on their local elections so to have a 19% turnout in Wixom was sad. He thanked the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their hard work.

**Mayor Beagle** congratulated the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for another outstanding election. He congratulated his fellow Councilmembers that were voted in again and was pleased to serve Wixom for another two years.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Buck  
City Clerk

Approved 11-28-2023
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