

**CITY OF WIXOM  
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024**

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

**Present:**

**Mayor:** P. Beagle (Excused)  
**Deputy Mayor:** T. Rzeknik  
**Councilmembers:** P. Behrmann  
K. Gottschall  
T. Gronlund-Fox  
P. Sharpe  
R. Smiley

**AGENDA CHANGES:** (None)

**MINUTES:**

**CM-01-08-24:** Moved and seconded by Councilmembers Behrmann and Gottschall to approve the Regular City Council meeting minutes of January 9, 2024.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CORRESPONDENCE:** (None)

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

There were no comments made at this time.

**CITY MANAGER REPORTS:**

**1.) Departmental Reports - December 2023**

There were no comments or questions regarding these reports.

**2.) Quarterly Budget and Investment Report – September 30, 2023**

There were no comments or questions regarding this report.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**CM-01-09-24:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Smiley and Gronlund-Fox to approve the Consent Agenda as presented which included:

- 1.) Approval to receive and file:
  - a.) Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes – October 9, 2023
- 2.) Recommendation to Authorize Resolutions for Special Liquor License Applications for March 8, 2024 and December 6, 2024 Events at the Wixom Community Center (49015 Pontiac Trail) and for the June 27, 2024 and August 15, 2024 Events at Sibley Square Park (48952 Pontiac Trail)

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- 1.) **Recommendation to Enact an Amendatory Ordinance to the City of Wixom Code of Ordinances, Title 13 Public Services, Chapter 13.08 Sewer Services System, Article IV Wastewater Disposal Standards, Section 13.08.450 Abbreviations to Add PFAS, PFOA and PFOS; Section 13.08.460 Definitions to Amend Regulations Relating to PFAS, PFOA and PFOS; Section 13.08.520 Pretreatment of Wastewater Facilities to Amend Regulations Relating to PFOA and PFOS; and Add a New Section 13.08.538 PFAS Regulated under Local Limits, USEPA or the State of Michigan**

**CM-01-10-24:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Behrmann and Smiley to enact an amendatory Ordinance to the City of Wixom Code of Ordinances, Title 13 Public Services, Chapter 13.08 Sewer Services System, Article IV Wastewater Disposal Standards, Section 13.08.450 Abbreviations to add PFAS, PFOA and PFOS; Section 13.08.460 Definitions to amend regulations relating to PFAS, PFOA and PFOS; Section 13.08.520 Pretreatment of Wastewater Facilities to amend regulations relating to PFOA and PFOS; and add a new Section 13.08.538 PFAS Regulated under Local Limits, USEPA or the State of Michigan.

Councilmember Sharpe asked if this motion would actually address the change in the local limits under Section 13.08.490. This was the table of PFOS and PFOA. He wondered if we could vote on this motion as it was written. Mr. Sikma spoke with the City Attorney who suggested that if he would like to amend the motion to include Section 13.08.490, he could do that because it was not a significant change. Councilmember Sharpe stated that the whole point of this entire exercise was to add PFOA and PFOS and we are adding the local limits to the ordinance.

**CM-01-11-24:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Sharpe and Gronlund-Fox to amend the motion as written to add Section 13.08.490 to include PFOA and PFOS Local Limits to the table.

Councilmember Smiley confirmed that we were not changing anything and that he just wanted the language to include something that was already part of the business. Councilmember Sharpe said that was correct. The ordinance that we are changing has the words in Section 13.08.490 as part of the ordinance. He thought we would want to match the motion to the actual words of the ordinance.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**CM-01-12-24:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Behrmann and Smiley to enact an amendatory Ordinance to the City of Wixom Code of Ordinances, Title 13 Public Services, Chapter 13.08 Sewer Services System, Article IV Wastewater Disposal Standards, Section 13.08.450 Abbreviations to add PFAS, PFOA and PFOS; Section 13.08.460 Definitions to amend regulations relating to PFAS, PFOA and PFOS; Section 13.08.490 Local Limits to add the local limits to the table; Section 13.08.520 Pretreatment of Wastewater Facilities to amend regulations relating to PFOA and PFOS; and add a new Section 13.08.538 PFAS Regulated under Local Limits, USEPA or the State of Michigan.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1.) **Recommendation to Confirm the Mayor's Appointment of Kathleen McLaurin to the Senior Citizen Commission with a Term to Expire June 30, 2025**

**CM-01-13-24:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Gronlund-Fox and Sharpe to confirm the Mayor's appointment of Kathleen McLaurin to the Senior Citizen Commission with a term to expire June 30, 2025.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

- 2.) **Recommendation to Authorize the Lease of Dark Fiber and Purchase of Dedicated Internet Access from Crown Castle of Troy, Michigan Through MiCTA Pricing and Authorize the City Manager to Sign the Agreements**

**CM-01-14-24:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Smiley and Gronlund-Fox to authorize the lease of dark fiber and purchase of dedicated internet access from Crown Castle of Troy, Michigan through MiCTA pricing and authorize the City Manager to sign the agreements.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox said she supported this but had a question about the elimination of the need for a firewall. She wondered how that would work if we didn't have a firewall anymore. Mr. Benson explained that the bigger picture of what we want to accomplish was that we would be centralizing our IT operations entirely at City Hall and using the dedicated dark fiber access for our remote facilities. The Fire Station and the DPW building would all run through our system. We would still have a firewall with security measures.

Councilmember Sharpe said he spoke with Mr. Benson earlier. The summary said based on the quotes, City Administration recommended Crown Castle for the dark fiber network update. The total was a difference of \$700 over the course of ten years. He asked Mr. Benson if there was more to it. Mr. Benson said that there were really only two options for dark fiber that we have access to in Wixom – Crown Castle or 123Net. Their quotes were very similar. They have tiered scales in terms of paying more for the non-recurring costs, your monthly fee goes down and vice versa. Given the similar prices, we recommended moving forward with Crown Castle. He said staff felt Crown Castle was a little more responsive. We were more comfortable that they understood and would be able to address the operational issues and goals of the project. Our IT consultants have expressed that they have had positive experiences with both companies so they supported our decision with Crown Castle.

Councilmember Behrmann asked if we currently had an existing business relationship with 123Net for leasing the water tower. Mr. Benson said that didn't come up in the negotiations. They pay us approximately \$17,000 a year. Mr. Brown didn't think this would affect that. The reason they picked our tower was because it fit their network needs.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik noted that this comes with a savings of \$13,000 a year, or \$130,000 over the ten-year period, by consolidating all of this hardware. Mr. Benson said this helps us address operational issues with our telecommunication and internet access at our remote facilities. Over the last few years, as we have made changes to our phone systems, we have really become more reliant on the internet for our operations. When there are issues, it creates significant problems.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

- 3.) Recommendation to Approve the Transfer of an Existing Michigan Liquor Control Commission Class C On-Premise Retail Liquor License, an Existing Specialty Designated Merchant (SDM) Off-Premise Retail Liquor License and Authorize the Issuance of Social District, Sunday (AM) and Sunday (PM) Sales Permits for P & C Wixom, LLC at 49115 Pontiac Trail, Wixom, Michigan and Authorize the Mayor to Sign the Agreement Restricting Transfer of the Liquor License**

**CM-01-15-24:** Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Smiley and Gronlund-Fox to approve the transfer of an existing Michigan Liquor Control Commission Class C On-Premise Retail Liquor License, an existing Specialty Designated Merchant (SDM) Off-Premise Retail Liquor License and authorize the issuance of Social District, Sunday (AM) and Sunday (PM) Sales Permits for P & C Wixom, LLC at 49115 Pontiac Trail, Wixom, Michigan and authorize the Mayor to sign the Agreement restricting transfer of the liquor license.

Councilmember Gottschall questioned the Social District request for Sundays. Mr. Brown said that this was the issuance of a social district permit, Sunday AM and Sunday PM. The Sunday hours were not related to the Social District permit.

Mr. Benson said the applicant from Wixom Station was in attendance. Mr. Sunny Palaj said he and his partner, Benny Cukaj, purchased the Wixom Station from their ex-partners at another location. They have been in this business for 30 years. They were looking to keep everything pretty much the same but make it better for the community.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

- 4.) Recommendation to Direct City Administration to Prepare Ballot Language for the Renewal of the City's Additional Operating Millage and Ballot Language to Replace the Local Roads Millage with Language to be Specified by City Council**

Mr. Brown said they were following up on an initial conversation that Council had regarding the road infrastructure needs within the City, and making a change as to how they approached it from a funding standpoint. It was their understanding that Council wanted to proceed with one tax-oriented question at the Primary Election of 2024 and another tax question in the General Election of 2024. Council needed to decide if they wanted to renew the additional operating millage for another four years, replace the local road millage by increasing it from 1.5 mills to 2.00 mills for

a 10-year period or potentially change the local road millage to a general road millage. Another item for consideration was if they levied the additional .5 mills that fell within the current operating millage (up to 3.5 mills but the City was only utilizing 3 mills) toward local and/or major roads. He said if they were to use the .5 mills, it would allow additional road funding in FY2024/2025. If the current operating millage was levied at the full 3.5 mills, they could allocate .017 toward local roads and .033 mills toward major roads.

Mr. Benson said they've asked the attorney to draft broad ballot language in relation to these items making it easier to fill in some of the blanks for the February 13, 2024 Council meeting. The Attorney General's office recommended ballot language be submitted by February 20, 2024 for the August 6, 2024 Primary Election. He stated that the operating millage expired a year before the current local road millage, and they needed that addressed this calendar year so they could prepare.

**CM-01-16-24:** Motion and seconded by Councilmembers Behrmann and Gronlund-Fox to direct City Administration to prepare ballot language for the additional operating millage, up to 3.5 mills, for a period of four years for the August 6, 2024 Primary Election.

Councilmember Gottschall would rather all the road funding fall within the road millage. He'd prefer they keep it straight forward within the ballot language and indicate 3.0 mills, considering that's what the City historically utilized, as opposed to the up to 3.5 mills.

Councilmember Behrmann was not in favor of using the .5 mills on road funding. However, he liked having the flexibility of the up to 3.5 mills so they could use that .5 mills if they had to.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked what the additional operating millage would fund. Mr. Brown said that millage was open-ended as it could be used for any operating expense of the City.

Deputy Mayor Rzeknik said they initially had the up to 3.5 mills because the Charter cap was 8.00 mills; however, with the Headlee rollback its down 7.54 mills. Given the 8.00 mill cap hasn't been amended within the Charter, the up to 3.5 mills was acting as supplemental funding rather than going for another Charter amendment. He thought they should keep the up to 3.5 mill language and have that .5 mills there just in case it was needed.

Councilmember Smiley recalled having to use that entire 3.5 mills in the past and believed the up to language was comforting to know they had the flexibility.

Councilmember Sharpe supported the motion from Councilmember Behrmann. He asked when they crafted the public campaign, could they explain how they wanted to steer clear of the November politics by placing the millage on the August Primary ballot. He hoped the message to residents would be that they didn't need the millage until FY 2025. They wanted to pull it ahead so they could have a serious discussion on the topic. Mr. Brown said both of those items would be part of the

information campaign they'd share with the public. Additionally, another issue would be that if the millage didn't pass, they could try again in November. Councilmember Sharpe was a proponent of only using the 3.00 mills; however, if they were to change the ballot language, it would no longer be a millage renewal, and potentially more challenging to convey to the residents. He thought keeping the millage ballot language the same would cause less confusion for everybody.

Councilmember Gottschall appreciated everybody's thoughts and comments. He asked if this millage expired at the end of June 2025. Ms. Stamper said the last time they could levy would be June 2025 so the funding was technically done at the end of June 2025. Councilmember Gottschall believed residents would love to hear the potential of getting taxed .5 mills less. He knew from working in real estate that with today's climate costs were increasing to the homeowner. He didn't like renewing the same thing time after time under the presumption of just in case. He thought they should signify to the residents that they haven't had to use the .5 mills. He added that as long as taxable values increased the amount they brought in per mill would increase.

**CM-01-17-24:** Motion and seconded by Councilmembers Gottschall and Smiley to amend the previous motion by changing the operating millage to read up to 3.0 mills for a period of four years for the August 6, 2024 primary election.

**Roll Call Vote: (1) AYES –Gottschall  
(5) NAYS- Behrmann, Gronlund-Fox, Rzeznik, Sharpe, Smiley  
(1) ABSENT - Beagle**

**Motion Failed**

**CM-01-18-24:** Motion and seconded by Councilmembers Behrmann and Gronlund-Fox to direct City Administration to prepare ballot language for the additional operating millage, up to 3.5 mills, for a period of four year for the August 6, 2024 primary election.

**Vote:**

**Motion Carried**

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik directed the conversation to talk about the ballot language to replace the local road millage.

Councilmember Gottschall recalled hearing that major road funding through ACT 51 was adequate because it covered the City's projects. After previous road discussions, they needed 1.97 mills for the next ten years to get up to a PASER rating of 6 for local roads. He presumed a joint millage with major and local roads would need to be slightly above the 2.00 mills to account for both roadways. He questioned if Administration believed that the ten-year millage would be long enough to obtain the desired roadways.

Mr. Sikma believed ten years would be a minimum but if they recommended fifteen years and included major and local roads, that would mean the funds could be allocated back and forth. Currently, the millage was for local roads only so major road projects cannot be funded by that millage.

Councilmember Gottschall thought based on the information given, in order to get a PASER rating of 6 for both major and local roads, they would need 2.33 mills per year. The millage should be up to 2.50 mills in order to accommodate for inflation and major and local roads.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked if the ACT 51 money was very specific on what they could use it for. Mr. Sikma said ACT 51 was for both major and local roads; however, they primarily used it for major roads and on occasion would roll funding over for a local road project.

Mr. Brown thought they should address the existing local road millage as it wasn't set to expire until June 2025. For clarification, this millage they would place on the August 6, 2024 ballot would essentially replace and eliminate the current local road millage.

Councilmember Smiley preferred one millage for local and major roads. He hoped the public could be educated on how this millage would eliminate the current millage and include major roads.

Councilmember Behrmann liked the idea of a single roads millage and incorporating an education plan telling residents that they were already paying for slightly above 2 mills, and they were only asking for slightly higher. He wanted the exact number to be included within the motion.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik suggested up to 2.5 mills considering inflation.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox asked if Administration was comfortable with up to 2.5 mills. Mr. Sikma felt it was adequate with the up to language and increasing the amount for inflation purposes. Councilmember Gronlund-Fox wondered what the cost per lane mile was for road construction. Mr. Sikma estimated \$1.5 million per lane mile, and Wixom has just under fifty lane miles.

Councilmember Gottschall said 1 mill equaled \$864,739 and adding the little inflationary impact, it came to a little less than \$150,000 dollars. Given that a lane mile was \$1.5 million, he asked if Administration felt that was an actual usable amount for road repairs. Mr. Sikma said the commercial and industrial roads throughout the City were primarily concrete. What he would propose was to work on sections of concrete over a period of time, and at the end of fifteen years you'd see a significant difference.

Councilmember Behrmann knew that Wixom had one of the lowest tax rates in Oakland County. He asked where the City would fall among the other cities in Oakland County with a 2.5 millage for roads. Ms. Stamper said they were currently 7<sup>th</sup> lowest but that would put them at 8<sup>th</sup> lowest.

Mr. Brown said the goal was to increase the PASER rating. PASER ratings were how they judged the status of the roadway. A fair category (PASER rating between 5-7) and the funding they were trying to achieve would put them on the higher end of the fair range category. He just wanted to reiterate this funding level would not put the City into an 8 or 9 category.

Councilmember Sharpe hoped to avoid confusing the voters but changing a millage altogether could bring confusion. He wondered why they couldn't wait until 2025 to put the road millage on the ballot. Mr. Benson said they would be able to levy funds one year sooner by placing it on a 2024 ballot. Councilmember Sharpe would like to think about this a little more knowing contractors were currently hard to come by; nevertheless, should they start knocking on our door, they could always use the .5 mill between now and 2025. He said for the remaining year, they could use the 1.15 mills and then decide how much was needed based upon how much road work was completed in 2024.

Councilmember Behrmann said the difference between this and the operating millage was that if the operating millage didn't pass, they'd have to start laying off employees and cutting services. That was why he supported the operating millage being placed on the August ballot. If the millage did not pass, they could always try for it again in November but if the roads millage didn't pass, they still had the current local road millage funding for another year.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik said putting the road millage on the 2024 November ballot would allow them another opportunity should it be defeated with only losing one year of funding considering it would be placed on the 2025 November ballot.

Councilmember Gronlund-Fox supported the operating millage being on the August 2024 ballot. She agreed there could be possible confusion for the voter with the road millage. If they were to wait until 2025, that would give them more opportunities to educate the public.

Councilmember Gottschall would prefer the road millage be on the November 2024 ballot. They could still inform the residents through HOA meetings, social media, etc., that this road millage would be part of their November ballot. If this failed, then they would have the time to gain the knowledge of what needed to be changed.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik noted the safety path millage that was on their recent ballot was overwhelmingly supported by the public.

**CM-01-19-24:** Motion and seconded by Councilmembers Behrmann and Gottschall to direct City Management to prepare ballot language to replace the existing local roads millage set to expire in Fiscal Year 2025/2026 with a millage for up to 2.5 mills for a period of ten years, to be inclusive of both major and local roads for the November 2024 Presidential General Election.

Councilmember Sharpe would still like to defer this to the November 2025 General Election. He thought residents had their pocketbooks hit enough with inflation and price increases everywhere else. He would prefer they kept the tax rates down.

Councilmember Gottschall said he believed roads were something that needed to be addressed two years ago and not two years from now. He'd like to see this on the November ballot.



**Roll Call Vote: (4) AYES –Behrmann, Gottschall, Rzeznik, Smiley  
(2) NAYS- Gronlund-Fox, Sharpe  
(1) ABSENT - Beagle**

**Motion Carried**

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

County Commissioner Ajay Raman said he represents four communities and he always loves coming to these meetings because of the thoughtful discussions. He likes that this Council has these discussions as it doesn't always happen in other communities. He wanted the residents to know that they are well represented and that these discussions were important. He felt the Wixom Council came to decisions in the right manner. He mentioned a few programming notes for the Oakland County residents. One of them just kicked off yesterday called the Oakland Saves Program. There is about \$5 million of ARPA Funding that is used for home improvements. He thought about \$4 million, or 80%, was income-based, and that was up to \$5,000 worth of home improvement and renovations (heating and cooling, water heaters, insulation, etc.) There was another million dollars that was set aside that was not income-based and that was about 20% of the repairs up to \$3,000. It is competitive and it will probably go quickly. Macomb County did something very similar and he thought the money was gone in about a week or two. Oakland County is also launching a program called Acorn to Oak and that goes live on February 1. This is a quarter of a million dollars where grants will be awarded to students ages 8 to 18 that want to pursue entrepreneur opportunities, support non-profits and small business start-ups, or to support community or educational endeavors. It is not meant to support sports activities, so they won't buy sports equipment. It is supposed to be seed money to get people up and going. Lastly, he mentioned that SMART has a transit meeting scheduled for tomorrow. He heard that the transit expansion has been going very well so far. They are trying to tie that in to bigger SMART transit and work on para-transit and micro-transit options so people can get to the fixed routes. They were looking for community feedback and hoped to have a lot of people at the sessions. The meeting tomorrow is at 6:30 pm at the Novi Public Library.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik asked if the links for the applications for the grants were on the City's website. Mr. Brown thought they were but he would verify that.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

Mr. Brown said that there were eight employees celebrating their work anniversaries in February. Their years of service ranged from one year to nine years. He congratulated and thanked all of them. He mentioned that he saw an article in the Detroit News about a Wixom resident, Chris Brewer, who was a Lions' fan. He called the live shot before the game and said they would be victorious by three points. He underestimated the points but he liked his enthusiasm. He congratulated him for being right on that. Go Lions! The other thing he wanted to mention was about the transit Doodly. The City was in discussions with other Southwest Oakland County communities and we were trying to decide how to get an informational piece out. We volunteered to get a Doodly piece out since we have that tool. This Doodly is on our website and it talks about the added service hours, the added times you can make those reservations and other important information. He thanked Kathy Venegas for her help with this.

Mr. Benson had no additional comments.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

**Councilmember Sharpe** thanked the DPW crew for being out at 3 a.m. with their plows. He thanked Mr. Benson for the first branding meeting with the team from Guide out of Cleveland. He thought it was going to be a worthwhile effort with a sharp team.

**Councilmember Gronlund-Fox** thanked Kathleen McLaurin for volunteering on the Senior Citizen Commission. She congratulated and thanked those employees who were celebrating work anniversaries and she thanked Mr. Sikma's staff who did a great job.

**Councilmember Gottschall** had no comments.

**Councilmember Behrmann** thanked the DPW for keeping the roads cleaned. Our roads in Wixom are so nice compared to other communities he has to drive through to get to work.

**Councilmember Smiley** said he was excited to be a part of the branding committee. He thought we needed a new look to our logo and other signage throughout the City. They thought this might be completed by June, which was a fine timetable. He thinks of Mr. Sikma whenever the weather turns bad.

**Deputy Mayor Rzeznik** thanked Mr. Sikma and his crew. He still can't work remotely because his roads are always clear.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Catherine Buck  
City Clerk

Approved 2-13-2024
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