

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2022**

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(Exc.)
P. Sharpe
R. Smiley

AGENDA CHANGES: (None)

MINUTES:

CM-02-14-22: Moved and seconded by Councilmember Gottschall and Deputy Mayor Rzeznik to approve the Regular City Council meeting minutes of January 25, 2022.

Vote:

Motion Carried

CORRESPONDENCE:

- 1.) Notice of Hearing for the Customers of Consumers Energy, Case No. U-21062
- 2.) Notice of Hearing for the Customers of DTE Electric, Case No. U-20836
- 3.) Memo from Police Chief Moore Regarding Information for Interpreting Police Dispatched Run Analysis

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

There were no comments at this time.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS:

1.) Fire Monthly Report – January 2022

Councilmember Behrmann asked about the explosions referenced in the report as he hadn't heard about them. Chief Roberts said it wasn't anything significant but merely a classification for reporting purposes. Most likely it was an electrical concern.

2.) Police Monthly Report – January 2022

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik was interested in some recent news stories regarding increased crime throughout America. He hoped Director Moore would be able to provide them with Wixom's crime data over the last five years (2017 – 2021). He was interested in reviewing the trends from the Class A and Class B crimes.

Councilmember Sharpe appreciated Director Moore sharing the information regarding Police runs. He especially enjoyed seeing the fine work from the Traffic Safety Officer.

CONSENT AGENDA:

CM-02-15-22: Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Behrmann and Smiley to approve the Consent Agenda as presented which included:

- 1.) Approval to receive and file:
 - a.) Library Board Minutes – November 22, 2021
 - b.) Library Board Minutes – December 8, 2021
 - c.) Downtown Development Authority Minutes – October 26, 2021
 - d.) Downtown Development Authority Minutes – November 23, 2021

Vote:

Motion Carried

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: (None)

DISCUSSION:

1.) Project Update – Economic Development & Marketing/Branding Strategy

Mr. Benson hoped this update would give insight on where they were with the Economic Development and Marketing/Branding Strategy created in 2019. He said due to COVID this project was stalled but was recently taken from the back burner. They were starting to gather new data and implement the marketing/branding plan from an economic development perspective for the City. He stated that Michigan Economic Development Corporation agreed to help fund this project. It was their desire to update the strategy with the assistance of an advisory committee compiled of a dozen business owners, manufacturing or company owners, developers and realtors. The advisory committee would operate similar to a focus group and bounce ideas between staff and CIB Planning. The recommendations of the committee would be given to Council for their consideration. His main focus was that the goals were comprehensive and measurable in order to report the information regularly. He figured the project would take around 3-5 months to complete and check off many items that were required to become RRC (Redevelopment Ready Community) certified. He invited a member of Council and/or Planning Commission that had an interest in this project to become part of the advisory committee.

Councilmember Gottschall indicated that CIB Planning suggested that 51% or more of the advisory committee be private business owners or leaders. He asked if the business owners had to live in Wixom. Mr. Benson said they could live outside the City but have their business in Wixom. Councilmember Gottschall wondered if the advisory committee would benefit more if the business owners lived in Wixom but had a business outside the City. If another community was more attractive for their business, they could learn why. He found it to be ideal to have a resident with a business owner's perspective.

Mr. Benson understood and said it's their intent for the advisory committee to have a variety of membership. He addressed Councilmember Gottschall's question regarding the goal of this. He explained that they had inquiries about placing a particular type of business for a particular location within the City, and that was when they learned that type of business did not comply with the Zoning or City's Master Plan. This project would allow them to outline those specifics within the strategy, then market/brand the City.

Councilmember Gottschall asked if this project could lead to the City updating the ordinances to accommodate all the buildings. Mr. Benson said that would be a perfect objective to come out of the Economic Development Strategy.

Councilmember Smiley appreciated the committee would include input from residents and business owners alike. He hoped someone from the City would administer the committee in order to keep things moving along and be productive. Mr. Benson said he and CIB Planning would guide the committee. Councilmember Smiley suggested discussions with City Council be held prior to finalization of the plan. Mr. Benson agreed.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik supported this and felt branding and marketing to a particular audience was important for business recruitment/retention. He knew within the last five years or so, technology companies or other manufacturing companies left the City. He suggested they contact those businesses to ask them for their input, and they should contact newer businesses to ask them why they chose Wixom.

Councilmember Sharpe asked if the amendments to the VCA ordinance was brought forth as a result of the Economic Development Strategy. Mr. Benson said that it was. Councilmember Sharpe supported this and was happy to see this forming.

Mayor Beagle offered to be part of the advisory committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

1.) Recommendation to Eliminate the Position of Director of Public Safety and Return to a Police Chief/Fire Chief Model of Police and Fire Administration Upon Separation from Employment of Public Safety Director/Chief of Police Ron Moore

CM-02-16-22: Motion and seconded made by Councilmembers Gottschall and Smiley to eliminate the position of Director of Public Safety and return to a Police Chief/Fire Chief model of Police and Fire Administration upon separation from employment of Public Safety Director/Chief of Police Ron Moore.

Mayor Beagle noted the Director of Public Safety position was created in 2004. He met with the City Manager to discuss this position after Director Moore gave his retirement notice. They agreed that this position could be dissolved upon Director Moore's retirement resulting in having a Police Chief and Fire Chief only.

Director Moore believed the Public Safety model had served the City well over the last 18 years. He thought the possibility was high that his replacement would be

hired externally. The older model of Police Chief and Fire Chief would become more suitable to external candidates that may not be familiar with nuances of the Fire Department. Additionally, with the newer collective bargaining environment within the Fire Department, the Public Safety Director position became part of another layer of unnecessary decision making. He recommended that upon his separation from the City, they revert back to the Police Chief/Fire Chief model.

Councilmember Behrmann understood the logic for returning back to the former model, but wondered why they were going to wait until he retired to make the change. Director Moore said making the change prior to his departure would interfere with the current collective bargaining negotiations and restructuring processes.

Deputy Mayor Rzeknik noted that only one community in the area similar in size to Wixom had a Public Safety Director. He supported the change.

Councilmember Smiley supported the elimination of the Director position.

Councilmember Gottschall was in full support of this and recalled talking about reverting back in the past. He understood the intent for the Director of Public Safety position was to possibly cross-train the Police Officers and Firefighters. Given that hasn't happened and did not appear to be happening in the future, he did not see a need for the position. Additionally, making this change could potentially help to address any issues or concerns they had within the Fire Department.

Vote:

Motion Carried

2.) Recommendation to Award the Bid for Two 2022 Dodge Durango Pursuit Vehicles to Snethkamp Automotive Family of Redford, Michigan for a Total Cost of \$74,800 from Vehicles – Police Account #411-301-973.370

CM-02-17-22: Motion and seconded made by Councilmember Smiley and Deputy Mayor Rzeknik to award the bid for two 2022 Dodge Durango Pursuit Vehicles to Snethkamp Automotive Family of Redford, Michigan for a total cost of \$74,800 from Vehicles – Police Account #411-301-973.370.

Mayor Beagle indicated that Derick Hulet, a Wixom resident and Operations Manager with Snethkamp Automotive Family, was in attendance. He has worked with us in the past to get the best deals and we appreciate that.

Director Moore stated that this was a difficult decision since we have always gone with Ford. Due to a change in body style, both interior and exterior, of the Ford Explorer Interceptors, it was going to require the City to purchase new equipment (light bar, cage, push bumpers, etc.). The Police Administration felt that now was a good time to investigate the possibility of changing vehicles. The Dodge Durango Police Package Pursuit vehicle was tested and evaluated by the Police Officers and they loved the vehicle. Mr. Hulet offered a price to the City that was \$400 per car cheaper than what we would pay by going with the State of Michigan competitive

bid pricing. Director Moore shared that at the time he wrote the report, the MiDeal pricing on the 2022 Ford Explorer Interceptors was not posted to the website. This morning it was posted and the Durango was 7.3% more than the Explorer. The Durango is more expensive, but staff felt it was a quality vehicle.

Mayor Beagle asked about the miles per gallon comparison. Director Moore stated that the Durango was slightly better.

Deputy Mayor Rzeknik stated that during the Budget Session last April, we budgeted \$105,000 for two patrol cars at \$35,000 plus changeovers at \$15,000. He asked if the changeover was mostly labor. Director Moore replied that in the past, we paid approximately \$8,000 in changeovers per car when we had the ability to take the equipment and move it to a newer model. He didn't anticipate going over budget with this purchase. Deputy Mayor Rzeknik commented that all of the Department vehicle listing was helpful to Council because it gives the age and type of vehicle. He said this list would be great to have for any kind of vehicle, including DPW. In 2020, we had two 2018 Dodge Charger lease vehicles and he wondered if we still had them. Director Moore said that those vehicles are for the Detectives and we have turned those in. We now have a Dodge Durango and a Jeep.

Councilmember Behrmann asked how many patrol cars we currently had and Director Moore replied seven. The two highest mileage vehicles would go to other Departments. Councilmember Behrmann said that if we were committed to changing to the Dodge Durango, it would be eventual that we would be replacing all seven of them to match. Director Moore said that was correct, but only if we were satisfied with the Durango in the future. Councilmember Behrmann said that the style on the Explorer changed and he wondered when the last time was that the style changed on the Durango. He thought if it changed next year, we would have the same problem. Director Moore said he didn't know what the body style would do in 2023.

Mr. Hulet stated that the current style of the Durango has been out for a couple of years.

Councilmember Gottschall asked about the mileage of the patrol vehicles that are going to be retired. Director Moore stated that because we did not purchase Police vehicles last year, he thought they were around 40,000 to 50,000 miles. Councilmember Gottschall said that in the past, we have debated engine hours and mileage, but then we found out the mileage could go higher than we typically use them. Since first elected to Council, he has always been leery. He thought we purchased patrol vehicles too frequently. He asked if we would still need to idle these vehicles. Director Moore said that in response to the previous comments from Council, he created a policy on limiting the idle time for the patrol vehicles. As a prelude to the Goal Setting Session next week, Councilmember Gottschall mentioned that one of his goals was to have a greener Wixom in some respect. We won't really get the highway miles for our patrol vehicles. Eighteen miles per gallon for City driving didn't sound great to him. He asked what prompted us to go with SUVs versus cars, which get a better fuel economy. Director Moore said that he was not the Police Chief when that decision was made but he knew that Ford Motor Company stopped making the Crown Victoria Police Interceptor.

Mayor Beagle thought we tested a couple different vehicles and decided on the Ford. Director Moore thought he was right. He remembered testing the Charger and the Officers found it to be cramped. At the time, they were more satisfied with the Explorer.

Councilmember Gottschall said that he was doing some research in preparation for our Goal Setting Session next week and there are places all over the world where they use cars, not SUVs. For some reason, around our area, everyone is using SUVs. He was looking at electric vehicles. It was tough to hear it was more expensive than what the MiDeal would be with the Explorer. Communities have gone to Tesla Model 3s and Model Ys and they are seeing savings of thousands of dollars per year. He knew it was not an immediate thing as that would be a big change to do right now. He hoped we could rethink how we are going about our patrol vehicles. He had a conversation with someone at a Police Station in Indiana and they were extremely satisfied with their Tesla vehicles. He indicated that he would vote no on this just based on the mileage. This was getting tougher as the vehicles get more expensive and more needless.

Director Moore respectfully disagreed with his assessment. He understood that 50,000 miles for personal vehicles was not a lot, but the type of wear and tear that a patrol vehicle gets was different. Putting Police Officers in vehicles with mileage around 50,000 made him uncomfortable. Councilmember Gottschall thought this was discussed at a Budget Session. He thought the average Ford was around 60,000 before those were being phased out in a lot of communities.

Councilmember Sharpe thanked Director Moore for their conversation earlier in the day regarding the data and the pricing on the Explorer. He commented that there are two nationally known organizations that test Police vehicles - the Michigan State Police and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. In this year's testing, Tesla did not enter anything for the Michigan State Police to evaluate. They probably won't get many bought because most communities rely on those findings from the Michigan State Police and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. When he went through the data, the Explorer and the Durango were comparable in performance. They run tests based on how Police use vehicles. The Durango performed pretty well and he was surprised. He said there was a reason Explorer owns 75% of the Interceptor market in the US. He didn't oppose buying a Durango, but once you get a fleet of vehicles, there are efficiencies there. He thought we would see fuel savings on the Durango versus the Explorers. Being an ex-Ford person, he didn't mind buying Durangos. The Michigan State Police did evaluate these vehicles and they did well.

Deputy Mayor Rzeknik noted that the Dodge Durango platform will be changing in 2024. It is based on the Jeep Grand Cherokee platform, which is unibody. They will be going to the Grand Wagoneer body and chassis for 2024.

Councilmember Smiley remembered the rotation of cars and debate over the 50,000 mileage. He was happy with the decisions in the end, but he couldn't remember why. He suggested that the minutes when these issues were discussed might be helpful to the Council for the Goal Setting Session next week.

Director Moore recalled that his first budget year as Police Chief was 2018 and his predecessor had always budgeted for three Police cars. During the 2018 budget, he requested three Police cars. Council granted it, but told him not to come back with a request for three. Ever since then, he has always requested two vehicles.

Councilmember Behrmann remembered that Director Moore had been requesting two vehicles each year, but last year he didn't purchase any. Director Moore said that was correct. He hoped we would be getting back on the cycle of two vehicles every year. The retired Police cars will be going to either the Fire Department, the Parks and Recreation Department or the DPW.

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

Motion Carried

3.) Recommendation and Request to Convene a Closed Session of the City Council in Accordance with the Open Meetings Act for the Purpose of Discussing Labor Negotiations Pursuant to, and Authorized by, MCL 15.268(c)

CM-02-18-22: Motion and seconded made by Deputy Mayor Rzeznik and Councilmember Gottschall to convene a Closed Session of the City Council in accordance with the Open Meetings Act for the purpose of discussing labor negotiations pursuant to, and authorized by, MCL 15.268(c).

Roll Call Vote: (6) AYES - Beagle, Behrmann, Gottschall, Rzeznik, Sharpe, Smiley

**(0) NAYS
(1) ABSENT – Gronlund-Fox**

Motion Carried

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

There were no comments at this time.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:

Mr. Brown noted that during the holiday season, the DPW staff adopted a family in need through the Lakes Area Youth Assistance. They received a letter of recognition from LAYA. Also, resident Greg Falkowski and his children volunteered to trim bushes and pickup branches at the Wixom Cemetery in January. He wanted his children to show support to their local community and respect the lives of those who have gone before us. He thanked Mr. Falkowski and his children for this service.

Mr. Benson said we received confirmation that two tenants have signed for Building B of the Flint Development property. Two different businesses will be splitting the 133,000 square foot building; one will be Wayfair and the other will be Advanced Nutrition. Both are distribution centers. He did not have the number of jobs these two businesses would be adding. There has been a lot of interest in Building A and

we hope for an announcement soon. Buildings C and D have submitted for site plan review and we expect those to go to the Planning Commission on March 7th. Also, the Planning Commission did discuss the VCA Ordinance since the last Council meeting. He said he was looking at a potential joint meeting in the future as a good way to bring this conversation together.

Mr. Brown added that the receipt of plans for the second phase of the Flint Development property was keen on having a longer time horizon on the required time period because they weren't sure how well received the initial effort would be on Phase 1. We are excited to see what other new tenants we will be seeing there.

Councilmember Behrmann asked about the acceleration and deceleration lanes there. Mr. Benson said that has been a direct point of the site plan review. We communicated to them that the Phase 1 tenants will have an impact on the overall site, including the need to expand that drive lane. Councilmember Behrmann thought it would make sense for them to do that prior to pouring the sidewalks and the other concrete. Mr. Benson said that was what was taking a little longer than normal during the review process. We have expressed our expectation and we are paying close attention to the traffic studies to verify the traffic will be accommodated.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilmember Smiley thought those were great stories about our DPW adopting a family in need and the work done in the cemetery by the Falkowski family. He thanked Mr. Hulet for providing good pricing on the Durango.

Councilmember Sharpe had no comments.

Councilmember Gottschall asked if the businesses going into the Flint Development property were completely new businesses to the area or if they were relocating from a nearby community. Mr. Benson thought Advanced Nutrition might have been in Livonia, but the majority of the jobs would be new to the area.

Councilmember Behrmann pointed out that Councilmember Sharpe did vote to purchase two competing vehicles this evening. He thanked the resident who sold us those vehicles. He appreciated him taking the time out of his evening to come to the meeting.

Deputy Mayor Rzeznik thanked Mr. Hulet. He wanted to throw his name into the hat for the Steering Committee. He has businesses in both Wixom and neighboring communities and he thought he might be able to offer some valuable input. He made a shout out to Mr. Sikma and the DPW crew for their work during the last snow event. The guys do a great job.

Mayor Beagle thanked the DPW for adopting a family in need and he thanked Greg Falkowski and his family for their work in the Cemetery. He also thanked Mr. Hulet for doing what he does for the City of Wixom.

The Council recessed at 8:07 p.m. They entered the Closed Session at 8:10 p.m. and rose from the Closed Session at 9:10 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Catherine Buck
City Clerk

Approved 2-22-2022
