

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET ON MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2023.

Mayor Frechette called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: City Mayor Paul Frechette, Council Members Carol Adair, Joanne Bennett, Mike Jackson, Ellen Pugh, Rusty Showalter, and Cathy Zimmerman.

Absent: None

Other officers present: City Manager John Dantzer, City Clerk Lori Ann Clover, City Treasurer Michelle Frechette, DPW Supervisor Mike Killackey, Chief Ken Walters, Ogemaw County Commissioner Craig Scott, Attn. Greg Meihn via Zoom, City Auditor Cindy Scott, and Representative Mike Hoadley.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Commissioner Scott gave an update on county activities. Emergency Manager Bowers is holding an emergency management training for Region 3 at the cost of \$4,500 which will be reimbursed by Homeland Security. The transit director reviewed their 2025 budget. A replacement for a Sergeant at the Corrections Facility was hired. There was discussion concerning Zoning Ordinance enforcement. Millages were also discussed. The Nature Park is closed for the season. The Campground has all 12 seasonal sites filled.

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Representative Hoadley gave a legislative update. There are several big hitters being addressed. The right to work act has been repealed with the prevailing wage being enforced. Term limits have been extended with the inclusion of financial audits. Representative Hoadley would like to see campaign related financials as opposed to personal. It is mandated for Michigan to be completely green by 2040 which he believes is unrealistic. He also noted he believed Proposal 3 in regards to abortion has gone further than the voters anticipated. There is a proposal to eliminate property taxes. Once a proposal is voted into law the law is very difficult to revise. Legislation has been introduced regarding The Open Meetings Act being reviewed for smaller subcommittees of non-elected members to be able to participate remotely. The integrity of the elections is being reviewed with the inclusion of all the changes that were made with Proposal 2.

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Cindy Scott presented on the results of the City’s Audit. The City was awarded an unmodified opinion, the highest level of Assurance in the Audit Opinion Letter.

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MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY SHOWALTER, TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF THE BILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$171,595.14.

Yes —Adair, Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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Manager Dantzer explained the first meeting in February is the joint meeting with the DDA and Planning Commission to meet the requirements of the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program. This has been held at the Police Department in the past to accommodate all three committees.

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY BENNETT, TO APPROVE HOLDING THE ANNUAL JOINT MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL, DDA, AND PLANNING COMMISSION FEBRUARY 5, 2024 AT 6:00 PM AT THE WEST BRANCH POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Yes —Adair, Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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Manager Dantzer informed Council that the Planning Commission held a public hearing at their last meeting and voted to recommend approval of Ordinance 24-01. The parcels are located where the Villa, Bachelder Law Office and the vacant parcel to the south owned by the City are. Member Showalter shared that there was some concern expressed regarding the wildlife in that area, and a letter was shared in the packet expressing the concern.

MOTION BY ZIMMERMAN, SECOND BY PUGH, TO INTRODUCE ORDINANCE 24-01 THE REZONING OF PARCEL 052-455-004-00 FROM SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL TO GENERAL BUSINESS, PARCEL 052-458-001-00 FROM CENTRAL BUSINESS TO GENERAL BUSINESS, AND PARCEL 052-630-040-00 FROM GENERAL BUSINESS/MULTIPLE FAMILY TO GENERAL BUSINESS.

Yes —Adair, Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY ZIMMERMAN, SECOND BY PUGH, TO APPROVE THE RENTAL OF THE COUNCIL CHAMBER ON FEBRUARY 9, 2024 AT 5:00 PM FOR A SHORT CEREMONY AND TO WAIVE THE FEES ASSOCIATED WITH THE RENTAL.

Yes —Adair, Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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Mayor Frechette shared the Fireman’s Club’s Winter Appreciation Party invitation for two Council Members. Member Adair will attend as a committee member of the Fire Board. Member Zimmerman and Mayor Frechette will attend as invited guests.

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MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY JACKSON TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND SUMMARY FROM THE REGULAR MEETING HELD JANUARY 8, 2024.

Yes —Adair, Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, Zimmerman

No – None Absent – None Motion carried

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MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY ADAIR TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE TREASURER’S REPORT AND INVESTMENT SUMMARY; WEST BRANCH POLICE DEPARTMENT DECEMBER 2023 REPORT; MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 7, 2023; MINUTES FROM THE WEST BRANCH PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 21, 2023; AND MINUTES FROM THE AIRPORT BOARD MEETING HELD DECEMBER 20, 2023.

Yes —Adair, Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, Zimmerman

No – None Absent – None Motion carried

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MOTION BY FRECHETTE, SECOND BY BENNETT TO RE-APPOINT RUSTY SHOWALTER AND KARA FACHTING TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR A THREE-YEAR TERM.

Yes —Adair, Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Showalter, Zimmerman

No – None Absent – None Motion carried

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Mayor Frechette thanked Mrs. Scott, Manager Dantzer, and staff for an outstanding audit and for continuously striving for improvement. He explained to Council that at the last meeting when Manager Dantzer and Member Zimmerman volunteered for the Ogemaw Housing Committee the process was not final. They were actually proposing their appointment to the committee and the Ogemaw Commissioners will appoint members to the committee at their next meeting. Mayor Frechette and Manager Dantzer met with the Chamber and Visitors Bureau this morning to look at some joint projects and marketing strategies.

Member Showalter thanked the administration staff for an audit well done. He also stated that he saw the conflicting speed limit signs; the temporary 35 MPH during construction with the permanent 30 MPH sign on Houghton Ave.

Member Adair announced that the Sesquicentennial Celebration is one and a half years away and if anyone is aware of an organization that would like to participate please let the Recreation Committee know. She thanked the DPW workers for all their overtime keeping the roads and sidewalks clean and safe during the last couple of

snow storms. She also informed members that the clear cutting in the median of the freeway headed north has caused more issues with the blowing snow than what MDOT had anticipated.

Member Pugh inquired about the companies working on Houghton. DPW Supervisor Killackey stated that it was DTE and AT&T building their infrastructure.

Member Zimmerman stated that she has never heard as many emergency vehicles in the city as she did today and hopes everyone is safe. She sang high praises to Mrs. Scott, and City staff for their efforts. She is so glad to sit on a council where things are flow so smooth and the staff is a cohesive unit.

Member Bennett reiterated Member Zimmerman's sentiments and also stated that happy employees are good employees.

Chief Walters announce that the grant for the newest patrol car was closed out so the City should be getting reimbursed soon. There are now five patrol cars on the road.

Commissioner Scott again voiced his concern that Victory St. needed paved.

Attn. Meihn thanked Council for letting him attend via Zoom as his wife was ill.

Mayor Frechette adjourned the meeting at 7:22 pm.

Paul Frechette, Mayor

Lori Ann Clover, Clerk