

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2016.

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

Present: Mayor William Ehinger, Council Members Kim Ervans, Jim Hasty, Denise Lawrence, Dave Lucas, Tim Schaiberger, and Rusty Showalter.

Absent: None

Other officers present: City Manager Heather Grace and Treasurer/Clerk John Dantzer.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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As an addition to the agenda, Manager Grace submitted an updated Title VI plan for 2016.

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO APPROVE THE 2016 TITLE VI PLAN AND NAME CITY MANAGER HEATHER GRACE AS THE PLAN COORDINATOR.

Yes –Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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Mayor Ehinger reintroduced the tax abatement request on Lahti Fabrication Inc. that was tabled from the last meeting.

Member Lawrence noted that she was disappointed that a representative from Lahti’s was not in attendance and felt that they were not truthful in their initial request and that Council was told the building was being used only for storage not for equipment so she didn’t think it was right that they were allowed the abatement.

Member Showalter recommended that they follow the recently adopted policy because if they don’t there could be potential to have Lahti Fabrication challenge the ruling again.

Manager Grace noted that under the current policy Lahti Fabrication would qualify for five years of tax abatements.

MOTION BY SCHAIBERGER, SECOND BY EHINGER, TO AWARD THE TAX ABATEMENT TO LAHTI FABRICATION INC. FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS WITH THE OPTION FOR AN ADDITIONAL

THREE YEARS UPON SATISFACTORY REVIEW AFTER TWO YEARS AS PER THE CITY OF WEST BRANCH "TAX ABATEMENT POLICY".

Yes –Ehinger, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – Ervans

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY LUCAS, TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION #16-15

A RESOLUTION APPROVING A TAX ABATEMENT AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF WEST BRANCH, MICHIGAN AND LAHTI FABRICATION, INC. AND AUTHORIZING THE SAME BY THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF WEST BRANCH

WHEREAS, an application for Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificate has been submitted by Lahti Fabrication, Inc. of 651 Columbus Dr., West Branch, MI 48661 for total project cost \$571,800.00;

WHEREAS, Lahti Fabrications, Inc. owns real property within an eligible Industrial Development District;

WHEREAS, the City agrees to enter into the following tax abatement agreement:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Council of the City of West Branch

The tax abatement agreement between the City of West Branch and Lahti Fabrication, Inc. shall be for a term of two years with the option of an additional 3 years upon satisfactory review after two years as per the city of West Branch "Tax Abatement Policy" and the Mayor of the City of West Branch is hereby authorized to execute said tax abatement on behalf of the City of West Branch.

Yes –Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent – None

Carried

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MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO PAY THE BILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$87,531.83.

Yes – Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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Manager Grace shared communications from PROTEC which is the Michigan Coalition to Protect Right-of-Way. She noted that they were an organization that lobbied on behalf of municipalities to help protect their right to have a say in what goes in the road right-of-way. She noted that there is a movement starting that companies could start putting in equipment in the right-of-way for self-driving cars that would drastically alter the appeal of a City. She noted that they were asking for money to join the organization.

Member Schaiberger noted that they could most likely join at any time so in his opinion they should just wait and see if the City receives any inquiry on these types of issues.

It was the consensus of Council to take no action on it at this time

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MOTION BY SCHAIBERGER, SECOND BY LAWRENCE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND SUMMARY OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 6, 2016.

Yes – Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent - None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE AUGUST POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT AND THE SEPTEMBER INVESTMENT AND TREASURES REPORT.

Yes – Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent - None

Motion carried

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Manager Grace shared a communication from Charter cable on a lineup change and a letter from the State of Michigan Public Service Commission.

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Mayor Ehinger asked about an update on the Stacey Alley payments. Manager Grace noted that recently a new show cause hearing was held and it is now required for her to pay \$500 on the 25th of every month until her amount is paid off. She further noted that if she does not keep up with the payments then she will be held in contempt of court and a warrant can be issued to put her back in jail.

Mayor Ehinger noted the work on the railroad crossing on Wright St. Manger Grace noted that they were adding a cross bar and safety beacons as part of their safety program.

Member Lawrence noted she attended the recent MML Conference.

Member Showalter noted he attended the recent MML Conference and would be updating Council at their next meeting on legislative finance reform that the MML is currently working on.

Member Lucas noted that he also attended the recent MML Conference and that one of his seminars were on the future of automatic cars.

Member Schaiberger noted that he is hosting a concert in Irons Park On Sunday the 24th at 3:00 pm with any donations raised going to the school music boosters and Kiwanis.

Manager Grace noted she too was at the recent MML conference and that one point of emphasis that she took from the conference was the need to allow citizens more of an opportunity to decide what they want for the future of their City. She noted the need for education of the community as well as several methods of interaction between the administration and the members of the community.

Member Hasty noted the need to educate the decision makers as well.

Manager Grace also noted that she attended a recent EDC meeting and it is looking at getting better internet service in the Industrial Park.

Manger Grace noted that the blight updates will be included in the police department reports and that Chief Walters and the rest of the department are continuing to work on the properties in question.

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Dora Zapzynski asked Council to approve a water bill insert. She noted it was similar to the ones that she has used in the past.

Dan Weiler inquired about the installation of a cell phone tower on the top of the Smiley water tower that had been talked about some time ago. Manager Grace noted that they did have some initial discussion but the City has not heard back from the company since it submitted its requirements for using the water tower.

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Mayor Ehinger adjourned the meeting at 7:05