

CITY OF ST. JOHNS

CITY COMMISSION MINUTES

OCTOBER 28, 2024

The regular meeting of the St. Johns City Commission was called to order by Mayor Dzurka at 6:01 p.m. at the Clinton County Courthouse, 100 East State Street, 2nd Floor, Suite #2200, St. Johns, Michigan.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Eric Hufnagel, Jean Ruestman (arrived at 6:16 p.m.) Brad Gurski, Scott Dzurka, Chris Hyzer

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Chad Gamble, City Manager; Kristina Kinde, City Treasurer; Mindy J. Seavey, City Clerk; Justin Smith, Director of Public Services; Anne Seuryneck, City Attorney; Jeff Keesler, McKenna

Mayor Dzurka asked if any of the commissioners or persons present wished to discuss any of the items on the consent agenda.

Commissioner Gurski asked to move item K. to the agenda.

Mayor Dzurka placed it after Credit Card Issuance under New Business.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the consent agenda be approved as amended.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

a. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the minutes of the September 23, 2024 regular meeting and October 14, 2024 special meeting be approved as presented.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

b. Receipt of Warrants

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that warrants be approved as presented in the amount of \$1,385,721.40.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

c. Michigan Municipal League Liability & Property Pool Ballot

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission authorize a vote to be cast for the two candidates as Director (3-year term).

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

d. Board Appointments

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission authorize staff to contact board members whose terms are expiring to see if they are interested in reappointment and also permission to contact board members who are not regularly attending meetings to find out their interest in continuing to serve on their board.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

e. 2025 Holidays

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve the 2025 holidays as noted.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

f. 2025 City Commission Meetings

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve the 2025 city commission meeting dates as noted.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

g. 2024 Awards Luncheon

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission authorize funds not to exceed \$1,500 for the annual awards luncheon.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

h. Holiday Gift per Section #330 of the Personnel Manual

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve \$2,500 for use towards leveraging a \$60 Kroger gift card for full-time & regular part-time employees and volunteer firefighters with Kroger donating \$2,000 towards the gift cards.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

i. Renewal of Alcohol/Tobacco Prevention Grant

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approves the renewal of the Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention Grant for fiscal year 2025 and authorize the Mayor to endorse the same.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

j. Bendzinski & Company – Water/Sewer Rate Study Agreement

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission accepting the contract with Bendzinski and Co. for the 25/26 water/sewer rate stuff for the amount of \$6,000 and authorize the mayor to sign.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

l. Lively - HRA & COBRA Agreement for 2025

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve the Master Service Agreement with Lively for HRA and COBRA administration pending city attorney review and approval of the agreement language.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

AGENDA

Mayor Dzurka said Commissioner Ruestman is running a bit late and plans on being here by 6:30. He also said our 3rd presentation is running a bit late from another event. He asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda. He added New Business #7 – Discussion Regarding the Fire Department

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission approve the agenda as amended.

AGENDA**A. OPENING:**

1. Invocation
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consent Agenda

The staff proposes the following items for the Consent Agenda. If any Commissioner wishes to discuss any of these items, it should be placed on the regular agenda. The remaining items and recommendations may be approved en masse:

- a. Approval of Minutes
 - Regular meeting minutes of September 23, 2024
 - Special meeting minutes of October 14, 2024
- b. Receipt of Warrants
 - In the amount of \$1,385,721.40
- c. Michigan Municipal League Liability & Property Pool Ballot
 - Staff recommends that the city commission authorize a vote to be cast for the two candidates as Director (3-year term).
- d. Board Appointments
 - Staff recommends the city commission authorize staff to contact board members whose terms are expiring to see if they are interested in reappointment and also permission to contact board members who are not regularly attending meetings to find out their interest in continuing to serve on their board.
- e. 2025 Holidays
 - Staff recommends the city commission approve the 2025 holidays as noted.
- f. 2025 City Commission Meetings
 - Staff recommends the city commission approve the 2025 city commission meeting dates as noted.
- g. 2024 Awards Luncheon
 - Staff recommends that the city commission authorize funds not to exceed \$1,500 for the annual awards luncheon.
- h. Holiday Gift per Section #330 of the Personnel Manual

-Staff recommends that the city commission approve \$2,500 for use towards leveraging a \$60 Kroger gift card for full-time & regular part-time employees and volunteer firefighters with Kroger donating \$2,000 towards the gift cards.

i. Renewal of Alcohol/Tobacco Prevention Grant

-Staff recommends that the City Commission approves the renewal of the Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention Grant for fiscal year 2025 and authorize the Mayor to endorse the same.

j. Bendzinski & Company – Water/Sewer Rate Study Agreement

-Staff recommends accepting the contract with Bendzinski and Co. for the 25/26 water/sewer rate stuff for the amount of \$6,000 and authorize the mayor to sign.

~~k. Park Utility Vehicle Acquisition (Moved to New Business)~~

~~-Staff recommends the City Commission approve the purchase of the Utility Vehicle from Bobcat of Lansing in the amount of \$39,367.10, with financing through Tax Exempt Leasing Inc. and authorize the City Manager to sign the appropriate paperwork pending City Attorney review of the agreement.~~

l. Lively - HRA & COBRA Agreement for 2025

-Staff recommends that the city commission approve the Master Service Agreement with Lively for HRA and COBRA administration pending city attorney review and approval of the agreement language.

4. Approval of Agenda:

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

C. PRESENTATIONS:

1. Introduction of Rachel Hoten – AmeriCorps Member
2. Introduction of Walter Conklin – Police Officer
3. Jaycee Simon – Presentation of Proclamation

D. PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY:

1. Public comment - agenda & non-agenda items

E. COMMUNICATIONS:

F. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Consideration of Donation of Depot Rail Cars to the City from the Clinton County Arts Council
2. Discussion of the Sale of City Owned Property at Townsend Rd. and Old County Farm Road

G. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Parking Survey Discussion and Consideration of Changes to Downtown Parking Plan

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2. Quarterly Budget Report
 3. 2025-2026 Fiscal Year Budget Preparation Schedule and Special Commission Meeting Request
 4. Wilson Community Center Agreement Modifications due to Proposed Federal Tax Credits
 5. Credit Card Issuance and Rebate Program Approval
 6. Park Utility Vehicle Acquisition (*Moved from Consent Agenda*)
 7. Discussion Regarding the Fire Department (*Added to Agenda*)
 8. City Manager Comments
 9. Commissioner Comments

H. ADJOURNMENT:

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PRESENTATIONS

1. Introduction of Rachel Hoten – AmeriCorps Member

Parks and Recreation Director Schafer introduced Rachel Hoten. He said she was hired as part of the CEDAM AmeriCorps agreement. We have her for 1,700 hours through August of 2025. He said she previously worked for St. Joe's, a pre-school, and was a real estate agent. She has been doing a great job. Her main responsibilities are working on the Wilson Center plan, 5-year master plan and recreation programming.

Ms. Hoten was present and said she is thankful for the opportunity to be here. She said everyone has been welcoming and kind.

Mayor Dzurka said he and Commissioner Hufnagel have worked with AmeriCorps in the past. He thanked her for her service.

2. Introduction of Walter Conklin – Police Officer

Chief Kirk said we are fortunate to get a good police officer in Walter Conklin. He discussed his background and the verification process. He said the core of the service element is sometimes harder to detect. He said this is one of the few backgrounds he has done that he was receiving unsolicited calls regarding Walter's personal service commitment.

Officer Conklin was present. He said he is from Lansing, Michigan and he introduced his wife and kids. He said he spent 15 years in the National Guard, came from the Lansing Police Department, and prior to that worked in prisons for the state. He said he is very excited to be here and everyone he met today has been nice.

Mayor Dzurka welcomed him.

Chief Kirk said we will be performing the badge pinning ceremony.

Mayor Dzurka welcomed him and said thank you for your service to the National Guard. He said the police department now has a full crew.

PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY

1. Public Comment

Mayor Dzurka discussed comments on-line regarding the Headlee proposal. He said the city has posted comments on that. We have a hearing on Wednesday morning regarding the pending litigation. He discussed the public comment rules and asked participants to keep the comments to facts. He asked if there were any public comments.

There were no public comments.

COMMUNICATIONS

OLD BUSINESS

1. Consideration of Donation of Depot Rail Cars to the City from the Clinton County Arts Council

Commissioner Ruestman arrived at 6:16 p.m.

City Manager Gamble said over the past several years the arts council has had many foci and found it difficult to keep rail cars in good condition. We had a meeting earlier this year and discussed with their group an opportunity to give the city the rail cars and existing funds they have on deposit for maintenance of the rail cars. Next week, we will bring on our part-time grant writer position and this project is a key factor in looking at this. He said the city would take ownership and develop a process of determining which ones we should keep and then develop a plan for getting grants and making improvements. He said the agreement is straight forward and discussed the fiscal impacts. We have some shared liability now and we may need to cordon off the access of

those until they are made safe. He said the members still want to work collaboratively with the city and it has been a very positive development.

There was a discussion of:

- There was no expectation that those railcars would all be maintained by the city in perpetuity.
 - The consensus at the meeting was it would take \$75,000 to \$125,000 per car to repair and they did recognize the city would need to sell some to get the funds for that.
- Section 2, part 1.a., should say railcar and not a rain car.
- The right to sell.
 - Once we attain ownership, we have the full right to dispose as we see fit.
 - Section 5c.

Mayor Dzurka said he is pleased to see we will be able to preserve history.

City Manager Gamble said Director Smith is doing a great job coordinating the reuse of the interior space in the depot that has a lot of historical artifacts in there. There is a meeting coming up with them on that.

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Ruestman that the city commission approve the Rail Car Transfer Agreement and authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement on the Commission's behalf.

YEA: Hufnagel, Ruestman, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

2. Discussion of the Sale of City Owned Property at Townsend Rd. and Old County Farm Road

City Manager Gamble said this property is on Townsend Road, west of County Farm Road. He said the city previously had it for sale, but the sale fell through. We have received a couple of inquiries recently and wanted to continue the discussion on options the commission may want to include in a possible RFP (Request for Proposals) or place it up for sale.

Jeff Keesler, McKenna, was present. He said McKenna completed a zoning analysis on this property. It has an undeveloped right-of-way cutting across it right now. He said there was a planned road that would go to a 4-way stop. He said there are two options: keep the right-of-way or make the parcel whole and get rid of the right-of-way. He said if we get rid of the ROW it would be 4.8 acres. Otherwise, the west parcel would be 3.88

acres, and the east parcel would be just under 0.5 acres. He said they looked at dwelling units and the chart of R-1, R-2, and R-3 zoning. With the ROW vacated you could have: R-1: 22-24 units; R-2: 20-30 units or a possibility they could petition city to build 35-30 units with a SLU (Special Land Use); 40 units by right and additional with Special Land Use. He discussed the different zoning designations. For either office or GC, the master plan would need to be changed. We are advising that regardless of housing chosen, the stub street of Braxton Court should be extended.

There was a discussion of:

- The plan for County Farm Road to intersect the property.
 - Safety issue.
 - More people using the intersection if that land is developed.
- Braxton Court stub and Germaine Drive stub.
 - The purpose of running to County Farm Road is that it would create an intersection.
- Multiple access points for circulation.
- More development to the south at some point in the future.
- Original lot plan.
- Understanding what the commission would like regarding density and zoning that could be included in an RFP.
 - Additional insight is needed to make a decision.
- The original plan and County Farm Road.
- Zoned R-1 currently.
 - If different zoning is desired, property would need to be re-zoned prior to the RFP.
- Greatest housing needs currently?
 - Gaps in every category.
 - Concern regarding the economy and price point of affordability.
 - Denser housing.
 - Over the last several years, more apartments have been built. We need more single-family.
- R-2 zoning can provide higher density.
- R-1 zoning.
- An RFP.
 - It will get a variety of responses.

City Manager Gamble said he will work on RFP language incorporating comments from this meeting and will bring back to our next meeting for comments and tweaking. We could have the RFP due after the holidays.

There was a discussion of:

- Mentioning the alignment with Swegles in the RFP; encourage the extension of Braxton, but not mandate it; or Germaine to be extended.

Jeff Keesler, McKenna, said if we change from R-1 that would require updating the master plan. You are in the middle of doing the master plan now.

There was a discussion about aligning the timeframe of the zoning with the RFP.0

There was no formal motion; staff will bring the RFP to our next meeting.

PRESENTATIONS

3. Jayci Simon – Presentation of Proclamation

Mayor Dzurka said he was pleased to have Jayci Simon with us as our honored guest. He asked Jayci to come forward for a picture with the Commission. He read the proclamation.

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Hyzer to adopt the proclamation and put it into the minutes.

YEA: Hufnagel, Ruestman, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

CITY OF ST. JOHNS PROCLAMATION HONORING JAYCI SIMON

WHEREAS, Jayci Simon, a native of St. Johns, Michigan, represented the United States at the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games and, alongside her partner Miles Krajewski, earned the first-ever para-badminton medal for Team USA by winning silver in the SH6 mixed doubles category; and

WHEREAS, Jayci’s achievement came in a tournament filled with obstacles, including delayed travel and grueling match schedules, where she demonstrated remarkable tenacity and resilience by overcoming world-class opponents, including the second-ranked Indian team, and making history for the Pan American region; and

WHEREAS, Jayci Simon is not only a world-class athlete but also a proud representative of St. Johns, Michigan, exemplifying the spirit of small-town America on the global stage. Her success is a testament to the values of hard work, determination, and community support that she carries from her hometown, making her a source of inspiration for young athletes across the nation; and

WHEREAS, her victory in Paris symbolizes the breaking of new ground for para-badminton in the United States, paving the way for future generations of athletes and bringing attention to the sport's growing impact on a global scale; and

WHEREAS, Jayci's dedication to her sport and her community reflects the very best of what it means to represent St. Johns, and her triumph will serve as a legacy for both her hometown and the sport of para-badminton; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Scott Dzurka, Mayor, on behalf of the City Commission do hereby proclaim February 13, 2025 as:

"JAYCI SIMON DAY"

in the City of St. Johns, Michigan, in recognition of her extraordinary athletic achievements and her role as an ambassador for both her sport and her community. I encourage all citizens to join in celebrating Jayci's accomplishments, applauding her perseverance, and supporting the continued growth of para-badminton in our city and beyond.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the City of St. Johns on this 28th Day of October, 2024.



Scott Dzurka, Mayor

Jayci thanked everyone that is here and St. Johns as a whole. She said that is the reason she has been able to make it so far. She said she appreciated it and thank you for making February 13, 2025 as Jayci Day.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Parking Survey Discussion and Consideration of Changes to Downtown Parking Plan

City Manager Gamble said with the implementation of the parking plan, we knew there were several changes downtown. We knew some problems downtown we were hoping to solve and, unfortunately, some problems we may create. He said a parking survey was issued this year by DDA Director Hanover. He said data was provided by Makayla Kent, April Lech, and Chief Kirk; meetings were held with the DDA and they came up with 3 recommendations.

There was a discussion of:

- Reserved parking and how it would be regulated.
 - Lottery system.

- Parking permit and it would be signed with that permit #.
- 10% of the parking spaces would be allocated.
 - Approximately 18.

Mayor Dzurka thanked Heather and the DDA for the survey. He said total revenue for a year is about \$27,000. We just re-did three of the parking lots and that also includes maintenance. Do we have any idea of our expense to maintain lots on an annual basis?

Director Smith said it would be hard to figure in labor cost.

Mayor Dzurka said we put more into them than we receive in revenue.

City Manager Gamble said it would cost approximately \$2,000 to change the signage. If all reserved permits are sold that would raise approximately \$8,000.

Commissioner Hyzer asked about the current permit fees.

Director Hanover said \$150 and then \$50 for street parking.

A member of the audience asked if a study on the lots were done.

City Manager Gamble said there wasn't a lack of study. He discussed making tweaks and said we can keep an eye on any issues you are referring to if you e-mail him your concerns.

Mayor Dzurka thanked City Manager Gamble, Director Smith and Chief Kirk. When we adopted the plan, we knew there was no perfect solution. We have 130 residents who live down there, 80+ businesses and their employees and customers. He said this was good feedback from the DDA and we are trying to make improvements. He discussed the additional parking on Spring and Brush Streets that we added.

Commissioner Hyzer asked about the 15- & 30-minute spots.

Director Smith said those would stay the same.

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve three parking change recommendations:

1. Allow daytime permit Parking Lot #4
2. Change all time-limited parking in the downtown from 2 hours to 3 hours
3. Issue reserved parking permits in a majority of the City parking lots

YEA: Hufnagel, Ruestman, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission set the new parking reserved permit fee as \$500.

YEA: Hufnagel, Ruestman, Gurski, Dzurka

NAY: Hyzer

Motion carried.

2. Quarterly Budget Report

Treasurer Kinde discussed highlights: the General Fund revenue is higher than 25% because we have received 92% of the property taxes for the year; interest rates have been higher and we moved funds to Michigan Class to get a higher rate of return; Legislative Department: 28% of contracts for zoning; Wilson Center and fire were moved into separate funds this year; no Wilson Center operating charges yet except for AmeriCorps position; streets have received one Act 51 payment; Fantasy Forest: just received first check from the St. Johns Area Community Fund; MERS actuarial report: funded ratio up to 68%; estimated to see \$100,000 increases until about July 2029; trying to put in surplus payments each year.

3. 2025-2026 Fiscal Year Budget Preparation Schedule and Special Commission Meeting Request

City Manager Gamble said staff met and tried to look at two major components: strategic planning and tweaks to last year's budget plan and calendar. He discussed changes and recommendations. Last year, we had a consultant lead the strategic plan process. He said he is willing to take that on and provide recommendations to our list of things to do for fiscal year 25/26 budget year. He said we propose two strategic planning meetings that align with regular meetings. He said it would be a similar process to last year, but a little bit earlier. He said we would have the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) presentation by department heads and supervisors on January 27th. A joint meeting of the Planning Commission & City Commission on February 24th. At the January 27th regular meeting, we would like to have an agenda item geared towards water/sewer rates.

There was a discussion of:

- 4:00 p.m. or 4:30 p.m. meeting.
- Whether two meetings would be enough.
- Move the Finance Advisory meeting ahead of the joint meeting with the Planning Commission.
 - There would probably be more Finance Advisory meetings scheduled.

- Have one beforehand to get revenue predictions.

There was a discussion of coming back to this item later in the meeting.

4. Wilson Community Center Agreement Modifications due to Proposed Federal Tax Credits

Commissioner Ruestman left the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

City Manager Gamble said there has been lots of activity at the Wilson Center regarding design and build out. He discussed the development agreement and said it took almost 3 years. After the transaction, the developer looked at the overall cost and options. They were very respectful and understanding of the development deal and they worked very hard with the MEDC and consultants to look for alternative funding mechanisms.

Commissioner Ruestman returned at 7:35 p.m.

City Manager Gamble said a Federal Historic Tax Credit does not pull from funds locally. He said it allows the development to get an infusion of funding. The building is restricted in the way it is to be built out, due to the historic nature. There were many hoops to jump through and they held multiple meetings in the past 6 months. He said they came down to a short list of impacts to the agreements.

Brendan Fox, Dymaxion, was present. He thanked Chad and Kristina for their hard work on this project. He said this took a tremendous amount of investigation. He said Part 1 has been submitted and the preliminary questionnaire and they heard back the building is eligible. He said they executed their contract with Studio Intrigue. They are expecting clearance testing results from TriTerra this week. He said the documents before you incorporate the historic tax credit details. He discussed the establishment of an escrow account, as an act of good faith, for the last scope of work.

There was a discussion of:

- The overall impact to the timeline.
 - They are looking at an April/May groundbreaking timeline.
 - What it means for our timeline.
 - Originally, we would begin in June/July 2024. Our contract and design drawings were complete pending impacts based on historical issues. He said our presentation of the community room was mostly a glass wall. We would probably be able to do less glass and more of a wood surround instead of a metal surround. He said other impacts are now a lot less of an impact. We anticipate the bidding

process in February or March; award in April/May; and construction commencement shortly thereafter. Dymaxion would pay 50% of the common space contract.

- Best case scenario would be the first quarter of 2026 would be a safe bet.
- Utility costs would be less because of energy efficiency, but more cost for cooling since it didn't have that before.
- Tax credits and how they work.
 - 20% of qualified expenditures given over the course of 5 years.
 - Fiscal impact and costs because of historical tax credits, but that would be covered by Dymaxion.
- The front entrance.

City Manager Gamble asked if we need separate motions.

Attorney Seuryneck said she preferred separate motions.

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Hyzer that the city commission accept the addendum to the development agreement and allow the mayor to sign on behalf of the commission.

YEA: Hufnagel, Ruestman, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve the amendment to the condominium bylaws and allow mayor to sign on behalf of the commission.

YEA: Hufnagel, Ruestman, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission approve the addendum to the agreement to purchase and sell real estate and allow the mayor to sign on behalf of the commission.

YEA: Hufnagel, Ruestman, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

3. 2025-2026 Fiscal Year Budget Preparation Schedule and Special Commission Meeting Request

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hyzer that the city commission adopt the 2025/26 fiscal year budget preparation schedule as presented.

YEA: Hufnagel, Ruestman, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

6. Credit Card Issuance and Rebate Program Approval

City Manager Gamble said in May of 2024 the commission approved amendments to the purchasing policy. We had discussions on how to cost-effectively procure items for the city. We met with Mercantile Bank, and they provide a rewards program (rebates). He said we would provide pro (procurement) cards to individuals listed in the RCA. We would provide issuance of a pro card to the DDA/PSD Director upon approval of the board. Right now, we only have one debit card for the city.

There was a discussion of:

- How staff came up with the limits.
- Purchasing policy.
- Mercantile was given a list of vendors from our AP system and will have the ability to set up individual cards for each business.
- \$25,000 is a proposed card maximum.
 - Limits seem high.
- Purchase orders and the purchasing policy.
- Implementation of a monthly presentation of receipts for the cards.
 - Audited by a third party within the city's employ.
- The procurement card feature in BS&A.
- Concern where it can cost more to buy something with a credit card.
- Internal controls.
- Credit Card Purchasing Policy.
- Two-tiered limits.

No action was taken.

6. Park Utility Vehicle Acquisition

Commissioner Gurski said he thinks we have the funds to purchase the vehicle, and he recommends purchase instead of financing.

Treasurer Kinde said the reason it was going to be financed was due to the budget and it was originally set up to be a lease payment. She said we would need a motion for a budget adjustment as well.

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hyzer that the city commission approve the direct purchase for the utility vehicle and authorize the treasurer to make the appropriate budget adjustments.

YEA: Hufnagel, Ruestman, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

7. Discussion Regarding the Fire Department

City Manager Gamble said we looked at fire agreements we have with Bingham, Bengal and Greenbush and looked at percentage of funding. He said operationally it is fair and consistent, but it is lacking in capital purchases and addressing a proportional share of that. We were planning on having conversations with the three townships and discussing the issue. He said staff ran some numbers and looked at a hybrid approach. A week ago, Chief Whitford indicated he is looking to step down as the Fire Chief in a couple of months. He discussed trying to find a replacement for Chief Whitford and said the odds of finding another part-time chief are slim to none. He said we would possibly move towards a hybrid arrangement and maybe could also look at an authority. We wanted to get an indication of the comfort level of the commission regarding an authority or a hybrid cooperative agreement with our teammates. He said we would look at advertising for that position.

Commissioner Hufnagel asked if we asked him to stay on longer?

City Manager Gamble said he would on a very limited basis; his plate is very full.

Commissioner Hufnagel asked if he broached this with any of the townships?

City Manager Gamble said he wanted to have the conversation with this board first.

Commissioner Ruestman said this is the way everything is going, with regional cooperation. She said asking someone to be a part-time fire chief is a big ask. She said she supports pursuing either of those options.

Commissioner Gurski said he agreed.

Commissioner Hufnagel said we had discussions internally about fairness and that issue has come up about capital purchases. We need to be realistic about the costs of operating a fire department. He said it is going to be a difficult conversation with the townships, but we must have this conversation.

Mayor Dzurka said he agreed. When the fire agreements came forward, this body expressed some concern. He said volunteer fire departments are not going to get any simpler. We have to look at that escalated cost and that the burden is shared appropriately. He said he is open to discussion about an authority.

Commissioner Hyzer discussed townships throughout the state and mutual aid. He said we have to have very careful discussions with them and show the importance of the whole buy-in and show the value provided to their residents.

Commissioner Hufnagel discussed insurance ratings and said an authority needs to be efficiently run.

City Manager Gamble said the plan is to call a meeting of the three townships and lay the cards on the table and the different options. He said he would work with Kristina and Jordan to package up options for discussion and will keep the commission up to date.

6. City Manager Comments

City Manager Gamble discussed:

- MSHDA Housing Increment Financing TIF program – Developers are beginning to ask about this new tool in the housing development market. I have passed out information from their website. I would like to place this on the commission agenda for next month to obtain guidance on if this tool would be one the Commission is willing to offer developers.
- Charter revision proposals - discussion and planning.
- Summary of the joint Bingham Township/City of St. Johns meeting went well. Supervisor Silm, Mike Homier and I will be working on the next draft of the document to be presented at the December 3, 2024 meeting.
- Fantasy Forest 2.0 update
 - Letters were sent to all of the principals of the surrounding school districts.
 - We presented at all of the 9 surrounding Township's meetings. A follow-up letter will be sent this week requesting placement on their agenda for consideration or a follow up presentation.
 - Presentation to the Clinton County Board of Commissioners tomorrow at 0900. I know that the Mayor will be there but would appreciate some additional company and/or other public comment participants.
 - FFCT and the P & R Committee will meet in the next few weeks to finalize a recommendation for the Commission to be taken up at the November meeting.
- Update on Terpening v. City of St. Johns.

- I Attended a CAPCOG meeting on Friday where a presentation was given by a joint venture of Resilenx and WSP for a Capital City on demand drone service. We are being asked to forward a letter of support for this project.
 - There was a discussion of this service.
- Commended Justin and staff for great clean-up after the windstorm on August 27th.
- A couple of vacancies on the Sister City Commission.

7. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Gurski said good luck to the Redwings (football) on Friday.

Mayor Dzurka wished everyone well, all the candidates for commission, in the upcoming election. If there are any communications following Wednesday's activity regarding the Headlee amendment, to share with the general public.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the meeting be adjourned.

YEA: Hufnagel, Ruestman, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.