

CITY OF ST. JOHNS

CITY COMMISSION MINUTES

NOVEMBER 25, 2024

The regular meeting of the St. Johns City Commission was called to order by Mayor Dzurka at 6:02 p.m. at the Clinton County Courthouse, 100 East State Street, 2nd Floor, Suite #2200, St. Johns, Michigan.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Eric Hufnagel, Brad Gurski, Scott Dzurka, Chris Hyzer, Chris DeLiso

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

REORGANIZATION

ELECTION OF MAYOR

Mayor Dzurka opened the nominations for mayor.

Commissioner Hufnagel nominated Scott Dzurka for Mayor, Commissioner Gurski seconded the nomination.

There were no other nominations.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission close the nomination and cast a unanimous ballot for Scott Dzurka as mayor. Clerk Seavey called a roll call vote:

YEA: Hyzer

YEA: Hufnagel

YEA: DeLiso

YEA: Gurski

YEA: Dzurka

NAY: None

Motion carried.

ELECTION OF VICE MAYOR

Commissioner Hyzer nominated Brad Gurski for Vice Mayor, Commissioner Dzurka seconded the nomination.

There were no other nominations.

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Hyzer to close the nominations.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Deliso that the city commission nominate Brad Gurski as Vice Mayor.

Clerk Seavey called a roll call vote:

YEA: Hyzer

YEA: Hufnagel

YEA: DeLiso

YEA: Gurski

YEA: Dzurka

NAY: None

Motion carried.

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

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the consent agenda be approved as presented.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

a. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the minutes of the September 23, 2024 and October 22, 2024 special meetings and October 28, 2024 regular meeting be approved as presented.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

b. Receipt of Warrants

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that warrants be approved as presented in the amount of \$967,027.77.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

c. Board Re-appointments

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission reappoint the following: Terry Thelen and Mark Crosby, Board of Review (three-year term expiring November of 2027); Peter Motz, William Pioszak, and Suzanne Fromson, Parks and Recreation Board (two-year term expiring November of 2026); Anne Rademacher, Zoning Board of Appeals (three-year term expiring November of 2027); Brian Mills, Mark Holden, Planning Commission (three-year term expiring November of 2027); Robert Craig, Brad Gurski, Brownfield Authority (three-year term expiring November of 2027).

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

d. Merit Bonus Recommendation – Noah Woodbury

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve the \$900 Merit Bonus to Noah Woodbury in recognition of his dedication to efficiently serving the City of St Johns.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

e. Cooperative Public Safety Records Management Agreement

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission authorize the Chief of Police to endorse and enter into the user agreement with the Clinton County Sheriff's Office and Central Square Technologies LLC for utilization of and access to the Cooperative Public Safety Records Management System.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

AGENDA

Mayor Dzurka asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve the agenda as presented.

AGENDA

A. OPENING:

1. Invocation
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reorganization
 - a. Election of Mayor
 - b. Election of Vice Mayor
4. 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
 - Special meeting minutes of September 23, 2024
 - Special meeting minutes of October 22, 2024
 - Regular meeting minutes of October 28, 2024
 - b. Receipt of Warrants
 - In the amount of \$967,027.77
 - c. Board Re-appointments
 - Staff recommends the city commission reappoint the following: Terry Thelen and Mark Crosby, Board of Review (three-year term expiring November of 2027); Peter Motz, William Pioszak, and Suzanne Fromson, Parks and Recreation Board (two-year term expiring November of 2026); Anne Rademacher, Zoning Board of Appeals (three-year term expiring November of 2027); Brian Mills, Mark Holden, Planning Commission (three-year term expiring November of 2027); Robert Craig, Brad Gurski, Brownfield Authority (three-year term expiring November of 2027).
 - d. Merit Bonus Recommendation – Noah Woodbury
 - Staff recommends the city commission approve the \$900 Merit Bonus to Noah Woodbury in recognition of his dedication to efficiently serving the City of St Johns.
 - e. Cooperative Public Safety Records Management Agreement
 - Staff recommends the city commission authorize the Chief of Police to endorse and enter into the user agreement with the Clinton County Sheriff's Office and Central Square Technologies LLC for utilization of and access to the Cooperative Public Safety Records Management System.
4. Approval of Agenda:

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

C. PRESENTATIONS:

D. PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY:

1. Public comment - agenda & non-agenda items

E. COMMUNICATIONS:

F. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Credit Card Issuance and Rebate Program Approval

G. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Reappointment of Fire Chief
2. Resolution #37-2024 – Regular Meetings of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals
3. Fantasy Forest Playground Equipment Vendor Selection
4. Resolution #38-2024 – Resolution to Introduce an Ordinance to Amend Title IX: General Regulations, Chapter 93: Nuisances of the City of St. Johns Code of Ordinances Regarding Noise Control
5. City Manager Comments
6. Commissioner Comments

H. ADJOURNMENT:

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PRESENTATIONS

PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY

1. Public Comment

Mayor Dzurka asked if there were any public comments. He discussed: the handout that gives some guidelines for participating in the meeting; the way we conduct public testimony; this is our chance to listen to you and your concerns and our public comments are not billed as a dialogue with commission, the board does not respond we just listen at this time; at the end of the meeting we do have time where our commission comments and many times we will respond at that time to any public comments brought forth if there's something that we feel we need to address.

Holly Thoms, Capital Area Humane Society, was present. She discussed the recent change to Chapter 92, making it unlawful to feed feral cats in the city and feral cat management. She discussed the catch-neuter-release program.

Nick Boyer, General Manager of Sirens, was present. He said over the summer they brought in a food truck and the rate was \$50 per month and without notice it went up to \$200. He raised concerns about the food truck fees.

James Terpening, 117 Lewis Street, was present. He said he sent everyone an email on November 13th asking questions. He discussed the city's use of Facebook for public communication and the lack of response to public inquiries. Concerns were raised about transparency and the city's investment of \$125,000 on transparency.

Mayor Dzurka said he acknowledged receipt of the email. You had 17 questions, and some were legal questions.

COMMUNICATIONS

OLD BUSINESS

1. Credit Card Issuance and Rebate Program Approval

City Manager Gamble discussed the substitute policy; modified the RCA; the Mercantile sample agreement; and we recommend two separate motions if there is support.

The city discussed the implementation of a credit card issuance and rebate program for employees.

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission recommend that we direct city administration with the issuance of procurement cards to employees filling the positions listed above and at the individual and monthly limits noted, and for the Administration to produce and implement the necessary cardholder agreement with Mercantile Band pending City Attorney approval and to authorize the City manager to sign the credit card agreement.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission approve the updated credit card policy.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None
Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Reappointment of Fire Chief

City Manager Gamble discussed the biannual reappointment of the fire chief following the election of city commissioners. We recommend Chief Whitford be reappointed for that term.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission appoint Jordan Whitford as Fire Chief.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

2. Resolution #37-2024 – Regular Meetings of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals

Mayor Dzurka said Resolution #37-2024 was to adopt the regular meetings of the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals. He said both boards have looked at the dates and are aware of this.

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Hyzer that the city commission adopt Resolution #37-2024 Establishing and Approving the Dates for the 2025 Regular Meetings of the City Planning Commission and the City Zoning Board of Appeals.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

3. Fantasy Forest Playground Equipment Vendor Selection

Mayor Dzurka thanked Bill Schafer, Chad Gamble, the Parks and Recreation Board and Friends of the Fantasy Forest Group.

Parks and Recreation Director Schafer discussed the process for selection of a vendor for the Fantasy Forest Playground equipment. He said Great Lakes Recreation was recommended as the vendor. He thanked Katie Dennis with Wade Trim, the Fantasy Forest Core Team and the St. Johns Area Community Fund.

City Manager Gamble recognized Director Schafer for being the point on this as well as Director Smith.

Director Schafer said this is just for the playground equipment; installation will come back to you for your approval.

There was a discussion of:

- The selection process and the partnerships.

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission approve Great Lakes Recreation to provide the playscape and related playground equipment for the Fantasy Forest 2.0 Project and be so designated as a sole source vendor for same. The authorization for this purchase is for the full amount of the SPARK funding of \$844,000 including an additional amount of up to \$56,000, for a total vendor expenditure of \$900,000.

Commissioner Hyzer asked about \$882,000 instead of \$900,000.

City Manager Gamble said there may be other benches or amenities with the final design and this provides a little room.

There was a vote on the motion.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

4. Resolution #38-2024 – Resolution to Introduce an Ordinance to Amend Title IX: General Regulations, Chapter 93: Nuisances of the City of St. Johns Code of Ordinances Regarding Noise Control

City Manager Gamble discussed our current noise ordinance and said it was very subjective, and it would be helpful to have it be objective.

The city discussed amending the noise control ordinance to establish objective noise levels and enforcement criteria.

Concerns were raised about:

- The timing and impact on agricultural operations.
- 8 pm shut down time; summer months.
- Commercial noise and individual property noise.
- Time conflicts under section 93.22.

- Section 93.23 and the Right to Farm.

There was no action taken and it will be brought back to the meeting on December 9th.

5. City Manager Comments

City Manager Gamble discussed:

1. E-Notify, the community engagement module from our website management company Core, is set to go live soon after the new year. In doing so we are in need of designating categories of the announcements. Our initial thoughts are:
 - a. City Meetings (agenda and meeting information distribution for major City Committees).
 - b. Community Communications (including non-urgent but important and timely information – parade closures, trash delays for snow, storm impact notifications etc.).
 - c. City Office News. (Tax payments, election notices, federal holiday closures etc.).

This will be on the agenda for next meeting but wanted to present this to you for information and consideration and thoughts before then.

2. Presentation and discussion of social media report from King Media.
3. Presentation of Letter addressed to Mayor Dzurka from Mayor Kunio Ikuta City of Konan, Shiga Province, Japan (Linda Beeman).
4. OPRA Update regarding Prevail Solar.
5. City Commission Sub-Committee for City/Bingham Township will meet tomorrow to discuss details of the newest version of the agreement and input from finance representative. (current draft #3 was distributed for your information).
Reminder of joint City Township meeting #3 set for December 3 at 5:30.
6. Lead Service Complete Distribution System Materials Inventory - CDSMI communications plan and presentation set for December meeting.
7. Fire Service Staffing Update & Impacts to Fire Agreements
 - a. Request for feedback on the development of full-time position for Fire Chief/Code and Rental Housing Inspector.
 - i. There was a discussion of the code/rental inspector and the cost to townships.
8. Fantasy Forest 2.0 update
 - a. Fantasy Forest is now closed for demolition.
 - b. I will be sending out follow up letters to surrounding townships to formally request a decision on funding contributions next week.

- c. One contract to go that will be issued in January and final scoping on budgets will happen at that time frame to set final phase 1 playscape and site improvements.
 - d. Thank you to the commissions and all members of the FFCT for their efforts over the past year.
9. Time of giving thanks, thank the Commission for their support and leadership through the last 1.5 transformative years, and wishing the Commission and all a Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving.

7. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Gurski thanked the commission for their support for him as Vice Mayor. He discussed Senate Bill 663 which would drastically impact water and wastewater rules and will likely have some financial impacts to us. Also, look at the earned sick time act that would be coming into effect in February 2025. It will put a lot of liability back on the city. Happy holidays and thank you.

Commissioner DeLiso thanked everyone for their support in getting him into this position. He looks forward to serving the city and said he has been blessed in living here for the last 30 years. He hopes to give back in a meaningful way. Happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Hufnagel said congratulations to Commissioner DeLiso and he looks forward to working with him. Happy Thanksgiving to staff, commissioners and guests.

Commissioner Hyzer said congratulations to those who put on the Veterans Day Parade. He said tax bills will be seen in the mail this coming Saturday or Monday. He said a lot of hard work goes into getting those out each year.

Mayor Dzurka said congratulations and welcome to Commissioner DeLiso. We will be recognizing former Commissioner Jean Ruestman at a later meeting. He thanked them you for the vote of confidence in allowing him to serve as chair of this distinguished board. I'm a commissioner first and privileged to have that responsibility, but as you know, there's five of us and it certainly takes all of us to really accomplish the work here. We know there's opportunities to go deeper. I appreciate the experience each of you bring. In saying that as well, one of the first duties we always do are our committees. I'll be looking at those. If you have any suggested changes or interest in committees with which you're on, please let me know, I'll be taking care of that between now and our next meeting. Commissioner Gurski said this during the strategic planning, it's important to acknowledge our interest in building trust amongst this board, not only individually as we work amongst ourselves, but also to the general public at large. Everyone up here did their best to make sure they were responsive to the public. Kudos to Chad and the team.

As Commissioner Hufnagel said communication is still important to us. We want to make sure that the residents of St. Johns are afforded any information that they are looking for. He discussed the AmeriCorps grant and we have an AmeriCorps volunteer that participates with us that helps with Parks and Recreation. There is a letter of support from mayors around the nation expressing to Congress to continue that AmeriCorps program. Unless there's objection, he would like to sign on to that letter. In our bills, there was our payment to the Clinton Area Ambulance Service of \$115,000 this year. Ed Thelen and Commissioner Gurski serve on that board. It's a valuable service that this city supports and it's a significant amount of money; the city contributes along with partners around the greater Clinton Area to the ambulance service. He discussed the comments from the Humane Society and hopefully the commission members can look at that. He discussed the food truck comments. He said there was a question of food trucks that are on public ground versus private ground. Did we come to any resolution there?

City Manager Gamble said as we approach springtime it will allow us to tighten down a little bit the public vs. private property and the fee structure. He said Nick's comments were very well taken and we are trying to compensate for businesses that do not have brick and mortar downtown. He discussed food trucks on an intermittent basis, which is the purpose of these permits.

Commissioner Hufnagel discussed feral cats, and said it is an issue people have talked about to him. He said he did have a conversation with someone from county animal control and they have limitations and can't accept cats. He asked if there is a role the county could play as well as the city. He discussed the catch-neuter-release program.

Mayor Dzurka said one of our presenters discussed our communications contract. Some of you have served in the last year and know the commission has delved deeply into the communications bills. Our management has changed, and our interns are providing great communications. Hopefully, people that have an interest will look back at conversations that have occurred within this body regarding that.

ADJOURNMENT

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

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.