

CITY OF ST. JOHNS
CITY COMMISSION MINUTES

JUNE 23, 2025

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, 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; Anne Seurnyck, City Attorney; Jordan Whitford, Wastewater Supervisor; Chris Khorey, McKenna

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 Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso 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 Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the minutes of the May 19, 2025 regular meeting be approved as presented.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

b. Receipt of Warrants

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that warrants be approved as presented in the amount of \$667,549.35.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

c. Principal Shopping District/Downtown Development Authority Appointments

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission reappoint Jason Butler, Tyler Barlage and Nancy McKinley to the Principal Shopping District and Downtown Development Authority Boards as recommended (terms expiring June 30, 2029).

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

d. Wolverine Contract - Safe Routes to School

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission approve the contract from Wolverine Engineers and Surveyors for the Safe Routes to School Grant application and project completion if awarded the grant and authorize the Mayor to sign the contract for the amount of \$7,500. The contract has been reviewed and deemed sufficient by our attorneys.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

e. Spicer CIPP Lining Bidding Services

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission approve the professional engineering services agreement with Spicer Group in the amount of \$4,500 for the preparation of technical specifications, contract documents, and management of the bidding process for the upcoming CIPP lining project. The City Attorney has reviewed the updated agreement and has determined it to be legally sufficient.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

f. Wastewater Influent Pump 1 Replacement

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission approve the proposal from Kerr Pump & Supply for the purchase of a new influent pump in the amount of \$56,908 and approve the installation proposal from JK Mechanical in the amount of \$35,195.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

g. Merit Bonus Recommendations - Licenses

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission approve the merit bonuses for water licenses as presented to the Personnel Advisory Board.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

h. 2024 Annual Review Merit Bonuses

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission approve the 2024 annual review merit bonuses as presented to the Personnel Advisory Board.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

i. Year End Budget Adjustments

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission approve the year end budget adjustments as per City Treasurer Kinde's memo.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

j. Approval of Fantasy Forest Tower Naming Recognition

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission approve as recommended in the RCA.

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. 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 May 19, 2025
- b. Receipt of Warrants
 - In the amount of \$667,549.35
- c. Principal Shopping District/Downtown Development Authority Appointments
 - The St. Johns PSD/DDA Boards of Directors recommends the city commission reappoint Jason Butler, Tyler Barlage and Nancy McKinley to the Principal Shopping District and Downtown Development Authority Boards as recommended (terms expiring June 30, 2029).
- d. Wolverine Contract - Safe Routes to School
 - Staff recommends that the city commission approve the contract from Wolverine Engineers and Surveyors for the Safe Routes to School Grant application and project completion if awarded the grant and authorize the Mayor to sign the contract for the amount of \$7,500. The contract has been reviewed and deemed sufficient by our attorneys.
- e. Spicer CIPP Lining Bidding Services
 - Staff recommends that the city commission approve the professional engineering services agreement with Spicer Group in the amount of \$4,500 for the preparation of technical specifications, contract documents, and management of the bidding process for the upcoming CIPP lining project. The City Attorney has reviewed the updated agreement and has determined it to be legally sufficient.
- f. Wastewater Influent Pump 1 Replacement
 - Staff recommends that the city commission approve the proposal from Kerr Pump & Supply for the purchase of a new influent pump in the amount of \$56,908 and approve the installation proposal from JK Mechanical in the amount of \$35,195.
- g. Merit Bonus Recommendations - Licenses
 - Staff recommends that the city commission approve the merit bonuses for water licenses as presented to the Personnel Advisory Board.
- h. 2024 Annual Review Merit Bonuses

-Staff recommends that the city commission approve the 2024 annual review merit bonuses as presented to the Personnel Advisory Board.

i. Year End Budget Adjustments

-Staff recommends that the city commission approve the year end budget adjustments as per City Treasurer Kinde's memo.

j. Approval of Fantasy Forest Tower Naming Recognition

-Staff recommends that the city commission approve as recommended in the RCA.

4. Approval of Agenda:

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

C. PRESENTATIONS:

1. Fire Department Cadet Program

D. PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY:

1. Public comment - agenda & non-agenda items

E. COMMUNICATIONS:

F. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Rezoning of the northern 700 and 800 Blocks of W. State St. and 110 Piston Ring Place – Resolution to Adopt Ordinance - #27-2025
2. 2025-2026 Budget Resolution #28-2025 & L-4029 Re-Approval
3. City Manager Contract

G. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Ladder 350 Replacement Plan
2. Resolution #29-2025 – a Resolution to Exempt the City from Public Act 152 of 2011
3. Resolution #30-2025 - Resolution to Adopt an Ordinance to Adopt a Supplement to the Code of Ordinances
4. Request for Funding of Independence Day Fireworks Show from St. Johns' Rotary – Independence Day Service Contract
5. Proposed contract for City Attorney Prosecution Services
6. Wage Study RFP Document
7. City Manager Comments
8. Commissioner Comments

H. ADJOURNMENT:

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PRESENTATIONS

1. Fire Department Cadet Program

Fire Chief Douglas discussed that the department was approached by Clinton County RESA to help create a cadet program; in 22/23 they tried to do a fire science program; looking to put on a Firefighter I & II program; benefits for the city; benefits for students; low-cost, high-impact initiative; and investing in our future.

There was a discussion of:

- If basic CPR is part of this.
- How it originated.

Mayor Dzurka thanked him for the presentation.

PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY

1. Public Comment

Mayor Dzurka asked if there were any public comments. He discussed the rules regarding public comment.

Alex Shinabarger, resident, was present. He discussed allowing golf carts on the streets of St. Johns and turned in petitions with signatures of people who have an interest or don't care if we ride golf carts in town.

David Andrews was present regarding golf carts. He discussed a side by side from the city goes on streets and during the Mint Festival the police have golf carts. He said at a meeting last week they discussed handicap stickers.

Melinda Locher-Jones was present. She said she appreciated their leadership roles. She discussed stray cats; we are able to feed the squirrels and birds, why can't we feed the cats; hoping to be allowed to feed the strays; and discussed Happy Feet Pet Rescue and their work.

Connie Skorna, was present regarding golf carts. She said she is in favor of Mr. Shinabarger's proposal. She discussed having elderly parents that she drives around to events.

Amy Maas, resident, was present to speak about the ban on feeding and sheltering community cats. She said she is affiliated with Happy Feet Pet Rescue and fosters for them; the ban is cruel and inhumane; and would help the community with a trap, neuter, and release program to get the population under control.

Cathy Kochensparger, resident, was present to discuss golf carts. She discussed an injury and using a golf cart; handicap stickers for cars; safety measures; and accidents and issues with every vehicle out there.

Makayla Roster was present to discuss cats and says she agrees completely. She said with golf carts she doesn't see a problem on the quiet side of the roads.

Cord was present regarding golf carts. He said he lives by the city park; golfcarts are his main way of going to town and supporting local businesses; thinks there needs to be rules set such as no busy streets; and asked the commission for their consideration.

Mayor Dzurka thanked them for their public comments.

COMMUNICATIONS

OLD BUSINESS

1. Rezoning of the northern 700 and 800 Blocks of W. State St. and 110 Piston Ring Place – Resolution to Adopt Ordinance - #27-2025

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said this originated as a request from the homeowner for a home occupation. This is for the entire block to be rezoned to Mixed Use.

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission adopt Resolution #27-2025.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

2. 2025-2026 Budget Resolution #28-2025 & L-4029 Re-Approval

Treasurer Kinde said received an updated L-4028, which created a slight adjustment to millage rates.

Motion by Commissioner DeLiso seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission adopt Resolution #28-2025.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

3. City Manager Contract

Mayor Dzurka discussed minor tweaks from the original version that was distributed: vehicle pay, adherence to city policies for use of vacation and leave time.

There was a discussion of:

- Section 3 D.
- Section 12.
- Vehicle Reimbursement.
- COLA
- Changes to the contract as discussed by the city commission.

Motion by Commissioner DeLiso seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission adopt the employment agreement as provided this evening with 3 changes: 3b COLA for executive staff; 5a remove sentence of 400 hours of accrued vacation; section 12 correct exempt instead of executive staff.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Ladder 350 Replacement Plan

Fire Chief Douglas discussed the ladder truck had a catastrophic failure. On June 7th we had a fire at the St. Johns Motel, and we could have used ladder truck, but had to call for mutual aid. He commended his staff. He said it was the hottest fire, temperature wise outside, he has ever been to. Everyone made it out safe, which is a win. He discussed an interim solution and a permanent solution for replacement of the ladder truck; larger buildings such as Glanbia, Proliant and The Castle; money set aside towards a replacement ladder truck; and he has been working with Representatives Tsernaglou and Kelly and will meet with Senator Singh.

There was a discussion of:

- Interim solution necessity
 - Due to the catastrophic failure an interim solution is required.

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- Delta Township has a 75-foot ladder truck available, which is 5 feet shorter than the current one, to fill the immediate gap.
 - Current build time for ladder trucks is 2-4 years.
 - Permanent solution through RFP
 - A permanent replacement ladder truck is needed, and an RFP will be developed for a new truck that meets current and 50-year needs.
 - Discussion included considerations regarding a used 100-foot truck versus new options and the long-term life expectancy.

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission authorize the city manager to negotiate the purchase of the '08 Spartan 75' ladder truck from Delta Township for a price not to exceed \$100,000.

YAY: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

2. Resolution #29-2025 – a Resolution to Exempt the City from Public Act 152 of 2011

City Clerk Seavey said the city has opted out of PA 152 annually since 2015. She said staff recommends the city commission adopt the resolution to exempt us from PA 152. By adopting this resolution to opt-out, we are in compliance, and it also keeps this on our radar annually.

Motion by Commissioner DeLiso seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission adopt Resolution #29-2025.

YAY: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

3. Resolution #30-2025 - Resolution to Adopt an Ordinance to Adopt a Supplement to the Code of Ordinances

City Clerk Seavey said annually we have American Legal codify any ordinances we have adopted through the last year. The S-19 supplement includes Ordinances #683 through #696. This will also update the online version of our code of ordinances. We are able to adopt this ordinance at the meeting tonight without introducing it.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission adopt Resolution #30-2025 a Resolution to Adopt an Ordinance to Adopt a Supplement to the Code of Ordinances.

YAY: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None
Motion carried.

4. Request for Funding of Independence Day Fireworks Show from St. Johns' Rotary – Independence Day Service Contract

City Manager Gamble discussed this came up last year when we were presented with the opportunity of assisting to sponsor the fireworks that is displayed every year here in the city. He said this is for a specific event, that being the fireworks, so we worked with the city attorney to address that issue in the Independence Day service contract that provides \$1,500 worth of support for this wonderful community event.

Mayor Dzurka said it brings a lot of people to our city.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve the proposed contract with Rotary for the amount of \$1,500 for the delivery of services related to the Independence Day Fireworks.

Commissioner Hyzer said we should look to increase the amount next year.

YAY: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso
NAY: None
Motion carried.

5. Proposed contract for City Attorney Prosecution Services

City Manager Gamble discussed opportunities for streamlining services, and a known cost for prosecution services.

Deputy Chief Tobias discussed:

- An RFP went out.
- Advantages of a flat fee contract
 - The new flat fee arrangement with Harkness Law Firm is expected to yield savings of approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000 and offers benefits such as continuous training, updated best practices, and dedicated access to legal advice.
 - The predictable expense and enhanced oversight of misdemeanor prosecution cases are major benefits.

Police Chief Kirk discussed specific training for our officers, and it counts as continuing professional education for us.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve the contract for city attorney services for prosecution services only submitted by Harkness Law Firm.

YAY: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

6. Wage Study RFP Document

City Manager Gamble discussed: \$20,000 is in the budget; trying to scale the RFP accordingly; and asked if there were comments or questions from the city commission.

There was a discussion of:

- Incorporate mechanisms to ensure commission feedback during the study to avoid the final report being solely delivered without input.
- Determination of comparable organization and justification.
- Inclusion of Retirement Benefits.
- Percentile of benchmarks.
- Timeline.

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hyzer that the city commission authorize the issuance of an amended RFP for Professional Wage Compensation Study.

YAY: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

7. City Manager Comments

City Manager Gamble discussed:

- Update on Status of Urban Cooperative Agreement Between Bingham Township and City of St. Johns. – presentation of updated draft agreement and supportive documents from this weekend's email.
- Update on City's negotiations with EGLE on our NPDES permit.
 - It has been 6 weeks since EGLE indicated we would receive a response regarding our suggested revisions.
 - He received an update today.
- No updates on Feiger v. City of St. Johns Lawsuit - discovery
- Fantasy Forest 2.0 update
 - Delivery of the remaining playscape features was this morning and currently being installed.

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- Contractor for underground conduit on site today with flat work crews to be in after the underground is complete.
 - We will be coordinating the volunteer planting day – looking at a Thursday morning/afternoon in mid-late August or early September depending on construction status.
 - Wilson Center and Office Reorganization Update
 - Bids were advertised today for Unit #1, Common Space, and for City Office Renovation.
 - Bid issue date Monday, June 23, 2025
 - Mandatory Pre-Bid Date: 2:00 pm, July 8, 2025
 - Bid Due Date; 2:00 pm, July 17, 2025
 - Roof Replacement Update: Meeting to discuss consultant assistance for roof replacement oversight. Estimates are \$350,000. Targeted to issue construction documents and bids in July.
 - Naming Rights Proposal.
 - Townsend Road RFP is also on the street and submittals will be discussed at the July meeting.
 - Commended Chief Douglas. Press Release for St. Johns Motel.
 - Thank you for the vote on the CM contract!!
 - Transformation of the depot is happening.

8. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Gurski requested staff to bring back the draft golf cart ordinance to the July meeting.

Commissioner Hufnagel said he would like it to go back to the Planning Commission. He discussed the ability to have access based on medical needs and the requirements.

There was a discussion of clarification of comments and information that should be sent to the planning commission for their July agenda.

Commissioner Gurski said they have held ambulance meetings, and the articles and by-laws are continuing. There won't be a vote on by-laws for each body. He said probably in August we should see those come back around. There has been a slight decrease in runs and they are spending less time in the southern portion of the county. Great work to Chief Douglas and his team.

Commissioner DeLiso said Chad sent out a nice press release (regarding the fire) and he reiterated thanking Clinton Area Transit for providing a bus; Applebee's and Kroger for beverages. We live in a great community, and this is a good example of that.

Commissioner Hyzer discussed a concern from residents about blight/tall grass (2 in Circle Drive). He said kudos to all law enforcement and first responders being out in the heat as well as the DPW staff being outside on a consistent basis. Also, kudos to those individuals who passed licenses.

Commissioner Hufnagel discussed the fire response and community organizations and said St. Vincent DePaul opened shop for this, and it was great to see the community come together. He said he appreciates the work you have done, and we are lucky to have a great department. There is value in having great relationships with other departments. Also, with respect to the feral cat issue, he likes the TNR (Trap, Neuter, Release) program and is not a fan of feral cats. We should be looking at TNR a little more closely. He congratulated Chad on his contract and thanked him for his patience.

Mayor Dzurka thanked Chad for working with them through the process. He recognized the work of Chief Douglas and the fire department. Also, the Beacon of Hope assisted. He said this community does take care of their own and the motel also filled a critical housing need in this community and that leaves a gap for us. On Thursday night, our regional LEAP is hosting a community conversation at East Olive Community Center. He said he appreciated support for the fireworks. He said the Mint Festival is in difficult economic times and that sponsorship and volunteerism is down. He discussed the economic impact.

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 8:07 p.m.