

CITY OF ST. JOHNS
CITY COMMISSION MINUTES

NOVEMBER 24, 2025

The regular meeting of the St. Johns City Commission was called to order by Mayor Dzurka at 6:00 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 A. Gamble, City Manager; Mindy J. Seavey, City Clerk; Justin Smith, Director of Public Services; Anne Seurnyck, City Attorney; Chris Khorey, McKenna (Zoom)

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

Commissioner Hyzer asked to correct the regular meeting minutes of October 27th, on page 10 Commissioner DeLiso made the motion instead of Hyzer.

Clerk Seavey said she will make that correction.

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Hyzer that the consent agenda be approved with the change as noted to the minutes.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

a. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Hyzer that the special meeting minutes of October 27, 2025 be approved and the regular meeting minutes of October 27, 2025 be approved with a correction.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

b. Receipt of Warrants

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Hyzer that warrants be approved as presented in the amount of \$570,479.56.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

c. Board Re-appointments

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Hyzer that the city commission reappoint the following: Jason Butler & Ed Thelen, Parks and Recreation Board (2-year term); Jennifer Kiel to the Brownfield Authority (3-year term); Heather Hanover & James Eshelman, Planning Commission (3-year term); Alan Harr & Bill Brewbaker, Parking Committee (2-year term); Craig Bishop, Compensation Board (5-year term); Craig Bishop & Curtis Keck, ZBA (3-year term).

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

d. Board Appointments

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Hyzer that the city commission authorize staff to contact members of the Board of Ethics to see if they are interested in being reappointed in December of 2025.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

AGENDA

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

Commissioner Hyzer added City Manager Contract to the agenda.

Mayor Dzurka added that after the Budget Calendar.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner DeLiso 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
 - Special meeting minutes of October 27, 2025
 - Regular meeting minutes of October 27, 2025
 - b. Receipt of Warrants
 - In the amount of \$570,479.56
 - c. Board Re-appointments
 - Staff recommends the city commission reappoint the following: Jason Butler & Ed Thelen, Parks and Recreation Board (2-year term); Jennifer Kiel to the Brownfield Authority (3-year term); Heather Hanover & James Eshelman, Planning Commission (3-year term); Alan Harr & Bill Brewbaker, Parking Committee (2-year term); Craig Bishop, Compensation Board (5-year term); Craig Bishop & Curtis Keck, ZBA (3-year term).
 - d. Board Appointments
 - Staff recommends the city commission authorize staff to contact members of the Board of Ethics to see if they are interested in being reappointed in December of 2025.
 4. Approval of Agenda:

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**C. PRESENTATIONS:**

1. Introduction of Marketing & Media Interns – Taylor Austin & Danica Bancroft

D. PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY:

1. Public comment - agenda & non-agenda items

E. COMMUNICATIONS:**F. OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Resolution #45-2025 – to Adopt an Ordinance to Amend Section 33.20 and Section 33.22 of Title III: Administration, Chapter 33: City Elections
2. Bingham Water/Sewer Discussions Update
3. Requested Permanent Electric Transmission Line Easement in Industrial Park

G. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Filling of Planning Commission Vacant Position
2. Resolution #46-2025 – Regular Meetings of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals

-
3. Resolution #47-2025 – Request for Rezoning 823 N. Lansing Street – Introduction of Ordinance
 4. Resolution #48-2025 – Request for Rezoning of Three Unzoned Industrial Parcels – Introduction of Ordinance
 5. Resolution #49-2025 – to Introduce an Ordinance to add 138.03 and Adopt the Offenses of Minor in Possession of Alternative Nicotine or Vapor Products, Furnishing Alternative Nicotine or Vapor Products to a Minor, and Use of Fraudulent Identification by a Minor
 6. Resolution #50-2025 – to Introduce an Ordinance to Add Section 138.02 and Adopt the Offenses of Minor in Possession of Tobacco Products, Furnishing Tobacco to a Minor, Use of Fraudulent Identification by a Minor, and Furnishing False Identification to a Minor
 7. 2026/27 Budget Calendar
 8. City Manager Contract (*ADDED TO AGENDA*)
 9. City Manager Comments
 10. Commissioner Comments

H. ADJOURNMENT:

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PRESENTATIONS

1. Introduction of Marketing & Media Interns – Taylor Austin & Danica Bancroft

City Manager Gamble said we wanted to bring in the new interns. He said Danica Bancroft could not be here tonight, but Taylor Ausitn is here. He said she has been an amazing addition and brings a lot of skill sets and talents to our never-ending efforts to increase and improve our communication to citizens and businesses in the region.

Taylor Austin was present. She said currently she is a web design major at LCC and has been studying different media formats since mid-high school.

City Manager Gamble said she does a great job. She brings a lot of bandwidth to the position. Thank you for all you do for the city.

Mayor Dzurka said thank you and welcome. He said Chad sent around a great update in terms of the benefits we are reaping.

PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY1. Public Comment

Mayor Dzurka asked if there were any public comments regarding agenda or non-agenda items. He discussed the rules regarding public comment.

There was no one present for public comments.

COMMUNICATIONSOLD BUSINESS1. Resolution #45-2025 – to Adopt an Ordinance to Amend Section 33.20 and Section 33.22 of Title III: Administration, Chapter 33: City Elections

City Clerk Seavey said PA 227 of 2023 increased the precinct size limit from 2,999 active voters to 4,999 active voters, allowing jurisdictions to condense their precincts. This would take us from 3 precincts to 2 precincts. If this is adopted, the next steps would be formally informing the county clerk; revising our street index with the State; and mailing out new voter ID cards to all affected voters.

Motion by Commissioner DeLiso seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission adopt Resolution #45-2025 to Adopt an Ordinance to Amend Section 33.20 and Section 33.22 of Title III: Administration, Chapter 33: City Elections.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

2. Bingham Water/Sewer Discussions Update

Mayor Dzurka said at our last meeting we had a chance to talk about this. Over the weekend we received a draft agreement back from Attorney Mike Homier. He said this is new to everyone and we hope to bring this back to our December meeting. Overall, he thinks based on conversations we are really close with this. He thinks it captures most of our comments and is a short-term agreement as we continue to look at an authority down the road.

City Manager Gamble said he is excited we are continuing to iterate agreement with our partners at Bingham Township. A lot of the proposed changes seemed very logical. The

only one issue the commission may want to consider is some sort of capacity maximum for water.

There was a discussion of:

- Previous drafts documents.
- We have greater capacity for water production than for sewer treatment.
- Cheese factory and ITC agreements.
 - ITC was more of a fire protection issue.
- If there was a hard cap we would have to go back and reopen the agreement.
 - Conversations can take place during the review process of the site plan.
- Maybe having a percentage for capacity instead of a number.
- The township is hoping to have an agreement by the end of the year.
 - Their meeting is also on December 8th, but at a later time.

3. Requested Permanent Electric Transmission Line Easement in Industrial Park

City Manager Gamble discussed: the last meeting; the meeting of the property advisory committee: the easement; overall prices; and we received comments from the Equalization Director of Clinton County, everything checks out in terms of pricing; there is an existing easement for the drain commission on this as well; we need to make sure easements are not incompatible; some other easements regarding abandoned force main; paragraph 1C of easement – they are able to prohibit and/or remove any buildings or other above ground structures that were not pre-existing; current language creates sole use of the area; and to place utilities across we would have to get their permission to do so. He asked for the commission's direction.

There was a discussion of:

- Why do they need exclusive rights to the property?
 - High powered transmission lines.
- It may be helpful to get a dedicated location for that as part of our agreement.
- It feels like we would be granting them excessive control over that space and whether that is standard.
- This is an exclusive easement, which is not uncommon for these types of easements.
- Any liability for us if we own the property and they have an extensive easement with us.
 - Attorney Seurnyck said she would have to ask Scott Hogan since he does this type of work.

City Manager Gamble asked for clarification on the general pricing. The total price is just under \$25,000 for 0.335 acres.

There was a discussion about finding out what other easements they have purchased recently and the price paid.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Filling of Planning Commission Vacant Position

Mayor Dzurka said we had a recent resignation on the Planning Commission, so now we have two vacant positions.

City Manager Gamble said we have four residents that put their hats in the mix. He said it is more and more difficult to get people to participate. The four candidates are: Kelly Taylor, Tim LeVeck, Shelly Gunther, and Brian Bancroft.

Mayor Dzurka discussed the process the last time we had a vacancy.

Shelley Gunther was present. She discussed: she has lived in St. Johns since 1977; worked in the schools for 23 years at St. Johns and 7 years in Ionia; she retired and worked at LCC for 6-7 years; was a negotiator for SJ Public Schools; President of the hospital auxiliary for 2 years and was also treasurer and served as fundraising chair; worked at the hospital gift shop and was one of the buyers; at LCC, she worked on curriculum development; she works on the elections with Mindy and works on the receiving board. She said she saw this online and thought it might be something interesting and she could give back to the community.

Commissioner DeLiso asked if there is any direction the city is going or not going that she feels strongly about.

Ms. Gunther said no. The streets are being fixed, we have lots of new businesses, and she feels pretty positive about things in St. Johns.

Mayor Dzurka said the planning commission is going through the 5-year master plan. He asked if she had a chance to take a look at it.

Ms. Gunther said no.

Kelly Taylor was present. She discussed: she grew up north of St. Johns and has lived in Clinton County most of her life; she moved into town 2½ years ago; graduated from MSU; works as the Association Manager of the Michigan Farmer's Market Association for 3 years; discussed her financial management, grant management, non-profit work; she volunteered with the St. Johns Downtown Development Authority; is volunteering to

work with the historical society; and discussed her experience onboarding new members. She said a lot of people complain, but are not willing to volunteer.

Commissioner DeLiso asked her the same question that he asked Ms. Gunther.

Ms. Taylor said she has seen a lot of progress in the past decade. She loves bringing friends and family to visit downtown and she worked at Phillips Orchard for a couple of years. She has seen challenges. She has heard about online complaints but gives less credence to that.

Mayor Dzurka asked her about the 5-year master plan.

Ms. Taylor said she did look at it a few months ago. She remembers being excited about it and the intentionality of 5-year plans.

Mayor Dzurka thanked both of them. He recognized Heather Hanover, Chairperson of the planning commission, was in attendance.

There was a discussion of the applications and the commitment time for meetings.

City Manager Gamble said the only special meeting the planning commission would normally hold is the joint CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) meeting.

Commissioner Hufnagel said one candidate that is not here did not list the planning commission at the top of their list on their application.

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission appoint Kelly Taylor and Shelly Gunther to the Planning Commission.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

2. Resolution #46-2025 – Regular Meetings of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission adopt Resolution #46-2025 Establishing and Approving the Dates for the 2026 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. Resolution #47-2025 – Request for Rezoning 823 N. Lansing Street – Introduction of Ordinance

Chris Khorey, McKenna, was present on Zoom. He said this is rezoning of an empty parcel on Lansing Street. He said it is zoned municipal Center and the Planning Commission approved the rezoning from MC to R-1 and said an infill home would be very appropriate.

Commissioner Hyzer discussed spot zoning and asked why we are not rezoning that whole block.

Chris Khorey said the Planning Commission has a public hearing scheduled to rezone the rest of the block to R-1 for that exact reason. He said the property owner applied for rezoning and both of those concerns came up.

The owners, Colleen and Jerry Smith, were present. Colleen said they had been waiting for months. They have been working with their realtor trying to get it rezoned, and it was then discovered the neighbors also need to be rezoned. There is no emergency, but they started this process in August or September.

There was a discussion of:

- Delaying the ordinance until the next meeting where all rezoning of that area could be done at once.
 - If delayed, the first reading would be in December, and the final approval wouldn't happen until the end of January.
 - The homeowners are trying to sell the lot.
- The December 3rd Planning Commission meeting and the quick turn around for the December 8th city commission meeting.

Carrie Dickenson, realtor, was present and said it is a hardship to the owners. She can't market the property until it is rezoned.

There was a discussion of:

- Spot zoning.
 - This would be differential zoning but wouldn't be non-conforming. It is the same type of use as the existing development.

Motion by Commissioner DeLiso seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission adopt Resolution #47-2025.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, DeLiso

NAY: Hyzer

Motion carried.

4. Resolution #48-2025 – Request for Rezoning of Three Unzoned Industrial Parcels – Introduction of Ordinance

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said this is an unusual situation. He said it is land near Proliant/Glanbia and it not shown as being in city limits. It is within the city limits but does not have a zoning category. He said this is a recommendation of the Planning Commission.

Motion by Commissioner Gurski seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission adopt Resolution #48-2025.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

5. Resolution #49-2025 – to Introduce an Ordinance to add 138.03 and Adopt the Offenses of Minor in Possession of Alternative Nicotine or Vapor Products, Furnishing Alternative Nicotine or Vapor Products to a Minor, and Use of Fraudulent Identification by a Minor

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission adopt Resolution #49-2025.

Commissioner Hyzer said he thinks it should follow through the county prosecutor's office.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, DeLiso

NAY: Hyzer

Motion carried.

6. Resolution #50-2025 – to Introduce an Ordinance to Add Section 138.02 and Adopt the Offenses of Minor in Possession of Tobacco Products, Furnishing Tobacco to a Minor, Use of Fraudulent Identification by a Minor, and Furnishing False Identification to a Minor

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission adopt Resolution #50-2025.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, DeLiso

NAY: Hyzer
Motion carried.

7. 2026/27 Budget Calendar

City Manager Gamble said staff presented a draft schedule for your approval. He said some dates might not be fixed in stone yet, but they are target dates. He said it involves 3 special meetings, 3 regular meetings, and the possibility of up to 4 advisory committee meetings.

Mayor Dzurka said it parallels what we did last year.

Commissioner Hyzer asked about the thought process on having the Personnel first then requests from department heads a week later. He said maybe those requests should come first.

City Manager Gamble said that is a very good point. With that particular meeting, we would be working with the MGT study to incorporate framework for their production, a policy statement for the commission to adopt in concert with the budget. He said it is an attempt to incorporate the process into the budget planning, but he understands your comment.

Commissioner Hufnagel asked staff to work with commissioners to get times on their calendars for those meetings.

8. City Manager Contract

Commissioner Hyzer said the contract talked about a 6-month performance evaluation. He wanted to get clarification if we need to get a 6-month evaluation. It is a new contract dated July 10, 2025, but we probably missed it on our part to take it out of the contract.

Mayor Dzurka said it was his understanding that was for the first contract. He said we will be kicking the process off pretty quickly.

There was a discussion of staff evaluations, the budget calendar and the budget process.

9. City Manager Comments

City Manager Gamble discussed:

- Leaf collection update – from Director Smith

-
- Director Smith said we made it through the first pass of the entire town late last week and began a 2nd pass of the north end. Some of the areas look like we didn't take a first pass. They will discontinue brush pick up and will start again in April. He said the weather has been beautiful. Kudos to the guys putting in longer hours.
 - Commissioner Hyzer discussed code enforcement on leaves being raked into the street.
 - Commissioner Hufnagel said he thinks it is education for people. In the past, it was allowable to rake leaves into streets.
 - Director Smith discussed the education process.
 - Announcement on the closure of Heist Grill.
 - Update on Property Advisory Subcommittee.
 - Sample summary document of discussion.
 - MGT schedule overview
 - Wilson Center Updates:
 - Roof project 95% complete with minor roof installations left and warranty certification inspection from the manufacturer.
 - Awaiting final approval from NPS.
 - Held second Wilson Center Core Team meeting on November 18th.
 - Receiving a proposal from Greater Lansing Council for the Arts
 - Mayor Dzurka said this is a heavy lift for the Arts Council. Potential for partnership with the Greater Lansing Area: additional staff and grant opportunities. Glad they are participating.
 - Guidance on sponsorship flier.
 - Held meeting with Bill Tennant RE: the band shell Improvements bid tabulation amount and gap in funding from \$80,000 to what the bids came in at just shy of \$150,000. We are collaboratively working on value engineering the project looking for viable options.
 - Labyrinth is complete save the landscaping, concrete walkway and sign. Unless we get an Indian summer, they will be installed next year.
 - Sponsorship benches for Fantasy Forest were installed earlier today.
 - Sunlight Award Issued to Mindy Seavey from the Michigan Fair Elections Institute.
 - DDA Incubator Space.
 - Benches/\$5,000 donation check from Meijer.

10. Commissioner Comments

Mayor Dzurka said thank you for getting the advisory meeting summary document started. He said there are a lot of ways to capture core content with meetings now.

Commissioner Gurski said the Clinton Area Ambulance Board continues to work on articles and bylaws and we will see how everything fleshes out. Getting all communities to somewhat agree on anything can be difficult. He said runs continue to be a little bit lower than normal and that is somewhat the consensus across the board in that field. We are definitely taking a hit from Eaton area contracts on the southern tier. The team is working on trying to get us to be the first call. That seems to make sense, but I understand that they also have a business as well that they're tied to, so we'll continue to work on that.

Commissioner DeLiso said kudos to the DPW for leaf collection. He said he noticed how most everybody's really well done and knowing that when you sweep them out to where they're going and they are picked up then they do more of the same. He said he actually gets them out there early. However, every mid-October, I have to wonder if we get our money's worth out of the last street sweeper pass of the season.

Commissioner Hufnagel recognized what the staff is doing on leaf pick up, the streets look great. He said it is a reminder that it's important for us to continue to do this work and it doesn't stop. It certainly makes a difference. There was someone that came into town and pointed out how nice the street they were on looked. Thank you. He discussed the previous conversations on the Trap Neuter Release program. He gave his support for that kind of a program. He said he doesn't think it would conflict with anything and is another tool in the toolbox and he thinks we should give it a try.

Commissioner Hyzer discussed the email he sent to Chad earlier and he responded today. He wants to make sure staff is following the sole purchase policy. Even though the pillow blocks are a sole source, with vendors that are a sole source we need to approve them as sole source. He said to make sure we are getting 3 quotes. Congratulations to Mindy and to DPW on the leaf pick up. The guys do a good job of picking up.

Mayor Dzurka said he is glad thus far work with the number of goals put together. He discussed MGT and comparables. He is glad to see the Property committee talking about the Federal Mogul property. He said he hears several concerns raised over the condition of the property and to make sure we continue to monitor it with the current owners. He is glad Commissioner Hufnagel mentioned the feral cat issue. He shares the concern about being humane to animals, but you want to find some level of balance. He said he is concerned with the program and overall viability. He said there is a cat that scratches out their screens. If cat were to bite a child, who would be responsible? He wants to continue conversations with the county commission on the roles of animal control. He also wants to look at if there are alternate shelters. He recognized Chief Douglas. He said he and Commissioner DeLiso had a chance to sit down with him and Chief Douglas did a really nice job of helping them understand how the building code drives so much of

the requirements in the existing fire code. He said the fire code makes sure we are maintaining what is in the building code. He said we both have questions about how that occurs with existing buildings and what kind of protocols they might incur here. He wanted to recognize Chief Douglas

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 7:50 p.m.