

CITY OF ST. JOHNS
CITY COMMISSION MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 8, 2026

The special meeting of the St. Johns City Commission was called to order by Mayor Dzurka at 4:15 p.m. at the Clinton County Courthouse, 100 East State Street, 2nd Floor, Suite #2200, St. Johns, Michigan.

CITY COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Eric Hufnagel, Brad Gurski, Scott Dzurka, Chris Hyzer, Chris DeLiso

CITY COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Chad Gamble, City Manager; Mindy J. Seavey, City Clerk; Kristina Kinde, City Treasurer

Agenda

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

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

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner DeLiso seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve the December 8, 2025 special meeting minutes.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner DeLiso seconded by Commissioner Hufnagel that the city commission approve the December 8, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

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Public Comments

Mayor Dzurka asked if there were any public comments.

Rachel Hoten, city employee, was present. She described the work environment as welcoming, kind, and positive under Chad's enthusiastic leadership and people feel valued and appreciated. She thanked Chad for his part in fostering this type of environment.

Bill Schafer, Recreation Director, was present. He said Chad is the best of the five city managers he has worked under, and praised his leadership, mentorship, and respect for staff. He said he took him under his wing and thanked Chad for providing that for him.

Heather Hanover, city resident, was present. She said she has worked in a lot of different places and a lot of city managers. She said she enjoyed working with Chad and that he is responsive, and she appreciated his professionalism.

Russell Shellberg, city employee, was present. He praised Chad for creating a supportive workplace where people feel valued; teams that work together; and emphasized his consistent leadership and ability to bring out the best in his team.

Anthony Berthieume, resident and school superintendent, was present. He described Chad as an excellent collaborator on joint projects between the city and the school district, including the Safe Routes to School grant and the Friendship City Project. He said he couldn't ask for a better collaborator. He said no matter what, he will be excited to work with the city.

Mayor Dzurka thanked everyone for their input and thoughts.

City Manager Contract

Mayor Dzurka discussed this includes difficult but necessary conversations and this decision does not come lightly nor comes from a single incident; and despite efforts there has been little progress and challenges have continued.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner DeLiso that the city commission terminate the employment of the City Manager Chad Gamble for convenience effective immediately pursuant to Section 10.B of the Employment Agreement dated July 10, 2025, noting that the payment of severance and benefits is conditioned upon the execution of a release and severance agreement as identified in Section 10.B of the

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Agreement. The Commission authorizes the execution of such release and severance agreement subject to final approval by the Mayor and City Attorney.

The city commission discussed:

- The working relationship with the City Manager, citing ongoing issues with communication, trust, and approach.
- Feedback was provided to the City Manager seven months prior, but sustained progress reportedly was not achieved.
- One term of evaluation is the relationship with staff, and the other element is the relationship with the city commission and that appears to be broken.

City Manager Gamble discussed the challenge of being a city manager and city commissioner is finding that right communication; communication is a two-way street and he had not received specific, formal direction from the commission as a whole on how to improve; the direction the Charter of the city provides for those roles; and he affirmed he did his best to manage the city's affairs efficiently.

Mayor Dzurka asked the City Clerk for a roll call vote on the motion:

YEA: Gurski

YEA: DeLiso

YEA: Dzurka

YEA: Hufnagel

YEA: Hyzer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Mayor Dzurka called for a break at 4:39 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 4:53 p.m.

City Manager Position

Mayor Dzurka recognized staff members that came and those unable to attend. He wanted to make clear their decision in no way reflects their full faith and confidence in staff. He said they want to work on a successful transition and there are a couple of steps the commission needs to take this evening. He said they need to identify an interim city manager. He put forth Deputy City Manager Kristina Kinde since she competently served in that role before and is willing.

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Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission appoint Kristina Kinde as interim city manager.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Mayor Dzurka said they need to begin the process of searching for a city manager. He said he is hoping to come to the January regular meeting to review proposals.

Motion by Commissioner Hyzer seconded by Commissioner Gurski that the city commission direct City Clerk Mindy Seavey to begin the process to gather proposals.

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Adjournment

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

YEA: Hufnagel, Gurski, Dzurka, Hyzer, DeLiso

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.