

## CITY OF ST. JOHNS

### CITY COMMISSION MINUTES

**JULY 11, 2022**

The regular meeting of the St. Johns City Commission was called to order by Mayor Hufnagel at 6:00 p.m. at the Clinton County Courthouse, 100 East State Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Suite #2200, St. Johns, Michigan.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Eric Hufnagel, Jean Ruestman, Bob Craig, Tamara Kirschenbauer

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Brad Gurski

STAFF PRESENT: Dave Kudwa, City Manager; Mindy J. Seavey, City Clerk; Kristina Kinde, Treasurer; Steve Martin, Director of Public Services

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

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the consent agenda be approved as presented.

YEA: Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

#### a. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the minutes of the June 27, 2022 regular meeting be approved as presented.

YEA: Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

#### b. Approval of Warrants

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that warrants be approved as presented in the amount of \$1,074,561.64.

YEA: Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

#### c. Approval of Merit Bonus

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the city commission approve the merit bonus as presented.

YEA: Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

d. National Night Out 2022 Proclamation

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the city commission adopt the National Night Out 2022 Proclamation and authorize the mayor and clerk to sign.

YEA: Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

e. Amendment to Agreement Core Business Technologies (EGov Strategies)

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the city commission ratify the amendment with Core Business Strategies for website redesign and authorize the mayor and clerk to sign.

YEA: Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

AGENDA

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

City Manager Kudwa asked that item #2 – Resolution to Modify Board of Review Dates be added to the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Craig seconded by Commissioner Ruestman 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 or person attending wishes to discuss any of these items, it*

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*should be placed on the regular agenda. The remaining items and recommendations may be approved en masse:*

- a. Approval of Minutes
    - Regular meeting of June 27, 2022
  - b. Approval of Warrants
    - In the amount of \$1,074,561.64
    - Includes fiscal year end warrants of \$1,035,155.99 and current warrants of \$39,405.65.
  - c. Approval of Merit Bonus
    - Staff recommends that the city commission approve the merit bonus as presented.
  - d. National Night Out 2022 Proclamation
    - Staff recommends that the city commission adopt the National Night Out 2022 Proclamation and authorize the mayor and clerk to sign.
  - e. Amendment to Agreement Core Business Technologies (EGov Strategies)
    - Staff recommends that the city commission ratify the amendment with Core Business Strategies for website redesign and authorize the mayor and clerk to sign.
4. Approval of Agenda:

**B. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**C. PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY:**

1. Sara Morrison – Briggs District Library Annual Report
2. Public comment - agenda & non-agenda items

**D. COMMUNICATIONS:**

**E. OLD BUSINESS:**

**F. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. King Media – Coleen King & Laurie DeYoung
2. Resolution to Modify Board of Review Dates
3. Resolution to Approve Charter Amendment Ballot Language to Change the Meeting Requirements from Semi-Monthly to Monthly - #14-2022
4. Resolution to Approve Charter Amendment Ballot Language to Authorize the City to Levy a Millage for Sidewalk, Street, Curb and Gutter and Drainage Improvements - #15-2022
5. Wilson Center
6. MERS DB Adoption Agreement – Separation of Briggs District Library
7. Commissioner Comments

**G. ADJOURNMENT:**

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YEA: Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

### PERSONS WISHING TO PRESENT TESTIMONY

#### 1. Sara Morrison – Briggs District Library Annual Report

Sara Morrison, Director, was present. She discussed: staff changes; story walks; two free libraries: at Motz Park and in front of the library; 20 hotspots to circulate to residents; purchased four chrome books for patrons; BrainFuse – online tutoring platform; added Canopy – online video streaming platform; switched to Transparent Languages – saving over \$2500 per year by switching; August 15<sup>th</sup> switching operating platform; changing fee/fine structure - give everyone a clean slate on August 15<sup>th</sup>; increasing the number of programs they are offering; outreach programs; July 19<sup>th</sup> have a Caribbean Steel Drum performance; working on renovation project; working on raising funds for renovation; kids space will move to the warehouse space; 60 person meeting room; moving main entrance near where the bay window currently is; \$532,667 committed towards the project; and they were notified they received a \$65,000 grant.

Mayor Hufnagel asked about the strategic plan that was created in the past and asked how they are doing in meeting some of those goals?

Director Morrison said the big one was to become a district library and secure funding on a broader base. She discussed: more programs, more outreach, more marketing, and the facility renovation.

Commissioner Craig asked if the board is going to this year or next develop a final, new strategic plan.

Director Morrison said it is on her things to take to them. The plan expired last year and she will be talking to the board in August to schedule time to do one.

Commissioner Ruestman said it is definitely something they will think about. They were trying to survive during the pandemic. They use the strategic plan and follow it and they had a session to brainstorm to make sure we were in still alignment of what the plan was. She gave a shoutout to Sara, the pandemic was crazy and there was a lot to figure out and she did an amazing job. The staff really stepped up. She is learning how to be a grant writer now. She has put a ton of effort in.

## 2. Public Comment

Mayor Hufnagel asked if there was anyone present wishing to present testimony.

Henry Burkhardt was present. He was concerned about a reading class the library had. He said they crossed the line when they got a political activist group to run a program. He discussed critical race theory and gender theory. He said he got a chance to talk to Ms. Morrison. He said he thinks it was a bad move and is going to cause disruption in the community. It is going to maybe have repercussions if they have a millage. He asked what power does the city commission have.

Mayor Hufnagel said he can have a conversation with staff on that.

Gary Becker was present. He said he agrees with Dr. Burkhardt. He said it is such a touchy subject and he is not sure how you handle it anymore. At a certain point, to teach to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> graders seems out of whack. He asked how commissioners feel.

Mayor Hufnagel said this is a public comment period. You can talk with individual commissioners outside of this meeting.

Tyler Barlage, 1020 Bills Lane, was present. He said he has been hearing things in the community in regards to this issue. He said there is so much we could unite on when it comes to the children's story hours. He discussed these issues that are divisive and splitting our community apart. He encouraged the library board to only allow story hours that are going to be uplifting.

Joel Cropsey, 600 N. Clinton, was present. He said he grew up with the library and he always appreciated the library. He said it is the only place of higher learning for adult education in St. Johns right now and it is a really important institution in our community. He said he does not want that to be a point of division. He said adults should be discussing those things and it is not appropriate to introduce children to those issues outside of their own parents. He urged the library and city commission to look into if there is something that will drive a wedge in this community.

Commissioner Ruestman said as a point of clarification, parents attended the program with their children and parents signed up and attended with their children.

Roberta Cocco was present. She said she wanted to echo Tyler, there are so many things in our community that we should promote. She said unity is a foundational skill. There are always preferences and the opportunity to disagree. She discussed agreement and respect.

Ed Thelen, 110 W. Cass, was present. He encouraged public comment be allowed during New Business items. He said he does not know what we are going to talk about on the Wilson Center.

Mayor Hufnagel said they have opportunity at planning commission meetings and at public hearings.

COMMUNICATIONS

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

1. King Media – Coleen King & Laurie DeYoung

Coleen King, President and Founder of King Media, was present. She thanked the commission for the opportunity to work for City of St. Johns. She went through highlights: rental housing program, she liked it was opening up communication between the landlords and city, they try to do lighthearted things with humor mixed in; yard waste communication program: website flier, postcards, social media post and seasonal reminders; strategic communication and negative media, press release for new city manager, new police officer, website evaluation, upcoming projects: rental housing program launch; informational mailer, website content; street campaign: community engagement of 9 year investment you have already begun; phase 2 informational campaign on millage ballot; charter amendment communication – newsletter, press release, marketing and communications plan – 5 phase approach. She said she has owned the company for 23 years. Their foundation is research and that is critical to moving forward. They are going to hold strategy meetings with city staff and focus groups. She said she conducts every interview and focus group herself. She will conduct 2 days of personal interviews. She will work with you to identify people to interview. They will craft an online survey to the community. Then they take all the information and use the research as our foundation to move forward.

City Manager Kudwa thanked the city commission for the initiative. It has been a huge help for us as staff. We have a lot of fun with this; King Media is fun to work with. We have had a lot of sensitive issues that we have worked on.

Mayor Hufnagel said the original plan was to jump into the marketing and communications plan and then things shifted a little bit. He said he is glad we are moving forward with communications and marketing plan initiative.

Commissioner Craig said this is excellent. He said we had two key personnel issues we had to deal with. This is really very timely and we need your services and expertise. This is going to be a great resource for us.

Ms. King thanked the commission for their kind words. She said she has an amazing team with a ton of depth and experience. When she looks at our region, Clinton County is paramount to the economic success and growth of our region.

Commissioner Kirschenbauer said we have a community social media page we take a lot of hits on. In MDOT, someone immediately responds to what is out there and it is managed. The St. Johns Community page has a lot of untruths. Is there anything you can do to help us respond to what is out there? A lot of people read it.

Ms. King said it is important for you to be part of the communication. We do look at it; two staff look at it almost every day. I have seen worse.

Mayor Hufnagel thanked Coleen for attending.

## 2. Resolution to adopt Alternate start Dates

City Manager Kudwa said the state sets our Board of Review dates for July and December. We need to have an alternate date. We need to pass, by resolution, for the assessor to set that date somewhere in that week.

Motion by Commissioner Craig seconded by Commissioner Ruestman that the city commission adopt resolution #16-2022 Resolution to Adopt Alternate Start Dates for July, 2022 and December, 2022 Board of Review.

YEA: Hufnagel, Craig, Ruestman, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

## 2. Resolution to Approve Charter Amendment Ballot Language to Change the Meeting Requirements from Semi-Monthly to Monthly - #14-2022

City Manager Kudwa said Clerk Seavey has been working with attorneys on language to modify our charter to only hold one meeting per month. We can hold special meetings when we want. For the most part, we have shifted and do a lot more committee work and the commissioners are part of the committee work. He said the attorney general has approved the language and with city commission approval, we will send it to the Governor.

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Attorney Anne Seurnyck said the resolution also moves the meeting time from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. She said she wanted to make sure the commission understood the change.

Motion by Commissioner Ruestman seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the city commission adopt Resolution to Approve Charter Amendment Ballot Language to Change the Meeting Requirements from Semi-Monthly to Monthly - #14-2022.

Clerk Seavey called a roll call vote:

YEA: Craig

YEA: Kirschenbauer

YEA: Ruestman

YEA: Hufnagel

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Commissioner Ruestman left the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

4. Resolution to Approve Charter Amendment Ballot Language to Authorize the City to Levy a Millage for Sidewalk, Street, Curb and Gutter and Drainage Improvements - #15-2022

City Manager Kudwa thanked Mindy and Anne for the work they have done. He said the language has been approved by AG's office and if approved, will be sent to the Governor. We are coming to the end of our 5-year street program. He discussed park improvements, sidewalks, and parking areas. This will be a 6-year program so we can keep it on even years so we don't have to hold a special election. This will maintain the 3 mills. Our focus will lean more towards sidewalks and ramps.

There was a discussion of the street program.

Motion by Commissioner Craig seconded by Commissioner Kirschenbauer that the city commission adopt Resolution to Approve Charter Amendment Ballot Language to Authorize the City to Levy a Millage for Sidewalk, Street, Curb and Gutter and Drainage Improvements - #15-2022.

Clerk Seavey called a roll call vote:

YEA: Craig

YEA: Kirschenbauer

YEA: Hufnagel

NAY: None

Motion carried.

4. Wilson Center



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City Manager Kudwa said we are continuing our due diligence with the Wilson Center. He said the commission asked us to do a financial analysis. The planning commission on Wednesday is discussing the rezoning and parking. We wanted to present information on looking at the city's purchase of the gym, auditorium, and old offices for city offices. He said Treasurer Kinde has been working hard with Baker Tilley. We have 3 options: staying at this building, add onto the police department; or purchase at the Wilson Center.

Treasurer Kinde said she put together the financial analysis. Baker Tilley came up with scenarios for bonding. We worked with our assessors to come up with a value for the Wilson Center and the increases with improvements. She discussed her graph. The courthouse value is little over \$850,000; the value remains same today as 25 years from now. There is a \$14,000 decrease in value each year. She discussed the operating cost on the graph: green lines represent new city hall near police department; solid line represents cost analysis; \$35,000 per year for operating cost; blue represents condo at Wilson Center; \$40,000 per year in operating costs. If you look at solid lines, at 25 years our cost to stay at the courthouse will surpass the cost of moving to the Wilson Center. The asset values of moving continue to increase. Our asset value if we stay here decreases. She discussed taxes captured over 22 years for a Brownfield (city, county and schools). She discussed what we have as far as taxes for the Wilson Center. If we have a Brownfield, taxes would no longer go to the downtown district for that building.

There was a discussion on the financial analysis.

#### 6. MERS DB Adoption Agreement – Separation of Briggs District Library

Treasurer Kinde said as a part of our MERS DB plan, the library has always been a part of that plan. On a monthly or quarterly basis, we bill the library. This is a separation agreement and they would have their own plan. When this plan was set up, the city was the backing source for funding. If there ever was a situation where the library couldn't make payments, we would be responsible. She said that is no different than it is now. She discussed the calculation that is done each year for the defined benefit liability.

Mayor Hufnagel said this is not something new that has developed.

Motion by Commissioner Kirschenbauer seconded by Commissioner Craig that the city commission adopt MERS DB Adoption Agreement – Separation of Briggs District Library.

YEA: Hufnagel, Craig, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

6. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Craig said he hopes the Wilson Center document can be provided to the public.

Treasurer Kinde said it is in the packet online.

Commissioner Craig said it is helpful for people to follow the charts. There are a lot of other steps that need to be done. Financially, you have made a very good case. He said he is glad they (Dymaxion) are in this community and have bought it. He said he appreciated all of the comments that the public made.

Commissioner Kirschenbauer said she was at the park and every facility was busy. It was very nice to see the families up there. Good job on the parks.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Kirschenbauer seconded by Commissioner Craig that the meeting be adjourned.

YEA: Hufnagel, Craig, Kirschenbauer

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.