

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

**Regular Meeting Held December 18, 2023**

Mayor Favale called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at the East Grand Rapids Community Center and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Commissioners Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hamrick, Hunter, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Mayor Favale.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Charles, Deputy City Manager LaFave; City Attorney Huff; Finance Director Seath; Parks & Recreation Director Melville; Zoning Administrator Gianotti; City Clerk Parmenter.

2023-261. The agenda was approved as submitted.

2023-262. Public comment:

State Representative Phil Skaggs congratulated Chief Herald on his pending retirement, reviewed budget items for Kent County and bills that the legislature has passed.

2023-263. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Schulz stated that this was a stressful time for many and not to be afraid to reach out for help.

Commissioner Wessely mentioned that the GVBA and EGRCF came together for a joint meeting regarding fundraising opportunities and events.

Mayor Favale reminded everyone about the recycling event for e-waste and Styrofoam on January 6<sup>th</sup> from 10:00-noon at DPW. They are looking for volunteers. EGGreen will be holding informational meetings at the library starting in the spring. She also wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

City Manager Charles noted that the Manhattan Park design has been tailored to fit between the \$2.9 and \$3 million range and that preliminary drawings are being done. He reminded everyone that offices will be closed December 25 and 26. Strategic Planning will be held on January 13<sup>th</sup>.

2023-264. Consider introducing an amendment to City Code Section 9.96 of Chapter 95 of Title IX - Outdoor Furnaces and Accessory Structure Heating Devices ordinance.

City Manager Charles reviewed the amendment and why this has come up.

City Attorney Huff noted that this ordinance was created from reviewing ordinances from Indiana and the City of Kalamazoo.

Mayor Favale asked if other communities have seasonal limits in their ordinances also. City Attorney Huff responded that they did.

Commissioner Burdick asked if this affected firepits or patio heaters. City Manager Charles stated that it did not.

Commissioner Schwartz questioned the height of the chimney and if the fifteen feet requirement would be enough. City Attorney Huff stated that height and appearance was a topic of discussion and would be left to the Commission to decide.

There was much discussion regarding the height and appearance of the chimneys.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked how many parcels meet the three-acre lot size. This was not known for sure.

Commissioner Schwartz said that Section E-1 could be clearer. She has visited the home impacted by this and noted that the smell was everywhere.

Mayor Favale wondered how tall the chimney was on the current sauna. Deputy City Manager La Fave stated that it was not fifteen feet tall.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if it could be tied into an existing chimney on a home. Deputy City Manager La Fave noted that inspectors are silent on this subject.

Mayor Favale asked if smoke would come down at any height. City Manager Charles stated that it does, but taller allows for better disbursement.

Commissioner Burdick asked if the height could be tied to the existing home chimney height. City Manager Charles stated that it could, but there could be some structural issues.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if there were any case laws on this. City Attorney Huff stated that there was nothing in Michigan at this time.

2023-0264-A. Wessely-Schulz. To accept the introduction of an amendment to City Code Section 9.96 of Chapter 95 of Title IX - Outdoor Furnaces and Accessory Structure Heating Devices ordinance.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7  
Nays: -0-

2023-265. Consider approval of a State of Michigan Metro Act Right-of-Way Unilateral Permit for aerial and subgrade telecommunications lines for a fifteen-year period, subject to future extensions.

Deputy City Manager La Fave reviewed the request.

2023-0265-A. Burdick-Schwartz. To approve a State of Michigan Metro Act Right-of-Way Unilateral Permit for METRO Fibernet, LLC for aerial and subgrade telecommunications lines for a fifteen-year period, subject to future extensions.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7  
Nays: -0-

2023-266. Consider approval of the new module purchase with NeoGov to move performance evaluations to NeoGov Perform.

Finance Director Seath highlighted the request.

2023-0266-A. Schulz-Burdick. To approve the new module purchase with NeoGov to move performance evaluations to NeoGov Perform.

Mayor Favale stated that she is familiar with NeoGov and that it is very friendly. She is happy to support this.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7  
Nays: -0-

2023-267. Consider approval of changes to Holidays for the Public Safety Unions and Non-Union groups.

Finance Director Seath highlighted the request.

Mayor Favale said that it was a nice move to support the holidays.

2023-0267-A. Wessely-Schulz. To approve the changes to Holidays for the Public Safety Unions and Non-Union groups.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7  
Nays: -0-

2023-268. Consider rescheduling the January City Commission meetings from January 2<sup>nd</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> to January 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

City Manager Charles highlighted the request.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak noted that there was a library meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup> also.

2023-0268-A. Groff-Blaszak-Schwartz. To approve rescheduling the January City Commission meetings from January 2<sup>nd</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> to January 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7

Nays: -0-

2023-269. Consider approving the purchase of SolarWinds Security Event Manager (SEM) software in the amount of \$2,445.00 (annual license) and approve the purchase of a Dell PowerEdge T350 server for \$3,409.34. The total project cost is \$5,854.34 for the 1<sup>st</sup> year with \$2,445.00 recurring annually.

Finance Director Seath highlighted the request.

2023-0269-A. Hunter-Groff-Blaszak. To approve the purchase of SolarWinds Security Event Manager (SEM) software in the amount of \$2,445.00 (annual license) and approve the purchase of a Dell PowerEdge T350 server for \$3,409.34. The total project cost is \$5,854.34 for the 1<sup>st</sup> year with \$2,445.00 recurring annually.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7

Nays: -0-

2023-270. Street millage update, information and discussion.

Deputy City Manager La Fave reviewed the previous millage, where street funds come from, maintenance and project completed since millage was approved ten years ago.

City Manager Charles noted that Summer 2024 tax collection will be the last collection for the current millage. There are two election dates possible for 2024. April 30<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for the August ballot.

Commissioner Wessely mentioned that with inflation being what it is, he is concerned that we are not asking for enough. Why wouldn't we go for 2.25 and wondered if the excess could go for lead line replacements.

Mayor Favale wondered if going back to 2 mil is really an extension of the current millage. City Manager Charles stated that he would have to check on that.

2023-271. Wessely-Schwartz. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2023-0271-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held December 4, 2023.

2023-0271-B. Minutes of the work session meeting held November 28, 2023.

2023-0271-C. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$289,921.26; county and school disbursements of \$15,393.29 and total remaining disbursements of \$257,161.72.

2023-0271-D. Consider adopting an updated policy for enforcement of the City sight distance ordinance.

2023-0271-E. Consider approving the updated Harassment Policy for the City of East Grand Rapids.

2023-0271-F. Consider approving the new Public Safety Clerk II position, the revised Public Safety Clerk I position, and the new Public Safety part-time office cadet position.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7

Nays: -0-

2023-272. Consider entering into closed session in accordance with Section 8(d) of the Open Meetings Act.

2023-0272-A. Wessely-Burdick. To approve entering into closed session in accordance with Section 8(d) of the Open Meetings Act.

Roll call vote was taken.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7

Nays: -0-

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until January 8, 2024.

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Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk