

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held May 6, 2024

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, Hunter, Schwartz, Wessely and Mayor Favale.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Charles; Deputy City Manager La Fave; City Attorney Huff; Parks and Recreation Director Melville; Public Safety Captain Ric Buikema; City Clerk Parmenter.

2024-77. The agenda was approved as presented.

2024-78. Public comment:

Steve Williams, 1038 Wren Ave., thinks the City can do a better job with the wood burning ordinance as it only speaks to one source. Thinks the ordinance needs to be tightened up because the real issue is smoke.

Steve Kiesmierczak, 230 El Centro, thanked Public Safety for action on April 23rd relating to a neighbor that had been stuck in their basement for days.

Jeff O'Hara, 63rd District Court, spoke about treatment court and recovery court. The goal is to treat the disease, not punish the person.

David Stoffer, 1925 Lake Dr., would like neighbor complaints and the process on how neighbor complaints are handed tightened up.

2024-79. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Hunter reminded everyone that EGReen was holding the gas-powered leaf blower buy back this Saturday at the Public Works Complex. They will receive a \$100 voucher due to the East Grand Rapids Community Foundation approving a grant for this program.

City Manager Charles noted that yard waste continues, and road construction is in full force.

2024-80. Consider the Permit for Fireworks submitted by Pyrotechnico Fireworks, Inc. on behalf of East Grand Rapids Public Schools.

Parks and Recreation Director Melville reviewed the request.

Burdick-Wessely. To approve the Permit for Fireworks submitted by Pyrotechnico Fireworks, Inc. on behalf of East Grand Rapids Public Schools.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak stated that she is hesitant to approve due to being respectful of other community members who may be sensitive to loud noises and wished they would have received the request sooner.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if they were as loud as regular fireworks. City Manager Charles noted that they are like large roman candles with no loud concussion like regular fireworks.

Yeas: Burdick, Hunter, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 5
Nays: Groff-Blaszak - 1

- 2024-81. Consider approval of a contract for fire hydrant sandblasting and painting services at \$138 per hydrant for 514 totaling \$70,932 with 10% contingency.

Deputy City Manager La Fave reviewed the request and noted that this was under the budgeted amount. He also noted that the hydrants would be fully contained during the sandblasting and painting process to protect air quality, animals and surrounding property.

- 2024-081-A. Groff-Blaszak-Schwartz. To approve a contract with National Public Works Coating for fire hydrant sandblasting and painting services at \$138 per hydrant for 514 fire hydrants safe routes to school totaling \$70,932 with 10% contingency.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 6
Nays: None.

- 2024-82. Consider discussing potential changes to the City’s parental leave policy.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request.

Commissioner Burdick wondered about “mutual aid” with other municipalities if someone is out for an extended period of time and if working from home was an option. City Manager Charles noted that some positions do not have the option to work from home and that each municipality has their own nuances that would make mutual aid difficult.

Commissioner Hunter wondered about accommodating someone coming back on a more part-time basis at first.

Commissioner Wessely wondered about looking at the amount of time off on a case-by-case basis. Finance Director Seath mentioned that doing such thing could lead to a HIPPA violation. City Manager Charles stated that we are a small organization and that could lend itself to violations.

Commissioner Schwartz stated that her employer allows for additional time if it is a “special” birth situation such as a c-section.

Commissioner Wessely likes the idea of tacking on additional time in the case of a special birth but said that we can keep it as is for now and see how it goes. He has concerns about having to dial it back at a later date if we raise the limits now.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked if there could be room for a hybrid approach after eight weeks, reduced hours or a work from home option. She also mentioned partnering with the schools on a childcare at Woodcliff for the City and school employees.

Mayor Favale said she is hearing to keep it at eight weeks for now and look at other options employers offer.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if we could bring this back at a later date to review to see how it is working. City Manager Charles said that it could be brought back.

2024-83. Consider setting an additional budget work session date.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request.

Consensus to set an additional budget work session for June 3rd if needed.

2024-84. Consider approving a process to fill the current City Commission vacancy.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request and said that the position has to be filled by July 22nd.

2024-084-A. Wessely-Burdick. To approve the process to fill the current City Commission vacancy.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 6
Nays: None.

2024-85. Consider approving the revised resolution placing the street & sidewalk millage renewal on the August 6, 2024, ballot at 2.0 mills for a ten-year period.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request.

2024-085-A. Schwartz-Wessely. To approve the revised resolution placing the street & sidewalk millage renewal on the August 6, 2024, ballot at 2.0 mills for a ten-year period.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 6
Nays: None.

2024-86. Hunter-Schwartz. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

- 2024-086-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held April 23, 2024.
- 2024-086-B. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$276,986.54; county and school disbursements of \$2,714.19, and total remaining disbursements of \$519,460.26.
- 2024-086-C. Minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held on March 17, 2024.
- 2024-086-D. Minutes of the Parks and Recreation meeting held on March 25, 2024.
- 2024-086-E. Minutes of the Library Commission meeting held on January 22, 2024.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 6
Nays: None.

2024-76 Consider holding a work session at the end of the regular meeting to review the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and the Water & Sewer Fund future rates.

City Manager Charles reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan and the Water & Sewer Fund.

Deputy City Manager La Fave reviewed how street projects are determined and gave an overview of the Cascade/Robinson Pathway project.

City Manager Charles said that there would be a work session set in the near future to the funding of the remaining park projects. Water and sewer rates will not have an increase this fiscal year, but we will want to consider looking at rates next year to continue replacement schedule of lead services lines.

Commissioner Wessely and Hunter feel a millage for this would be accepted by the residents.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until May 20, 2024.

Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk