

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

**Regular Meeting Held December 2, 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, Skaggs, 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 Director Buikema; City Clerk Parmenter.

2024-197. The agenda was approved as presented.

2024-198. Public comment: None.

2024-199. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Skaggs hopes everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. The Personnel Committee reviewed a work from home policy, a resolution to opt out of PA152 relating to health insurance and the consideration of Ric Buikema as Public Safety Director.

Commissioner Wessely noted a Facebook post that he saw relating to the damage done at Manhattan Park. He reminded everyone to call the police when they see something like this so a report can be made.

Mayor Favale hopes everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and thanked staff and Public Safety for their time with the tree lighting.

City Manager Charles noted that the tree lighting went well and thanked the GVBA for coordinating it, Derek Melville for his time working on it and DPW for their work putting the tree together. He commended the DPW crews for their efforts during the first snow fall event. He noted that there would be a work session at the December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting relating to traffic and pedestrian safety and that Gaslight Investors may be coming to the January 6<sup>th</sup> meeting with an introduction of the preliminary plans for their project.

2024-200. Consider confirming the appointment of Captain Ric Buikema to the position of Public Safety Director.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request and Ric's background with the department.

Various commissioners asked Captain Buikema about what was going well in East Grand Rapids, what could be better, community involvement, having a presence at special events and the school resource officer position.

2024-200-A. Wessely-Skaggs. To confirm the appointment of Captain Ric Buikema to the position of Public Safety Director.

Commissioner Wessely had coffee with Captain Buikema and had very detailed conversations about various topics and supports the appointment.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak has had nothing but good interactions with Captain Buikema and has only heard positive comments from staff and citizens.

Mayor Favale has seen the staff morale improve, Captain Buikema is an invaluable asset and has demonstrated his knowledge since being the Interim Director.

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

Nays: None.

2024-201. Consider approving the City's Carbon Action Plan as provided by GZA Engineering.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request.

Tom Klotz from GZA gave a presentation on the City's plan.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked about the city-wide timeline. City Manager Charles noted that the starting point is to start with what we can control, which is city operations. Community wide conversations will be next.

Commissioner Wessely asked how often the plan should be updated. Tom Klotz stated that every five years is reasonable.

Commissioner Skaggs questioned if this plan took into account the guidelines that the State put into place last year. Tom Klotz stated that it did.

2024-201-A. Skaggs-Burdick. To approve the City's Carbon Action Plan as provided by GZA Engineering.

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

Nays: None - 0

2024-202. Consider approving a resolution to sell the remaining Park Improvement Bonds.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request.

2024-202-A. Schwartz-Wessely. To approve a resolution to sell the remaining Park Improvement Bonds.

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

Nays: None - 0

2024-203. Consider setting a public hearing for January 20<sup>th</sup> to take comment on the proposed Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak noted that the 20<sup>th</sup> was a holiday.

2024-203-A. Hunter-Burdick. To set a public hearing for January 21<sup>st</sup> to take comment on the proposed Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

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

Nays: None - 0

2024-204. Groff Blaszak-Schwartz. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2024-204-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held November 18, 2024.

2024-204-B. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$277,771.32; county and school disbursements of \$0, and total remaining disbursements of \$499,972.84.

2024-204-C. Consider approving the attached resolution opting out of the health care premium 80/20 employer/employee contribution amounts required under State of Michigan Public Act 152 (Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act) for the calendar year of 2025.

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

Nays: None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until December 16, 2024.

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Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk