

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held February 3, 2025

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, and Mayor Favale.

Absent: Commissioner Wessely.

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

2025-19. The agenda was approved.

2025-20. Public comment:

Scott Atchison, 3846 Kirkshire, proposed changing Kent County to Grand Kent.

Marc Armstead, 2202 Elmwood, concerned about the Gaslight PUD project.

2025-21. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Burdick gave a report from the Parks and Recreation meeting.

Commissioner Skaggs reported that on February 10th herself, Commissioner Burdick, Kris Pachla and Mayor Favale will be hosting a coffee hour at the Community Center.

City Manager Charles noted that Gaslight Investors will be hosting an open house tomorrow night from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. and there is a public hearing scheduled on February 17th during the regular meeting which has been moved to the Performing Arts Center. He also noted that Strategic Planning is being moved to a new date.

2025-22. Planning Commission annual report.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti reviewed the report.

2025-23. Public Safety annual report.

Public Safety Director Buikema reviewed the report.

Mayor Favale questioned if the office was adequately staffed. Public Safety Director Buikema stated that at this time it was.

Commissioner Schwartz questioned the number of purchase permits for guns. Public Safety Director Buikema noted that not all of the permits were requested by East residents.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak questioned if there was going to be action taken or analysis in 2025 regarding race disparities in traffic stops.

2025-24. Presentation of the multi-year financial forecast.

City Manager Charles reviewed the information.

2025-25. Consider a contract addendum to the current Construction Observation Engineering Services through the 2025 construction season in an amount not to exceed \$167,240.

Deputy City Manager La Fave highlighted the request.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked if the streets not colored meant that there was no work to be done on them. Deputy City Manager La Fave stated that was correct.

2025-025-A. Skaggs-Ryan. To approve a contract addendum to the current Construction Observation Engineering Services with Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc. (HRC) through the 2025 construction season in an amount not to exceed \$167,240.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs, and Favale – 6

Nays: None.

2025-26. Consider the authorization to purchase a new Pierce Ascendant® 110' Heavy-Duty Aerial Platform fire truck for \$1,647,190 with a \$82,360 contingency.

City Manager Charles and Public Director Buikema reviewed the request.

Commissioner Skaggs questioned the quote date of December 17, 2024 with it being valid for only 30-days. Public Safety Director Buikema noted that he could get an updated quote with no change to the amount.

Commissioner Hunter asked what the height was on our current truck. Public Safety Director Buikema stated that it was 100 feet.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak questioned if electric had been looked into. City Manager Charles stated that they did not have an aerial at this time that they were aware of.

Mark Armstead, 2202 Elmwood, was not sure how big purchases were made, but feels items should be budgeted for.

2025-026-A. Schwartz-Skaggs. To approve the purchase of a new Pierce Ascendant® 110' Heavy-Duty Aerial Platform fire truck for \$1,647,190 with a \$82,360 contingency with staff to look into electric model and if one is available within the same timeframe, it will come back to the City Commission for review.

Commissioner Schwartz stated that she trusts public safety and appreciates the “standard” and basic function of the selected truck.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak would like more information about electric models.

Commissioner Burdick would love to see electric but wondered about the weight of the vehicle.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak made a motion to table this item.

City Manager Charles verified that there are no electric aerials at this time. There are only engines.

Commissioner Schwartz would like to know the experiences of other communities with electric engines and questions if we are the right community to try this since we only have the one.

Commissioner Hunter seconded the motion to table this item.

Yeas: Groff-Blaszak and Hunter – 2
Nays: Burdick, Schwartz, Skaggs and Favale – 4
Motion failed.

Commissioner Burdick agrees that maybe we are not the best to try electric with only having one.

Commissioner Skaggs mentioned the extra expense with charging and noted the weight of it being electric.

Commissioner Hunter understands the feelings of not wanting to take the step into electric yet.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak is supportive of purchasing equipment that is needed, but we need to look at the Carbon Action Plan.

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

2025-27. Consider authorization and contract approval for the recommended mill and overlay street projects.

Deputy City Manager La Fave highlighted the request.

2025-027-A. Groff-Blaszak-Burdick. To authorize and approve a contract for the recommended mill and overlay street projects with the qualified low bid within 10% of the engineering estimate with an additional 10% contingency, purchase of sole source utility castings and covers from East Jordan Iron Works within FY 24/25 and FY 25/26 budgets; Pavement preservation projects within engineering estimates plus 10% with Kent County Road Commission bid contracts subject to the programmed and approved FY 24/25 and FY 25/26 street budgets and accordance with the Mobility-Bike Action Plan/Implementation Plan with the exception the Federal Aid Plymouth Rd Project from Hall St to Martin Luther King Jr. St which will be addressed separately.

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

2025-28. Consider amending the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) policy.

Deputy City Manager La Fave highlighted the request.

Commissioner Schwartz questioned if all the criteria had to be met. Deputy City Manager La Fave said no. Commissioner Schwartz asked about putting semicolons after each item with “or” before the last one to make it clearer.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak thanked him for the flexibility.

2025-028-A. Burdick-Skaggs. To amend the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) policy.

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

2025-29. Consider the Mayor’s appointments to various boards.

City Manager Charles highlighted the request.

2025-029-A. Hunter-Burdick. To approve the Mayor’s appointments to various boards.

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

2025-30. Skaggs-Schwartz. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2025-030-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held January 21, 2025.

2025-030-B. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$287,305.20; county and school disbursements of \$224,246.90, and total remaining disbursements of \$277,477.93.

2025-030-C. Consider approval of a resolution amending the FY 2024-25 budget.

2025-030-D. Minutes from the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting held on December 9, 2024.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs, and Favale – 6

Nays: None.

Work Session

2025-31 2024-2025 Strategic Area update.

City Manager Charles reviewed the information.

Closed Session

2025-32 An executive session is scheduled to take place following the work session to discuss property acquisition in accordance with Section 8(d) of the Open Meetings Act.

2025-030-E. Groff-Blaszak-Burdick. To enter into executive session at 8:04p.m.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs, and Favale – 6

Nays: None.

Roll call vote was taken.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until February 17, 2025.

Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk