

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

**Regular Meeting Held October 20, 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, Skaggs, Schwartz, Wessely and Mayor Favale.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Charles; Deputy City Manager La Fave, Finance Director Seath, City Attorney Huff; Public Safety Chief Buikema; City Assessor Hayes; City Clerk Parmenter.

2025-146. The agenda was approved as presented.

2025-147. Public comment:

Jerry Anderson, 435 Edgemere, spoke about the protest petition that was submitted.

Marc Armstead, 2202 Elmwood, spoke about concerns he has.

Craig Noland, 455 Edgemere, spoke about the PUD ordinance amendment.

David Decker, 925 Bellclaire, spoke about seeking petition signatures.

Erica Dunten, 2100 Gorham, feels that more information is needed.

2025-148. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Skaggs stated that Harvest Festival was a great event and reminded everyone about the upcoming election and noted no early voting for this one.

Commissioner Hunter said that the EGR boys' soccer team won the district championship, Harvest Fest was a great event, this week is the last football game of the season, Hearts of Gold is this week and also spoke about the young man that spoke at the last meeting.

Mayor Favale said that Harvest Fest was a great event and also spoke about Hearts of Gold.

City Manager Charles spoke about Harvest Fest, thanked Parks and Recreation Director for his long hours and work put into the event. Joe Morey and Todd Cupp

took first place at the American Public Works Association Roadeo Midwest Branch and they will be going to the finals next summer.

- 2025-149. Consider approval of adding the Roth contribution option to city employee's 457 Deferred Compensation Plan.

Finance Director Seath reviewed the information.

- 2025-0149-A. Burdick-Skaggs. To approve of adding the Roth contribution option to city employee's 457 Deferred Compensation Plan.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Skaggs, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7  
Nays: None.

- 2025-150. Consider amending the City Poverty Exemption Policy to raise poverty income and asset limits and eliminate the special circumstances section 7.

Finance Director Seath reviewed the information.

Mayor Favale asked what happens if the special circumstances piece is removed and if we knew how many would qualify. City Assessor Hayes said that it just goes away, and nobody is grandfathered in and there may be two that could qualify, but nobody qualifies at this time.

Commissioner Schwartz asked about what assets and income are considered and wondered how trusts work in this situation. City Assessor Hays said that they look at the forms that were filed for income taxes, and she is not sure about trusts.

Mayor Favale asked if we ask for the tax forms and bank documents. City Assessor Hayes stated that they do ask for those.

Commissioner Wessely asked about getting documents directly from the IRS. City Assessor Hayes stated that she was not sure. Finance Director Seath said that we can with the resident completing a form.

Commissioner Burdick asked if this had to be applied for each year. City Assessor Hayes said that it did.

Commissioner Skaggs asked how residents are made aware of this. City Assessor said that it was on the website on the Assessing page and when people call to ask about help.

Commissioner Hunter asked if the language could be codified for holdings and other things. City Assessor Hayes said that it could.

Commissioner Schwartz said that she wants to be careful but help people as well. Her personal viewpoint is to double the asset limit.

Commissioner Burdick wants to be compassionate while trying to make it clearer cut.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked about the sliding scale and wondered how much leeway there was to set the asset limits. Finance Director Seath said that it was up to the Commission to set the limits.

Catherine Kriegbaum, 2249 Estelle, read from a previous email that she sent in and doesn't feel she should have to disclose how she spends money.

Erica Dunten, 2100 Gorham, said that the 1040 form should be sufficient and wants consideration for circumstances.

Marilee Fisher, 609 Lakeside, sits on the Board of Review and recommends doubling the poverty amounts, increase asset limit to \$10,000, exempt vehicles, require verification from the IRS and spoke about tax losses as the state issues more exemptions as well.

Commissioner Wessely said that it is a good idea to pull from the IRS and to look at it more black and white, eliminate the vehicle and doubling the amounts makes sense to him.

Commissioner Skaggs is agreement with doubling the limits.

Commissioner Burdick was thinking about doubling as well and is not concerned about fraud.

Commissioner Schwartz is in favor of higher asset levels.

Commissioner Hunter said that affordable housing should be worked on by the City Commission to go along with this and the resident should sign an affidavit that all the information given is correct.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak is in favor of a two to two and a half times increase.

City Manager Charles said that they have some additional homework to do, noted that this can be changed every year and said that the second meeting in November is the target date to bring this back.

2025-151. Consider approving the proposal for the placement of sidewalks at Remington Park for a price not to exceed \$11,000.

City Manager Charles reviewed the information and noted that this cost was shared 50/50 with the schools.

2025-0151-A. Groff-Blaszak-Schwartz. To approve the proposal for the placement of sidewalks at Remington Park for a price not to exceed \$11,000.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Skaggs, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7  
Nays: None.

2025-146. Consider approval of lake management services for services to be rendered for 2026-2030 for an annual average cost ranging from \$27,400 to \$34,800.

Deputy City Manager La Fave reviewed the information.

2025-0146-A. Wessely-Schwartz. To approve of lake management services for services to be rendered for 2026-2030 for an annual average cost ranging from \$27,400 to \$34,800.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Skaggs, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7  
Nays: None.

2025-147. Consider awarding a contract for the installation of holiday lighting on street trees within Gaslight Village Business District in the amount of \$12,188.

City Manager Charles reviewed the information.

2025-0147-A. Skaggs-Wessely. To award a contract to Grapids Irrigation for the installation of holiday lighting on street trees within Gaslight Village Business District in the amount of \$12,188.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Skaggs, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7  
Nays: None.

2025-148. E-bike/scooter discussion.

City Manager Charles reviewed the information and shared a PowerPoint presentation.

Commissioner Skaggs asked if we were talking about a ban. City Manager Charles stated that we were not.

Commissioner Burdick said that nothing was more effective than those ice cream tickets.

Commissioner Hunter asked about the correlation with the traffic impact studies and this. City Manager Charles stated that we strive to be adaptable and change as needs change and said that the roundabouts come out next week.

Deputy City Manager La Fave noted that people don't believe in studies, so we have been utilizing time lapse cameras to be able to see the utilization during certain times.

Mayor Favale asked what the status of Safe Routes to School was. Deputy City Manager La Fave said that they will be engaging with the residents on the north shore of Reeds Lake again and that we have concept designs, but they are not approved yet.

City Manager Charles noted that all municipalities are having a hard time figuring out how to enforce these devices.

Commissioner Burdick stated that having rules out there could help some parents out.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak noted that there are some things that could be enforced at this time such as targeted enforcement in Gaslight Village and helmets.

Mayor Favale questioned the safety videos that were done in the past. City Manager Charles stated that we have quotes to update them, this will be an ongoing issue and everything is on the table at this time.

Commissioner Schwartz thanked staff for working on this and bringing it forward.

Tonya DeOliveira, 1851 Hall, is part of the Walk, Ride and Roll group and agrees with reward rather than ticket.

Anthony Maurer, 421 Lakeside, commended staff on the number of safety items completed and said that rules for electric are necessary and rewards work better.

Tom Tilma, 1635 Hall, spoke about the pedestrians in crosswalks and the timing and ability of cars to stop. He also said that a standing committee is important.

Kevin Hagler, 2714 Cascade, thanked staff for the sidewalks, noted that his daughter feels safer at the RRFB crossings, and wants thought put into this before rules are set in stone.

Janet Dietsch, 562 Greenwood, thinks that 15 mph is too fast for bikes and read comments from Erica Dunten.

Christine Dugette, 1649 Seminole, is scared for her kids and thinks the police should put out a video.

Jerry Anderson, 435 Edgemere, said to not underestimate middle school kids as they want and expect rules and guidelines and consequences. He also said to educate first, have a warning period and then an enforcement period.

Commissioner Schwartz said that she will make a personal commitment to infrastructure and said that sidewalks should be for walking, running and strollers. Bikes and scooters should have a mobility lane.

Commissioner Wessely mentioned a Tik Tok video and incentivize behavior.

Commissioner Skaggs mentioned doing a nationwide search for policies and see who else is leading the way and said that there has to be enforcement.

Commissioner Burdick supports infrastructure changes and wants to be aggressive on this.

\*Commissioner Skaggs left at 8:25 p.m.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak said that it is a culture shift within the community, loves the idea of a work session, standing group is needed and not focusing on just the younger kids.

Commissioner Hunter said to educate and hold the drivers accountable, likes the idea of a community group and get messages out.

Schwartz-Burdick. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2025-149. Minutes of the regular meeting held September 15, 2025.

2025-150. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$331,529.70; county and school disbursements of \$62,238.64, and total remaining disbursements of \$549,547.02.

2025-151. Communications.

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

Nays: None.

### Work Session

2025-152. Public comment and how items get on the agenda.

Mayor Favale asked if the topic of public comment arose at a meeting she missed. Commissioner Schwartz stated that it did. It was a motion to move public comment to a different part of the agenda and that a policy states how and why public comment is moved.

Commissioner Hunter said that he had made a motion for this, but it seems that we have found a way to adapt.

Commissioner Wessely would like a solid consistent way of doing this.

Commissioner Schwartz said that there may be a benefit to have it to say that the Mayor can move public comment if there is a perceived need.

There was more discussion on the timing of when to hold public comment.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked that we change from telling people to state their name and address to inviting them to introduce themselves when they come to speak and wondered what constitutes a personal attack and when it gets cut off. City Attorney Huff stated a personal attack is when something is directed at a person and he used the examples from the previous meeting and noted that there just has to be an effort to cut it off.

Commissioner Wessely asked if there was any thought to allow the submission of video comments and having a pre-sign-up list for public comment.

There was more discussion regarding decorum and time limits for speakers.

City Manager Charles reviewed the process for compiling the agenda for meetings.

Commissioner Wessely thinks things are working properly.

Commissioner Schwartz thinks that it works the way it is.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak said that she has felt a bit stifled and that she likes Wyoming's policy and wants ours to be clearer.

Commissioner Hunter supports what Commissioner Groff-Blaszak said.

There was more discussion regarding the policy with the majority feeling that it works as it is currently.

City Manager Charles reviewed the use of city emails by consultants and stated that this is typically only done when they are embedded in the city.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if IT had been questioned about doing something like this. City Manager Charles stated that it had not been done.

Commissioner Hunter said that it was common practice in the business world and wants Commission to bring this to the next meeting as an agenda item. He wants to be able to FOIA emails from the consultants.

Commissioner Schwartz asked what the standard practice was as she had not heard of this.

There was discussion regarding employees, contractors and consultants.

Commissioner Hunter asked how consultants are paid currently. City Manager Charles stated that they are paid for time and materials.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak stated that when they are conducting business on behalf of the City, they should have a city email.

City Manager Charles stated that no consultant is reaching out to anybody without being directed to do so by staff.

Deputy City Manager La Fave stated that consultants are not filing a roll of staff members and noted that everything goes through staff.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak does think that there is merit to pursuing this.

City Manager Charles stated that they are not doing business on behalf of the city, but they are doing work for the city.

There was a lot more discussion regarding consultants versus employees and what the standard is for emails.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion for any non-full time non-employee working more than 60-days be provided an eastgrim.gov email address. Commissioner Groff-Blaszak seconded the motion.

Commissioner Burdick stated that if he did not trust the consultant/employee he would be pushing to get them out and city email is not needed.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak said that trust is essential and wondered what policies other municipalities have in place. City Manager Charles stated that he checked with the Metro 6 communities and none of them require this.

There was more discussion.

Yeas: Hunter – 1

Nays: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Schwartz, Wessley and Favale. - 5

#### Closed Session

2025-153. An executive session is scheduled to take place following the work session to discuss attorney client communication and to conduct a personnel evaluation for the city manager in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Open Meetings Act.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request.

2025-153-A. Schwartz-Burdick. To enter into executive session at 10:13 p.m.

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

Nays: None.

Roll call vote was taken.

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until November 3, 2025.

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Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk