

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held February 2, 2026

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; City Clerk Parmenter.

2026-17. Commissioner Groff-Blaszak made a motion to add a resolution to establish policies to protect the safety of the community to the agenda. Supported by Commissioner Hunter.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schwartz to amend the previous motion to postpone discussion of the resolution until no later than the first meeting in March. Supported by Commissioner Burdick.

Commissioner Schwartz said that the resolution is a strong document and she would like documentation on current policies and how this would fit in.

Commissioner Burdick agrees and wants more time to review the resolution.

Commissioner Skaggs concurs and wants the resolution to go through the normal vetting process.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak is not opposed to conversation at the next meeting and would like to work from this resolution.

Commissioner Hunter echoes what the others said.

Vote on motion to amend original motion to postpone the discussion on the resolution until no later than the first meeting in March

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

Vote on original motion as amended.

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

Nays: None.

2026-18. Public comment:

Nancy Pattison, 2104 Gorham, spoke about flock cameras.

Tina Murua, 1031 Lakeside, spoke about the proposed resolution and Brownfield.

Chris TerHarmsel, 2615 Boston, spoke about policies he would like to see implemented.

Lauren, 520 Cambridge, would like urgency on the proposed resolution.

Tonya DeOliveria, 1851 Hall, spoke about her family regarding ICE.

Robert Blaszak, spoke about the protest outside of his house.

Marc Armstead, 2202 Elmwood, spoke about the Brownfield.

2026-19. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Hunter thanked staff for clearing the snow and the We the People group he has been working with took second place in competition.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak thanked residents that came out for the protest.

Commissioner Schwartz thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and speaking and noted that residents like the sidewalk clearing equipment.

Commissioner Burdick noted that previously he gave out information regarding flock cameras and mentioned that Ben Smith was the new Parks and Recreation School Board member.

Commissioner Skaggs spoke about the ICE activities in Minneapolis.

Mayor Favale wants to make sure we do the right thing relating to ICE and mentioned how good the roads have been compared to other communities. She also thanked Public Safety for the way in which they responded to unhoused individuals at the Community Center.

City Manager Charles said that East is blessed with resources that neighboring communities don't have regarding snow removal, the previous Rite-Aid building is being refreshed while vacant, reminded everyone about Strategic Planning on Saturday and February 10th the Planning Commission is holding a public hearing for the Master Plan.

2026-20. Public Safety annual report.

Public Safety Chief Buikema reviewed the information.

Commissioner Skaggs asked about what would happen if ICE showed up in East. Public Safety Chief Buikema said that the city has no authority to enforce immigration issues.

Mayor Favale asked about FAQ's for the website. Chief Buikema said that he is working on that and policies relating to ICE.

Commissioner Burdick recognized the crossing guards and other personnel that were working out in the frigid weather.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak gave a kudos to public safety for the reduction of property crimes and asked what the cameras were at the intersections. Deputy City Manager La Fave said that they were detecting traffic cameras, and some were sensors that gave the temperature of the roads.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if most of the traffic stops ended in a warning. Chief Buikema said that they did.

Commissioner Skaggs asked if traffic crashes were categorized with mobility devices. Chief Buikema said that it was difficult at this time due to the form only having vehicle or pedestrian options for accidents.

Commissioner Hunter asked about the staffing at public safety. Chief Buikema said that it takes about one and a half years to get a new recruit fully trained in all the areas.

Mayor Favale asked about additional staffing needed to handle FOIA requests. Chief Buikema said that it was not needed at this time.

2026-21. Strategic Area Update 2026.

City Manager Charles reviewed the information.

2026-22. Schwartz-Skaggs. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2026-022-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held January 20, 2026.

2026-022-B. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$324,192.29; county and school disbursements of \$680,679.72, and total remaining disbursements of \$627,374.39.

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

Nays: None.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until February 17, 2026.

Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk