



MINUTES
Committee of the Whole
Monday, June 3, 2019 @ 5:30 p.m.
Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Wood called the meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Councilmember Kathie Dunbar- arrived at 6:01 p.m.
Councilmember Jeremy A. Garza
Councilmember Adam Hussain
Council Member Brian T. Jackson
Councilmember Peter Spadafore
Councilmember Patricia Spitzley- excused
Councilmember Jody Washington
Councilmember Carol Wood

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Eric Brewer, Council Internal Auditor
Jim Smiertka, City Attorney
Samantha Harkins, Executive Staff, Mayor's Office
Angela Bennett, Finance Director
Linda Sanchez, HR Director
Calvin Jones, BWL
Jean Bolley, Librarian
Deb Bloomquist, CADL Board Chairperson
Margaret Bossenbery, CADL Board Member
Vern Johnson, CADL Board Member
Scott Duimstra, CADL Ex. Director
Melissa Cole, Librarian
Brett Kaschinske, Parks and Recreation Director
Breina Pugh, BWL
Elaine Womboldt
Loyd Stonner
Ronshon Fisher
David Weiner
Bryan Beverly

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM MAY 20, 2019 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

Ms. Stanaway spoke on the topics on the Council agenda for later, and the veto presented by the Mayor. Ms. Stanaway spoke in opposition to it and wanted funds towards roads, parks, fire and police. Ms. Stanaway then spoke on the Scott Garden progress and her concerns on plant transfers, asking Council to ask where the funds came from for the new plantings.

Presentation

Capital Area District Library Annual Presentation

Mr. Duimstra provided introductions and went through their 2018 initiatives, programs and items listed in their annual report. Ms. Cole spoke on the highlights at the South Lansing Branch which included reviews by some of their patrons. Ms. Bolley spoke on the Foster Library location and what services they provide. Council President Wood referenced a letter from November 20, 2018 regarding the TIFA and the decision of the CADL Board to not opt into agreements with taxing authorities. Mr. Duimstra confirmed that there is legislation that protects library millages that were passed after December 2016, and those could not be captured by a taxing authority without an agreement for the 2018 millage and after. The 2018 was not just a "renewal", but rate was renewed, but technically it was a new rate per their attorney the Michigan Library Association. That passage the Board did discuss going into an agreement with the taxing authority and they chose to take funds the voters chose to go to library, to go to the library. Council President Wood asked for confirmation that the City of Lansing does pay for CADL rent at the South Lansing branch and gives CADL space at Foster, and Mr. Duimstra confirmed, and added that there is an agreement with the municipalities that if they provide the space CADL will provide the library services. Council President Wood then asked what the amount of the reduction was from not being able to capture and Mr. Duimstra and Ms. Harkins confirmed it was \$63,000. Council Member Garza asked how often library cards are renewed and was told four (4) years. Council Member Washington asked the CADL to research and invest more services on the north side of Lansing, and reach out to corporate and community partners. Ms. Cole confirmed that they are working with Parks and Recreation to bring services to Hildebrand and Mt. Vernon for the summer. Council Member Hussain asked about the activity of the Friends of the Library, and was told that their only fund raiser is the used book sales in the basement of the Downtown Library. Council Member Hussain then asked where they received their operating funds from, and it was stated to the Committee that it was 90% from the operating millage and they do get some Federal and State aid funds.

Discussion/Action:

RESOLUTION –Reappointments

Jason Wilkes, At Large; Board of Public Service; Term to Expire June 30, 2023
James Tischler, Business Owner; Downtown Lansing Inc.; Term to Expire June 30, 2023
Brian McGrain, City of Lansing Representative; LDFA; Term to Expire June 30, 2023
Elaine Barr; Michigan Avenue Authority; Term to Expire June 30, 2023
Zoe Ahlstrom, At Large Member; Park Board; Term to Expire June 30, 2023

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE REAPPOINTMENTS OF JASON WILKES, JAMES TISCHLER, BRIAN MCGRAIN, ELAINE BARR AND ZOE AHLSTROM. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

DISCUSSION – Update on the Scott Garden transplants and new landscaping

Mr. Kaschinske, Parks Director and Ms. Pugh with BWL presented to the Committee. Council President Wood recapped for them the comments at other meetings regarding the garden material that was removed from Scott Gardens and the transplanting of or new material in the new Scott Garden. Mr. Kaschinske summarized that the garden was moved in fall 2016, and the peonies were the only items that did not survive, but 99% of the other plants did. All of the bricks from Sunken Garden were moved over, and in process it was replaced “brick by brick”. Mr. Kaschinske then spoke briefly on the construction of the wall and the holes that were placed in the wall for the proposed sedum. Then beginning in 2017 they held meetings with garden club members responsible for Scott Garden, the Cooley Garden Master Garden Volunteers, and former and current City staff along with BWL and consultants. This group he stated took the opportunity to redesign the garden and the opportunity with this site now being full sun, redesign with input from the Garden Club Members of the Sunken Garden. Their goal was to add more color and have plants that can survive with more sun, and based on the USDA ratings, the zones went from 4 to 5, with zone 5 being warmer, that changed their plantings. They have 450+ shrubs, annuals, and perennials planted.

Council Member Spadafore stepped away from the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Mr. Kaschinske stated that within 4-5 years they will see the full size of the plants they chose, and the group chose different blooming colors for each area based on time of year and time of bloom. He confirmed that 99% of the original plants were saved and in either Cooley Garden of the Sunken Garden.

Council Member Spadafore returned to the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

Mr. Kaschinske then highlighted changes including ten (10) markers highlighted items in the park, parking in the area of the parks and a connection between the parks. Council President Wood asked, out of the 450+ plantings, how many were actually from the former garden, and Mr. Kaschinske stated that 50% from the original garden are now in the current, and the other 50% is staying in the Cooley Garden.

Council Member Jackson asked about the BWL stump removal progress at Colonial Village, and Ms. Pugh confirmed they have been talking to those residents, and are waiting on coordination from them on a follow up meeting. Ms. Harkins was asked if there was a meeting with them and the Administration, and Ms. Harkins acknowledged she was not aware of one but would check. Council President Wood stated the Committee would ask for an update at the June 10th Committee meeting. Council Member Garza asked if there were any additional costs for the plantings and if so who bid on those new plantings. Mr. Kaschinske confirmed with the project over all there were additional costs. Council President Wood asked if the percentage of the new plantings were paid for by BWL and that was confirmed.

DISCUSSION - General Fund Status Report, FY2019 3rd Quarter and Vacancy Factor Report

Council President Wood acknowledged Ms. Bennett and Ms. Sanchez-Gazelle for providing the vacancy factor report prior to the meeting. Ms. Bennett then went through the 3rd Quarter GF report highlighting where they are on target and how the revenues are benchmarked over the last three (3) years. Council President Wood asked if she had met with the Courts on the numbers noted in fines and forfeitures and Ms. Bennett confirmed that the deficiencies reflect changes in case revenues and the civil filing revenues. Mr. Smiertka added that other than a variation of caseloads, he was not sure why there would be a difference. Ms. Bennett then went into details on the expenditure portion of the report. Trends are driving on patterns in payroll, at it is currently at 70.4%, she then spoke briefly on a proposed budget amendment for the vacancy factor. Council President Wood asked if the Clerk’s budget will be reimbursed by

the School District for the recent school election, and was told it would. She then asked what the amount was they were front loading for the LPD positions, at which Ms. Bennett stated \$200,000-250,000.000 which equates to front loading 5-8 officers, however she was not sure of the exact number, so Council President Wood asked for the exact numbers to be provided. Ms. Bennett moved into the vacancy report, noting it is budgeted for \$500,000 and in March they expect to be at \$375,000 however this year they are at \$868,000. Council Member Spadafore asked if the number is less, if that means they hired more than they anticipated, therefore filled more vacancies. Ms. Bennett clarified that if the number is less not as many people left therefore fewer vacancies. Council Member Spadafore then asked when it would be considered a budget problem, and Ms. Bennett said that in March they expected \$375,000 and if it would have been lower they would think about budget adjustments. Council President Wood then noted to the Committee that the Administration, HR and Mr. Brewer have been working on getting a metric spreadsheet to work out what is off-set by contract. She acknowledged that the report that was provided offered a lot than in the past, however they are still looking for more. Ms. Sanchez-Gazelle offered to answer any questions. Council President Wood referenced the \$868,000 and asked how she was dealing with hiring practices and if it was a matter of not getting applicants, or not getting qualified applicants, and if so why. Ms. Sanchez-Gazelle acknowledged that a year ago there were more vacancies and while there are a number of issues, her HR staff is working hard to fill the vacancies. She hopes the software program she proposed in her budget will make things run smoother, however also noted that some positions such as engineers and public service has been difficult to fill because those position have to have the qualifying individuals apply.

Council Member Jackson stepped away from the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Council President Wood then referenced all the positions that stated “on hold by department” on the report. Ms. Sanchez-Gazelle has asked the department directors to prioritize all their openings to they can move on the urgent ones first. Council President Wood referred to a City Attorney position that has been vacant since June, 2011 and a LPD Administrative Assistant vacant since 2011. The HR Director confirmed the legal position was filled April 6th, and the LPD position is being worked on for a new job description. The other one listed in Finance for an appraiser, she added, was filled March 23rd.

Council Member Jackson returned to the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Ms. Sanchez-Gazelle stated her department is working diligently to fill vacancies. Council President Wood provided an example form the vacancy report where it was noted an electrical technician position had been vacant since 2006. The HR Director confirmed that positions like that are problematic because they are not successful in getting applications. Offhand she was not able to provide the salary figure being offered but stated she would look into it.

Ms. Bennett stated that the Council will be referred a budget amendment at the next Council meeting which will have an adjustment in it for the difference in the vacancy factor.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary
Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on June 10, 2019