

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON  
CITY COUNCIL  
JUNE 26, 2006  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Kenneth Zichi, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. Roll Call:**

Mayor Kenneth Zichi, Mayor Pro-tem Robert Hanna, Council Members Penny Davis, Michelle Hyne, George Monroe, Brian O'Connell, and Scott VanAllsburg.  
Absent: None.

Also Present:

City Manager Lisa Hitchcock, Deputy Clerk Holly Thompson, City Attorney Timothy Perrone, Planning & Development Administrator Lynn Wilson, JFM Productions, EDC Members Dan Frank, Mike Thomas, and Adam Lesperance, DDA Members Barb Vandenberg, and Tom Mitchell, Chamber of Commerce Members Dawn Marie Joseph, and Barb Burke, ZBA Member John Pratt, Planning Commissioner William Schall, TSC Representative Don Kettler, citizens Bill Dyke, Terri Campbell, and B. Kazewyck.

**4. Approval of Agenda:**

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **O'Connell**, to approve the agenda as presented.  
**Motion passed by voice vote.**

**5. Audience Participation:**

Councilman Hanna reported that former Fire Chief Kirt Hunt had passed away. He also reported that Jubilee Coordinator Sandy Whelton commented that this year has been the best cooperation between the City and Jubilee and thanked them for their assistance.

Terri Campbell commented that she was confused about the idea to not raise the water/sewer rates by taking money from the general fund.

Dawn Marie Joseph on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce called the Council's attention to the issue of the Williamston High School football games moving to Webberville for the next season. She stressed that this will greatly impact the local businesses if this happens.

William Schall asked why there were black tubes across Williamston Road. Manager Hitchcock answered that they are for a traffic count for TSC. Dr. Schall asked about a traffic study for TSC in April and was told by the City Planner it would not be needed. He believes that the traffic count will be inaccurate because school is not in session.

**6. Council Minutes of June 12, 2006:**

Councilman VanAllsburg asked the Clerk to review the tapes and add the comments between he and Planning Administrator Wilson in item 9c. and correct item 9h. to reflect that they would be digging in the Deer Creek Park area. Michelle Hyne recalled that she amended the motion to have the project begin after Jubilee.

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **O'Connell**, to table the minutes until the next meeting. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

### **7. Accounts Payable:**

Councilman Hanna reported that the accounts payable totaled \$62,334.36 and included consultant payments, utilities, Public Service Building loan, Master Plan, and other miscellaneous supplies and services. Reference #'s 6901-6949.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **O'Connell**, to approve the accounts payable as presented. Yes: O'Connell, Davis, Monroe, VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi, Hyne. No: None. **Motion passed.**

### **8. Action Items**

#### **8a. 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Ordinance #299- Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments:**

Mayor Zichi distributed a news article from 1970 regarding tearing down the Wilkins building to build a gas station.

Councilman VanAllsburg questioned if the public has been well informed of this ordinance, especially the surrounding homes in Plymouth Landing.

Councilmember Davis replied that she has personally spoken with most of the Plymouth Landing residents and they are in favor of the development.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that this will end up as a strip development. If there is no overlay district will this allow strip development?

Terri Campbell asked the Council to define "strip development".

Mayor Zichi answered that it is defined as a traditional strip mall, with a building set back with parking in the front and a building you can barely see from the road.

Councilman O'Connell commented that one business is not a strip development. He asked if it was considered strip development because the parking is in the front because that would mean all businesses are strip developments.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that he believes Williamston should be set apart and better than average.

Councilmember Davis commented that she wants to see jobs created in Williamston. She cited an instance where one of her children's classmates had to move to a homeless shelter because his father could not find a job.

Councilman Hanna commented in regards to the distributed news article, stating that there is a difference between a historical building and an empty field.

Terri Campbell commented that East Lansing is referred to as a strip development and there is no parking in front and they are historical buildings.

She believes parking in front of a building is a marketing factor for any business.

She also thinks that a gas station in the downtown would have been bad, but where TSC is going is appropriate.

Dawn Marie Joseph commented that there are berms proposed between the houses and the business.

Councilman VanAllsburg asked if the developer suggested the berms or was just willing to concede to the demands of the City.

Administrator Wilson commented that the developers' first plans showed a physical buffer to separate the different types of uses.

Councilman VanAllsburg asked if this particular property was discussed with the Master Plan Consultants.

Councilmember Davis answered that the consultants advocated mixed use.

Councilman Monroe commented that the Council is off subject and the agenda calls for a second reading of the ordinance.

John Pratt commented that he has made hundreds of calls to residents to inform them of what is happening.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **Davis**, to approve the second reading of Ordinance #299, Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments as presented. Yes: Hanna, Hyne, O'Connell, Davis, Monroe. No: VanAllsburg, Zichi. **Motion passed.**

**8b. Forest of Nottingham Readiness to Serve Water Billing:**

Bill Dyke informed the Council that he has reviewed the water bills for the past year and the water/sewer usage was average or below average every month. The Council directed the City Manager to draft a resolution for the next meeting adjusting the rates to a one inch connection.

**8c. Board Re-appointments:**

John Pratt and Adam Lesperance introduced themselves to the Council.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **O'Connell**, to concur with the Mayor's reappointment of John Pratt for a term to expire 6-30-09 to the Parks and Recreation Commission, and Adam Lesperance for a term to expire 6-30-12 to the Economic Development Corporation/TIFA 2A & TIFA 2B. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**8d. Parks & Recreation Commission Rules and Regulations:**

On page 7, item H., 29 lines down delete "rule".

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **O'Connell**, to approve the rules and regulations for the Parks & Recreation Commission as amended. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**8e. Budget Amendments:**

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **Monroe**, to make the budget adjustments as presented. Yes: Zichi, Hyne, O'Connell, Davis, Monroe, VanAllsburg, Hanna. No: None. **Motion passed.**

**8f. Fiscal Year 2006-2007 Budget:**

**i. Consider Subsidizing Water and Sewer Fund Budgets from General Fund Taxes:**

Motion by **Hyne**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to go ahead and make some adjustments to the General Fund Member Hanna commented that he appreciates Councilman VanAllsburg's suggestions to always find a compromise and Councilman O'Connell's ways to find a resolution, but in his opinion taking money from the General Fund to subsidize Water/Sewer which is separate is disguising the problem. All it will do is pass the problem on to the next Council. The problem will be much more expensive in the future. Councilmember Hyne commented that she and O'Connell are fairly new and asked them what the Council has done in the past five years to address the problem. Hanna answered that they have raised rates. Mayor Zichi answered that the 2000 rate increase was minimal because they were unaware how much to raise them. In 2001 they were raised according to a study done by Tetra Tech. Councilmember Hyne commented that she believes that there needs to be budget cuts made and form a work group to address the issue and look in to what the Council can do. Councilmember Davis commented that she ~~does not~~ feels that it should not be the government's job to judge whether anyone should get help paying their bills. Taking money from the General Fund will only compound the issue. If people have issues with higher rates perhaps a fund can be established where people can opt to have their bill rounded up and the money would go into a fund to help them or reduce the late fees and turn on fees. Monroe commented that there is a Family Independence Agency in Lansing that will help people pay their bills. The Water/Sewer fund should stand on it's own as a private enterprise. Councilman O'Connell commented that his issue is that the Council subsidizes outside the City by supporting marketing campaigns for businesses outside the City. It is not the role of government to advertise for businesses. He believes that a hold should be put on the advertising money. Hyne continued with the motion: On the General Fund under City Council under salaries she proposed to make a cut of \$3750, Councilmember Davis asked Hyne to explain the cuts as she went along. Under membership dues cut \$800, cut \$1,250 under travel and education, and under printing cut \$800. Manager Hitchcock asked if Hyne has a total per department because the City cannot have a line item budget because it will cause issues with the auditors. Councilman VanAllsburg asked how she came up with the numbers. Hyne answered that she just held the numbers the same as last year. Councilman Hanna commented that the problem with that is addressing how much per meeting is allowed. Councilman O'Connell commented that if the Council is over budget the Councilmember's pay will be cut per meeting. Mayor Zichi commented that it cannot be done because the rates are set by the Compensation Commission. Hyne continued with her motion: In the City Manager Budget she cut the Executive Secretary Position which eliminated -\$35,000 with fringe benefits of -\$17,882 and operating supplies -\$700, membership dues -\$300, and travel and education -\$1000, in the City

Clerk's budget salaries -\$5,000, travel and education \$-500, Treasurer budget salaries -\$15,000, travel and education -\$1000, the Assessor budget, professional services -\$1,820, under Building and Grounds budget, -\$5000, and operating supplies -\$1000, and repairs and maintenance -\$5000. Councilmember Davis asked if this information could be typed up and submitted. Mayor Zichi answered that the budget needs to be voted on with tonight. Davis commented that there have been three special meetings regarding the budget. She added that Councilmember Hyne is doing to the Council what she complained that is being done to her, by not giving the Council the information to review before the meeting. Hyne commented that she requested information immediately following the last budget meeting, Thursday, and received no response. She followed up with an e-mail on Friday, and had her daughter go to City Hall to pick up the information. She commented that she called Friday at 4:30 and could not even get the salary for the executive secretary. She received absolutely no response. Hyne met with the City Manager on Monday afternoon to meet with her and get the information and follow up. The Treasurer responded to her that he had no idea what the Executive Secretary makes. City Manager stated that she disagrees with Councilmember Hyne and offered to provide the Council with the e-mail she was referring to. Hyne continued with her motion: DPW salaries - \$5000, DPW Equipment and Maintenance Salary-\$4200. Councilman Monroe asked if he could just see a copy of the amendments she wants to make. Operating Supplies -\$5000, Equipment Repair and Maintenance -\$2000, Leaf and Grass Collection Salary-\$3300, Equipment Rental -\$3000, under Planning, Engineering and Consulting -\$5000, Travel and Education -\$800, and Operating Supplies -\$2000, Community & Economic Development, Salary -\$2500, Operating Supplies -\$500, and Travel and Education \$500, and Marketing - \$21,600. Under Parks & Recreation, Salary -\$2500, Operating Expenses - \$1000, under Capital Outlay, DPW Equipment -\$5000. With a total of -\$159,702 cut from the General Fund. Manager Hitchcock commented that she figures the expenses high and the revenues low, so some of these items are already budgeted high. Councilman VanAllsburg asked if there is extra in the budget does it cause employees to spend more because it is available. Manager Hitchcock responded that the staff is not allowed to do so. Councilmember Hyne commented that her goal is to make some cuts and give the Council an opportunity to get a work group to address this issue in a responsible way, ~~look at it~~. This was discussed this issue with the City Manager and there has been no substantial things done to address this issue. Hyne continued her motion: Under Major Street, -\$8500, Local Street -\$5000, Building & Zoning -\$5000, Sewer Fund -\$10,000, Water -\$6300. **Council member Hyne stated that there are over 130 homes for sale in the City.**

Discussion: Councilman VanAllsburg asked if this is feasible. Manager Hitchcock reported that either way the budget expenses are estimated high and revenues are estimated low, it means that budget amendments are done less throughout the year. Councilman Hanna asked what the money cut from the budget will be use for. Councilmember Hyne commented that she wants the

money to be applied to the sewer bond payment. She added that she talked to Alan Dolley for 2 ½ hours. Councilman Hanna commented that basically she wants to disguise the problem. Councilmember Hyne responded that she is not trying to disguise anything, because the problem has been going on for years. Hanna commented that the Council will bankrupt the City by subsidizing the water/sewer with the General Fund. This will end up raising the millage rate in the taxes. Davis commented that it will end up costing the residents 15% next year. Hanna commented that under this scenario in 3 years the City budget will be busted because the debt goes up every year. Hyne commented that she would like to see a work group formed. Member Davis commented that principal payments went up this year and tap fees have decreased. It is not from malicious intent by the Council to neglect the water/sewer fund. Zichi commented that even an aggressive work group will not solve anything because even an aggressive work group cannot raise money. Hyne disagreed, she believes that a work group that is committed to work on the budget will be able to address these issues and there is money budgeted to renovate on the Community Center. Mayor Zichi responded that money for the Community Center is not in this budget and there needs to be something done to house City staff. The only other option they have is to fire everyone that works for the City or something needs to be done to figure out how to spend the money. Hyne commented that there are people that are interested in looking at funding different things. Member Davis commented that they should run for City Council because that is what their job is. Hyne commented that notice was too short for the rate increase information. Hanna commented that the current library building costs half of the utilities that the Community Center's cost and the Community Center is much more efficient. Terri Campbell commented that what her understanding is, there is approximately \$150,000 in extra money in the General Fund, she wants to know what will be cut from her City services. This information should have been presented to the public a long time ago. Hyne commented that she has e-mails she can show everyone about her questions and requests for information to the City. Ms. Campbell commented that if Hyne were prepared she could have provided the information after the last Council meeting. **Hyne stated that on June 26<sup>th</sup> she was able to obtain the information after following up with the City Manager.** Zichi commented that he also had the impression that, the budget cut ideas were going to be presented at the budget work shop. He commented that the major budget cuts are from eliminating the Executive Secretary position so the City is short staffed and cutting out the billboard. He does not believe spending money on a billboard is a good idea either and the rest is just nickel and dime stuff. Hyne commented that it is just holding salaries at the same. Zichi commented that she believes that it does not matter if employees get a raise or does not matter if gas costs more. He believes the City is short staffed and this will only hurt the employees. O'Connell asked Hyne if she wants to put more money to the principal bond payment for an extra payment this year. He asked if this is a budget cut for future years. Hyne commented that she would just like to try this for one year. O'Connell expressed his concerns that some of the budget cuts were made from

the water/sewer budget, the budget cuts are made to people and not program cuts. He never heard that the City was overstaffed or overpaid. Hyne commented that people are losing their jobs. He expressed another concern that Major Street and Local Street are being cut. He added that most of the employees also live in the City, and they are going to have to pay the water/sewer bills that are raised.

Vote on the Motion: Yes: Hyne. No: VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi, O'Connell, Davis, Monroe. **Motion failed.**

Motion by **O'Connell**, second by **Hanna**, to eliminate the budget item for the billboard in the amount of \$21,600 in the advertising fund. Yes: Hanna, Zichi, O'Connell, Davis, Monroe, VanAllsburg. No: Hyne. **Motion passed.**

**ii. Consider Water & Sewer Rates:**

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to increase the water rates by 5% and the sewer rates by 9%. Yes: O'Connell, Davis, VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi. No: Hyne, Monroe. **Motion passed.**

**iii. Future Budget Workshop &/or Budget Committee Meetings:**

Council members O'Connell, Hanna, and Monroe volunteered to hold budget committee meetings to discuss budget proposals.

**iv. Consider Budget Resolution:**

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **Davis**, to accept the budget resolution 09-06 adopting the millage rate of 15.1342 as amended with the elimination of the billboard in the amount of \$21,600 out of the advertising budget. Yes: O'Connell, Davis, Monroe, VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi. No: Hyne. **Motion passed.**

**11. Staff Reports**

**11a. City Manager:**

Manager Hitchcock submitted a written report for Council review.

**11b. City Attorney:**

No report.

**11c. Community Development Director:**

Director Alfredson submitted a written report for Council review.

**11d. Planning & Development Administrator:**

Administrator Wilson submitted a written report for Council review. Mayor Zichi commented that he has made two complaints to her office but has never seen them in her reports.

**12. Committee/Sub-Committee Reports**

**12a. Legislative Director:**

Councilman O'Connell commented that the state budget should be done shortly and legislation session are scheduled every Wednesday for the rest of the summer.

**13. Audience Participation:**

Mike Thomas commented that the next public street should be named in Kirt Hunt's honor.

**14. Council Member Comments:**

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that he is hoping that the City will consider developing an official tree planting project, because no matter how ugly something is it can be covered with trees.

Councilman O'Connell thanked the remaining audience for attending the entire meeting.

Councilman Hanna commented that the Jubilee and Grand Parade were great. He added that he enjoys the painted fire hydrants.

Councilmember Hyne commented that the Jubilee Committee did a great job and the parade had a good turn out.

**Meeting Adjourned at 9:26 p.m.**

**Respectfully Submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Holly M. Thompson, Deputy Clerk**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Kenneth V. Zichi, Mayor**

**Date Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_