

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON  
CITY COUNCIL  
FEBRUARY 26, 2007  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Mayor Ken Zichi and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. Roll Call:**

Mayor Ken Zichi, Mayor Pro-tem Robert Hanna, Council Members Brian O'Connell, and Scott VanAllsburg. Absent: Michelle Hyne, (arrived at 7:37), Penny Davis, (arrived at 7:05) and George Monroe.

Also Present:

City Manager Lisa Hitchcock, Deputy Clerk Holly Thompson, City Attorney Dave Stoker, NIESA Representative Charlie Galbreath, and citizens Mike Thomas, Susan Graff, Keith and Betty Honey, and John Pratt.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **O'Connell**, to excuse Hyne and Monroe. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**4. Approval of Agenda:**

Remove item 12c.

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

**5. Audience Participation:**

Susan Graff asked for clarification on the numbers for the renovation versus new construction, what is the general square footage that is being looked at for new construction.

Manager Hitchcock answered that the existing building total is 17,000 and the projected square footage needed is 12,436 which does not include the DPW building.

Mayor Zichi commented that the estimates given in the newspaper were strictly his estimate.

John Pratt commented that he has gone through the report page by page and found that the Community Center space is 22% bigger than the space needed by the City. He added that he believes everyone should be on the same page and the Community Center should be sold and put back on the tax rolls.

\*Councilmember Davis arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Mayor Zichi commented that the City is talking about phasing the renovation of the building to make sure taxes are not increased. He believes that the estimate of renovating the building for 1.2 million is two years old and believes cost increases will make it more.

John Pratt commented that he believes it should not be that much more expensive from the quote from two years ago. He asked the City Manager the cost of the space needs study.

Manager Hitchcock answered that she does not have the figures at the meeting.

**6. Council Minutes of February 12, 2007 and Special Meeting Minutes of February 7, 2007:**

On page 1, item 5., 2<sup>nd</sup> line down, of the February 12<sup>th</sup> Council minutes, change “any council members” to “the City Council”.

Motion by **O’Connell**, second by **Hanna**, to approve the February 12, 2007 regular meeting Council minutes as amended. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

On page 1, item 3., 4 lines down on the February 7, 2007 special meeting Council minutes change “the” to “his”. On page 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> line down, add “She believed there was a verbal agreement between the City and Jubilee.”

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to approve the special meeting Council minutes of February 7, 2007 as amended. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**7. Accounts Payable:**

Councilman Hanna reported that the accounts payable totaled \$158,769.06 and included insurance, utilities, consultants, attorneys, bond payments, and other miscellaneous supplies and services. Reference #'s 8243-8319.

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

**8. Presentation – Betty Honey:**

Betty Honey thanked the Council for allowing her to speak. She recapped the presentation from last month on putting the City Hall on the National Historic Register. She stressed how unique the City Hall building is to Williamston and pointed out that not everyone wants to preserve the building.

Mayor Zichi commented that he has made a call to Mr. Lutzke regarding the project but has not received a response yet. He stated that his goal is to preserve the building for future generations. He added that if the building at the

corner of Putnam St. and Grand River Ave. was demolished and a gas station built in his place he probably would not have moved to Williamston.

Betty Honey commented that the City Hall is important to the quality of life in Williamston and not everyone knows how terrible it would be if the building was torn down.

Mayor Zichi commented that the Streetscape in front was created as a pocket park.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that it would be a good idea to find out what impact there would be to renovating the building if it was on the national register.

Councilman Hanna commented that the City has been approached on the expansion of the war memorial in front of City Hall.

Mayor Zichi commented that he will contact Mrs. Honey if there are any new developments.

## **9. Action Items**

### **9a. Board of Review Appointment:**

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **O'Connell**, to concur with the Mayor's appointment of Barb Grant to the Board of Review for a term to expire 01/01/10. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

### **9b. Consider Sale of Fire Hall Property Located at 627 W. Grand River Avenue:**

Charlie Galbreath commented that there did not seem to be any opposition at the public hearing over selling the fire hall. He has been contacted by a person that is interested in purchasing the building.

Mayor Zichi commented that he believes it would be best to allow people to make an offer on the building.

John Pratt questioned if the building would be up for bid.

Attorney Stoker commented that it does not have to be up for bid but would have a requirement to establish a resolution to keep on file regarding the sale.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that he believes there should be a sale price set.

Attorney Stoker commented that they would be able to publish it in the newspaper.

Councilman VanAllsburg questioned if the estimate for building a new fire hall is appropriate for the sale price.

Mayor Zichi answered that it would not be. He added that when a price is set, that sets it as a maximum of what is offered.

\*Councilmember Hyne arrived at 7:37 p.m.

Attorney Stoker commented that the City should reserve the right to accept or reject any and all offers.

Councilman O'Connell commented that he has no problem with not setting a sale price, but will not accept a low ball bid.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to approve the offer for sale of the building at 627 E. Grand River Ave. with the provision that offers can be accepted or rejected, and split the cost of sale with NIESA with a deadline for offers of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. Yes: VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi, Hyne, O'Connell, Davis. No: None. **Motion passed.**

**9c. Refuse Contract Renewal:**

Skip Losey of Granger Container introduced himself to the Council and added that they should contact him if they have any questions or concerns.

Councilmember Hyne asked when the contract was up for bids last.

Manager Hitchcock stated it had been three years.

Councilman VanAllsburg asked if there have been complaints.

Manager Hitchcock responded that they have had a few calls but have had no problem contacting Granger and having them take care of any issues.

Councilman O'Connell gave an example of what other companies do in other cities to encourage recycling. Money is given back to the City when a certain amount of recycling is done by the residents.

Mr. Losey stated that Granger does not have that program.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **Davis**, to approve the three year contract extension with Granger as presented. Yes: Zichi, Hyne, O'Connell, Davis, VanAllsburg, Hanna. No: None. **Motion passed.**

Mr. Losey thanked Council for approving the contract extension.

**9d. Consider Proposed Sale Price of Public Services Building:**

Mayor Zichi reported that the agreement with Habitat for Humanity was leasing the building with an option to purchase. The EDC recommended a purchase price of 1.1 million dollars at their January meeting. The cost is based on an appraisal done in 2001 and increased it by the consumer price index.

Councilmember Hyne commented that she talked to the City Manager regarding the remaining mortgage on the building and the cost of construction of a new DPW building and was concerned that the construction of a new DPW building would be too high.

John Pratt commented that the cost will be 3 million dollars to redo the current DPW building. The City would be a lot smarter to keep the public services building and keep the police department out of the downtown for emergency runs. He believes the building is a quality building.

Councilman Hanna commented that he does not agree it is a quality building.

John Pratt commented that the Community Center is not a quality building and added that there is a leak in the gym ceiling.

Councilman O'Connell commented that there is currently more space than the City will ever need. He is concerned that the City has too much excess property.

John Pratt commented that the community needs to come together to talk about this. He added that the DPW garage is currently located on a road where there is no public access. He suggested that the police stay where they are.

Mayor Zichi commented that the discussions have been going on since 2001 regarding the difficulty of having City offices located too far away from the center of town. He added that the issue is not whether to sell the building, but how much it is going to be offered for.

Councilmember Hyne commented that she wants to know how much it is going to be to replace the buildings the City is selling. She felt that she did not have enough information when making the initial decision to sell the building for 1.1 million while she was on the EDC.

Councilman O'Connell commented that he would have liked to know that when this building was going to be sold that another building would have to be built.

John Pratt commented that the building will not go onto the tax rolls because Habitat is non-profit.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that Habitat still does a lot for the community.

John Pratt commented that he agrees.

Councilmember Hyne commented that she agrees as well but when there are taxpayers that are strapped it defeats the purpose and there is the potential to spend three times what it is being sold for.

Susan Graff commented that she recalls there were quite a few issues with the public services building not having sufficient ventilation, waste handling of oil containment, fire walls, and an elevator to make the building adequate for a public building.

Mayor Zichi commented that it was determined in 2001 that the building was dysfunctional.

Councilmember Hyne commented that she would have appreciated having all of the information before she made a decision.

Councilman Hanna commented that the agreement with Habitat for Humanity was done before she was on the Council.

Councilman O'Connell commented that this could potentially be a big hit to the City if new buildings need to be built to replace the Public Services Building.

Councilmember Hyne commented that the old site could be contaminated and could cost a lot of money to fix.

Mayor Zichi commented that DEQ will probably require the property to have a concrete slab put on it to keep it under control.

Motion by **Hyne**, second by **O'Connell**, to table the consideration of the proposed sale price of the Public Services building. Yes: Hyne, O'Connell. No: VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi, Davis. **Motion failed.**

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to approve the selling price of 1.1 million dollars to the Habitat for Humanity as recommended by the Economic Development Corporation. Yes: VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi, Davis. No: Hyne, O'Connell. **Motion passed.**

**9e. Amendment to Industrial Park Agreement:**

Manager Hitchcock reported that there is an agreement that Innovation Dr. should not go through as the contract currently states. It does not meet City standards and also leaves issues with P.I. Engineering to the north.

Attorney Stoker commented that a site plan was approved by the Planning Commission like a road was already there but it was not. The City needs to

clarify whether it should be a road or a private drive. They will need to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals to amend the site plan.

Manager Hitchcock commented that the proposal was to have Innovation Dr. connect to Loop Rd. Which would cause increased through traffic.

Councilmember Hyne clarified that if the road was built then it would cut through a parcel.

Motion by **O'Connell**, second by **Hanna**, to allow the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the agreement with Granger and the EDC to make Innovation Dr. a driveway and not a public road. Yes: Zichi, Hyne, O'Connell, Davis, VanAllsburg, Hanna. No: None. **Motion passed.**

## **10. Discussion Items**

### **10a. Liquor Licenses for Redevelopment:**

Mayor Zichi reported that the liquor license program will allow the downtowns to get a liquor license with renovation which will draw businesses into the City.

Manager Hitchcock commented that it would require a business paying \$20,000 for a liquor license with \$75,000 in renovations.

Attorney Stoker commented that it would require Council approval before a liquor license is issued.

## **12. Staff Reports**

### **12a. City Manager:**

Manager Hitchcock submitted a written report and added that the STDI meeting will be at the Discovery Elementary School at 7pm on Tuesday, February 27, 2007. She added that the City has been contacted by the County regarding a landfill that was sold to Ingham County Road Commission by the City that could be contaminated. In the sale agreement it was stated that the City would be held liable for the contamination on the property if there was any.

Councilman VanAllsburg questioned the status on the library building appraisal.

Manager Hitchcock answered that she was not the one working with Mr. Hansen but will e-mail the status of the appraisal to the Council.

Councilman Hanna asked what the status is of the library moving in to the Community Center.

Manager Hitchcock replied that they are waiting on CADL to finish the electrical work.

Councilmember Hyne asked about the status of the DEQ grant and if someone would be following up on it.

Manager Hitchcock stated that she will.

**12b. City Attorney:**

Attorney Stoker reported that one of the primary changes from the Cable Franchise agreement will be the right to use the right of way. As long as they are treated like everyone else it will be ok. The City should adopt an ordinance regulating the use of right of ways. The FCC passed a regulation that will pull the right to franchise away from local municipalities. There may be changes to the Cable Franchise Agreement from Congress.

**12c. Community Development Director:**

Director Alfredson submitted a written report for Council review.

**13. Committee/Sub-Committee Reports**

**13a. Legislative Director:**

Councilman O'Connell reported that the executive order was defeated and the Governor does not want to issue a new one.

**14. Audience Participation:**

Mayor Zichi called for public comment at this time and there was none.

**15. Council Member Comments:**

Councilmember Hyne commented that La Dolce Vita was great.

Councilman Hanna commented that March 2<sup>nd</sup> is "First Fridays" in Williamston. The theme is "Find the Pot of Gold".

Mayor Zichi commented that the high school band is set for the Regional Band Festival.

**16. Closed Session- AFSCME Union Negotiations & FOP Union Negotiations:**

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to go into closed session to discuss the AFSCME and FOP Union Negotiations. Yes: VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi, Hyne, O'Connell, Davis. No: None. **Motion passed.**

Closed Session started at 9:07 p.m.

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **O'Connell**, to return to open session. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Closed Session ended at 9:42 p.m.

**Action on Closed Session:**

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **Davis**, to approve the contract with AFSCME as discussed in closed session. Yes: O'Connell, Davis, VanAllsburg, Hanna, Zichi, Hyne. No: None. **Motion passed.**

**17. Adjournment:**

Motion by **Hanna**, second by **O'Connell**, to adjourn. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**Meeting Adjourned at 9:44 p.m.**

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

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**Kenneth V. Zichi, Mayor**

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