

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON
CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 14, 2008
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

1. Call To Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Michelle Hyne and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call:

Mayor Michelle Hyne, Mayor Pro-tem John Pratt, Council Members Scott VanAllsburg, Kenneth Zichi, Richard Couturier, Carmen Siciliano, and Traci Smith. Absent: None.

Also Present:

City Manager Lisa Hitchcock, Deputy Clerk Holly Thompson, City Attorneys Dave Stoker, and John Gormley, Police Sergeant Jeff Hull, Community Development Director Michelle Aniol, JFM Productions, Eldar Entertainment Coordinator Marla Swartz, Head Librarian JoAnn Hegedus, Capital Area District Library Board Members Sally Trout, and Deb Bloomquist, Downtown Development Authority Members Bev O'Malia, Barb Vandenberg, and Alyson Wendt, EDC/TIFA Members Mike Thomas, and Dan Frank, citizens Susan Graff, Terri Campbell, Mark Stevens, Teresa Wood, Bill St. John, Joseph Choma, Richard Dorn, Todd Carlisle, Dawn Marie Joseph, Rob Couturier, and other members of the public.

4. Approval of Agenda:

Add 15. Closed Session- Attorney Client Privilege Letter.

Motion by **Siciliano**, second by **Couturier**, to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion passed by voice vote with Pratt voting no.

5. Audience Participation:

Terri Campbell commented that she is disappointed to see that there are no materials in the Council packet regarding the discussion items and believes the agenda should at least state who requested the item and why it is a concern or idea for the benefit of Council and the public.

Bev O'Malia, Downtown Development Authority Chair, submitted a letter to Council regarding the consideration of the McKenna contract. She added that the positive comments she made in December are still valid, and outlined the projects that the DDA is working on that need the consistency of the same Community Development Director. She commented that Director Aniol provides continuity between boards and projects. She has worked well with the Wilcox representative on the streetscape project. If the DDA does not receive a grant for the streetscape project, they are going to go through with at least a portion of the project. The DDA needs to have someone that knows what is going on to make the project go smoothly. She added that Director Aniol also did a great job with the survey that was need for the DDA island and parking lot as well as having good communication between the DDA Director and City Planner. The communication between the boards and staff have been very good and she believes it

is disconcerting to have this issue reviewed by Council in January and then again in April.

JoAnn Hegadus, Head Librarian, invited everyone to attend a meeting on Thursday, April 17, at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Center regarding the Capital Improvement Plan from the Capital Area District Library.

John Donahoe commented that the Chamber is in attendance and encouraged the City Council to attend Chamber meetings which are held on third Thursdays of the month.

Aly Wendt, DDA member, commented that she agrees with Bev O'Malia, and supports McKenna and believes they provide an invaluable resource. She added that Director Aniol keeps the DDA going and focused and it would be terrible if they were to lose them.

6. Council Minutes of March 24, 2008:

On page 6, 9h., line 11, change "site" to "sight" and line 21 add "and site distance taken into account as well". On page 7, 9k., add "Mayor Hyne asked where the funds would be coming from and when the issue began, and was told they would be taken from the general fund."

Motion by **Zichi**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to approve the Council minutes of March 24, 2008 as amended. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

7. Accounts Payable:

Councilman Couturier provided a list of the payables and reported that they totaled \$208,385.63. Reference #'s 10544-10655.

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Pratt**, to approve the accounts payables as presented. Yes: Pratt, Siciliano, Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi, Couturier, Hyne. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8. Presentation from Williamston Head Librarian JoAnn Hegedus:

JoAnn Hegedus, Head Librarian, reported that the library move went smoothly and they are happy to be in their new location. The room they are currently located in is sunny, bright, dry, with a staff work room and two workstations allowing her to have her own office. They also have their own activity room. Some of the drawbacks to the new space are, there is not a lot of seating, it is hot year round, they are not as visible, and the library has had to decrease their bookshelves and stock due to decreased public space.

They would like to see more lighting in the parking lot. Ms. Hegedus went over the programs the library offers, and commented that over 67,000 people visited the library in 2007. Computer use has increased significantly while staffing and hours has remained about the same. She introduced Sally Trout and Deb Bloomquist from the Capital Area District Library and distributed a written report.

9. Action Items

9a. ArtFest- Marla Swartz, Eldar Entertainment:

Marla Swartz reported that she has looked into doing the ArtFest this year and wants to go forward with it as a two-day event. She will be holding several smaller events before ArtFest to help fund it.

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Couturier**, to support Marla Swartz's efforts to go forward with the ArtFest for the last weekend in July with no financial obligation from the City except for waiving fees if needed and taking into account traffic control and park use. Yes: Zichi, Couturier, Hyne, Pratt, Siciliano, Smith, VanAllsburg. No: None.
Motion passed.

9b. Sign Setbacks Draft Language:

Director Aniol reported that she, Planner Acuff, and Attorney Stoker combined their ordinances and revised it based on Council comments from the previous meeting.

Attorney Stoker commented that the setback distances are from the sidewalks unless there is not a sidewalk present, and then it is measured from the roadway.

Member Siciliano commented that there is a sentiment of being put off and the Council trying to dictate what the Planning Commission is supposed to do.

Mayor Hyne commented that there was a motion made to have the Planning Commission look at this issue as soon as possible and they chose not to. This will help give them the language to consider and the ordinance is just to give the Planning Commission a helping hand.

Motion by **Zichi**, second by **VanAllsburg**, table the sign setbacks draft language until the next meeting. **Motion passed by voice vote with Couturier voting no.**

9c. Asbestos Inspection- 171 E. Grand River:

Motion by **Couturier**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to reject all proposals for asbestos inspection on the 171 E. Grand River building. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

9d. Building Demolition- 171 E. Grand River:

Motion by **Couturier**, second by **Siciliano**, to accept the bid from Stevens Construction in the amount of \$16,332 as presented for the demolition of the building at 171 E. Grand River. Yes: Couturier, Hyne, Pratt, Siciliano, Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi. No: None.
Motion passed.

9e. EDA Grant Application:

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Couturier**, to support the submission of the EDA grant application as presented. Yes: Hyne, Pratt, Siciliano, Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi, Couturier. No: None. **Motion passed.**

9f. AGS Review/Building Subcommittee Appointment:

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Couturier**, to appoint Smith, Siciliano, and VanAllsburg, to the AGS Review/Building Subcommittee. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

9g. Appointment of Task Force for City Financial Revenue/Debt Report:

Mayor Hyne proposed a task force to look at the City revenue, debt, and bonds to report to Council, the City's status.

Councilman Zichi commented that he is frustrated there was no information in the packet regarding this item.

Mayor Hyne commented that she will present the charge of the task force within the next two meetings when one of the members returns from a business trip. The group will be at the next Council meeting to introduce themselves.

Motion by **Zichi**, second by **Siciliano**, to table the appointment of a task force for City financial revenue/debt report until the next meeting when there is a written proposal detailing what is going to be done. Yes: Pratt, Siciliano, Zichi. No: Hyne, Smith, VanAllsburg, Couturier. **Motion failed.**

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Smith**, to create a task force of Korkoske, Bangston, and Wagner to review the City revenue, debt, and bonds and issue a report and allow them the ability to add tasks at their discretion. Yes: Smith, VanAllsburg, Zichi, Couturier, Hyne, Pratt, Siciliano. No: None. Motion passed. **Motion passed.**

9h. Set Budget Workshop Date:

Motion by **Zichi**, second by **Pratt**, to hold a budget workshop on Saturday, April 26, at 9:00 a.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

***Meeting recessed at 9:22 p.m.**

***Meeting reconvened at 9:31 p.m.**

10. Discussion Items

10a. Process for Soliciting Developers for Public/Private Projects (MSHDA Signature Building Program):

Director Aniol reported that she has been working with Councilman Siciliano on the MSHDA program. An option of the grant is that the City works with a developer to renovate the building. She explained that the City can have a specific list of qualifications. When the proposals are received and narrowed down, an RFP can be distributed. This will be on the next agenda as an action item.

Councilman VanAllsburg questioned whether the City could lease a building to a merchant.

Manager Hitchcock responded that the City can, but would eventually want to sell it so the City is not competing with other businesses.

10b. City Attorney Contracts:

Councilman Couturier commented that he believes the City should have one law firm working for the City that can perform both duties for the City.

Attorney's Stoker and Gormley explained their current contracts with the City.

Councilman Couturier commented that he believes there are communication issues when two different firms are used.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that he does not believe there is a problem having two firms.

Attorney Stoker commented that there are often two firms working for a municipality.

Councilman Couturier would like to see this on the next agenda to solicit bids.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that he would like to see the City Manager's opinion on the quality of service, current issues, and whether soliciting a new firm is a good idea.

10c. McKenna Contract:

Councilman Pratt reported the total spent so far on McKenna is **\$100,000 since August** and feels that the City would be better served by hiring individuals to fill the positions.

Councilman Siciliano read aloud the letter submitted by Planning Commissioners Reagan, Buzzitta, Wittrup, Schall, and Siciliano. The letter outlines the accomplishments made by the Planner as well as positive feedback regarding the Planner's work. The letter asks the Council to extend the contract with McKenna.

Councilman Couturier commented that he is not concerned with the quality of work, but what it is costing the City. He asked Director Aniol what she has accomplished so far.

Director Aniol commented that she has coordinated meetings with the DDA, EDC, and TIFA. She works at least 3 days a month with the First Friday's group. She coordinated advertisements for the downtown during the holiday season by managing the budget effectively. She has worked on the ArtFest, business retention, RiverHouse Inn issues, and the MSHDA program. She has also worked with the TIFA and EDC on the Farmers' Market, Industrial Park website, Ice House, and other Industrial Park developments.

Councilman Couturier commented that he believes the positions are full time jobs, and the Council should not overspend at this time.

Councilman Zichi commented that the McKenna contracts are under the proposed budget.

Mike Thomas of the EDC/TIFA commented that there has been several projects done off the retainer by Director Aniol that the EDC/TIFA is paying for. There was a complaint from residences regarding some EDC property management issues that Ms. Aniol has had to work on as well as the Farmers' Market, a brochure, and an Ice House proposal.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that the issues were reviewed at their six month review and it was found that the quality and costs were in line with what was predicted. He added that he believes McKenna and all contracts should be evaluated on a yearly basis. He believes that there are months that the cost is higher, but it is due to special projects.

Councilman Siciliano agrees that the review of McKenna every six months or less is excessive.

Councilman Pratt commented that the discussion item was not to get rid of McKenna but to make it known how much the City is paying for their services.

Manager Hitchcock commented that she does not believe that McKenna is only doing a part-time job, and they are always available when needed. She has received no complaints regarding McKenna's services.

Councilman Pratt commented that he has received comments that McKenna is doing a good job.

10d. Staff Conferences:

Director Aniol reported that the Upstairs Downtown conference is at the end of April in Pontiac.

10e. Time Clock for City Staff:

Councilman Pratt commented that he wants to see a time clock or sign in for all City staff to keep better track of City employees.

Manager Hitchcock commented that the employees are accountable to her and has not had any problems with employees not being accountable.

Councilman Pratt commented that there should be a log book at the front counter for people coming to the front desk to see an employee.

Councilman Couturier commented that he would also like to see a log book of when people come to the front desk.

Mayor Hyne commented that she agrees with Councilman Couturier.

Sargeant Jeff Hull questioned the purpose of a log book.

Councilman Pratt commented that people call him and report to him what City employees are doing out of the office and he wants employees to be held accountable.

Manager Hitchcock commented that it is about a neighbor calling Council to report an employee being home on their personal break and feels it is insulting.

10f. Hiring Freeze:

Mayor Hyne commented that she does not feel the City should be hiring anyone right now.

Sergeant Jeff Hull commented that the Police Department goes through a lot of part time officers and if they are unable to fill those positions, the full time officers will have to work overtime. The Police Department would not be hiring new employees but replacing current ones.

Mayor Hyne commented that her goal is to see the employee numbers stay the same and not increase.

Mike Thomas commented that the EDC is looking into hiring a part time farmers' market manager to fill in when the market manager is away.

Councilman Pratt commented that he wants to see the employment positions published everywhere.

Sergeant Hull commented that both the full time officer position and administrative assistant positions were posted and testing and interviews were held.

12. Staff Reports

12a. City Manager:

Manager Hitchcock submitted a written report for Council review and added that a liquor license for Our Town Party Store is being transferred to Spartan Stores. The joint meeting with Williamstown Township will be held Thursday, May 15 at 7:00 p.m. at the Williamstown Township Hall. The NIESA Open House is Saturday, April 19. Manager Hitchcock reported that the City did receive a call regarding the statewide siren testing, but it was within an hour of the actual test. The county will let the City know more in advance next time it occurs.

12b. City Attorney:

No report.

12c. Planning & Development Report:

A written report was submitted for Council review.

12d. Building Department:

A written report was submitted for Council review.

12e. Assessor:

A written report was submitted for Council review.

12f. Treasurer:

A financial printout was submitted for Council review.

13. Audience Participation:

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

14. Council Member Comments:

Councilman VanAllsburg commented that there is a fundraising concert for the Williamston Theatre on Friday, April 18, 2008 at 8:00 p.m. and tickets are still available.

Councilman Pratt commented that the construction of the Veteran's Memorial has begun. He requested that a time limit to Council meetings be put on the next Council agenda. Councilman Pratt also wants to see public parking signs put up around town.

Councilman Siciliano commented that he agrees with Terri Campbell on listing who requested the items on the agenda. He added that the Planning Commission has a vacancy that needs to be filled soon.

Councilman Zichi congratulated Tim Grossman on the birth of his son and commented that the City has been recognized for their historic map on www.palatial.com that he worked on and submitted.

Councilman Couturier commented that he is resigning from the City Council effective May 1st. He read aloud his resignation letter.

Mayor Hyne thanked Couturier for his participation as a Councilman and added that he is an asset to the community and looks forward to his input and friendship.

15. Closed Session- Attorney Client Privilege Letter:

No action taken.

16. Adjournment:

Motion by **Zichi**, second by **Siciliano**, to adjourn. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

***Meeting Adjourned at 11:30 p.m.**

***THE PRECEDING MINUTES ARE A SYNOPSIS OF A CITY COUNCIL MEETING AND DO NOT REPRESENT A VERBATIM RECORD.**

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Holly M. Thompson, Deputy Clerk

Michelle A. Hyne, Mayor

Date Approved: _____