

CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2022  
IN CITY HALL

1. Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Mayor Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Melanie D. Ryska, City Clerk, gave the Invocation.
3. Council Members present at roll call: Deanna Koski, Michael V. Radtke, Jr., Maria G. Schmidt, Liz Sierawski, Michael C. Taylor, Henry Yanez  
Absent: Barbara A. Ziarko.

Also Present: Mark Vanderpool, City Manager; Marc D. Kaszubski, City Attorney; Melanie D. Ryska, City Clerk; Carol Sobosky, Recording Secretary.

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Taylor explained that Councilwoman Ziarko is not present tonight because she is on a pre-planned family vacation. He pointed out that, while they try to plan their vacations on the weeks they do not have a City Council meeting, Councilwoman Ziarko had a cruise scheduled in 2020 that was delayed multiple times and this was the only date available, so she sends her regrets.

Moved by Koski, seconded by Sierawski, **RESOLVED**, to approve the agenda with the deletion of Item 6-A.

Councilman Radtke understands they are deleting Item 6-A because the application was withdrawn, but he expressed his frustration with the petitioner on how they are handling this with City Council. He noted it has been on the agenda twice and they have not had a discussion on it. He questioned as to

whether the applicants will have to submit an entirely new plan if they wish to come back before Council.

Mr. Kaszubski replied the rules require that the applicant would have to come back with a substantially different plan consisting of a major change from what they were proposing if they choose to come back. He assured a similar project cannot come back for one year.

Councilman Radtke stated he would eventually like to have a debate on this issue.

Mayor Taylor explained that the petitioner reached out to him and tried to have conversations with the community and with the neighbors directly impacted by this. They came before the Planning Commission, and they have reached out to members of Council. They do not believe there is support from the community to go forward with this project, which is why they are withdrawing their request.

Yes: All. The motion carried (6/0).

**5. REPORT FROM CITY MANAGER**

Mr. Vanderpool reminded everyone that the City offices will be closed for business on Thursday, November 24, and Friday, November 25, 2022, in observance of Thanksgiving. The City's refuse collection will be delayed one day, with the normal Thursday collection delayed to Friday, and Friday's collection delayed to Saturday. Mr. Vanderpool also reminded everyone that yard waste collection will end the week of December 5 through 9. He commented that most leaves are down, and a lot of properties have been

cleaned up. He informed that leaves can be composted in an approved manner, and more information on that is available on the City's website. The leaves can also be mulched, but if those two options are not done, the leaves need to be collected from yards to avoid code violation, adding that code officers inspect for that and issue violations. He emphasized they have a couple of weeks to finish it up, and they appreciate everyone's hard work in getting their leaves collected in the proper manner.

Mr. Vanderpool announced that the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Sterling Christmas is scheduled for Saturday, December 3, from 5:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Dodge Park. He outlined the activities, including the tree-lighting, holiday music, caroling, visiting with Santa, horse-drawn wagon rides, ice skating, the trackless train ride, and more. He advised that an ornament can be brought for the Upton House tree, and canned and boxed food items will be collected for those in need. He urged those who want more information to check the City's website. Mr. Vanderpool stated their Passport Walk-In Week will be held from December 5 through December 10, and he informed there is more information on the website about this event.

Mr. Vanderpool stated he is excited to announce that the City has been selected to receive an award of \$1.8 million for a proposed ten-foot-wide pathway along the south side of Dobry, extending from Dequindre to Utica Road, to connect with Heritage Park. The entire project is \$2.4 million, and this will provide multi-modal transportation and enhanced landscaping to the area, in addition to eliminating the unsightly chain link fence along M-59. He

noted these improvements will be made over the next couple of years. He added that this is pursuant to the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan and their Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, and it will connect a few communities, including Rochester Hills, Troy, Utica, Sterling Heights, and numerous pathways. He thanked SEMCOG in working with the City and granting this award, and he thanked their consultant, HRC, along with the City's engineering staff, who worked very hard on this over the last couple of years.

He informed that Sterling Heights Television Broadcasting Services Coordinator Dan Rizek and Bob Sergott were recently awarded three Philo Farnsworth Awards for Excellence in Community Programming. He provided some history on this award, named after the inventor of the first receiving tube for television transmission. He outlined the awards granted to Mr. Rizek and Mr. Sergott and named the specific programs for which the awards were presented. He added that Mr. Rizek was also a finalist in the promotional video category for his work on "The Break Free Blast", a series produced during Covid. He emphasized the City is fortunate to have these two gentlemen and their entire team, including Community Relations.

Mr. Vanderpool explained they have been highlighting the City's boards and commissions, and this evening, they will hear from the African American Coalition. He invited Community Relations Director Melanie Davis to introduce their special guests.

Community Relations Director Melanie Davis explained one of the committees she works with in her department is the African American Coalition. She commended them for doing an incredible job coming together since their inception a couple of years ago. They have formed a steering committee, developed goals, a vision, a mission, and guiding principles. She introduced Chair AeYanna Yett and Vice Chair Diana Bledsoe.

AeYanna Yett, Chair of the African American Coalition, named the members of the Coalition. She talked about their goals include their mission and vision statement, which is to create Sterling Heights to be a community where African Americans belong and being a place of networking where everyone can be brought together. She outlined their core values and their grounding principles. She highlighted their “wins” over the past year, including representing their Coalition at the Macomb Black Excellence Awards this past February, showcasing the marvelous work that black Macomb County residents are doing. They also represented the Coalition at the Cultural Exchange event, and they marched in the Memorial Day Parade. They passed some resolutions for Black History Month and Juneteenth and hosted the City’s first-ever Juneteenth Celebration. They hosted two blood drives with Versiti, and they were both focused on issues with Sickle Cell Disease and to increase donors for their needs in the community. She concluded that they held a voter education event for the community in the middle of October, where they heard from the City Clerk how to vote and what they would find on the ballot. Ms. Yett explained they are now getting ready to highlight black-

owned businesses in Macomb County, particularly in the City of Sterling Heights, during Black History Month, and they are excited about this opportunity they have through the Sterling Heights Public Library. She credited Mr. Vanderpool for organizing the initiative of a Tuskegee flyover, having a Tuskegee Airman featured in the Memorial Day Parade. She stated they will be hosting the Charles Russell Dedication to highlight Sterling Heights first black voter, and they are focusing on organizing their next Juneteenth event to be held in 2023, to make it even bigger and better than this year's event. She stated she is open to comments, thoughts, or concerns.

Councilman Yanez stressed he is very proud of this group that came together just prior to the Covid pandemic, and he commended them for the incredible amount of work they have done. He hoped they are moving forward so that black residents are feeling they are not only taxpayers of Sterling Heights but also part of the community. He urged them to spread the word of this Coalition to surrounding communities so they can build a stronger community together. He thanked Ms. Yett and all members of the Coalition for the work they do.

Councilwoman Sierawski echoed the words of Councilman Yanez, commending Ms. Yett, and the Coalition on the very nice work they have done.

Councilman Radtke stressed he loves the work the Coalition is doing. He noted the suggestion has been brought up in the past to do something to

honor Martin Luther King Jr. Day, although he understands they already have “a lot on their plate”. He felt it would be great if, in the future, they could plan an event in Sterling Heights that would commemorate that day.

Ms. Yett agreed that would be awesome.

Mayor Taylor thanked Ms. Yett and the Coalition, noting their work is much appreciated. He acknowledged it is always difficult to get a new group off the ground, and this group has survived the effects of covid with Zoom meetings. They have a clear direction, with goals, vision, and mission, and he is confident that every member of City Council will support them. He stressed this Coalition is helping their 134,000+ residents in Sterling Heights.

Mr. Vanderpool stated he has enjoyed working with the Coalition, and he extended his thanks to the Mayor and City Council for helping to create the Coalition. He is looking forward to working with them over the next year. He stated this concludes his report.

**6. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

A. This item was removed from the agenda (*Application by Waad Nahir, on behalf of BOSC Realty Advisors, LLC, for a mixed use Planned Unit Development on approximately 10.0 acres of land situated on the south side of Hall Road, west side of Sterritt Street, PPUD22-0003*).

**7. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Taylor stated this item is consideration of the Consent Agenda. He opened the floor for public comments.

- Joe Znoy – talked about Item 7-F and requested clarification on the nature of the request.

Moved by Koski, seconded by Taylor, **RESOLVED**, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

- A. To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 1, 2022.
- B. To approve payment of the bills as presented: General Fund - \$1,340,622.65, Water & Sewer Fund - \$2,920,924.01, Other Funds - \$7,773,537.60, Total Checks - \$12,035,084.26.
- C. **RESOLVED**, to purchase one (1) Toro swivel-tracked mud buggy from Weingartz Supply Co., d/b/a Weingartz, 46061 Van Dyke Ave., Utica, MI 48317, at pricing available through Sourcewell cooperative purchasing contract #031721-TTC at a total cost of \$21,062.
- D. **RESOLVED**, to purchase VMware and Veeam annual licenses for software maintenance from Access Interactive, 46665 Magellan Drive, Novi, MI 48377, for a one (1) year period at a cumulative annual cost of \$55,665.20 and authorize the City Manager to sign all required documentation on behalf of the City.
- E. **RESOLVED**, to:
  - 1. Purchase two (2) 2024 Freightliner tandem axle 64,000# GVW chassis from Wolverine Freightliner – Eastside, Inc., 107 S. Groesbeck, Mt. Clemens, MI 48043, at pricing available through the City of Rochester Hills, MI cooperative request for proposals, RFP-RH-13-030, in the cumulative amount of \$277,409; and
  - 2. Purchase one (1) fourteen-foot (14') Henderson Mark E dump body, with snowplow hitch, front plow, underbody scraper, and accessories, and one (1) sixteen-foot (16') Henderson Magnum dump body, with accessories, from Knapheide Truck Equipment, 1200 S. Averill Avenue, Flint, MI 48503, at pricing available through a Sourcewell cooperative request for proposals, RFP #080818-HPI, in the cumulative amount of \$217,096.
- F. **RESOLVED**, to award the bid for firefighter ballistic vests to Municipal Emergency Services, 2655 N. Meridian Rd., Sanford, MI 48657, at unit prices bid for a one-year period, with the option for the City Manager to extend the bid term one (1) additional year upon mutual consent.
- G. **RESOLVED**, to:
  - 1. Purchase a one-year software subscription to Graykey technology at the Essentials level, including a twenty (20) Advanced Actions expansion pack, Graykey access terminal, shipping and handling, and certification training, from Grayshift, LLC, 931 Monroe Dr. NE, Suite A102-340, Atlanta, GA 30308, at a cumulative cost of \$19,165 and authorize the City Manager to sign all required documents on behalf of the City; and
  - 2. Authorize a budget amendment for \$19,165 from General Fund reserves.
- H. **RESOLVED**, to accept the proposal from Nordicom Technologies, Inc., 43155 Main Street, Suite 2208, Novi, MI 48375, for maintenance and daily administration of IT network infrastructure for the period



January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, through June 30, 2023, at a cost of \$3,000 per month and authorize the City Manager to sign all required documentation on behalf of the City.

- I. **RESOLVED**, to:
  - 1. Accept the proposal by BIS Digital, Inc., 1350 N.E. 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 300, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33334, for audio-video upgrades at the 41-A District Court at a total project cost of \$176,560.24, and authorize the City Manager to sign all required documentation on behalf of the City; and
  - 2. Authorize a budget amendment from Capital Fund reserves in the amount of \$79,060.24.
- J. **RESOLVED**, to:
  - 1. Accept the proposal by Dynamix Consulting Group, P.O. Box 68, Lake Alfred, FL 33850, for professional consulting services in connection with the development of a strategic plan for the Sterling Heights Fire Department and authorize the City Manager to sign the Personal Services Contract on behalf of the City; and
  - 2. Approve the budget amendment from General Fund reserves for \$10,410 in conjunction with this approval.
- K. **RESOLVED**, to accept the new Public Utility Easement being granted for Shuert Industries, 6600 Dobry Drive and 44600 Merrill Road, in Section 4, PSP22-0007 and PSP21-0035, and authorize the City Manager to sign it on behalf of the City.
- L. **RESOLVED**, to:
  - 1. Approve the Administrative Services Contract between the City of Sterling Heights and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan for the period January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, with monthly fees of \$68.15 per employee/retiree contract for administration, and \$134.35 per employee/retiree contract for specific stop loss insurance at \$250,000 for the self-insured retention; and
  - 2. Approve the Addendum to the Health Care & Benefits Consulting Services Agreement between the City of Sterling Heights and AP Global Insurance Services, LLC, d/b/a Manquen Vance, for RDS data aggregation services; and
  - 3. Authorize the City Manager to sign all documents required in conjunction with the approvals, upon review and approval by the City Attorney.

Yes: All. The motion carried (6/0).

**8. CONSIDERATION**

- A. Mayor Taylor stated this is to consider approval of a memorandum of understanding between the City of Sterling Heights and the Sterling Heights

Police Officers Association/Michigan Association of Police. He invited Mr. Vanderpool to give a presentation. He also asked Mr. Vanderpool, upon completion of the presentation, if he would respond to Mr. Znoy's request on clarification of the purchase of firefighter ballistic vests.

Mr. Vanderpool stated he would be happy to explain the purchase of the firefighter ballistic vests. He explained the memorandum of understanding (MOU) in front of them this evening is a perfunctory memorandum, so he briefly reviewed the request. He noted that the Executive Board approached Human Resources Division and proposed a potential amendment to expand membership eligibility for overtime associated with special events requiring uniformed officers to be present. He clarified the special events include everything from school athletic events, such as ballgames, parades, Farmer's Market, Concerts in the Park, Election detail, etc. He informed that under the current bargaining agreement, only members assigned to the patrol and traffic bureau are eligible for special event overtime. This MOU would expand eligibility to all officers in the department, and the membership widely supports this, with the union approving it. He stated the required memorandum of understanding, which requires City Council approval, is presented to them this evening. He respectfully requested that the Mayor and City Council approve the MOU.

Mayor Taylor opened the floor to the public, but no one spoke.

Moved by Sierawski, seconded by Radke, **RESOLVED**, to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Sterling Heights and the

Sterling Heights Police Officers Association/Michigan Association of Police and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign it on behalf of the City.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski is in full support of this MOU, and she commented that everyone should be approved for their overtime. She emphasized they need officers from all the departments at these events, so she is in favor of this.

Yes: All. The motion carried (6/0).

**9. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS**

Mayor Taylor opened the floor for public comments.

- Ken Nelson – stated he is not disappointed in the withdrawal of Item 6-A; questioned whether there is any chance the applicant will be resubmitting; concerned for the residents in the area who continue to come to these meetings, only to have the petitioner withdraw.
- Joe Znoy – questioned why the City, which is the fourth largest in the State, does not offer leaf collection services like what is offered in Royal Oak and Dearborn, where residents blow their leaves into the street at a designated time, noting the leaves are then taken to a remote site for composting.
- Sanford Williams – questioned an estimated date of review of 2022 Task Force report and when it may be voted on by the Mayor and Council.

Mayor Taylor replied they will provide an update tonight on the status of that report.

- Paul Michael – would like more discussion on the PUD ordinance, as well as other ordinances Council feels are out of date; recalled the petitioner for Lakeside redevelopment had indicated there is a need for office space, yet it has been mentioned at previous meetings that office space is not currently in demand; commented about public comments and questions brought up by residents.

**10. REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION AND CITY COUNCIL**

Mr. Vanderpool addressed Mr. Znoy's question about the ballistic vests being purchased in the Fire Department. He explained the goal is to have twenty-one vests, with two on every ambulance, two on every engine, and one for the Battalion Chief vehicle. He clarified not every firefighter is assigned a vest. He clarified the vests are like the vests used in the Police Department, for the purpose of protecting firefighters in the same way. He pointed out firefighters often must go into the same situations, putting their lives in harm's way. This is now a best practice, and they have been phasing these in over the last couple of years.

Mr. Vanderpool recalled the question of why the City does not allow leaves to be blown into the street for collection. He noted there are some communities that allow it, but he cautioned it is a very expensive proposition that requires very specialized equipment as well as increased labor. He suspected the refuse millage in communities allowing for this are much higher than the refuse millage in Sterling Heights. Mr. Vanderpool could not recall many requests for this service, and he is not sure there would be support for an increased millage to provide it. He emphasized they communicate and coordinate several on-demand services where residents can request leaf pickup now through Uber-like services. He noted it is very affordable, and a contract is not required. The apps can be downloaded to request yard cleanup, which is a viable option for many. For residents who cannot afford this service, they have a volunteer corps who go out and help residents. Through the SHINE program, these volunteers go out to help those who may

have mobility limitations or financial hardship, and they have helped hundreds of homeowners through this program. Mr. Vanderpool explained that the Marijuana Task Force report is now published online, and that can be viewed by going to the City's website. He added that it will be presented publicly soon.

Mr. Vanderpool commented on the PUD (Planned Unit Development) Ordinances, which is a concept used widely in communities across the United States. It proves to be beneficial in many cases for development of unique infill parcels in communities that are fully developed. This allows these parcels that do not lend themselves to development through the more traditional zoning classifications. He pointed out that most of the City's properties have been developed through the very traditional zoning provisions, but in the unique cases, the PUD ordinances allow flexibility that is not normally allowed in those situations. It has been used widely, has been used in Sterling Heights over the last ten to fifteen years, and has been beneficial, although not in all cases. He emphasized that public hearings are required just as there would be for a rezoning, so the community is able to weigh in at the Planning Commission level, and ultimately the City Council level. He stated he has nothing further to add this evening.

Councilwoman Schmidt addressed Mr. Znoy's earlier comment about leaf collection from the streets of certain communities. She explained she grew up in Royal Oak, her mother still lives there, and she considered the leaf collection there to be a disaster. When the leaves are blown into the streets

along the curbs, there is no parking in the streets. She added that if they park in the street, they take a chance of their car catching on fire from the hot exhaust system being exposed to the dry leaves. She added that if there is a windstorm on the day the leaves are scheduled to be picked up, they blow all over the neighborhood. She stated she would not be in favor of it, especially since there is a higher cost associated with it.

Councilwoman Schmidt reminded about the DPW Ken Stempowski Food Drive, which has been held for over forty-four years and will be held on Mondays through Fridays through December 14, 2022, at the DPW Building from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. or Community Relations at City Hall from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. They collect canned goods and non-perishable dry goods, and checks made out to The Macomb Food Program are also welcome. She encouraged everyone if they can contribute to the food drive.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski congratulate the winners of the election that was held last week. She thanked those who did not win for participating in the democratic process. She thanked everyone who started decorating early for Christmas, and she extended congratulations to Bob Sergott and Dan Rizek, who both do a wonderful job. She added she is very grateful for the work they do for the City. She wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Councilman Radtke wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, and he wished the deer hunter's luck. He noted the recent pedestrian fatality at 18-1/2 Mile and Mound Road. He expressed frustration because when they approved the expansion of Mound, the sidewalk that was supposed to be built along

the east side of Mound Road was removed from the plan by the County, who indicated “no one walks there”. He felt if that pedestrian had a sidewalk to walk on, it is possible he may not have been struck and killed by a car. He stated that, without objection, he asked the City Manager to send a letter to County Executive Mark Hackel, the Road Commission of Macomb County, as well as the two County Commissioners Don VanSyckel and Joe Romano, noting the recent death and requesting that they please find ARPA funding to give the City the sidewalk that was promised. He did not feel it should take a pedestrian being hit and killed by a car to realize they need sidewalks on both sides of Mound.

There were no objections to this request.

Mr. Vanderpool felt an important component of the letter would be requesting a solution to the sidewalk crossings across the Mound/18-1/2 Mile area. He pointed out that Mound is a county road, and the original project, when proposed, had two skywalks over it, one in Sterling Heights and one in Warren by the GM Tech Center. He emphasized they need to solve that problem in addition to a sidewalk completed on the east side of Mound.

Councilman Radtke stated he is not sure a skywalk, which is very expensive, may be the best option. He noted one in Clinton Township that was struck, and it cost over \$1 million to replace it. He felt the best option is to paint stripes on the ground, and then stopping traffic to let people cross. He thanked Mr. Sergott, Mr. Rizek, and their crew for the work they do. He

congratulated the winners of last week's elections and urged those who did not win to keep trying.

Councilwoman Koski wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. She reminded that December 3, 2022, is Sterling Christmas, and those who wish can bring an ornament that can be hung in the Upton House. She asked if the City Attorney could work with Administration to put together a guideline the Council members can follow regarding PUD developments. She recalled in the past it was mainly for residential construction, but now it seems as though mixed-use developments are being submitted. She would like some guidelines as to whether they will be looking at setbacks, easements, height of buildings, etc., and these guidelines may be able to help City Council as they consider these requests.

Councilman Yanez congratulated Mr. Rizek and Mr. Sergott for their awards. He commented that they are used to such high-quality work in Sterling Heights that they often take it for granted, and these awards make them realize the good work these gentlemen, and the entire Community Relations Department, does. He also congratulated City Clerk Melanie Ryska and her staff for the hard work they did for the recent election. He questioned whether the election workers are volunteers, or whether they are all paid.

City Clerk Melanie Ryska replied that everyone is paid except for a few interns who are sixteen or seventeen years of age and do this for school.

Councilman Yanez commented that the election workers do not make a lot of money, but they take their jobs seriously. He thanked the Clerk and her staff



once again. He noted that with the arrival of the cold weather and snow, he urged residents to check on their neighbors, especially the seniors and those with disabilities. He also wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mayor Taylor thanked all for participating tonight and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. He added he is looking forward to seeing everyone at Sterling Christmas.

11. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

12. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

13. **CLOSED SESSION PERMITTED UNDER ACT 267 OF 1976**

Mr. Kaszubski stated there are no items for tonight.

14. **ADJOURN**

Moved by Schmidt, seconded by Taylor, **RESOLVED**, to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

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MELANIE D. RYSKA, City Clerk