



WHITEHALL

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Council Chambers

May 28, 2024

PRESENT Scott Brown, Tanya Cabala, Debra Hillebrand, Jeff Holmstrom, Steve Salter, Steve Sikkenga and Tom Ziemer

ABSENT None

ALSO PRESENT Scott Huebler, Brenda Bourdon, Will Meier, Alyssa Seaver, and Roger Squiers

Mayor Salter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Cabala, seconded by Holmstrom to approve the agenda.

Voice Vote: All yeses

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC HEARING FISCAL YEAR 24/25 BUDGET & MILLAGE LEVY

Mayor Salter opened the Public Hearing for the 2024/25 budget and millage levy. City Manager Huebler presented the key highlights of the budget. Elie Ghazal provided comments on the Fire Millage and School Millage, David Hosticka discussed the accessibility of Covell Park, and Jerry Rowe addressed concerns about the editing of the last council meeting's live stream. With no further comments, Mayor Salter closed the public hearing.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION – WHITE LAKE LIBRARY

Norm Kittleson and Ray Veeder provided an annual report on the library's financials and programs being offered.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the May 14, 2024 Work Session and Council Meeting Minutes, and May 21 Budget Work Session Minutes
- B. Accounts Payable - \$776,221.12
- C. Communications: Central Dispatch Minutes, Quarterly Financial Update, Wastewater Management Committee Minutes, WESTPLAN Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion by Sikkenga, seconded by Holmstrom to approve the Consent Agenda.

Voice Vote: Yes – 6; No – 1, Brown; Absent – None

MOTION CARRIED

MESSAGES FROM THE MAYOR, COUNCIL, AND CITY MANAGER

Messages were received from the Mayor, Council members, and the City Manager

PUBLIC COMMENT

Maggie Maxy praised Whitehall's Art Council and Playhouse and supports closing N. Mears for Monday's Fan Club night. Patrick Nulty, the new owner of Mylan's, also supports the N. Mears closure, plans to submit a Social District permit, and wants to improve Mylan's visibility. Elie Ghazal advocated for budget allocations to incorporate the maintenance of the splash pad and suggested a City Hall sign to boost council meeting attendance. Laura Abrahamson noted Fetch's Fan Club night's popularity and supports closing North Mears. David Hosticka mentioned the river's prime fishing leads to trespassing on his property.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Funnell Field Fundraising Request

Motion by Brown, seconded by Sikkenga to approve the reservation of Funnell Field for a fundraising event on August 17 to combat Berger Disease, featuring a car show and freestyle dirt bike show. However, after discussing concerns about noise and potential damage to the field, along with other questions, the motion was withdrawn.

B. Fetch Brewing Road Closure Event

Motion by Holmstrom, seconded by Cabala to approve closing the north section of Mears Avenue leading to the North Mears Parking Promenade to accommodate the growing crowds at the weekly Fan Club event. This closure will be in effect from Memorial Day through Labor Day on Monday nights from 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm.

Show of Hands: Yes – Holmstrom, Cabala, Hillebrand, and Salter; No – Ziemer, Brown and Sikkenga; Absent – None

MOTION CARRIED

C. Resolution 24-18 Forest Hills Manor

Motion by Cabala, seconded by Brown to authorize the City Manager to sign a Professional Services Agreement with Prein&Newhof for preliminary engineering services to address street construction and storm water management for the Forest Hills Manor subdivision.

Roll Call Vote: Yes – Cabala, Brown, Sikkenga, Hillebrand, Ziemer, Holmstrom, and Salter; No – None; Absent – None

MOTION CARRIED

D. Resolution 24-19 Street Project

Motion by Brown, seconded by Holmstrom to approve a budget amendment to increase the 2024 Street Project by \$50,000 with this amount coming from the FY 23/24 Capital Fund fund balance of \$213,000 to include Warner Street from Slocum to Colby.

Roll Call Vote: Yes – Brown, Holmstrom, Ziemer, Hillebrand, Cabala, Sikkenga, and Salter; No – None; Absent – None

MOTION CARRIED

E. Resolution 24-20 Annual Budget & Millage Levy

Motion by Sikkenga, seconded by Holmstrom to approve the FY 24/25 Budget and Millage Levy with the following amendments:

FIRST AMENDMENT:

Amendment by Ziemer, seconded by Brown to split the Marijuana tax money to sidewalks (90K) and streets (remainder).

Discussion followed with Brown commenting that the Playhouse and the Police shouldn't be getting the money and that it should go to sidewalks and streets; Ziemer agreed that the money should go to streets and sidewalks; Holmstrom commented on the importance of in-vehicle cameras and body cams for the police department.

Withdrawal and Amendment: Ziemer withdrew motion and moved to allocate the marijuana tax money: \$20K for Police in-vehicle cameras and body cams; \$90K to complete the sidewalks; and the remainder to streets; seconded by Brown.

Vote: Amendment approved; Yes – Ziemer, Brown, Hillebrand, Holmstrom; No – Sikkenga, Cabala, Salter.

SECOND AMENDMENT:

Amendment by Brown, seconded by Ziemer to not increase the Playhouse Manager's pay grade to an eight (8).

Discussion followed with Hillebrand and Cabala in support of an increase because the Playhouse Manager is currently underpaid and holds a very unique position.

Withdrawal and Amendment: Brown withdrew motion and moved to increase the Playhouse Manager's pay grade to a six (6), seconded by Ziemer.

Vote: Amendment approved; Yes – Brown, Ziemer, Hillebrand, Sikkenga, Holmstrom, Salter; No – Cabala

Amendment by Cabala, seconded by Hillebrand to increase the grade to a seven (7).

Withdrawal: After clarification of salary, motion was withdrawn by Cabala.

THIRD AMENDMENT:

Amendment by Brown, seconded by Ziemer to send no council members to Mackinac for the MML Conference.

Discussion followed regarding the importance of training with Hillebrand, Holmstrom, and Cabala in support of training.

Amendment by Brown, seconded by Ziemer to allow one person who has not attended the year before to attend the MML conference in Mackinac.

Vote: Yes – Brown, Hillebrand, Cabala, Sikkenga, Ziemer, Holmstrom and Salter; No - None

FOURTH AMENDMENT:

Amendment by Hillebrand, seconded by Brown, to restrict the payment of membership dues exclusively to staff, excluding council members.

Discussion followed with Hillebrand stating that council's stipend should cover membership dues especially because they are not mandatory memberships.

Vote: Yes – Hillebrand, Brown, Sikkenga, Ziemer, Holmstrom, Cabala, and Salter; No – None

FINAL RECORDED MOTION:

Motion by Sikkenga, seconded by Holmstrom to approve the FY 24/25 Amended Budget and Millage Levy with the following amendments:

1. Split Marihuana Tax money between Police for in-vehicle cameras and body cams (\$20,000); sidewalks (\$90,000) and the remainder to streets (\$8,200).
2. Increase the Playhouse Manager's Pay Grade to a six (6).
3. One council member, who has not attended last year's MML conference, may register for the MML conference in Mackinac for 2024.
4. No membership dues will be covered by the city for council members.

Roll Call Vote: Yes – Sikkenga, Holmstrom, Ziemer, Hillebrand, Cabala, Brown, and Salter; No – None; Absent – None **MOTION CARRIED**

F. Resolution 24-21 Utility Rates

Motion by Brown, seconded by Sikkenga to set the sewer rate at \$6.47 per 1,000 gallons; the water rate at \$3.12 per 1,000 gallons; and the non-metered sewer only quarterly charge at \$135.83 effective January 1, 2025.

Roll Call Vote: Yes – Brown, Sikkenga, Cabala, Hillebrand, Ziemer, Holmstrom, and Salter; No – None; Absent – None **MOTION CARRIED**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jen Hain emphasized that safety is the top priority for the street closure during the Fan Club event. Christina Normadin expressed her support for the car show fundraiser. Jerry Rowe highlighted the importance of training to ensure the money spent is worthwhile. Laurel Sanchez remarked that the chairs are uncomfortable.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Salter adjourned the Council Meeting at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Bourdon, City Clerk