



WHITEHALL

CITY COUNCIL

WORK SESSION MINUTES

Council Chambers

December 10, 2024

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

ABSENT None

ALSO PRESENT Scott Huebler, Brenda Bourdon, Will Meier, Roger Squiers

Mayor Salter called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Playhouse Committee

The session focused on forming a committee to address the Playhouse's financial gap and long-term sustainability. Scott Brown expressed opposition to the mayor being on the committee and his interest in joining, emphasizing the need for diverse perspectives, including those skeptical about the Playhouse. Tanya clarified that the committee's purpose is not to decide the Playhouse's fate but to make recommendations on closing the financial gap and ensuring sustainability. She also indicated more public members could be beneficial. Tom mentioned Elie Ghazal's interest in joining, and Tanya brought up Amanda Kiefer as a potential member.

After some confusion about whether a vote was required to form the committee, the city attorney clarified that the charter assigns the mayor the authority to appoint committee members. The mayor outlined the next steps, which include contacting proposed members and scheduling meetings.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

One resident requested access to the Playhouse's financials to understand how the current situation developed. Sandra Gibbs emphasized the importance of establishing clear goals and objectives for the Playhouse committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Salter adjourned the work session at 6:39 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Bourdon, City Clerk



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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, Roger Squiers

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

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

Voice Vote: All yeses

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC HEARING – LDFA AMENDMENTS

Mayor Salter opened the public hearing at 6:03 pm.

City Manager Huebler explained that the LDFA committee approved the proposed plan and is now seeking council approval. He addressed questions from residents and business owners within the district, clarifying that the plan does not eliminate taxes but allows the city to capture growth and reinvest it in the district. He also highlighted that the resolution includes the reconstruction of Benston Road from Peach Street to the district boundary. With no other comments, the mayor closed the public hearing at 6:05 pm.

PUBLIC HEARING – TIFA AMENDMENTS

Mayor Salter opened the public hearing at 6:05 pm.

City Manager Huebler explained that the TIFA committee approved the proposed plan and is now seeking council approval. The resolution would include the burying of overhead utilities in the 200 to 400 block of Lake Street. With no other comments, the mayor closed the public hearing at 6:07 pm.

PUBLIC HEARING – HOWMET IFT

Mayor Salter opened the public hearing at 6:07 pm.

Jim Vresics from Howmet provided an update on the Plant 10 expansion, noting that other states were considered for the project. However, Whitehall was ultimately chosen due to the strong, positive relationship between Howmet and the city. With no other comments, the mayor closed the public hearing at 6:11 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the November 26, 2024 Council Meeting
- B. Accounts Payable \$344,001.58
- C. Communications: Maggie Derby Project Update, Muskegon County Public Works Board Meeting Minutes, WestPlan 2026-2029 Proposed MDOT Projects, WestPlan Transportation Technical Committee Minutes.

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

Voice Vote: All yeses

MOTION CARRIED

MESSAGES FROM THE MAYOR, COUNCIL, AND CITY MANAGER

Messages were received from Council members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Schmidt would like documentation on the benefits of tax abatements.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution 24-44 – TIFA Amended Plan

Motion by Sikkenga, seconded by Holmstrom to approve the Tax Increment Financing Plan and will include burying overhead utilities in the 200 to 400 block of Lake Street.

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

MOTION CARRIED

B. Resolution 24-45 – LDFA Amended Plan

Motion by Brown, seconded by Sikkenga to approve the Local Development Finance Authority Plan which will include the reconstruction of Benston Road from Peach Street to the district boundary.

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

MOTION CARRIED

C. Resolution 24-46 – Howmet IFT

Motion by Sikkenga, seconded by Holmstrom to award a real property Industrial Facilities Exemption Certificate to Howmet Corporation in the amount of \$40,000,000 for 12 years subject to execution of an Exemption Agreement.

Brown and Ziemer initially moved/seconded to reduce the exemption period to seven years, citing concerns about abatements and the appropriate duration. After input from other committee members emphasizing the role of IFTs, Brown and Ziemer withdrew their motions.

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

MOTION CARRIED

D. Resolution 24-47 – Automated Clearing House Policy

Motion by Cabala, seconded by Brown, to adopt the Automated Clearing House and Electronic Transactions Policy as presented and designates the Finance Officer/Treasurer as the Electronic Transaction Officer.

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

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Salter adjourned the Council Meeting at 7:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Bourdon, City Clerk