



WHITEHALL

CITY COUNCIL

WORK SESSION MINUTES

Council Chambers

January 13, 2026

PRESENT Scott Brown, Tanya Cabala, Debi Hillebrand, Jeff Holmstrom, Bryan Mahan, and Tom Ziemer

ABSENT None

ALSO PRESENT Brenda Bourdon, Dan Tavernier, Will Meier

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

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Sports N Shorts

City Manager Tavernier provided background on the Sports N Shorts program and outlined the cost to the City if it chooses to sponsor the program. Council expressed consensus that it is a valuable program for children and indicated support for sponsoring it at a cost of \$4,500. Formal action will be taken at the next Council meeting.

Senior Millage Allocation

Council Member Cabala announced that she is stepping away from the Senior Millage Advisory Board and recapped the Board's decision made in March. Council Member Squiers expressed a preference that the funds be focused on direct support for seniors in need and that the City's \$1,000 allocation be directed to AgeWell. Mayor Ziemer stated that he believed the City's \$1,000 could instead be directed to the VAC, though he was open to either option. Council Member Brown noted that comments on social media reflected a preference for supporting seniors in need rather than seniors in general. No consensus was reached.

Boards & Commissions

The Council reviewed the mayor's recommendations for each board and discussed potential changes for the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals, noting in particular that members should not serve on both bodies simultaneously. In addition, the one Council member who was not currently assigned to a board or commission, Roger Squiers, was appointed to the Solid Waste Board.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Council Member Cabala noted that a date for the second senior dinner still needed to be set, and a tentative date of March 23 was suggested. Council Member Brown also asked whether the Council would like to schedule a discussion at a future work session regarding the ambulance service.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ziemer adjourned the work session at 5:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Bourdon, City Clerk

DRAFT



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ABSENT None

ALSO PRESENT Brenda Bourdon, Dan Tavernier, Will Meier

Mayor Ziemer called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE AMENDED AGENDA

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

Voice Vote: All yeses

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the December 23, 2025 Council Meeting Minutes
- B. Accounts Payable \$268,839.52
- C. Communications: None

Motion by Holmstrom, seconded by Hillebrand 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.

Motion by Brown, seconded by Mahan, to approve the mayor's recommendations for the boards & commissions as presented.

Voice Vote: All yeses.

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kim Cyr shared a press release on the Consumer Energy solar project.

OLD BUSINESS

City Manager Tavernier reported that TIFA/LDFA both approved resolutions at the last BLT meeting to allocate funds for the bond repayment.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Chamber of Commerce Requests

Motion by Holmstrom, seconded by Cabala to approve the requests submitted by the Chamber of Commerce for the Feet on the Street event – June 7 and the Maritime Festival – August 6-8.

Voice Vote: All yeses

MOTION CARRIED

B. Resolution 26-01 Street Administrator Designation

Motion by Holmstrom, seconded by Hillebrand to designate Dan Tavernier as Whitehall's Street Administrator for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

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

MOTION CARRIED

C. Resolution 26-02 Commercial Rehab Exemption Certificate Public Hearing

Motion by Hillebrand, seconded by Mahan, to set a public hearing for Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 6 pm to receive comments regarding the proposed Commercial Rehabilitation Exemption Certificate application as submitted by Jeremy Garcia.

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

MOTION CARRIED

D. Resolution 26-03 Residents Right to Protest

Motion by Holmstrom, seconded by Hillebrand, to provide the right of resident and non-resident taxpayers to file protests to the Board of Review in writing, without the necessity of personal appearance by the taxpayer or the taxpayer's representative, provided such written protest is received on or before the second Tuesday in March of the tax year at issue.

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

MOTION CARRIED

E. Resolution 26-04 Poverty Exemption

Motion by Cabala, seconded by Squiers, to adopt the updated 2026 Poverty Exemption Policies and Guidelines as presented.

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

MOTION CARRIED

F. Resolution 26-05 Board of Review

Motion by Hillebrand, seconded by Brown, to schedule the dates for the Board of Review public sessions for Wednesday, March 11th from 1pm – 4pm and 6pm – 9pm; and Thursday, March 12th from 9am – 12pm and 1pm – 4pm.

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

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ziemer adjourned the Council Meeting at 6:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Bourdon, City Clerk