

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON
CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 25, 2024
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

1. Call to Order:

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Pro-tem Brandon Lanyon, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call:

Mayor Pro-tem Brandon Lanyon, Council members Tommy Pratt, Scott VanAllsburg, Dan Rhines, and Terry Hansen. Absent: Tammy Gilroy and Steve Jenkins.

Also present: City Manager John Hanifan, City Clerk Holly Thompson, City Attorney Timothy Perrone, Police Chief Jeff Weiss, Police Officers Ryan Kuch and Tryon Calkins, Reserve Officer Marcus Medrano, JFM Productions, citizens Jim Belles, Jeff and Robin Kodet, Jim Carr, Courtney Estala, Sonia Allen, Clint and Mackenzie Sweet, and other members of the public.

Motion by **VanAllsburg**, second by **Hansen**, to excuse Jenkins and Gilroy. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

4. Approval of Agenda:

Motion by **Hansen**, second by **Pratt**, to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

5. Audience Participation:

Mayor Pro-tem Lanyon called for public comments at this time and there were none.

6. Council Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2024:

Motion by **Pratt**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to approve the February 26, 2024, minutes as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

7. Accounts Payable:

Motion by **Rhines**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to approve the March 11, 2024, accounts payable as presented, reference #'s 77387-77421, ACH 772-796 from dates 2/22/24 through 3/04/24 for a total of \$664,452.72. Yes: Lanyon, Pratt, VanAllsburg, Rhines, Hansen. No: None. **Motion passed.**

Motion by **Rhines**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to approve the March 25, 2024, accounts payable as presented, reference #'s 77422-77460, EFT 809, and ACH 797-818 from dates 3/5/24 through 3/15/24 for a total of \$129,034.47. Yes: Lanyon, Pratt, VanAllsburg, Rhines, Hansen. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8. Action Items

8a. Set Public Hearing Date for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget/Utility Rates & Fees/Millage Rates:

Motion by **Hansen**, second by **Pratt**, to set the following public hearings for May 28, 2024: 2024/2025 Millage Rates, 2024/2025 Utility Rates and Fees, and 2024/2025 Fiscal Year Budget. Yes: Pratt, VanAllsburg, Rhines, Hansen, Lanyon. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8b. Set Budget Work Session Dates:

Motion by **Pratt**, second by **Hansen**, to set Budget Work Sessions for April 22, 2024 and May 13, 2024. Yes: Pratt, VanAllsburg, Rhines, Hansen, Lanyon. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8c. Red Cedar Jubilee Application and Permit for Sale and Consumption of Alcohol in Howard Dahlstrom Park; and Liquor Control Commission Resolution:

Motion by **Rhines**, second by **Pratt**, to approve the permit for sale and consumption of alcohol in Howard Dahlstrom Park for Red Cedar Jubilee. Yes: VanAllsburg, Rhines, Lanyon, Pratt, Hansen. No: None. **Motion passed.**

Motion by **Pratt**, second by **Hansen**, to approve the Liquor Control Commission Resolution authorizing the application for special license for the Red Cedar Jubilee from June 19-22, 2024. Yes: VanAllsburg, Rhines, Lanyon, Pratt, Hansen. No: None. **Motion passed.**

8d. Red Cedar Jubilee Fireworks Consideration:

Motion by **Hansen**, second by **Pratt**, to approve the request from Red Cedar Jubilee for Great Lakes Fireworks, LLC, to have fireworks at Howard Dahlstrom Park in Williamston on Friday, June 21, 2024 as part of the Red Cedar Jubilee, with notification made to NIESA. Yes: VanAllsburg, Rhines, Lanyon, Hansen, Pratt. No: None. **Motion passed.**

9. Discussion Items

9a. Road Diet:

Manager Hanifan reported there are discussions with MDOT on whether the overall road diet area can be shortened. More review of the intersection is needed. MDOT has plans to install a new turn signal in 2026 so there may be a way to make changes at that time.

Councilman Rhines commented the City wanted a left turn lane on Grand River Ave. in 2018 and MDOT would only allow the road diet. With the new turn signal installation in 2026, there may be an alternative at that time.

9b. Construction Project Update(s):

Manager Hanifan reported Iron Horse has pulverized the two streets quickly and will be installing catch basins in the next few days. He reminded everyone of the continuation of the North Putnam Street project on April 15th. Notices will be going out to affected residents soon.

11. Department Head Reports

11a. City Manager:

No report.

11b. Police Chief:

Chief Weiss provided a written report and introduced the new full-time night shift Officer Ryan Kuch who is a lifelong Williamston resident and graduated from Williamston in 1993. He also reported they have a new Reserve Officer Brandon Knepp and three new applicants for Reserves. Officers are making stops at the school games. The new “No Left Turn” on Highland Street seems to be working well. They have only been issuing warnings at this point, but will be writing tickets soon.

11c. Building Department:

A written report was submitted for Council review.

12. Committee/Sub-Committee Reports:

Councilman Rhines commented the Zoning Board of Appeals granted a variance to the Williamston Road Overlay District to not require a road being constructed behind Dollar General to the Tractor Supply Company property as it would create traffic close to the residences behind the store. They also asked that the Planning Commission review the screening of the development for the residential areas.

Councilman Hansen reported they are planning to divide Memorial Park development into two phases. They are also looking for grant funding to help with the development.

Councilman Pratt commented NIESA is working on creating a tiered approval system to move money. NIESA also wants to purchase a boat for water rescue but they already have one. They are also considering the purchase of a side by side.

Manager Hanifan reported TIFA has been working on their budget and ideas for the Ice House building. The DDA has been working on budgeting and rebranding.

13. Audience Participation:

Sonia Allen commented the Williamston Lakes has a petition signed by people opposed to the Road Diet. She is amazed and disturbed people didn’t know about it. Many did not support it. Businesses and NIESA are also opposed to it and believe it doesn’t make sense and will hurt businesses. She feels this should be a ballot issue and will promote road rage.

Jim Carr reiterated his opposition to the dollar stores coming to Williamston. He feels the Williamston Master Plan is a brilliant document and these stores do not fit that vision. He asked what is next with the road diet and would like to see whatever will slow down traffic through Williamston.

Mackenzie Sweet commented she feels it would be good to have the speed limit enforced and never sees police sitting on Grand River. They could also make it a “No Right on Red” zone.

Katie Conley commented Facebook uses an algorithm so people may not see the posts. She asked if a one-page newsletter would be possible.

14. Council Member Comments:

Councilman Rhines thanked Kodet True Value Hardware for sponsoring the fireworks for

Jubilee. He added he keeps hearing a lot about lack of communication, but all Council meetings are recorded and available on YouTube, agendas are posted on Facebook, the website, bulletin board, and you can sign up to get agendas e-mailed directly to you. He feels they are doing the best they can to be open and honest with the community.

Councilman VanAllsburg commented New Orleans has a rule that a dollar store cannot be within a two-mile radius of another dollar store. He added safety at the four corners is an issue. The lines on Grand River are faded away and would really help. He would like to see other ways of indicating people are crossing the street.

Councilman Hansen commented the Williamston Enterprise went out of business because they couldn't make money. The City website has been revamped and has a lot of information on it. He is also concerned with pedestrian safety. There are statistics for accidents, but nothing for "close calls". It is a dangerous intersection with a lot of businesses and parking and his primary concern is safety.

Councilman Pratt commented the City's communication is pretty cut and dry. There is Facebook, the website, YouTube, and the bulletin board. The number one goal of the road diet has been safety. He lives on Grand River Ave. and would be directly affected by the road diet. He also served on NIESA for ten years and responded to many calls of pedestrians and bicyclists being hit at that intersection. He reiterated Council doesn't have a hidden agenda, it has always been about public safety.

16. Adjourn to the Call of the Chair:

Mayor Pro-tem Lanyon adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

***Meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Holly M. Thompson, City Clerk

Brandon Lanyon, Mayor Pro-tem

Date Approved: _____