

Grant City Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 18, 2009

The special meeting of the Grant City Commission was held on Monday, May 18, 2009, at the City of Grant Offices.

1. **Call to Order:** Mayor Pro Tem Harry Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**
3. **Roll Call:**
PRESENT: Commissioner Julie Hallman, Commissioner Anne Pickard, Commissioner Harry Robinson, Commissioner Terri Yeomans and Commissioner Kevin Smith.
Others Present: Doug La Fave-City Manager, Sherry Powell – Assistant City Manager/Clerk, Dan VanBelzen – Chief of Police, Terry Hiler – Ashland/Grant Fire Chief, Dan Graham, Amanda Mol, Melissa Hilbrandoi, Spencer Proctor, and Christine Proctor.
ABSENT: Commissioner Cheryl Lake
EXCUSED: Mayor Terry Fett
4. **Approval of the Agenda:**
Motion: Motion made by Yeomans second by Pickard to approve the agenda.
Motion carried unanimously.
5. **Public Comment:**
None
6. **Consent Agenda**
a-f. *Approval of the Consent Agenda*
Motion: Motion made by Yeomans, second by Pickard to approve the consent agenda.
Motion carried unanimously.
7. **Unfinished Business:**
None
8. **New Business**
 - a. Resolution 09-16: Resolution providing for the confirmation of the mayor's appointment to City Board: ZBA
Motion: Motion made by Hallman, second by Pickard to approve Resolution 09-16.
Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. 74 S Lake St - Fire Exercise request
Motion: Motion made by Hallman, second by Pickard to approve the request for a fire training exercise.
Motion carried unanimously.
 - c. Release of Master Plan
Motion: Motion made by Yeomans, second by Smith to release the Master Plan.
Motion carried unanimously.
 - d. Cemetery tree request from Julie Cook
Motion: Motion made by Hallman, second by Yeomans to approve the request by Julie Cook for removal of a tree stump and replacement with a small tree of a variety approved by staff prior to planting.
Motion carried unanimously.
9. **Other Business**
 - a. Trailer/Mobile Home Storage: Doug asked the Commission for specific guidance when handling camper trailer and motor home violations. The primary concern is that they should be allowed in the driveway during the typical camping season as long as they are registered and in appropriate condition. The secondary concern pertains to the definition of disrepair. The Commission by consensus agreed that campers should be allowed in driveways during camping season as long as they are in proper condition, and that they should be stored either behind a walled enclosure, behind the house, or alongside and just behind the front of the house the remainder of the year.
 - b. Sewer Rates: Doug has been working with Rural Development and Fleis & Vandenbrink Engineers to determine the appropriate rate increases. Many communities are at risk of bankruptcy because they are not charging enough to pay for their bonds. Doug explained that the federal government requires us to forecast the increase over the

next several years, and they could force us to charge a much higher rate because they hold the bonds. Discussion about switching to monthly billing took place to help ease the difficulty for many residents that struggle with budgeting for quarterly billings. In order to switch to monthly billings, we would need to upgrade from touch read to radio read devices rather than require the DPW to walk to each location and physically read over 300 meters every month.

- c. Annual City Budget: Commissioner Yeomans commented that in fairness, Doug should not forego the 1% raise that is slated across the board for the rest of the regular staff. Doug advised that in lieu of receiving a raise, he would prefer additional vacation hours for his annual military commitment. Sherry explained that many communities give staff paid time off for military training. The Commission agreed that we should consider offering similar benefits, and that it should be brought back for approval with the new budget. Commissioners asked if any raises were appropriate given the current economy, and Doug responded that Newaygo County employees are getting 3% across the board this year in spite of an even higher rate of inflation. He further explained the total raises would cost the City about \$1,000 in total, and that it is more of a token gesture. Doug also explained that the City Offices building will be paid off this next fiscal year, and Transportation Bond Debt will be paid off the end of next year, so these expenditures will free up significant revenue in the future.
- d. Annual Audit: Doug sent out RFPs (Request for Proposals) for auditing services that could save the City up to \$3,000 next fiscal year. The proposals will be brought back to the Commission for review and selection.

10. **Information Items / Updates**

- a. Streetscape update: A total of about 40 easements have been filed with Newaygo County Register of Deeds. The tentative construction will begin the end of July, and we will schedule an open house in June where the engineers can interact with the public and address questions and concerns. We are awaiting a decision of the Fremont Area Community Foundation about the additional funding of about \$40,000 to construct the streetscape.
- b. Sewer Project update: The discharge permit is held up currently by DEQ over some levels obtained back in 2004. More testing is needed for verification, and the project funds have already been obligated.
- c. Community Building update: We have found once again that it is not possible to make all of the local contractors happy, but the roof replacement portion of the project has been awarded to K-Van, and was done within the confines of our local purchasing policy. The renovated building will provide significant saving on utility costs.
- d. Skate park update: The renovation should be complete in about a week. Milt Barr has been working more than a month straight, and it is coming together nicely. We will schedule a June 5th re-dedication right after the Water Tower Park dedication with the Fremont Area Community Foundation. Staff will put together a small picnic at the skate park after both dedications, and Doug will send out the invitations.

11. **Public Comments:**

None

12. **Adjournment** without objection at 7:46p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Harry Robinson

Sherry Powell, Grant City Clerk