

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 12, 2023

The Regular City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Mallory in the Council Chambers at City Hall at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present: Raab, Mallory, Mills, Dodd, Kwiatkowski, Darling and Bedwin.

Absent:

Fire Chief Don Dailey introduced the firefighters that were present to Council

Police Chief Scott Rifenberg introduced the police officers that were present to Council.

Public Comments on Agenda Items Only:

- Janet Gahn asked regarding the prepaid bills and disbursements report. Gahn asked regarding the Charter Communications charge for 220 Water Street.
- Sabolsky answered Gahn’s question explaining that the bill is for wifi services for the City owned marina.
- Gahn also asked when the unpaid bills and disbursements will be done.
- Interim Treasurer Clear explained that all of the bills from November have been prepaid so there are no unpaid bills for the month of November.

Approval of Agenda and Receive and File all Communications:

- Councilwoman Mills moved to approve the agenda and to receive and file all communications. Seconded by Councilman Kwiatkowski. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

- Councilwoman Mills moved to approve the Regular City Council meeting minutes of November 14, 2023, with corrections. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bedwin
- Councilwoman Mills explained the correction regarding the minutes.
- Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing:

- Comments from the public regarding the proposed Police and Fire Special Assessment District Boundaries and Proposed Police and Fire Special Assessment District Levy.
 - Mayor Mallory mentioned the sign in sheet for the public hearing. Mayor Mallory opened the public hearing at 7:06pm.
 - Wes LeMarble voiced his support for the Police and Fire Special Assessment District Levy.
 - Janet Gahn voiced her questions regarding the Special Assessment. Asking about the number of mills, and if this would be forever on the taxes of the people if passed by Council.

- Mayor Mallory said the number of mills can be between 0-10 mills.
- Sabolsky responded that Council needs to approve the amount of mills every year, so next year, Council may move to put no mills towards this. Council can change the mills from 0 to 10 mills, but the number of mills needs to be set every year. Sabolsky stated any resolution can be repealed. Sabolsky explained the adjustment for the number of mills.
- Gahn asked Sabolsky how the number of mills needed would be determined each year.
- Sabolsky discussed the budgetary process. Discussing with Council and Department Heads to determine the needs and what needs to be done to fund those needs.
- Gahn asked regarding scheduling a public hearing.
- Sabolsky responded that there does not need to be an act/motion of Council to set a public hearing.
- Gahn expressed her concerns regarding this matter. Gahn communicated some research she did regarding another community that voted on a Police and Fire Levy. Gahn believes more public hearings should have been had. Gahn also commented that the City should look into having a City income tax. Gahn said that the City needs to look at using the Sheriff's Department for part time public safety.
- Roger Kopernik clarified that this levy would be on every property in the City, not just homesteaded properties. Kopernik voiced that he is against this levy and his reasonings why. Kopernik believes the public should have more notice. Kopernik said that this should be a matter that goes onto a voted ballot.
- Mayor Mallory closed the public hearing at 7:16pm.

Departments, Board and Commissions:

- Cheboygan Fire Department, November Report.
- Cheboygan Police Department, November Report.

Bills and Disbursements:

- Prepaid Bills and Disbursements for the Month of November 2023.
 - Councilwoman Mills moved to approve the prepaid bills and disbursements for the month of November 2023 in the amount of \$1,237,541.17. Seconded by Councilwoman Dodd.
 - Mayor Mallory asked regarding the check made out to Rehmann Group and Councilwoman Darling asked regarding the voided checks made out to Walmart.
 - Clear, Sabolsky and Council discussed the bill for Rehmann, the work Rehmann has been doing for the City, and Rehmann's contract with the City. Clear said the number of hours Rehmann will bill us in the future will go down as they will work less hours with the City and City staff. Council voiced their concerns regarding the bill and further discussed Rehmann's involvement with the City.
 - Councilman Kwiatkowski said he would like to see an activity report about a month from now for all the activity line items regarding Rehmann and the total cost.
 - Clear and Chief Rifenberg explained the problem that the City ran into with Walmart while trying to purchase the Shop with a Hero gift cards.
 - A roll call vote was taken. Councilwoman Dodd abstained from voting on check number 36058 to Dodd's Tree Service. Motion carried unanimously.

General Business:

- Establishment of the Police and Fire Special Assessment District and the Police and Fire Special Assessment District Levy.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Bedwin moved to approve the Resolution establishing the Police and Fire Special Assessment District and Levy. Seconded by Councilwoman Mills.
 - Council and Sabolsky extensively discussed the levy proposal. Discussing the City's current and past finances, old and new police and fire equipment, taxes, inflation, notice to the public, possibly postponing this to a different time/meeting, having more public hearings, moving the City forward and what needs to be done to do so. Councilmembers asked Sabolsky different questions regarding the levy with Sabolsky responding. Some Councilmembers voiced their support and their reasons why this levy should pass, other Councilmembers voiced that they do not support this levy and the reasons why it should not pass.
 - A roll call vote was taken. Naves from Councilwoman Darling, Councilwoman Raab, and Councilman Kwiatkowski. Ayes from Mayor Pro Tem Bedwin, Councilwoman Mills, Mayor Mallory, and Councilwoman Dodd. Motion carried.
- Consideration of Cheboygan MI Trailblazers, Inc Lease Agreement.
 - Councilwoman Mills moved to approve the 3-year lease agreement between the City of Cheboygan and Cheboygan MI Trailblazers, Inc to use the right-of-way snowmobile route on Lincoln Ave and Western Ave. Seconded by Councilman Kwiatkowski.
 - Sabolsky suggested a one-year lease agreement. Sabolsky suggested something more formal. Sabolsky commented that he would like to look into this further.
 - Councilman Kwiatkowski asked if this is for grooming the right-of-way.
 - Sabolsky said yes. Sabolsky discussed this with Council. Expressing that he is not sure why this is a lease when they are not paying us anything. Wondering if it should be an agreement, not a lease. Sabolsky reiterated approving for a year and looking at something new come next fall.
 - Council discussed the Cheboygan Trailblazers and what they do. Chief Rifenberg also discussed what the Trailblazers do.
 - Council discussed further regarding the motion and the Trailblazers.
 - A roll call vote was taken. Motion failed unanimously.
 - Councilwoman Mills moved to approve a one-year lease agreement between the City of Cheboygan and Cheboygan MI Trailblazers, Inc to use the right-of-way snowmobile route on Lincoln Ave and Western Ave. Seconded by Councilman Kwiatkowski. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.
- Consideration of City Council 2024 Regular Meeting Schedule.
 - Councilwoman Darling moved to approve the City Council 2024 Regular Meeting Schedule as presented. Seconded by Councilwoman Dodd.
 - Clerk Singles noted to Council regarding the December 26, 2024 meeting. That is a Thursday due to the holiday being on a Tuesday.
 - Councilwoman Raab voiced her concern regarding the cancellation of Council meetings and sticking to the Council meeting schedule.
 - Council and Sabolsky discussed the Council meeting schedule and the cancellation of meetings.
 - Motion carried unanimously.
- Consideration of School District Annual Tax Collection Request.

- Councilwoman Mills moved to approve the School District Annual Tax Collection Request pursuant to the Cheboygan Area Schools Annual Summer Tax Resolution, Dated October 23, 2023. Seconded by Councilman Kwiatkowski. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

City Manager's Report:

- Sabolsky reported on different topics to Council. Sabolsky stated that he met with staff from Senator Peters' office. They discussed issues the City is facing. Lively asked for a list describing projects in which the City could use Senator Peters' help. Sabolsky discussed us putting in for federal appropriations again.
- Sabolsky reported and discussed regarding a meeting with MDOT Small Urban Program. Sabolsky reported on the different issues that were discussed at that meeting. Sabolsky said they agreed to fund, with the 2025 allocation, the culvert replacement over by the school. Sabolsky described the project and the steps moving forward.
- Regarding the Tissue Plant, phase 3 is complete, phase 4 has been submitted to the building owner's insurance company. Sabolsky commented on a press release and article from the building owner.
- Sabolsky reported on Huron Street infrastructure issues and that we will be getting a Clean Water SRF loan. That will take care of the sewer from Burger King to Huron Estates. Sabolsky discussed the road improvements needed for that project as well.
- Sabolsky reported on two watermain breaks. Sabolsky also reported on the new meter program and the progress made with that.
- Sabolsky said we are currently reviewing applications for the Front Desk position as well as taking applications for the Water/Wastewater Operator position. Police Union contract has been signed by both parties.
- Sabolsky reported regarding two new businesses that the City and the DDA are working with.
- The Walstrom Marine project is almost done. The utility easement is done and filed.
- Sabolsky reported on a letter of support that was written for a business that is buying a building downtown so they can apply for OPRA funds. Sabolsky further discussed.
- Sabolsky mentioned applying for a dam risk reduction grant.
- Sabolsky and Council discussed some grant updates.
- Mayor Mallory inquired about the lead service replacement project. Sabolsky responded. The lead service replacement will take some time, similar to the water meter replacement.
- Sabolsky talked to Council regarding the building we own that is currently vacant due to the law firm moving out of the building.

Clerk Comments:

- Singles reported that the recorder stopped recording.
- Sabolsky reported to Council regarding the DDA and complimented Executive Director Schneider's work for all the events downtown and the parade. Sabolsky also thanked Chief Rifenberg and his officers for Shop with a Hero.
- Singles reported that the auction is live online.

Public Comments:

- Janet Gahn made comments regarding her new water meter that was installed and that she can no longer read it herself. Gahn commented on the Finance Committee and the involvement of the Finance Committee and the levy. Gahn also commented on the meetings of the Council and inquired about the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.
- Ray Lofgren inquired about the Inverness Township water/sewer agreement. Lofgren commented on the Council's spending and City funds.

Council Response to Public Comments:

- Councilwoman Darling commented that she is curious about the Finance Committee and the Inverness Township water/sewer agreement.
- Sabolsky responded saying the agreement is current and will have to be renegotiated at some point. Right now, we are waiting on a report back from a consultant that was looking over a rate study for us.

Committee Updates:

- Councilwoman Dodd reported on the DDA events that have happened. Councilwoman Dodd mentioned the Match on Main grant for Melody's Lane. The new Christmas decorations are up downtown.

Messages and Communications from Mayor and Council Members:

- Councilwoman Raab discussed the Historic District Commission. Councilwoman Raab mentioned the proposed draft regarding a different approach to historic properties that she gave to Sabolsky at the last Council meeting.
- Sabolsky discussed with Councilwoman Raab about the documents she gave to him.
- Councilwoman Raab mentioned an email from Joe Heaphy that all of Council received. Councilwoman Raab communicated the concerns she had regarding the email.
- Councilwoman Raab and Councilwoman Mills discussed the email.
- Councilwoman Darling communicated regarding an email Council received from Alex Mesner and how he was denied a driveway on Mill Street.
- Sabolsky responded to Councilwoman Darling explaining why the driveway could not be put in, the engineering opinions, and how this issue cannot go to the Zoning Board of appeals.
- Councilwoman Darling also communicated regarding emails from Don Schappacher, the representative for the TJ Maxx. Councilwoman Darling asked regarding the development.
- Sabolsky referenced the letter all of Council signed and gave to Schappacher explaining why the development cannot happen at this time and the timeline of fixing the problems. Sabolsky discussed the infrastructure issues and further discussed being able to develop that property and what has to be done to do so.
- Councilwoman Darling communicated regarding the easement behind K-Mart.
- Sabolsky explained and discussed the problems with the easement Councilwoman Darling is referring to.
- Mayor Mallory asked if the DDA is in the Special Assessment District.
- Sabolsky responded that the entire City is.
- Mayor Mallory and Sabolsky discussed.

Adjournment:

- Mayor Mallory adjourned the meeting at 9:12pm.

Mayor Brett Mallory

Clerk Alyssa Singles

Mayor Pro Tem Adam Bedwin

Councilwoman Diane Mills

Councilman Kenneth Kwiatkowski

Councilwoman Mary Darling

Councilwoman Diane E. Raab

Councilwoman Hayley Dodd