

MINUTES
Plainwell City Council
May 8, 2023

1. Mayor Keeler called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 PM in City Hall Council Chambers.
2. Scott Fenner of Lighthouse Baptist Church gave the invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance was given by all present.
4. Roll Call: Present: Mayor Keeler, Mayor Pro Tem Steele, Councilmember Overhuel, Councilmember Keeney and Councilmember Wisnaski. Absent: None.
5. Approval of Minutes:
A motion by Steele, seconded by Overhuel, to accept and place on file the Council Minutes of the 04/22/2023 special meeting and the 04/24/2023 regular meeting and the closed session. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.
6. Public Comment:
Citizen Denise Miller at 241 N Sunset briefed Council on concerns about climate change and recommended discussions or a committee to consider things the city could be doing now to mitigate future concerns.
7. County Commissioner Report: None.
8. **A motion by Steele, seconded by Overhuel, to approve the Agenda for the May 8, 2023 meeting as presented. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.**
9. Mayor's Report:
Mayor Keeler reported the city is moving forward with the City Manager and City Clerk. He noted that the Noon Whistle is nearly ready for installation and will be on display at City Hall on Friday May 12, 2023.
10. Recommendations and Reports:
 - A. Superintendent Nieuwenhuis reported shrubbery that needs replacement in Hicks Park along Allegan Street between the bridge and Soule Fountain. Rather than replacing with new shrubbery that will need to grow and be maintained, the recommendation is to replace the shrubs with black-lined chain link fencing. The city also identified fencing needed on the Mill property from the NW Corner of Building 2 north to the river. Backyard Fencing LLC provided quotes for both projects for \$5,000 for Hicks Park and \$3,900 for the Mill. Council suggested installing a 16' gate on the Mill property, instead of the 12' quoted. **A motion by Wisnaski, seconded by Keeney, to approve the project with Backyard Fencing LLC to install black-coated chain link fencing in Hicks Parks and on the North Side of the Mill Property, with a 16' gate, at a cost not to exceed \$10,000.00. On a roll call vote, all in favor. Motion passed.**
 - B. Superintendent Nieuwenhuis reminded Council of a 3-year certification needed for the freight elevator in the Mill. Upon review after the project was approved at the last Council meeting, Great Lakes Elevator realized the original quote was for a passenger elevator, not a freight elevator. Due to the additional weights needed to certify the elevator's operation, additional funds are needed.

A motion by Keeney, seconded by Steele, to modify the approved cost a three-year certification for the mill freight elevator with Great Lakes Elevator to the amount of \$14,000.00. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

C. Superintendent Nieuwenhuis reported additional sweepings to be hauled after the spring 2023 sweepings. Since the approved project to haul and dispose of old piles had not yet started, the administration recommends adding the new pile to the existing pile for disposal this spring, which could reduce overall costs. Additional disposal fees will be needed due to the extra weight of the debris being hauled.
A motion by Overhuel, seconded by Wisnaski, to modify the approved disposal fees to Kent County Landfill to the amount of \$15,000.00. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

D. Clerk Kelley reminded Council of the motion made at the April 22 special meeting to offer a contingent job offer and reported that the background check had come back and that the employment contract had been negotiated successfully. The agreed upon contract was included in the Council packet for approval.
A motion by Keeney, seconded by Wisnaski, to approve a 3-year employment contract with Justin Lakamper for Plainwell City Manager, beginning June 12, 2023. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

E. Mayor Keeler noted the new Manager's contract ties raises to "favorable" performance evaluations and Council has the opportunity to tweak its process for evaluating the Manager. He suggested starting with the current evaluation form, consider the ICMA's evaluation form, and include a component for staff input as part of the process. Council debated the score level that would qualify as "favorable" and agreed on an 85% score. Council debated the changes to the scoring form as felt additional time was needed to consider all the possibilities.
A motion by Steele, seconded by Overhuel, to define an 85% score as "favorable" for the City Manager evaluation, and to table the updates to the evaluation form with inclusion of staff comments. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

F. Clerk Kelley asked for a special meeting on May 15, 2023 to discuss water rate proposals after a rate study done as part of the DWAM Grant. The special meeting would also review the 2023/2024 draft budget. Council could gather before the meeting for a meal.
A motion by Steele, seconded by Keeney, to set a special meeting for May 15, 2023 at 7pm to discuss water rates and the draft 2023/2024 City Budget. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

11. Communications:

A. A motion by Steele, seconded by Overhuel, to accept and place on file the April 2023 Investment and Fund Balance Reports. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

12. Accounts Payable:

A motion by Keeney, seconded by Wisnaski, that the bills be allowed and orders drawn in the amount of \$444,885.94 for payment of same. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

13. Public Comments:

County Clerk Bob Genetski gave an overview of the 2022 Annual Report of the Allegan County Clerk and Register of Deeds (full report on file at the Clerk's Office). He also reported a new fee service for property owners to protect them against property fraud. He also reminded Council the need to budget funds for the replacement of election tabulators scheduled for replacement, at city cost, in 2027.

14. Staff Comments:

Personnel Coordinator reported having ordered a background check for a soon-to-be-named City Clerk.

Community Development Manager Siegel reported lead abatement will start May 12 and that the River Dam project is ongoing and will need extensions because the project is so large and complicated.

Superintendent Pond noted that the Dystor cover replacement is completely and that the tank is operating much more efficiently.

Director Callahan reported outfitting the two new on-call firefighters with gear.

Clerk/Finance Director Kelley reported ongoing budget work and working with staff on contract negotiations.

Superintendent Nieuwenhuis reported a planned closing of the interconnect with Otsego Township on May 17 when the township's water system is scheduled to go live. He then reported that Plainwell fire hydrants will be flushed beginning 2am on Friday May 19. Finally, he reported that the work on the West Bridge and North Main bridges will begin on June 5. The North Main work will shift traffic to one side of the bridge, then the other, while work is being done. West Bridge will be closed to thru-traffic from Park to Church during the project.

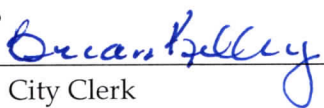
15. Council Comments:

Council each thanked staff for going above and beyond during staff shortages.

16. Adjournment:

A motion by Steele, seconded by Overhuel, to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 PM. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

Minutes respectfully
Submitted by,
Brian Kelley
City Clerk

MINUTES APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL
May 22, 2023


Brian Kelley, City Clerk