



Approved

City of Ypsilanti
City Council Regular and Goal Setting Agenda
Thursday, January 25, 2018
7:00 – 10:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers - 1 S. Huron Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL –

Council Member Bashert	Present	Council Member Robb	Present
Mayor Pro-Tem Brown	Present	Council Member Vogt (7:07)	Present
Council Member Murdock	Present	Mayor Edmonds	Absent
Council Member Richardson	Present		

Council Member Bashert moved, seconded by Council Member Richardson to excuse the absence of Mayor Edmonds.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the absences were excused.

III. INVOCATION -

Mayor Pro-Tem Brown asked all to stand for a moment of silence.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE -

"I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

V. INTRODUCTIONS –

Mayor Pro-Tem Brown introduced the following individuals; Economic Development Director Beth Ernat, Police Chief Tony DeGiusti, Fiscal Services Director Marilou Uy, DDA Director Joe Meyers, DPS Director Stan Kirton, Fire Chief Max Anthouard, Human Resources Director Rebecca Craigmile, City Manager Darwin McClary, City Clerk Frances McMullan, and City Attorney John Barr.

VI. AGENDA APPROVAL –

Council Member Bashert moved, seconded by Council Member Richardson to approve the agenda.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the agenda was approved.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

1. Amber Fellows, Ward 3, stated a memo was sent to Council regarding an investigation against her attempts to expedite a FOIA request. She views it as a way to suppress criticism and does not want to humor the investigation. She feels city resources could be better used than on this investigation. She has asked for transparency of government, greater engagement, and accountability. She asked for the city to engage with the Community Benefits Group Coalition.
2. Amy Shordes, River St., informed Council about the community coalition and explained a member of the coalition is being singled out and investigated.
3. Nathanael Romero, Ypsilanti Resident, stated he sees a lot of positive things happening in the city. It would be unfortunate if a key player of what is happening is targeted. He said the investigation is foolish and doesn't understand how a person could claim to be a council member since it is easily verified. He looks forward to the outcome of the China trip investigation and Council elections next November.

VIII. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR –

— Thanked everyone for their comments.

IX. DISCUSSION

2018/2019 Goal Setting Discussion- Dr. Jeffrey L. Bernstein, Facilitator

Dr. Bernstein explained his strategy for the second goal setting meeting.

Council Member Bashert asked if the goals outlined from last meeting should be prioritized. Dr. Bernstein responded priorities could be set, but Council might also feel all goals must be achieved. Council Member Vogt stated he would prefer to organize the goals be high priority high urgency, high priority low urgency, low importance high priority, and low importance low priority. He feels only 10% of goals would be a high priority and high urgency.

Council Member Murdock stated at this time he is not interested in staffing levels because it is unknown what is appropriate. As a general theme staff levels need to be examined in conjunction with revenue produced by the Water Street Millage. Using that millage a strategy can be designed to restore services lost as a result of budgetary issues. Staff compensation is about employee morale and might be broader.

Dr. Bernstein asked what a high priority with high urgency is. City Clerk Frances McMullan responded public safety. DPS Director Stan Kirton added staff levels in terms of public safety.

Council Member Bashert asked if an audit of staff levels would be completed prior to budget. City Manager Darwin McClary responded metrics will be examined on what staff levels are appropriate for the Police and Fire Departments. Ms. Bashert responded she would like it completed for all staff. Mr. McClary replied the city has \$1 million to work with and one officer costs around \$100,000 a year included salary and benefits. He added the Police and Fire Departments have the greatest need for increased staff. Ms. Bashert asked if staff levels in other departments is not being examined. Mr. McClary responded it is possible, and the city has staffing needs in all departments, but priorities should be addressed first. Ms. Bashert replied

staff levels is starting to interfere with city services, and the effectiveness of Council. She is not satisfied on only focusing on the Police and Fire Departments. Mr. McClary agreed, and an examination needs to be completed. Ms. Bashert asked if that will be done through an audit. Mr. McClary responded yes, an audit will be completed in the Fire and Police Departments first followed by other departments. An examination needs to address if the need is increased staff, or better technology. Ms. Bashert stated she would like an audit completed on staff levels for each department. Council Member Robb stated resources are going to flow to the department that would achieve goals set by Council. Ms. Bashert stated goals were submitted and were compiled, and now Council needs to discuss how to allocate funds.

Council Member Murdock stated the city has additional revenue from the Water Street Millage and the County Public Safety Millage. The Water Street Millage can be used to restore services that were cut because of budgetary issues. The funds from the county can be allocated to the capital improvement fund and used for projects the city has not had funding to complete. It would be wise to get projects shovel ready for when grants become available.

Dr. Bernstein asked if a list of priorities would it assist with a staff audit. Council Member Murdock stated Department Heads have made recommendations for staff levels, and Council could trust their expertise. A study would be useful in addressing salary levels. Dr. Bernstein asked Department Heads if they see a value in completing a staffing audit to match priorities. Council Member Bashert stated she does not want staff levels to be increased simply because the city has an influx of money.

Council Member Richardson stated she would like staff levels increased at the Department of Public Services. Generally, public safety is thought of as only Police and Fire Department, but DPS is essential to keeping the city functioning properly.

Fire Chief Anthouard stated a staffing audit performed for the Fire Department will show next year's funding will not produce adequate staffing. Police Chief DeGiusti stated the Police Department has lost six officers over the last year. Council Member Murdock agreed additional funding will not bring the Police and Fire Departments back to appropriate levels.

Dr. Bernstein stated absent an audit hires need to be made for public safety. He suggested hires be made for public safety and then perform an audit to see where needs are. Council Member Murdock stated he wanted to hold a special meeting to discuss potential new positions for public safety. Council Member Robb stated public safety hires would be done in threes, so the city will either hire three or six. There are directional costs for employees and if two new fire fighters and three new police officers are hired it is nearly \$500,000. He does not feel a special meeting is necessary to discuss staffing levels for those departments.

Council Member Bashert asked if the city pays for the academy how much will that increase training costs. Chief DeGiusti responded the city would need to pay the cost of the academy and salary for the officer. Ms. Bashert asked for an estimated cost. Chief DeGiusti replied a salary has not been set for an officer in training, but lower than a patrol officer. The cost of the academy is \$7,000. Council Member Robb asked how long the academy is. Chief DeGiusti responded seventeen weeks. Chief DeGiusti added this would not be the practice for every hire. Mr. McClary added the salary has already been budgeted the only additional cost would be for the academy.

Dr. Bernstein stated salary raises need to be kept in mind when new hires are decided. Council Member Vogt responded both issues are subsets of a staff audit.

Dr. Bernstein asked if a salary and technology audit should be listed as a goal. Council Member Vogt responded in the affirmative.

Dr. Bernstein directed Council to goal two "enhance communication between city government and residents". Council Member Bashert stated city staff is going to be examining technological upgrades, and is not sure this needs to be examined further at this point. Council Member Robb stated he is not sure live streaming is necessary given the amount of people who would watch it. He suggested investing in capital improvements and improve the technology in Council Chambers. He suggested moving to paperless packets and views parking enforcement delivering Council packets as absurd. The core function of the Clerk Department is to put the packet together, not to create mountains of paper. He said if Council decides to do live streaming it is going to be an upfront cost of \$50,000. Plus laptops for each Council member and access to the internet. If sustainability is important in the city council packets should be paperless.

Council Member Vogt suggested instead of investing in technology the goal should be to evaluate technology.

Mr. Kirton suggested partnering with EMU to provide live streaming.

Dr. Bernstein introduced enhancing performance of public safety functions as a Council goal. He asked Council if there are other things they would add under this goal. Council Member Bashert stated code enforcement. Council Member Richardson stated traffic enforcement and traffic calming methods. Dr. Bernstein stated there is not much for Council to do other than increasing staffing levels. Ms. Bashert stated she would like to add traffic calming improvements to Cross and Huron as a capital improvement.

Chief DeGiusti stated each time a document is sent to Iron Mountain it costs \$75 to retrieve it. He stated digitizing records would make this more efficient and cost effective. Council Member Bashert stated it would be helpful to know how much Iron Mountain services cost the city over a year or two year timeframe. Council Member Robb asked what is being sent to Iron Mountain. Economic Development Director Beth Ernat responded documents that have been aged out, and there is not room. Mr. Robb stated he thought the city stopped receiving paper documents. Ms. Ernat responded no. Mr. McClary asked why the city is not asking for a digital and paper copy of building plans. Ms. Ernat responded there is not room in the city's digital storage. Mr. Robb stated when the city sends out a request for proposals for a new IT provider that should be included. Ms. Ernat stated the city also purchase a digital scanner.

Dr. Bernstein introduced the budget category and asked for underlying goals. Mayor Pro-Tem Brown suggested the Fee Schedule be added under that category, especially rental inspection fees. Council Member Robb stated that needs to happen immediately. Ms. Ernat responded the study has been completed and will submit it to Council for approval by the end of February. Ms. Ernat responded there will be backlash from the public. Council Member Vogt responded the city needs to be in line with other communities, and cover city costs. Council Member Murdock stated ultimately the fees are going to be paid by the tenants. Ms. Ernat responded she is aware. Council Member Vogt replied that is not completely true.

Council Member Bashert stated decreasing overtime should assist in improving staff morale. Chief DeGiusti replied the main reason officers leave, other than retirement, is overtime. Officers go elsewhere work less and make more money. Human Resources Director Rebecca Craigmile added overtime increases worker's compensation costs with increased accidents and injuries.

Dr. Bernstein asked if building up cash reserves is a realistic goal for this coming budget year. Council Member Vogt responded he wants to continue fiscal responsibility not rush to spend it. Council Member Murdock stated the city has a minimum fund balance requirement.

Dr. Bernstein introduced goal number five "making progress on longer term fiscal issues facing the city". Council Member Bashert stated the second bullet point should be separated into two goals; implement a community benefits ordinance and ensure development friendly policies.

Council Member Richardson asked what steps the city can take to reduce the Fire and Police Pension. Mr. McClary responded examining the pension multiplier and reducing the benefits offered under the pension system. Council Member Robb asked what would be the risk of putting all new hires into MERS. Mr. McClary responded the MERS system is not an Act 345 system so the city would not be able to levy a millage. Mr. Robb understood but asked about its potential in the future. The ten mills levied for the Fire and Police Pension is a disincentive for development. Council Member Murdock stated the cost needs to be decreased, not necessarily shifted. Mr. McClary replied changes have been made to the pension but they are long term cost reductions. Chief Anthouard stated there will be fewer firefighters retiring and the pension should be 100% funded in fifteen years. Chief DeGiusti stated a lot of this conversation will be moot because of what the state legislature decides to do about Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB).

Mr. McClary stated the high millage rate is an issue that needs to be addressed. Council Member Murdock responded if decreasing the millage rate is an issue Council could address that this year.

Dr. Bernstein asked if the Police and Fire Pension Millage, or any other listed goals are high priority. Council Member Bashert stated creating a parking strategy is a priority. Council Member Vogt stated he would like to see contributions made to the Parkridge Community Center, Rutherford Pool, and the Senior Center. The amount of the contribution is to be determined, but should be a priority. Moving the recycling center is another high priority. Council Member Murdock stated if the entire city is being serviced by other means, there is no need for a recycling center.

Dr. Bernstein asked if Water Street development is a priority. Council Member Richardson responded in the affirmative. Council Member Robb asked if Water Street is going to be actively marketed. Mr. McClary responded as of December 31, 2017 the city no longer has a purchase agreement with International Village. The Economic Development Department is waiting to see the goals of Council before it begins to actively market the property, but it is listed. Mr. Robb asked if the listing is for a single, or multiple developers.

Council Member Murdock stated two things need to be a part of the Water Street development. The process must be transparent and the development must have a community benefits agreement. Council Member Richardson stated there needs to be a high level of transparency. Mr. McClary agreed, and explained it would be helpful for Council to decide what it feels is a transparent process. Once that it is defined staff can meet those expectations. Mr. Murdock stated a resolution was approved that defined expectations, but it could be revisited. Mr. McClary replied he will review the resolution, but there might be a need to expand upon the directive.

Council Member Bashert stated technology upgrades need to be a high priority.

Council Member Richardson stated the development of a Community Benefits Ordinance needs to be a high priority. Council Member Bashert responded that will be completed by the next Fiscal Year.

Council Member Murdock stated several capital projects that will not be completed next year are not included as goals. Council Member Vogt stated a goal should be to determine funds to be set aside for capital projects.

Dr. Bernstein introduced the ecological category. Council Member Bashert stated she would like alternative fuel vehicles used when replacing the fleet. The city parks also need attention. Either find a way to incorporate all city residents into the recycling program, or provide a better alternative. Council Member Robb stated the city has a policy for alternative fuel vehicles. He asked if Council Member Bashert is suggesting the policy be changed. Ms. Bashert responded examine alternative fuel vehicles is a listed goal of the DPS. Council Member Murdock stated he would like to see non-fossil fuel vehicles used. Ms. Bashert would like to use some of the savings from the solar panels on the Fire Department roof to increase the amount of solar panels on the roof.

Council Member Murdock stated one of the purposes of the Energy Efficiency Fund is to support solar power and a possible solar field at the former city dump.

Mr. McClary asked if Council will like staff to be more aggressive with the development of an urban forestry program. Council Member Murdock stated Water Street was used as a nursery, but those trees cannot be used. Council Member Richardson asked why. Ms. Ernat responded because there is no way to strip the bulbs to replant them because of contamination.

Dr. Bernstein asked what the highest ecological priority items from the list developed are. Council Member Bashert responded moving the recycling center, and citywide recycling needs. Council Member Murdock stated he would like the 2018 Road Plan to be created to repair damage done by this year's winter.

Council Member Vogt asked Department Heads if anything they feel is important was missed. Mr. Kirton stated city parking lots.

Mr. McClary stated the train station project is important but there needs to be a substantial investment from outside the city. Council Member Murdock stated he worries about an alternative analysis being done with the state legislature propensity to put thing in the township. Council Member Richardson added she has heard the Township is very interested in having the train stop in the township. Mr. McClary stated Amtrak needs a second option if they are going to move forward with this project. The other option Amtrak suggested was by LeForge. Council Member Murdock stated his issue is when this first was discussed Depot Town was the only option, and there was not a requirement for an alternative. Last time he talked with OHM Engineering he was told they have not been involved with the project since the previous City Manager left. Mr. McClary responded he does not believe the project is at the point of engineering.

X. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

None

XI. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR –

XII. ADJOURNMENT –

Council Member Vogt moved, seconded by Council Member Bashert to adjourn the meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.