



**City of Ypsilanti  
City Council Goal Setting Minutes  
Saturday, January 12, 2008  
8:30 a.m.  
City Council Chambers  
1 S. Huron Street  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Council Member Filipiak	Present (8:39)	Council Member Robb	Present
Council Member Gawlas	Present	Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson	Present (8:34)
Council Member Nickels	Present	Mayor Schreiber	Present
Council Member Richardson	Present (8:39)		

**III. INVOCATION**

The Mayor 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 Schreiber introduced Former Mayor Pete Murdock, and asked Council Members and city staff to introduce themselves to the audience.

**VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Mayor Schreiber read the rules for audience participation.

1. Joe Queen, 220 S. Huron, stated that much of his business is from travelers who are interested in the historic sites of the city. He stated that he and his wife market the historic value of Ypsilanti, and without it there is no other draw to the city. He supports the Historic District Commission (HDC) and said it is the key to keeping the city looking good and preserving the historic value of Ypsilanti.

2. Barry LaRue, 302 Oak, suggested that the City talk with the county about possibly providing police services. He said he would hate to see the next five years devoted to chopping necessary functions to meet budget restraints because the city would continue to lose good people. He stated that if policing is cut, the city could balance the budget and design the amount of services needed by the County around the funds that are available.
3. Rene Greff, 1305 Grant, spoke in support of the HDC. She stated that certain developers in the community want to abolish the HDC because it cuts into their profits. She said that the HDC enforces and preserves community standards and quality of life. She stated that she appreciates the value of historic preservation because it is one of Ypsilanti's greatest assets.
4. Christian Overland, 119 S. Washington, stated that the HDC, along with businesses and residents have focused on growth. He said the historic districts should be considered an asset of the city. He challenged City Council to become innovative in looking at ways to deal with the current financial challenges.
5. Eric Mauer, 35 S. Summit, stated that the HDC helps control things and keep the city looking good. He said the HDC is important for redevelopment and maintaining the city's historic nature.
6. Karen Mauer, 35 S. Summit, spoke in support of keeping the HDC. She stated that without a historic district developers would not have access to OPRAs to allow redevelopment of old buildings. She stated that without the HDC developers would be allowed to do whatever they want. She commended the HDC for the fantastic job they do with putting standards on historic preservation.
7. Max Antward, Ypsilanti Fire Department EMS Coordinator, explained that he is a member of the medical control committee and the services provided by YFD are quality and above standard. He explained the nature and volume of calls received and stated that it would be impossible to do a good job with less people.
8. Steward Beal, 208 W. Michigan, expressed concern about elimination of the HDC. He said Ypsilanti's historic district is one of the city's major assets. He stated that volunteers are great, but a paid staff person is needed to monitor things. He stated that without a HDC planner the community will eventually erode.
9. Bill Kinley, stated that the tax credits for historic structures allowed him to rehab two buildings in the city. He stated that it would be impossible to redevelop in Ypsilanti without the federal and state tax credits. He said it

is important to have HDC staff because they direct and inform developers of federal monies and guidelines for construction and redevelopment.

#### **VII. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR**

Mayor Schreiber thanked the audience for attending the goal setting session and commented that the Historic District Commission is important for the city to have.

He thanked Mr. Antwart for speaking about the EMS services provided by the Ypsilanti Fire Department.

Mayor Schreiber explained that the purpose of the goal setting sessions is to set priorities for city services. He stated that Council and staff are looking at city services in order to create budget options for the City Manager to present to Council for approval.

#### **VIII. MOTIONS, RESOLUTIONS & DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Discussion of Goals for 2007-2008, with Dr. Joe Ohren, Eastern Michigan University.

#### **IX. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

1. Pete Murdock, 504 N. River, stated that AATA is a valuable service to the community and the city must figure out a way to keep it. He suggested that the city explore alternative funding sources such as E.M.U. and Washtenaw Community College.
2. Frank Wright, 968 W. Cross, stated that he is 100% for bus funding, but not for Ypsilanti paying 100%. He stated that a regional effort is needed to sustain the service. He asked how much the salary of City Council members is.
3. Jane Katz, 1824 Roosevelt, urged the City to stop nickel and diming and use long-range planning. She stated that the City must examine its core business plan and determine what Ypsilanti's vision is in order to solidify direction for the future.

#### **X. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR**

Mayor Schreiber said he appreciates the comments made regarding the AATA bus service although opinions differ, a common idea has been expressed.

Mayor Schreiber stated that City Council's salary is \$5,151.00 annually, the Mayor Pro-Tem salary is a little higher, and the Mayor's is \$9,000.00.

He stated that he appreciates the work of the 20/20 Task Force and the Eastern Leaders who have been discussing how the city can best use the resources we have. He said that the number one goal of Council is to balance the budget and Council is attacking this goal by facing hard fiscal decisions. He indicated that all of the goals are on the city's website.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Council Member Richardson moved, supported by Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson, that the meeting be adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

## MEMO

January 16, 2008

TO: Mayor and Council-members, Ed Koryzno, City Manager  
Participants in the Goal-Setting Workshop, City of Ypsilanti  
FROM: Dr. Joe Ohren, EMU  
RE: Minutes of the January 12 Work Sessions

As I promised following the work session on Saturday, January 12, I have presented below the Minutes, reflecting our general discussion of the proportions of the budget devoted to the several categories of services we have been examining and the detailed discussion of each of the service areas in the fifth and final remaining category, administration.

The product of the first two sessions in our series, held on December 8 and December 15, was a set of recommended reductions in four of the five broad service categories; these Minutes should be read in conjunction with those from the earlier meetings in anticipation of our final session, scheduled for January 26, from 9 until 2, at the Community Room in the Haab's Health Center. As we did for our earlier sessions, I will arrange for breakfast and lunch for that session. To focus your thinking for our final session together, at the conclusion of the Minutes in this memo I have summarized the proposed reductions across all five of the service areas we have examined.

Given the discussion during this past meeting concerning earlier Council's goals and priorities, I have also included as an attachment the broad goal statements generated as part of an earlier set of work sessions. These provide a framework or context for the current budget considerations.

### **January 12, 2008**

The session began with brief comments on a handout reflecting the proportions of the budget devoted to the five broad categories of services that have formed the basis of our discussions. Using FY 2008 data, the proportions of the budget for each category are:

Police	35%
Fire	20%
Public works	11%
Planning/development/building	6%
Administration	29%

While these proportions have probably changed slightly over the past several years—for example, as DPW expenses have been reallocated from the general fund to other funds—the general pattern probably has held true, although total spending has remained relatively static with tightened revenues.

The last category, administration, represents a catch-all listing of thirty or so services; as I noted in the earlier session, anything that didn't fit easily into one of the first four categories was placed here. The task before the group was to discuss and make recommendations on proposed reductions to the services listed.

## **Administration**

Issues were raised and recommendations offered with respect to almost every item listed in the handout; I have summarized those discussions under each heading. During the course of the morning several more general issues/suggestions were raised, and I have treated them together at the end of the narrative.

### City Clerk's Office

The clerk and a deputy clerk presently staff the clerk's office and provide a range of services to council and other departments along with handling election responsibilities. Given the location of the clerk's office, the office also serves as the front counter for all city hall traffic. For a period of time the county provided some services on a contract basis but the cost of the county contract exceeded the cost of a city employee. Other possible vendors might be examined to provide some services currently provided by employees in that office, though election officials must be certified on the qualified voter file of the SoS office. It was generally agreed that limiting front desk hours in the clerk's office would not save significant dollars. No reductions proposed.

### Auditing

This service, along with all other professional services, will be rebid in the coming months to try and secure reduced costs.

**Recommended reduction: rebid auditing services to reduce costs.**

### General legal services

This service, along with all other professional services, will be rebid in the coming months to try and secure reduced costs.

**Recommended reduction: rebid legal services to reduce costs.**

### Retiree health care

Funding for police and fire pensions and retiree health care is funded by a dedicated millage and accounted for separately from the general fund. Other city employees are covered under the state MERS program, but at present no general fund contributions have been required since the city program is actuarially sound.

### Human resources

The responsibilities of the personnel director have been shifted to the assistant city manager over the past two years, and some other HR functions have been shifted to accounting staff. Under consideration is a plan to shift further payroll responsibilities to department heads to minimize other HR demands. While no specific reductions were proposed, consideration should be given to contracting for payroll services.

### Treasury, accounting, assessing and finance

This represents several related functions or services and much of the discussion overlapped. Some participants suggested bidding out certain portions of these services; the examination should consider both the county and the township to determine whether any cost savings are possible from contracting for assessment and payroll services. Preliminary contact with the

county indicated that contracting would be more expensive, and the scope of services available would be more limited. For example, the assessor provides support for the building department and planning staff and serves on the city's Board of Review and well as the Election Commission.

A second line of inquiry focused on whether some reductions could stem from consolidating positions within the several service areas, all now reporting to the finance director. That may be possible, and the Manager will make a recommendation as to specific actions to be taken, but one constraint mentioned reflected the need for checks and balances in the internal control system; e.g., no individual should be taking in revenues and accounting for those same revenues.

**Recommended reduction: consider reducing staff through consolidating positions to the extent possible consistent with auditing requirements. Explore further possible cost savings resulting from contracting for assessment services, either through another government or a private vendor, or shifting to part-time employees to address peak-load needs.**

#### Website

Several individuals noted that over the long term savings might come from better and greater use of the city website. A collaborative effort is underway with EMU to secure help from an intern to develop the website; this is a long term effort supported by the assistant city manager. In developing its system the city might also consider establishing an intranet that would allow for more effective communication and record-sharing across a secure website. No reductions proposed.

#### Recreation—administration, utilities, capital improvements

While the city eliminated recreation staff and programs several years ago, utility and other administrative costs have continued to be supported. In addition, staff have devoted considerable time to developing and maintaining relationships with various Friends group in an effort to keep some facilities open. There appears to be general agreement that the Parkridge Center and the Freight House efforts have been supported, with the signing of agreements that appear to provide for sustainability, participants were less sanguine about the Friends group for the pool.

In addition, there is a considerable capital investment that will need to be made relatively soon if the pool is to remain open, given a leaky roof and leaking water pipes beneath the pool itself. A recommendation will need to be made on the use of CDBG funds for the pool; if such funds are used for repairing the pool itself, the city is in effect committing to continue to use the pool in perpetuity. It may be best to mothball the pool for a year or two until such time as it becomes clearer whether there is sufficient community support for the pool. Efforts might also be made to ascertain whether the county or the township might also be willing to partner to keep the pool open on a long term basis.

**Recommended reduction: mothball the pool for the next two years while work continues to build a sustainable source of funding. Repair the roof of the building proper, and use for alternative public purposes as needed.**

### City council compensation

Compensation of local elected officials has been frozen the past several years. While some participants recommended reductions in compensation, there did not appear to consensus on the issue.

### Lobbyist

The lobbying firm has provided assistance at several points over the years in assisting with grants and facilitating meetings with state agencies. There has been some thought about contracting with a firm on a case-by-case basis—essentially hiring for specific services but not paying a retainer—but the current firm would not contract on that basis. A suggestion was made to explore a partnership with EMU for a shared resource. Ultimately, lobbying services, as is the case with other professional services, will be rebid in the coming months, with a potential reduction in costs.

**Recommended reduction: rebid lobbying services to reduce costs.**

### Memberships and dues

While very limited, the dollar amounts devoted to these memberships needs to be considered in the context of benefits received as well as other potential uses. Most participants agreed that membership in MML was critical, with less support for continuing contributions to SEMCOG and NLC. It was agreed that a general analysis of membership costs would be undertaken.

**Recommended reduction: consider eliminating membership in NLC and SEMCOG.**

### Contribution to SPARK

This organization incorporates the work of the earlier Washtenaw Development Council and has recently concluded negotiations on opening a business incubator in downtown Ypsilanti. The focus of recent efforts has been on high-tech or life sciences initiatives across the county. No recommended change in funding.

### AATA bus service contract

Over the past two fiscal years the city has reduced its contribution to AATA by fifty percent, although as a result of AATA subsidies, the level of service in the city has remained the same as before. Representatives from AATA have indicated that the subsidy will not be continued into the next fiscal year. Thus, a fifty percent reduction in city funding for bus service will result in a corresponding reduction in service levels.

Participants agreed that bus service was important, and sought to consider ways of bringing in additional revenues to maintain service levels. Two ideas were proffered: one involves recommending a fare increase to the AATA Board to offset city funding reductions. At the time of the earlier action, that board did not agree to fare increases since it would create a two tier fare system. But several participants urged a fare increase as opposed to a service reduction. The second suggestion for increasing revenue was to place a dedicated millage before the voters to support the AATA contract or some portion of that amount. A millage question could be placed on one of the election ballots for later in calendar 2008, and if approved revenues could be available during FY 2009 (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009).

It was also noted that there are ongoing discussions at the county level about increasing funding for AATA or creating a county-wide system, with separate funding. It is not clear whether or when such decisions will be finalized, certainly not it time for FY 09 budget action by the city.

**Recommended reduction: continue reduced AATA funding at 2007-08 levels and recommend a fare increase or a dedicated millage.**

### **General Issues/Strategies for Reducing Expenditures**

**Contracting:** One general theme that was raised at several points during the discussion of specific services had to do with contracting with other providers for services. Several such arrangements are to be explored in the coming year involving specific services. It is important however to understand with respect to contracting that often the pay scale for employees in the city is lower than that offered by other entities, and contracting may actually result in higher costs. In addition, in small communities where employees “wear many hats,” contracting for services may mean that other duties of individual employees would end up falling on others. Consideration of part-time employment might also be considered as a way of reducing costs. Finally, it is also common that city services are provided by certified or licensed employees, and contracts must provide for similar licenses or certifications.

**Service Hour Reductions:** A second theme raised during the discussion had to do with limiting the availability of services to the public, by closing offices for specified times or for that matter closing city hall completely during specified times. For example, one suggestion was to open city hall to public traffic from 10 until 5, rather than 8 to 5; or set aside one day per week when public traffic would not be allowed. Alternatively, specific offices might only be open during more limited hours than currently.

Generally the group agreed that while such a strategy might contribute to overall productivity in the performance of services—limiting interruptions, for example, and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness with which services are implemented—the dollar savings from such strategies would be very limited.

**Office Reorganization:** Still another general strategy suggested for reducing administrative costs related to reorganizing offices within city hall. One suggestion was to convert the present council chambers on the first floor to office space, with several services organized in the room. These would be primarily public oriented services, improving access to the public, but also consolidating functions and potentially allowing a reduction in office staff. The Manager indicated that an analysis would be undertaken in the coming year to ascertain possible costs as well as savings of such reorganization/renovation. Council meetings would be scheduled for the Senior Center in that event.

A variation on the same theme was struck with the suggestion that a common records system be developed—the specific example was for police and fire departments, but the strategy could extend across all departments. A secure intranet would be one way to implement such a strategy, with access by all departments, as long as concerns about upkeep and security were addressed.

**Collaboration:** Several ongoing discussions concerning cooperative service agreements were described over the three work sessions and will be reported on as progress is made. More generally, the Mayor has begun exploration with the Township Supervisor about interest in regular joint meetings of the two governing boards.

### **Summary of Proposed Reductions**

***Police proposed reduction***—reduce police staffing to three per shift instead of four. There may be opportunities for savings associated with reorganization within the police department or reassignment of existing officers from special units or services. Reduce public service hours.

***Fire proposed reduction***—reduce fire staffing to four per shift instead of five. There may be opportunities for savings from a change in shift strategy or the elimination of EMS over the long term. In the short run, vacant positions can be frozen.

***Public Works proposed reduction***—reduce the number of parks, and hence park maintenance costs, by identifying a small number of core parks to be preserved and maintained while the others are sold or donated to adjacent property owners. Shift all remaining appropriate general fund costs to special funds. Freeze current vacant positions. Complete an analysis of the residential parking permit program to determine whether additional fees should be levied for implementation.

***Planning and Community Development proposed reduction***—reduce staffing in planning, building and housing by one. Consolidate department head positions and reduce the time devoted to staffing boards and commissions. Consider contracting out major planning and zoning tasks such as the update of the master plan. Focus ordinance enforcement efforts only on those deemed most important to maintaining healthy neighborhoods or in response to complaints.

***Administration proposed reductions***—

- 1. Recommended reduction: rebid auditing services to reduce costs.**
- 2. Recommended reduction: rebid legal services to reduce costs.**
- 3. Recommended reduction: consider reducing staff through consolidating positions to the extent possible consistent with auditing requirements. Explore further possible cost savings resulting from contracting for assessment services, either through another government or a private vendor, or shifting to part-time employees to address peak-load needs.**
- 4. Recommended reduction: mothball the pool for the next two years while work continues to build a sustainable source of funding. Repair the roof of the building proper, and use for alternative public purposes as needed.**
- 5. Recommended reduction: rebid lobbying services to reduce costs.**
- 6. Recommended reduction: consider eliminating membership in NLC and SEMCOG.**
- 7. Recommended reduction: continue reduced AATA funding at 2007-08 levels and recommend a fare increase or a dedicated millage.**

Attachment  
City Council Goals, 2005-06

**Goals for 2005-2006  
Ypsilanti City Council**

- Goal One      Continue to pursue a variety of strategies to strengthen the financial capacity of the City
- Goal Two      Continue to foster an environment in City government where communication and information is shared and services are provided in an efficient, cost-effective, friendly and timely manner
- Goal Three     Strengthen neighborhood leadership and organizations and open lines of communications between neighborhood leaders and elected officials and city employees
- Goal Four      Continue to pursue a variety of strategies for improving the physical condition of neighborhoods and increasing the rate of home ownership in the community
- Goal Five      Continue to address the broad range of facility and infrastructure needs across the City
- Goal Six       Continue to strengthen working relationships with the University to address mutual problems and strengthen the community
- Goal Seven     Assume a leadership role across the community in promoting the need for regional and cooperative service delivery strategies