



City of Marquette, MI

300 West Baraga Avenue
Marquette, Michigan 49855

Meeting Minutes City Commission Special Meeting

Wednesday, September 8, 2021
4:00 PM
Commission Chambers

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Present: Bonsall, Davis, Hanley, Hill, Mayer, Smith and Stonehouse.

Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Fred Stonehouse moved to Approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Sally Davis and Carried Unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Smith had no announcements.

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

There were no public comments at this point in the meeting.

1. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Sally Davis moved to Approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Jessica Hanley and Carried Unanimously.

1.a. Approve the minutes of the August 30, 2021 regular Commission meeting

New Business

2. Budget Overview

City Finance Director Mary Schlicht provided an overview of today's meeting.

Andrea Ingmire, Director of the Peter White Public Library, highlighted the library's budget for the coming year.

Becky Finco, Executive Director of the Marquette Downtown Development Authority, offered a summary look at the DDA budget.

Mary Schlicht then discussed the details of the Marquette Brownfield Redevelopment Authority budget, including a brief look at individual projects. There was commission discussion about the MBRA Revolving Loan Fund and the MBRA's project priority policy. Mayor Smith suggested holding a future work session, focused solely on brownfield.

Mary Schlicht then led discussion on the Local Development Finance Authority. The commission discussed the LDFA and the SmartZone, what those bodies do and what the overall budget looks like.

City Manager Karen Kovacs summarized reductions and changes in the City's general fund budget, which, as currently proposed, has a shortfall of about \$1.9 million. Commissioners then discussed details of the funding for the Street Improvement Maintenance Project, as well as planned projects on Lakeshore Boulevard and College Avenue.

Mary Schlicht provided an overview of the City Fee Schedule, and this led into a discussion about utility rates.

City Manager Kovacs shared some slides with the Commission, highlighting the results from the utility rate study previously commissioned by Raftelis. The data indicates a significant need for some rate increases to cover debt, operations and infrastructure related to the City's utility systems. Ms. Kovacs said that City road projects, even if funded by a millage, will often include infrastructure work; this work must be funded independently of the millage. Commissioners discussed the need for some rate increases, the options for rate assistance for residents and the best ways to ensure an equitable rate structure that allows the City to maintain its utility infrastructure. Mayor Smith suggested holding a future work session on the topic of utility rates.

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Margaret Brumm said she hopes there is a way to make people more aware of existing avenues for utility rate assistance. She also spoke about the City and Superior Watershed Partnership program to collect cigarette butts in drop-off tubes around town. As of last week, 10 pounds have been collected.

Comments from the Commission

Commissioner Hanley thanked staff, especially City Manager Kovacs and Finance Director Schlicht, for all the work that has gone into the budget this year.

Mayor Pro Tem Hill said that residents can call 2-1-1 to be put in touch with someone who can walk them through available assistance services.

Commissioner Mayer thanked staff and said he appreciates how well the commission can work together.

Commissioner Stonehouse thanked everyone and commended the passion that everyone brings to these meetings.

Commissioner Bonsall echoed everyone's positive comments. He said this meeting started out a bit slowly but was ultimately very beneficial. He reminded residents that it is still glass recycling week. He praised the work done and discussed the work to come on this budget.

Commissioner Davis talked about striking a balance between maintaining city services and keeping the cost of living in Marquette as low as possible. She said staff is working hard, and the City is doing what it can.

Mayor Smith said this is the toughest city budget since she joined the commission in 2017. She said she likes this new process and thanked staff and the other commissioners.

Comments from the City Manager

City Manager Karen Kovacs thanked the commission for the discussion tonight. She said this is a difficult process, but that everyone involved is working together very well.

Adjournment

Mayor Smith adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Jennifer A. Smith, Mayor

Kyle Whitney, City Clerk

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