

Ishpeming City Council Proceedings: October 2, 2024
Ishpeming, MI 49849

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Special meeting of the Ishpeming City Council was held on Wednesday, October 2, 2024, in the Ishpeming City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Jason Chapman called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Jason Chapman, Council Members Elizabeth Firby, Renelle Halverson, and Pat Scanlon (4). One seat vacant (1). Also present was Interim City Manager Grant Getschow.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Scanlon, seconded Mayor Chapman and carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT - Public comment was offered through Zoom and in person.

Jeff DeGabriele, 413 Vine Street, explained his concerns with the City not having a backup attorney as it is outlined in the City Charter. He would like this situation rectified and suggested the City Attorney be terminated.

5. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. Quarterly Presentation from Lake Superior Community Partnership

Chris Germain, Lake Superior Community Partnership, gave an update on work performed under their contract to date. The update included work on the Match on Main grant program; the Branding and Marketing contract with Community Image Builders; time spent with Al Pierce, by Rachel Raak, before he retired to gather information and processes for zoning; and also talked about the quarterly business workshops that have been well attended. He further noted it was important to keep updates current for Redevelopment Ready Communities certification. The magazine was almost complete and would be provided shortly.

He added the West End Economic Hub is now open and a ribbon cutting was held which was very successful. The office will be open 4 days a week and would be staffed by one full- time employee. The monthly newsletter was again being provided to members and they were very focused on having more events in Ishpeming.

b. Confirm 2024 Form L-4029

A motion was made by Councilmember Scanlon, seconded by Councilmember Firby and carried unanimously to confirm the 2024 Form L-4029 as presented.

c. City Manager Search Update

Interim Manager Getschow contacted two recruitment firms; however, neither firm has replied back. Staff provided an ad that could be placed on the City's website along with being placed in The Mining Journal. The timeline to receive applications would be left open, until after the November 5th General Election.

d. Quotes for Daewoo Forklift Repairs

Interim DPW Director Bill Anderson requested this item be tabled so that staff could investigate alternatives before the repairs were made to this piece of equipment.

A motion was made by Councilmember Scanlon, seconded by Mayor Chapman and carried unanimously to table this item until alternatives could be determined.

e. 2025 Proposed Budget Discussion

Interim Manager Getschow read the budget message into the record. He further reviewed the budget narrative related to the General Fund and discussed employee health care costs. He did not want to discuss insurance plans tonight; however, he suggested the Council should determine what the City is able to spend on health care and then the Health Insurance Committee could meet to discuss various options with plans and premium shares.

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Councilmember Halverson suggested a premium share should be considered for employees; it was a wonderful benefit to offer to staff, however, it was becoming unaffordable.

Mayor Chapman expressed his concerns with making a drastic change to employee's health care at this time. He was unsure if he was comfortable setting a dollar amount for health care, because, if a good plan comes in at a little higher cost, he did not think it should not be eliminated.

Councilmember Firby and Scanlon suggested starting with the Health Insurance Committee reviewing options for health care.

Councilmember Scanlon expressed the need for the City to adopt a balanced budget not a deficit budget.

Interim Manager Getschow reviewed the Major and Local Street Funds; the DDA budget and noted the DDA was beginning to see some flexibility in its funding; the Public Improvement Fund and also summarized some of the projects listed and the funding available, and he included \$140,000 in blight elimination funding; he summarized the Brasswire Campground fund and explained it made \$14,900 in 2024 which was very close to breakeven and in 2025 he was hopeful the Campground would see approximately \$25,000 in revenue; and he explained the Sewer and Water Funds were both currently very healthy funds.

In addition, he suggested the City start a Storm Sewer Fund and would like the Council to be in discussions. The City currently does not have funding for storm sewer issues that arise. He proposed the Council not impose the 5% increase to water and sewer rates for 2025, as specified in the ordinances, but instead, add a storm sewer charge of approximately \$10.00/month. This was one suggestion to take some proactive action with storm sewer in the City. This charge could be reevaluated during future budgets to determine if it should continue to be charged or if it should be removed.

Council would like staff to continue to look into a storm sewer charge in lieu of the water and sewer 5% increase for 2025.

Interim Manager Getschow reviewed the Motor Pool Fund and noted some very smart purchases were made on used equipment from the fund this year. He explained how the Motor Pool Fund functioned in conjunction with the General Fund; and, he gave a brief summary of the Police Fire Retirement Fund.

Mayor Chapman advised City staff and the City Attorney have been looking into a substitute attorney, to be available during the absence of the City Attorney, and noted progress has been made over the last several months.

6. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:18 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Firby seconded by Councilmember Scanlon and carried unanimously to adjourn.



Cathy Smith, City Clerk