

## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 17, 2015**

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Mayor Strazdas at 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Strazdas introduced Reverend Dr. David Moffett-Moore of the Portage United Church of Christ, who gave the invocation, and the City Council and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **CURRENT COUNCIL:**

**ROLL CALL:** The City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Nasim H. Ansari, Richard Ford, Jim Pearson, Patricia M. Randall, Claudette S. Reid, Terry R. Urban and Mayor Peter J. Strazdas. Also in attendance were City Manager Laurence Shaffer, City Attorney Randall Brown and City Clerk James R. Hudson.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion by Reid, seconded by Ansari, to approve the November 3, 2015 Committee of the Whole and Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**BOARD OF CANVASSERS REPORT:** City Manager Larry Shaffer reviewed the Board of Canvassers Report for the November 3, 2015 City General Election. Motion by Reid, seconded by Ansari, to accept the Board of Canvassers Report of the final results of the November 3, 2015 City General Election as approved by the Kalamazoo County Board of Canvassers as information only. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE OF RETIRING CITY COUNCIL:** Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting sine die at 7:40 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

### **NEW COUNCIL:**

**OATH OF OFFICE AND SEATING OF MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS:** City Clerk James Hudson administered the Oath of Office to Patricia Randall, Jim Pearson and Richard Ford as Councilmembers and to Peter J. Strazdas as Mayor.

**SIGNING OF THE CITY COUNCIL CODE OF ETHICS AND VALUES POLICY:** Councilmembers Patricia M. Randall, Jim Pearson and Richard Ford along with Mayor Peter J. Strazdas signed the Ethics and Values Policy.

**SEATING OF MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS:** At the invitation of Mayor Strazdas, City Councilmembers took their respective seats at the dais.

**ROLL CALL OF NEW COUNCIL:** The City Clerk called the roll with the following members present: Councilmembers Nasim H. Ansari, Richard Ford, Jim Pearson, Patricia M. Randall, Claudette S. Reid, Terry R. Urban and Mayor Peter J. Strazdas. Also in attendance were City Manager Laurence Shaffer, City Attorney Randall Brown and City Clerk James R. Hudson.

**ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO-TEMPORE:** Mayor Strazdas reviewed the process for determining who would assume the role of Mayor Pro Tem and entertained nominations for Mayor Pro Tem. Councilmember Randall nominated Councilmember Nasim Ansari to serve as the Portage Mayor Pro Tem and Councilmember Pearson supported the nomination. There being no further nominations, motion by Ford, seconded by Reid, to close the nominations. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

With that, Mayor Strazdas suspended the need for a vote of Council for the election of the Mayor Pro Tem and seated Nasim Ansari as Mayor Pro Tem of Portage, and Councilmember Pearson assumed the chair formerly occupied by Mayor Pro Tem Ansari.

**ADOPTION OF RULES OF ORDER AND PROCEDURE:** Mayor Strazdas noted that all Councilmembers received these rules, asked if there were any concerns from the City Clerk or the City Manager. Hearing none, he entertained a motion to approve them. Motion by Ansari, seconded by Reid, to approve the Rules of Order and Procedure as presented. Discussion followed. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Mayor Strazdas recognized various citizens and government officials in the audience, including his wife, Sharon Strazdas, former Mayors Betty Ongley and Jamie Graham, Kalamazoo Mayor Bobby Hopewell, Kalamazoo City Manager James Ritsema, Kalamazoo County Under Sheriff Paul Matyas, former Councilmember and current State Senator Margaret O'Brien, and House Representative Brandt Iden.

**ADJOURN FOR A RECEPTION OF NEW COUNCIL:** 7:46 p.m.

**RECONVENE OF NEW COUNCIL:** 8:12 p.m.

**COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL:** Mayor Strazdas asked if there were any comments from the City Council.

Councilmember Pearson thanked the Portage voters for re-electing him. He referenced Councilmember Randall and her experience as an initiate with some of her suggested changes for the Assessor's Office, and he recounted that last year there was a lawyer threatening to sue him because he wanted to look outside for a Temporary City Manager. He indicated that he knows what it is like to be new and spoke about his newly elected official seminar with the Michigan Municipal League in Ann Arbor where he was told not to expect to effect change right away because it may take a few years. He said bold leadership, "to bring positive change in your community," means you have to take some lumps, know the system, so in his fifth year, he is looking forward now that he knows the system.

With that, he congratulated Councilmember Randall as the highest vote getter of any Councilmember winning every precinct in the city, especially considering the "lumps" she has had to take. He gave great praise to Larry Shaffer as an outstanding City Manager and indicated that he is well-respected throughout the County.

Councilmember Reid thanked the newly elected Councilmembers, Mayor Strazdas and newly appointed Mayor Pro Tem Ansari, congratulated them and expressed her appreciation to them. She pointed out that it is always a challenge to provide for a family, serve on City Council and deal with all of the competing activities and explained.

Councilmember Ford expressed his appreciation for being elected and recounted his experiences over the last two years as he brought positivity and energy to the tasks faced by City Council, as well as his youth. He reflected on a comment by Mayor Pro Tem Ansari at that time, who said, "Principle matters," when he defended his (Mr. Ford's) appointment to Council as the next highest vote-getter in the prior election and congratulated him on being elected Mayor Pro Tem.

Councilmember Randall congratulated her colleagues for a successful and a positive campaign saying they were very deserving and the voters recognized and supported their leadership. She thanked the voters for electing her and trusting her and that she will continue to always put citizens first. She indicated that the election reflected citizen satisfaction with the City of Portage and the new direction of the City leadership under City Manager Larry Shaffer as affirmed by the hundreds of households she visited.

She issued a plea that Council work together to provide Mr. Shaffer with the support he has earned and now deserves so that he may carry out his duties as City Manager as efficiently as possible. She said that she is looking forward to enhancing the City and the services of the City under the direction of this new Council. She thanked everyone for their support and encouragement and gave personal thanks to her husband, Bob, her hiking friend, Debbie, and recognized her nieces, nephews, sister and former Mayor Jamie Graham in the audience as some of her supporters.

She indicated that Mayor Pro Tem Ansari brings an offering of peace and good will, represents the City at every event and will carry out his office as a noble emissary.

Councilmember Randall congratulated outgoing former Mayor Pro Tem and Councilmember Jim Pearson, who represented the City as much as humanly possible. She especially thanked him for his work as representative on the Central County Dispatch Authority (Consolidated 911) where an agreement was reached which had not been possible for thirty years, and for his work on the Kalamazoo County Transit Authority/Central County Transit Authority.

She applauded the technology acumen and enthusiasm of Councilmember Ford and recognized that he represents a whole new faction of voters with the diversity that his youth brings to Council.

Councilmember Urban extended congratulations to those who ran the election, to all of the newly elected Councilmembers and to Mayor Strazdas.

Mayor Pro Tem Ansari asked for a moment of silence for the victims of the recent terrorist attack in Paris, France. He revealed that this is a bittersweet time for him as he is reminded of the suffering in the world and he finds it hard to concentrate on anything else except how to make matters better. He indicated that he is also reminded of the goodness of the Portage community and the citizens of Portage, who have elected him again to speak their voice and resolve their concerns and explained. He expressed his gratitude for being elected and indicated he is both blessed and humbled by the community for their faith in him. He recognized it as a great responsibility and promised the community that he would uphold the strong community-based values the voters have come to expect from City Council: integrity, transparency and commitment to our citizens. He indicated that we all live in a Democracy where we can agree to disagree, treat each other with respect and learn from the past, but not dwell on the past. He said that he is looking forward to working with all of the Council in the best interests of the City of Portage. He congratulated the newly elected Councilmembers for their hard work on the campaign trail, expressed his pride to be on the City Council and extended a special thank you to the rest of Council and City Manager Shaffer.

Mayor Strazdas expressed congratulations to all of City Council as he reflected that Portage has six great Councilmembers and an excellent City Manager, that this is an opportunity to work on the future, to work with the citizens, to offer better services, to offer value to our citizens and to take this City to a new level. He expressed an interest in taking advantage of the turnaround economy, new job opportunities, growing the economy and the good things before us. He pointed out that some of the current Councilmembers worked through the downturn in the economy, and the City was able to weather the great recession very well. He said it is time to “put the foot on the gas pedal” and move the City forward in positive ways. He indicated that he is looking forward to his role of supporting the Administration and bringing Councilmembers together, and he challenged all Councilmembers, and even himself, to work collaboratively among themselves, with the State Legislature and Kalamazoo County because there is much to be done, and there is a great future in store for Portage if everyone works together.

**STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS AND GUESTS:** State Senator Margaret O’Brien congratulated the newly elected Councilmembers and thanked City Council for all they have taught her. She explained that, as a Councilmember, this is where she learned about how to address issues, how to build relationships, and how to debate with one another and still come together. She explained how these skills have served her well in the legislature and that she is looking forward to continuing their partnership and working together.

House Representative Brandt Iden characterized the work by Council as a “wonderful job” and explained that he understands the difficulties associated with running a campaign while serving on Council and working a job in the community. He thanked Council for their service and continued dedication to Portage. He pointed out that he served with Mayor Pro Tem Ansari on the Kalamazoo County Commission and congratulated him on his new office. Discussion followed.

\* **CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor Strazdas asked Councilmember Randall to read the Consent Agenda. Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve the Consent Agenda motions as presented with Councilmember Reid recusing herself from item N.1, Investment Committee Citizen Appointments, as Mr. Richard Kraas is her husband. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

\* **APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER OF NOVEMBER 17, 2015:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve the Accounts Payable Register of November 17, 2015, as presented. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR AN ORDINANCE AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH BUDGET STABILIZATION FUND:** Mayor Strazdas introduced the item and deferred to City Manager Larry Shaffer, who explained that a Budget Stabilization Fund allows City Council to formally set aside funds as a “rainy day” fund in a highly regulated, highly managed system and is recommended as one more tool to address downturns in the economy that affects the financial standing of the City. He indicated that only certain types of issues can be addressed by the fund under State Statute: downturns in revenue, changes in employment status for municipal employees or changes in public services, for example. He also pointed out that all funds coming in and out of the Budget Stabilization Fund require a two-thirds vote of City Council. He introduced Finance Director Bill Furry as a source of information on the particulars of the Budget Stabilization Fund. He said that the establishment of the Ordinance does not carry any funds with it as this requires a separate consideration and vote of Council and explained. Mayor Strazdas asked for comments from City Council; hearing none, he opened the public hearing to members of the audience.

There being no comments from the members of the audience, motion by Pearson, seconded by Reid, to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Discussion followed.

Motion by Pearson, seconded by Randall, to approve an Ordinance to establish a Budget Stabilization Fund for the City of Portage, Michigan, by adding Article 3, Budget Stabilization Fund, to Chapter 70, Taxation.

Councilmember Reid referred to Council discussion at the Committee of the Whole Work Session of November 3, 2015, and her question, “What is the benefit?” She said she is still grappling with that question. She referred to the conversation about whether the Budget Stabilization Fund would be a part of or beyond the 24% Fund Balance as it could make a portion of the Fund Balance more difficult and more restrictive to use. She explained that the four purposes could still be funded with the Fund Balance, so she questioned the need for the Budget Stabilization Fund because there is no upside for having a Budget Stabilization Fund. Mr. Shaffer explained and expressed his view that the Budget Stabilization Fund is necessary for emergency purposes and is a preventative measure. He cited three stiff downturns in the economy in his 34 years as a City Manager where the fund would be necessary for addressing downturns in revenue, changes in employment status for municipal employees or changes in public services, for example.

Councilmember Reid asked if City Council maintains the current unencumbered 24% Fund Balance, how is that less available or less useable for emergencies than if we had 60% of that 24% in a Budget Stabilization Fund and 40% unencumbered? Mr. Shaffer indicated that Councilmember Reid has some very good points and admitted that this may be a case of personal preference. He indicated that he is not recommending that \$3.5 million be placed in that fund, but something less than that with

an annual appropriation for the fund. He reminded Council that he recommended \$300,000 for now with the hope that it can be built up gradually, and recommended that the Budget Stabilization Fund be in excess of 24%. He advocated having repositories of funds in different accounts with different strictures on them as being a very good thing for the City. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Reid indicated that one of the difficult things about the Budget Stabilization Fund as a Council is whether it would be part of the 24% Fund Balance, or would it be in addition to the 24% Fund Balance, and as a policy decision this impacts how Council views this Budget Stabilization Fund.

Councilmember Ford indicated that he is a proponent of the Budget Stabilization Fund, and noted that the Ordinance would establish the Fund but not provide funds for it. He pointed out that two times in the past decade, the City has had a deficit and the Administration was allowed to cover those losses with the unrestricted Fund Balance. He indicated that the Council is accountable to the citizens and need to be able to explain that the City did not do well because of the recession, a wind storm, the South Westnedge Project cost increases, etc., and “the Fund allows the City to take the next step forward instead of a step back.”

Councilmember Urban referred to the statement by Councilmember Reid, regarding whether the Budget Stabilization Fund would be part of the 24% Fund Balance, or would it be in addition to the 24% Fund Balance, and indicated that Council will never know the answer to that because it can change every year with the Budget approval as Councils change their minds. He acknowledged that some communities might find a Budget Stabilization Fund important, but he cited the fact that because Portage was able to weather both the Michigan recession, then the national recession, he expressed doubt that it is a necessity for the City of Portage. He recognized that the City is levying at near the General Fund millage cap and near the total millage cap, and pointed out that in the past one of the special millage caps have been “bumped” up to the maximum allowable for the natural wind storm disaster, for example, until it was paid back, but there is not much room to do that. He pointed out that in the case of a natural, manmade or economic disaster, the Council cannot impose an increase in a millage to pay for a need without the consent of the citizens, but this is still not enough to convince him to have a Budget Stabilization Fund, at least not in Portage. He also recognized a unique situation could occur with regard to the Portage tax base that may also warrant such a Budget Stabilization Fund, except the restrictions may make such a Fund inappropriate for Portage, and it leaves the use of the Fund to the discretion of Council, whether it be a part of the Fund Balance or in addition to the Fund Balance. He also indicated his preference that it not be a part of the Fund Balance. Because of the uncertainty that it be a part of the Fund Balance, the history of Portage and the minimal advantage of the Budget Stabilization Fund, he indicated he did not think he could support it at this time. He remained flexible, nevertheless, and indicated that he could still support it.

Mayor Strazdas indicated that the City has always had at least 24% Fund Balance and asked when, if ever, have the Council had to take more than \$1 million of the \$6 million Fund Balance. The only upside the Mayor could cite was that it was a prudent measure to put restrictions on spending money and explained. In answer to Mayor Strazdas, City Attorney Randy Brown indicated that the Ordinance could be repealed, but the remaining funds would still fall under the statute. Mayor Strazdas expressed his support for the Budget Stabilization Fund and discussion followed.

Councilmember Randall indicated that this was a great example of showing confidence in City Manager Shaffer and his advice since the City is not supposed to accrue wealth, but to provide quality services to our citizens who pay taxes. She emphasized that future Councils are influenced by past Councils, cited examples, reminded Council that the future is uncertain, and expressed her support for the Budget Stabilization Fund. She indicated that the Fund Balance was 13% when she first became a Councilwoman, but the City had much more than that, so the City was not really carrying out what Council prescribed as a Fund Balance percentage.

Councilmember Urban indicated that the Fund Balance has always been figured as a minimal in the past and not been set as a specific percentage amount. He indicated that if Council takes the recommendation of the City Manager, it would result in the accumulation of wealth as referenced by

Councilmember Randall because it would be an extra amount of money over and above the Fund Balance and would be considered accruing wealth. He noted that the establishment of the Fund for that one time the City might need it could be 30 years from now, so he questioned should Portage Council hold \$3 million of the City citizens' money for 20 or 30 years for that one time it is needed. He mentioned that only two times has there been situations where the funds would be needed since he has lived in Portage, and revealed the results of his research that confirmed in part the assertion of Mr. Brown that the Ordinance could be repealed, but the remaining funds would still fall under the statute and cannot be used for capital improvement purposes.

In answer to Councilmember Reid, who cited Section 70-310 of the proposed Budget Stabilization Fund Ordinance, Mr. Brown confirmed that the Ordinance could be repealed, but the remaining funds still fall under the statute. Discussion followed.

Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 2. Yeas: Councilmembers Ford, Pearson, Randall, Mayor Pro Tem Ansari and Mayor Strazdas. No: Councilmembers Reid and Urban. Discussion followed. Ordinance recorded on page 337 of City of Portage Ordinance Book No. 12.

### **REPORTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION:**

\* **SOUTH SHORE DRIVE SANITARY SEWER PROJECT #416-S:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to adopt Resolution No. 1, accept the City Manager Report, request preparation of Resolution No. 2 for the South Shore Drive Sanitary Sewer Project #416-S, award a contract to Midwest Civil Engineers, Incorporated, for design and construction engineering services for an amount not to exceed \$42,500 and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents related to these matters on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 65 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 46.

\* **WEST CENTRE AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION - GRAND ELK RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to authorize the replacement of the grade crossing at the West Centre Avenue railroad crossing by the Grand Elk Railroad in the amount of \$95,840 and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents related to this authorization on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

\* **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY APPOINTMENTS:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to confirm the City Manager appointments to the Local Development Finance Authority by adopting the Resolution to Appoint Members to the Local Development Finance Authority of the City of Portage. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0. Resolution recorded on page 67 of City of Portage Resolution Book No. 46.

\* **DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY APPOINTMENTS:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to confirm the appointments to the Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

\* **OCTOBER 2015 SUMMARY ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY REPORT – INFORMATION ONLY:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to receive the communication from the City Manager regarding the October 2015 Summary Environmental Activity Report as information only. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

\* **DEPARTMENT MONTHLY OPERATIONAL REPORTS:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to receive the Department Monthly Operational Reports from the various departments for October 2015. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

## **COMMUNICATION:**

\* **INVESTMENT COMMITTEE CITIZEN APPOINTMENTS:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to reappoint citizen Richard Kraas and appoint citizens Christopher Burns and Aimee Kornowicz to the Investment Committee. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 6 to 1 with Councilmember Reid recusing herself.

\* **MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** Council received the minutes of the:

Portage Human Services Board of September 3, 2015.

Portage Public Schools Regular Business Meeting of September 28 and Special and Committee of the Whole Work Session of October 12.

Portage Youth Advisory Committee of October 5, 2015.

Portage Historic District Commission of October 7, 2015.

Portage Historic District Study Committee of October 7, 2015.

Portage Zoning Board of Appeals of October 12, 2015.

Portage Planning Commission of October 15, 2015.

## **COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**DISCOVER KALAMAZOO:** Councilmember Randall recounted the Discovery Kalamazoo meeting, including a PowerPoint presentation by Kalamazoo City Manager James Ritsema regarding what is happening in Kalamazoo and an excellent report on the City of Portage by City Manager Larry Shaffer.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL:** Councilmember Ford indicated the minutes of the last meeting of the Environmental Health Advisory Council will be available just before the next meeting.

**CENTRAL COUNTY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (CCTA):** Councilmember Urban indicated that the Authority reviewed how much work needed to be done by the October 2016 closing date; that they reviewed a spreadsheet of 210 items, with 60% as the responsibility of the CCTA Board of Directors, including contracts and policies; and, that the list was by no means exhaustive or comprehensive. Discussion followed.

**COUNTYWIDE DISPATCH AUTHORITY:** Councilmember Pearson indicated that the Authority is very close to announcing an Executive Director; that Mr. Shaffer is taking the lead in working out the details of the employment contract; and, Mr. Shaffer confirmed that it should be announced in a couple of weeks.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**COUNCIL RETREAT:** Mayor Strazdas asked for and received a consensus to use the same facilitator as last year and indicated that he would cross-reference all calendars with that of the facilitator. He recommended a one day session and suggested a Friday or Saturday. After a discussion of four date options, Council agreed to January 22, 2016, and the same location as last year.

**PRE-COUNCIL MEETINGS:** Mayor Strazdas asked for input on having a meeting prior to the Regular City Council Meeting with the intention that if there were any questions on an Agenda Item, it would be easier to speak face to face with a Department Head or the City Manager.

Councilmember Reid asked for minutes of the proposed Special Meetings so that all of Council would have the same information. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Randall asked that Council take advantage of technology by calling in on a phone or Skype (copy of a DVD, streaming, etc.) of the Special Meeting and explained.

Councilmember Urban indicated that these Pre-Council Meetings have never been all of the Councilmembers, have never been publicly noticed meetings and were originally the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem with a Councilmember rotated in eventually because there was a sense that not everyone was getting the same information.

He pointed out that he cannot make a 7:30 a.m. meeting and, if Council is scheduling a routine meeting of this Council, it needs to be when the members are available. He indicated Council only has one such meeting, at 7:30 p.m., two Tuesdays a month (*Portage City Charter*). He emphasized City Council cannot schedule a regular meeting of Council when a Councilmember is not available, especially since this was not known when that Councilmember was elected. He asked, "What's broke?" Mayor Strazdas listed all of the ways Council can obtain answers to their Agenda questions: telephone, e-mail, personal meeting with the City Manager or a Department Head. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Pearson revealed a long-term problem he experienced with the original meeting schedule was that three members of Council and the public could attend, but the four remaining Councilmembers were "locked out" and asked for flexibility from Councilmember Urban some time on Monday before the Tuesday meetings. Councilmember Urban responded that he could not understand why Council needed to schedule two, properly noticed meetings on meeting week, and pointed out that Council can make decisions at these meetings, as they are different from the Committee of the Whole meetings. Councilmember Pearson responded that Council could set a policy to not make a decision at Pre-Council Meetings and Mayor Strazdas concurred. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Ford advocated the simple opportunity to ask the City Manager a question on Monday morning to give time for a response that would go to all Councilmembers, and that he saw it as a chance for the City Manager to get the answer and even respond after the meeting.

Mayor Strazdas observed that Council agrees that there has to be some rules promulgated and that only agenda items can be addressed on Monday with the City Manager. Mayor Strazdas offered to work with Mayor Pro Tem Ansari and City Manager Shaffer to create some basic rules of engagement, publish the rules and that Council would work within the confines of these rules if anyone shows up for a meeting.

Councilmember Urban objected saying there is no necessity for this since all Councilmembers have telephones and e-mails and can contact the City Manager with questions a number of ways; he said "We are simply posing questions to the City Manager." He said Council does not need to set a regularly scheduled public meeting of the entire Council. Mayor Strazdas indicated it is just another avenue of a "face to face;" no one has to be there; and the other opportunities are still options.

Councilmember Pearson indicated that he is not hearing any objections to the concept, and asked if Councilmember Urban could settle on a time on Monday and let Council know. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Reid offered 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. as her optimal time recognizing anyone who works may not be available, hence the need for comprehensive minutes. Discussion followed.

Councilmember Pearson asked that the time be subjected to a Doodle survey. Mayor Strazdas asked City Manager Shaffer to arrange the survey. Discussion followed.

## **BID TABULATION:**

\* **TELEPHONE SERVICES AGREEMENT – BID TABULATION:** Motion by Urban, seconded by Reid, to approve the five-year agreement between CTS Telecom of Galesburg, Michigan and the City of Portage for the provision of telephone services at an approximate annual cost of \$28,584 and authorize the City Manager to execute all documents related to the contract on behalf of the city. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 7 to 0.

## **OTHER CITY MATTERS:**

**STATEMENTS OF CITY COUNCIL:** Councilmember Ford attended the Grand Opening of the KENCO Facility the day after the election with Mayor Strazdas, Mayor Pro Tem Ansari, Councilmember Randall and City Manager Shaffer. He thanked his wife and family for tolerating him during his campaign and announced that his wife is going to have another child. City Council, Mayor Strazdas and City Manager Shaffer congratulated him.

Councilmember Randall attended the Senior Center Craft sale and congratulated the school board, the parents and those who voted for the Portage Public School Proposals. She wished Happy Thanksgiving to everyone and safe travels.

Councilmember Pearson stressed the time commitment involved in the community, Council meetings, campaigning and home responsibilities and noted that campaigning helps a person lose weight, so he was glad the campaigning was over since he reached his target weight.

Councilmember Reid expressed her appreciation for the moment of silence requested by Mayor Pro Tem Ansari and reflected on family, the holidays and the importance of the people we really care about.

City Manager Shaffer congratulated the newly elected Councilmembers, Mayor Strazdas and Mayor Pro Tem Ansari and indicated he was looking forward to working with all of Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Ansari recognized former Mayor Jamie Graham and reflected on the earlier conversation regarding the time for the Pre-Council Meetings.

Mayor Strazdas discussed his meeting with the owners of KENCO, and indicated that he took the opportunity to show the owner around Portage since she had never been to Michigan. He asked Council to focus on business, the economy and good jobs for Portage. He reminded Councilmembers Urban, Reid and Ford that they volunteered to read the essays, "What I like About Portage." Councilmember Urban recused himself since his daughter is writing one of the essays. Discussion followed.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mayor Strazdas adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

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James R. Hudson, City Clerk

**\*Indicates items included on the Consent Agenda.**