

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

St. Louis, Michigan
April 15, 2025

The regular meeting of the Saint Louis City Council was called to order by Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw on Tuesday April 15, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Council Members Present: Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw, Fares E. Azzam, Mayor Pro Tem William R. Leonard, Kevin D. Palmer, Elizabeth A. Upton.

Council Members Absent: None

City Manager: Kurt Giles
Clerk: Jamie Long
Police Chief: Richard Ramereiz

Others in Attendance: Brian Buysse-resident, Josh Leppien- Economic Development Coordinator, Keith Risdon- Utilities Director, Adam Upton-resident, Don and Sherida Burch-residents, and 5 students.

Mayor Echtenaw led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Azzam, to approve the agenda for April 15, 2025. All ayes carried the motion.

City Council Minutes.

Moved by Leonard, supported by Upton, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on April 1, 2025. All ayes carried the motion.

Claims & Accounts.

City Council discussed the Claims & Accounts.

Moved by Upton, supported by Leonard, to approve the Claims & Accounts in the amount of \$392,277.54. All ayes carried the motion.

Monthly Reports.

City Council discussed the March 2025 Monthly Reports.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Upton, to receive the March 2025 Monthly Reports and place them on file. All ayes carried the motion.

Audience Recognition.

Adam Upton-resident expressed concern against the rubber mulch being placed in Lions Park. Upton stated that there is not enough evidence to show that the material is safe for children.

Upton commented in favor of allowing chickens within the city.

Consent Agenda.

Mayor Echlinaw requested approval/receipt of Consent Agenda item “as shown below:

- a. Payment to CMP Distributors, Inc. for Police Officers Service Pistol Upgrade.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Azzam to approve Consent Agenda item “a”. All ayes carried the motion.

Lions Park Playground Safety Surface Material.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the quote from Sinclair Recreation for safety surface material for Lions Park playground in the amount of \$25,024.09.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Palmer, to approve the quote from Sinclair Recreation for safety surface material for Lions Park playground in the amount of \$25,024.09.

Ayes: Azzam, Palmer, Leonard, Echlinaw Nays: Upton

Rite Way Asphalt Quote.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the quote from Rite Way Asphalt for cemetery road repairs, in the amount of \$22,729.29.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Upton to approve the quote from Rite Way Asphalt for cemetery road repairs, in the amount of \$22,729.29. All ayes carried the motion.

Sick Leave Conversion to MERS Health Care Savings Program (HCSP).

Manager Giles requested members to approve the change in excess sick time payout for full-time employees from 50% to 100%, with pay out to be deposited into a MERS Healthy Care Savings Plan (HCSP) account and directing the City Manager to execute needed agreement with MERS for the HCSP and MOUs with bargaining units, as applicable, for this change. All ayes carried the motion.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Azzam, to approve the change in excess sick time payout for full-time employees from 50% to 100%, with pay out to be deposited into a MERS Healthy Care Savings Plan (HCSP) account, and directing the City Manager to execute needed agreement with MERS for the HCSP and MOUs with bargaining units, as applicable, for this change. All ayes carried the motion.

Space Utilization Study.

Manager Giles requested members to ratify the proposal from MCD Architects for a space utilization study and master plan for the library in the amount of \$18,800.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam supported by Leonard, to approve the proposal from MCD Architects for a space utilization study and master plan for the library in the amount of \$18,800. All ayes carried the motion.

Resolution 2025-06-Appointing Commissioners to the Michigan Public Power Agency.

Minutes of a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot, State of Michigan, held on April 15, 2025, at the City Hall, City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Echtenaw, Azzam, Leonard, Palmer, Upton ABSENT: None

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Azzam, and supported by Member Leonard:

WHEREAS, the Michigan Public Power Agency (“MPPA”) is a public body politic and corporate of the State of Michigan created in late 1978 under act 448, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976 as amended, to help members realize the benefits of joint action in the planning, development, acquisition, and management of energy-related assets and services; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis is a member of the MPPA which is governed by a Board of Commissioners consisting of one appointee from each member pursuant to MPPA by-laws as follows:

ARTICLE II

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Section 2.1 Board of Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners. The Agency shall be governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the respective governing bodies of the municipalities which are members of the Agency. The governing body of each member municipality shall by resolution appoint one commissioner. The governing body of each member municipality may by resolution appoint an Alternate Commissioner who

shall be entitled to vote only in the absence of the Commissioner. If a 2nd Alternate Commissioner is appointed in the resolution of the governing body of the member municipality, the resolution shall designate who shall be

the 1st Alternate Commissioner and the 2nd Alternate Commissioner. In the event more than one Alternate Commissioner attends a meeting of the Agency, including any of its committees, the Alternate Commissioner, with the highest designation shall be recognized and entitled to vote in the absence of the Commissioner.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the City of St. Louis appoints Kurt Giles to the MPPA Board of Commissioners as a Commissioner effective as of the date of this resolution.
2. That the City of St. Louis appoints **Josh Leppien** to the MPPA Board of Commissioners as the **first** Alternate Commissioner effective as of the date of this resolution.
3. That the City of St. Louis appoints Keith Risdon to the MPPA Board of Commissioners as the second Alternate Commissioner effective as of the date of this resolution.
4. That all resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict herewith shall be and the same are hereby rescinded.

YEAS: Azzam, Leonard, Palmer, Upton, Echtenaw NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None ABSENT: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Dated: April 15, 2025

Quote for a Bobcat E35 R-2 Series Compact Excavator.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the quote for the purchase of a Bobcat E35-R2 Series Compact Excavator from Ellen's Equipment in the amount of \$61,240.49 and approve the use of electric equipment replacement reserves as necessary to fund the purchase.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to approve the quote for the purchase of a Bobcat E35-R2 Series Compact Excavator from Ellen's Equipment in the amount of \$61,240.49 and approve the use of electric equipment replacement reserves as necessary to fund the purchase. All ayes carried the motion.

City Manager Report.

Manager Giles reported that interviews for the open line man positions began today.

City Clerk Report.

Nothing to report.

Police Chief Report.

Chief Ramereiz reported that there has been a conditional offer of employment for a new hire, he is just waiting for the MCOLE's licensing to be completed.

Council Comments.

Member Azzam reported that he had contacted the City of Davidson to inquire about chickens within their city. Azzam reported that the city has had no issues and only a few people there actually have chickens.

Member Azzam reported that he met with Mayor Mapes from the City of Alma to discuss the possibility of a police merger. He reported that another meeting can occur the second week of May, with both Azzam and Leonard.

Public Comments.

Brian Buysse-resident, commented on the livestock ordinance again, offered packets to council members with information regarding his findings on Avian Flu. Member Upton declined the packet.

Adam Upton-resident stated that he disagrees with Buysse and stated that the geese also carry the Avian Flu.

Dori Foster-Code Enforcer reported that blight issues take time and there is a process she must follow. Foster also stated that she has had experience with the rubber mulch and has no concerns with using it in the park.

Adjournment.

Moved by Leonard, supported by Upton, to adjourn 6:59 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.

Jamie Long, Clerk