

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

St. Louis, Michigan
May 6, 2025

The regular meeting of the Saint Louis City Council was called to order by Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw on Tuesday May 6, 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
City Clerk: Jamie Long
Police Chief: Richard Ramereiz

Others in Attendance: Josh Leppien- Economic Development Coordinator, Elsie Burton-Community Development Coordinator, Calvin Martyn-DPW Superintendent, Bobbie Marr-Treasurer, Sheila Salmon, Mikayla Howd, Tammy Howd, Sara Piaskowski, Gabby Beckett, John Fisher, Bunny Fisher, Tim Rath-Gratiot County Herald, Levi Salmon, Jeremy Daniels, Leslie Daniels, Jackson Shattuck, David Mossner, Shelby Howd, Zach Howd, RaeAnn Seward, Claudia May, David May, Tiger Russell, Alex Rodriguez, Owen Fogel, Crystal Davis, and Jan Bunting.

Mayor Echtenaw led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard to approve the agenda for May 6, 2025. All ayes carried the motion.

Public Service Recognition:

Bobbie Marr presented, in observance of Public Service Week, the coloring contest winner, Braelynn Howd.

Presentation by Sheila Salmon:

Sheila Salmon gave a presentation of the activities that she sees taking place on the parcel of land on Wells Road that is near her daughter's home. Salmon issued a formal complaint with the city, stating it is being used for unauthorized industrial operations. Packets were handed to members of the council for their review.

City Council Minutes.

Moved by Upton, supported by Leonard, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on April 15, 2025. All ayes carried the motion.

Claims & Accounts.

City Council discussed the Claims & Accounts.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Upton to approve the Claims & Accounts in the amount of \$1,851,683.40. All ayes carried the motion.

Monthly Board Minutes.

City Council discussed the April 2025 Monthly Board Minutes.

Moved by Leonard, supported by Upton, to receive the April 2025 Monthly Board Minutes and place on file. All ayes carried the motion.

Audience Recognition.

There were no comments.

Consent Agenda.

Mayor Echtenaw requested approval/receipt of Consent Agenda item “a” through “e” as shown below:

- a. Payment to OHM for Professional Services for the DWSRF Loan Design Project.
- b. Payment to OHM for Consultant Construction Engineering Services for the DWSRF Grant Project I, Phase II.
- c. Payment to Malley Construction, Inc. for DWSRF Grant Construction Project.
- d. Payment to Powder Coating of Central Michigan to refurbish metal benches for DDA project.
- e. Letter of Engagement with Bendzinski & Company.

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

Road Closure Request for 2025 Farm Market Season.

Manager Giles requested council members to approve the reoccurring road closure request for the 2025 Farm Market season. This closure will be on West Saginaw between Mill Street and the alley, on Thursdays from 1pm-7pm, May through October. Giles stated that there was discussion prior to this evening’s formal meeting and a conflict was found with this proposal during the school year. The proposal needs additional work to resolve, due to a school bus drop off location in this area. Alternatives were provided and there is needed input from the school.

Discussion was held and Chief Ramereiz stated he can’t make any recommendations without speaking to the school administrators.

Market Manager, Sara Piaskowski, stated that the school’s administrators will not work with her or return her calls.

Rameriez stated that he will contact the schools to see if there is any way to resolve this conflict.

David May, a resident, spoke in favor of the Farm Market and believes that it brings more people into the community.

David Mossner, a resident, spoke as a vendor on behalf of the Farm Market.

Member Palmer recommended that the council approve the remaining dates that are not affected, due to school not being in session for summer break.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Upton, to approve the road closure request for May 10th and June 12th through August 12th, along with the week of August 4th-9th for National Farm Market Week. This closure will be on West Saginaw between Mill Street and the alley, on Thursdays from 1pm-7pm. All ayes carried the motion.

Purchase of Frontier Flail Mower.

Manager Giles recommended council members to approve the purchase of a Frontier Flail Mower from Hutson, in the amount of \$7,125.55.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to approve the purchase of a Frontier Flail Mower from Hutson, in the amount of \$7,125.55. All ayes carried the motion.

Backyard Chickens.

Manager Giles opened the discussion of backyard chickens and asked council to take action as to whether they would like to maintain and uphold Article I-Section 10.1 of the City's Code of Ordinances which currently prohibits the keeping of chickens within the city limits or if they would like to amend the ordinance to allow chickens within the city limits.

Discussion was held and member Upton spoke in favor of raising chickens in the city. Upton gave statistics from the CDC website regarding the Avian Flu.

Member Palmer commented that there had been 6 confirmed cases directly linked to backyard chickens in Michigan.

Market Manager, Sara Piaskowski also spoke in favor of chickens in the city.

Jeremy Daniels, a resident, spoke in favor of allowing chickens.

Member Leonard stated that member Upton did a great job presenting on this topic, however he has struggled with the decision and can't support the amendment of the ordinance.

Motion by Upton, supported by Azzam to amend Article I-Section 10.1 of the City's Code of Ordinances to allow chickens within the city limits.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Upton, Azzam

Nays: Leonard, Palmer, Echtenaw

Abstain:

Motion Failed.

Motion by Palmer, supported by Leonard to maintain and uphold Article I-Section 10.1 of the Code of Ordinances prohibiting chickens with the city.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Palmer, Leonard, Echtenaw

Nays: Upton, Azzam

Motion Approved

Contribution to Mid-Michigan Area Group Narcotics Enforcement Team (MAGNET).

Manager Giles recommended council members to approve a contribution to Mid-Michigan Area Group Narcotics Enforcement Team (MAGNET), in the amount of \$3.500.

Discussion was held.

Move by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to approve a contribution to Mid-Michigan Area Group Narcotics Enforcement Team (MAGNET), in the amount of \$3.500. Four ayes carried the motion, Member Palmer abstained from the vote.

Spring Sidewalk Repairs.

Manager Giles recommended council members to approve the bid from Siefert Concrete for spring sidewalk repairs in the amount of \$9.377.50.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Azzam, to approve the bid from Siefert Concrete for spring sidewalk repairs in the amount of \$9.377.50. Four ayes carried the motion, Mayor Echtenaw abstained from the vote.

Commercial, Industrial, and Multi-Family Parcel Review.

Manager Giles recommended council members to approve a property review of commercial, industrial, and multi-family parcels by Legacy Assessing Services Inc., not to exceed \$27,000.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Leonard, to approve a property review of commercial, industrial, and

multi-family parcels by Legacy Assessing Services Inc., not to exceed \$27,000. All ayes carried the motion.

City Manager Report.

Manager Giles congratulated Rich Ramereiz on receiving the Jill Gallihugh Outstanding Alumni Award, Alex Velasco for the Spirit of St. Louis Award and Jamie Long for achieving her level one Municipal Clerk Certification.

Manager Giles reported that Flag Day will be on June 14th, on the back deck of city hall.

Manager Giles gave members of the council a brochure from Michigan Public Power Agency and discussed the benefits of municipal electric.

City Clerk Report.

Nothing to report.

Police Chief Report.

Nothing to report.

Council Comments.

Member Palmer gave congrats to Jamie Long, Rich Rameriez, and Alex Velazco.

Mayor Echtenaw asked if a fence could be put up at Penny Park to deter the geese.

Public Comments.

Sara Piaskowski informed council she will be at the next meeting.

Jan Bunting discussed the addition of new administration and the ongoing investigation at the county.

Adjournment.

Moved by Azzam supported by Leonard, to adjourn at 7:23 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.

Jamie Long, Clerk