

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

St. Louis, Michigan
May 20, 2025

The regular meeting of the Saint Louis City Council was called to order by Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw on Tuesday May 20, 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: Tim Rath-Gratiot County Herald, Sara Piaskowski, Ryan Warnke, Josh Leppien-Economic Development Coordinator and 7 students.

Mayor Echtenaw led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Upton, to approve the agenda for May 20, 2025. All ayes carried the motion.

City Council Minutes.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Leonard, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on May 6, 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 \$2,512,861.76. All ayes carried the motion.

Monthly Reports.

City Council discussed the April 2025 Monthly Reports.

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

Audience Recognition.

Member Palmer had concerns on Malley Construction's safety protocols. Palmer stated he was unimpressed with the negligence he saw from the company working on the city's 14-million-dollar project.

Consent Agenda.

Mayor Echtenaw requested approval/receipt of Consent Agenda item "a" through "h" as shown below:

- a. Payment to Advanced Rehabilitation Technology for manhole linings and manhole benches.
- b. Payment to Game Time for playground equipment for the Lions Park Playground Project.
- c. Payment to Green Tech Systems, LLC for the DWSRF Grant Construction Project.
- d. Payment to Malley Construction, Inc. for the DWSRF Grant Construction Project.
- e. Payment to Mr. Manhole for materials for the 2025 Street Pavement Improvement Project.
- f. Payment to OHM for Consultant Construction Engineering Services for the DWSRF Grant Project I, Phase II.
- g. Payment to OHM for Professional Services for the DWSRF Loan Design Project.
- h. Payment to Rubbercycle for Lions Park Playground Project

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to approve Consent Agenda item "a" through "h". All ayes carried the motion.

Set Public Hearing for Public Safety Special Assessment.

Manager Giles requested members to approve setting the Public Hearing for the Public Safety Special Assessment for June 3, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Leonard, to approve setting the Public Hearing for the Public Safety Special Assessment for June 3, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.

Resolution 2025-07-Establish Updated Underground Electric Service Rate Structure.

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City Council of the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot, Michigan held on the 20th day of May 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Present: Azzam, Leonard, Palmer, Upton, Echtenaw

Absent: None

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

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis operates a municipal electric utility that provides electric service to residential, commercial, and industrial customers; and

WHEREAS, certain customers request electric service to be provided through underground installation rather than overhead connection, which involves specialized labor, materials, and equipment use; and

WHEREAS, the City finds it in the public interest to establish a standardized method for recovering costs

associated with such installations in a fair and transparent manner;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of St. Louis hereby adopts the following rate-based fee structure for underground electric service installations:

1. Labor Charges: Labor costs shall be calculated using actual time expended by City personnel, including mobilization, travel time, and on-site work, billed at the employee's hourly rate inclusive of applicable fringe benefit and overhead multipliers.
2. Equipment Charges: Equipment utilized during installation shall be billed at the applicable rates as published in the most current edition of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Equipment Rental Rate Schedule.
3. Material Charges: Materials used shall be billed at the City's average inventory cost, based on the most recent purchase price plus any applicable freight or handling.
4. Restoration and Surface Repairs: Property owners shall be responsible for all restoration and surface repair costs, including but not limited to paving, concrete, landscaping, or sod replacement. These costs may be incurred directly by the property owner or coordinated through a contractor of their choosing.
5. Permit Fees: Any required permits (e.g., road crossings, MDOT, environmental) shall be the responsibility of the property owner and will either be paid directly or passed through at cost.
6. Project Quote Requirement: City staff shall provide customers requesting underground electric service with a written cost estimate itemizing anticipated labor, equipment, materials, and applicable permit charges. The customer must acknowledge and accept the estimate prior to scheduling work.
7. Annual Review: The Electric & Finance Departments shall update the rate-based fee structure **twice annually** to reflect changes in equipment rental rates and labor costs. Equipment rates shall be updated each **January** in accordance with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Equipment Rental Rate Schedule. Labor rates shall be updated each **July** to reflect changes in wages and fringe benefit costs. Additional adjustments may be made as needed to ensure continued cost recovery and transparency.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption and shall remain in effect until amended or repealed by action of the City Council.

Upon roll call vote, the following voted:

AYE: Azzam, Upton, Leonard, Palmer, Echtenaw

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

Resolution declared adopted on this 20th day of May 2025.

City Hall Receptionist Area Architectural Safety/Security Study.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the study and report proposal which includes evaluation and cost estimates for options to enhance architectural security features associated with the customer service counter and window from William A. Kibbe and Associates, in the amount of \$5,000. This cost does not include the study for the front counter at the police department.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to approve the study and report proposal which includes evaluation and cost estimates for options to enhance architectural security features associated with the customer service counter and window from William A. Kibbe and Associates, in the amount of \$5,000, which does not include the study for the police department. All ayes carried the motion.

Proclamation-National Flag Day.

Proclamation National Flag
Day June 14, 2025

WHEREAS: Patriotic values have long been recognized by fraternalists who have made significant gains promoting such values in our county; and

WHEREAS: The National Flag Day Foundation has developed a ceremony called Pause for the Pledge of Allegiance, which transcends age, race, religion, national origin, political and geographical differences by encouraging Americans across the nation to pause and recite the Pledge of Allegiance; and

WHEREAS: Fraternal benefit societies throughout the nation support the efforts to encourage national patriotism.

NOW, BE IT RESOLVED, the American Fraternal Alliance calls upon leaders of its 76 members societies and 32 state fraternal congresses to promote the celebration of National Flag Day in an effort to spread patriotic ideals and pride in our country to all fraternal benefit society members in every corner of this land of “liberty and justice for all.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I Ralph Echtenaw of Saint Louis, MI, do hereby proclaim June 14, 2025 as National Flag Day and call upon citizens to lend their support and show their appreciation for the contributions made by fraternal benefit societies and their members.

Downtown Beautification Project.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the application for the June 1 grant cycle with the Gratiot County Community Foundation. This project is to improve the downtown aesthetic appeal.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Palmer, to approve the application for the June 1 grant cycle with the Gratiot County Community Foundation. All ayes carried the motion.

Correction to May 6, 2025 Payables.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the correction of the May 5, 2025, Accounts Payables, in the amount of \$115, due to a duplicate payment. The corrected payables amount for May 5, 2025 is \$1,851,568.40.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Azzam, to approve the correction of the May 5, 2025, Accounts Payables, in the amount of \$115, due to a duplicate payment. The corrected payables amount for May 5, 2025, is \$1,851,568.40. All ayes carried the motion.

Updated Street Closure-Farm Market.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the updated request for street closure, during the school year, for the Farm Market. The updated request includes June 5th, August 28th, October 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Upton, supported by Palmer, to approve the updated request for street closure, during the school year, for the Farm Market. The updated request includes June 5th, August 28th, October 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th. All ayes carried the motion.

Selection of Energy Waste Reduction Program.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the continuation with the Energy Waste Reduction Plan Program proposed by the Michigan Public Power Agency for calendar years 2026-2029.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Leonard, supported by Palmer, to approve the continuation with the Energy Waste Reduction Plan Program proposed by the Michigan Public Power Agency for calendar years 2026-2029. All ayes carried the motion.

Set Public Hearing for 2025/2026 Budget Adoption.

Manager Giles requested members to approve setting the Public Hearing for the 2025/2026 Budget Adoption for June 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Upton, supported by Leonard, to approve setting the Public Hearing for the 2025/2026 Budget Adoption for June 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.

Set Public Hearing for 2024/2025 Budget Amendments.

Manager Giles requested members to approve setting the Public Hearing for the 2024/2025 Budget Amendments for June 17, 2025 at 6 p.m.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Azzam, to approve setting the Public Hearing for the 2024/2025 Budget Amendments for June 17, 2025 at 6 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.

City Manager Report.

Manager Giles reported that the DWSRF project plan is currently at the state for review and permitting and we will

receive bids in June, and awarding the bids is set for July 6. No decision has been made on 30 versus 40 year term.

City Clerk Report.

Nothing to report.

Police Chief Report.

Nothing to report.

Council Comments.

Nothing to report.

Public Comments.

A St. Louis student asked who would be deciding on the images that will be painted for the Downtown Beautification Project, the art students or council?

Sara Piaskowski thanked the council and Chief Rameriz for working with the school to get the necessary street closures during the school year.

Adjournment.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to adjourn 6:32 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.

Jamie Long, Clerk