

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

St. Louis, Michigan
September 2, 2025

The regular meeting of the Saint Louis City Council was called to order by Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw on Tuesday September 2, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Council Members Present: Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw, Fares E. Azzam, Robin W. Hart, Mayor Pro Tem William R. Leonard, Kevin D. Palmer

Council Members Absent: None

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

Others in Attendance: Josh Leppien- Economic Development Coordinator, John Pavlik, Mr. Nehmer-St. Louis Schools.

Mayor Echtenaw led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Leonard to approve the agenda for September 2, 2025. All ayes carried the motion.

Public Hearing for Community Development Block Grant.

Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw opened the Public Hearing at 6:01p.m. and asked for public comments. Josh Leppien-Economic Development Coordinator, touched on the highlights of the Community Development Block Grant.

Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw closed the Public Hearing at 6:08 p.m.

City Council Minutes.

Moved by Hart, supported by Leonard, to make corrections and approve the minutes of the Special Meeting held on August 18, 2025, and the Regular Meeting held on August 19, 2025. All ayes carried the motion.

Claims & Accounts.

City Council discussed the Claims & Accounts.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Palmer, to approve the Claims & Accounts in the amount of \$685,573.01. All ayes carried the motion.

Monthly Board Minutes.

City Council discussed the August 2025 Monthly Board Minutes.

Moved by Leonard supported by Hart, to receive the August 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 “b” as shown below:

- a. Payment to Altec for purchase of a Hydraulic Backyard Derrick for SLED.
- b. Payment to Ross Education Holdings for CDL program for Aldrich and Teed.

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

Correction of August 19, 2025 Payables

Manager Giles requested members to approve the correction to the August 19, 2025, payables. A check was created for payment on invoice #0622910-IN for Action Target in the amount of \$150.61. Before a check was mailed, it was discovered that the invoice had been paid by credit card. The corrected amount for August 19, 2025 payables is \$1,616,473.64.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to approve the correction to the August 19, 2025 payables. All ayes carried the motion.

Resolution 2025-20 Zoning Ordinance Update Project.

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City Council of the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot, Michigan held on the 2nd day of September 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Present: Azzam, Hart, Leonard, Palmer, Echtenaw
Absent: None

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

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis supports the submission of an application titled “Zoning Ordinance

Update Project” to the Rural Readiness Grant Program for the review and update of the City’s Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis is hereby making a financial commitment to the project in the amount of \$10,000 matching funds, through cash and in-kind contributions; and,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of St. Louis hereby authorizes submission of a Rural Readiness Grant Program Application for \$50,000 and further resolves to make available its financial obligation amount of \$10,000 (20%) of a total \$60,000 project cost, during the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

AYES: Azzam, Hart, Leonard, Palmer, Echtenaw

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Resolution Declared Adopted the 2nd Day of September, 2025.

Temporary Street Closure-Homecoming Parade.

Manager Giles requested members to approve a temporary street closure for the annual homecoming parade on Friday, September 19, 2025.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Azzam, to approve a temporary street closure for the annual homecoming parade on Friday, September 19, 2025. All ayes carried the motion.

Resolution 2025-21-Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan.

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City Council of the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot, Michigan held on the 2nd day of September 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Present: Azzam, Hart, Leonard, Palmer, Echtenaw

Absent: None

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

WHEREAS, consistent with the goals and objectives of activities assisted under Section 104 (d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (“Act”), the City of Saint Louis (“City”) will take the following steps to minimize the displacement of persons from their homes:

- 1) Coordinate code enforcement with housing rehabilitation programs

- 2) Evaluate housing codes and rehabilitation standards in reinvestment areas to prevent placing undue financial burden on long-established owners

WHEREAS, if required, the City will provide relocation assistance for lower-income tenants, who, in connection with an activity assisted under the CDBG Program, move permanently, or move personal property from real property as a direct result of the demolition of any dwelling unit or the conversion of a lower-income dwelling unit in accordance with the requirements of 24 CFR 42.350. A displaced person who is not a lower-income tenant will be provided relocation assistance in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and implementing regulations at 49 CFR Part 24; and,

WHEREAS, the City will replace all occupied and vacant occupiable low- and moderate-income dwelling units demolished or converted to a use other than as low- or moderate-income housing in connection with an activity assisted with funds provided under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, as described in 24 CFR 570.488 (c) in Subpart I; and before entering into a contract committing the City to provide funds for an activity that will directly result in demolition or conversion the City will make public by publication in a newspaper of general circulation the following information in writing:

- 1) A description of the proposed assisted activity.
- 2) The location on a map and number of dwelling units by size (number of bedrooms) that will be demolished or converted to a use other than as low- or moderate-income dwelling units as a direct result of the assisted activities.
- 3) A time schedule for the commencement and completion of the demolition or conversion.
- 4) The location on a map and number of dwelling units by size (number of bedrooms) that will be provided as replacement dwelling units.
- 5) The source of funding and a time schedule for the provision of the replacement dwelling units.
- 6) The basis for concluding that each replacement dwelling unit will remain a low- or moderate-income dwelling unit for at least 10 years from the date of initial occupancy.
- 7) Information demonstrating that any proposed replacement of dwelling units with smaller dwelling units (e.g., a 2-bedroom unit with two 1-bedroom units) is consistent with the housing needs of lower income households in the jurisdiction

WHEREAS, to the extent that the specific location of the replacement dwelling units and other data in

items 4 through 7 are not available at the time of the general submission, the City will identify the general location of such dwelling units on a map and complete the disclosure and submission requirements as soon as the specific data is available; and,

WHEREAS, the City's Assistant City Manager, Josh Leppien, reachable at 989-261-1434, is responsible for tracking the replacement of lower income dwelling units and ensuring that they are provided within the required period; and,

WHEREAS, the City's Assistant City Manager, Josh Leppien, reachable at 989-261-1434, is responsible for ensuring requirements are met for notification and provision of relocation assistance, as described in 570.488 (c), to any lower income person displaced by the demolition of any dwelling unit or the conversion of a low- and moderate-income dwelling unit to another use in connection with an assisted activity.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of St. Louis hereby approves the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan.

AYES: Azzam, Leonard, Hart, Palmer, Echtenaw

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Resolution Declared Adopted the 2nd Day of September 2025.

Resolution 2025-22-Authorizing the MSHDA Community Development Block Grant Application.

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City Council of the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot, Michigan held on the 2nd day of September 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Present: Azzam, Hart, Leonard, Palmer, Echtenaw

Absent: None

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

WHEREAS, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) administers Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds on behalf of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for eligible communities throughout the State of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis, Michigan is applying for \$400,000 in CDBG funds from MSDHA with no matching dollars from the City to implement a homeowner rehabilitation program designed to assist forty low- and moderate-income homeowners with necessary repairs and improvements to ensure safe, decent, and sanitary housing; and

WHEREAS, all activities by the City will be taken for the purpose of improving permanent residential structures, which upon completion will be 100% occupied by low- or moderate-income households; and

WHEREAS, the homeowner rehabilitation program is consistent with the City's community development plan as described in the application and aligns with the City's goals of supporting housing stability, preserving existing housing stock, and improving quality of life for its residents; and

WHEREAS, no project costs, CDBG or non-CDBG, will be incurred prior to a formal grant award, completion of the environmental review procedures and formal, written authorization to incur costs has been provided by MSHDA; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to apply for this grant and authority the City Manager to execute all necessary documents related to the administration and implementation of the grant-funded program

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The City Manager, a position currently held by Kurt Giles, is designated as the Authorized Representative for purposes of the CDBG Application.
2. The Authorized Representative is hereby authorized to sign the Application and all attachments.
3. The Authorized Representative is hereby authorized to sign the Grant Agreement and all amendments.
4. The Authorized Representative is hereby authorized to sign Payment Requests.
5. The Authorized Representative will serve as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Review Certifying Officer.
6. The proposed form of the Grant Application between the City and MSHDA is hereby approved.

AYES: Azzam, Hart, Leonard, Palmer, Echlinaw

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Resolution Declared Adopted the 2nd Day of September, 2025.

City Manager Report.

Manager Giles reported that the security study, for the front office of city hall, has been received and reviewed in house. The study has been approved and when the final draft has been received, he will share it with council.

City Clerk Report.

Nothing to report.

Police Chief Report.

Nothing to report.

Council Comments.

Member Azzam asked about the Lions Park updates. Josh informed him they are moving along on the project, but had a few small issues, which have been resolved.

Mayor Echtenaw asked if Dori Foster had finished writing the processes for blight and code enforcement for an upcoming newsletter, which he was informed that it was a work in progress.

Public Comments.

There were none.

Adjournment.

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

Jamie Long, City Clerk