

## CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

St. Louis, Michigan  
February 17, 2026

The regular meeting of the Saint Louis City Council was called to order by Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw on Tuesday February 17, 2026, 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  
Clerk: Jamie Long  
Police Chief: Richard Ramereiz

Others in Attendance: Josh Leppien- Economic Development Director, Chuck Sandro-Healthy Pine River, Valerie Kerr-resident, Joy March-resident.

Mayor Echtenaw led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Agenda.**

Moved by Hart, supported by Leonard, to approve the agenda for February 17, 2026. All ayes carried the motion.

### **Healthy Pine River Presentation-Chuck Sandro.**

Chuck Sandro gave a presentation on the condition of the Pine River. He noted that there had been testing on Sugar Creek and Horse Creek to try to find a source of contamination. Sandro stated that the discovery of an underground drain could be a possible source of contamination.

Sandro stated that the summer 2026 goals included pinpointing the source of contamination. Sandro stated that everyone must work together to get the river back to good conditions.

Sandro gave an annual report of the organization with a handout.

Sandro informed the board that there will be breakfast event on March 12<sup>th</sup>, at the Masonic home. This event raises awareness and funding.

Sandro requested that the city contribute \$2,500, to aid in the water testing of the river.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the agreement with The Healthy Pine River Group for a contribution in the amount of \$2,500.

Discussion was held

Moved by Hart, supported by Palmer, to approve the agreement with The Healthy Pine River Group for a contribution in the amount of \$2,500. All ayes carried the motion.

### **City Council Minutes.**

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on February 3, 2026. All ayes carried the motion.

### **Claims & Accounts.**

City Council discussed the Claims & Accounts.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Hart, to approve the Claims & Accounts in the amount of \$685,128.06. All ayes carried the motion.

### **Monthly Reports.**

City Council discussed the January 2026 Monthly Reports. Mayor Echtenaw questioned the reports that were unavailable this month, Police and DPW. Manager Giles explained that there are certain months that, due to circumstances beyond control, a report is not available.

Moved by Azzam , supported by Hart, to receive the January 2026 Monthly Reports and place them 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 “d” as shown below:

- a. Payment to Farabee Mechanical Inc. for Diesel Generator Fuel System Upgrades.
- b. Payment to NTH for F.E.R.C. Engineering Services.
- c. Payment to OHM for Consultant Construction Engineering Services for the DWSRF Grant Project I, Phase II.
- d. Payment to OHM for Union Street Pump Station-Bypass Connection.

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

### **Ordinance B-246 Water Supply Cross Connection Ordinance.**

An ordinance regulating cross connections with the public water supply system, i.e., a connection or arrangement of piping or appurtenances through which water of questionable quality, wastes or other contaminants can enter the public supply system.

Be it ordained by the City Council of St. Louis, State of Michigan:

**Sec. 66-131. State Rules Adopted**

That the City of St. Louis adopts by reference the Water Supply Cross Connection Rules of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy being R 325.11401 to R 325.11407 of the Michigan Administrative Code.

**Sec. 66-132. Inspection by City.**

That it shall be the duty of the City to cause inspections to be made of all properties served by the public water supply where cross connections with the public water supply is deemed possible. The frequency of inspections and reinspections based on potential health hazards involved shall be established by the Saint Louis Water Department and as approved by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

**Sec. 66-133. City's Right of Entry onto Property.**

That the representative of the St. Louis Water Department shall have the right to enter at any reasonable time any property served by connection to the public water supply system of the City of St. Louis for the purpose of inspecting the piping system or systems thereof for cross connections. On request, the owner, lessees, or occupants of any property so served shall furnish to the inspection agency any pertinent information regarding the piping system or systems on such property. The refusal of such information or refusal of access, when requested, shall be deemed evidence of the presence of cross connection. The potable water pipelines shall be color coded "dark blue" or tagged if there are any other piping in the area so that the lines can be traced from room to room or from building to building as deemed necessary by the St. Louis Water Department

**Sec. 66-134. Discontinuation of Water Service for Article Violation.**

That the St. Louis Water Department is hereby authorized and directed to discontinue water service after reasonable notice to any property wherein any connection in violation of this ordinance exists and to take such other precautionary measures deemed necessary to eliminate any danger of contamination of the public water supply system. Water service to such property shall not be restored until the cross connection(s) has been eliminated in compliance with the provisions of this ordinance.

**Sec 66-135. Required Testing of Backflow Prevention Devices.**

That all testable backflow prevention assemblies shall be tested at the time of installation or relocation and after any repair. Subsequent testing of devices shall be conducted at a time interval specified by the Saint Louis Water Department and in accordance with Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy requirements. Only individuals that hold a valid Michigan plumbing license and have successfully passed an approved backflow testing class shall perform such testing. Each tester shall also be approved by the City. Individual(s) performing assembly testing shall certify the results of his/her testing.

**Sec. 66-136. Protection of Potable Water Supply; Identification of Water Unsafe.**

That the potable water supply made available on the properties served by the public water supply shall be protected from possible contamination as specified by this ordinance and by the State plumbing code. Any water outlet which could be used for potable or domestic purposes, and which is not supplied by the potable system must be labeled in a conspicuous manner as:

<b>WATER UNSAFE FOR DRINKING</b>
<b>NO CONNECTION BETWEEN A PRIVATE WATER SUPPLY AND THE CITY OF SAINT LOUIS PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY SHALL BE ALLOWED</b>

**Sec. 66-137. Article Provisions Deemed Supplemental.**

That this ordinance does not supersede the State Plumbing Code but is supplementary to it.

**Sec. 66-138. Violations and Penalty.**

That any person or customer found guilty of violating any of the provisions of this ordinance or any written order of the Saint Louis Water Department, in pursuance thereof, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$100 for each violation. Each day upon which a violation of the provisions of this act shall occur shall be deemed a separate and additional violation for the purpose of this ordinance.

Yeas: Azzam, Hart, Leonard, Palmer, Echtenaw  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Abstain: None  
Ordinance Adopted.

**Water Supply Cross Connection Program.**

Manager Giles requested members to adopt the Water Supply Cross Connection Control Program, in accordance with EGLE standard rules and policies.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to adopt the Water Supply Cross Connection Program. All ayes carried the motion.

**Purchase of 2026 Chevrolet Truck.**

Manger Giles requested members to approve the purchase of a 2026 Chevy Pickup from Berger Chevrolet, in the amount of \$65,107. This truck will replace #76, a 2016 Dodge Ram 2500.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to approve the purchase of a 2026 Chevy Pickup from Berger Chevrolet, in the amount of \$65,107. All ayes carried the motion.

### **Quote for Security Upgrade.**

Manager Giles requested members to approve the security upgrades at the municipal and police service counters from Insulgard, in the amount of \$22,138.

Discussion was held. Member Azzam asked why the city was not going through with the entire security upgrade that were originally discussed. Manager Giles made comment about the high costs for all the original upgrades that were discussed.

Member Palmer asked where the initial request for more security came from. Giles answered by saying there were a handful of relatively minor security incidents and councilman Leonard had been an advocate for security upgrades but to Giles knowledge, no employees had expressed concerns.

Chief Ramereiz stated that in his opinion all the security upgrades needed to be done, if not all at once, over a period to achieve a much more secure facility over time.

Member Hart mentioned doing the proposed updates in stages or phases over time, starting with the proposed \$22,138 quote.

Member Leonard agreed the security upgrades needed to be done.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Hart, to approve the security upgrades at the municipal and police service counters from Insulgard, in the amount of \$22,138 and to continue with the additional security upgrades over time. All ayes carried the motion.

### **City Manager Report.**

Manager Giles reported that Dana from River Rock Bar and Grill can host our annual Employee Appreciation Dinner on March 19<sup>th</sup>, invitations will be mailed soon.

Manager Giles reported that the annual MPPA Stakeholders event will be on May 14<sup>th</sup> at Meijer Gardens. Giles encouraged the elected officials of the city to attend.

Manager Giles reported the city's participation in the White Tail Solar Project was a success. They achieved commercial operation last year.

Manager Giles reported that North Main Reconstruction is on the docket, expected to start in June.

Manager Giles reported that after a meeting with Malley Construction, it is expected that the Water Main Project will resume, estimated to begin at the end of March.

Manager Giles reported that the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, Phase II with Crawford has a tentative start day for July.

### **City Clerk Report.**

Nothing to report.

**Police Chief Report:**

Chief Rameriez reported that he received notice that they were approved for funds in the amount of \$43,720.90 from the Public Academic Assistance Program for the two recruits currently attending the police academy. Member Hart inquired about Jasmine Vandyke's knee injury. Rameriez stated she was doing well, receiving physical therapy right at the college where the academy is being held. Rameriez also stated that Josh Coty was on track to receive several awards through the academy, including one for top academics.

**Council Comments.**

Mayor Echtenaw reported that he had been talking to Michael Bessert on Facebook and Bessert informed him that Jeff Baker has been picking up dead deer along the roadsides in the city. Mayor suggested nominating Baker for the Spirit of St. Louis for his deeds.

**Public Comments.**

There were none.

**Adjournment.**

Moved by Leonard, supported by Azzam, to adjourn at 7:10 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.

Jamie Long, Clerk