

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

St. Louis, Michigan
June 4, 2024

The regular meeting of the Saint Louis City Council was called to order by Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw on Tuesday June 4, 2024, 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: Kathy Roslund-Assessor, Hannah Post-City of Alma, Aeric Ripley-City of Alma, Art Pyle-resident, Pat Pyle-resident, Joe Vozar-Gratiot County Jail Administrator and Don Burch-resident.

Mayor Echtenaw led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Leonard to approve the agenda for June 4, 2024. All ayes carried the motion.

Public Hearing-Establishing Even Year Elections.

Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. and asked for Public Comments.

There were none.

Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw closed the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m.

Resolution 2024-08-Establishing Even Year Elections.

At a regular meeting of the City Council of St. Louis, Gratiot County, Michigan, held the 4th day of June, 2024 at City Hall Council Chambers, 300 North Mill Street, St. Louis, MI 48880 the following Resolution was offered by Upton and was supported by Leonard, and with the following members being present or absent:

PRESENT: Azzam, Leonard, Palmer, Upton, Echtenaw

ABSENT: None

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis currently holds regular non-partisan City primary elections on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in August of each odd numbered year; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis currently holds regular non-partisan City general elections on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November of each odd numbered year; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis wishes to change from odd year to even year regular City elections; and

WHEREAS, Section 642a(4) of the Michigan Election Law, MCL 168.642a(4), provides that a city may change primary and general elections from odd to even numbered years by adopting a resolution to such effect; and

WHEREAS, Section 644g of the Michigan Election Law, MCL 168.644g, provides that a term of office shall not be shortened by MCL 168.642a, and the term of an official who was elected before the effective date of the change continues until a successor is elected and qualified at the next regular election; and

WHEREAS, the City Council gave notice of a public hearing on this Resolution in a manner designed to reach the largest number of the City's qualified electors in a timely fashion; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a public hearing on this Resolution immediately before considering the adoption of the Resolution;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of St. Louis hereby changes its regular primary and general elections from odd to even numbered years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of St. Louis shall hold regular non-partisan City primary elections on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in August of each even numbered year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of St. Louis shall hold regular non-partisan City general elections on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November of each even numbered year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution takes effect January 1, 2025, pursuant to MCL 168.642(7)(a)(ii) and MCL 168.642a(4).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, by operation of law, the term of office for certain officials may be extended as required by MCL 168.644g.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall be filed with the Michigan Secretary of State.

Upon roll call vote the following voted:

“Aye”: Upton, Leonard, Azzam, Palmer, Echtenaw

“Nay”: None

Abstained: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED: June 4, 2024

Public Hearing-Public Safety Special Assessment Renewal.

Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw opened the Public Hearing at 6:01 p.m. and asked for Public Comments.

There were none.

Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw closed the Public Hearing at 6:01 p.m.

Resolution 2024-09-Public Safety.

Minutes of a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot, State of Michigan, held in the City on June 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time.

PRESENT: Mayor Ralph Echtenaw, Ferris Azzam, William R. Leonard, Kevin Palmer, Elizabeth Upton

ABSENT: None

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

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot, State of Michigan, pursuant to Act 33, Public Acts of Michigan, 1951, as amended, has created the St. Louis Fire and Police Special Assessment District (the “District”) to pay for certain costs and expenses of fire and police motor vehicles, apparatus, equipment, housing and operations (the “Assessed Costs”) and assess the costs thereof to the property specially benefitted by said fire and police protection in the District; and

WHEREAS, a special assessment roll has been prepared for the purpose of defraying the Assessed Costs; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed said special assessment roll, and, after due and legal notice, the City Council met on June 4, 2024 and heard objections to the distribution of the special assessment levy; and

WHEREAS, the City Council deems said special assessment roll and special assessment levy to be fair and equitable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The special assessment roll attached hereto as Exhibit A shall be designated “St. Louis Fire and Police Special Assessment Roll” (the “Roll”).
2. The Roll, in the total sum of \$129,490.55 is hereby confirmed and approved.
3. The assessments made in the Roll are hereby ordered and directed to be collected and the City Treasurer is directed to distribute the special assessment levy on the taxable value of all of the lands and premises in the District.
4. The City Council shall annually determine the amount to be assessed in the District for fire and police motor vehicles, apparatus, equipment, housing and operations, shall direct the City Treasurer to distribute the special assessment levy, and shall hold a hearing on the estimated costs and expenses of fire and police protection and on the distribution of the levy. The assessment may be made either in a special assessment roll or in a column provided in the regular tax roll. The special assessment shall be distributed and shall become due and be collected at the same time as other City taxes are assessed, levied, and collected, and shall be returned in the same manner for nonpayment. If the collections received from the special assessment levied are, at any time, insufficient to meet the obligations or expenses incurred for fire and police motor vehicles, apparatus, equipment, housing and operations, the City Council may, by resolution, authorize the transfer or loan of sufficient money from the general fund of the City, to the special assessment fund. This money shall be repaid to the

general fund of the City out of special assessment funds when collected.

5. All resolutions and parts of resolutions insofar as they conflict with the provisions of this resolution be and the same hereby are rescinded.

AYES: Azzam, Upton, Leonard, Palmer, Echtenaw

NAYS: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Public Hearing-Budget Adoption.

Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw opened the Public Hearing at 6:02 p.m. and asked for Public Comments. There were none.

Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw closed the Public Hearing at 6:02 p.m.

Resolution 2024-10 Budget Adoption.

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City Council of the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot, Michigan held on the 4th day of June 2024, 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 Leonard:

WHEREAS, the City Manager has submitted and filed with the City Council a proposed budget estimating revenues and expenditures for 2024-2025 fiscal year, as required by Chapter VII, Section 7 of the City Charter and Act 2, Michigan Public Acts of 1968, as amended, and

WHEREAS, the City Council in accordance with Act 621 Michigan Public Acts of 1978, as amended, has set the date June 4, 2024 for a public hearing at 6:00 o'clock PM, or as soon thereafter as the agenda permits, to receive citizen comment on the proposed budget as presented herein. A copy of the affidavit of publication of said public hearing is on file with the City Clerk.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City Council, after such hearing thereon and consideration thereof, does hereby adopt said budget as represented herein and fixes the tax of fifteen (15) mills for general operating purposes (subject to Headlee rollbacks and adjusted to 13.0548 mills) , to be raised by a general ad valorem tax upon owners of real and personal property in the City, by the authority granted, and in accordance with the Michigan Constitution, the General Property Tax Act 206, Michigan Public Acts of 1893, as amended, and City Charter, Chapter VII, subject to limitations therein.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Treasurer be authorized and directed to make such transfers between the various funds in accordance with the adoption of the budget as follows:

GENERAL FUND

REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
Taxes	\$ 884,611	General Government	
Federal Grants	-	Legislative	\$ 31,750
State Grants	761,884	Executive	65,139
Charges for Services	483,365	Clerk	40,259
Interest & Rents	58,500	Board of Review	3,215
Licenses & Permits	34,650	Finance	98,487
Other Revenue	9,600	Assessing	108,145
Other Financing Sources	-	Elections	37,940
		Hall & Grounds	211,544
		Corporate Council	10,000
		Public Safety	
		Building & Code Enforcement	118,020
		Public Works	
		Cemetery	133,248
		Public Works	229,266
		Community & Economic Development	
		Planning	37,086
		Development	107,297
		Industrial Park	22,231
		Blight	-
		Community Promotion	28,951
		Recreation & Culture	
		Pool	89,106
		Parks Maintenance	89,291
		Capital Outlay	62,000
		Debt	84,341
		Other Financing Uses	1,199,636
		Contingency	75,000
From Fund Balance	649,342	To Fund Balance	-
Total Revenues	\$ 2,881,952	Total Expenditures	\$ 2,881,952

CEMETERY PERPETUAL CARE FUND

REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
Charges for Services	\$ 2,500	Other Financing Uses	\$ -
Interest & Rents	5,400	Other Financing Uses	-
Other Financing Sources	-	To Fund Balance	7,900
From Fund Balance	-	Total Expenditures	\$ 7,900
Total Revenues	\$ 7,900		

MAJOR STREET FUND

<u>REVENUES</u>		<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
Federal Grants	\$ -	Highways Streets & Bridges Maint.	\$ 256,220
State Grants	629,990	Capital Improvements	370,000
Interest & Rents	12,000		
Other Revenue	16,405		
Other Financing Sources	-	Other Financing Uses	155,065
From Fund Balance	122,890	To Fund Balance	-
Total Revenues	<u>\$ 781,285</u>	Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 781,285</u>

LOCAL STREET FUND

<u>REVENUES</u>		<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
State Grants	\$ 244,899	Highways Streets & Bridges Maint.	\$ 220,804
Interest & Rents	9,800	Capital Improvements	340,000
Other Revenue	-		
Other Financing Sources	155,065	Other Financing Uses	-
From Fund Balance	151,040	To Fund Balance	-
Total Revenues	<u>\$ 560,804</u>	Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 560,804</u>

PUBLIC SAFETY FUND

<u>REVENUES</u>		<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
Taxes	\$ 129,491	Police	\$ 1,177,993
State Grants	18,860	Fire	147,566
Interest & Rents	55		
Fines & Forfeitures	645	Capital Outlay	25,000
Other Revenue	3,100	Debt Service	1,228
Other Financing Sources	1,199,636	Other Financing Uses	-
From Fund Balance	-	To Fund Balance	-
Total Revenues	<u>\$ 1,351,787</u>	Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 1,351,787</u>

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

<u>REVENUES</u>		<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
Taxes	\$ 53,141	Community & Economic Development	\$ 36,016
Interest & Rents	10,260	Debt Service	-
Other Revenue	-	Other Financing Uses	-
From Fund Balance	-	To Fund Balance	27,385
Total Revenues	<u>\$ 63,401</u>	Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 63,401</u>

T.A. CUTLER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
Taxes	\$ 210,000	Recreation & Culture	288,244
State Grants	10,450	Capital Outlay	80,000
Fines & Forfeitures	55,299		
Interest & Rents	43,200		
Other Revenue	17,350	Contingency	43,200
Other Financing Sources	-	Other Financing Uses	-
From Fund Balance	75,145	To Fund Balance	-
Total Revenues	\$ 411,444	Total Expenditures	\$ 411,444

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Manager be authorized to direct transfers between department levels of up to \$5,000 and to allocate available contingency to functions as needs arise.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Ayes: Azzam, Leonard, Palmer, Upton, Echinaw

Nays: None

Absent: None

Resolution declared adopted.

City Council Minutes.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Upton, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on May 21, 2024. 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 \$350,802.97. All ayes carried the motion.

Monthly Board Minutes.

City Council discussed the May 2024 Monthly Board Minutes.

Moved by Leonard, supported by Azzam to receive the May 2024 Monthly Board Minutes and place on file. All ayes carried the motion.

Audience Recognition.

Pat Pyle, resident of 114 Delaware street, reported that her neighborhood needs to be improved. Pyle reported that the house behind hers has had mattresses and other trash in it for a long time. She has reported it to the Building Department but has not seen any action taken. Pyle reported that she will be putting up a privacy fence, so they do not have to look at the trash every day. Pyle also reported that the corner of Saginaw and Pine is another area that is getting bad and needs to be dealt with as well.

Joe Vozar, Gratiot County Jail Administrator, discussed a project he would like to start. Vozar would like to clean and maintain Veteran grave markers. Vozar would like to get some information on the cemetery rules and regulations.

Consent Agenda.

Mayor Echinaw requested approval/receipt of Consent Agenda items “a” through “c” as shown below:

- a. Payment to Michigan Biotech Agronomics for Biosolid Liquid Land Application.
- b. Payment to GRP Engineering for Engineering Services-System Model Update & Distribution Systems Study.
- c. Payment to Franklin Holwerda Company (FHC) for Annual Boiler Maintenance for the WWTP Boilers.

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

Correction of May 21, 2024 Payables.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the correction of the May 21, 2024 Accounts Payable in the amount of \$.99 due to an input error. The corrected check amount for May 21, 2024 is \$669,133.86.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Leonard, to approve the correction of the May 21, 2024 Accounts Payable in the amount of \$.99 due to an input error. The corrected check amount for May 21, 2024 is \$669,133.86. All ayes carried the motion.

As Needed GIS Updates and Training.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the proposal for as needed GIS Services and Training provided by Spicer Group in the amount of \$15,500.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Azzam to approve the proposal for as needed GIS Services and Training in the amount of \$15,500. All ayes carried the motion.

Resolution 2024-11 Board of Review Compensation.

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City Council of the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot,

Michigan held on the 4th day of June 2024, at 6:00 PM.

Present: Azzam, Leonard, Palmer, Upton, Echtenaw

Absent: None

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

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. B-131 was adopted into the Code of Ordinances by the St. Louis City Council on March 17th, 1999.

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. B-131 allows for the City Council to establish, from time to time, by resolution, the rates of compensation for each member of the Board of Review.

WHEREAS, the current rate of compensation is in the amount of \$100 per member for a full day session of Board of Review and research by City Staff has concluded this rate has been similar since May of 1993.

WHEREAS, the passage of time and inflationary effects indicate the rate is in need of adjustment to adequately compensate members of the Board of Review for the time taken away from other activities.

WHEREAS, an average annual inflation rate of 2.52% since 1993 yields the result of \$100 being approximately equivalent to \$216 at the current time.

WHEREAS, adjustment of compensation to an amount of \$216 per member for a full day session and \$108 per member for a half-day session has been deemed reasonable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the City Council hereby approves and establishes the rate of compensation for Board of Review members at \$216 per member for each full day session and \$108 per member for each half-day session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this rate of compensation shall be effective on the first meeting of the Board of Review following the adoption of this Resolution and shall remain in effect until such time as the City Council makes changes by adopting a subsequent resolution.

Upon roll call vote, the following voted:

AYE: Palmer, Leonard, Azzam, Upton, Echtenaw

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

Resolution declared adopted this 4th day of June, 2024.

Complete Reappraisal.

Manager Giles reported that with all the information the city has been provided, the best course of action would be to go forward with the complete reappraisal that Assessor, Kathy Roslund had recommended.

Assessor Kathy Roslund gave a short presentation explaining the need for the complete reappraisal.

Alma City Manager, Aeric Ripley, discussed the process when Alma had their complete reappraisal done. Ripley explained the process, residents' reactions and feedback. He stated that the hardest decision was the financial decision to go forward, once that was made, the whole process ran smoothly.

Discussion was held with comments as follows:

Mayor Pro Tem, Bill Leonard stated he has grown weary of hearing about Alma. Leonard stated he does not care about five to seven years down the road, he cares about now and financially now is not the time to do the reappraisal.

Member Palmer stated that the City of St. Louis hires professionals to do their jobs and the city should trust them and take their recommendations and go forward with complete reappraisal.

Member Upton stated she does not support the complete reappraisal.

Member Azzam stated he does not support the complete reappraisal.

Member Palmer made a motion to go forward with the complete reappraisal. No support was given.

City Manager Report.

Manager Giles reported that the Joe Scholz Memorial Fishing Derby would be June 8th, starting at 9:00 a.m.

Manager Giles reported that the annual Flag Day Celebration would be June 14th at 7 p.m. on the back deck of City Hall.

Manager Giles reported that nine contractors are showing interest for the DSWRF Project, with the bid opening being June 26th.

Manager Giles reported that the city has an electric refund coming for Wholesale Distribution Service Charges in the amount of \$85,504.

City Clerk Report.

Nothing to report.

Police Report.

Nothing to report.

Council Comments.

Member Leonard inquired on the gas station progress.

Member Palmer reported he will not be able to attend the June 18 meeting.

Mayor Echtenaw reported that Jake Gregory from the Hope House will be attending the next Planning Commission meeting on June 12th to answer any questions.

Public Comments.

There were none.

Adjournment.

Moved by Leonard, supported by Upton, to adjourn at 6:50 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.

Jamie Long, City Clerk