

## CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

St.Louis,Michigan  
July 16, 2024

The regular meeting of the Saint Louis City Council was called to order by Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw on Tuesday July 16, 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

Finance Director: Bobbie Marr  
Clerk: Jamie Long  
Police Chief: Richard Ramereiz

Others in Attendance: Keith Risdon-Utilities Director, Brett Baublitz-Candidate for Gratiot County Sheriff, Roy McCollum-Gratiot County Undersheriff, David Rapacz-Gratiot County 911 Director, Brett Morrell.

Mayor Echtenaw led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Agenda.**

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard to approve the agenda for July 16, 2024 with the addition of 11C-Sponsorship of Two Candidates for Delta College Police Academy. All ayes carried the motion.

### **City Council Minutes.**

Moved by Palmer, supported by Leonard, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting held on June 25, 2024 and the Regular Meeting held on July 2, 2024. All ayes carried the motion.

### **Claims & Accounts.**

City Council discussed the Claims & Accounts.

Moved by Upton, supported by Palmer, to approve the Claims & Accounts in the amount of \$623,185.96. All ayes carried the motion.

### **Monthly Reports.**

City Council discussed the June 2024 Monthly Reports.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Upton, to receive the June 2024 Monthly Reports and place them on file. All ayes carried the motion.

### **Audience Recognition.**

Brett Baublitz, Candidate for Gratiot County Sheriff, gave a short presentation introducing himself. Baublitz stated some changes he would like to make, if elected, including putting police presence back in schools and upgrades to officer benefits. Baublitz reported that between him and his running mate, Roy McCollum, there are over 52 years of combined experience.

Roy McCollum, Gratiot County Undersheriff, gave a short presentation of his background in law enforcement and in the community, dating back to 1993. McCollum gave a brief history of the percentage of officers living in the county and working on the force, with a gradual decline through the years.

Dave Rapacz, Gratiot County Director, gave a short introduction of the 911 Ballot Proposal. The funding is needed for technology upgrades, facility repairs, day to day operations and most importantly a new tower.

### **Consent Agenda.**

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

- a. Payment to OHM for Phase I Engineering Services for June 2024.
- b. Payment to ROWE for Professional Services for the DWSRF Project.

Moved by Leonard, supported by Upton, to approve Consent Agenda item “a” through “b.” All ayes carried the motion.

### **Temporary Street Closure-Evening in the Park.**

Bobbie Marr requested members to approve the temporary street closure request from the Historical Society for an Evening in the Park event.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Palmer, to approve the temporary street closure request from the Historical Society for an Evening in the Park event. All ayes carried the motion.

### **Resolution 2024-18-Charter Amendment-Establishment of Even Year City Elections.**

#### **RESOLUTION TO PROPOSE AMENDING THE CITY CHARTER TO REFLECT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EVEN YEAR CITY ELECTIONS**

At a regular meeting of the City Council of St. Louis, Gratiot County, Michigan, held the 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, 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 and Echtenaw.  
ABSENT: None.

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis is organized and operates as a Home Rule City pursuant to the Charter of the City of St. Louis, adopted according to the Home Rule City Act, MCL 117.1 *et seq.*; and

WHEREAS, Section 21 of the Home Rule City Act, MCL 117.21, authorizes a city council to adopt a resolution proposing to amend the city charter by a three-fifths vote of its members-elect; and

WHEREAS, the Charter of the City of St. Louis, Chapter III, Sections 3.2 and 3.3, provide that regular primary and general City elections shall be held in odd numbered years; and

WHEREAS, on June 4, 2024, the City Council changed regular City elections from odd to even years by adopting Resolution 2024-08, under authority of Section 642a(4) of the Michigan Election Law, MCL 168.642a(4); and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to amend the City Charter to reflect this change in election years;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council for the City of St. Louis proposes that Chapter III, Section 3.2 and Section 3.3, of the City Charter be amended as follows:

SECTION 3.2-Effective January 1, 2025, nonpartisan City Primary elections shall be held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in August of each even numbered year. If upon the expiration of the time for filing nominating petitions for any elective city office, it appears that petitions have been filed for no more than two times the number of candidates for such office to be filled at the next city election, then no primary election shall be held with respect to such office and the City Clerk shall publish notice of such fact. City primaries shall be held jointly with the state primaries whenever practicable.

SECTION 3.3-Effective January 1, 2025, a nonpartisan City election shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November of each even numbered year. Special elections shall be held when called by resolution of the City Council at least 49 days in advance of such special election or when required by the Charter or the General Laws of the State; provided, however, that no more than two special elections shall be conducted in any year. Such resolution shall set forth the purpose of the election.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the aforementioned proposition shall be submitted to the electors of the City of St. Louis at the regular election to be held in the City on November 5, 2024, and the proposed amendment in full shall be posted in a conspicuous place in each polling place; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk is hereby directed to submit a certified copy of this Resolution to the Attorney General and Governor of the State of Michigan pursuant to MCL 117.21 and 117.22;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that before submission of said amendment to the electors of the

City, the amendment and notice of said election shall be published in full at least once in the Gratiot County Herald, a newspaper of general circulation in the City of St. Louis, the first publication of which shall be not less than 14 days prior to said election; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the purpose of the proposed Charter amendment shall be designated on the ballots to be printed by the City Clerk, which ballot question and statement of purpose shall be as follows:

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS

The City Council of St. Louis adopted a resolution to change regular City primary and general elections from odd to even numbered years. However, the Charter of the City of St. Louis still states that regular primary and general elections shall be held in odd numbered years.

The City Council is proposing that Charter Sections 3.2 and 3.3 be amended to correct the Charter and reflect the change in City elections from odd to even numbered years.

Shall the amendment as proposed be adopted?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk shall do and perform all acts required of said Clerk by the City Charter and laws of the State of Michigan to effectuate this Resolution, including without limitation providing all necessary notices, obtaining all necessary approvals, conducting the necessary election, and filing all necessary documents with the appropriate offices.

Upon roll call vote the following voted:

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

“Nay”: None

Abstained: None

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED: July 16, 2024**

**Addition to Agenda-Sponsorship of Two Students in the Delta College Police Academy.**

Chief Ramereiz requested members to approve sponsoring two students in the Delta College Police Academy, starting August 6<sup>th</sup>, with an approximate cost of \$9,000, per student.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Upton, supported by Leonard, to approve sponsoring two students in the Delta College Police

Academy, starting August 6<sup>th</sup>, with an approximate cost of \$9,000, per student. All ayes carried the motion.

**City Manager Report.**

Manager Giles was absent (excused) from the meeting. Bobbie Marr spoke in his place and reminded council that there would be a joint meeting with St. Louis Public Schools on August 20, 2024, beginning at 5 p.m.

**City Clerk Report.**

Nothing to report.

**Police Chief Report.**

Chief Ramereiz asked the council to approve a street closure for Christmas in July at the Farmers Market on July 25, 2024. The road closure requested was Center Street between Mill and the south parking lot drive, to accommodate additional vendors. The market manager sent the information late to Rameriez and he was unable to have added to the agenda, due to the timing of the information received and his late arrival to the council meeting. All members of the council approved the closure.

Chief Rameriz reported that there was a lot of pedestrian traffic, along with bikes and automobiles for the July Celebration and he suggested a street closure of the 300 block of Mill Street in the future for this event.

**Council Comments.**

Member Leonard reported that the dunk tank was a success and Miranda and the M-80's drew in a large crowd again. Leonard praised member Azzam on a job well done at the July Celebration.

Member Azzam thanked Member Leonard and stated he felt inspired by Leonard's dedication.

Mayor Echinaw reported of a motorcyclist tipping their motorcycle over several times when trying to pull out of the Frosty Cone.

**Public Comments.**

There were none.

**Adjournment.**

Moved by Azzam, supported by Upton, to adjourn at 6:57 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.

Jamie Long, Clerk