

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

St. Louis, Michigan
February 4, 2025

The regular meeting of the Saint Louis City Council was called to order by Mayor Ralph R. Echtenaw on Tuesday February 4, 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
City Clerk: Jamie Long
Police Chief: Richard Ramereiz

Others in Attendance: Brian Buysse-resident, Bobbie Marr-Finance Director, Keith Risdon-Utilities Director, Josh Leppien- Administrative Intern, Jan Bunting-Gratiot County Board of Commissioners, and Walter Seyka-resident.

Mayor Echtenaw led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Leonard to approve the agenda for February 4, 2025 with the removal of item #5-EPA updates. All ayes carried the motion.

City Council Minutes.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on January 21, 2025 and the Executive Session of January 21, 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 \$422,320.27. All ayes carried the motion.

Monthly Board Minutes.

City Council discussed the January 2025 Monthly Board Minutes.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Leonard, to receive the January 2025 Monthly Board Minutes and place on file. All ayes carried the motion.

Audience Recognition.

Brian Buysse, a resident, spoke again regarding the police presence on the 200 block of Mill Street. Buysse stated the lack of police presence is not due to short staffing in the police department. Buysse again stated that he wants a patrol car to be parked downtown on the 200 block of Mill to deter many of the violations that he sees occurring.

Mayor Echtenaw responded by saying it was not cool for the council to be dictating what the police department does.

Member Palmer stated that the council doesn't dictate police policy, it is up to Chief Ramereiz to run his department as he sees fit. Palmer stated that the council is always willing to hear his complaints and concerns.

Chief Ramereiz reported that there is directive for officers to be in the downtown area several times each shift and officers must include in their daily logs. Ramereiz reported that it is not always possible to be there, due to being called to other locations in the city and he, himself has handed out violations in that area.

Buysse asked if it is more appropriate to speak directly to the Police Chief versus addressing the council.

Manager Giles explained it is appropriate to speak directly to the police department or the City Manager in these cases. Giles reported that the police are expected to cover the equivalent of three hundred city blocks of St. Louis and can't just focus on one specific block.

Jan Bunting from the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners reported that the board approved grant funds for Lion's Park.

Bunting reported that the board signed the contract with MMR for five more years of service.

Mayor Echtenaw asked for an update on the ongoing investigation with Chris Oosterhoof as to which Bunting stated she was not at liberty to discuss.

Walter Seyka expressed his interest in purchasing the vacant lot at 403 South Clinton

Consent Agenda.

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

- a. Payment to OHM for Professional Services for the DWSRF Project II, Phase I.
- b. Payment to Berthiaume & Company for the City's audit and single audit for the year ended June 30, 2024.
- c. Payment to Safeware, Inc. for 50% completion of the upgraded camera system.
- d. Payment to the CMP Distributors, Inc. for Police Officers service pistol upgrade.

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

— **Appointment of Josh Leppien.**

Manager Giles requested members to appoint Josh Leppien to the Greater Gratiot Board.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Upton, supported by Leonard, to appoint Josh Leppien to the Greater Gratiot Board. All ayes carried the motion.

Election Agreement.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the Election Coordinating Committee Initial Report and Agreement for 2025-2028.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Palmer to approve the Election Coordinating Committee Initial Report and Agreement for 2025-2028. All ayes carried the motion.

Sale of 403 South Clinton Vacant Lot.

— Manager Giles requested members to approve the sale agreement for the vacant lot located at 403 South Clinton in the amount of \$4,750.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Leonard, supported by Upton, to approve the sale agreement for the vacant lot located at 403 South Clinton in the amount of \$4,750. All ayes carried the motion.

Quote for Electric Meters.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the quote from Etna Supply for the purchase of new electric meters in the amount of \$10,160.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Upton to approve the quote from Etna Supply for the purchase of new electric meters in the amount of \$10,160. All ayes carried the motion.

Quote for Purchase of Backyard Machine (Hydraulic Derrick).

— Manager Giles requested members to approve the quote from Altec for a Backyard Machine (Hydraulic Derrick) in an amount not to exceed \$282,000.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Palmer, supported by Upton, to approve the quote from Altec for a Backyard Machine (Hydraulic Derrick) in an amount not to exceed \$282,000. All ayes carried the motion.

Resolution 2025-04-Notice of Intent for Water Supply System Revenue Bonds (DWSRF Project).

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

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis, County of Gratiot, State of Michigan (the “City”), has determined that it is necessary for the public health, safety and welfare of the City to acquire, construct, furnish and equip improvements to the Water Supply System of the City (the “System”), consisting generally of the replacement of water mains, service lines, valves, and hydrants, including necessary equipment, together with interests in land, appurtenances and attachments thereto (the “Project”); and

WHEREAS, the City has been advised by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (“EGLE”) that financial assistance to accomplish the acquisition and construction of all or a portion of the Project is available through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (“DWSRF”) loan program administered by EGLE and the Michigan Finance Authority; and

WHEREAS, the City has made application for participation in the DWSRF loan and grant program; and

WHEREAS, the Revenue Bond Act, Act 94, Public Acts of Michigan, 1933, as amended (“Act 94”), provides a means for financing the purchase, acquisition, construction, improvement, enlargement, extension and repair of public improvements such as the Project through the issuance of revenue bonds; and

WHEREAS, the issuance of bonds payable from revenues of the System under Act 94 in a total amount not to exceed Fourteen Million Dollars (\$14,000,000) (the “Bonds”) for the purpose of financing part of the Project, in one or more series, represents the most practical means to that end; and

WHEREAS, a notice of intent to issue revenue bonds must be published before the issuance of the Bonds in order to comply with the requirements of Section 33 of Act 94; and

WHEREAS, the City intends at this time to state its intentions to be reimbursed from proceeds of the Bonds for any expenditures undertaken by the City for the Project prior to issuance of the Bonds.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to publish a Notice of Intent to Issue Bonds in a newspaper of general circulation in the City.

2. The Notice of Intent shall be published as a display advertisement not less than one-quarter (1/4) page in size in substantially the form attached to this resolution as Exhibit A.

3. The City Council does hereby determine that the foregoing form of Notice of Intent to Issue Bonds and the manner of publication directed is adequate notice to the electors of the City and users of the City's Water Supply System and is well calculated to inform them of the intention of the City to issue the bonds, the purpose of the bonds, the security for the bonds and the rights of referendum of the electors with respect thereto, and that the provision of forty-five (45) days within which to file a referendum petition is adequate to insure that the City's electors may exercise their legal rights of referendum.

4. The City makes the following declarations for the purpose of complying with the reimbursement rules of Treas. Reg. § 1.150-2 pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended:

- (a) The City reasonably expects to reimburse itself with proceeds of the Bonds for certain costs of the Project which were paid or will be paid from the Water Supply System funds of the City subsequent to sixty (60) days prior to today.
- (b) The maximum principal amount of debt expected to be issued for the Project, including issuance costs, is \$14,000,000.
- (c) A reimbursement allocation of the capital expenditures described above with the proceeds of the Bonds will occur not later than 18 months after the later of (i) the date on which the expenditure is paid, or (ii) the date the Project is placed in service or abandoned, but in no event more than three (3) years after the original expenditure is paid. A reimbursement allocation is an allocation in writing that evidences the City's use of the proceeds of the Bonds to reimburse the City for a capital expenditure made pursuant to this resolution.

5. Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, P.L.C. is hereby confirmed as Bond Counsel to the City in connection with the issuance of the Bonds.

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

AYES: Palmer, Upton, Azzam, Leonard, Echtenaw

NAYS: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Rental Equipment for Riverbank Cleanup.

Manager Giles requested members to approve the rental of a specialty excavator with forestry mulcher from CRC Contractors for an amount not to exceed \$17,575.

Discussion was held.

Moved by Azzam, supported by Upton, to approve the rental of a specialty excavator with forestry mulcher from CRC Contractors for an amount not to exceed \$17,575. All ayes carried the motion.

City Manager Report.

Manager Giles reported that the city is closing in on forming a Compensation Committee, three members have been found, and once the other two members are found, the council can appoint the committee members.

Manager Giles reported that the city received the water testing results back from EGLE, which test for lead and copper, and they were very good results and the testing will continue on a three year frequency.

City Clerk Report.

City Clerk, Jamie Long, reported that the City of St. Louis was randomly selected for an election audit for the November election. The audit was conducted on January 24th, with positive results and feedback.

Police Chief Report.

Chief Ramereiz reported that Officer Szafranski is now on the regular schedule rotation and Tim Kirby will go on the night rotation for the next part of his field training. Ramereiz reported that Kirby is expected to complete his field training in March.

Ramereiz reported that Officer Clarke accepted a position with L.A.R.A and is no longer with the St. Louis Police Department. Ramereiz stated that there are prospects to fill the open position, but they have not officially replied.

Ramereiz reported he would be out of the office for the remainder of the week, at a chief's conference, any questions or concerns, while he is out of the office should be directed to Sergeant, Kristi Forshee.

Council Comments.

Mayor Echtinaw reported that the state representatives Jerry Neyer and Roger Hauck visited City Hall on Monday and had a great turn out, with good results. Echtinaw reported that Senator Hauck suggested coming to the area four times a year. Echtinaw suggested that the City of Alma be the host of one of these meetings in the future.

Public Comments.

There were none.

Adjournment.

Moved by Leonard supported by Palmer, to adjourn at 6:54 p.m. All ayes carried the motion.



Jamie Long, City Clerk