

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF THE CITY OF GROSSE POINTE WOODS HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2004, IN THE COUNCIL-COURT ROOM OF THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 20025 MACK PLAZA, GROSSE POINTE WOODS, MICHIGAN.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Mayor Novitke.

Roll Call: Mayor Novitke
Council members: Chylinski, Dickinson, Granger, Howle, Spicher
Absent: Reynolds

Also Present: City Administrator Bidigare
City Attorney Charles Berschback
City Clerk Warnke
City Comptroller-Treas. Maison
City Assessor - Knapp
Director of Public Works Ahee
Confidential Secretary/Deputy City Clerk Hathaway

Motion by Chylinski, seconded by Howle, to excused Council Member Reynolds from tonight's meeting.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Chylinski, Dickinson, Granger, Howle, Novitke, Spicher
No: None
Absent: Reynolds

The following Commission members were in attendance:

Lisa Gaglio, Beautification Commission
Mary Mitts, Planning Commission
Heather Simmet, Beautification Commission
Marge Kingsley, Beautification Commission
Mary Zedan, Senior Citizens' Commission
Steve Vassallo, Senior Citizens Commission
Fred Petz, Community Enhancement Fund Advisory Board/

Mack Avenue Business Study Committee

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Loretta Altobelli, Community Development Block Grant Advisory Commission
Ross Richardson, Planning Commission
Peter Gilezan, Local Officers' Compensation Commission/Cable Ad TV Advisory
Lee Allcut, Board of Canvassers/Historical Commission
Nancy Breedlove, Beautification Commission
Ronna Gillis, Historical Commission
Susan Kent, Historical Commission
Ken Peterson, Community Tree Commission
Michael Skaff, Community Tree Commission
Freda Jossens, Community Tree Commission
Wilson Rodgers, Community Tree Commission
George Martin, Community Tree Commission
Mike Zolik, Planning Commission
Joan Thornton, Senior Citizens' Commission

Motion by Chylinski, seconded by Dickinson, that all items on tonight's agenda be received, placed on file, and taken in order of appearance.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Chylinski, Dickinson, Granger, Howle, Novitke, Spicher
No: None
Absent: Reynolds

City Administrator Bidigare waived his right to Closed Executive Session under **Michigan Open Meetings Act 1976 P. A. 267.**

Motion by Howle, seconded by Spicher, regarding **Personnel Matter – City Administrator**, that the City Council dismiss current City Administrator Ted Bidigare under the authority of City Charter provision 4.6, "City Administrator shall hold office at the pleasure of the majority of the Council."

Council Member Reynolds arrived at tonight's meeting at 7:20 p.m.

The Chair declared a recess at 7:26 p.m., and reconvened at 7:36 p.m.

At the suggestion of the City Attorney, Council Member Howle stated the following reasons for the motion:

- Under 4.6 of the City Charter, *The City Administrator shall be selected on the basis of his executive and administrative qualifications with special reference to training and experience.* Towns as small as Negaunee, population 4,600, require a bachelors and masters degree in public administration. We also require a bachelors and masters degree in public administration. Mr. Bidigare has neither. I have not located one single job search advertisement that requires less than a bachelors in Public Administration. The degree incorporates a number of different areas of study that are essential to today's complex, litigious, and rule-based society. Moreover, it includes the ability to write grants and receive federal dollars for our budget, which we so desperately need now that revenue sharing is biting into our budget;
- Secondly, Under 4.7, *the City Administrator is responsible for the efficient administration of all administrative departments.* Mr. Bidigare has exercised poor judgment by filling a position called *Assistant to the City Administrator*, which according to our own job description requires at least a bachelor's degree in public administration and preferably a master's degree in public administration. He instead appointed a Confidential Secretary who has a high school education. He explained this away by saying he was saving money. By that logic, we can take a person who is pretty good in math and put them in the Comptroller's position and save that salary as well;
- Third, under Charter provision 4.5, I believe that the *appointments of administrative officers by the City Administration shall be subject to the confirmation of the Council.* That's a quote from 4.5. I believe that this is an administrative officer. It was originally federally funded and the creation was long ago. It was never abolished. A Confidential Secretary was placed in this position. We were never informed, we had never given our consent - we found out about it, and I was told it was changed to Assistant to the City Administrator, which by our own standards requires still a bachelor's degree and preferably a master's degree in public administration. The Confidential Secretary has neither of these;

- The fourth reason is under 4.7. *The City Administrator is responsible for the efficient administration of all administrative departments of the City government except the department under the direction of the Clerk, Treasurer, Assessor, and Attorney.* Our City Administrator has unwittingly created chaos in City Hall with respect to City employees with respect to closing the lines of communication. In the Compensation and Evaluation Meeting that we had, I was hoping he would come back to us with a written proposal or some scintilla of success in opening the lines of communication with the other appointed officials, with the employees, with anybody and there was absolutely no success. In fact, it went the other way. The proposal to me was to change the charter so that, instead of Council appointing the Clerk, Treasurer, City Attorney, City Administrator, and Assessor, the City Administrator would be responsible for all of those departments. Now, a charter change like that was absurd in my opinion and that was the proposal that was given to me. I believe that he was given the opportunity. The situation is much, much, much worse. I believe that my proposal to give Mr. Bidigare the chance to remedy the situation was the wrong decision. I believe I should have just let the meeting happen because the situation now is far worse than it was before.
- The letter of December 30th indicates one thing only. That while Mr. Bidigare was appointed to the City Administrator position, he was never elected by his employees by the evidence, their clear no vote of confidence when they sent that letter. That letter was their cry to the Council that they were saying they had no confidence in their leader. We need to listen to them. They wrote a letter. They tried to get our attention. It was never meant to be public. I got the letter, I read it, I never gave it to anyone else. I expected us to take action on the letter.
- Last but not least, this situation is spiraling out of control. We need to seek a job applicant, through a job search, who has the appropriate credentials for a City of our size. You can tell things are running awry just by the way the citizens are treated when they walk in the door at City Hall. Thank you.

The following individuals spoke in favor of the motion:

Jane Brown
928 Moorland

Carl Schuster
863 N. Brys

The following individuals spoke in opposition to the motion:

Kenneth Dare
1726 Hollywood

Lynne Bryant
1811 Hollywood

Mike Thoits
890 S. Oxford

Arthur Bryant
1811 Hollywood

Kevin Hendrick
1035 Roslyn

Marge Kingsley
974 N. Renaud

Lisa Gaglio
959 N. Renaud

Michael Weinert
706 Hampton

Fred Petz
642 Shoreham

William Rogers
1430 Oxford Rd.

Joseph Sucher
730 S. Oxford

Dietrich Bergmann
1385 Aline Dr.

James Perry
1765 Prestwick Rd.

Motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Granger: No
Howle: Yes
Novitke: No
Reynolds: Yes
Spicher: Yes
Chylinski: Yes
Dickinson: No

Motion by Howle, seconded by Chylinski, regarding **Acting City Administrator**, that the City Council appoint Cliff Maison as Acting City Administrator until such time as the Council has the opportunity to form a Selection Committee and make a decision regarding a City Administrator.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Chylinski, Dickinson, Howle, Novitke, Reynolds, Spicher
No: Granger
Absent: None

Motion by Howle, seconded by Chylinski, that tonight's meeting be adjourned at 9:27 p.m. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.