



**MINUTES**  
**Committee of the Whole**  
**Monday, May 15, 2017**  
**City Council Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council Vice President Wood called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Councilmember Brown Clarke  
Councilmember Kathie Dunbar  
Councilmember Tina Houghton  
Councilmember Adam Hussain  
Councilmember Patricia Spitzley-excused  
Councilmember Jody Washington  
Councilmember Carol Wood  
Councilmember Jessica Yorko

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff  
Angie Bennett, Finance Director – arrived at 5:34 p.m.  
Joseph Abood, Chief Deputy City Attorney  
Eric Brewer, Council Internal Auditor

**Public Comment**

No public comment.

**Minutes**

No action on the minutes, and moved to next meeting.

**Discussion/Action:**

**FY 2017 3<sup>RD</sup> Quarter General Fund Status Report and Vacancy Factor**

Ms. Bennett was not present, and after waiting, Council Member Wood moved the meeting to the next agenda item.

**RESOLUTION – Fiscal Year 2017/2018 Budget and Policies**

Council Member Wood referenced the proposed amendments, and went through the amendments nothing the following:

Common Ground Support – (\$10,000)  
Sister City Support – (\$20,000)  
Finance Department Contractual Services (\$150,000)

Finance Department Contractual Service into a Control Account \$100,000

Council Member Yorko stepped away from the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

Fire Department Miscellaneous Expenses (\$30,000)

OP TFR FLI – (\$100,000)

Groesbeck OP TRF 583 Fund (\$283,389)

Groesbeck Municipal Expenditure Back into Parks at \$283,389

One Code Enforcement Officer for Commercial Corridor and Signs \$121,000

Neighborhood Grant Program \$15,000

EDC Contract (\$26,000)

EDC Grant for Façade \$100,000

Council Member Yorko returned to the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

Council Member Wood then referred the Committee to the suggested budget policies amendments. Those included the addition of the description on the Code Enforcement for commercial properties, mention of the Pension and Retiree Health Care Study spoke to any changes with Groesbeck Golf Course and lastly an item on the proposed façade grants.

Ms. Bennett distributed answers to earlier budget questions. Council Member Houghton asked about the potential duplicate in the budget for the IT software item. Ms. Bennett confirmed they were not duplication, IT position data analytics is a City wide, and the Fire Department software in the Fire budget is for data analytics in the Fire Department to gather data. Council Member Wood stated opinion it was a duplicate because Fire and IT are both paying dollars for the technology. Ms. Bennett stated that the software is funded in the fire budget, and it is ongoing maintenance in the IT budget. She continued by admitting that in the past the department purchased their own software, however in the last round of technology improvement, programs were purchased under bond funds, and IT handles ongoing maintenance and implementation. The software analysis will look at statistical information from Fire such as the repetition of fire calls, types of calls, areas, and look for patterns.

Council Member Brown Clarke reminded Ms. Bennett and the Committee that the Fire Chief had admitted they would have a cost savings of about \$50,000-\$100,000 in allocated unspent dollars, could that not be contribute to maintain the Fire Marshall and the analytic program. Ms. Bennett acknowledged it is a possibility to use the fund balance in next year, and any residuals will go to the reserve.

Council Member Brown Clarke stated to the Committee she felt there was an awkward position with the potential for the future administration it would be hard to approve any amendments to the proposed budget.

**MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN CLARKE TO APPROVE THE BUDGET AS IT WAS ORIGINALLY PRESENTED.**

Council Member Wood pointed out that if there are no amendments, then there are no funds for an additional code enforcement officer, and the contract will proceed with LEPFA for Groesbeck Golf Course.

Mr. Abood asked to speak on the Budget Policies, but was informed they were not part of the discussion at this time.

**MOTION FAILED 3-4.**

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN TO APPROVE THE BUDGET WITH THE AMENDMENTS AS READ BY COUNCIL MEMBER WOOD.

Council Member Hussain confirmed his decision for the motion by stating he was doing it in support of the commercial corridors and listening to the cities constituents.

Council Member Wood added to the discussion that the amendments would only affect \$210,000 out of the \$120 million general fund budget.

Council Member Washington provided her opinion that the residents she has spoken to do not support Sister Cities, Faith Based Initiatives, way finding signage, the transfer of Groesbeck Golf Course and she did not support subsidizing the market.

Ms. Bennett provided her opinion that that new code compliance position would offer another officer, however the commercial code does not allow a lot of enforcement, and it will add to structural costs, but not address what Council is looking for. She then made an appeal on the proposed cuts including Downtown Lansing way finding signage, the LEDC contract reduction, Groesbeck golf course which believed would free up funds from the Park Millage to use for improvements to the other City parks.

Council Member Hussain clarified that his concerns is the commercial corridors, not limited to the buildings, but signage, broken windows, and nuisances. Currently it was confirmed to him that there are 7 officers and 3 premise officers, who are doing a great job, but his belief is they need help and support. Council Member Washington supported the request also.

Council Member Wood stated her opinion that the amendments address the needs of a code officer, façade grants, and asking for the accountability for the study by FHT. These topics came from talking with the public. She added that the public and the Park Board have also spoken on not turning over Groesbeck Golf Course. Council Member Wood referred back to Ms. Bennett's comments on a code for the new commercial code enforcement officer to use, and answered that there is an International Property Maintenance Code that can be used for residential and commercial properties, and Council was also told when the LFD took over Code Enforcement, that this would provide more opportunities to go into commercial properties.

Ms. Bennett voiced her concern on the amendment that took \$50,000 from the FHT report lowering it to \$100,000 and put the \$50,000 into a budget control account.

Council Member Brown Clarke noted to the Committee that they should consider that when passing the budget, some funds may not stay where proposed because of the new administration entering in January 1, 2018. Council Member Wood acknowledged the comment, but also pointed out that there is 6 months of the budget passed before that action happens. Any contracts can be signed before January 1, 2018 tying the City to some of the proposed actions. Council Member Washington against stated her objection to LEPFA managing Groesbeck Golf Course, and added that once that contract is signed, the new administration may never bring it back.

Mr. Abood spoke on the topic of the proposed funds into a Budget Control Account, stating that from the legal perspective the City Attorney Office would have an issue with the control budget account as described. The Act is strict and the Charter speaks to the Council role in the matter of the budget.

Council Member Houghton asked about asking LEDC to handle the proposed new item of the Façade Grants if there is also an amendment to cut funds from them. Council Member Wood reminded the Committee that they have been told in the past that the reason for the request by LEDC for \$100,000 was because the Radisson was no longer paying, and that those funds were sent onto the LEAP contract. By reducing that \$100,000 by \$26,000, the Council Committee will work with LEAP to generate a policy resolution to describe the area and requirements for the implementation of the Corridor Façade Grants by August 1, 2017. This would allow for 10-12 grants. Council Member Washington also noted that she was informed that LEAP stated they would administer this with no charge and are supportive of the grants. Council Member Houghton spoke in opposition to reducing the item. Council Member Wood stated they would still have funds, so the consensus was to take the EDC Contract for Façade Grant from \$100,000 to \$74,000.

Council Member Hussain spoke in support of the façade grant change, and removing Groesbeck Golf Course from a proposed LEPFA management.

Council Member Yorko asked the Administration for an update on why LEPFA would manage the course since was not present at the meeting at Foster when the business plan was presented. Ms. Bennett went through the reasoning for the proposal.

Council Member Washington stepped away from the meeting 6:26 p.m.

She highlighted that LEPFA can bring more to Groesbeck Golf Course because of their current operations; they will market it and work on future management. Over time this would bring the subsidy down.

In regards to the proposed decrease of \$100,000 from the Downtown Lansing request for way finding signs, Council Member Dunbar reminded everyone that the Downtown is a neighborhood also, and the signs would not just direct to locations, but to features along the way to someone's destination.

Council Member Washington returned to the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

She continued by confirming that in the 2016 budget Council granted funds for the study and creation of the way finding signs. She spoke in opposition to cutting the \$100,000 in funds. Council Member Dunbar then spoke on the proposed changes to the on a code officer position which she questioned if the Committee was looking for a Code Officer or a Premise Officer, because they each have separate roles. The corridors, signage cannot be regulated if they are unsightly but only if a safety hazard. So she questioned again if adding a Commercial Corridor Code Officer would address what they are trying to address. Council Member Wood noted her understanding that a code officer can do premise work, and the difference is will they also be able to go inside a building. Regarding the signage, the hopes are this new position can address abandoned signs.

Council Member Houghton spoke in support of the proposed funds for the way finding signs which were designed in coordination with LCC and the State of Michigan. She also supported keeping funds with Sister Cities. Council Member Washington stated her opinion that Sister Cities should be self-supporting. She continued into a discussion on Groesbeck Golf Course changes and the recently known proposed road through Ormond Park. Council Member Washington was opposed to the road through Ormond Park and the move to LEPFA of Groesbeck, but supported the amendments for a new Commercial Code Officer.

Council Member Brown Clarke referenced the missing vacancy report from HR, and asked if there was an open position currently in Code. Council Member Wood stated her

understanding there was a part time position open. Council Member Brown Clarke encourages that position to be filled an address only commercial.

Council Member Hussain spoke in support of downtown funding, but not the requested \$100,000 for wayfinding signs.

Council Member Yorko spoke in support of the amendment for the façade grant funding for all areas and interested in the reduction out of the Sister Cities and Common Ground. Council Member Wood encouraged the Downtown to approach their businesses for assessments to cover the signage.

As for Sister Cities, Council Member Wood pointed out that they had survived on \$20,000 so there was no reason to increase it another \$20,000.

Council Member Washington suggested that since it appeared to be no support for the new code officer, she would be willing to put those funds into the façade improvement program.

**COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN WITHDREW HIS MOTION.**

The Committee took a vote on each proposed amendment.

Common Ground Support – (\$10,000) – MOTION FAILED 4-3

Sister City Support – (\$20,000) - MOTION FAILED 4-3

Finance Department Contractual Services \$50,000 - MOTION FAILED 4-3

Fire Department Miscellaneous Expenses (\$30,000)- MOTION CARRIED 6-1

OP TFR FLI – (\$100,000) – MOTION FAILED 3-4

Groesbeck OP TRF 583 Fund TO LEPFA (\$283,389) MOTION FAILED 4-3

Groesbeck Municipal Expenditure Back into Parks at \$283,389

One Code Enforcement Officer for Commercial Corridor and Signs \$121,000

Neighborhood Grant Program \$15,000 – MOTION CARRIED 5-2

EDC Grant for Façade \$74,000 – MOTION CARRIED 6-1

During the vote there was discussion Council Member Dunbar admitted she was struggling with removing funding of Groesbeck to LEPFA. Council Member Wood stated her concern they could sign the contract before the new Mayor in 1/1/2018, and it would obligate the new Mayor. Mr. Abood agreed that after 1/1/2018 if the new Mayor changed anything it would be a breach of contract. Council Member Washington reiterated that Council had heard the Park Board did not support it, and there was no information provided when the Mayor presented the budget. There needs to be more time to investigate, speak to the current employees, and see a study. Council Member Yorko noted her opinion that she did not support the City operating a golf course. Council Member Brown Clarke reminded the Committee that LEPFA admitted they had put their plan together hastily, and maybe there needs to be more discussion on alternative funding, and LEPFA could work with the Park Board. Fiscally Council cannot talk about the challenges without the look at taking items off the books. The discussion on the Groesbeck Golf Course and LEPFA continued with the Committee including their understanding that no one has spoken to the neighborhood. Council Member Brown Clarke suggested waiting another year for the FY2018/19 budget, and the Park Board can work on an RFP for a study, and Council Member Washington agreed on an RFP, but also did not want to enter into an agreement now 6 months before the new Mayor. The Committee went through the proposed figures of operating the course currently which is \$984,000, and they want \$75,000 for a concrete pad for a pavilion, and they want \$283,389 for LEPFA to manage it. The discussion ended on the amendments and the vote was taken on the rest of the budget.

Council Member Brown Clarke asked to be recused from the 54-A District Court Budget due to her family financially benefiting.

TO RECUSE COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN CLARKE FROM THE 54-A DISTRICT COURT BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WASHINGTON TO APPROVE THE DISTRICT COURT BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Council Member Dunbar asked to be recused from the HRCS Budget their services funder her employer.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HOUGHTON TO RECUSE COUNCIL MEMBER DUNBAR FROM THE HRCS BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WASHINGTON TO APPROVE THE HRCS BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Council Member Yorko asked to be recused from the HRCS Budget because budget supports the services with her employer, the Ingham County Health Department.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HOUGHTON TO RECUSE COUNCIL MEMBER YORKO FROM THE HRCS BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

COUNCIL MEMBER WASHINGTON RESCINDED HER MOTION TO APPROVE THE HRCS BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WASHINGTON TO APPROVE THE HRCS BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER WASHINGTON TO APPROVE THE BALANCE OF THE FY2017 BUDGET. MOTION CARRIED 6-1.

**Adjourn**

Adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by Committee on June 12, 2017