



**MINUTES**  
**Committee of the Whole**  
**Monday, August 12, 2019, 2019 @ 5:30 p.m.**  
**Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council Member Wood called the meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Councilmember Kathie Dunbar- arrived at 5:42 p.m.  
Councilmember Jeremy A. Garza- excused  
Councilmember Adam Hussain  
Council Member Brian T. Jackson  
Councilmember Peter Spadafore - excused  
Councilmember Patricia Spitzley  
Councilmember Jody Washington  
Councilmember Carol Wood

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Sherrie Boak, Council Staff  
Jim Smiertka, City Attorney  
Lisa Hagen, Assistant City Attorney & Council Legal Analyst  
Samantha Harkins, Deputy Mayor  
Eric Brewer, Council Internal Auditor  
Nick Tate, City Labor Negotiator  
Loretta Stanaway  
Mary Reynolds

**Minutes**

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPITZLEY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM AUGUST 5, 2019 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

Ms. Stanaway asked the Committee to review the Lansing Connect program, asked the Committee to pursue oversight of the recommendations from the Chief Strategy Officer, and lastly asked them to assign more funds in the next budget for LPD officers.

Ms. Reynolds spoke to the Committee on areas in Lansing she believed needed assistance.

## **DISCUSSION/ACTION**

### **RESOLUTION– City of Lansing Defined Contribution Plan Amendment**

Council President Wood spoke briefly on past practices of the previous Administration and their exit benefits. Council at the time worked with the Administration and approved an Executive Management Fringe Benefits Plan. It was noted Council cannot make changes but can say “yes” or “no” to what is proposed. Recently the current administration referred a resolution that would change the options for the Executive Management retirements plans.

Council Member Spitzley referred to the proposed resolution, and in comparison to the Fringe Benefits plan itself, there was a date inconsistency from August 1, 2019 on one document and August 26, 2019 on the other. Mr. Smiertka confirmed the dates should reflect August 26, 2019 on each document. Mr. Tate outlined the changes in the document beginning on page 5. Council President Wood asked if a current employee is promoted after August 26, 2019 do they stay in the defined benefit and Mr. Tate confirmed. Council Member Spitzley referred Mr. Tate to page 5, line 215 where it stated a one-time option and asked if that can only be done at time of hire, and Mr. Tate confirmed. Council President Wood asked if the Retirement Health Care was changing, and Mr. Tate stated that will remain at 12 years of service and they are not proposing any change. Council Member Jackson referred Mr. Tate to page 5, lines 220-221 and asked for the rationale on three (3) years. Mr. Tate explained that the primary consideration was in terms of recruiting, and in the case of an administration change, and making positions more competitive in the market. Council President Wood asked if they were proposing for the unions, and Ms. Harkins stated it was for executive, mayoral staff and non-bargaining. Mr. Smiertka clarified that the only change in the proposed resolution would be the date to change to August 26, 2019. Council Member Jackson then asked who proposed the recommendation. Council President Wood confirmed it was referred from the Mayor’s office. Ms. Harkins added that the Financial Health Team also made a recommendation as well, and she noted the Mayor also thought that proposing this would help to change the landscaping in the legacy costs. She concluded by confirming this is for new employees, and does not affect anyone in the current positions. Council Member Jackson asked why this was not waiting until after the hiring of the Chief Strategy Officer, and Council President Wood asked how many employees this would effect, and Ms. Harkins stated there are 14 department heads currently, and those are not affected. There are 8 staff in the Mayor’s office and of those 6 are full time, and in the non-bargaining units there are 12-15 positions. Council President Wood asked how many of those 40 would be affected because the position is currently vacant. Ms. Harkins agreed it would be currently the IT Director position and the Chief Strategy Officer, and believe now is a good time to make the change with the hiring of the CSO and giving them a pension would not reflect well in the goal for the retirement, so the new person would be under this new plan.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPITZLEY TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PLAN AMENDMENTS. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

### **DISCUSSION/RESOLUTION – Introduce and Set Public Hearing; Ordinance Amendment Chapter 288 Section 288.21 – Chief Strategy Officer**

Mr. Smiertka noted that based on the last discussion on August 5, 2019, item (C) on page 2 was amended to blend the responsibility to Council with the responsibility to the Administration and Mayor’s office. In the Charter, under appropriations, there are obligations put on the Legislative body and in the case of the CSO, that person will have to directly submit through the Mayor their suggested appropriations and budget. Council Member Spitzley acknowledged that the statement was not envisioned that way during the budget process for this position and the intent was for Council to be given the reports so to assist in looking at recommendations by CSO. It was also noted by Committee that since Council does the budget, they need to plan accordingly and do their due diligence. In the future there may not

always be the support and flow of information from Mayor to Council. Council Member Jackson referenced page 2, lines 1-17 that speak to the Charter itself, which does not clearly stated the Council rights, and so asked what role the Council wants. Council Member Washington referenced page 2, line 16 which stated “regular schedule” and requested something written, defined and possibly a regularly scheduled conference so the CSO can adhere to it. Council President Wood stated in her opinion that she would suggest a set meeting schedule, passed by resolution, similar to the City Council and Committee of the Whole meeting schedule. Mr. Smiertka noted it did say “mutually agreeable regular schedule”, so if there is a willingness to set a regular schedule of specific dates, it can be done by resolution. Council President Wood proposed have the CSO attend the meetings when the quarterly reporting and vacancy report are done.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPITZLEY TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR INTRODUCTION AND SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING OF AUGUST 26, 2019 FOR THE ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS FOR CHAPTER 288 SECTION 288.21.  
MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Council President Wood stated that due to a timeline provided to her by the Mayor, the Council could take action the same night as the hearing.

#### DISCUSSION- Lansing Connect

Council President Wood stated to Ms. Harkins that Council Members receive multiple concerns with the Lansing Connect program, including but not limited to access, putting in a complaint, not being user friendly, tracking, and the system not working.

Council Member Jackson stepped away from the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Examples were provided were the system states it is “closed” or taken care of, however the issues still exists on the property and nothing is done. Ms. Harkins admitted it is not just an IT issue, but throughout the entire user data base. Council Member Hussain asked who the Administrator of the program was, and how it is channeled. Ms. Harkins admitted that position of administrator is currently vacant because they had offered it to someone but they did not take it, so it is being posted again. Currently however, she added, there are employees in Public Service that are active in the program daily and two (2) employees in IT that have been addressing any issues. Ms. Harkins then went onto explain that depending on the issue, it goes to the appropriate department that can address it, such as sidewalks to public service.

Council Member Jackson returned to the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Ms. Harkins did also admit the feedback loop does not work the way it should. It was noted that the staff would be meeting on August 13, 2019 to go over the program. Council Member Hussain noted nuisance issues that should evidently be going to Code Enforcement, however he was able to provide examples of violations that have been open for 53-74 weeks. Ms. Harkins stated that from reviewing the program it appears that 29% of the complaints are pot holes and those are referred to Public Service, and she noted in the case of those, Public Service will look at them and if they determine they cannot be filled but the whole area needs to be addressed it is not closed, but appears closed. She also pointed out that street lights are addressed by BWL and they do not have access to City Works. Council Member Hussain stated his opinion that the issues deal with training and consistency. Ms. Harkins admitted there is a struggle with waiting on compliance and what the next step is. Council Member Hussain also pointed out the mapping issue where the program does not recognize an address. Ms. Harkins made a note of that and stated she would ask that in the August 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Council Member Spitzley asked Ms. Harkins to also find out what “closed” means

because they are not always resolved, and the system should be checked for better feedback language. She then asked Ms. Harkins to provide Council with direction on what they should be telling the residents on these complaints, and Ms. Harkins stated she would follow up with Council on it. Council Member Dunbar suggested including in the program an option for a photo to be added by staff when it is evident it is resolved and closed. Council Member Washington stated to Ms. Harkins she will not recommend to anyone to use the program, and encouraged the Administration to look into something else. Council President Wood added an interest in finding out the cost of the system, if there is a user fee and what that is, if there are guarantees, and if there was a system contractor on site during the implementation. Council Member Hussain asked Ms. Harkins to ask for an option to add "other" to make it user friendly.

Ms. Harkins was asked to update on a resolution at the Committee at their September 9, 2019 Committee meeting.

**Other**

Council President Wood informed the Committee that the FY Budget Priorities for FY2020/2021 will be reviewed again with final review on 9/23/2019 and action on 9/30/2019 at Committee and Council. They were asked to take to their individual Committees for discussion as well.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on August 26, 2019