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MINUTES
Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, September 3, 2026 @ 3:00 p.m.
City Council Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Spadafore called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm

PRESENT

Council Member Tamera Carter, Chair
Council Member Peter Spadafore, Vice Chair
Council Member Deyanira Nevarez Martinez, Member

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Legislative Office Manager
Andy Fedewa, EDP
Bryan Dryer, EDP
Luke Thiel, Legislative Analyst
Greg Venker, OCA

Minutes

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 20, 2026 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

Discussion/Action:

RESOLUTION – Grant Acceptance; Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM), Michigan CSA Program Innovation and Sustainability Initiative

Mr. Dryer spoke about the program for post high school education with the children's savings program.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE GRANT ACCEPTANCE FROM CEDAM, MICHIGAN CSA PROGRAM INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

RESOLUTION – Grant Acceptance and Authorization; Michigan State Historic Preservation Office Certified Local Government Grant, Old Town Commercial Association

Mr. Fedewa noted there was a grant for the westside survey, and OTC Association asked for the same update, and they could not apply so the City sponsored it. They will act as the fiduciary, and the OTC was able to put up the front money and will get reimbursed and they will administer

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the grant, and this request is for OTC to administer on the City behalf. Mr. Fedewa stated there will need to be a MOU.

Council Member Nevarez Martinez asked if this is similar to westside, and Mr. Fedewa stated no, because OTC has already been surveyed and part of the historical society. They already know the history and significance. This is to look at the attributes and inform the owner and future owners on any rehab so those historic significance is jeopardized.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORÉ TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE GRANT ACCEPTANCE FROM MICHIGAN STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANT, OLD TOWN COMMERCIAL ASSOCIATION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

DISCUSSION – Budget Priorities for FY 2027/2028

Council Member Carter noted this is the last regular meeting before full Council will adopt, so they should consider them today.

Council Member Carter began with her proposed priorities, and since there are no funding significance there, however these are similar to past budget priorities. She then outlined the following:

Performance-Based Budgeting

Priority: Establish a Performance-Based Budgeting Framework

Purpose:

Develop a budget process that evaluates City spending not only by the amount appropriated, but by the services, outcomes, and measurable results generated from those dollars.

Proposal:

Direct the Administration, in coordination with the City Council, to develop a standardized performance framework for City departments as part of the annual budget process.

Departments would identify a limited number of measurable performance indicators tied to their budgets and core responsibilities.

Potential measurements could include:

- Number of residents served
- Service response times
- Permitting/inspection turnaround times
- Infrastructure projects completed
- Code violations resolved
- Vacant properties addressed
- Businesses assisted
- Grant dollars secured

Ways & Means Consideration:

This does not necessarily require additional funding. The objective is to improve accountability and provide Council with better information when evaluating departmental funding requests.

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Requested Action for Budget Priority Resolution:

Request that the Administration return to Ways & Means with a proposed performance-based budgeting framework and identify opportunities to incorporate performance measures into the FY2027–2028 budget process.

Desired Outcome:

Create a budget culture where every significant expenditure has a defined purpose, measurable outcome, and accountability mechanism.



Funded Vacancy & Workforce Efficiency Review

Priority: Comprehensive Review of Funded Vacancies and Workforce Utilization

Purpose:

Evaluate whether the City's current staffing structure is aligned with operational needs, service delivery, and fiscal sustainability.

Proposal:

Request a comprehensive review of City positions that are:

- Currently vacant
- Funded but unfilled
- Filled through temporary or contractual staffing
- Generating significant overtime
- Difficult to recruit or retain
- Potentially duplicative across departments

The review should evaluate whether vacant positions should be filled, redesigned, consolidated, eliminated, or repurposed.

Key questions for Ways & Means:

- 1 How many budgeted positions are currently vacant?
- 2 How long has each position been vacant?
- 3 How much funding is associated with those positions?
- 4 Are vacancies causing overtime or contractual expenses?
- 5 Are certain functions being performed by outside vendors that could be performed internally?
- 6 Are there opportunities to consolidate administrative functions?
- 7 Are there positions that should be redesigned based on changing technology or service needs?

Financial Consideration:

This could potentially identify cost savings without reducing essential services.

Requested Action:

Direct the Administration to provide a vacancy and workforce utilization report to Ways & Means as part of the FY2027–2028 budget development process.

Council Member Spadafore asked for an amendment to the "Action" to say "Request" instead of "Direct".

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Desired Outcome:

Ensure that the City is funding the right positions, performing the right functions, at the right cost.



Neighborhood Investment Equity Review

Priority: Develop a Neighborhood Investment & Equity Measurement Framework

Purpose:

Create a transparent method for evaluating how City resources and investments are distributed throughout Lansing and whether funding decisions appropriately reflect neighborhood needs, infrastructure conditions, economic opportunity, and community priorities.

Proposal:

Develop an annual Neighborhood Investment Report showing City investments by geographic area.

The report could track:

- Infrastructure investment
- Parks and recreation
- Housing
- Economic development
- Code enforcement
- Public safety
- Road and sidewalk improvements
- Community development
- Grants
- Neighborhood programs

The goal is not necessarily to spend the same amount in every neighborhood. Rather, the goal is to understand whether investments are aligned with need, opportunity, condition, and measurable outcomes.

Potential Equity Indicators:

- Infrastructure condition
- Vacant/blighted properties
- Property values
- Population
- Business activity
- Housing conditions
- Public safety indicators
- Environmental conditions
- Previous City investment

Ways & Means Consideration:

This could initially be accomplished through existing financial and departmental data and may not require significant new funding.

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Requested Action:

Request that the Administration work with Council to develop a standardized neighborhood investment reporting format for consideration during the FY2027–2028 budget process.

Desired Outcome:

Give Council and residents a clearer understanding of where City dollars are being invested, why they are being invested, and what outcomes those investments are producing.

Council Member Nevarez Martinez asked if this was a study, and Council Member Carter explained not a study but guidance for the departments to hon in on those areas.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPADAFORE TO APPROVE THE THREE PRIORITIES FROM COUNCIL MEMBER CARTER TO BE ADDED TO THE BUDGET PRIORITIES FULL DOCUMENT. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

Council Member Nevarez Martinez outlined her proposed 4 priorities:

\$750,000 – Neighborhood Sidewalk & Accessibility Investment: Additional dedicated funding for sidewalk repairs, critical sidewalk gaps, ADA/accessibility improvements, pedestrian crossings, and related pedestrian-safety needs. I would also like us to consider prioritization criteria based on condition, safety, accessibility, proximity to schools/transit/services, and neighborhood need, along with geographic reporting on where these investments are made.

With this first one, she stated it was a request of a continuation from the FY2025 of \$700,000. Council Member Spadafore asked if this would lower from what the Mayor has for the current year of \$1.5 million, and Council Member Nevarez Martinez stated it would be in addition to. Council Member Carter asked for the line item this would be from per the earlier Council President request, and Council Member Nevarez Martinez stated she does not have that but can do that and forward in a separate email.

\$500,000 – Vacant & Dangerous Property Stabilization Fund: Additional resources to address vacant, abandoned, and dangerous properties through stabilization when structures can reasonably be saved, demolition and remediation when they cannot, and planning for productive reuse of the property afterward.

Regarding the 2nd item she acknowledged she is aware of Code Enforcement, but wants a better strategy and funds behind that to deal with the properties. This would include taking a more proactive approach, boarding up, proactively helping homeowners, and include commercial properties. Council Member Carter asked if this a duplicate to what Council Member Spadafore proposed in the current ordinance that is going through the process for savings homes. It was noted by Council Member Nevarez Martinez that this would be for homes that cannot be lived in; can be torn down or boarded up. Council Member Carter asked if the funds would be for the city to

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purchase, Council Member Nevarez Martinez stated that would be a case by case basis, and would have to go through OCA. Council Member Carter asked OCA if the City can legally take property. Mr. Venker stated that the City should not take procession of the property in that state, and if it goes to tax foreclosure and comes to the City reverted, and then they can consider them. He stated the other path, under housing law, requires going to court, if a property is in MSD status, the City can go to court, petition the court to address the property and then place a lien back on the owner. Mr. Venker added that however if it went to court that could take months. Council Member Nevarez Martinez noted her intent was the housing stock that are in distress. Council Member Spadafore asked if OCA can draft an amendment to the current ordinance addressing this issue that is before council, (public hearing on 9/14) and would be open to put this into what is currently on the floor. This priority was removed from the list.

\$250,000 – Neighborhood Improvement/Participatory Mini-Grants: Additional larger, dedicated pool for resident-identified physical neighborhood improvements, such as lighting, trees, benches, pedestrian improvements, traffic calming, community gardens, small park improvements, and other projects that can make a noticeable difference at the neighborhood level.

Council Member Nevarez Martinez spoke on her 3rd priority, noting this would be in addition to is already budgeted, and Council Member Carter noted that is already \$120,000, and Council Member Nevarez Martinez stated this would be in addition to what is already in the budget for more meaningful impacts. Council Member Carter noted there is \$120,000 already in the budget with some funds for Neighborhood in Bloom and some for Neighborhood grants, so where would these proposed additional funds go, and Council Member Nevarez Martinez stated she wants these funds to be used for neighborhood grants.

\$100,000 for one full-time Council Constituent Services Coordinator, inclusive of salary and benefits.

Council currently has extremely limited independent staff capacity, despite the volume of constituent requests, policy questions, departmental follow-up, and legislative work that comes through our offices. I think we should begin addressing that capacity gap.

This position could serve all eight Councilmembers by helping track and follow up on constituent cases, coordinate with City departments, maintain a shared system for constituent requests, assist residents in navigating City services, and provide basic research and legislative support to Councilmembers.

Importantly, this would not duplicate 3-1-1 or departmental staff. Residents regularly contact their Councilmembers when they have been unable to resolve an issue through the normal administrative process. We need someone on the Council side who can track those issues, follow them through, and make sure residents receive an answer.

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I also think there is a broader institutional issue here. Council is an independent branch of City government with legislative, oversight, and constituent-service responsibilities. We should have at least some professional staff capacity that is accountable to Council and supports us in carrying out those responsibilities. For this budget cycle, I think beginning with one shared position is a reasonable and fiscally responsible first step. We can evaluate the workload and effectiveness of the position before considering whether additional Council staffing is warranted in future years.

Council Member Nevarez Martinez outlined her 4th priority which would be addressing case management on constituent services, and something similar to case management, with one person working with each Council Member. Council Member Carter noted that Committee on Personnel and Human Resources should be involved, and asked for clarification on how this is different from current staff. Council Member Nevarez Martinez stated this would be direct assistance to Council, follow up, and believes this will help assistance to council members, and believes that Council staff does not have the time to do this. Council Member Carter believes there is a further discussion needing to be held, and Council was elected by the people. Council Member Nevarez Martinez stated this is a case management services when doing constituent services, and if that means Council has to do that the Council positions need to be paid full time, and they are not, and this fills the gap. Council Member Carter stated she believed that Committee on Personnel should look into this. Council Member Spadafore stated they just added staff in this budget with the Legislative Analyst and is hesitant to ask the Mayor to budget for more staff, and would consider dropping the amount to \$25,000 for a case management software. Council Member Nevarez Martinez stated there are vacant positions in the City, and some of those could be eliminated to come up with the funds to cover this new position, and this can go to other committees, but this is funding. Council Member Spadafore stated it is worth a discussion with leadership and the full Council, and is not comfortable asking for this at this time. Council Member Nevarez Martinez stated she believes they need one for each ward, and one for each at large, and the constituents need full-time council members. Council Members Spadafore and Carter consensus was to have further discussions with current staff, and human resources. Council Member Spadafore stated she can bring the item to the full council for discussion if she wishes to continue.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER NEVAREZ MARTINEZ TO APPROVE TWO BUDGET PRIORITIES; \$750,000 ADDITIONAL FOR NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALKS & ACCESSIBILITY INVESTMENT, AND \$250,000 ADDITIONAL FOR NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS/PARTICIPATORY MINI-GRANTS. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

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OTHER

No other discussion.

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 3:37 pm

Submitted by,

Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary,
Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on