

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
August 4, 2011

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on Thursday, August 4, 2011, in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by Mayor Buck.

PRESENT: Buck, Knol, McShane, Wiggins, Wright.

ABSENT: None.

CITY ADMINISTRATION: City Manager Pastue, City Clerk Halberstadt, City Attorney Schultz, Treasurer Weber.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

08-11-128 MOTION by Knol, seconded by McShane, to approve the agenda as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION – “DASHBOARD” REQUIREMENTS

City Manager Pastue reviewed the “dashboard” requirements set forth by the Department of Treasury in order for the City to receive revenue sharing. He stated the “dashboard” concept is a tool to ensure municipal government transparency.

Pastue reviewed how the City of Farmington meets the “dashboard” requirements in the areas of: fiscal stability, economic strength, Public Safety and quality of life.

Pastue discussed the use of Munetrix, a web based information source designed to give easy-to-understand access to financial information for municipal governments. This tool allows for building long-term financial forecasts and trend analysis including fiscal indicator scores, best-practice benchmarking and peer group comparisons. He pointed out the data is taken from the F-65 report municipalities file with the State Treasury Department.

Pastue advised the cost of this program is \$1300 and would be linked to the City’s website. He pointed out the City can load in all of the current financial data and provided greater transparency to residents. He noted this tool allows for comparison with other communities.

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Pastue stated he would need to submit a signed affidavit to the State before September 30, 2011 affirming the City has met the “dashboard” requirements.

McShane, referring to the Public Safety data, expressed interest in the median age of the residents calling for medical runs and service. She asked about when the current census data would be available. Pastue responded some of the 2010 census data will not be used in the “dashboard” report because it will not be available in time.

McShane asked about assistance available to communities to ensure the highest level of information is provided to the State in order to secure revenue sharing funds.

Pastue responded that through the Munetrix System the City will be able to provide the Treasury Department with the most up-to-date information. He noted that SEMCOG is holding workshops to assist communities in using Munetrix to its fullest extent.

McShane recommended the City provide an explanation of Munetrix when it is added to the website.

Wright asked why it has taken so long to get information that compares information between communities. He expressed support for the Munetrix System, but noted there is opportunity for fraud. He stated the fact that a City can load its own information is a flaw in the quality of that data. He stated information can be massaged to present a favorable point of view which destroys the opportunity to be accurately comparable.

Wright stated eventually there will be a type of funneling system that directly inputs an audited report providing a higher level of integrity. He advised the City needs to grab the information available now, but at the same time recognizing its strengths and weaknesses. He stated the City should continue to look at improved systems as they are developed.

Responding to a question from Buck, Pastue stated the City will use Munetrix along with constructing its own graphs for “dashboard” purposes. He stated the real value of Munetrix is providing statewide benchmarks that can be used to evaluate the City’s progress.

Discussion followed regarding educating the public on the meaning of the graphs including providing a narrative on the website.

Buck, in referring to the “quality of life” section of the “dashboard”, stated the City would be better off discussing those programs in qualitative rather than quantitative terms. He pointed out the miles of sidewalks or acres of parks will

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not likely change in Farmington. Citing one example, he suggested the City could discuss the number and types of events happening in its parks.

Responding to a question from Buck, Pastue stated the “dashboard” requirement could be viewed as an unfunded mandate, however, the legislature has the discretion on whether or not it will provide revenue sharing.

Responding to a question from Wiggins, Pastue stated Munetrix is the only system available that provides this level of detail.

Wiggins pointed out that comparisons can be misleading between small and large cities. He noted a 20% fund balance in a small city is not the same amount of money as 20% of a large city’s fund balance. For example, he stated if a mile of sewer goes down in Farmington or Farmington Hills the cost is the same to repair, however, the City could have zero fund balance left and Farmington Hills could go from 20 to 10%.

Wright pointed out that Lansing should be providing the data and should have been all along. He stated currently it is a third party channeling of this information and that third party defines the measurable criteria for comparability. He stated the data will never be completely accurate because everyone will present it in the best light possible.

DISCUSSION – PROCESS FOR FILING CITY COUNCIL VACANCY

City Attorney Schultz reviewed the appointment process as defined by City Charter. He stated an appointment must be made within 60 days of Council officially receiving a resignation. He advised there is no specific process in the Charter. He noted the Charter Review Committee had discussed whether or not an official appointment process should be written into the Charter. He stated the Committee decided to add new language providing for Council to determine the process.

Schultz stated if Council does not hit the 60 day time limit they lose the ability to make an appointment and the vacancy is filled on the next election date. He discussed the voting and appointment process that was used in a previous appointment.

Responding to a question from Knol, Schultz stated it would not be possible to hold a special election to fill this vacancy alongside a regular election.

Responding to a question from McShane, Schultz confirmed the four remaining Councilmembers would vote on the appointment. He stated the appointment must be a 3 out of 4 majority vote regardless of who attends the meeting.

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Pastue advised the Council will officially receive Wiggins' resignation at the August 15, 2011 meeting which will start the 60-day time limit. He stated an appointment would have to be made at the first study session in October or a special meeting would have to be set shortly thereafter.

Buck speculated that interviews would take place at the September 19th regular meeting.

Responding to a question from McShane, Halberstadt stated 12 people have picked up petitions and 1 of the 12 has officially filed. She confirmed the deadline for turning in petitions is August 16th.

McShane suggested it might take more time to interview the candidates than in the past.

Schultz confirmed that candidates on the November ballot can also apply to fill the Council vacancy.

Discussion followed regarding the possibility of a candidate who is both appointed and wins a term in the November. Schultz will research the proper procedure under this scenario.

Pastue confirmed that if a candidate running for Council also applies for the appointment to fill a vacancy would need to complete an application.

Wright recommended the Clerk send a letter to all potential candidates informing them of the appointment opportunity. He asked about a timeline for accepting applications.

Discussion followed regarding setting a deadline for receiving applications. Council concurred that interviews would begin after the deadline of September 9, 2011 for receiving applications.

Knol pointed out Council may need more than one meeting to accommodate all of the applicants.

Pastue confirmed the application is the one used for all City volunteers and the one used for the last Council appointment process.

Wright asked if there was a practical way to communicate to applicants the issues important to Council.

McShane stated she has encouraged potential candidates to meet with the City Manager about the issues facing the City.

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As part of his experience in the appointment process, Wright stated he learned that there are non-negotiables such as a commitment to run in the next election cycle. He recommended providing candidates with the broader obligations of the office in terms of public appearances, etc.

McShane stated it is up to each candidate to seek out the information he/she needs such as meeting with the City Manager. She pointed out they should have an understanding of what is involved in running a campaign.

Wright suggested shortening up the application deadline because Council needs to expand the amount of time needed to deliberate on the candidates.

Pastue pointed out Councilmembers can narrow the field of candidates through the application review process. He suggested Councilmembers could separately meet with candidates.

Council concurred to stay with the September 9th deadline for submitting applications.

Pastue recommended sending a letter to those who pulled petitions informing them of the opportunity to apply for the Council vacancy.

Discussion followed regarding publicizing the Council vacancy and the application process.

Buck asked if there was any logic to *not* accepting Wiggins' resignation until the middle of September moving the 60 day deadline till after the election. Pastue responded the problem would be that the new Council would only have a few days to make the appointment otherwise it would go to a special election.

McShane expressed concern that the appointment process could diminish other candidates' chances on the ballot.

Knol emphasized the importance of making the appointment before the Absent Voter ballots are mailed out.

In response to a question from Wright, City Administration will provide an answer at the next meeting concerning what process will be followed should the candidate appointed to Council also win a seat in the November election.

DISCUSSION – GRAND RIVER CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY

Pastue advised Farmington Hills is holding a public hearing regarding the Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority at their next meeting. He stated as part of the process there is a 60-day waiting period following the public hearing before

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an authority can be established. He noted Farmington held their public hearing in May and is therefore able to establish an authority at the August 15th meeting.

He requested Council feedback on whether to proceed with establishing the authority at the August meeting or try to do it concurrently with Farmington Hills in September or October. He advised that if Council waits there may be a new appointment who may not be familiar with the project. On the other hand, Council may not want to get too far ahead of Farmington Hills.

Responding to a question from Wiggins, Pastue stated that if Farmington Hills decides not to establish an authority Council can adopt a resolution rescinding its previous action.

Wright noted Council's action to establish the authority would show the City's commitment to the project.

Knol advised the current Council has been part of this process and discussion and expressed support for establishing the authority at the August meeting. She did not believe there is a downside to taking action one or two months ahead of Farmington Hills.

Council concurred to establish the authority at the August meeting.

DISCUSSION – APPOINTMENTS TO FRIENDS OF GOVERNOR WARNER MANSION

Pastue advised the bylaws and articles of incorporation have been established for the "Friends of Governor Warner Mansion" nonprofit organization. He stated one of the bylaw requirements is the City Council will make the first set of appointments to the Board of Directors.

Pastue recommended Council by resolution make the following appointments at the August 15th meeting: Brian Golden, Mary-Jeanne Shore, Kimberly Shay, Sharon Bernath, Laura Myers, Sue Halberstadt and Vince Pastue.

McShane requested the resolution specifically state the appointments are to the Board of Directors rather than "Friends of the Mansion".

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was heard.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kristin Kuiken, 33808 Glenview Court, confirmed that candidates for Council in the November election can also seek the upcoming appointment to fill a vacancy.

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She further confirmed that if an appointment is made before the November election, the City will have a process in place if that appointee is elected as well.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Pastue offered an open invitation to all candidates for Council to meet with him to go over any questions they may have.

Buck commented Councilmembers would also be available to answer any questions.

McShane inquired about the results of the millages that were on the August 2nd, primary ballots.

Knol noted there is a State publication that summarizes the election results. She stated most of the Public Safety millages passed, however, most of the School millages failed.

ADJOURNMENT

08-11-129 MOTION by Wright, seconded by Wiggins, to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

J.T. (Tom) Buck, Mayor

Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

APPROVED: August 15, 2011