

8/24/21

Memo from City Manager Michael Cain

Information regarding questions posed at recent City Commission meetings:

Meeting Schedule: City Commission has had meetings at noon and 7:00 p.m. for well over 30 years in an effort to give more people the opportunity to attend a meeting no matter what their schedule. The meeting schedule is approved once a year at a public City Commission meeting in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act. On November 16, 1999 the then City Commission voted to switch from weekly meetings to twice a month meetings to be held the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. and the fourth Tuesday of the month at noon. That schedule has been pretty much maintained since then.

Addresses: Addresses shown on the City website for board and commission members reflect their preferred mailing address, not necessarily home addresses. I have lived in the City since 2003. The City Manager is required to sit on three boards, the DDA, the LDFA and the EDC. I am also the main staff liaison to the Airport Board and City Commission. That is not a conflict of interest, it is part of the job. The City Manager's car allowance is a common negotiated provision in the City Management profession and has been in effect since I was hired in 2002.

Housing Commission: Although originally created by the City of Boyne City the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has made it very clear to the City that other than making required appointments to their Board the City is to not be involved in its operations. There is only one person on Hemlock Street on the Housing Commission. The address was repeated in error and has been corrected. The City Attorney has determined, years ago, that the City Manager is to make the appointments to their governing board. The City collects no tax revenues on the Housing Commission properties.

As a pretty much independent organization in their day to day operations they maintain their own website and distribute their own agendas and minutes, much like the independent District Library Board that we also appoint some of its members to.

Sidewalks: It is my understanding that representatives of the Housing Commission have responded to Chet F's sidewalk questions by noting the difficulty in creating a sidewalk on the north side of Division Street between their parking lot and Park Street due to the grade of the land there and have provided a reasonable accommodation using the existing and year-round maintained walkways between Deer Meadows and Park Streets and going thru Litzenburger.

EMS. The City's ambulance system is funded thru a combination of user fees and local government (City and Townships) subsidies to cover annual shortfalls. Unlike many Townships the City has no separate EMS millage and hasn't for at least 20 years.

At the beginning of the year there was discussion about a possible countywide EMS system. This idea has been explored several times during the last 20 years. The recent discussions came to an end for the time being several months ago when the communities served by the City of Charlevoix EMS system decided to withdraw from the discussion and create their own authority,

which recently began operations. The City's current system is less costly to operate than either the Jordan Valley or Charlevoix authorities. While we keep looking for ways for the systems to work together going forward nothing concrete has developed at this time.

River mouth Restrooms Approval. At their January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting the City Commission approved working directly with Kroondyk Construction to develop a contract for improvements to both the River mouth restrooms and the Old City Park Gazebo. We had gone out for bids on the restroom and pavilion projects, which the City rejected because they were priced too high. We then sought out other local other options and ended up working with Kroondyk to determine if better prices could be obtained. He ended up providing a lower cost, high quality proposal so the Pavilion project could be completed. That worked out really well and the same rationale applied for the River mouth restroom and gazebo projects. Those contracts were ultimately approved by the City Commission at their February 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. While the rest rooms reopened a little over a week ago, items like the re-roofing, which will be done in coordination with the new peak roof going on the pumphouse portion of the building as part of that project, are anticipated to be done this fall.

Commission pay. The City Commissioners have been paid \$2,700 per year, with the exception of the Mayor, who receives \$3,270 per year, since 2017. A Compensation Commission was established under State law to review Commissioner pay in the late 1990's. In 1997 the Compensation Commission changed the basis of pay from per meeting to annual with the thought that there was more to being a Commissioner than just attending the meetings. It has remained that way since.

Use Marina money for housing. As currently proposed those are both important but separate issues. Consistent with City Commission direction from many years ago, the marina project has been designed to be self-supporting using funds from users and grants to pay for the project rather than general tax dollars. The Waterways grant and fees paid by users of the marina are not allowed or appropriate for use on Housing projects. The proposed marina project does not take away money from housing projects.

Agenda posting process. The agenda and the full packet the City Commissioners receive for the City Commission meetings are generally posted late in the afternoon of the Friday before the Tuesday meeting. Any revisions are posted on-line as they are made.

Items to be considered for a City Commission meeting are to be provided to the City Clerk by noon on the Wednesday preceding the next regular meeting.

The City Manager reviews all items submitted to determine if they will be included on the agenda. The City Manager informs the Commission of items not included. The Commission may add items to the agenda by action of the City Commission at a meeting.

Commission procedures also provide that questions raised on non-agenda items will not be answered by the Commission, but will be referred to the City Manager of City Staff for follow-up.

Take care of residents, not visitors. I would encourage people to review the list of major accomplished and proposed projects/expenses that are included in my letter that are in the front of each annual budget notebook. They are available on line, at City Hall with the most current one also at the Library. I believe you will find that the vast majority of projects are for the benefit of our residents. Even when projects may also benefit visitors, like the purchase and improvements to the Open Space or Marina, those also strengthen our own local economy and help support jobs for our residents or those in our area.

Staffing/Wages. No DPW, or other employees, have been laid off since at least late 2002, even during the economic downturn around 2008-10. All full-time employees received raises each of the last two years.

Memorial Flag Issues. The meeting with the veterans about flags at the memorial was tied to the 2<sup>nd</sup> removal of the American flag and its replacement with another flag. If the American flag had not been removed again, the meeting would not have been scheduled. It was not the result of any speaker's comments who came before the City Commission.