

Council Proceeding's
Regular Meeting
January 3, 2024

The Regular Council Meeting for the City of Rockwood was called to order by Mayor Troy A. Cox in the Council Chambers at 7:00 PM

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Cox, Council Members Bennett, Cramton, Farmer, Grzywacz, and Wasner

Absent: None, operating with 1 vacant seat

City Officials

Present: Police Chief Krause, Fire Chief Mercure, Administrator Weekly, Treasurer McCoy, Attorney Pelland, and City Clerk Oney

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENTATION

Mayor Cox presented Dan Guzzi, Mark Scafidi, and Brian Smith with a plaque of appreciation for all their hard work, support, and dedication to the city

Dan Guzzi wanted to thank the mayor and city council and offer his assistance if he can in any way help in the future

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Cox requested to move Old Business – Roll Call Voting up to Action Agenda

M-001-24

Motion by Wasner/ Bennett to approve this evening's agenda as amended

Motion Carried

PUBLIC DISCUSSION (Items not on Agenda)

Darrin Camilleri
State Senator, 4th District

Mr. Camilleri congratulated the new members of City Council and stated that he was excited to start working with them. Mr. Cammilleri wanted to stop by and say hello and is going to sit through the meeting to see what the City of Rockwood is working on and to see if he can be of any assistance. Mr. Camilleri stated that they have been doing a lot in Lansing and there is a lot of recourses that he wants to bring back home for infrastructure and local improvement projects. He would love to have a coffee hour here in Rockwood to speak with the council and residents about current issues.

Mr. Camilleri stated that he was here during the summer and did a walk through with Mayor Guzzi and Congresswoman Dingall and spoke with some of the residents during that difficult time. He stated that he knows that the city as well as a lot of the region has gone through some systemic structural challenges when it comes to infrastructure and so that is on the top of his list and he is sure it is for the community as well and he looks forward to doing the best that he can to remedy some of those situations. He firmly believes that a lot of the work that he does and that the City Council does is nonpartisan, it has nothing to do with party affiliation, it is actually serving the residents and getting things done and solving problems for them whether it's the train crossing issue, which he actually got caught in on his way here, or fixing the schools, which he is very proud to have chair (?) of the school budget and provide a lot of resources for the students. He looks forward to continued partnership.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION (Items on Agenda)

None

ACTION AGENDA

Mayor Cox discussed this evening's Action Agenda items A) Council Minutes – December 20, 2023, B) Accounts Payable, C) Roll Call Votes

M-002-24 Motion by Wasner/Bennett to approve this evening's Action Agenda as presented

Mayor Cox stated the we discussed at the last meeting to do a Roll Call vote for every motion. He thinks that when we are just receiving reports from the departments and there really is no discussion on the matter that we can eliminate the roll call vote. Anything that we have a debate on or want to discuss then we can do a roll call vote so every voice is heard. If something comes up that you would like a roll call vote on then you can request it. Mayor Cox is hoping that we can use a combination of both.

Council Member Grzywacz wanted to make clear that we would do a roll call vote with the exception of the police and fire department reports.

Mayor Cox stated that anything trivial or that we have to go into discussion on, we can do a roll call vote, other than that we can just do a yay or nay.

Council Member Wasner stated that if someone has an issue, once the motion is made, they can request a roll call vote.

Council Member Grzywacz stated that she had just brought it up because it was so unclear on how they were voting or even whether or not they were voting to begin with and we did not know that until after the vote was completed. We couldn't say "take a roll call vote" at that time because the vote was already completed.

Mayor Cox stated that he likes the idea but if we can interchange the way the votes are done then things would go a lot smoother.

Attorney Pelland stated that the first motion to do a roll call vote for every motion would need to be rescinded and a new motion made.

Council Member Wasner stated that Council Member Grzywacz would have to rescind her motion first and then he would second it due to the original motion being made in that order.

Council Member Grzywacz that she does not want to rescind her motion because she does not entirely agree with it.

Council Member Wasner stated that if the vote is not rescinded then the vote stands.

Council Member Grzywacz stated that the other issue she has is protecting the integrity of a vote. She stated that she wishes we would have discussed it more at that time. Looking in the future, maybe we can table the issue so we can discuss it further.

Mayor Cox asked Council Member Grzywacz if she was going to rescind her vote.

Council Member Grzywacz stated that she is not going to rescind the roll call vote motion from the previous meeting.

Mayor Cox asked if there was any further discussion on this

Ayes: Mayor Cox, Council Members Bennett, Cramton, Farmer, Grzywacz, and Wasner

Nays: None

Motion Carried

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS/DEPARTMENTS

Police Department:

Chief Krause discussed the resignation of officer Freddie Harshbarger. He has accepted a position with Plymouth Twp. For financial reasons. They are offering him more than we can offer him.

M-003-24 Motion by Bennett/Cramton to accept the resignation of Freddie Harshbarger effective January 5, 2024, with regrets

Ayes: Mayor Cox, Council Members Bennett, Cramton, Farmer, Grzywacz, and Wasner

Nays: None

Motion Carried

Chief Krause stated that this is the seventh year under his administration that they have done the “Blue Santa” program. We have an anonymous donor that gives a substantial amount of cash to help out families in need and we were able to help 30 families this year.

Chief Krause also stated that they partnered up with Flat Rock Police Department and did ‘Shop with a Cop’ for the first time this year. He would like to thank Chief McInchak and his officers for helping us out. He also wanted to thank Flat Rock Meijer Corp. for giving us a great deal on everything and he looks forward to doing it again next year. Both programs were a huge success this year.

Mayor Cox asked Chief Krause to let Freddie know on behalf of Himself and City Council, that we appreciate his service and we wish him good luck.

Fire Department:

Chief Mercure discussed the ESO CAD integration Software Annual Fee

M-004-23 Motion by Wasner/Cramton to pay the annual service contract fee for ESO CAD Integration in the amount of \$612.50 payable to ESO Solutions, Inc.

Ayes: Mayor Cox, Council Members Bennett, Cramton, Farmer,
Grzywacz, and Wasner

Nays: None

Motion Carried

Treasurer's Report:

No Formal Report

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

No Formal Report

CONSIDERATION ITEMS

No Formal Report

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

No Formal Report

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

No Formal Report

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Cox discussed the Vacant Council Seat – Introduction of Jeremy Joaquin,
and Master Plan Study Session

M-005-24 Motion by Wasner/Grzywacz to hear introduction of Jeremy Joaquin

Ayes: Mayor Cox, Council Members Bennett, Cramton, Farmer, Grzywacz, and Wasner

Nays: None

Motion Carried

Jeremy Joaquin stated that he would like to read a statement that he has prepared so the residents and City Council know a little about him

Mr. Joaquin stated that he has been a resident of Rockwood since he was honorably discharged from the military in 2015. His wife and her family have been members of the community for over 20 years. His wife is a Carlson Alum and he has 2 sons who are currently enrolled there, a junior and a freshman. He is active with the Carlson Athletic Boosters and is President of the Carlson Rowing Booster. He is a combat veteran with 12 years of honorable service and he had 3 overseas deployments, 2 of which were in combat zones and the other in Korea. During his last deployment he served with the current Maryland State Delegate who is willing to speak on his character and his ability to perform this position if needed. He and Delegate Nicholas Allen are currently working with multiple members of congress to help formally discharged veterans transfer their GI bills to qualifying benefits.

He is a firm believer of what President Lincoln said in the Gettysburg Address, "These deeds shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Mr. Joaquin stated that according to the 2021 Rockwood Census, 46% of our citizens are married, 41% are between \$100,000.00 and \$200,000.00 annually, 28% are between ages of 30-49, 16% are blue collar workers, and 8.6% are veterans. He represents all of these categories and is sure that he can be the voice

of not only these people but all of the residents and to consistently execute his duties with their best interest in mind.

Mr. Joaquin stated that if he is granted this opportunity his top priority would be to make Rockwood a destination for families and businesses by providing resources for both. He believes that both go hand in hand. For families we need to ensure that they have availability to meet their basic needs within our city limits by ensuring they have adequate access to housing, food, and health needs. For businesses we need to create an enticing market where they are able to provide their services while creating job opportunities for the residents. He also stated that he would be an advocate for police, fire, and department of public works who do a great job filling their roll, he believes that these services are the backbone of our community and should be protected.

Mr. Joaquin wrapped up his statement with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Junior; "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve, you don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve, you don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love."

Mayor Cox asked which was harder, one of his deployments or that speech.

Council Member Wasner first wanted to thank Mr. Joaquin for his service. Council Member Wasner asked if there was anything in particular that brought him to Rockwood.

Mr. Joaquin stated that he met his wife in Georgia. She was basically born and raised in Rockwood. He followed her back here after his discharge. The city grew on him. The small-town community, the parades, the sense of everybody caring about each other. His kids go to Carlson, there's no comparison between that and late nineties high school, they're a big family as well and it just shows that this community here, Flat Rock, and Gibraltar all come together and work together for the greater needs. Rockwood is small, 3300 people, and only a couple of square miles, but it embodies all of that. It gives you a sense of a warm blanket rather than being out in the cold in a big city.

Council Member Cramton stated that they have something in common. His niece was one of his sons' teachers at Carlson.

Mr. Joaquin stated that he hopes it was a good experience for both of them.

Council Member Cramton stated that we just lost a police officer, Freddie Harshbarger, he was good and he liked him and hates to see him go. He wants to know if Mr. Joaquin has any ideas on how to generate money so we can stop losing these police officers.

Mr. Joaquin stated that we have to build the infrastructure and business. We have a lot of industrial but we don't have a lot of retail that is progressively creating revenue for the city that we can capitalize on to pay them. DPW is spread thin, they just had to replace a pump and motor. Everything is going everywhere but we are not bringing in anything. It's not like a booster club where you can have a car wash for the city. We have to find ways in the budget to make enticing to be here and then make sense in the budget for us to be able to have hire them.

Council Member Grzywacz stated that he answered all questions that she had

M-006-24 Motion by Wasner/Cramton to appoint Jeremy Joaquin to City Council to fill the vacant seat for the rest of the term which ends November 2025

Ayes: Mayor Cox, Council Members Bennett, Cramton, Farmer, Grzywacz, and Wasner

Nays: None

Motion Carried

Jeremy Joaquin was given the oath of office by City Clerk Oney

M-007-24 Motion by Wasner/Cramton to move the Master Plan Workshop to January 16, 2024

Ayes: Mayor Cox, Council Members Bennett, Cramton, Farmer, Grzywacz, Joaquin, and Wasner

Nays: None

Motion Carried

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Council Member Grzywacz wanted to introduce the Early voting, which is something new to Rockwood and the State of Michigan. She stated that it looks like we only have 2 council meetings before this takes place and she is not prepared and does not know what the hours are or where it will be. She believes that it starts February 17th – 25th

City Clerk Oney stated that everything is already in motion. Mailers will be sent out to notify residents that early voting will take place at Rockwood City Hall in the Community Room (2nd floor) starting February 17th-25th from 8 AM – 4 PM. Absentee ballot applications have already been sent out and we are receiving them back.

Council Member Grzywacz stated that she needs 2 months to plan for voting and just wanted the residents to know where they can go for early voting.

Council Member Wasner asked if there are any plans for replacing the open position for Police Officer

Mayor Cox stated that he has been in talks with Chief Krause for sometime here. The issue is money and what we offer as opposed to other cities. He thinks there is a little less than a year left on their contract. The Chief is actively recruiting and he is actively recruiting in Monroe County. For this size of city, we really need a young or retired person and we really need 2 officers and a dispatcher but they are working on it.

ADJOURNMENT

M-008-24 Motion by Wasner/Cramton to adjourn this evening's council meeting at 7:25 PM

Ayes: Mayor Cox, Council Members Bennett, Cramton, Farmer, Grzywacz, Joaquin, and Wasner

Nays: None

Motion Carried

City Clerk, Colleen E. Oney

Mayor, Troy A. Cox