

City of Marquette, MI

300 West Baraga Ave
Marquette, Michigan 49855



Meeting Minutes City Commission

Monday, December 9, 2024
6:00 PM
Commission Chambers

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Present: Davis, Gottlieb, Hanley, Larson, Mayer, Ottaway, Schloegel

Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Jerney Ottaway moved to Approve the agenda as written, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Paul Schloegel and Passed.

The motion carried 6-0, as Commissioner Davis had stepped briefly out of the room.

Announcements

Mayor Hanley announced that the City's Holiday Parade and tree lighting would be happening on Friday, and she also shared information about the public component of the City Police Department's re-accreditation process.

Boards and Committees

1. Appointment(s)

Jane Fitkin to the Planning Commission for an unexpired term ending 02-15-27

Commissioner Michael Larson moved to Approve the appointment of Jane Fitkin to the Planning Commission for a term ending Feb. 15, 2027, seconded by Commissioner Cary Gottlieb and Carried Unanimously.

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

Jim Dowling said he works at a local church, and spoke about a recent incident where an agitated and distressed individual entered the church and police were ultimately called. He said that he had hoped the person would have been held more accountable for their actions.

Gayle Marjaniemi shared handouts with the Commission and spoke about her concerns with water fluoridation. She said she would like to have a citywide meeting to discuss the topic.

Margaret Brumm discussed battery recycling and said she would like the city to consider

funding battery recycling stations.

Valerie Olson read excerpts from a recent federal court decision related to fluoridation and said she would like to have broader dialogue and discussion about this. She said she thinks nothing is more important than the health and well-being of our children.

Dave Campana said he believes in the positive effects of water fluoridation and he thanked the city for doing it. He said the Commission needs to decide which organizations and groups to trust the opinions of and he said he personally chooses to put his faith in the recommendations of a long list of apolitical medical organizations that support the practice.

Presentation(s)

2. Cliffs-Dow Project Update by Project Team: Richard Baron and Nicolas Tatro, Foley Baron, Metzger & Juip, PLLC, Special Counsel to City; Tom Anthos and Ryan Whaley, TriMedia Environmental & Engineering

The Commission saw a presentation from Rich Baron and Nick Tatro from Foley, Baron, Metzger & Juip, PLLC, as well as from Ryan Whaley and others on behalf of TriMedia.

Mr. Baron talked about the history of the Cliffs-Dow site and said the issues being addressed by his firm has been related to the historic wood processing activities on the site and the long-term impacts of that operation.

The team discussed the history of the property, the results of long-term environmental monitoring on the site, mitigation efforts that have already been undertaken, and possibilities for future use of the property.

Commissioners offered a handful of follow-up questions to the team, with discussion touching on future property uses, grant funding opportunities, and how and when to best move forward with marketing the site, if the Commission decides to go that route.

3. Local Development Finance Authority, by Brian Cherry

Brian Cherry, presenting on behalf of the Local Development Finance Authority, discussed the activities of the LDFA. He also highlighted the activities of the SmartZone, which is funded in part through the LDFA tax-increment financing district, touching on successes, funding and brief company profiles for SmartZone clients. He suggested that it may be beneficial for the LDFA board and City Commission to have a conversation at some point, to ensure that everyone is on the same page moving forward.

4. Consent Agenda - Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Jermei Ottaway moved to Approve the Consent Agenda as written, seconded by Commissioner Michael Larson and Carried Unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

- 4.a. Approve the minutes of the November 25, 2024 regular Commission meeting
- 4.b. Approve the minutes of the December 9, 2024 joint work session
- 4.c. Approve the total bills payable in the amount of \$814,710.89
- 4.d. Aggregate Material Purchase
- 4.e. Housing Commission MERS 457 Resolution- Roll Call Vote

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

Jim Dowling said he has no problem with the police department, but said he sees a broader issue, wherein he believes the broader community seems unwilling to hold people accountable for their actions.

Dave Campana again said that he thinks water fluoridation is appropriate, and said he has seen no evidence indicating that the amount of fluoride used in municipal water fluoridation is harmful.

Margaret Brumm discussed water fluoridation, which she feels is partly responsible for her own lifelong dental health. She said the court opinion being referenced by others tonight is not binding in any way.

Comments from the Commission

Commissioners Gottlieb, Davis and Larson had no comment.

Mayor Pro Tem Schloegel asked everyone to do their best to keep their dollars local when shopping for the holidays and warned people to be cautious when driving around town during these early winter days, when the sun sets so early.

Commissioner Mayer said, regarding fluoridation, that he's not a water quality expert, but the people he trusts are the water experts that oversee the processes at a state level. He said that the story from the church sounds like it was not pleasant; he said he isn't sure what the best solution is to the mental health and substance abuse issues being brought up tonight, but he doesn't think the best solution is to build more jails.

Commissioner Ottaway said the Commission is not an expert body in the topic of fluoride, and that they should listen to the experts at every level. He said he doesn't foresee Marquette's processes changing without first receiving guidance to that effect from one of those expert bodies.

Mayor Hanley said she agrees with previous Commissioners' fluoridation comments and said she will follow the guidance given by experts. She said the church situation sounds horrible, but she praised the City Police Department and urged residents to reach out to them with any concerns.

Comments from the City Manager

City Manager Karen Kovacs said she has Community Office Hours at the Peter White Public Library this Wednesday.

Adjournment

Mayor Hanley adjourned the meetings at 7:38 p.m.

Jessica Hanley, Mayor

Kyle Whitney, City Clerk

If you require assistance to participate in any meeting, program or activity offered by the City of Marquette, please provide advanced notice to City of Marquette ADA Coordinator Eric Stemen at 906-225-8978 or via email at estemen@marquettemi.gov.