

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE GROSSE POINTE CITY COUNCIL  
HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2010**

Mayor Scrace called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Council members Boettcher, Walsh, Weipert, Stempfle, Stevens, Parthum, and Mayor Scrace answered the roll call.

Also present were City Manager Dame, City Attorney Kennedy, City Treasurer Johnson and Public Works Director Weitzel.

Mayor Scrace asked if there were any changes to the Agenda and Manager Dame stated there were no changes to the Agenda.

The Council took up consideration of the Consent Agenda. The Council discussed and considered the Consent Agenda.

Councilmember Weipert, second by Councilmember Stempfle, moved that the Consent Agenda be approved.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED.

**PUBLIC HEARING - 2010 SINGLE LOT ASSESSMENT ROLL**

Mayor Scrace called for a public hearing on the 2010 Single Lot Assessment Roll. Treasurer Johnson explained and presented the roll. Treasurer Johnson answered a Council question explaining that Wayne County is responsible for the ultimate collection of single lot assessments.

Mayor Scrace called for public comment. There were no public comments. Mayor Scrace closed the public hearing.

Councilmember Weipert, second by Councilmember Stempfle, moved that the 2010 Single Lot Assessment Roll be approved.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED.

The Council then convened as the Planning Commission.

Mayor Scrace called for consideration of a Site Plan review of the exterior refurbishment of the Blockbuster store at 16824 Kercheval Avenue.

Mr. Weitzel presented the April 13, 2010, report of the City Planner, incorporated in these minutes by reference, which recommended approval of the site plan as submitted.

Council expressed a concern about the durability of the shingles proposed for the facade. Staff stated that shingles were an approved material under the City ordinance.

Planning Commission member Stevens, second by Planning Commission member Parthum, moved that the Blockbuster site plan be approved as submitted.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED.

The Planning Commission reconvened as the City Council.

Mayor Scrace recognized Municipal Judge Russell Ethridge. Judge Ethridge addressed the Council on Court operations and budgetary issues. Judge Ethridge requested that his annual salary be reduced from \$15,000 to \$12,000 in light of the difficult budgetary situation facing the City.

Pursuant to ordinance, Councilmember Parthum, support by Councilmember Boettcher, proposed a resolution:

Commencing July 1, 2010, and thereafter, the Municipal Judge shall receive a salary of \$1,000 per month.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED.

**Public Comment:**

The Mayor called for public comment.

Anneliese Bajer asked if anyone was trying to recruit businesses to the Village. Ms. Bajer was directed to the Grosse Pointe Chamber of Commerce. The Mayor noted the Kroger reconstruction.

A question was asked about the Downtown Development Authority. The Mayor noted that the Authority was generally limited to certain projects approved by Wayne County.

Cameron Lawrence, owner of the BP gas station on Mack, expressed concern about the proposed consolidation of public safety services. Mr. Lawrence commended the police force.

Kurt Buhler asked questions about the City Website and the City quarterly newsletter.

James Sullivan, of Rivard Blvd., expressed concern about violent crime and concern about cutting basic City services.

State Representative Betty Cook Scott introduced herself. She is running for State Senate and asked for support.

**Staff Reports:**

Treasurer Johnson submitted a draft budget with the following budget message:

**Proposed 2010-2011 City of Grosse Pointe Budget Summary**

All departments have reduced expenditures, many in the double digits. All administrative divisions are proposed to be reduced by 20% or more including Legislative, City Administration, and Human Resources.

Three managerial positions are being eliminated (Assistant Manager, Recreation Coordinator and Public Works Supervisor), along with several part time seasonal workers for an overall reduction of 4.25 employees or Full Time Equivalents.

The budget assumes no salary increases for City employees, and a reduction in benefits. The City will introduce a new health plan that reduces costs. Contracted consultants are reduced for the third year in a row.

Overall, the City’s General Fund budget is proposed to be \$5.6 million, down from \$6.6 million in 2009-10. Per the residential survey, service reductions have been made in the Parks Department, reducing some recreational services and special events. The City is not purchasing any new Public Works or Public Safety vehicles, or undertaking any major building projects. On the other hand, all existing Public Safety staff are proposed to be retained [personnel costs comprise 93% of that Department’s operational costs].

The City’s major property tax generator is the general operations levy. The 11.8391 levy is proposed to remain at the same rate.

Due to the reduced property values, neither the solid waste levy nor the debt retirement levy covers related costs. To address this problem, the City is creating a Solid Waste Fund to account for all revenue and expenses related to garbage, recycling, and yard waste services. An increase in the solid waste tax rate is proposed from the current 1.1609 mills to 1.7755 mills. The debt retirement levy for the pool construction bond that the voters overwhelmingly approved in 2001 no longer covers the principal and interest payments and is proposed to increase from .5 mills to .6476 mills. Without these rate increases, the General Fund would be required to subsidize these expenses. Funds would be taken away from the operational budget, in particular, the funds available to support critical Public Safety needs.

The City’s residential properties declined in value an average of 9% this year. The total levy amount of 14.2622 mills would still generate less property tax than this past year, even though the combined RATE would increase by approximately 5.5%.

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Manager Dame submitted the Public Safety annual report. The Manager noted the drop in crime statistics.

The Manager also noted that staff had been working on the budget for the last 6 months and that the budget was largely based on the priorities of the citizen survey and the citizen budget committee.

The Manager further noted that Grosse Pointe Park and Grosse Pointe Farms had agreed to join with the City on a committee to discuss public safety issues.

**Council Comment:**

Council expressed their agreement with the sentiment that public safety is their number one concern.

Council commended the work of the Manager and the Treasurer on the budget.

Council commended Judge Ethridge for requesting a reduction in salary.

Council is focused on establishing priorities. Council is taking direction from citizens. Revenue and expenditures need to be balanced in each category of public expenditure wherever possible.

The focus should be on keeping the City safe, clean and secure.

Council is always available for discussions with citizens.

Council is concerned about falling tax revenues in future years.

The Mayor noted the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast on May 6, 2010.

Councilmember Weipert, second by Councilmember Parthum, moved that the meeting be adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED.

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Charles S. Kennedy III  
Secretary of the Meeting