

City Council Regular Meeting
Madison Heights, Michigan
January 12, 2026

A City Council Regular Meeting was held on Monday, January 12, 2026 at 6:30 PM at City Hall - Council Chambers, 300 W. 13 Mile Rd.

PRESENT

Mayor Corey Haines
Mayor Pro Tem William Mier
Councilwoman Toya Aaron
Councilman Sean Fleming
Councilor Laurie Gerald
Councilor Emily Rohrbach
Councilor Quinn Wright

ALSO PRESENT

City Manager Melissa Marsh
City Attorney Larry Sherman
Deputy City Manager/City Clerk Cheryl Rottmann

Councilman Fleming gave the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

CM-26-02. Additions to the Agenda.

Motion to add to the agenda, under Reports, Pending Litigation in RE: Aqueous Film-forming Foams Products Liability Litigation - Docket No. 2:18-MN-2873-RMG.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Mier.

Voting Yea: Mayor Haines, Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Councilwoman Aaron, Councilman Fleming, Councilor Gerald, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS:

2025 Holiday Light Awards

On behalf of the Active Adult Advisory Board and Beautification Committee, Department of Public Services (DPS) Director Sean Ballantine announced the 2025 Holiday Lighting Award winners, as follows: First Place Winner: 813 East Kalama Avenue and Second Place Winner: 27784 Townley Street. He then shared a PowerPoint presentation of the winner's and nominees outstanding displays and presented each winner with a certificate of appreciation. He also noted that in July, there will be a Summer Beautification awards for residents to participate in and nominations are due to the Active Adult Advisory Board in June.

Historical Commission - City of Madison Heights 70th Anniversary Proclamation

Historical Commission Council Representative, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Mier, read the Oakland County Board of Commissioner's Proclamation honoring the 70th Anniversary of the City of Madison Heights.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Martha Covert, resident, praised City Manager Marsh for the job she did on the strategic planning budget meeting as well as the Department Heads for the work that they do.

Dennis Tomasin, resident, congratulated Mayor Haines on his election. He spoke regarding water rates, asking the city to please keep in mind those on a fixed incomes and requested that residents be forewarned of future rate increases so they can prepare adequately.

CM-26-03. Consent Agenda.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as read.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Seconded by Councilwoman Aaron.

Voting Yea: Mayor Haines, Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Councilwoman Aaron, Councilman Fleming, Councilor Gerald, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

CM-26-04. Library Advisory Board - Adoption of Updated Library Internet Safety Policy.

Motion to adopt the updated Library Internet Safety Policy as presented.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Seconded by Councilwoman Aaron.

Voting Yea: Mayor Haines, Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Councilwoman Aaron, Councilman Fleming, Councilor Gerald, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

CM-26-05. 2026 Poverty Exemption Resolution and Application.

Motion to adopt the 2026 Poverty Exemption guidelines, application and resolution, as follows:

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING
POVERTY EXEMPTION GUIDELINES**

WHEREAS, Public Act 253 of 2020, which amended Section 7u of Act No. 206 of the Public Acts of 1893, as amended by Act No. 313 of the Public Acts of 1993, being sections 211.7u of the Michigan Compiled Laws, requires that the governing body of the local assessing unit determine and make available to the public the policy and guidelines used by the Board of Review in granting reductions in property assessments due to limited income and assets,

referred to as "Poverty Exemptions."

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that in order to be eligible for poverty exemption in the City of Madison Heights, a person shall do all of the following on an annual basis:

1. Be an owner of and occupy as their principal residence the property for which the exemption is being claimed. The applicant cannot be the renter liable for the taxes. The property cannot be owned by a business entity.
2. The applicant must file a fully complete application (Form 5737) and provide all required and requested tax returns and documentation – listed in below item 6.
3. The applicant must meet the Income Guidelines which are the Federal Poverty Guidelines updated annually by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.
4. The applicant must meet the Asset Guidelines as approved by the Madison Heights City Council.
5. File a claim with the Board of Review on a form provided by the **City Assessor's Office** The form must be filled out in its entirety and returned in person. Handicapped or infirmed applicants may call the **Assessor's Office** to make necessary arrangements for assistance.
6. Provide copies of documents for applicant, spouse, and/or all others that are residing in the homestead. **Must** submit last year's copies of the following or indicate "N/A" (not applicable) on application checklist:
 - a. Completed Form 5737, Application and Affirmation for MCL 211.7u Poverty Exemption;
 - b. Valid Michigan Driver's License or other legal form of photo identification for all persons in the household;
 - c. Completed IRS form 4506-T (Department of Treasury IRS Request for Copy of Tax Return) and any/all correspondence from the IRS; Federal Income Tax Return – Fully complete, signed copy of what was filed with the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS);
 - d. State Income Tax Return - Fully complete, signed copy of what was filed with the State of Michigan Department of Treasury;
 - e. If any of the applicants are not required to file a Federal or State Income Tax return Form 4988, Poverty Exemption Affidavit, must be provided for ALL persons that are not required to file income tax;
 - f. Michigan Homestead Property Tax Claim Form MI-1040CR. This completed form is required regardless of your requirement to file income tax returns;
 - g. Bank and/or credit union monthly statements for the prior 12 months (as of the date of application) of ALL checking and savings accounts;
 - h. Social Security Administration annual benefit statement (end of prior year total benefit);
 - i. Cash benefit statement;
 - j. Non-cash benefit statements such as Medicaid, WIC, food assistance and school lunches;
 - k. W-2's from employer;

1. Net receipts from self-employment;
- m. State or Federal checks;
- n. Unemployment benefits statement;
- o. Pension – 1099 statement;
- p. Certificate of deposit statement;
- q. Stocks or bonds statement;
- r. Child support payment statement;
- s. Alimony payment statement;
- t. Insurance or annuity payment statement;
- u. If home was purchased in the prior 2 years, a copy of the loan application and closing statement;
- v. Most recent mortgage verification showing balance of loan plus principal and interest payment amounts;
- w. Second mortgage or equity loan statement;
- x. List and current value of other property currently owned by applicant (includes but not limited to vacant land, second home, rental property, building/property other than the principal residence);
- y. List of equipment, jewelry, antiques, artwork and current value;
- z. State of Michigan registration for all vehicles;
 - aa. Notarized statement of regular contributions OR gifts OR loans from persons not living in the residence (in the last 2 months);
 - bb. List of dividends, interest, and net income from rentals or estates or trusts (in the last 24 months);
 - cc. List of money received from the sale of property such as stocks, bonds, a house, or a car (in the last 2 months).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that applications may be filed only once annually, and if denied, may appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal. To claim a poverty exemption, the application, required forms, and all supporting documentation as outlined in the Policy must be submitted between January 1st each year and November 30th (10 days prior to the December Board of Review).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the applicant's total household income cannot exceed the Federal Poverty Guidelines published in the prior calendar year in the Federal Register set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as established by the State Tax Commission-to be updated annually.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that meeting the income level guidelines does not guarantee 100% exemption, at their discretion in accordance with the General Property Tax Act 211.7u(5), the Board may grant a full or partial exemption equal to a 25%, 50% or 75% reduction in taxable value.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED as required by PA 390 of 1994, all guidelines for poverty exemptions as established by the governing body of the local assessing unit SHALL include an asset level test. The purpose of an asset test is to determine the resources available: Cash, fixed assets or other property that could be converted to cash and used to pay property taxes in the year the poverty exemption is filed. The value of the principal residence is not included in the asset test. The following asset test shall apply to all applications for poverty exemptions:

1. The applicant's household shall not have Liquid (cash) assets in excess of \$8,000, AND
2. The applicant's household shall not have total value of all assets (cash and other non-cash assets) in excess of \$25,000.

Assets greater than what is stated above will result in a denial of the poverty exemption, even if the applicant meets the Income Guideline. The Board of Review may deny any application if the assets are not properly identified.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board may review applications without the applicant being present. However, the Board may request that any or all applicants be physically present to respond to any questions the Board or Assessor may have. This means that an applicant could be called to appear on short notice.

1. At this meeting an applicant should be prepared to answer questions regarding their financial affairs, health, the status of people living in their home, etc.
2. All applicants appearing before the Board will be administered an oath, as follows:

"Do you, _____, swear and affirm that evidence and testimony you will give on your own behalf before the Board of Review is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God."

Applicant responds, "I do" or "I will."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the designated City Official and the Board of Review must agree as to the disposition of the poverty claim for the exemption to be granted and any successful applicant may be subject to personal investigation by the City. This would be done to verify information submitted or statements made to the Assessor or Board regarding their poverty tax exemption claim. The designated City Official will tape and keep minutes of all proceedings before the Board of Review and all meetings must be held in a municipal building.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Review shall follow the policy and guidelines set forth above when granting and denying poverty exemptions. The same standards shall apply to each taxpayer within the city claiming the poverty exemption for the assessment year. In reviewing the application and all supporting documentation, the Board of Review will consider an asset test and income test as required by Michigan statute, along with State of Michigan required application form.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in order to ease the burden on taxpayers, the assessor and the Board of Review and to ensure that all taxpayers have an equal opportunity to be heard by the Board of Review, the City of Madison Heights hereby resolves, according to provisions of MCL 211.30(8) of the General Property Tax Act, that the Board of Review shall receive letters of protest regarding assessments from resident taxpayers from the first Tuesday in March until it adjourns from the public hearings for which it meets to hear such protests. All notices of assessment change and all advertisements of Board of Review meetings are to include a statement that the resident taxpayers may protest by letter to the Board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that to conform with the provisions of PA 253 of 2020, this resolution is hereby given immediate effect and will stay in effect for subsequent years until amended or voided.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Seconded by Councilwoman Aaron.

Voting Yea: Mayor Haines, Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Councilwoman Aaron, Councilman Fleming, Councilor Gerald, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

CM-26-06. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes of December 1, 2025.

Motion to approve the City Council Regular Meeting Minutes of December 1, 2025, with the correction of Councilwoman Aaron's title in the roll call.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Seconded by Councilwoman Aaron.

Voting Yea: Mayor Haines, Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Councilwoman Aaron, Councilman Fleming, Councilor Gerald, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

CM-26-07. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes of December 8, 2025.

Motion to approve the City Council Regular Meeting Minutes of December 8, 2025, as printed.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Seconded by Councilwoman Aaron.

Voting Yea: Mayor Haines, Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Councilwoman Aaron, Councilman Fleming, Councilor Gerald, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

CM-26-08. FY 2026-2031 Capital Improvement Plan.

City Manager Marsh noted that this is an opportunity for Council and the public to see a first glance of what may be included in future budgets and what the capital needs of the city are into the future.

Motion to receive and file the 2026-2031 Capital Improvement Plan.

Motion made by Councilor Wright, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Mier.

In response to Councilor Rohrbach's request, City Manager Marsh summarized the Capital Improvement Plan noting that over the next five years, the plan includes a need for \$54 million in capital improvements of anything from water mains to police cars. For next year, \$10.8 million has been requested; however, due to budget constraints, all the items may not actually make it into the final budget, they may be eliminated, deferred or incorporated into the budgeted in phases. City Manager Marsh noted that once Council agrees on the plan, the city can begin to look for grant monies that may be available to supplement the budget. She noted that the largest capital expense are the roads, with neighborhood roads making up 33.3% of capital expenditures and noted that the current road millage will expire this year. Other capital improvement expenditures are comprised of 16.3% for public safety, 6.7% for library and parks and 4% for general government and economic development.

Councilor Rohrbach stated that capital improvements are planned for Gary McGillvray Park and Councilman Fleming added that there are improvements scheduled for the phone system to increase reliability during the current fiscal year. City Manager Marsh noted that improvements are being made throughout the city's park system and we are working with Oakland County to get a park design professional to see what we can do at McGillvray Park; however, due to it sitting on a drain, our options may be limited.

Voting Yea: Mayor Haines, Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Councilwoman Aaron, Councilman Fleming, Councilor Geralds, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

CM-26-09. Pending Litigation - RE: Aqueous Film-Forming Foams Products Liability Litigation - Docket No. 2:18-MN-2873-RMG.

Motion to concur with the City Attorney's recommendation to appoint Mike Stag from the Stag Luizza law firm of New Orleans, Louisiana as national counsel and Gary Klein of Cummings, McClorey, Davis and Azho of Livonia, Michigan as local counsel to represent the city's interest in RE: Aqueous Film-Forming Foams Products Liability Litigation in the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina, Charleston Division, Docket No. 2:18-MN-2873-RMG on the basis of and for the reasons discussed in Closed Session and authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents in relationship thereto.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Mier.

Voting Yea: Mayor Haines, Mayor Pro Tem Mier, Councilwoman Aaron, Councilman Fleming, Councilor Geralds, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilwoman Aaron wished a Happy New Year to all; noting time is moving too fast. She wished everyone great peace, good rest and good health. She congratulated the nominees and winners on their Holiday Lights. She stated that in her church, instead of a New Year's resolution, they choose one word to focus on to carry through the year and her word is "ready." She stated that she is ready to listen, learn and show up. Ready to pause before reacting, to ask questions, care about people and not just the problem. Working in mental health, she has learned that our mental health doesn't just touch our mind, it's in everything that we do. Mental health affects our relationships, homes, workplaces and how we show up for each other. She stated that the Library Board will be focusing incorporating our mind and our mental health by hosting a speaker series which includes National Nutrition month in March, Mental Health Awareness Month in May and Disability Pride Month in July. She is hoping these conversations will help people utilize tools and resources to support each other and be a place to reach out. She stated that she is ready to lead with heart, grace, common sense, and grow in support.

Mayor Pro Tem Mier stated it was a privilege and honor to accept proclamation from Oakland County on the City's 70th Anniversary at Heritage Room Open House. He noted that he had good conversations with folks that came to the event. The Historical Commission is meeting on Wednesday to finalize goals for the year. He thanked Kevin Wright for his contributions to social media and increasing the following on the Historical Commission page. He wished a Happy New Year to all, stating he is looking forward to this year. He thanked Martha Covert for her comments on the budget, and he stated that we wish we could do everything everyone wants us to do, but unfortunately, we can't due to budget constraints. We are going to need to renew our roads millage, but the renewal won't cover full amount needed.

Councilor Wright stated that he heard some words last night that resonated with him. He hopes that we can focus on laughing with each other rather than at each other. Remember to be good.

City Attorney Sherman wished a Happy New year to all residents.

City Manager Marsh had no comments this evening.

Deputy City Manager/City Clerk Rottmann had no comments this evening.

Councilor Rohrbach reiterated Happy New Year to all. She thanked Dennis Tomasin for coming tonight and talking with us and encouraged him to reach out to staff to make sure there isn't another cause for his increased bill other than the rate increases.

Councilor Geralds concurred with Marth Covert's comments on the strategic planning meeting, noting that staff provides so much information and it is available to the public as well. She thanked County Commissioner Ann Ericson-Gault for sponsoring lunch for the pantry volunteers. She commented that she attended her first ECC meeting, noting this is an amazing, compassionate group. Her word that was assigned to her at her church for the new year was "open minded" and she is curious to see where that leads her this year.

Councilman Fleming noted that the city is in a consortium with other cities that tries to fight increases that are passed onto us from entities such as GLWA and DTE. He encouraged residents to write to these organizations as well, to voice their displeasure with the rate increases or attend their meetings as they are open to the public as well. He stated that the Master Plan survey had over 800 participants, which is great participation, and thanked those that took the time to look at

our ideas as well as provide input. We will also be having townhalls to talk to the City Planner and Planning Commission to give face to face input to apply to our Master Plan.

Mayor Haines wished all a Happy New Year. He praised Kevin Wright for his social media contributions, noting the Historical Commission page is gaining more traction and he is learning new things every day. Thank you to staff, the strategic planning meeting was fantastic. He thanked City Manager Marsh for her work, assistance and for her knowledge, noting how she keeps City Council well informed to help us to make knowledgeable decisions. We are ready to move the city forward. Thank you Dennis Tomasin for your kind words this evening, we will continue to do our best for the city.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Mayor Haines adjourned the meeting at 7:19 p.m.