

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVI
MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025, AT 7:00 P.M.**

Mayor Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Mayor Fischer, Mayor Pro Tem Casey, Council Members Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith, Staudt, Thomas

ALSO PRESENT: Victor Cardenas, City Manager
Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager
Tom Schultz, City Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mayor Fischer recommended the addition of Item 4 under Matters For Council Action:
Discussion about January 21st Council Meeting.

CM 25-01-01 Moved by Fischer, seconded by Thomas; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

To approve the agenda as amended.

Roll call vote on CM 25-01-01	Yeas: Casey, Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith, Staudt, Thomas, Fischer Nays: None
--------------------------------------	---

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

PRESENTATIONS:

Applicants for the Novi Library Board:

1. Brian Bartlett – He is reapplying for the Board where he has already served four years; three years as the secretary and last year as the treasurer. He's been on various committees including the Strategic Direction Committee which hired an outside firm, and they did an exhaustive study with various members of the community from all walks. They are in the first year of implementation of that plan. He also served four years on the Finance Committee and is currently Chair. He was also Chair of the Bylaws Committee where they updated the bylaws that hadn't been updated with about six years of board action.
2. Caren Fifer – She is a 37-year resident of Novi. She is currently a crossing guard with the police department. She worked the election in November. For 17 plus year, she was the executive director of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission. This was a multi-jurisdictional agreement between Novi, Farmington and Farmington Hills. She reported to a board that consisted of two members from each city, an elected official and the city manager or representative of that office. She has had a lot of experience working with boards. She also worked as a manager and has experience in finance and planning, particularly in building, development and financing the \$1.5 million studio that they built at that time. She has experience working with volunteers, the Cable Access committee and developing the policies for public, government and educational access. She is very interested in working with the library. She is passionate about books and the special events that the library has to offer. It's

a wonderful treasure for our city. She also wanted to express her interest should any opportunities come up for other boards or commissions.

3. Fred Lebowitz – He is retired and has spent his entire life working with young adults. He's had a lot of training and experience in being an active listener and resolving issues of people's concerns. He's very curious as to how the library board works. He is interested in seeing if there can be more communication with the schools and the public library.
4. Mark Sturing – He is a 30-year plus resident of Novi. He's been retired now for two years but he used to be general counsel for the best tech companies, real estate and development company that has done several apartments, subdivisions in Novi as well as the country. He is currently the president of the library and is seeking reappointment. Prior to this term, he was on the Library Board for about 15 years. He has a lot of experience with the library. He is proud of the diverse and cohesive board they have right now. He is proud of what the library has accomplished. This last year they had almost 850,000 item checked out from the library. They have about 400,000 visits per year, which is back up to pre-covid attendance records. He would like to continue to serve on the library as there are some financial challenges, not immediately but in the long term, that he would like to be there and help address some of those issues.
5. Kanchana Sundaram – Not present.
6. Frank Svehota – Not present.
7. Dawn Whitehead – Not present.
8. Janice Krupic – Information to be shared with Council tomorrow.

Quarter Goals Update:

City Manager Cardenas said these are the goals that City Council created a year ago. Instead of having a reconfiguration or re-imagining of the goals, they'll be presenting an update on goal statuses. Unlike years past where they created new ones, this allows City Council to dig deeper into these goals and make changes or updates as these will carry Council on to the next election when then that time City Council will reconvene and have another goal setting session. There'll be a meeting on January 21st which is completely different and that's about the transformative goals. These are just the goals that Council came up with last year.

Assistant City Manager Danielle Mahoney reminded Council these are goals that they came together and set last year during an early input budget session. These goals were approved last February and rather than getting together again and coming up with brand new goals, for the sake of continuity and being able to make progress on what's already been done, that's not going to be done this year. They're going to come back to Council every quarter with updates so Council can see where we stand and make adjustments if needed, pivot based on priorities and other influences that may be impacting decisions as it relates to these goals. These goals fit under operate, build and invest. Those broad strokes will guide the conversation and the goals that fall within. This update is for the second quarter that ended at the end of the year. There was an update at the end of the first quarter and to recap, all the information is the packet. This will be more high level but at the end of the first quarter of their 23 goals, we were underway with just under half of them, so we were making good progress. All of the goals in invest were under way.

Some key highlights included the committee restructuring, there's been a lot of development going on at Town Center and the senior transit with the PEX switch over. There were seven goals that weren't yet started but we've made some progress there. For the second quarter, we're actually now underway in more than half of Council's goals. We're up from 48% to 61% of the goals are now underway. Of the 23, now only three are not started and of those three, all are long-term goals. Our ability to get moving with things on Council's short-term radar we've proven successful with. The three that we've haven't started yet, one of which will probably be discussed at the workshop coming up on the 21st related to the community center, one is prioritizing actions from the environmental action plan which hasn't been developed and the last one was working on local connections with our partners for trail connectors. That takes a lot of coordination so those are the only three that we've not yet gotten moving on but in the pre-planning stage. Key highlights, building off one of the goals from the first quarter, the Long Range Strategic Planning Committee got together and was formed. We are underway in establishing what is essentially going to be our Novi 2050 plan. The Committee, with Mayor Pro Tem's leadership, has established a draft timeline for the plan. We're out to bid for a consultant to help facilitate that process and we're hoping to bring all those back to the Committee at the end of the month to delve into those. The first Council workshop meeting is going to be on the 21st and we'll go into more of those transformative projects, those big game changing efforts that will impact the community. Under operate, this goal speaks of our fiscal governance. One of the things we wanted to do was work on our investment strategy and our approach. Happy to say we are officially under contract. We have signatures with AON who are providing investment strategy consultation services and we're going to get a project kicked off with our staff and their team very soon. We're working on getting dates solidified for that and they're expected to wrap up their work in late winter. We'll keep the Finance and Admin Committee updated as that work progresses. One of the goals was to create this vibrancy strategy that focuses on the Town Center area and work is underway with a lot of developments happening over there. In thinking through a vibrancy strategy with so much development that plays into a lot of staff's thinking, and how we work with our partners in the development community, how we can work with the Corridor Improvement Authority, who's recently gotten back together, to figure out how we can hit on these pillars that have been outlined in this goal. There's been a lot of home stuff going on so as all of that is progressing, staff's pivoting to think through what a potential strategy can look like. Brainstorming is happening there but it's all good stuff. Our PASER score goal, which is maintaining our road funding levels, is to increase our score and have fewer roads scoring poor and fair. The 2024 PACER valuation's complete and that's going to be presented to the Mobility Committee this year. Under invest, the senior transit is on the agenda tonight so the agreement is in progress, and we continue to gather data on ridership, the cost to Novi and really thinking through what a plan can look like with our partners at the county level, with SMART and with PEX to figure out what's going to be best for Novi. Eight Mile between Novi and Haggerty Roads has been completed. Again, these are just broad strokes to paint a picture. All the information is in the packet that details each goal, more specifically with progress and status updates.

Mayor Fischer reminded his colleagues that given our progress, it was mentioned a year ago that these goals were set up. Unlike in prior years when we would add completely new goals, that is something that we're not going to entertain at this point from a process perspective. This is the opportunity as a council to deep dive a little more into the goals, ask questions, shift or pivot, or let the staff continue with what they're working on.

Member Gurumurthy said she appreciates the amount of progress that's been made and is thankful for the update. She said it would be amazing to publish this online so that the community can see the wonderful progress that's been made. She wanted to highlight a few area and one is

regarding the vibrancy and create the Novi downtown. It is wonderful to see all the different developments which relates to the whole residential and economic and in terms of the safe and welcoming space, it would be nice to see if we can start thinking through in terms of creating that space as a community gathering space. She knows it's hard to call it the downtown word there but with what we have, it would be wonderful to see what we can create, she thinks of that as a mini Twelve Oaks in bringing people together. She was thinking of examples like a park or street performer and when she thinks when they added this goal, one of the things was to look at other cities where they had a vibrant strategy. It would be nice to look at what we can do, what is feasible and maybe even get some community engagement on deciding what we can do based on the feasibility. The second thing she is excited about is increased engagement and outreach efforts with Novi's diverse population. That would be her request on that. We are starting to work with Jeff and the Parks team in terms of putting together or organizing a Diwali festival in the City. We are pulling together the team members, which is exciting, and she is looking forward to that. In regard to the engagement and outreach, she thinks with the boards and commissions they are seeing more people interested in applying and being a part of these commissions and to serve. She would encourage that they continue to put more effort in terms of promoting as well as encouraging residents to apply for it as well. The third thing is the Strategic Plan, and she is so glad to be a part of that committee led by Mayor Pro Tem Casey and is excited in terms of putting together a long-term strategic plan for Novi 2050 but also systematically approaching getting the community input during our journey. Lastly, she is looking forward to hearing more information regarding the City yard waste collection.

The Mayor Pro Tem said she would like to echo the previous speaker. She wanted to commend the work that has been done because some of the goals have been heavy, meaty goals and she acknowledged the progress that staff and administration has made. Her only feedback would be to add some dates regarding expected completion in the quarterly presentation as that would be good for them and residents to see an end date.

Mayor Fischer said a lot of hard work has been done and he knows that a lot of discussions have been taking place in the Mobility Committee and he would consider some of the goals started even though City management does not think it has been. He echoes Member Gurumurthy regarding two item she brought up. As far as the boards and commissions, he thinks they should do everything they can to promote encouraging people to get involved. He thinks that they almost have to take an approach and would like staff to think about how there are boards and commissions that just don't function as they should be and are there ones that could be recommended for combining or maybe where there are seven members when there should be only five members. There's a lot of opportunities to maybe tweak the current boards and commissions that might give more opportunity to open positions for other residents. He's not saying to cut down on the number of members on a commission but maybe as people roll off, we just don't refill those positions. He knows there's Council's appetite for adding boards and commissions capacity in other places and he's skeptical of doing that when he knows there is some realignment that needs to be done. Hopefully that gives a little more direction on what he would expect from that goal. He would like to tweak the goal on hazardous waste and increase the opportunity for the community to participate in hazardous waste days.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: None

ATTORNEY REPORT: None

AUDIENCE COMMENTS #1:

Vijay Venugopal, 43364 Ashbury Drive, said he is one of the beneficiaries of Eight Mile and it's awesome to drive on that road. There's a particular section of the road that gives a certain sound when driving on it. He just wanted to convey a few updates of the community updates we've been doing on. As part of Diwali, they had run a community activity to raise food for the needy. They conducted this under the activity called Sewa Diwali. Sewa Diwali is an initiative by Dharmic communities, individuals and organizations like Yoga, Spiritual, Hindu/Buddhist/Sikh/Jain centers, Temples, Gurudwaras, Linguistic and Indian socio-cultural organizations who believe in the Sewa Dharma, that service to humanity is service to divinity. The basis mission is to foster togetherness and Sewa, selfless giving, for the welfare of society, by promoting the festive and enlightening spirit of Diwali. November to December and in total in the U.S., there was a reach out for more than 267 different organizations who came together and did the food drive. We were able to generate about 717,000 pounds of food items, which is equivalent to almost providing three meals a day for 550 people for the who years. In Novi specifically, we were able to raise about 2,500 pounds of food items, which were donated.

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS AND APPROVALS:

- A. Approve Minutes of:
December 16, 2024 - Regular Meeting
- B. Approval of the deficit elimination plans for the Capital Improvement Fund (CIP) and the Drain Operating Fund as of June 30, 2024.
- C. Approval of claims and warrants – Warrant 1171

CM 25-01-02 Moved by Casey, seconded by Thomas; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

To approve the consent agenda as presented.

Roll call vote on CM 25-01-02	Yeas: Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith, Staudt,
	Thomas, Fischer, Casey
	Nays: None

MATTERS FOR COUNCIL ACTION:

- 1. Consideration to Adopt Resolution Consenting to Improvements to Portions of Oakland County's Huron Rouge Sewage Disposal System (HRSDS) and Authorizing Payment to the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner (WRC) for Same.**

The City Manager said what they're talking about tonight is about sewer and how we transmit our wastewater away from the City. The Huron Rouge Sewage Disposal System share the name with the retention facility that was built over by Rotary Park. It's all part of the whole system that gets the sewer water away from the City and to the wastewater treatment facility. This is a very large pipe, it's 50 years old and needs repair. The ownership is under the oversight of the Water Resource Commission, so we'll be paid in \$6 million from our reserves that are held at the Water Resource Commission. There will not be any kind of giant excavation or excavators on site disturbing the topical earth. There'll be more done underneath through the lining process. We

don't know how long it will take to plan it after the contractor's been brought on board. It's going to be about a year until this gets underway.

The Mayor Pro Tem asked Jeff Herczeg to give a quick explanation of how this project is going to work. Mr. Herczeg responded by saying that there will be some excavation and it'll be manhole points that get down to the pipe. As City Manager Cardenas said, it's going to be a lining and there are about a half dozen techniques that are acceptable. It's based on pipe condition, deterioration of the pipe and the limitations in terms of the circumference at the end of the project. There's only a few way to do it without actually digging the pipe up. One of which is cured in place piping which there's several ways to do cure in place. Some of them are actual flexible liner that's pulled through whether it's fiberglass or some other poly material that's blown up and adheres to the pipe. There's also a system where you put the poxy in, blow that up and then it creates a new pipe and the liner's pulled out. There's three or four different CIPP methods that are going to qualify for the project. That's how most of the construction will be done. There will be minor excavations, and he thinks half a dozen new manhole constructed so the crews can get down to work on sections of the pipe, isolate those pipes and pump the flow overground to the next manhole. Mayor Pro Tem appreciated the summary from Mr. Herczeg. She said there was a lot of comprehensive information provided and one of the reference in the information talked about there might be some potential environmental disruption because of where we're doing some of the work. There was a recommendation in the memo that talked about not just trying to get any disruption back to what state it was in but to take it the next level and go for better. She asked is that was the responsibility of the WRC or the City to decide what kind of remediation gets done and it goes back to current state or the better state. Mr. Herczeg replied that it is the WRC's project so it will be up to them to get the permits from EGLE or whatever other permitting agents need them. It is his understanding that they will do all the restoration and make it better than it was before. There may be an instance of access roads which is a good thing because then they need to get back to the manholes after they do the lining for maintenance on the system. Mayor Pro Tem thinks this is another opportunity that we have in the City to partner with WRC and get some excellent work done and she appreciates the fact that we started with a \$18 million price point in the CIP and now we're talking about our contribution being \$6 million. It's a win-win for everybody.

CM 25-01-03

Moved by Casey, seconded by Thomas; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Consideration to Adopt Resolution Consenting to Improvements to Portions of Oakland County's Huron Rouge Sewage Disposal System (HRSDS) and Authorizing Payment to the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner (WRC) for Same.

Member Smith, addressing Mr. Herczeg, said he's assuming since this is mostly underground, there'll be minimum impact to the residents. Mr. Herczeg responded that it mostly follows the rail line from the north to south and then ends at the Rotary Park facility so very few impacts to roads in general. Maybe old Grand River will have a little. Member Smith said it looked like the only place that was really residential was that little corner of Meadowbrook Lake subdivision and asked that as the planning goes on to encourage treading lightly in that area.

Member Staudt asked Carl Johnson approximately how much is currently in the Novi Reserve account held by the WRC. Mr. Johnson responded that he didn't have an exact number. The annual fees, the monthly charges include operation maintenance and replacement reserves that we pay. The operating costs that they charge us include a replacement reserve that they have on

hand so the reserves that we're talking about today are held by the county. Member Staudt asked if Mr. Johnson and Mr. Herczeg could find out the exact amount being held. He said he always get nervous when government says they're going to issue bonds for a portion of the project to the benefit of the City. He's assuming we're paying for those bonds through this fund as well. Mr. Johnson said it will be through our rates going forward. Member Staudt asked if we're going to have additional rates to pay for this bond. Mr. Johnson replied that the part of our normal operating costs that they bill us will include an amount for the debt service on these. Member Staudt asked if they have done that on any projects in the past for Novi and that he's never heard of the Water Authority issuing bonds that we're paying for through fees. He then asked the City Attorney if this was normal and Mr. Schulz replied that yes, the City has reviewed it and is fine with it. Member Staudt said so they can issued bonds on our behalf as a city, and we're paying for them, and he wants to know where do they fall under to be able to issue bonds and right do they have. Mr. Johnson responded that these aren't Novi bonds, that they are WRC bonds in their name that they are responsible for but do the work. We're paying for them because the facility is Novi's responsibility. Member Staudt asked for an overview provided in a midweek packet because he's never heard of this, and he's been around for a long time. He wants it shown how our residents pay for this and it sounds as though we're adding it to the water and sewer fees. Mr. Johnson said this is in lieu of giving them \$12 million from our checkbook and it's just a cost spread out. Member Staudt clarified that this is \$6 million out of a checkbook that they hold that's unique to us, it's bonds that they're going to issue on our behalf that we're going to pay for and it's \$6 million out of our water and sewer fund. Mr. Johnson replied that's correct. Member Staudt asked if an overview of what that reserve is to be provided to them.

Roll call vote on CM 25-01-03

Yeas: Heintz, Smith, Staudt, Thomas, Fischer, Casey, Gurumurthy

Nays: None

2. Consideration of Transit Enhancement Services Agreement with People's Express (PEX) for temporary use of office, parking space at the Novi Civic Center and access to city fuel pumps, effective January 1, 2025.

The City Manager stated that this is coming back to City Council with what they brought before them all last meeting. This separates the two, with one agreement dealing with all facility uses of our office building, use of the parking spaces and the fuel pumps. They'll be charged a monthly rent for the first six months, \$450. If they have not found a location by then, we'll make sure we'll bring it back well before May for your consideration to keep them on, if Council agrees with another six months, at a rate of \$600 a month. The fuel fees will be charged for as what we get charged, we just pass a charge on to them. The second agreement, which is after this, deals solely with the subsidies and solidifying your commitment to those subsidies for individual that qualify for them.

CM 25-01-04

Moved by Casey, seconded by Smith; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Approval of a Transit Enhancement Service Agreement with People's Express (PEX) for temporary use of office parking space at the Novi Civic Center and access to city fuel pumps, effective January 1, 2025.

Roll call vote on CM 25-01-04

Yeas: Smith, Staudt, Thomas, Fischer, Casey, Gurumurthy, Heintz

Nays: None

3. Consideration of a Transit Enhancement Agreement with People's Express (PEX) to continue subsidies for eligible residents effective January 1, 2025.

CM 25-01-05 Moved by Smith, seconded by Thomas; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Approval of the proposed Transit Enhancement Services Agreement with People's Express (PEX) to continue providing subsidies for eligible Novi residents effective January 1, 2025.

Roll call vote on CM 25-01-05

**Yeas: Staudt, Thomas, Fischer, Casey,
Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith**

Nays: None

4. January 1st major capital initiatives prioritization meeting.

Mayor Fischer said he wanted to put this on the agenda tonight as we have not done something like this recently. He wanted to give Mr. Cardenas an opportunity to recap the process he outlined in his memo from a couple of weeks ago and answer any questions Council might have and to help Council understand what to expect over the next couple of weeks as they prepare for the major capital initiatives prioritization meeting.

City Manager Cardenas said these are the initiatives that they talked about last year. Staff is really looking forward for direction as we've been talking about these topics for the last year. We're really looking to making some decisions so we can move forward. Those topics are the public safety facilities, senior center, rec center, the widening of Beck Road, and then the ITC reconfiguration. With the public safety facility, we're looking for funding mechanism, and election dates because we are up against the calendar right here to make sure if this is a go or not and what ballot it's going to be on. We'll have all the representative from the consultants the Council has hired to help us with and all the information that we shared last year will be available to you. We'll provide more information with respect to millage history, funding mechanisms, and election dates. We really look forward to some guidance and some directions that will be made on the 21st. As information comes in, we'll give it to Council so will have enough time to digest it and we can have an informed discussion on the 21st.

Mayor Fischer said he expects it to be more of a workshop type discussion meeting as opposed to formal. As he understands it, they will actually have a presentation from RealPoint. When we hired them as a group, we expected them to come and present to us so they'll be giving us an update on the work, the progress, and their thoughts on where we can and should go with that projects in particular. He wants to reiterate to Mr. Cardenas' point; we have started a lot of these discussions. We've been doing studies on public safety for decades. We've had committees formed back in 2019 for the rec center. We've been kicking the idea around for Beck Road. There's been trips to Washington. There's been back to the future meetings. This Council has actually never deliberated in a public forum and actually given their opinions on where the direction of that should go. Same thing with ITC and other ones that Mr. Cardenas mentioned. He and Mayor Pro Tem Casey have had some discussions and some of the information that I would expect from the City Manager has to do with some of the other things that are coming up like our library fund that we need to keep on our radar and our CIP millage that we should consider on

how that fits into the grand scheme of all these. So, when he calls this a prioritization meeting, he really does expect it to be that. He expects the information from the City Manager to be coming to us this week. There can be follow ups, but we should have a good 10, 12 days to be able to review all of this information, even if it is regurgitation of prior information. He wants everyone to be ready to come to give your opinion, share what they're thinking, share what you can support, share what you might vote for because we really need to wrap up some of these things. Be prepared to deliberate and share your feelings.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS #2: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Finance & Administration Committee

Mayor Fischer said they had RealPoint join them at the last meeting and discussed a couple of things related to public safety, but we really gave them some feedback on what they need to be prepared to discuss and to give their first presentation to the full Council. The second part of the meeting was an initial review of our CIP process. We used to have a committee just focused on CIP, but we moved that under the umbrella of finance and admin committee. Now we review some of the progress we made on last year's CIP items and we did that. We'll have another meeting to look at the full plan before it's incorporated into the overall budget in April.

2. Mobility Committee

Member Smith said they met December 19th and met with colleagues in Northville to discuss connecting trails at the Eight Mile and Novi intersection to try to get people moving between that area and Novi and then down into the new development area. They had some interesting discussions. It's a complex area to get people through with the railroad track and the bridge and all of that. Looking forward to keep addressing that issued. Next meeting will be later this month to start focusing on the Novi Active Mobility plan.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL ISSUES: None

COMMUNICATIONS: None

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 P.M.

Cortney Hanson, City Clerk

Justin Fischer, Mayor

Transcribed by Becky Dockery,
Account Clerk

Date approved: January 27, 2025