



# The City of Auburn Hills

## City Council Workshop

### Minutes

December 14, 2015

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor McDaniel at 5:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** City Council Chamber, 1827 N. Squirrel Road, Auburn Hills, MI 48326

Present: Mayor McDaniel, Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell, Council Members Burmeister, Hammond, Kittle, Knight, Verbeke

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Tanghe, Assistant City Manager Grice, Police Chief Olko, City Clerk Kowal, Community Development Director Cohen, Mgr. of Business Development Carroll, Media Communications Specialist Scislowicz, Management Assistant Mariuz, Executive Assistant Stokley, City Attorney Beckerleg, City Engineer Stevens.

City Manager Tanghe reminded City Council members that this meeting's agenda includes discussion of our media consultant's contract and topics for workshops in 2016. The first item for discussion will be the media contract. We currently have CKC Agency as our media consultant. In reviewing the past year, most of the big media blitzes, such as Legoland, came from the company's own media coverage; Merlin Entertainments. CKC Agency has done a good job, but we need to decide whether having a media consultant is necessary or can be rated as "nice to have". Mr. Tanghe is not convinced it is a necessity, and with tightening our budget for 2016, perhaps we don't need a full time contract. He spoke to the staff at CKC, who understand our budget concerns, and have agreed to work with us at an hourly rate as needed. Their hourly rate for providing "as needed" services is \$175.00 per hour.

Many press releases for the Mayor, as well as City ads, are currently done in-house, with Kyle Scislowicz and Jessica Smith having the ability to collaborate on them. Mr. Tanghe would like to increase the amount of work that they are doing for us. For example, our Cable station needs work, which Mr. Scislowicz is capable of doing.

In addition, Mr. Tanghe mentioned that people have questioned the silo that we use for our City logo, wondering if we are a farming community. Perhaps we should look at updating the logo, with something more modern and sophisticated. Mayor McDaniel inquired if designs could be drafted in house, while Mr. Burmeister suggested we involve the colleges in the area. Mayor McDaniel stated he is in favor of Mr. Scislowicz and Ms. Smith doing the press releases in house, and the search for a new branding logo.

Mr. Burmeister indicated he is in favor of having the press releases done in house also, as it is very little more per hour to hire what we need on an as-needed basis. He is not sure if he is in favor of changing our logo at this time.

Ms. Verbeke feels changing the logo could positively impact our international relations with large corporations. Mr. Knight stressed that he would like to keep the small town feeling in Auburn Hills. Ms. Hammond inquired if we do most of the ad work now; Mr. Tanghe replied yes. He added that if it doesn't work out with doing it all in house, we can go back to CKC.

Mr. Knight stated that Mr. Scislowicz may need training and will need to be active in professional circles to build media relationships. Mr. Scislowicz replied that he has a degree in broadcasting, with several connections in media.

Mr. Kittle asked if we could use just a name for rebranding. He is not adverse to a new logo, but questions the cost involved.

**Ms. Mitchell stated that she is not in favor of pursuing a revision to the Logo at this time.**

City Council came to a consensus that we can do the media work in house, and should not re-enter into a contract with CKC at this time. However, we will keep them as an "as needed" consultant. In addition, Council agrees that we can look into rebranding with a new logo. Mr. Tanghe advised that he will bid out the design process. The expert can then give Council various designs to review.

Mr. Tanghe moved on to discuss the workshop topics for 2016. January is already scheduled for a joint meeting on tax abatement with the Tax Incentive Review Committee. He asked Council to consider the first meeting in February to discuss millage rates and revenues, then finish that topic at the second meeting in February. On March 14, we could discuss the possibility of allowing beer and wine on municipal properties.

Council Members questioned the need for two meetings on the millage rates. Mr. Tanghe replied that if we want to consider putting a millage question on the ballot for next August, we need to have the language approved by the first of May so the Clerk can send it to the County by May 12<sup>th</sup>. If we discuss it in February we can approve language if we

decide, during March or April, to put it on the ballot. If we put a millage question on the ballot for 2016, it is collected in 2017 for use in 2018, so we need to determine soon if we wish to go forward. Mr. Beckerleg explained that we would be

looking at a Headlee override, or for a millage increase. Either requires a vote of the public. Discussion continued regarding the type of millage we would request, including funds for the Fire Department. Mr. Tanghe informed Council that there is a work group meeting regularly who will be prepared to provide details and proposals to Council at a workshop. Council Members commented on the need for a millage increase, and if savings elsewhere can offset the budget deficits. Mr. Tanghe addressed the Fire Department budget and the need for it to be self-supporting instead of requiring monies from General Fund.

Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell asked for an example of how we could save monies to help balance the budget. Mr. Tanghe replied that about half the communities in Oakland County have 911 communications through the county. Transferring that service would save the City about \$600,000.00 annually. However, it must be determined if service would suffer. In other departments, we could cut staff or services to balance the budget. The Paid-on-Call program is difficult as we hire and train firefighters who then find a full time job and leave. We are correcting that now.

Mr. Kittle offered to put some numbers into Munetrix and see what they look like prior to the February 8<sup>th</sup> workshop. Council would also like an opinion on what the appropriate amount of funds in the Fund Balance should be. Mr. Kittle would like 30% of our operating budget in Fund Balance. We need to hire more full time Fire Fighters.

Mr. Tanghe recapped that we will have some numbers put together with Munetrix for the February 8<sup>th</sup> workshop.

Council Members offered other topics for workshops that they would like to see. Ms. Mitchell requested that Council attempt to keep to one workshop a month as everyone's calendars are full.

Mr. Knight would like to discuss purchasing although he does not believe we need a full time purchasing agent.

Mayor McDaniel would like to review OHM's process for bidding out projects. Mr. Stevens replied that they could bring the information to a workshop.

Discussion took place about the possibility of getting a bond rather than a millage.

Without objection, the workshop adjourned at 6:55 pm.

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Kevin R. McDaniel, Mayor

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Terri Kowal, City Clerk