

City of Albion
Special Session Minutes
October 5, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Council Members Maurice Brown (1), Lenn Reid (2), Sonya Brown (3), Marcola Lawler (4) Jeanette Spicer (5), and Andrew French. Mayor Brown was absent.

ABSENT: Mayor Brown

STAFF PRESENT:

Sheryl Mitchell, City Manager and Cullen Harkness, City Attorney; Chief Scott Kipp and Deputy Chief Jason Kern.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Persons addressing the City Council shall limit their comments to **agenda items only** and to no more than three (3) minutes. Proper decorum is required).

No public Comments were received.

IV. Motion to Closed Session: Barnes moved. Lawler Seconded.

- a. Manager Mitchell requested that evaluation be had in open session.
- b. Motion fails due to mootness.
- c. Spicer moved for 5 min recess. Lawler seconded. All in favor. Recessed at 6:39pm. Reconvened at 6:46pm. Rollcall. All present at 6:46pm.

V. CLOSED SESSION

The City Manager requests an Closed Session under the Open Meetings Act (Section 15.268 (a), P.A. 267 of 1976, as amended) to consider the dismissal, suspension or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, or to consider a periodic personnel evaluation of a public officer, employee or staff member of individual agent, if the named person requests a closed hearing.

Evaluation Notes/Comments:

- a. Mayor Brown: Believes she is the best manager we have had and agrees with French in that regard. She has great initiative and intellect and is impressed by this. Concerned about judgment and decision making. Believes that there needs to be candor with the council especially financial

decisions. Concerned with process by which assistant city manager was hired. Believes the council was assured that the job would be posted and it wasn't. Believes it is critical to have a mindset to find someone with right expertise when making hiring decisions. Believes it is not fair to not have open hiring for city positions. Healthcare grant was short notice and believes it was tailored to only one healthcare agency. Does not believe it was presented to council in a way to avoid bias. With grant applications, believes grants are known about weeks ahead of time, but are not brought to council until later. Believes it would be helpful to know information sooner. Concerned that council was not notified of DDAs recommendation to not give money for parking lot. Believes that her pursuit of grants has been good. With Albion-Marshall connector, issue is that it takes residents elsewhere and Marshall was not contributing. Concerned that council is being influenced on the side aside from policy recommendations. Believes there is conflict between policy and how the city operates. Also, concerned with city labor being used to pave college lots when citizens complain their public streets are not done. Believes we need clear policy and procedures. Believes that things should be done efficiently and fairly.

- b. Councilman Barnes: Believes Sheryl has shown the ability to lead. Balanced the budget. Free thinking and has an open mind. Makes strategic decisions. Handles goals well. Works well with all departments. Thinks that previous managers did not keep staff in the loop. Believes that Sheryl keeps the staff, particularly the department heads, well informed.
- c. Sonya Brown: Evaluations are an opportunity to give constructive criticism. Observed pushback as it relates to the posting of jobs issue. Issue with the Albion-Marshall Connector flier where manager asked people to get people to come support the connector at council meetings. Healthcare grant was also a concern. Did not believe there was not enough research done for the manager to make a recommendation. Believed that goal setting session was flipped. Commends the manager for being active on many boards. Issue with complaints from constituents, then department head comes to council rather than to Mitchell. Concern over whether there is an official citizen complaint policy. Wants to know if there is a match when they get grant requests. Budget was presented in a timely manner. Concerned that new business is not generating tax revenue. Hiring decisions have been sound. Always helpful, reports are helpful, excellent interaction with community groups. Does not take accusations lightly and feels she gave a fair evaluation.
- d. Lenn Reid: Thinks Sheryl has been doing a fantastic job. Always has an answer available or shortly thereafter. Always very accessible. She is always very helpful. Very pleased. She is doing an A-1 job. Staff is very pleased with her.
- e. Jeannette Spicer: Appreciates Sheryl. Likes that she took the time to show her how things run and offered to be at the councilwoman's disposal. Thinks

that we can all agree they want the best for the city. No one person has everything, but we come close with Sheryl. Strong administrative background and educational background all lend to her being exceptional. Her strong personality works well with management. Believes council has been treated fairly and believes that council is kept informed. Appreciates her.

- f. Marcola Lawler: Everyone has room for improvement. Did not go lower than a 4. Her knowledge and outreach is good. Does not know how she works so much. Wishes she didn't have to go overboard. Pleased with everything. With her skills she is doing well. Does not want to put pressure on her. When she makes a mistake she does apologize for it. A lot of people don't do that, when you have morals that says a lot about a person. Truly believes that she is a genuine person.
- g. Andrew French: Sheryl is the best manager we have had. She is collaborative with many organizations. Taking action on many items that have been on the agenda for years and action is occurring. She is encouraging to subordinates and engages with them regularly. Owns her mistakes. Believes that the criticism of the manager stems from council members wanting to be more involved than they should be. Many of the issues addressed by the Mayor, were issues passed by the council. Concern is that when Mayor is evaluating Manager's performance it seems to mirror the Mayor's negative votes on those issues. If we are to preserve relationships with administration, we need to have better expectations of our city manager. Concerned that Manager has indicated that she will quit.
- h. Attorney Harkness: Indicated that Manager has an excellent ethic and is a pleasure to work with. Believes that staff is very happy with her.
- i. Manager Mitchell: Deeply concerned with the negative scores and comments. From Mayor Brown and Councilwoman Brown. Per the form the evaluation should be a reflection of overall performance, not specific actions.
 - i. Disagrees that qualifications for council is a procedure, it's a duty of the prospective councilmember.
 - ii. References to being open and transparent and not in compliance with having a trustful relationship. There is a fundamental disrespect with regard to what she does and how she does it.
 - iii. Albion-Marshall Connector. Indicated they were doing a presentation and offered to invite two people that use the serve to attend. Never advocated that they bring an outpouring of residents.
 - iv. Attributing the actions of others to the Manager. She will not accept responsible or be reprimanded for the actions of others.
 - v. She is not paid to be neutral, she is paid to provide information and recommendations. She administers decisions of the council.

- vi. Rural healthcare Grant. She shared with council the entire email chain the moment she got it. She never withheld anything.
- vii. The parking lot grant. Provided information as soon as it was received.
- viii. With street paving, followed the same process. A match is not a surprise to anyone.
- ix. Tax capture. Efforts are underway to develop long term tax capture. The council determined to make exemptions for certain city developments. It was not the manager who made the decisions.
- x. Believes there is disagreement with performance. 2.5 for management skills from the Mayor.
- xi. Very concerning that two of the five council members are concerned about her judgment. Wants to make a decision with both parties about future of leadership.
- xii. Insulted that council that has issues with Stacy's qualifications.

VI. Approval of Tentative Agreement between the City of Albion and the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM) (RCV)

Comments were received from Council Members Barnes, Brown, Reid, Lawler and French; Mayor Brown; City Manager Mitchell and Chief Scott Kipp.

French moved, Barnes supported, CARRIED, To Approve Tentative Agreement between the City of Albion and the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM) as presented. (7-0, rcv)

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Persons addressing the City Council shall limit their comments to no more than three (3) minutes. Proper decorum is required).

Comments were received Chief Kipp who stated Officer Kelli Williamson is moving into public outreach policing position.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Brown moved, French supported, CARRIED, to ADJOURN Study Session. (7-0, vv).

Mayor Brown adjourned the Special Session at 8:36 p.m.

**Minutes were taken by City Attorney Cullen Harkness.

Date

Jill Domingo
City Clerk