

City Council Regular Meeting  
Madison Heights, Michigan  
January 08, 2024

A City Council Regular Meeting was held on Monday, January 08, 2024 at 7:30 PM at City Hall  
- Council Chambers, 300 W. 13 Mile Rd.

PRESENT

Mayor Roslyn Grafstein  
Mayor Pro Tem Mark Bliss  
Councilman Sean Fleming  
Councilman William Mier  
Councilor Emily Rohrbach  
Councilman David Soltis

ABSENT

Councilor Quinn Wright

OTHERS PRESENT

City Manager Melissa Marsh  
Assistant City Attorney Tim Burns  
Deputy City Manager/City Clerk Cheryl Rottmann

**CM-24-01. Excuse Councilmember.**

Motion to excuse Councilor Wright from tonight's meeting.

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

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Fleming,  
Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion Carried.

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

**CM-24-02. Additions/Deletions.**

Motion to add under Reports: Letter of Agreements and Contract Extensions through June 30, 2026 between the City of Madison Heights and Supervisors & Assistant Unions AFSCME Council 25 Local 1917.33, Department Heads Union AFSCME Council 25 Local 1917.34, Fire Fighters Association, Police Officers Union Michigan Fraternal Order of Police, Police Command Officers Union, Municipal Employees Union

Technical Professional and Office Workers of Michigan, and the Department of Public Services Union Technical Professional and Office Workers of Michigan.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Seconded by Councilman Fleming

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Fleming,  
Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

### **2023 Holiday Light Awards**

On behalf of the Active Adult Advisory Board, Department of Public Services (DPS) Director Sean Ballantine announced the 2023 Holiday Lighting Award winners, as follows:

First Place Winner: Marc and Robin Cram - 27123 Osmun Street

Second Place Winner: Nicole and Robert Gudat - 26531 Brush Street

He then shared a PowerPoint presentation of the winner's and nominees outstanding displays. 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.

## **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

Linda Dimambro-Marshall, 1118 Elliot, spoke regarding her water bill. She stated that she had a meter issue and since it has been repaired, she went from a minimum usage to extremely large bills. She stated that she has been working with DPS, however, she would like the matter to be looked into further.

Oakland County Commissioner Ann Erickson Gault introduced herself to the community. She was appointed to Gary McGillivray's seat. She stated that she is working on catching up on Madison Heights issues, and she wants to continue his legacy regarding supporting parks and recreation. She noted that she has worked with City Manager Marsh on the Co-Responder Program and encouraged anyone to reach out to her at anytime. She stated that she will work with Oakland County to continue to improve quality of life for the residents of City of Madison Heights.

### **CM-24-03. Consent Agenda.**

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the following amendment:

*Agenda Item #6, amend the minutes of the Special Council Meeting of December 4th to reflect that the discussion on speed humps to include broadening the budget item to incorporate other elements that would lend to traffic safety, not just speed humps.*

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Fleming.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion Carried.

**CM-24-04. 2024 Poverty Exemption Resolution and Application.**

Motion to approve the following 2024 Poverty Exemption Resolution and Application.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Fleming.

**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 a principal residence the property for which an exemption is requested.
2. 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.
3. Submit the most recent year’s copies of the following:
4. All applicants and other persons residing in the homestead must submit last year’s copies of the following:
  - a. Federal Income Tax Return-1040, 1040A or 1040E.
  - b. Michigan Income Tax Return-MI1040, MI1040A or MI1040EZ.
  - c. Senior Citizens Homestead Property Tax Form MI-1040CR-1.
  - d. General Homestead Property Tax Claim MI-1040CR-4.
  - e. Statement from Social Security Administration and/or Michigan Social Services as to moneys paid to you during previous year.
  - f. All copies of the prior year bank statements (including December) as well the statement(s) from the current month.
  - g. Family Independence Program (FIP) and/or Food Assistance Program (FAP) statement of benefits.
  - h. Complete IRS form 4506-T and return it with the application.

5. Produce a valid driver's license or other form of identification for all persons residing in the household.
6. Produce a deed, land contract or other evidence of ownership of the property for which the exemption is requested.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that applications may be filed only once annually beginning January 1st each year for the March Board of Review or beginning May 1st until the day prior to the last day of the Board of Review meeting.

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 as permitted under the law, if deemed appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if the Board of Review determines that the applicant has or should have income from other sources, such as relatives, dependents and/or friends, they may add this income to the applicant's reported income. If the resulting sum of these incomes is greater than the income guidelines, then a poverty exemption may be denied. If the amount of this income is added to the applicant's reported income and the resulting sum is less than the income guidelines, then a poverty exemption may be granted.

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.

"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 a poverty exemption shall not be granted to any applicant whose assets exceed \$10,000. An applicant's homestead and principal vehicles shall be excluded from consideration as an asset. All other property, including from all other persons residing in the household, shall be included as an asset. Property shall include, but is not limited to: cash, savings, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, insurance commodities, coin collections, art, motor vehicles, recreation vehicles, etc.

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 a person filing a poverty exemption claim is not prohibited from also appealing the assessment on the property for which that claim is made before the March Board of Review in the same year.

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 income, assets, and potential earning capacity of the applicant.

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.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion Carried.

**CM-24-05. FY 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan.**

Motion to receive and file the FY 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan as presented.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Fleming.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion Carried.

**CM-24-06. Recommendation to Remove Lisa Wright from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.**

Motion to remove Lisa Wright from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and declare the seat vacant.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Fleming.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion Carried.

**CM-24-07. City Council Special Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2023.**

Motion to approve the City Council Special Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2023, with the following amendment:

*Amend the minutes of the Special Council Meeting of December 4th to reflect that the discussion on speed humps included broadening the budget item to include other elements that would lend to traffic safety, not just speed humps.*

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Fleming.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion Carried.

**CM-24-08. City Council Special Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2023.**

Motion to approve the City Council Special Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2023, as printed.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Fleming.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion Carried.

**CM-24-09. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2023.**

Motion to approve the City Council Regular Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2023, as printed.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Fleming.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion Carried.

**CM-24-10. Board and Commission 2024 Work Plans.**

Motion to approve the Work Plans for the 2024 Calendar year for the following boards: Arts Board, Crime Commission, Environmental Citizens Commission, Historical Commission, Library Advisory Board, and Human Relations and Equity Commission.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Mier.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion Carried.

Mayor Pro Tem Bliss reviewed the Arts Board workplan noting that it includes increasing visual arts in community; enhancing cultural community involvement; and facilitating performance arts. This includes continuation and expansion of current programming including the Arts Gala, Trail Tunes, Trail of Treats, and the addition of new performance art programming. The biggest event for 2024 will be the unveiling of bandstand and its utilization. The Arts Board has been working hard for six years and will continue to do great things.

Councilman Fleming reviewed Crime Commission workplan stating it includes community engagement through guest speakers including a human trafficking speaker, holding the bike rodeo in June; and having a Fall police canine demonstration. The Crime Commission will be aimed towards building relationships between the Police Department and the community in 2024.

Councilor Rohrbach discussed the Environmental Citizen Committee workplan. From 2023, EAGLE granted \$15,000 to create a sustainability master plan - this work will continue; they are hoping to begin resident and business education, continue ongoing gardening initiatives including garden grants and fundraising, maintain the seed library, review and adopt the action plan for their master plan and moving forward on their energy futures grant, support native gardening, partner with Michigan Green Communities, continue to be a Tree City USA, and work with the County to incentivize water sustainability in the city.

Mayor Pro Tem Bliss noted that the Historical Commission workplan includes experiencing Madison Heights, naming Madison Heights, and digitizing Madison Heights. Digitizing Madison Heights is ongoing; we are trying to preserve as much history through digitization as possible. Naming Madison Heights continues, to identify which of our founders and/or long-serving Councilmembers deserve recognition and determine locations to name after them. Experience Madison Heights is allowing us to gain more traction and traffic in our Historical Museum, as well as our online components. They are trying to drive some awareness into the history of our community. This next year, the Historical Commission is partnering with DDA business to give a history of music in Madison Heights.

Councilman Soltis stated that this next year, the Library Board will be working on a collaborate speaker series, expand tween events, free educational events for community, more activities for grades 5-8. Resources needed are space, snacks and books and the Board will measure success by participation.

Councilor Rohrbach stated that the Human Relations and Equity Commission's 2024 new calendar for social media content that celebrates recognizing cultural and religious holidays, continuation

of advising Council on inclusion and diversity issues as they arise, participate in Juneteenth in a meaningful way, plan and execute a car show and cooking competition in July, continuation of the cook book project that will celebrate our cultural diversity, continue to work with Library on a book club that increases exposure to different view points and culture.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Fleming,  
Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

**CM-24-11. Letters of Agreement and Contract Extensions through June 20, 2026  
between the City of Madison Heights and the City's Labor Unions.**

Motion to approve the Letter of Agreements and Contract Extensions through June 30, 2026 between the City of Madison Heights and the Supervisors & Assistants Union AFSME Council 25 Local 1917.33, Department Heads Union AFSCME Council 25 Local 1917.34, Fire Fighters Association, Police Officers Union Michigan Fraternal Order of Police, Police Command Officers Union, Municipal Employees Union Technical Professional and Office Workers of Michigan, and the Department of Public Services Union Technical Professional and Office Workers of Michigan.

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

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Fleming,  
Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Soltis

Absent: Councilor Wright

Motion carried.

**Council Comments:**

Councilman Mier welcomed 2024 and stated that he hoped everyone had a restful holiday. He commented that he is looking forward to his first full year of making good things happen here in Madison Heights.

Mayor Pro Tem Bliss expressed Go Blue and Go Lions! He stated that he was going through some old paperwork and found his father's election pamphlet from many years ago. His goals were all goals that this Council has worked on and have been able to accomplish over the past years and he expressed his thanks to the staff, the City Attorney, and his colleagues for helping to accomplish these items.

Assistant City Attorney Burns stated that he was looking forward to working with Council this year and wished a Happy New Year to all.

City Manager Marsh had no comments this evening.

Deputy City Manager/City Clerk Rottmann reminded voters that they must return their Ballot Selection Form or Absentee Ballot Application and select which party ballot they wish to receive



for the February 27, 2024 Presidential Primary election in order to have a ballot sent to them. Go Blue!!

Councilor Rohrbach wished everyone a Happy New Year and Go Blue!

Councilman Fleming had no comments this evening.

Councilman Soltis had no comments this evening.

Mayor Grafstein wished everyone a Happy New Year. She stated that we are expecting snow, so please drive carefully; the DPS will be doing the best job they can do to make the streets safe for the community.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Having no further business, Mayor Grafstein adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

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Roslyn Grafstein, Mayor

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Cheryl E. Rottmann, City Clerk