CITY OF LIVONIA – CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF STUDY MEETING HELD MAY 7, 2025

Meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by Council President McCullough. Present: Vice President Martha Ptashnik, Carrie Budzinski, Lynda Scheel, Scott Morgan, Laura Toy, Rob Donovic, and President Brandon McCullough. Absent: None.

Elected and appointed officials present: Carter Fisher, City Attorney; Mark Taormina, City Planner and Economic Development Director; and Lori L. Miller, City Clerk.

Councilmember Vice President Ptashnik led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

During Audience Communication, Cindy Fleming Woodring, announced Thursday, May 8th would be an Open House and Ribbon Cutting ceremony for Seedlings Braille Books for Children starting at 5:00 p.m. and invited all to attend.

Nicholas Pickard, 29810 Robert Drive, announced the upcoming Mother's Day Craft Show hosted at the Wilson Barn this weekend and stated the Farmers Market at the Barn will start Saturday, June 21st.

President McCullough announced there was New Data received for Agenda Item #3.

President McCullough indicated Agenda Items #8 and #9 were removed from tonight's Agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

1. REQUEST TO WAIVE THE CITY'S NOISE ORDINANCE: Rev. Dr. Rodrigue Constantin, Saint Rafka Maronite Catholic Church, re: in order to hold a cultural festival with music played by a DJ and live bands at Saint Rafka Maronite Catholic Church located at 32765 Lyndon Street on Friday, August 8, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m., Saturday, August 9, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. and Sunday, August 10, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

   Joanna Danowski, representative on behalf of St. Rafka Church, was present for this matter. Ms. Danowski indicated this is an annual cultural festival for the Church to reach out to the community. This year's event is scheduled for Friday, August 8th 2025 through Sunday, August 10th and extended an invitation to Council and all residents to attend. Ms. Danowski indicated this event draws in residents throughout the entire region and has been very successful for their Church.

   Motion was made by Councilmember Toy to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

2. REQUEST TO WAIVE THE CITY'S NOISE ORDINANCE: Wafi Barshini, Festival Chairperson, The Basilica of St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church, re: in order to host a festival with live music in the rear parking lot at 18100 Merriman Road on Friday, August 15, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., Saturday, August 16, 2025, from 12:00 p.m. to

11:59 p.m. and Sunday, August 17, 2025, from 12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Neefin Bashini, representative on behalf of The Basilica of St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church, was present for this matter. Ms. Bashini indicated this is an annual festival with live music on their church property located at 18100 Merriman Road. This year's festival will start on Friday, August 15th and run through Sunday, August 17th.

Vice President thanked St. Mary's Church for addressing noise concern levels brought up in the past year and taking necessary measures to prevent noise complaints and working well with the neighboring residents.

Councilmember Morgan inquired if the Church would maintain the music decibels at the appropriate levels as last year. Ms. Bashini responded in the affirmative and confirmed they have again retained an expert to monitor noise levels so as not to be disruptive to the neighborhoods that surround their property.

Councilmember Toy stated it was nice to have a woman representing the organization and speaking on the matter, but asked when the opening for the event was hosted where the elected officials were invited for the ribbon-cutting? Ms. Bashini stated it would be on Friday, August 15th. Councilmember Toy stated she does not want to miss it as the Church does such a great job and the food is amazing.

Motion was made by Councilmember Morgan to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

3. WAIVER PETITION: Planning Commission, re: Petition 2025-02-02-06 submitted by NC Designers and Contracting, requesting waiver use approval to construct a 2,117-square foot, full- service oil change facility at 27410 Joy Road, located at the northwest corner of Joy Road and Inkster Road in the Southeast ¼ of Section 36.

Mark Taormina, City Planner and Economic Development Director, presented a thorough presentation on the waiver use submitted to develop a full-service oil change facility at 27410 Joy Road. Mr. Taormina stated the property is located at the northwest corner of Joy and Inkster Roads, is approximately 1/3 acre in size and has been vacant for approximately 30 years. He stated the property is zoned commercial and the building would be just over 2,100 sq. ft. with two driveways for access to the property from both Joy and Inkster. The new data received this evening addresses one of the issues raised by the Planning Commission, which is to move the driveway moved, north the north portion of the site.

Mr. Taormina indicated parking is 3 spaces, which is adequate for this type of use and circulation would be counterclockwise. The building is set up with three (3) work bays, the exterior would be dark gray brick with silver metal. The dumpster enclosure was another concern, as there are utility lines that run along the north side of the property. Mr. Taormina stated if the utility lines are located, then the dumpster can stay in its current position. Some lighting needs to be addressed, which is not a big issue. The other big issue is the unpaid taxes and stormwater on this must be developed underground so the petitioner will have to work on providing that. The Planning Commission is recommending approval with those conditions.

Rob Bell, NC Designers and Architects and Todd Bala, the purchaser of the property, were present to answer questions of Council. Councilmember Donovic stated he has several concerns related to this petition, the biggest concern being the close to $15,000 in back taxes owed on the property. Councilmember Donovic inquired what the plan was to pay off the back taxes for the two properties in question. Mr. Bala responded he has a purchase agreement for both parcels of land, and the purchase agreement states the seller will pay all back taxes at closing.

Vice President Ptashnik indicated one of her concerns was also the past due taxes which Councilmember Donovic addressed but inquired about the utility lines on the property and how would the dumpster issue be addressed. Mr. Bell indicated there are a couple of options to pursue, the least expensive would be the first choice, to either move the dumpster in related to the lines but ideally, they would not want to have to move utility lines but shift the dumpster location.

Mr. Taormina indicated one of the poles for the overhead utility is located somewhere in the driveway, where indicated, so the option would be to push the driveway further to the south, extend the green belt along the side of the property so that it includes the utility pole to allow the shift of the dumpster location. Mr. Taormina stated it was possible to do that and still ensured enough room to go around the building. The secondary choice is to relocate those utility poles but that does not come without a great expense.

Vice President Ptashnik inquired about the hours of operation for the oil change business. Mr. Bala stated the business would be open 8 am to 7 pm six days a week and Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm. Vic President Ptashnik stated another concern raised at the Planning Commission meeting was the landscape screening along Joy Road to keep the headlights from spilling over into the roadway. Mr. Bell responded they have addressed that concern and shrubs to be planted that are approximately 36” high to act as a barrier. Vice President stated her appreciated for coming into the Livonia community and invested in a vacant parcel of land that has sat there for 30 years.

Councilmember Scheel stated she wanted to revisit the past due taxes that are due. She inquired if the purchase agreement stated the taxes would be paid at closing, Mr. Balal responded in the affirmative. She inquired who was paying the taxes, the buyer or the seller, and how soon did they plan to close on the property. Mr. Balal responded the seller will pay and they plan to close as soon as possible, pending Council’s approval tonight, stating it was a condition for the purchase agreement, two weeks maximum following approval.

Councilmember Toy thanked Mr. Balal for coming to the community and improving the site. She stated she would like to see some assurance the past due taxes would be paid. Mr. Balal stated he has the purchase agreement which shows the seller will pay the taxes at closing. President McCullough inquired of Mr. Taormina and Mr. Fisher if the Council could include a condition that prior to plan review and building permits being issued for the property, the taxes must be paid in full? Mr. Fisher stated that would be a stipulation the City could make, whether it be building permits or Certificate of Occupancy.

Councilmember Donovic stated he felt it may be easier to simply deny the petition, given the nearly $17,000 in taxes owed. He indicated the taxes should be paid before the approval happens and the petitioner can go back to the seller to emphasize the taxes must be paid to close the transaction. Councilmember Donovic stated he appreciated what the petitioner and architect are trying to do, but perhaps an approving and denying resolution could be offered at the next Regular meeting and that gives the petitioner two weeks to work things out with the seller. Mr. Balal indicated he understands the City's position and he is serious about making this deal happen.

President McCullough inquired if the petition is denied, would the petitioner walk away from the deal to purchase the property. Mr. Balal responded in the affirmative. President McCullough reiterated his position that he felt a stipulation in the approving resolution could help solve that. Mr. Balal stated the title company will make sure all taxes are paid, before the seller gets his proceeds from the purchase and they are looking to move quickly to get the property developed.

Vice President Ptashnik inquired if the petitioner could bring back at the next Regular meeting the changes that were discussed tonight, as far as what will be done with the utility poles and so on, to have a final site plan.

Susan Nash, City Treasurer, confirmed the tax amounts expressed by Councilmember Donovic were correct.

Councilmember Donovic inquired if the purchase agreement shared with Mr. Taormina could be shared with the Council as new data. Mr. Taormina confirmed the purchase agreement from Mr. Balal does state he is purchasing both parcels of land with the outstanding taxes.

Councilmember Budzinski inquired if the petitioner had any intent to develop the north portion of the property. Mr. Balal responded, for right now he does not intend to develop the northern portion.

Mr. Balal stated if it were easier for the City, he was willing to cut a check for the past due taxes owed on both properties, and then minus that out of the seller's proceeds. He stated he does not have any issue getting the taxes paid now to move forward with this development. Mr. Balal stated he would confer with the seller and take the necessary steps.

Motion was made by Councilmember Donovic to put a denying resolution for this matter on the regular portion of the next Regular Agenda.

Motion was made by Councilmember Toy to put an approving resolution for this matter on the regular portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING AND DENYING REGULAR

4. REQUEST TO APPROVE EARLY VOTING PLAN: Office of the City Clerk, re: local elections to be held in 2025, pursuant to MCL 168.720e.

Lori Miller, City Clerk, presented the item to Council. Ms. Miller stated last year was the beginning of early voting and it was not known if it would take off. By the Presidential election, more than 9,000 voters went to Livonia's early voting site. Ms. Miller explained early voting is not required under election law for local elections, however, the Election Commission met in February to discuss whether and how early voting should be handled in 2025. The Election Commission unanimously decided to provide two (2) days of early voting, the Saturday and Sunday before each election held in 2025; the hours would be

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; and the site would be in the lobby of City Hall, which is closed to the public on the weekends. Ms. Miller stated it is a great opportunity to provide enhanced voting hours for voters. She indicated it is a requirement under election law to have the legislative body of a municipality adopt a resolution to conduct early voting in an election that is not a statewide or federal election, and her office is seeking Council's approving resolution for same.

Councilmember Toy inquired who makes up the Election Commission. Ms. Miller responded it is comprised of the Mayor, the City Attorney and herself. Councilmember Toy asked if the law was to give voters longer time to vote and Ms. Miller responded in the affirmative. Councilmember Toy stated going down to only two (2) days seemed drastic and asked if the Election Commission considered going down to four (4) days instead. Ms. Miller responded it was discussed by the Commission, but given the voter turnout of local elections together with the numbers of individuals on the permanent ballot list and permanent application list did not support expanding the days.

Councilmember Budzinski inquired if Ms. Miller could remind Council and voters the difference between absentee ballots vs. early voting. Ms. Milelr explained absentee ballots are not tabulated when presented, however, early voting allows voters the opportunity to vote and run their ballots through the tabulator, including an absentee ballot. Ms. Miller stated absentee ballots are issued up through and including the day before the election.

Councilmember Morgan inquired if the permanent list meant everyone just receives their absentee ballot. Ms. Miller clarified there are two (2) separate lists, one for the permanent ballot where individuals do not need to complete an application but are simply mailed their ballot and the second list is for applications, which must be completed and returned for a voter to receive their ballot.

Motion was made by Councilmember Morgan to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

Motion was made by Councilmember Scheel to put the matter on the Regular portion of the next Regular Agenda, just so the difference between permanent ballots and permanent application list can be explained.

DIRECTION: APPROVING REGULAR

5. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE LIVONIA CODE OF ORDINANCES, AS AMENDED: Office of the City Clerk, re: to revise Sections to Title 1, Chapter 1.08 (Election Precincts) to maintain ballot alignment within previously consolidated precincts.

Lori Miller, City Clerk, presented the item to Council. Ms. Miller stated the Clerk's Office sought Council's approval earlier this year to approve an ambitious and aggressive plan to consolidate precincts from 44 to 26 which required modification to the City's Ordinance. Following the submission of documentation to the State of Michigan, Ms.

Miller was informed the consolidation created what is known as a “split precinct”, a precinct that would have two (2) separate ballots for voters. Ms. Miller stated this was done inadvertently and would create a nightmare for administrating an election and would be very confusing and hard on our voters.

Ms. Miller indicated the State offered her the opportunity to correct the problem or leave it as it stood. The change could be made easily by moving a section of the newly created Precinct 23 into the newly created Precinct 24. Ms. Miller stated the Election Commission met on April 7th to discuss how to proceed and voted unanimously to make the adjustment as proposed by the State, so a split precinct was not created. Ms. Miller stated it would impact a small number of voters, all involved would continue to vote where they originally voted before the consolidation in March and where they were slated to vote once the consolidation was approved in March. Ms. Miller stated although the polling location would not change, the voters would receive new voter ID cards with the changed precinct number, and this would be to clean up the problem that was created.

Vice President Ptashnik inquired if all new voter cards would be mailed to these voters. Ms. Miller responded in the affirmative. Vice President Ptashnik inquired approximately how many, and Ms. Miller responded a very small number of residents.

Motion was made by Councilmember Budzinski to put the mater on the Regular portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING REGULAR

6. REQUEST TO EXTEND CONTRACT WITH BOUND TREE MEDICAL: Livonia Fire & Rescue, re: for emergency medical supplies and equipment, not to exceed $130,000.00 annually, from budgeted funds.

John McKee, Training Coordinator for Livonia Fire & Rescue, presented the request to Council. Mr. McKee stated one of his responsibilities includes the EMS supplies and equipment. Mr. McKee stated they have operated under a cooperative started by the City of Farmington Hills to get vendors to compete to offer the best prices and is part of the Michigan Intergovernmental Trade Network. Mr. McKee indicated the Fire Department was contacted by the Finance Department with the suggestion they seek Council’s approval to keep things in order and that is why the matter was being presented to Council for an approving resolution.

Councilmember Donovic inquired about the contractual terms, stating the information provided looked like it will expire in 2026. He inquired if the Fire Department would come back in 2026 seeking Council approval for the extension at that time.

Councilmember Toy inquired how many ambulances are provided for our City. Mr. McKee indicated LFD staffs a minimum of five (5) ambulances, 24/7 365 days a year. There are times they will staff a sixth ambulance, during special events and such. Mr. McKee stated all fire engines are staffed with fully trained paramedics as well and they ran just under

11,000 EMS calls last year in the City. Councilmember Toy inquired if there were higher numbers of transports from nursing or skilled car facilities. Mr. McKee stated he would say a fair portion go to those type of facilities. Councilmember Toy inquired if they reimbursed the City for EMS transports. Mr. McKee responded the facilities do not, however, the patient's insurance carriers do. Mr. McKee stated on average they collect approximately $240,000-$260,000 a month and those funds are returned to the General Fund.

Motion was made by Vice President Ptashnik to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

7. REQUEST TO RENEW SOFTWARE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT WITH SOLE SOURCE PROVIDER: Department of Information Systems, re: with ESRI, Inc., for the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) for a period of one year, from budgeted funds.

Casey O'Neil, Director of Information Systems, presented the request to Council. Mr. O'Neil indicated it is a renewal of the City's GIS system is used by various City departments, and the request is to renew the City's software maintenance agreement with the sole source provider, ESRI, Inc., for a one-year period. Mr. O'Neil stated the total cost for one year is $32,934 from budgeted funds.

Motion was made by Councilmember Scheel to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

AUDIENCE COMMUNICATION

Steve King, Coventry, stated he wanted to expound on something Councilwoman Toy brought up at the Regular meeting. He stated he understands some of the Council candidates had an issue with some of their paperwork and he spoke directly with the Clerk about it. Mr. King stated the paperwork must be filled out properly and it is not within the Clerk's purview to say what the spirit of the law is. Mr. King stated he hoped that is why Councilmember Toy put this into the Committee of the Whole to investigate it in the open. He had heard a rumor, saw a document and encouraged Council to have that discussion.

Christopher Martin, Livonia resident, stated he raised concerns about the operators of the rides at the Spree at the last Council's meeting and was disappointed the Spree items were voted on the Consent portion of the Agenda. Mr. Martin further expressed disappointment with the Civic Center Library being closed the Friday and Saturday before the Easter Holiday and stated he had to go to a neighboring community to use their library, which was open.

President McCullough responded to Mr. King's statement and indicated it would be scheduled very soon, potentially the next Monday and it would be posted.

Councilmember Toy inquired if they should go to the City Attorney or City Clerk to address the matter as residents are coming in and she wanted to clear it up, she didn't want it to get into a committee meeting where it's all crazy.

Lori Miller, City Clerk, responded that it is part of the Clerk's responsibility to decide what names appear on the ballot. Having reviewed the last nine (9) local election files over 18 years, there were a multitude of names that appeared on the ballot during the past five (5) City Clerks. There was no malicious intent and no lying, those who lied on their Affidavits were immediately disqualified. A scrivener's error does not disqualify candidates, many have appeared on the ballot with incomplete, inaccurate and misinformation on their Affidavits. The matter of the law is to prove that they have met our Charter requirements and the candidate in question did and that is why her name will be on the ballot.

Ms. Miller stated she has spoken with many Clerks and not one indicated they would have disqualified a candidate for a clerical error. There are 19 candidates running and Livonia is lucky to have them coming from all walks of life, a good representation of democracy. Ms. Miller stated it is up to the voters to ultimately make the decision. Ms. Miller concluded that if political opponents want to challenge it, they have the right to do so by filing a complaint with the Circuit Court.

President McCullough stated the Committee meeting will be 6:00 p.m. on Monday, prior to the Strategic and Economic Development Committee meeting. It will be a public meeting, it will be open and will discuss a lot of these topics. President McCullough stated he appreciated the statements raised and as the Clerk pointed out, if someone wants to challenge it, they have an avenue to challenge it.

ADJOURNED

Adjourned at 8:56 pm

For May 19, 2025 Regular Meeting