

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVI  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M.**

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL:** Mayor Gatt, Mayor Pro Tem Staudt, Council Members Casey, Crawford, Fischer, Smith, Thomas

**ALSO PRESENT:** Peter Auger, City Manager  
Victor Cardenas, Assistant City Manager  
Tom Schultz, City Attorney  
Carl Johnson, Finance Director/Treasurer/CFO

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**CM 22-04-034 Moved by Casey, seconded by Fischer; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**To approve the Agenda as presented.**

**Roll call vote on CM 22-04-034 Yeas: Staudt, Casey, Crawford, Fischer, Smith, Thomas, Gatt**  
**Nays: None**

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None**

**PURPOSE OF SPECIAL MEETING - 2022-2023 CITY OF NOVI BUDGET**

1. Overview  
Introduction: Goals – Projects  
2022-2023 Budget Overview – Highlights  
Multi-Year Budget

City Manager Auger said it is easy to see how the City of Novi has grown since the last census. In 2010 we had 250 miles of sidewalk and today we have 307 miles. We had 300 miles of watermain and today we have about 370. We had 1,000 acres of parkland and today we have around 1,500 acres. We had 180 center lane miles of road and today we have 194. He said he could go on with all the infrastructure, but he thought they could see they have added infrastructure and it all needs to be maintained. Back before the last recession our employee head count had reached 284 employees. Last year's budget number was 274, and this year's budget recommendation is 278. He said the proposed budget had 277, but Chief Zinser has put forward his reorganization plan, that he supported, which adds one more position to the Police Department that is not in the budget before Council. He said on another note, our taxable value was around \$3 billion coming out of 2010 and we are now around \$4.5 billion and have become the second highest taxable value City in Oakland County. This budget, and the two following years, encompass the goals priorities and issues that were a product of the recent City Council Goal Session. He said we continue to invest in our roads and have averaged over \$5 million per year in road improvements in the past several years and we are

recommending increasing our efforts with this budget spending approximately \$7 million on our roads and overall, as page 101 shows we spend around \$10 million per year on road infrastructure. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) weblink in your packet demonstrates 34 projects this year with a total cost of over \$22.5 million and a total project for the three-year budget as shown is 88 projects and an investment of \$64 million. He stated that this year he is requesting an increase in funding for our full-time employee head count positions adding four positions. He said the additional police position that he mentioned earlier, and the three additional positions that are spelled out on page 133. He explained these positions have been laid out in the past three budgets and moved forward as new infrastructure coming online and being added to our inventory, plus an increased focus on code compliance in our neighborhoods. He said that City Council wants to intensify our focus on our Older Adult Services to ensure we have the programs and facilities to meet the needs of those residents in Novi. He said this effort started with the Special Outreach Services (SOS) that Mayor Gatt introduced, and City Council supported, during the forced shut down of society as we knew it. This outreach effort and added employee has seen a very positive impact on community members as we see an increase in new older adults involving themselves in programming such as five new request per week for the Fire Department's File for Life Program, 24 new users of our transportation system, and 100 new clients to our medical loan closet. He stated that he has met with a citizen volunteer with decades of experience in the older adult field and she is sharing a wealth of information and ideas. He planned to continue this conversation and we are currently scheduling visitations to other communities to see what's working for them and their older adult services and see if it is transferable for us.

## 2. Capital Improvement Program Proposed Plan

Assistant City Manager Cardenas reiterated what City Manager Auger said previously, we have about 34 projects, \$22.6 million in this year's portion of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which is a six-year program. He said the CIP Committee met on January 19, 2022, to recommend it for the Planning Commission's approval, which was in February. He stated part of that \$22.6 million is \$9.9 million dollars of road projects, which are significant projects throughout the whole community. He said you can see Taft, Beck, and Meadowbrook are all slated to be done this year, as well as 12 Mile which is one of our last two dirt roads in the community. He said Beck North Corporation Park roads are going to done as well, so there is a lot going on in the \$9.9 million dollars. He said they had mentioned before, the Splash Pad is also part of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for \$1.5 million. The pedestrian bridge, a tunnel, underneath South Lake Drive is another big project that goes with Lakeshore Park will be about \$500,000. He said they mentioned earlier, the fire trucks which they have been doing for the last few years. They have three more budgeted out for the next three-years as well. He said replacing that fleet of fire trucks, tankers, ladders, and they take about a year to build. He said they might have started that three-years ago, but they are just starting to et them delivered in the last few years. That will continue to go as a promise to our voters when the CIP millage was passed a few years ago. He mentioned that during the CIP Committee meeting that member's Fischer, Casey, and Crawford are part of the pulled forward two projects in the CIP. He said the first was a police drone, for \$36,000, and will help us with our search and rescue efforts throughout the community. He said the last one was the Novi

Cemetery pathway, which is just south of the Ring Road Bond Street. He said they will complete the cobblestone pathway throughout the whole cemetery, which is something they wanted to get done this year per the CIP Committee recommendations.

### 3. Proposed 2022-23 Budget

Director Johnson stated the 2022-23 Budget you have before you reflected the City of Novi continuing to have a very strong, very sound financial condition. He said they continued to do the right thing; we live within our means. This Budget document even though it is very voluminous, really reflects all the hard work not only up here, but for all the department heads behind him as well. He said the City Manager and Assistant City Manager have done a great job summarizing the highlights, he just wanted to point out a couple specific things related to a couple funds. He pointed out a couple of key things to remember in this that are different from before. COVID is still having an impact on the courts, which is impacting our Forfeiture Fund. He explained that we had to do a budget amendment in the very last month of the year to cover the costs of the police cars. Historically, we buy our police cars out of the Forfeiture Fund to the tune of about \$400,000. Our Forfeiture Fund literally ran out of money at the end of last fiscal year. We have a ton of cases outstanding, and our share of those cases are over a million dollars. He stated we are just waiting for the courts to get caught up and reopen and start to hear in cases as that the money will start flowing. He said in the current fiscal year, we do not have budgeted a subsidy in the budget before you, we are planning to have the General Fund we have incorporated that into the budget to be covered because again, we just do not know when that will be received if it is received at all during the year or even for the fiscal year starts. Obviously, that will be removed from the budget but a concern over the bases, we wanted to make sure that was covered given, we are now 18 months into the delay of getting our funds and we just do not know exactly when we are going to receive it. Historically, in the General Fund, we usually present a balanced budget. So, revenues equal expenditures trying not to dip into Fund Balance. He said the three items that we are dipping into Fund Balance for this year, in year one, the primary year focus in the current year is the Splash Park. He stated the General Fund of the \$1.5 million dollars, the General Fund will be contributing that over to the Parks and Rec Fund, so it is budgeted in the Parks and Rec Fund, but it is being paid for out of the General Fund. In the current budget, that is \$1.5 million dollars. He said the police cars that he talked about in the Forfeiture Fund is \$400,000 again, budgeted in the General Fund, not the Forfeiture Fund where it usually is, just because again, there are no funds there. He said the last thing was the drone as Victor touched on. Those are the only three items that make up the use of Fund Balance, which is about \$1.9 million dollars, year two and three are balanced, they balanced to a zero, so the Forfeiture Fund is zero. Lastly, he wanted to touch on the fact with our Street Funds, as much as we love our streets and we want to continue to do back in all the funds out there, you will find in this three-year budget that every dime we have budgeted towards only street projects. That includes the routine maintenance, the snow plowing, patching, etc. He stated these projects that have been approved in the budget, all the fund balances and all three-years are the Fund Balance minimum set by the Mayor and City Council. We continue to invest heavily, but it is every single dime we have, and we can only do what we can do.

4. City Council discussion and decisions regarding the plan priorities

Mayor Gatt explained that it is now City Council's turn for discussion. He said traditionally no motions are made during the first round. He said it's an opportunity to say what you have to say about the current budget, what you like, what you do not like, what you want added, what you want to see subtracted. He explained the second round is when motions are accepted.

Member Casey started her remarks with saying thank you to the team that puts together the budget and the entire staff that has a role in making this budget document. The hours that you have spent are greatly appreciated, because your hard work makes her work easier. She thought when we talk about the budget, we talk about how it defines the priorities that we have. She was pleased with this year's budget. She thought staff has really heard what City Council has set as the priority and you have given us the best recommendations, you have given us the best budget that we can come up with. She was pleased with the work that has been done, she did not have any changes to the budget this year. She wanted to listen with interest to what her colleagues had to say, but she did want to raise one topic since she had the floor. She called attention to the fact that we still have listed in the General Fund assigned funds are about \$1.9 million dollars that came from the ARPA Fund or the American Rescue Plan. She said we received originally about \$2.4 million, we spent about \$580,000 of that related to SOS Program and the two playgrounds, leaving us with that \$1.9 million dollar. She noted that if everything happens the way that the federal government said it was going to happen, we should get another \$2.4 million coming in May. She said the federal government has finalized the rules and they went into effect as of Friday, April 1, 2022. She thought it was a good time for us as a Council to sit down and talk about what we want to do and how we can best use those funds to make things good for our city. She looked forward to us having that conversation in the very near term, hopefully in the next couple of weeks, maybe when we know for sure that the funds are coming in, because she thought we should have the conversation knowing what the total amount available to us is. She said she wanted to raise the issue because it is listed in the budget. She said it is something that we have talked about at this table, but we have not talked about it recently, so she raised the issue again. She wanted people to be aware that the funds are there. She hoped we were getting more funds and we owe ourselves in the city a conversation about how best to use those funds going forward. She thanked everyone again for their work and putting together the 2022-23 Budget and she looked forward to hearing what her colleagues had to say.

Member Fischer thanked City Staff because he understood that the Finance team is really driving this bringing all the numbers together. He said every employee basically touches this budget, and that does not fall on deaf ears from any of City Council. He thanked them from the bottom of his heart for all staff members who have been working so hard on this. He said it is hard for Finance as well because you are juggling the budget, you are juggling ending this year, and you are trying to launch next year. He said it is a constant revolving door of numbers, and you have an amazing way to keep it straight

for all of us. He commented that he as had the opportunity to pour over this budget the last wo weeks, some of it on a plane, some of it on cruise ship, some of it with Mickey Mouse. He stated it was not a surprise to him that this city is rated triple A by S & P, it is not a surprise that we get awards after awards for the Budget because it is transparent. It is very clear, it does not take an MBA college degree or anything to really go through this and understand what the city's doing, what its priorities are. He said to see the health of the city, the fact that we have 31% Fund Balance estimated for this year, \$13 million, that will only go up because that is what happens every time, we close the year. He said there are a million things like that, through these pages, it is very clear to any reader, and he encouraged any resident to pick this up and look at it. He echoed the previous speaker and said he did not have many changes that evening. He said he had some Parks related comments that he will make during the motion times. He thanked everyone again for a very transparent and clear process. He thanked them for incorporating what he thought were the residents' priorities into the document and the priorities of City Council.

Member Smith joined his colleagues and started off by thanking all City Staff, everyone who was there that evening, and those who were not there, but had worked on the Budget. He commented that being a new on City Council and looking at this was impressive on how much work had to go into getting the budget to where it is. He said a couple of things caught his eye in the budget, Victor had mentioned them earlier, the Splash Pad at Bosco Field and the Lakeshore Park Pedestrian Tunnel are going to be great improvements for Parks and Recreation. He was happy to see those coming up. He was also happy to see we were scheduling to replace some of the light fixtures with LED fixtures, he thought it was great for improving the environment, and saving some money on electricity. He stated he would like to see some of the ones that are scheduled further out, pulled forward. He mentioned we are scheduling some vehicle replacements for this year and with the improvements that have been made recently, he was hoping that hybrid and full electric are brought forward when possible. He looked forward to hearing what the rest of his colleagues had to say.

Member Thomas thanked City Staff who created this Budget, she said she was not a financial professional, but she found that this was easily consumable, and she could read it and understand it. She thought that it was a testament to the work that the team has done inputting this together. She thought that any resident who picks this up should at least be ale to understand it and grasp what our priorities are. She said that it was wonderful that they make it very easy for us to know what is happening in the city. She appreciated that. She thought the budget clearly follows the goals that have been put forth by the Council, the ones that we have all agreed on everything that is out there. She agreed with some of her colleagues, she thought that she did not have any changes that she will be proposing this evening. She stated we have been through COVID, it has been a long time and she thought that things have been very different, and they are starting to go back to probably as normal as they are going to get. She said life since COVID has irrevocably changed, fewer people will be going into their offices, lots of storefronts that have closed will not be reopening. She said as we look forward with the funds that will be coming in as Member Casey mentioned earlier, she just wanted to make sure, again, there are future City Council discussions. She said as we look forward

to how to make sure that we are ensuring the economic growth of our community moving forward and adjusting for the changes that have come out of the last couple years that we have been through in the new normal that we are settling into. She thanked everyone very much for the work that they have done.

Member Crawford thanked City Staff; it is well deserved. He said it was a book and a budget that he could somewhat comprehend. He said he did not have any changes to the budget, he thought it was well prepared. He said their goals are in that budget. He mentioned Senior Services and that would in his opinion, be a dedicated City department with a dedicated director in charge of Senior Services, as well as some support staff. He said it has been mentioned at various times throughout the years. He said there has been some recent discussion and he wanted to make sure it does not get lost with just further discussion. He said we have been nibbling at the edge of the cookie for years, and he wanted us to take a bite of that cookie and get a dedicated department with a dedicated director in charge of Senior Services, as well as some support staff. He said he did not know if there was a motion in order that evening, but when the time comes, he wasn't sure how to pursue it, but he was not going to let it lie.

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt stated that this was his 15th budget, and it was always well done and always fun to read. During the years there have been some things that have been consistent with him, one of them is the number one focus of all priorities in City budgets to him was our Public Safety, whether it is fire, fire engines, firemen, police, whatever it is, we need to provide whatever they need to keep our City safe. He said normally infrastructure is his number two priority and we have a lot of things in this budget to address that. He echoed Member Crawford in elevating our Older Adult Services. He thought we learned one thing during COVID which was while we thought we were really doing a great job, they needed more help, people his age and older. He said they want to promote things like aging in place and increases in housing opportunities. We want to increase our senior transportation, all of that is going to cost money, how are we going to get there? He did not think we quite understood the complete infrastructure that is in existence now, but he thought it was time to move in that direction. He wholeheartedly supported the previous speaker's comments. He said one other thing that has always been near and dear to him was the Parks and Recreation, pathways, and sidewalks. He thought that we had some interesting things on the agenda for this year, with one of them being something that was overlooked a little bit, and that is the Lakeshore Park Pedestrian Tunnel to the beach. He said we need to make that ADA compliant in a way that nobody can ever question in the future that the access point is something that everybody can enjoy, and not just those that can walk and get through there. He said we need to take any barriers away, he strongly supported that. He said we are looking at \$1.5 million for the Splash Pad that he completely agreed with. He said he had a little different view of where the money should come from, but we will talk about that at motion time. He mentioned Bosco, the negotiations hopefully with the school district are reaching an end and there is about 70 to 75 acres there, some of it is developed, some of it is completely barren. He said we have a lot of things we need to do there. We also have other parks around the City which we are very fortunate we have, we just do not have anything that we are doing with it. He thought we needed to start thinking about

that. He pointed out another thing brought up by another speaker that it is time to start thinking about the ITC fields and what we are going to do there. He thought it was going to take a lot of preparation, it is going to take a lot of money, and we are going to have to figure out what the best funding mechanism is. He felt before we do all of that, we really need to know what we do have. What needs to be fixed. What are our options. He will be interested in hearing some proposals down the road on that. He said his last point was Fund Balance. He pointed out this budget brings some of our Fund Balance down to a range in the 24% range, which may sound great, but not for him. He said he was going to be making some proposals during the motion period to do some of these projects in a place that he thought has the funding available and would be the appropriate place to put them while maintaining amongst the strongest Fund Balances of cities our size in the State of Michigan. He commented other than that, there is a lot of things in this budget that is fortunately, our City Council does not go through things line item, one at a time, because none of us live it, work it, breathe it, like everybody who creates it. He was excited to see what the proposals are going to be moving forward. That was all he had to say at that time.

Mayor Gatt said he goes last, which is the easiest position to be in, because everybody has said pretty much everything that he wanted to say. He said this was his 19th budget. He said he will say what he has said for 18 years in a row, and that was he thought most cities are envious of our books, are envious of our strong economic position. That did not just happen. He said a lot of work went into it from staff and from management, and from your City Councils over the years. He said Novi is a very well-planned city, and we are all very grateful for what we have here. He mentioned this was not the time to make motions, but it was brought up earlier that evening, that the Police Department is going to add a person. He believed the proposal is to add two people, but they are going to delete one position. He said it is a net gain of one, if he understood City Manager Auger, and he said he has had some robust emails over the last few days. He was not sure in his mind what exactly was happening, because it has always been his position up at this table to support the Police Department 1,000%, and what he was thinking in his mind is, let's give them what they want, but he thought we should give them more. He said it has always been his position that the road patrol, the patrol officers are the people that keep the City safe. The management, people who make the plans and they get things together, they coordinate, they are the brains of the operation. He supported that, but it is the road patrol that goes out there and answers the calls for service and so on and so forth. He said this plan that is going to be voted on this evening will eventually take two police officers on the road patrol. He commented that he did not know how they were going to get to filling two vacant commander spots. He said there is going to be a bunch of promotions and people are going to move up and eventually it is going to be two patrol officers that are missing, because they will become sergeants, and sergeants will become the lieutenants, and lieutenants will become captains, if it all goes in order. He was not saying it will because maybe two patrolmen will be commanders, he did not know. He felt two patrol officers will be missing. He understood that we have some vacancies. He wondered how many patrol officers are budgeted in the budget. City Manager Auger replied we have around 40 to 43. Mayor Gatt asked how many are on the road. City Manager Auger replied that we are down about five officers right now, we

have two in the background stage right now. Mayor Gatt confirmed that we have about 38 officers works. Mayor Gatt said 42, if we have vacancies, there are 37 police officers presently working, 5 more have been authorized by City Council to be hired. Is that correct? City Manager Augers said that was correct, to get to our top number, those are police officer positions. Mayor Gatt said we will keep that in mind when it is time to make those motions, 42 authorized, 37 are working now.

Mayor Gatt said his next point is regards to what Mayor Pro Tem Staudt and Member Crawford already said previously. He said this is not reflection on our present Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services, Older Adult Services Department over the years. He said that goes back to 1975, and he could tell you that the Parks and Recreation, Senior Services have been tremendous, and the are still tremendous. He thought that the older adults, now that baby boomers are older adults, that population is booming. He thought it has grown so much where it not only deserves, but it requires a separate department, a separate management, a separate system, to oversee all the things that the new senior citizens not only want, but they are demanding. He noted our city has grown 20%, in the last 10 years. He stated out of that 20%, a good portion of those people are older adults, and it is going to continue and continue. He thought people his age did not want to leave Novi, but they cannot stay in their big homes, they cannot stay in two story homes, we are lacking in adult real estate. He thought we need a new department that is going to focus strictly on that. He mentioned the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, is growing in leaps and bounds. He mentioned ITC Community Sports Park, we want to make that a world class park. He said we have already made Power Park a world class park, we have got all different kinds of new parks, and our Lakeshore Park has never been better. He felt it is time to break those two departments off and develop. He echoed what Member Crawford and Mayor Pro Tem Staudt said, this is something that he did not want to just talk about, and then not talk about it again until next time when it is a big meeting of some sort. He said when it is time for motions, he will make some sort of motion. He said we need some facts; we need some figures. He said he talked to City Manager Auger over the weekend about this, and we are not ready for any motions or anything like that. We are a long way from that, but it is time to really start serious talking about it and determining where the money will come from and what avenue, what venue will take to get that money. He said there are a lot of possibilities. He said the two things he really wanted to touch on were the Police Department, Public Safety will always be in his opinion, not just policemen, police, and fire and DPS for that matter. If you are not safe in our city, we could have the best parks in the world, nobody would care. We could have the best schools, but nobody cares, we got to be safe, and we are safe. He said we thought our Police Department was the best in the state, maybe the darn country, right? It is. He wanted to keep it that way, and we cannot keep it that way if we start robbing the patrol division, in his humble opinion. He said we will see what his colleagues have to say. He said that was all he had to say.

Mayor Gatt explained that the next part of the meeting is that Councilmembers can raise their hands and he will call on them to make a motion. He said to keep in mind it takes four votes to add something to our budget or subtract something from our budget. It takes five votes to pass a budget when we end up voting this in May.

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt said he had a few questions of Chief Zinser, and he asked him to come up to the podium. He said in his mind, one of the things that he knew least about in this budget, that was a real revelation, was the difficulty in filling the vacancies in our Police Department. He mentioned the oldest outstanding vacancy is a position that we really did not even have on the budget for a few years. He said we also have one from July and others moving forward. He asked what City Council could do for you to help you in the recruiting process, because as the Mayor said, we have five openings. He said now we are going to have a couple more because of people moving up in the ranks. He said we are going to have people retiring and moving on to other positions. He said this could mean anywhere from seven to 10 or 12 positions this year. He asked what they could do to help him achieve what you need to achieve, which what we want is full staffing. Chief Zinser explained the recruiting has become very difficult over the years. He said it is not because of necessarily the City of Novi itself. He said it is the sentiment across the country with law enforcement. He said a lot of young people are not wanting to get into law enforcement, and he had a couple examples of that. He explained that traditionally, Police Academies will have 50 cadets in the Police Academies and in the last couple of years, we are seeing where Police Academies have 25 or 30 cadets in the academies. He said on to of that, years ago, if they had 50 students, cadets in the Police Academy, many of those students we not sponsored by another agency. He explained they were paying for themselves looking for jobs, that has all flipped around so you have less people in the Academies. He said many of those people are sponsored. He said when he says the majority, he has seen that Academies, where there may be 30 cadets in the Academy and 25 of them are already sponsored. He said we go to all the Academies looking for recruits, most of them are already being sponsored by another organization. He explained when he says sponsored, the organization is paying for the Academy, they are paying the cadet the full-time salary while they are there, so they are already committed to another agency. He said we are seeing a lack of interest in law enforcement overall. He said we must really change our recruiting efforts; we must become more aggressive with the recruiting efforts. He thought the biggest thing that City Council could do is help support that, whether that is through funding or different recruiting events. How do we get the word out that Novi is where you want to be, and that is what they are working toward? He said we must become more aggressive with our hiring. He said so rather than wait for a bigger pool of applicants to apply, we have left the job posting open, like City Manager Auger said previously, we have two in the background right now, they just finished the interview process. He stated April 19th, we have five more applicants that we are interviewing. He said we are interviewing them as they are coming in, which creates a little more work, it is a little more aggressive. He felt it was worth it because we do not want to leave candidates hanging out there not knowing, we like to stay in constant contact with them. He said our hiring process, we like to get that done in about 12 weeks. That is from posting to hiring, and that is aggressive. He said if you talk to other departments, you will find out that can be several more months, through their background phases or what have you. He said they try to be as aggressive as they can to getting the applicants in here, but it is the support of aggressive recruiting efforts is really where the Council can help us. Mayor Pro Tem Staudt asked if we had partnerships with other departments in the City like Human Resources, or is that

primarily driven by the Police Department internally. Chief Zinser replied that they work closely with Human Resources on the recruiting side of things. He said they attended about 10 career fairs since last September. He said those career fairs have also changed. He said they not only go the criminal justice career fairs, but they also go the general career fairs. He said you never know, somebody who may be interested in law enforcement when they are walking around looking at the career in engineering. He said he was going to talk about the issue with career fairs. He said since COVID, they all went virtual, most of them when he said we attended 10, seven of those were virtual. He said you do not have that one-on-one contact, they schedule appointments, and based on the appointments that they schedule, so you do not get the people walking around, attracted to the law enforcement side of it. He said with the virtual career fairs we do not get a lot out of; we have been to three in person career fairs as it since the beginning of the year. He said a lot of those career fairs they are talking to lower-level educational people that are in their second or third year of college. He stated that we have a four-year degree requirement, so when we are talking to them, now we stay in contact with them as they come through. Hopefully when they do graduate, they are still interested, but it has been very challenging. He said this is not something that is unique to Novi, this is something that is across the country with recruiting, and retention, just finding interested individuals. He said we are staying as aggressive as we can to try to fill these positions. He said they do flush people out of the hiring process in the background phase for different reasons. He stated we have very high standards here at the Novi Police Department, we are very proud of those standards, we are not going to lower those standards. He said we are all very highly educated individuals, we hold ourselves to a higher standard and we hold ourselves to a higher standard, so we are very critical in our background investigations. He said we have had hiring processes in the last year where we do not hire anybody from a process, maybe interviewing or background phase. He said we just had an individual turn us down in a conditional job offer today to stay at the city of Saginaw, which he was shocked by that, but it was his family that kept him there. He said it is not for a lack of trying, we are very aggressive with the hiring process. He said they work closely with Human Resources, he would like to do a recruiting video, and they are going to get involved a little more the on social media aspect of it. He said they are utilizing a QR code on our flyers to get direct access to the application, which is what kids look for these days. Mayor Pro Tem Staudt said as somebody who works in a school environment that recruits students, we probably have increased our spending on social media tenfold in the last two years, and it doubled our student count. He said there are so many opportunities to do things, but he wanted to ask those questions. He asked Chief Zinser if he could give City Council a little bit of an overview of the restructuring that you are proposing, because it is adding some budget positions. He also asked him to give City Council an idea of how you see this increasing the efficiency of your operations and the efficiency of those who work under you. Chief Zinser replied that this will add one position. He said the idea came about when looking at what the sergeants are doing daily. He said we have a very young road patrol, as many of you probably know, and we need more oversight, more supervision, more leadership, more mentoring, out on the road. He stated right now we have many administrative assignments within the organization. He said a lot of those assignments do fall on the lieutenants and the sergeants to complete. He explained that the sergeants time has been drawn to those administrative

assignments as opposed to being out mentoring, doing leadership, and being out on the road with the officers. He said how do we accomplish taking away the administrative assignments from the sergeants and have them do what sergeants are supposed to do? He said they are supposed to be first line supervisors on the road, mentoring and doing leadership on the roadway with the officers. He said the commander positions as he envisioned it, one commander would be overseeing the Uniform Operations Division, the other commander would be assigned to oversee our Support Services Division. He said they would absorb many of those station assignments. He said currently we have Sergeant Bob Manar, who is our accreditation manager. It is also our training and standards Sergeant with our three accreditations, through Communications, MLEAC AND CALEA. He is very busy on that end of his job, so we want to take the training part of that assignment and redistribute over to the support services commander. He said the Uniforms Ops is kind of the extra layer of oversight between the lieutenants come in at noon. He said until noon, the sergeants are addressing issues that they have, maybe it is a simple question, that goes directly to the Assistant Chief, which is just not efficient. He said that is what he envisioned for the commander positions. He said then Uniforms Ops are kind of the extra layer of oversight between the lieutenants and the Assistant Chief. He stated the structure of the Police Department lieutenants come in at noon. That is what he envisioned for the commander positions. Mayor Pro Tem Staudt said we look at things like the way he looked at new leadership when it comes in, we get some fresh eyes and a fresh look, and then they get to implement their vision of what their department looks like. He did not think there is anybody here that questions your leadership in that area. He said those were the only questions he had regarding the Police Department. He said he did have one question regarding the Fire Department. He wondered if there was anything that they were missing in this budget that the Fire Department needs that they were not aware of. He explained that they were blindsided a few years ago, when they found out that we were using old air tanks and we were not aware of that. He said this was his opportunity to say, whatever you want, give us a wish list if there is anything. Chief Zinser thought they were all set right now. Mayor Pro Tem Staudt said that was the kind of news that they like to hear right now, we do not have to spend any money on that right now. Mayor Pro Tem Staudt stated this restructuring that is being proposed requires that they make some moves in the budget. One of the moves that we must make is restructuring the positions in the budget so that we have them lined up properly for the future. He said he would like to make a motion right now to amend the budget, as follows based on the recommendations of Chief Zinser on his restructuring plan.

**CM 22-04-035**

**Moved by Staudt, seconded by Casey; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Approval to amend the budget based on the recommendations of Chief Zinser and his restructuring plan: to eliminate one Assistant Chief position and to add two new Commander positions to the budget and their associated personnel costs.**

Mayor Gatt said he had a couple of questions directed towards City Manager Auger. He stated there are 42 authorized patrol officers' positions in the budget right now, is that

correct? City Manager Auger replied yes, that is correct. Mayor Gatt said presently we have 37 patrol officers working. He said if this motion passes this evening, and we create two commander positions, his first question is, do you plan on filling these immediately or on July 1st after this budget becomes effective. City Manager Auger replied, no, we have open positions right now and we've put two in the background process. Mayor Gatt said he was talking about the Commander positions. City Manager Auger replied the Commander positions will be filled as soon as we can go through a promotional process. Mayor Gatt said the new budget will not be effective until July 1st, is that correct? City Manager Augers said yes. Mayor Gatt said if we fill these two Commander positions, say immediately, within a month, where will these two positions come from? He asked if we are going to go outside and hire somebody from another City or hire from within. City Manager Auger said the goal was to hire from within. Mayor Gatt said they are going to come from within and they will come from either Lieutenants, or Sergeants or Detectives or patrol officers. City Manager Auger replied yes, that is correct. Mayor Gatt said two of those people are going to move up to command, is that correct? City Manager Auger replied yes. Mayor Gatt said so eventually, if it is two Lieutenants, then two Sergeants will replace them and then two patrol officers will replace the sergeants. So eventually there will be two less patrol officers than there are today. Is that correct? City Manager Auger said that we requested to add one position, we have eliminated the Assistant Chief position, but we did not eliminate that position in the department, but the position as an Assistant Chief, we will no longer have the Assistant Chief position, but we still have that headcount number that will be a patrol position. Mayor Gatt said he was thinking about the patrol officers.

Mayor Gatt said if he heard this correctly, the motion this evening shouldn't be to add two Commanders, it should be to add two Commanders, and one more patrol officer. City Manager Auger replied, as he understood what Mayor Pro Tem Staudt's motion is, it is just to change the structure of adding two Commander positions and fund it and remove one Assistant Chief, that was title. He said that position, but the headcount would remain in the budget as a patrol position. Mayor Gatt stated we would go from 42 authorized, which we have now, because in the budget now, we have two Assistant Chiefs. He said if he heard that correctly, we are going from 42 to 43. City Manager Auger said he believed the number was 42. Mayor Gatt asked how that is adding, we have 42 currently. City Manager Auger explained that we are adding one Commander position, if you look at the Assistant Chief position and drop that down to a Commander position, that is one of the positions we are adding, one new position to make two Commander positions. Mayor Gatt commented that what City Manager Auger said made perfect economic sense as far as the budget monies and stuff. He was talking about openings. He said two vacant Commander positions will become present, as soon as this budget is passed, or soon after this motion is passed, is that correct? He stated that we have already established that they are going to come from within the department, so that means two patrol officers are going to be missing. He said that means instead of 40, instead of 37, we will have 35 working, he understood that we are authorized for 42. He said you can hire the five people and bingo, we are not going to miss anybody, but our authorized strength will be different. City Manager Auger said we will have to hire to backfill those positions. Mayor Gatt said was his question, are we going to authorize the

City to backfill those positions by adding a patrol position right now? City Manager Auger replied yes, they asked us for one new position, and we are going to backfill the other positions. Mayor Gatt understood backfill to mean that you are going to take the vacancy that was created by the promotion and backfill it with the new person. That new person is going to come from this number 42? Or is it going to come from outside the department and that 42 is going to go up to 43? Or will it go up to 44? Mayor Gatt said if you want to be technical, we are going to be missing two patrol officers when we end up promoting two people, but we will have more money because we have eliminated an Assistant Chief, he understood that. He said he was talking about what we are missing as far as police officers. City Manager Auger explained that we, at the end of the day, we want to have one Assistant Chief, so you will have one Fire Chief and one Assistant Chief reporting to the director. He said then under the Assistant Chief, you have two Commanders, three Lieutenants, and you will still have 10 Sergeants. He said you will have 10 dispatch positions, and then 42 police officers. He explained the goal was to keep our staffing and not reduce our staffing, but add an additional position, so we can then push the Sergeant's out onto the road. Mayor Gatt said he thought he understood what Mr. Auger was saying. We are going to miss a couple of patrol officers, but we are going to fill them in. He said we could have a couple more Command officers, we will have just as many police officers, but we are not going to have as many patrol officers. City Manager Auger replied no, we will have the same amount of patrol officers. Mayor Gatt said the same amount we have now, but we will have less vacancies. City Manager Auger said we will fill the goal to fill all 42 police officer positions on patrol. Mayor Gatt said that is what is authorized right now, 42, correct? Currently we have 37 working, and we have five vacancies. He stated if we take two of those people and move them upstairs, that will leave us with 35 working patrol officers and hopefully we will hire a couple more people and that 42 will stay the same. He reiterated that we are not adding to the patrol division, we are just adding to the command range. City Manager Auger said that was correct. We are going to just add that one extra Command position to get the Sergeants more on the road. We will keep the same level of patrol. Mayor Gatt understood, but said we are taking two of those patrol officers and moving them upstairs. City Manager Auger said we will hire people to replace those two that get moved. Mayor Gatt understood it that we are going to hire new people out of the authorized number, we are not authorizing any more positions. He wondered if that was correct? City Manager Auger said correct, the 42. Mayor Gatt said we are not adding any more police officers other than what Mayor Pro Tem Staudt made the motion on. City Manager Auger said that was correct. Mayor Gatt said he understood, but he did not agree with that. He understood completely. He said two will become Command officers. City Manager Auger said we are filling those patrol positions, this budget is authorizing 42 patrol positions, the same as last year, this is not increasing that. City Manager Auger said it is maintaining that 42.

Assistant City Manager Cardenas said they have the listing. He explained in terms of the Assistant Chiefs as your reference, you are going to have now the Assistant Chief and you have the two Commanders, instead of five open positions, you will have seven open positions. So, we are going to be hiring an additional two people. He said yes, in essence, two are going to be gone, but then we are putting two more in there, so it will still be a

total of 42. Mayor Gatt understood that we are increasing the number of police officers and that is good. He thought his goal was to add more because he thought we are taking away a couple patrol officers. He asked if there was any further discussion on this motion?

**Roll call vote on CM 22-04-035**

**Yeas: Casey, Crawford, Fischer, Smith, Thomas, Gatt, Staudt**

**Nays: None**

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt mentioned back in 2017 we increased our patrol officers from 43 to 45. He said that same year, leadership decided that they wanted to, instead of using those as patrol officers, make them detectives. He said we moved from 45 patrol officers at the time to 43. He stated a few more years later, we created a Lieutenant's position that Lieutenant's position was offset by the reduction of one patrol officer. He stated it was an even swap at the time, we were in COVID, we were being very cautious. In addition, at that time we removed a position from the budget that was still sworn we did not eliminate it. He said we just did not budget for it that year, and we reduced our count to 41 patrol officers. He stated the following year, we were presented with a budget with 41 patrol officers. There was discussion at the table, we increased that count to 42 by taking that position that was set aside for a year and made it an active position again. He said move forward to today, we are still at 42. We have never replaced the officer that was removed, the patrol officer that was removed at the time that we created the lieutenant's position. He said we are a city that has grown exponentially since 2017 and increased our overall count within the department by one. He thought it was time that we consider additional patrol officers. He knew the Chief has not been consulted and nobody else has, but at the end of the day, if in 2017 we needed 43, in 2022-23 we need 43.

**CM 22-04-036**

**Moved by Staudt, seconded by Gatt; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY:**

**Approval to increase our patrol officer positions by one to reflect the replacement of the loss of the lieutenant driven position in 2020.**

Member Thomas said she would like to hear what Chief Zinser's thoughts on that motion. She wondered if he thought we needed additional personnel and if that would benefit our community. Chief Zinser agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Staudt that we have grown considerably over the years, and yet, we are still at a level that we have been in previous years. He said he was fully in support of adding another officer. He said at the end of the day, we are here to put police officers on the streets to keep our community safe. He stated that we have a lot of special assignments, which are extremely important to our organization, those special assignments add to the success of our organization, no doubt about it. He said it is important to him to put as many police officers on the street as he could to get them in the neighborhoods, the businesses, all of it. So yes, he absolutely supported any additional police officer.

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt explained that in 2017, we had 69 sworn officers, then we added those two, we went up to 71 sworn officers. As of today in this budget, we went from 71 to 72. He proposed that we go from 72 to 73. In other words, a net gain of four sworn officers in a period of six or seven years in one of the fastest growing communities in the state of Michigan. He thought this is extremely well warranted. He thought it is something that, if we had the finances to add another three, four or five, he suspected the Chief would figure out a way to use it.

**Roll call vote on CM 22-04-036**

**Yeas: Crawford, Fischer, Smith, Thomas, Gatt, Staudt, Casey**

**Nays: None**

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt commented that one of the most important things about budgets, and usually the thing that he is looking at first, is what our Fund Balance is. He said this budget drops our Fund Balance down to roughly 24%. He said Member Fischer tells him over and over, it really does not matter. He said it does not matter what it is today, it matters how it ends up at the end of the fiscal year. He agreed with Member Fischer on that, however, we have a Capital Improvement Program Fund (CIP), and we have some projects that fit extremely well. He thought the project for the Lakeshore Park Pedestrian Tunnel replacement is something that was funded, the Lakeshore Park improvements were funded by the Capital Improvement Program and when he says the program, he was speaking of the millage and there are funds. He stated right now there is about \$3.7 million available in there, so that would absorb that \$500,000. He said the \$1.5 million for the Splash Pad was another project that fits our Capital Improvement goals very well, that is what that Fund was created for. He made a motion to move those two projects and move the funding from the General Fund to the Capital Improvement Millage Fund.

**CM 22-04-037**

**Moved by Staudt, seconded by Gatt; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Approval to move funding from the General Fund to CIP Millage Fund for the Splash pad for approximately \$1.5 million and Lakeshore Park tunnel for approximately \$500,000.**

Member Fischer asked just the point of clarification. He said in Director Johnson's opening comments, he alluded to the fact that the Lakeshore Park Pedestrian Tunnel project and the Splash Pad are currently in this budget coming out of the General Fund. He thought it was based on what Assistant City Manager Cardenas said earlier on the budget transfers. He said he was on board with this because he did think it is there. He asked for confirmation that both the Splash Pad and the Lakeshore Pedestrian Tunnel are currently in this budget coming out of the General Fund, and that this motion accomplishes what we are all trying to do. Mr. Johnson replied, the reason he did not highlight it specifically was on an annual basis. The General Fund usually contributes about \$300,000 to \$400,000. He said the Lakeshore Park Pedestrian Tunnel was part of our normal appropriation to the Parks and Recreation Fund. He stated the Splash Pad was over and above that normal, that is why he did not specifically highlight it. He confirmed yes, both, are in fact, part of

the contribution from the General Fund to the Parks and Recreation Fund. Member Fischer said he understood that disconnect now and he would support the motion.

Mayor Gatt asked City Clerk Hanson if she could read off the motion again. City Clerk Hanson said the motion is taking the two projects mentioned, the Splash Pad for approximately \$1.5 million and the Lakeshore Park Pedestrian Tunnel for approximately \$500,000 and moving the funding from the General Fund to the CIP Millage Fund.

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt said there is one other part to this that we need to make sure we have a budget change that he just realized. He said in addition to that, we are expecting \$400,000 in pledged revenues to that project, those revenues would then be put into the Capital Improvement Millage Fund (CIP) to help offset the cost of that project. He said whenever it comes in, it would go to the Capital Improvement Program Millage Fund (CIP) so that if the project's \$1.5 million and we get \$400,000, it is really \$1.1 million.

**AMENDED MOTION**

**CM 22-04-037      Moved by Staudt, seconded by Gatt; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Approval to move funding from the General Fund to CIP Millage Fund for the Splash pad for approximately \$1.5 million and Lakeshore Park tunnel for approximately \$500,000 and to include any contributions for the Splash pad as revenue in the CIP Millage Fund.**

**Roll call vote on CM 22-04-037**

**Yeas: Fischer, Smith, Thomas, Gatt, Staudt,  
Casey, Crawford**

**Nays: None**

Member Fischer wanted to make a few quick comments regarding the Senior Services. He thought the Mayor put it best. He stated this didn't have anything having to do with the current regime and the Parks and Recreation Department. He thought there was a lot of effort to maybe split this apart and put some focus on Senior Services. He said they talked about it at the last meeting about a month ago. He said he was not prepared to make any necessarily budget changes related to it. He thought City Manager Auger has clear instruction to hit the ground running with this and come back to City Council. He thought that was what they told him a month ago, you had a month or two to come back to Council with some recommendations on where we are going to go next. He said he was still on board with that direction. He appreciated the comments and agreed with much of what was said on Senior Services. The only budget item he wanted to bring up was alluded to by the Mayor Pro Tem as well. We have a gem of a park in ITC Community Sports Park that was built several years ago. He said it needs a face lift. He said they have kicked around where to fund it from, and they have kicked around dollar amounts, millions, five million, tens of millions. He thought it was time to get serious about having some of those discussion on what we want that park to be. What amenities are we missing? What we need to do is give our Parks and Recreation Department the resources to work with a consultant and really dive into those discussions and come up with some proposals to bring to City Council and to have that policy discussion. He asked his colleagues to support a motion to add \$50,000 into the Parks and Recreation Fund from

the Capita Improvement Fund, because eventually that is where he would assume that funding would come from for \$50,000 for the Parks Department to go ahead and start working on a needs assessment and start that dialogue.

**CM 22-04-038            Moved by Fischer, seconded by Casey; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Approval to add \$50,000 into CIP Fund for Parks and Recreation to start working on a needs assessment for ITC Park.**

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt said he was happy to hear the number \$50,000. He thought this must be more than a bunch of cometic drawings. He thought this needed to be engineering studies, potential expansion into the property that is next door if that is at all possible. He said there are parks that need major renovations. He also thought this need to be the beginning of a dialogue with some of the teams that are using those facilities. He said we need to figure out what we are going to do in the interim between you know, how we are going to tis thing, how are we going to fund it, and how we are going to put people while we are grading down the mound on the soccer fields, and it is going to take a year or two to rebuild that and regrow grass. He felt there will be a lot of thought and a lot of process that will go into this. He said Member Fischer would be a really strong advocate if we put together something, and if the Mayor chose to do a committee or something. He thought it would be good to start thinking about this, but his is not just your run of the mill this is not let's draw some pretty pictures and make the park look pretty. He said this is how do we get the outfield to stop being at a 10-degree decline.

Member Casey wanted to go on record completely supporting this as well. She has been on the CIP Committee for the last several years and watched us move the ITC Park pricing and planning around. She was excited to give the Parks and Recreation Department an opportunity to put some thought and get some money to put some thought behind what the park should look like. As per the previous speaker, she has heard quite often from some of the end users of that park, who have expressed interest in having a chance to give their perspective and give their point of view. She knew that Director Muck has been very open to and has plans in place to integrate some for the feedback from those groups already.

**Roll call vote on CM 22-04-038**

**Yeas: Smith, Thomas, Gatt, Staudt, Casey,  
Crawford, Fischer**

**Nays: None**

City Manager Auger said we normally set the Public Hearing and the City Clerk's office sets that up. Mayor Pro Tem Staudt said we are making a motion to schedule a Public Hearing. He said then they will reconvene after the Public Hearing is completed. City Manager Auger said that was correct.

**CM 22-04-039            Moved by Staudt, seconded by Gatt; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY:**

**Approval to set a Public Hearing and cancel the Budget meeting.**

**Roll call vote on CM 22-04-039**

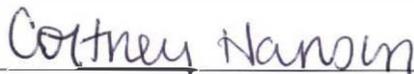
**Yeas: Thomas, Gatt, Staudt, Casey, Crawford,  
Fischer, Smith**

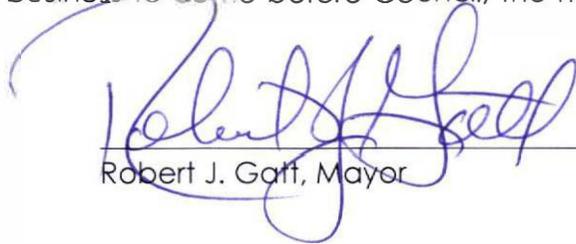
**Nays: None**

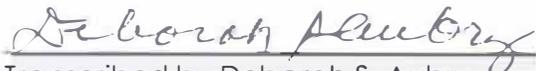
Mayor Gatt said before he called for audience comment again, he wanted to go over the motions. The first was to eliminate in the system one Assistant Chief position and add two Commander positions. The second was to add one police officer position. The third was to move the Splash Pad and the Lakeshore Park Pedestrian Tunnel funding from the General Fund to the Capital Improvement Fund. The fourth was to add \$50,000 to the Capital Improvement Fund to study the ITC Community Sports Park. He said on behalf of his colleagues, he thanked the City Staff that was there to our City Attorney, City Administration and to the millions watching. He said of a lot of work went into this budget process and a lot of went into the deliberations. He said these four things did not just pop in their head that evening. He thanked everyone.

**AUDIENCE COMMENT: None**

**ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 P.M.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cortney Hanson, City Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert J. Gatt, Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Transcribed by Deborah S. Aubry

Date approved: April 25, 2022