

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVI
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026, AT 7:00 P.M.**

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Mayor Fischer, Mayor Pro Tem Casey, Council Members Gurumurthy, Heintz, Martinez, Smith, Staudt

ALSO PRESENT: Victor Cardenas, City Manager
Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager
Tom Schultz, City Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

CM 26-01-010 Moved by Casey, seconded by Martinez; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

To approve the agenda as presented.

Roll call vote on CM 26-01-010 **Yeas: Casey, Gurumurthy, Heintz, Martinez,
Smith, Staudt, Fischer**
Nays: None

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

PRESENTATIONS:

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Millage

Mayor Fischer said City Manager Cardenas has been moving quickly on one of Council's goals, the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Millage renewal. He said oftentimes, he and his colleagues don't talk very much after a presentation because the presenters do such a good job, but there were a couple of decision points, based on the memo that had been sent to Council by the City Manager's office that might have required some discussion and thoughts at the meeting. Mayor Fischer said he was giving Council advance notice to pay close attention to what City Manager Cardenas had to say and they should be prepared to discuss it.

City Manager Cardenas said they have three decisions points that he wanted Council to discuss. This is a current goal as well as a goal from the last goal-setting session. They've been looking at this for quite some time. They had to wait until the public safety bond was approved last year. To review, back in 2016, this was put before voters on the August election. It was approved. It was a 10-year millage up to 1 mill. A Capital mill (or CIP) means anything over \$25,000. The main purpose of the millage was to support parks, new city facilities, some pathway sidewalks, fire apparatuses (which have gotten very expensive in the last 10 years), or any other kind of infrastructure possibilities that the Council may deem a priority. He showed a slide called "2016 City of Novi Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Millage Staff Fact Sheet Tuesday, August 2" and said this was

some of the public relations they had. It included the information, the promise to the voters and laid out what amount they asked for and what it would cost.

City Manager Cardenas said as he looked into this, he was very impressed by what they were able to accomplish. He showed a slide called "Major Accomplishments (2017 – Present)" that highlights some of the big projects they were able to do such as Lakeshore Park building/renovations, park land acquisitions/preservation and shoreline stabilization, fire apparatus replacements (3 engines, 1 ladder) and the DPW expansion. He said he is surprised by everything they've been able to take advantage of and finance in the last 10 years. He said Council got right to work in 2017. He went into more detail about the fire apparatuses. He said they were able to acquire three engines. One of them is a ladder truck which was very expensive but well needed. Chief Martin loves his ladder truck. He said the DPW expansion was a big thing as was the ITC Trail and many, many other projects.

City Manager Cardenas showed a slide called "Lakeshore Park Building and Renovations" and said it is completely different now. The building is a jewel that is well-used by Novi's camps. His own kids attended the camp there. The pavilion to the south of that is also brand new. The whole area with the library machine and the tunnel that was constructed recently have breathed new life into Lakeshore Park. There were a bunch of Parkland acquisitions, like Shawood Lake, the Northwest Park, the ITC Community Sports Park to the east of that, and Bosco fields and all of the developments there with the land transfer from our friends at Novi schools, providing much-needed capacity for Novi's soccer-loving residents and kids.

City Manager Cardenas said recently, for preservation purposes, Council decided to acquire the property at the corner of 12 Mile and Novi Road. This was from the County in a tax foreclosure. It is several acres that are now in Council's hands for preservation purposes for the foreseeable future.

City Manager Cardenas put up a slide called "DPW Expansion and Redesign" and said that a big thing for Novi's staff was the Public Works expansion and redesign of the facility. He said the pictures shown didn't fully capture how impressive the building is. He said for roughly 30 males, there were only two urinals and one bathroom stall. Now that there are several different facilities that support a modern-day Public Works facility, they don't need to bring in bathrooms in the summer for seasonal and full-time staff. One of the other major improvements with this facility is the ability to house all the trucks under one roof. This really increases the longevity of the vehicles.

City Manager Cardenas said another addition to Novi's facilities was Jessica's Splash Pad at Bosco Fields. The number of attendees for the splash pad increases each year.

City Manager Cardenas said it's time to be thinking about this now because Council has seen it as a priority to renew it. The last tax collection will be this summer. It will not show up in the fiscal year 2026-2027 if it is not approved by the voters. It provides stable funding for our capital needs such as anything over \$25,000, which, unfortunately, all the costs

have increased from normal light-duty vehicles, large trucks, Novi's plow trucks and the fire apparatuses. It also supports the long-range plans for the 2050 efforts as well.

City Manager Cardenas showed another slide called "Decision #1: Election Timing" and echoed what Mayor Fischer said about there being three decisions City Council needs to advise them on. There are two elections coming up that are already planned---the August election and the November election. They believe there is a countywide enhancement millage for the intermediate school district that is going to occur on the August ballot. In November, there will be a very busy ballot with the congressional, the U.S. Senate, all the state representatives, the state senators, the governor, the secretary of state and the attorney general. The filing dates are listed for them to get the language in for either election.

City Manager Cardenas said the second decision is how long City Council would like the millage to last. 10 years ago, they went to voters with a 10-year guarantee. They have an option for 10 years, 20 years or an indefinite timeline which would require a charter amendment, and which would have a little bit sooner of a requirement according to City Attorney Schultz because that would have consideration by the Attorney General's Office as well as the Secretary of State.

The third decision City Manager Cardenas put before Council is the rate. One mill is what they went to the voters with 10 years ago. Since then, the Headlee rollbacks have occurred, so instead of one, it's down to .94 which would give Council \$4.9 million. One mill would return up to about \$5.1 million all told. These figures are based on 2025 values. 2026 will be a little bit more than \$5.1 million if they go back to one mill.

City Manager Cardenas outlined different ideas of what City Council could consider where those funds could go. The ITC redevelopment in terms of not only the current ITC in that parcel, but also the parcel to the east of it from the last 10 years' proceeds. They could reimagine that whole area. There have been many discussions at the Council's table about a community center and/or a senior activity space. Fire apparatuses need to be maintained and replaced every 6-10 years. They could opt for more acquisition and pre-preservation of lands similar to what they did at 12 Mile and Novi Road. They could continue sidewalk and boardwalk enhancements and connections where gaps exist currently throughout the city.

City Manager Cardenas showed a slide called "Next Steps" that outlines what staff needs from Council to move forward. He said once they get direction from Council, they will draft the language, make sure they get all the different resolutions they need to get on that date's ballot, and then come up with a public engagement strategy similar to what they did with the bond initiative--visiting HOAs, talking to community groups, adding information sessions to HOA breakfasts, all the things they've been successful with, not only with the first CIP millage, but also the road millage override and expansion they did about 10, maybe 12 years ago. They've had good luck with different initiatives to support the infrastructure and support the needs of the city. They would mirror that for this initiative as well, if that is what Council decides.

Mayor Fischer said that was a good report about what has been accomplished by city administration and prior councils and the promises that were kept from 10 years ago and some exciting things that can come.

Member Staudt said about 14-15 years ago, he and Mayor Gatt started talking about this initiative. They were coming out of a very difficult time, a recession. Things looked very difficult in terms of having available funding for capital improvement projects. They had \$100 million worth of projects to get done for the City. Over a couple of years, they worked their way through it and came up with the final proposal they put in front of the voters. In a very narrow race, the voters approved it. Part of the reason they went with a 10-year term rather than a 20-year or an unlimited term was that they felt like they needed to prove to the voters that they could responsibly handle their money. He said if you look at the outcome from how Council has spent that money over the years, it was a resounding yes. He said they are going to turn to the voters, and he feels like they have a responsibility to do another 10-year program to show that they can responsibly spend their money on things that are of benefit and of need to the City. Some of the things are related to parks. Some of the things will be related to public safety. None of the things will be road related. Road funding is a separate, entirely different pot of money. This money will be for all the things they all want to have done, but responsibly, they can't do 100% of it.

Member Staudt said the two things that are most important to him are the community senior center that he hopes will be built on the property of the current police station and the expansion and enhancement of the ITC park. He was a Park Commissioner in 2000 and they were talking about how outdated the park was then. That was 25 years ago. They have purchased 91 acres so they can expand the park. He said they have so much to do there. The irrigation systems and the drainage are just not acceptable for a first-class facility. Those are just two of the things; they have a whole list of many, many things they'd like to get done. He had a pop-up on his computer on YouTube that highlighted the 10 best cities to live in in Michigan. Novi was rated #5. He said Council and staff are always striving for #1. Without having these additional funds to fund programs like these, he doesn't believe Novi will get there. They have to continue to push and this money gives them the ability to do that. \$5 million a year or more for the next 10 years is \$50-60 million, a minimum of \$20 million of that will go into ITC park. He said it gets more and more difficult every year. Money becomes more and more important to really working hard to spend it in a wise and frugal manner. He said he didn't know he'd be here 10 years later, but here he is. This is an opportunity for him to be able to vote on the successor bill.

Member Staudt said he hopes the citizens of Novi really understand that this isn't just like "Hey, we don't really need this." These are the fire trucks. These are the things that, in addition to parks, woodlands and wetlands, these are things we really need. He's looking forward to advancing this proposal. He believes they should renew the 1 mill for 10 years by asking the voters for their support again so Council can prove to them that they're responsible and forward-thinking.

Member Smith said he agrees with Member Staudt. The CIP has been a great tool for getting the things that the City needs like fire trucks, police cars and things like that. It has also helped them get things they want like more land and better parks. One of the things he hears consistently from residents is they'd like to preserve land. Realistically, the only way they can preserve land as a city is to buy it. The CIP gives them the tools to be able to react when things become available such as the 90 acres east of the ITC park. They were able to get that without impacting the rest of the budget adversely. It's a great tool and he supports renewing it wholeheartedly. He believes the August election is probably the best time to do it. Normally, he would be in favor of doing it in November, but there is already an election scheduled in August and the November ballot is going to be crowded. He wants to make sure they are able to talk to voters and get them out to come support this. He said renewing it for 10 or 20 years would be great and for one mill. They have seen the effects of the Headlee rollbacks on the last 10 years. If they renew it at that current rate of .94, they'd just see that erode again. He suggested starting off at one mill and letting Headlee do its thing and erode that. He reiterated that he supports putting this on the August ballot for one mill for either 10 or 20 years and they'll continue to do good things with the money.

Member Gorumurthy complimented the City team for doing an amazing job using the CIP to get so many above and beyond projects completed. She fully supports the renewal. From the list, one of the things she is passionate about is finding out what the Novi community wants in terms of the community center and the senior activity center. Before they begin anything, she feels like this is an important first step. She said Council has been procuring a lot of land, the ITC land and the adjacent lands, and this will help them develop it and make it more accessible to residents. She supports putting it on the August ballot because it is less crowded and it also gives Council some time to react based on what they get from the results. She supports a 10-year timeframe with inflation going on. She believes it would be best to keep things the same so residents don't feel overwhelmed by committing to something for 20 years. She supports one mill.

Member Heintz echoed what other members have said. He loved seeing the list. It's so impressive to see what has been done with the money and he thanked staff for putting that together. He supports the idea of a 10-year term with the thoughts that Member Staudt shared. It holds Council accountable, making sure they are doing things in a responsible way. All of the things they've talked about using the money for such as the community center, the ITC park, and purchasing land for green preservation are very important. He believes having the one mill rate seems important. In terms of election timing, he is open to whatever is the most successful. The discussion focused on the August election, and he is supportive of that.

Member Martinez echoed the appreciation to the staff for working on this. He said the CIP has been a great project that everyone has taken on over the past 10 years. What he believes is the most successful part is that Council has been effective at showing the residents how this millage touches virtually every service they provide as a city. He'd like to think that that remains the forefront of their pitch to the residents, reminding them of the quality of life that we all enjoy in Novi. The services that are provided are top-notch,

but they're top-notch for a reason. It's because the residents are willing to take that step and make the investment in the city and where they live.

Member Martinez said he is generally averse to August ballot questions like this because he has not seen an August election yet that has brought the community out in droves to have their voices heard. Whether that's a yes or a no vote, he hasn't seen it happen either way. His thinking is that they have a November election where it's all but certain they'll get a higher voter turnout than the August election. He said even if you account for ballot drop-off and people who don't want to finish the ballot all the way, from his review of the data, they'll still have more people getting to those questions in the November ballot than the August ballot. From that standpoint, it makes sense to put it on the November ballot. That way, they can go forward confidently with a mandate from the residents. Hopefully, a majority of voters will come out in support of this. It allows Council to show their cards to the residents, tell them that Council values their input, that they want to hear from the voters, and that they want to know what matters to the residents. He said he knows the City team is going to do a great ground game to get that message out and make sure they are connecting with the residents. The November election strikes him as the more palatable option in order to get the consensus from the residents. As far as how long the term of the millage should be, he leans more toward the 10-year option because they want to be able to show the residents that they are being good stewards of the finances that the voters are providing them. 10 years would give them the opportunity to do that. He is not offended by a 20-year plan because they are already doing some work on the Novi 2050 plan. Having some of that context here can help them. It reinforces the point to residents that they are forward thinking, that they are looking down the line and that if the voters were to trust them with a 20-year millage, they could show them a list of all the things they believe they could do in that time. He said he didn't want to deviate from what the 2050 plan is already focusing on, but he thinks there is an element of this millage that could be really important there. He thinks that Member Smith said it about the Headlee rollbacks and all of that being in effect, it makes sense to put the one mill no matter what, regardless of when you do it and for how long.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said she is proud of the work the City has done to use the CIP millage funds as wisely as they have. She believes they have done some good things and some great things. She noted that Council members are subject to the millage payments just like other residents. She believes they have a good story they can use to tell the residents they can trust the Council to do good things with the money they are asking the voters to give them. She said the projects the CIP money has been spent on are not things the general fund could have paid for. They are seeing increases in costs, in some cases almost double the cost for items like fire engines. They know costs are going up. They would have hard trade-offs if they weren't able to get the millage passed. With the money they've got in the general fund, they wouldn't be able to do a lot of the things they want to do, not just the big things, but they'd be having trade-offs with some of the things they do on a general basis. From that perspective, she believes this is an important conversation. It's an important millage for them to have the voters and residents trust them with. She absolutely supports one mill for 10 years. She believes asking residents to renew the opportunity they had initially is the right way to go. She appreciates the

comments about a 20-year term and tying it to 2050, but they'll have the opportunity in 10 years to come back and continue to show value and ask for funding. She is leaning toward one mill for 10 years and she is comfortable with an August ballot. She said that's because of the way elections run these days where you don't have to go in person and it's easy to get a mail-in ballot. She feels comfortable that the people who want to vote will have the opportunity to vote. They don't have to go to a precinct. They can vote in the comfort of their own home. We are not excluding people who aren't in town or who are busy and can't attend.

Mayor Fischer said he appreciated all his colleagues being forthcoming and participating in the dialogue. He agreed with many of the comments that were made. He said the list of the things they've been able to do is amazing. There are some wants in there like a splash pad, things that they wouldn't have been able to do, there are some preservation of woodlands and wetlands which they all know is very near and dear to many residents. They also had some needs that were taken care of as well. He believes the DPW expansion, the fire trucks and the ladder truck could not have been purchased without the funding from this plan. He said it was said during goal setting how important this is because if this does not go forward, if they can't convince voters that they've done the right thing, they are back to funding all these things through the general fund. They would need to figure out how to get \$5 million or so each year from the general fund and they certainly don't want to go down that path.

Mayor Fischer said as far as the different decisions, he is not offended by the 20-year term. He was originally leaning that way, but he gotten his head around the whole renewal concept. He would like to go back to voters and say they had a program of 10 years and one mill. They think they've done a great job, and they'd like the voters to renew it for them. He believes August is a good time to go because that election is already scheduled. There are going to be a couple of different items on there, but it gives people the opportunity to know it is coming. He said sometimes when you get something like a November ballot, there's so much stuff on it that people don't have the opportunity to research and make an educated decision. The State of Michigan gives Council four dates each year to choose for elections. He asked Clerk Hanson for clarification—February, May and August—three dates they can choose. He believes August is a fair date that will not cost the City additional funds to run another election, but at the same time, it won't be overly burdensome to understand what is on the ballot.

Mayor Fischer told City Manager Cardenas that he believes they heard some consensus that should help the staff to keep the work going. He asked if there was anything else City Manager Cardenas needed from Council. City Manager Cardenas said no, he believes this is a great, clear direction. He said they'll package it all up and bring it back, most likely at the next meeting in February, so they can get off and running with education efforts for Novi residents and stakeholders.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: None

ATTORNEY REPORT: None

AUDIENCE COMMENTS:

The property owner at 723 South Lake Drive said she invested money into a lot on South Lake Drive 20 years ago. She saved the property for her kids and now her son is married with children and they'd like to build a house. She is having a problem with her next-door neighbor. She paid \$2,400 for a survey. She said he put a fence up on her property. When she asked him to move it and do it right, without fighting, he said it wouldn't happen. He has been trying to buy her property for 20 years and she doesn't want to sell it because she has saved it for her kids. When she asked, they said she had to get a lawyer. She doesn't want to deal with the police, and she doesn't want to go into very expensive legal fighting and paying for lawyers. She said she has paid taxes all these years on an empty lot. She's happy that her kids want to build a house, and she hopes they don't have problems after that.

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS AND APPROVALS:

CM 26-01-011 Moved by Casey, seconded by Smith; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

To approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

- A. Approve Minutes of:
January 26, 2026- Regular Meeting
- B. Approval of request to transfer ownership of an existing 2025 Class C license from CH Novi LLC to Bloomfield 14, LLC (dba Emagine Theater), located at 44425 W Twelve Mile Rd., Novi, MI 48377.
- C. Approval of Traffic Controls Order 26-01 through 26-10 for various regulatory signs for Bolingbrooke Lane, Ellesmere Circle, and Yardley Drive within the Bolingbrooke subdivision.
- D. Conditional approval of a Pawnbroker License requested by Thomas Blaine, Novi Jewelry & Coin, Inc., located at 41990 Grand River Avenue.
- E. Approval of Resolution authorizing a Renewal of a Uniform Video Service Local Franchise Agreement with DIRECTV, LLC, as transferee of AT&T Michigan.
- F. Approval to award an annual contract to Eganix, Inc., for a FOG (Fats, Oils and Grease) Prevention Program.
- G. Approval of an annual contract with KUBRA for use of their water utility customer portal, Dropcountr, in the amount of \$26,231 per year. The contract term is three years.
- H. Enter Executive Session immediately following the regular meeting of February 9, 2026, in the Council Annex for the purpose of discussing union negotiations.

I. Approval of claims and warrants – Warrant 1196.

Roll call vote on CM 26-01-011

**Yeas: Gurumurthy, Heintz, Martinez, Smith,
Staudt, Fischer, Casey
Nays: None**

MATTERS FOR COUNCIL ACTION:

1. Consideration of the award of the Village Wood Road Reconstruction project contract to Fonson Company, Inc, in the amount of \$1,527,724.

City Manager Cardenas said this project includes reconstruction of Village Wood Road between Cranbrook and Haggerty. Along with the construction of the road will be the installation of storm and sewer and a 6' sidewalk on the north side of the road.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey asked City Manager Cardenas about the timing of the construction. She asked if it would be spring/summer. He said they're looking at getting the construction underway in June and completing it in mid-September.

CM 26-01-012 Moved by Casey, seconded by Martinez: MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Approval to award the Village Wood Reconstruction project contract to Fonson Company, Inc, the qualified low bidder, in the amount of \$1,527,724.

Roll call vote on CM 26-01-012

**Yeas: Heintz, Martinez, Smith, Staudt, Fischer,
Casey, Gurumurthy
Nays: None**

2. Consideration of approval of resolution to authorize Budget Amendment #2026-3

CM 26-01-013 Moved by Casey, seconded by Gurumurthy: MOTION CARRIED 7-0

Approval of resolution to authorize Budget Amendment #2026-3.

Roll call vote on CM 26-01-013

**Yeas: Martinez, Smith, Staudt, Fischer, Casey,
Gurumurthy, Heintz
Nays: None**

3. Consideration of Ordinance 26-184.01 to amend the City of Novi Code of Ordinances, Chapter 16, "Garbage and Refuse", to allow for rates to be set by user fee. FIRST READING

City Manager Cardenas said when they chose a consolidated single hauler, the ordinance was written in a way that the City can only charge what was bid for those services. Unfortunately, since then, the cost of recycling has gone up. Novi is, per capita,

the biggest recycling entity in our consortium. To that end, those costs are not being passed on to the user, so the general fund is being tasked for a lot more. Right now, the general fund has been absorbing some of the costs to the tune of \$400,000-\$500,000 a year for Novi's recycling efforts. The cost per car for household hazardous waste events is also increasing. They are looking at making small increases to the charges that our residents pay for recycling. This ordinance amendment allows them to do so.

Member Heintz said he appreciates the support of this program because it demonstrates how Novi prioritizes recycling. He would like to continue to support residents recycling at the rates they are. He asked if there is anything they can do to ensure they're not adding any undue burden, whether it be contaminant material or anything like that, to make sure things are as streamlined as possible.

CM 26-01-014 Moved by Heintz, seconded by Smith: MOTION CARRIED 7-0

Approval of Ordinance 26-184.01 to amend the City of Novi Code of Ordinances, Chapter 16, "Garbage and Refuse", Article IV, "Collection, Recycling and Disposal," section 16-71, "Rates and Payment to Waste Hauler," and section 16-72, "Rate to be Adopted by Resolution," to allow for rates to be set by user fee. FIRST READING

Member Martinez addressed City Attorney Schultz. He said that recently, there was discussion at the Supreme Court over franchise fees and how those were being treated. He thinks the Supreme Court ended up ruling that they were an unlawful tax. He asked if there are any concerns on that end that this could fall into that same fate or is this well within Council's boundaries and what they're able to do. City Attorney Schultz said it's well within Council's boundaries. There is case law that talks about using rates to pay for garbage and refuse services. He said it's pretty standard.

Roll call vote on CM 26-01-014

**Yeas: Smith, Staudt, Fischer, Casey,
Gurumurthy, Heintz, Martinez
Nays: None**

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS: None

AUDIENCE COMMENT: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Ordinance Review Committee – Mayor Fischer

Mayor Fischer said they met before the Council meeting to discuss the potential creation of a brownfield authority in the City of Novi. There is some good information in Council's packet. The committee asked City Manager Cardenas and City Attorney Schultz to put the appropriate documents in front of Council for consideration to move forward with that authority. That will be forthcoming.

2. Environmental Sustainability Committee - Councilmember Smith

Member Smith said they met just before the Council meeting. They discussed the proposal from My Green Michigan for a pilot program for food waste composting. That would be kind of like how recycling started in Novi where you would take it to a location rather than having a curbside pickup. They will be doing some more work on that. He said they expect to bring something to Council for that sometime in March. They also discussed the upcoming Arbor Day celebration in Novi. They want to talk to residents and start the education and outreach process to encourage people to look at what they're recycling, what they're planting in their gardens and what they've got growing on their property. He said this includes things like invasive species removal such as buckthorn, Bradford pears and other plants that were sold by home centers that are invasive. They'll meet again in March.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL ISSUES: None

COMMUNICATIONS: None

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 P.M.

S//

Cortney Hanson, City Clerk

S//

Justin Fischer, Mayor

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Transcribed by Diana Charles
Customer Service Representative

Date approved: February 23, 2026