

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVI
MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2025, 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, Smith, Staudt, Thomas

ALSO PRESENT: Victor Cardenas, City Manager
Tom Schultz, City Attorney

Mayor Fischer wanted to take this opportunity to thank Fox Run for allowing them to hold the City Council meeting there. It occurred to him that in all of his years of being involved, they have never held a regular City Council meeting outside of their Council Chambers. This is a very special event tonight to be able to bring local government to the Fox Run community and to hopefully hear some of what's going on at Fox Run through the audience participation section of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

CM 25-01-07 Moved by Casey, seconded by Smith; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

To approve the agenda as presented.

Roll call vote on CM 25-01-07 **Yeas: Casey, Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith, Staudt, Thomas, Fischer**
Nays: None

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

PRESENTATIONS:

Novi Public Library Annual Report:

Julie Farkas, Library Director, said thank you for the opportunity to be there at Fox Run and to present their annual report. She wanted to thank the amazing residents of Fox Run and the fabulous staff for the many opportunities for building relationships and program partnering over the years. They have been serving the Fox Run community for at least 15 years, which will be the age of the library building in June of 2025. Each interaction with a resident and staff member is always enjoyed and appreciated. The Fox Run staff and residents have been receptive over the years to connecting with the Novi Library and she truly appreciates their overwhelming support. They get great response from those partnerships and connections they have. They have supported numerous book clubs that are run by residents of Fox Run and they use library material. They've offered digital literacy programs to learn the newest and greatest with technology and downloading books and music. They've hosted many well-known authors at Fox Run for the residents and community, provided educational programs such as financial literacy, concerns about book banning, health & wellness, and topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. They've welcomed donations from Fox Run residents to be offered in the library's Book Nook. They've offered many library card signup events, and they love the ones that are hosted during happy hour. They've participated in Fox Run's annual expo which gives all the residents opportunity to look at clubs. They've been a sponsor of the annual gala. They offer books by mail to the residents who cannot get to the library. They considered the residents of Fox Run when

adding the lending library to Lakeshore Park, knowing it would be closer and hopefully easier to drive to the park to grab a great read. They've provided many tours of the library to residents and even locked about 150 of them in for a night of dancing, wine and music. They enjoy hanging out with all of them but most of all, they have built long time and meaningful friendships with many of the residents and the staff.

Dana VanOast, Communications Manager, was presented the 2023-2024 annual report. She said it was special to be there at Fox Run because it's a place where NPL feel so much love and support from the residents. There are two versions of the annual report: one was a printout of their first ever digital annual report and the second is a shortened version that they can use for outreach in library use. For this presentation, she referenced the digital version because it's more robust. People can download the full digital version by visiting novilibrary.org/annual-report. Page one of the report features a letter from the board president, Mark Sturing, where he talks about the library's impressive year, their extensive programming, loaning of materials, their strategic plan and how they continue to use it as a guiding light while they evolve as a library while continuing to meet the needs of the community. He also speaks about the future and where they are heading. They highlighted their major accomplishments of 2023-2024. In April 2024, the library board approved a one year strategic work plan for this current fiscal year. This plan details the ways the Novi Public Library will work towards its four strategic goals, align funding and services, improve internal communications, adapt resources, services & facilities, and staff investment & retention. In October they introduced a brand new online event calendar, meeting room software called Library Market, which allows them for better flexibility with their patrons for registering for their programs and booking their meeting spaces online. Spring into fall of 2024 they were proud to collaborate with the Novi Parks and Rec department for the DIA Inside Out program. This partnership aligned perfectly with their value of collaboration and commitment to serving the community beyond their walls. They improved technology throughout the building. They have a new WIFI, new security camera system, new paging system and remote printing options. With the help from the City, there are brand new electric charging stations. They introduced new toys into the youth playing area, which is very popular in the library. She thanked the friends they collaborated with at the Dear Asian Youth Novi (DAYN) at the high school for a fantastic API Heritage Festival and welcomed over a thousand people in the building for their summer reading kickoff party among many other things, all listed in the report. Looking into the future in their current fiscal year, they're excited to complete more technological upgrades to the building including printing & scanning and updating their teen area on the second floor to have more study spaces for students after school. There are over 30 chairs and tables where kids can collaborate, or they can sit on these really cool chairs on the floor and just hang out after school. She loves putting together the snapshot of their community's engagement with NPL because it provides a visual illustration of their relevance and highlights how frequently residents use the library. Some quick number to highlight, they had over 835,000 checkouts, 676,000 were physical items and 158,000 digital items, total card holders increased 5% from the previous year, checkouts at the Lakeshore Lending Library increased 32% from the previous year, 114% increase in teen space participants over the previous year. The iCube Makerspace had over 3,300 training sessions, a 26% increase from the previous year, and their program participants were over 43,000 which is 18% increase from the previous year. People are using the library, and they would like to extend their heartfelt appreciation to all their sponsors and donors who generously supported NPL in '23 and '24, among them are the Friends of the Library who contributed over \$29,000 which enabled them to fund various musical performances, and their support allows the library to bring entertainment from local senior centers, enhanced training opportunities with staff, acquire new technology for their iCube makerspace and much more. As they reflect on the numerous achievements and milestones of the past year, their strategic plan remains their

steadfast compass. It is through the strategic planning that they will continue to align their resources and services to the needs of their patrons, ensuring that NPL remains a vital and vibrant hub for education, innovation and connection. They are committed to enhancing many aspects of the library experience from technology upgrades to more welcoming spaces for all ages. She gave thanks for the continued support as they pave the path for the future of NPL.

Mayor Fischer said there was good information in the report and two things that comes to his mind for him is that the success of library has to do with the leadership that's provided and the innovation that keeps them moving forward. He thinks about when he grew up and the old building with the Dewey Decimal system, the cards, some computer technology and what's been done over the past 20 years to make is more accessible for the youth, the outreach to Lakeshore Park and here at Fox Run. It's the constant innovation that makes the library what it is and successful. The only question he had was in regard to the 400,000 visits and how that compared to pre-covid levels. Julie Farkas responded that the library is still coming back. Before covid they were averaging about 1,500 people in the building and now there are about a thousand. They have transitioned people over to digital use and they do count that as well but not in terms of visits.

Member Smith wanted to highlight the iCube because it's one of the things he loves about the library and to see the visits going up.

Member Gurumurthy said she's very close to the library because she started her career there. She wanted to thank them for everything they do and wanted to highlight the safe space the library creates for students. She also acknowledged the way the library brings the diverse community together, the number of programs they come up with, the innovation, the creativity and the openness to meet and hear from residents.

Director Farkas said she wanted to take a moment to say she has an amazing staff, just under 70 of them. They work seven days a week. They are open to the community on Sunday as well. Not just one person is creating the programs. There are a number of programs by a number of people. She appreciates the support they're getting from their library board, which Council appoints, and they are getting great people who understand the role of libraries are in community. To meet the needs of the residents in Novi, they are trying to meet those expectations for what someone needs or wants to read or have access to when it comes to information.

Member Heintz said it surprised him that the number of digital checkouts were only a quarter of the physical checkouts. Director Farkas stated that shows they still have a lot of physical users in the community and even the youngest users are starting with the opportunity to connect with a book. Digital is definitely going up and they are continuing to put money into it because of the demand. Member Heintz said holding a book is a great experience so it's great to see.

Member Thomas said holding a book is great and you don't have to find a place to store it when you're done, you just take it back to the library. She said she's used the iCube space to digitize a lot of her old photographs so that she is able to make sure that they keep them and that they are stored. She's been partaking in some of the book clubs and thinks that they are wonderful. It's a wonderful place to bring community together. She appreciates the language services the library provides. It's a place where people can go and practice speaking in different languages with their community if you're learning or maybe that just someone's language and they just want to use it. Member Thomas also said that people can also take their old VHS tapes and digitize them at the library as they have the equipment and it's free.

Mayor Pro Tem wanted to call attention to the board president's cover letter which is titled; The Next Twenty Years. She wants to make sure that as municipal leaders, looking that far into the future is important. She thinks there's some interesting information in that letter. She will comments that as they are starting their long range strategic plan, she looks forward to making sure that they've got the library's work and input as they go forward. She thanked the library for all that they do.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: None

ATTORNEY REPORT: None

AUDIENCE COMMENTS:

Angelo Nardoni, South Lyon resident and Associate Executive Director at Fox Run, stated that at Fox Run and Ericsson Senior Living, they value meaningful relationships. At this time, he would like to offer his sincerest appreciation for the relationship they have with the City of Novi. It was a lot of work by a lot of people over the years who helped craft this partnership they have but there is no better friend to Fox Run and its residents than the City of Novi. From Mayor Fischer & his entire team, the City Council, City staff, Communications Director Sheryl Walsh, Julie Farkas and the Novi Public Library for all the services they provide to the residents of the City and Fox Run. Just hearing a breadth of what some of it the library does is amazing. They thank Cortney Hanson, the City Clerk, for all she does for the residents to ensure they have a voting process right here in their home. The fire and police departments provide safety to their community in the most expeditious and professional manner. The City of Novi is similar to Fox Run, the investments you put in your community takes care of the residents who live there and hopes to draw future residents. It's no different than what they do there. The work the Council puts into the City, infrastructure, and parks and recs is amazing work they do. He wants to extend his appreciation to all of your predecessors who helped lay this groundwork over the years. Lastly, he would take this time to thank Fox Run's Political Awareness Committee for all they do for the residents. This past election cycle, their efforts made sure Fox Run residents were able to make informed choices before they cast their ballots.

Doreen Poupard said they realize this is the first time that the City of Novi Council meeting has met outside chambers, and they are deeply honored. In addition to the partnership that Angelo Nardoni mentioned and of all the services the City provides, she would like to tell them that residents are involved in the City of Novi. They have a resident who is serving on the Older Adult Services board currently and has for several years. They had a resident who served on the Beautification Committee. There was someone who participated in the Ambassador Academy. There was a member who served on City Council and a member who was a trustee for the library's board. There is a continuing process. The connections with the library are almost unheard of in other retirement communities. When they have extra books, they take them to the front of the library for the Nook. Julie Farkas mentioned a few of the many services. So, in gratitude for all that Council does for them, the residents are in there doing for them also.

Connie Wesley, Edison Place, likes all the efforts for the DIE and she's not sure what Novi's policy has for that and hopes it will continue. If the City doesn't then she hopes they will develop one.

Ronald Paler, Fox Run resident, is a retired associate professor of dentistry at the University of Michigan. He thanked the Council for coming and appreciates the time they're spending with Fox Run. He wants to talk about a traffic hazard that they have on 13 Mile Road between 8 - 9AM to

3 – 4PM, Monday through Friday. He was just informed that there was a serious accident outside on 13 Mile Road about a week and a half ago. He's been asking for some help in being able to make the egress from Fox Run safe. Within one third of a mile, there is Meadowbrook School, the Early Childhood Center across the street, Fox Run residents & employees, Lennox subdivision, Brightmoor Church, Novi Christian Academy along with the normal average traffic that uses 13 Mile especially in the morning and late afternoon. They have a confluence of dangerous traffic patterns established here. Fortunately, no one has been seriously hurt. The problem is the speed limit is 45 miles per hour and M-5 is 55 miles per hour. That's a difference of only ten miles per hour. However, from Novi Road to Meadowbrook, the speed limit is 40. He wondering why it was increased to 45 in front of Fox Run. There's other hazards. The topography from M-5 has a hill so you can't see the approaching traffic until they're at the top of the hill racing down doing 45 or maybe 50 miles an hour. It makes turning left a hazard because there is a school across the street making a left turn and Fox Run is making a left turn. The effect is that two cars are forced to be pointing at each other in opposite directions. There's only one school sign and it's on the west end of 13 Mile, west of Meadowbrook Road. There is no sign from M-5 to west Meadowbrook Road. Today he saw a sign on Novi Road between 13 and 14 Mile that said school speed 35 miles an hour. He's asking for some consideration with the traffic department of Novi to come and do an assessment. He realized there can't be a traffic light there, but they can certainly identify the hazard condition with another sign or two yellow signs and perhaps lowering the speed limit to 35 because it's been done on Novi Road. He's 87 years old and his reaction time isn't as good as it was.

David Merrion, 41320 Fox Run, is a five year resident of Fox Run. He doesn't know why there aren't signs or something at 11 Mile and Meadowbrook that says 11 Mile or Meadowbrook or directions to Town Center so at least those who are coming from Fox Run have some idea where they're going.

Eleanor Kuhn wanted to thank Council for People's Express. This has been such a wonderful help for her personally. She just moved here from Richmond, Virginia where they had free bus service from downtown but not out to the suburbs. She hopes it continues and grows because it has been wonderful. Their Taxi fees were running between \$30 and \$60 to go to a doctor and that seemed a bit too much. This is a big help.

Bob James is a six year resident of Fox Run. He's in charge of a Veterans group at Fox Run. He wanted to thank Council for all they do for the Veterans in Novi. They really appreciated the picnic, the Veterans Day luncheon and the parade. He said Council has heard some complaints tonight and wanted to give them an attaboy. The Mayor said Director Muck of Parks and Recs and his team is in charge of all of those activities so kudos to him.

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS AND APPROVALS:

- A. Approve Minutes of:
January 6, 2025 - Regular Meeting
- B. Approval of contract award to Accuform Printing & Graphics to design, produce and distribute Engage three times per year in the amount of \$62,964.00 annually for one year, with the option for two renewals. **(REMOVED AND LATER APPROVED)**
- C. Consideration of contracts for as needed Supplemental Building and Trade Inspections, Plan Review services, with Carlisle Wortman and McKenna, and to amend the fee schedule.

controlled and they all of a sudden got \$500,000 more interest income than City Council would have more prerogative in saying what they should be spending that money on. He's always said that when they see these one-time types of increases, they should be able to spend on one-time types of items, capital items like cars, trucks, improvements to the parks. He feels that they've gone from a position of having a lot of money because of grant funding and different things over the last couple of years and that isn't the case anymore. The money isn't flowing down from different entities. He thinks that they need to be more careful on the cost side and would implore Mr. Cardenas that as he goes through the budget process, to consider expenses and when he brings them forward. The Mayor understands there are going to be controllable and non-controllable costs just like on the revenue side. He also understands that they had a situation in the police department where they have an investigation due to the state fair and that Council has made it a priority to retain and recruit to make sure they have the right level of staffing in the public safety. There's going to be times when he would say they're comfortable as a council spending that fund balance. He's not sure that all of the expenses in that side have been fully scrutinized. He would encourage them to start looking at it from that perspective. If he went home today and told his wife that he got a \$500 bonus but already spent it already, he doesn't think she'd be happy with him and that's how he views how this budget amendment has been proposed. Those are just some general comments as they enter the budget negotiations coming up.

CM 25-01-10 Moved by Casey, seconded by Thomas; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Approval of resolution to authorize Budget Amendment #2025-3

Roll call vote on CM 25-01-10

**Yeas: Smith, Staudt, Thomas, Fischer, Casey,
Gurumurthy, Heintz**

Nays: None

3. Approval to award engineering design services to Spalding DeDecker for the design of Ella Mae Power Park Pathway Reconstruction and Parking Lot Rehabilitation, in the amount of \$39,775.

The City Manager stated that this is just for the design of this project. This was spread over two different years. So far, it's looking good in terms of the estimates so it's going to be coming under budget. This will be taking place this construction year. It's going to start in fiscal year 2025 and end in 2026 as it will be constructed this summer. This will come out of Parks and Recs & Cultural Services Fund. Most importantly, this will address some drainage issues that are taking place on the south side of the park.

Member Smith noticed that the lifetime of what's listed in the packet is eight years and asked if this was an expected replacement or is it unusually early. Mr. Cardenas responded that this was eight years from one of the rehabs close to the neighborhood and that most of the network has been around for some time so the last time they touched it was eight years ago. Prior to that most of it existed for quite some time.

CM 25-01-11 Moved by Thomas, seconded by Smith; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Approval to award engineering design services to Spalding DeDecker for the design of Ella Mae Power Park Pathway Reconstruction and Parking Lot Rehabilitation, in the amount of \$39,775.

Roll call vote on CM 25-01-11

Yeas: Staudt, Thomas, Fischer, Casey,
Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith
Nays: None

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS

B. Approval of contract award to Accuform Printing & Graphics to design, produce and distribute Engage three times per year in the amount of \$62,964.00 annually for one year, with the option for two renewals.

Member Gurumurthy commented that the magazine Engage is something that she looks forward to and what she understands through this agenda item is that there have been five additions and now it's going to be three. She wants to make sure Council talks through it in terms of impact. She sees that 80% of the registration for all programming comes through Engage. She asked to be reminded when the five times were Engage Magazine went out and what's the new proposal in terms of timing. City Manager Cardenas responded that the magazine used to go out quarterly with one extra during the holidays. This is twofold in terms of the amount put into it and in terms of the reward they get. There are the registrations that come in, but they've also seen a lot of waste. In terms of their sustainability, this was an effort to condense it, in collaboration with the Parks department. They were able to condense it down to three different versions so they can still get the word out and get the registrations coming in. If you are someone like him that lived in a community that had a PO box, you would go to the mailbox and see the trash bins filled with Engage magazines. This was an effort to still meet the goal of getting the registrations & information out there to the residents and at the same time meet the sustainability goals as set forth by the Council. Maybe they need to go digital in terms of information sharing. He believes there will be a spring/summer issue that will be combined into one, a late April issue and then a winter edition as well. Member Gurumurthy confirmed that the programming will be distributed between the three editions and asked the City Manager if he sees any impact or are there some other ways they are going to digitally promote this. Mr. Cardenas replied that they will still be trying to direct people to the Engage online. It's a good user-friendly version that people can flip through almost like a book in hand. This was scrutinized and looked over by Ms. Walsh Malloy, the Communications Director in concert with the Parks Director who carries a heavy stick so they're very cognizant of that to make sure they don't disrupt the Parks budget in terms of registration, but they all seem comfortable in moving in this direction and presenting to Council for their consideration. Member Gurumurthy said one thing she'd like to request to consider would be, instead of an entire edition, maybe there is a postcard or something that goes with a QR code that people can scan and look at a digital version.

CM 25-01-12 Moved by Gurumurthy, seconded by Casey; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Approval of contract award to Accuform Printing & Graphics to design, produce and distribute Engage three times per year in the amount of \$62,964.00 annually for one year, with the option for two renewals.

Member Thomas said that since they are discussing this, it would be a good opportunity to promote the work that the communications staff is doing. They have a ton of social media presence and different ways to give input. Please check out the Novi Facebook page, check out the digital magazines and get the digital monthly newsletter that can be emailed out to you and let you know what programs are coming up each month.

Roll call vote on CM 25-01-12

**Yeas: Thomas, Fischer, Casey, Gurumurthy,
Heintz, Smith, Staudt**

Nays: None

AUDIENCE COMMENTS:

Sue Weston, 41130 Fox Run, has lived at Fox Run for almost two years. She feels honored that the City of Novi held their council meeting there.

Connie Wesley said she enjoys reading Engage but know they end up in the trash a lot. She suggested that perhaps they could have several copies of at the desk or in their library to save on tax dollars that obviously they are helping to pay for. Talk to people there to see whether that would be a good option to save paper and have it available for people who want it.

David Landry, 45471 Kimberly Court, is present on behalf of the Friends of Villa Barr. He wants to address item #2 under the Mayor and Council's issues, the Villa Barr Art Park Pathways. Everyone is familiar with Villa Barr. It's a wonderful passive park in the City. There are no other cities that he's aware of that have such an art park. The Parks and Recreation department in the City does a wonderful job. There are several active parks with soccer fields and baseball fields, but in Novi they also have a passive park where people can enjoy over 30 pieces of sculpture. They encourage anybody and everybody to come and bring their family members. One of the issues is mobility. Around the park there are pathways, but they are currently gravel and large sorts of rocks. If you have any kind of mobility problems, that's very difficult, especially if you have a walker or an amigo. He's ecstatic to see this on the agenda. He's given several tours of the art park. If Council is seriously considering the pathways, please complete it all the way around the lake because there are no pathways on the far side of the lake, and they really need to complete the loop.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Public Utilities and Technology Committee

Member Thomas said they held a meeting on January 19th. Sheryl Walsh joined them to discuss details about getting community input through FlashVote. Farmington Mayor LaRussa also joined them to discuss some of the work DTE has done with Farmington to bring fiber internet to their community.

2. Environmental Sustainability Committee

Member Smith said they met on January 15. They had representatives from AECOM environmental team talk to them about the possibility of bringing a consultant in to help develop the Environmental Sustainability Master Plan. That's something that will be discussed more by the committee in the upcoming weeks. They also discussed ways to improve hazardous waste material handling, food waste, yard waste disposal for the residents and ways to make it easier for people to bring in their hazardous waste materials and possibly something with food waste rather than through it in the garbage.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL ISSUES:

1. Sale of City Senior Transit Buses and Villa Barr Art Park Pathways

Mayor Fischer said part of the process when they decided to move to the People's Express was to get rid of some of the assets that previously supported the public transit service they provided. They sold several buses, and they've now received just over \$75,000, which they added back to the Parks and Rec budget. This goes along with what he was saying about his thoughts on how the budget should work and how they should have thought through the budget amendment. They sold capital assets that were designed for assisting seniors. It's incumbent upon them to take those funds and make sure that they are investing them not in some ongoing cost but that one-time revenue should be matched with a one-time expense. They heard from former Mayor Landry tonight and a prime opportunity would be to take that \$75,000 and consider it to be seed money toward paving the pathways at Villa Barr Art Park. The other thing he recognized tonight in the budget amendment is this general fund no longer requires a \$25,000 subsidy from the general fund to the parks fund to pay for the senior transit. That's another \$25,000 that they should be able to scoop up and include that. He's personally willing to go to the Parks Foundation and see if they are willing to match some of those funds. Lastly, it's his understanding that in the budget, they have about \$200,000 allocated for senior transit but the subsidies this year are only going to cost them much less so there are more savings there. Because of the move to PEX, that frees up money in their budget. It's incumbent upon them to maybe use some of that budget to do something that'll primarily not just help seniors, but anyone with mobility issues. It'll make that park more enjoyable for all Novi residents. He asked the City Manager if he had an estimate of what the pathway would cost. Mr. Cardenas responded that after discussing it with Mr. Muck, they're looking around \$200,000 for concrete as asphalt would not be an option due to the park's topography. The Mayor asked the City Manager to package it up for Council's deliberation in the near future.

Member Smith said additional parking is also needed at the park. The Mayor said realistically they should start small but keep it on the radar.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said AARP just released their community grant program and doesn't know if this project would fall underneath that, but it might be something to investigate.

COMMUNICATIONS: None

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 P.M.

Cortney Hanson, City Clerk

Justin Fischer, Mayor

Transcribed by Becky Dockery,
Account Clerk

Date approved: February 10, 2025