

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Council Chambers, 805 St. Clair River Drive
Algonac, MI 48001
February 14, 2017
7:00 p.m.
AS APPROVED 3/7/17

A special meeting of the Algonac City Council was called to order by Mayor Eileen M. Tesch at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 14, 2017. The meeting was held in Council Chambers, 805 St. Clair River Drive, Algonac, MI 48001.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Michael Bembas, Mayor Pro-Tem
Irene Bird
Ray Martin
Helen Meldrum
Joe Nugent
Eileen M. Tesch, Mayor
Mark Thompson

Absent: None

Others: City Manager Alexander, City Treasurer Mackie, City Attorney George Joachim, Previous City Manager Chris Wilson, Mark Scott, Wendy Meldrum, Richard Poole, Joe Bohnhoff, Gary Tuzinowski, Karen Cole, Bill Gratopp.

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

Mayor Tesch called for a moment of silent prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Tesch led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gary Tuzinowski, stated that Doug Alexander exceeded the good work done by previous City Manager Tomion. He listed many of Mr. Alexander's accomplishments: Contracted with the SCC Sheriff's Department, negotiated

with the Coast Guard to pay for a portion of the Seawall repairs, obtained a grant for the Lions Field Park, negotiated to reduce/eliminate Retiree Health Care liability, accomplished the repurposing of the former Lions Club property which is now filled with single family homes, combined positions of DPW Superintendent & Water Supervisor, doubled the Lease Revenue for space on cell tower, advertised for the repurposing of the Chamber Building, etc. He ended his 5 minute comment by stating that “he was willing to raise his right hand to state that if this man is dismissed it will be one of the biggest mistakes that Algonac has ever made”.

Michele Nolan, asked for the resignation of the Mayor. She stated it was difficult to watch the division on City Council and how it was affecting the City. She felt that too much energy was being wasted on negative matters. Mr. Alexander was a great City Manager. She was concerned with the treatment of Council Member Meldrum by some members of City Council and indicated that they were not adhering to ADA requirements and this could cause problems. She wished that they would all make an effort to do what is right by the City and try to get along.

Ada Smith, thanked City Manager Alexander for everything he did for the City. She then indicated she was very disgusted by some members of Council refusing to excuse Council Member Meldrum – she felt they were kicking a person that has served our community for 12 years when they are down. In her opinion this was bullying.

Karen Cole, discussed the function of City Manager, and City Mayor. Having lived in the City for 64 years and served in banking management and public agencies I feel qualified to say that we are fortunate to have Douglas Alexander for City Manager and James T. Downey, Jr. as Algonac’s City Attorney. We Citizens of Algonac should be alarmed if we were to learn that some Council Members away from the Council Meeting Table have been interacting in person or by telephone to undermine the reputations of Mr. Alexander and Mr. Downey, if they have done so, it would be reasonable for Algonac residents to speak with one voice in condemning the demonstration of lack of integrity. Asked that this be accepted by the City Clerk and to become permanent part of the City’s records.

Cindy Kloeffer, I am here to show my support for our City Manager Doug Alexander and Councilwomen Helen Meldrum. I'm deeply troubled that the leadership of this community is one that we have lost trust in. However, now we have the majority of our Council Members that need to be under a microscope and they are making decisions behind our backs. A council that seems to be wanting to oust the people that are doing their very best to serve this community. I can't make sense of it and I wonder what the motive is, is it just because they don't share the same options as you and you only want those that do. That is not how it works and that is why we utilize our right to vote. You cannot manipulate the system to suit yourselves. At a previous Council Meeting the pastor of Woodside read his statement that the church was no longer accepting the donation of Algonac El. I found it quite interesting that at the end of the meeting Mayor Tesch said that she had taken it upon herself to contact the City of Beaverton inquiring about their repurposing of one of their schools into an activity center, I found it odd since there was no knowledge that Woodside was going to decline the building in the first place. Why would there be a conversation on repurposing a school that was said to be going to the church. Each meeting Mr. Alexander would comment if there had been any communication with Woodside and he stated they had not been in contact with him. It seems he was not in the loop with whatever conversation the Mayor and Woodside were having and those conversations were not being relayed back to him. Those behind closed door meetings need to stop and the very person that you are trying to oust you chose to keep in the dark making his job more difficult. This is nothing but intentional and motive driven. I'm asking for the resignation of Mayor, Irene Bird, Joe Nugent and Mr. Thompson. Your way of conducting business, representing me and our entire community is not only disrespectful it is unsociable and unethical.

Amanda Gougeon, thanked the City Council and more specifically Mayor Tesch for calling this meeting so last minute on Valentine's Day. She discussed the form of City Government and that Doug was the epitome of what a City Manager should be, he has strived to serve the best interest of the people which is the chief function of local government. Keeping the community informed, resisted being a "yes man" Discussed Doug's **high principles and good judgement**, how forthright and on the ball he is, but the 4 of you want him dismissed, for what? On The Woodside matter Doug did the unthinkable, his job. City Council is not supposed to work on goals that achieve a personal gain, you are supposed to work for us. At this point I wish I could say I was

surprised or confounded by the action of this council but that this council continues to take. Ms. Bird, Mr. Nugent, Mr. Thompson and excused Mayor Tesch because she just got in. Do you think you won't be recalled, do you not think the wheels aren't already in motion if you take nothing else away from tonight, please know you will be subject to a recall, the language is drafted and it is awaiting approval and petitions will be circulating soon. You want to play loose and fast with government ethics and the truth; well be prepared to pay the piper.

Jim Wisdom, said he was going to complement Doug Alexander but Mr. Tuzinowski did a far better job of that than he could. The thing going on here by the way of not excusing Helen Meldrum, that's the first step to get her off and the next step is to appoint Corey Blair for a replacement, that's what's going on.

Michele Landry, said after the election this town saw change that began to concern its citizens. A new face on the Council that most of the people of this community don't even know. A few days later they saw that stranger get voted in by some of this Council as the New Mayor. I'm fairly certain that I'm not alone when I say that this day we held on to the hope that this new person would not try to change this town against itself. Unfortunately Mayor Tesch, you have done just that. These persistent witch hunts against Councilwomen Helen Meldrum, City Manager Doug Alexander and City Attorney Downey are little more than schoolyard bullying. Do you understand who you see when you look at these people that you are trying so hard to eliminate from their positions and what the effect of their removal will be, do you even care, or is this all some personal part of an agenda you have against these people that fight every day for the people whom live within these city limits. Helen has a history of fighting for this town long before you stepped foot in it. Her fierce dedication to the city and the passion she has for its citizens is commendable and irreplaceable, Doug Alexander's loyal and dedication and the seamless and the 40 years of service of which Jim Downey's company has worked for the City.

Sarah Kilchevsi, reexamine you roll as a councilmen, please do not take your que from Artie Bryson whom is known to cause havoc among both communities. She handed out to council members an ADA pamphlet. She read an excerpt how to accommodate Mrs. Meldrum to participate in what is

going on. She stated this is bullying and that the City Manager had better things to be doing.

Chris Wilson, as a former Algonac City Manager I concurred with Mr. Tuzinowski that Doug Alexander is one of the finest City Manager's that the City has ever had and I salute you for what you have accomplished in the 5 years you have been here. He said meetings like this when 60 to 70 people take Valentine's Day off to attend a meeting like this is a form of blight on this City you can't fix.

Ed Stanulis, said he will do his best for a recall. He said Councilmembers are sworn under oath to uphold ethical government. The citizens deserve fair and ethical government conduct. He stated they are railroading Mr. Alexander, and they are deliberately trying to oust Councilwomen Helen Meldrum. He said he heard rumors of claims of a private meeting between Mrs. Tesch, Ms. Bird and Mr. Nugent to discuss the dismissal of Mr. Alexander.

Susan Foguth, said if Mr. Alexander is no longer here he will no longer be on Housing and she would not like that.

Gail Majors, said she is glad to see Helen back. She expressed disappointment in Irene, the new Mayor and Joe. The 3 of you are united and a real disappointment.

Toni Tuttle, said Eileen, and Joe, & Irene who have served this community for so long my heart aches that this happened.

Mr. Alexander asked; at this point would he be allowed to defend himself after the following discussion. He stated his rights to a closed meeting under his contract section 6c for what he is being accused of.

NEW BUSINESS

Item 5) a.

CO-02-14-17 City Manager's Job Performance

Motion by Irene Bird, supported by Ray Martin to discuss the City Manager's Job Performance.

Attorney George Joachim explained the open meetings act.

CCMIN22117

Mayor Pro-Tem Bembas asked Mayor Tesch and Council Woman Bird if they had met with Supervisor Art Bryson and discussed Mr. Alexander. He indicated he had spoken with him about this meeting and Mr. Bryson told him that there was a meeting with Mayor Tesch, Council Woman Bird and himself regarding the removal of Mr. Alexander from his job and how this would open up a better working relationship between the City and the Township. Mayor Tesch stated she had no comment to this concern.

Mayor Pro-Tem asked the Mayor about numerous things, like contacting the MERS representative by herself, refusing to meet with City Manager Alexander, City Clerk Greenia and himself for breakfast meetings to familiarize herself with what was happening in the city and what would be discussed at Council meetings. She had no comment regarding these concerns either.

Council Member Meldrum asked why the meeting was called regarding Mr. Alexander's job performance. Mayor Tesch had no comment.

Council Member Martin referred to the petition that was brought to City Council prior to Mayor Tesch being a member and this was regarding the removal of employ from the city both Mr. Alexander and Mr. Downey. He noted that the Mayor and her husband had both signed this.

City Manager Alexander then commented it was going to be difficult to defend himself as he did not hear the reason given for firing him.

Motion by Mr. Bembas, supported by Mark Thompson, for a roll call vote to close the discussion of the City Manager's Job Performance.

MOTION ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Bird, Martin, Meldrum, Nugent, Tesch, Thompson,
Bembas

NAYS: None

Motion Carried

Motion by Mark Thompson, supported by Joe Nugent, to go into closed session as requested by Doug Alexander, City Manager, at 7:51 PM.

MOTION ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Martin, Meldrum, Nugent, Tesch, Thompson, Bird

NAYS: Bembas

Motion Carried

City Council returned into open session at 9:10 p.m.

Mayor Tesch announced that no action regarding the City Manager's job performance would be taken at this time.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Mayor Tesch would like to talk about blight on our next meeting February 21st.

Mr. Bembas would like the Attorney to find out more about ADA.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Helen Meldrum wanted to thank everybody for being here tonight and was glad that no action was taken.

Mr. Bembas would like to thank everyone for coming out tonight. There are tons of good things going on in Algonac.

Mark Thompson thanked everyone for coming, it is good to see community support.

Mr. Martin also thanked everyone for their support tonight and said keep paying attention people.

Mr. Nugent thanked everyone for coming, and having patience while we deliberated so long and you all stayed it shows you are really concerned about what is going on in Algonac.

Mayor Tesch thanked everyone for coming out, she expressed concerns about the City of Algonac.

ADJOURNMENT

CO # 02-15-17 Adjournment

Motion by Tesch, supported by Bird, to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 PM.
Motion carried.

Signed:

Respectfully Submitted:

Eileen Tesch, Mayor

Cindi Greenia, Clerk / LGM