

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVI
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – NOVI CIVIC CENTER – 45175 TEN MILE ROAD**

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 Breen, Casey, Crawford, Fischer, Mutch

ALSO PRESENT: Pete Auger, City Manager
Victor Cardenas, Assistant City Manager
Thomas Schultz, City Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mayor Gatt added Andy Meisner, Oakland County Treasurer to Presentation 1 and move the Novi Chamber of Commerce Toast of the Town 2020 Novi Business Award Winners to Presentation 2.

CM 20-02-015 Moved by Casey, seconded by Breen; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

To approve the Agenda as amended.

Roll call vote on CM 20-02-015 Yeas: **Staudt, Breen, Casey, Crawford, Fischer, Mutch**
Nays: **None**

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Andy Meisner, Oakland County Treasurer

Andy Meisner, Oakland County Treasurer gave a short presentation. He said that March 31st is the deadline for property tax foreclosure. They have worked with citizens across the county to prevent foreclosure. He said that the City of Novi had little impact on the tax foreclosure front he wanted to provide a historical comparison. He stated that in 2012 they maxed out at six tax foreclosures. He said other communities were worse off. In 2019 the number was cut in half to three tax foreclosures. There are folks who have delinquent taxes. He said they were asking for your help as local leaders to reach out to constituents to offer resources. He explained that the Step Forward Michigan Program which will pay for a person's delinquent property taxes, and/or mortgage up to \$30,000. To qualify someone would be that they suffered a hardship such as: loss of job and the new job only pays half, or still you are still unemployed. You may have had a death of spouse or loved one, a medical disability, and in some cases, divorce. You may be late on mortgage; perhaps you hadn't paid 2017 taxes and are four payments behind on mortgage. He explained that their office has counselors available to help people apply for this program. We do have residents who are in need. In addition to the Step Forward Program, his office offers payment plans. They have tax payer assistance meetings where they sit down with them and they listen about what's

happened in your life. This is a judgement free zone. They want to work with people and get them through hard times. They have done tens of thousands of payment plans. He stated that a majority of people pay their delinquent taxes when given the opportunity. He said in Michigan the delinquent property tax is a three year. Right now we are collecting 2017 tax years. It is the 2017 tax year that the March 31st deadline applies to. He stated they have a Financial Empowerment Center offers free counseling for entrepreneurship, workforce development, literacy, food banks, mental health services it is a whole range. They never know what types of challenges people may be facing. He said they partner with them to overcome the challenge. He stated that the last matter of business is their office is a proud partner with City of Novi across many different fronts. One of those is called the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) they offer through their office where local governmental entities can invest money with them and realize better returns while also maintaining the safety of the state law that governs them in that area. State law says this is not a risky scenario. He said the City, since joining LGIP has earned over \$2 million dollars since 2012. He said the Library has made \$29,000 and Water and Sewer District has made \$63,000. He also mentioned the woman that handles the investments has been there for a long time, around 29 years of experience and they are always looking for new depositories to support. If there is a bank, credit union that opens up in the community let them know. They want to deploy their capital there and make sure they are available to turn around make loans for businesses, mortgages and cars. Mayor Gatt thanked him for informative presentation. For the people watching, is there an email or phone? Mr. Meisner phone number is 248.421.2639 cell phone, his office number is 248.858.0611, and his email is meisnera@oakgov.com resources available on the website oakgov.com/treasurer.

2. Novi Chamber of Commerce Toast of the Town 2020 Novi Business Award Winners – Mayor Gatt

Mayor Gatt said we have the State Senator, Jim Runestad, State Representative, Kathy Crawford, and Director of Communications, Sheryl Walsh-Molloy. Mayor Gatt said the presentation is from the Novi Chamber of Commerce Toast of the Town 2020 Novi Business Award Winners. Communications Director Walsh-Molloy said earlier this month the City of Novi had the opportunity to partner with the Chamber of Commerce. She stated that at the Award Gala, they recognized and honored businesses that have gone above and beyond in several different categories. It is customary that we have the business there and they receive a little additional recognition from the City. State Senator Runestad and State Representative Crawford also came to show their appreciation. The Mayor had a small token from the City to present to the businesses.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS CANDIDATE INTRODUCTIONS

1. Priya Gurumurthy- Library Board, Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee, and Historical Commission

Ms. Gurumurthy thanked Council for the opportunity to express passion for giving back to the community. She said that she brings diverse perspective. She is a parent

of two kids who are active or being a woman in technology. She was born and brought up in India and came bringing a different perspective. Every day she leads a project team and listens to businesses and offers software solutions. She said that she implemented on time delivery and great quality. She said she had experience in various boards at Holland. She has learned what to do or not do. She advocates for diversity and inclusion. She had an award from the West Coast Chamber. She also leads an initiative group at her work. She looked forward to submitting her time.

2. Liz Larson- Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals

Liz Larson – absent

3. Tara Michener- Library Board

Ms. Michener said that inform, inspire, include is the motto of Library. She has served for over 5 years and wants to continue to serve because the library serves her. She asked her son what he thought she should say tonight and why she should apply again. His response to why she should serve was because she was always at the library. She said it's the best place to be. She got his school involved with library. They got students set up with library cards. They started a night at the library coming soon. They were using it as a pilot program for the community. Thank you.

4. Michael Thompson- Zoning Board of Appeals

Mr. Thompson said he currently serves on the Construction Board of Appeals and wants to serve on ZBA. He is an auto recycler during the day. When a car is getting made, it's put together to be taken apart. They have to figure out how to put it back together. He said problem solving is a daily task for him. He has been a coach for his kids' sports for 15 years. He always went into a season with parents understanding the team has a goal, not just goals for individual kids. He said one motto for the year is "team before me" and that would be good to bring to the citizens.

5. Arjun Tuteja- Zoning Board of Appeals, Historical Commission, Library Board

Arjun Tuteja said he was a retired engineering manager from General Motors and has lived here since 1974. He has a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Wisconsin. He has skills in planning, executing and directing new technology. He represented General Motors on committees and is a life member of the Society of Automotive Engineers and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He said he didn't have specific experience in any of the boards or commissions. He believed based on his education and his experience that after studying the rules and regulations and the logic behind those rules, he could analyze any issue and contribute towards the resolution of the issue.

6. Carolyn Upton- Zoning Board of Appeals

Carolyn Upton – absent

7. Geoffrey Wood- Library Board

Geoffrey Wood said that he has been a resident for 16 years and raised three sons here. He has been a member of Library Board for four years. He could proudly say they've maintained a balanced budget, even a surplus. It has been a big challenge even though it's a beautiful facility, it is aging. He believed they need to look ahead in terms of financially maintaining the facility. He wants to take responsibility for it. He thought they could forecast those expenses so they can maintain the facility and financial responsibility.

MANAGER/STAFF REPORT: None

ATTORNEY REPORT: None

AUDIENCE COMMENT:

Joseph Samona, 41542 Burroughs Ave., Novi said he is a realtor and practices real estate all over Michigan. He said that his mission is to advocate speaking for those who can't speak themselves. He wanted to speak for those who don't feel love, care, compassion, or faith. He felt he was blessed to be part of a huge family that reaches out and loves. However, many people are fortunate they may not feel it. He said that many have been affected by suicide. In December 2009 he realized how painful this was when he lost a friend of his. He decided to speak in every community to let them know there is a need for help. He said this is the second meeting he has come to for this purpose.

Deborah Ross, 1191 E. Lake Dr., resident of Novi was there speaking as member of League of Women Voters. The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political. They work to increase understanding of major public policy issues that influence public policy through education and advocacy. She wanted to speak about the Census that is coming up and the importance it has for the country and people of Novi. The Census takes place every 10 years. This is the 24th Census. Every Census since 1970 Michigan has lost one seat in the House of Representatives. She explained that the Census data is kept private. The Census just provides statistics, demographics. They are very important for emergency services. They need to know how many senior citizens and children are in Novi. We get money from the federal government based on demographics. If we don't get the demographics right, we tend to lose money. We already paid that money, we should get it back. Oakland County has an 84% return rate on their Census in 2010. That meant that 24% of the people were not counted. If we look at Novi numbers the population of Novi is about 60,000 and if you take 20% of that you have 9,000 people losses us \$1,800 dollars that is \$12 million that we lose a year and multiply

that by 10 years. We have lost a lot of money. She reminded everyone that Census Day is April 2nd. They will use computers, phone and paper to complete the Census.

Ed Roney said he lives in Novi and was there that evening to introduce himself as a candidate for State Representative for our District. He said he was there to listen. He said it was important to get results for the people you represent.

Bill Halvangis, 2020 Austin, Novi said he has lived in Novi since 1987 on Shawood Lake. He said he has had an opportunity to see the change and evolution. They will discuss Goosebusters. He was there in support and said many of his neighbors are also in support. He had a survey and petition signed. He mentioned that back in 1987 you could see through the water and take his pontoon boat out. You can't do that now. The weeds have grown and it's invasive. There are a number of reasons for that. He hoped that City Council could look into why that is happening. He said Sunday morning he counted 54 geese out there on the lake. Walled Lake hires Goosebusters, he thought it was a humane way to deal with the issue.

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS AND APPROVALS:

Member Casey removed Consent Agenda Items C and D.

CM 20-02-016 Moved by Fischer, seconded by Casey; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

To approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

- A. Approval of Minutes from February 10, 2020 - Regular Meeting
- B. Approval of recommendation for student representative to the Library Board.
- C. Approval of resolution in support of Lakes Area Homeowners Association's request to participate in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Goose Nest Destruction Program for Walled Lake. **REMOVE/LATER APPROVED**
- D. Approval of resolution in support of Lakes Area Homeowners Association's request to participate in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Goose Nest Destruction Program for Shawood Lake. **REMOVE/LATER APPROVED**
- E. Approval to award a contract for the administration of the 2019 Program Year for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Minor Home Repair Program to McKenna & Associates in the amount of \$20,806.
- F. Approval of a Warranty Deed to dedicate 60 feet of half-width right-of-way along the west side of Meadowbrook Road as part of the Jaguar/Land Rover Dealership (parcel 50-22-23-251-025).
- G. Approval of Claims and Warrants – Warrant No. 1054.

Roll call vote on CM 20-02-016 Yeas: Breen, Casey, Crawford, Fischer,
Mutch, Gatt, Staudt
Nays: None

MATTERS FOR COUNCIL ACTION

1. Consideration of approval to award a service contract to Ferguson Waterworks, through the Oakland County Cooperative Purchasing Contract, for the replacement of residential water meters (Phase 1 and 2) as part of the City's initiative to implement an Advanced Metering Infrastructure network, in the amount of \$1,459,319.55.

Member Mutch asked how long the water meter replacement will take. DPW Director Herczeg said it was tough to put timeline. He said that based on appointments, hopefully a year. Member Mutch wondered if they were smarter than the existing meters that transmit data, this transit more data. DPW Director Herczeg replied yes, it is real time data. Member Mutch wondered if in the future users could see the data. DPW Director Herczeg said yes.

CM 20-02-017 Moved by Casey, seconded by Staudt; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Approval to award a service contract to Ferguson Waterworks, through the Oakland County Cooperative Purchasing Contract, for the replacement of residential water meters (Phase 1 and 2) as part of the City's initiative to implement an advanced metering infrastructure network, for \$1,459,319.55.

Roll call vote on CM 20-02-017 Yeas: Casey, Crawford, Fischer, Mutch,
Gatt, Staudt, Breen
Nays: None

2. Consideration of approval of a resolution consolidating Precincts 21 and 22 for the May 5, 2020 election.

Member Breen asked about the communication that will go out to the voters about the consolidation of Precinct 21 and Precinct 22 for the May 5, 2020 election. City Clerk Hanson said these two precincts were actually not affected by the precinct changes that had occurred with the recent overall changes to the precincts in the rest of the community. Hopefully that will not add to any confusion. There are less than 100 voters affected in Precinct 21. They will receive individualized notification through the mail and we are looking to add at least another post card type notification closer to the election.

CM 20-02-018 Moved by Crawford, seconded by Staudt; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**Approval of a resolution consolidating Precincts 21 and 22 for the
May 5, 2020 election.**

Roll call vote on CM 20-02-018

**Yeas: Crawford, Fischer, Mutch, Gatt, Staudt,
Breen, Casey**
Nays: None

AUDIENCE COMMENT:

David Galloway, 1197 E. Lake Dr., Novi said he is the retired chairman of the Lake Improvement Board. Last year he presented research on geese last year to the City. He said most of us agree they are a problem and nuisance. They are a health problem. He was in favor of renewing the Walled Lake Resolution on the Goose Nest Destruction Program and adding it to Shawood Lake.

Jerry Anderson, 127 S. Pontiac Trail, Walled Lake said he has lived on Walled Lake over 40 years. He was there adding onto the previous speakers. He said that we have over 300,000 geese in south eastern Michigan. They have no natural predators. They don't migrate due to the warmer winters. If there is open water, there are geese. They are territorial and aggressive. He said Pavilion Park is five acres of beautiful grass and it entices the geese. They surveyed and found that Shawood Lake is a prime site for nesting of geese. This will not harm. He said that the City could have taken Lakeshore Park on its own without participation of the citizens. They went door to door, they had a couple of no's. We should try to manage the goose population.

Rachel Sines, 2219 Austin Dr., Novi said she personally walked around with the neighbors and talked to neighbors. She met with very little resistance. The lake was surveyed and identified by the DNR as a hot spot for where the goose population was coming from. Goose control on Walled Lake and they have been finding only a few nests. That is because most of the nests are in Shawood Lake. The neighbors are all on board to help control that population within the parks and they fully support the items on the Agenda.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Member Mutch reported that the Walkable Novi Committee met last week and had a few new members including Member Fischer. They elected a new chair, Julie Maday and vice chair, Brian Smith from the Parks, Recreation, Cultural Services Commission. He said they are losing our staff planner, Sri Komaragiri. He said that it was a productive meeting that included resident feedback on Grand River near Olde Orchard and Bashian with the lack of sidewalks over there. He looked forward to continuing work there.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL ISSUES:

1. Fire Department Strategy and Accreditation

Member Breen said last year as a Council we voted to establish as a short term goal a long term strategy for the Fire Department. We have some wonderful departments in the City and they have been nationally recognized and that includes our Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, Police Department, our Department of Public Works might even be working towards national accreditation as well. She said as of now, the Fire Department is the only departments without an up to date long term strategy. The last one that was done was in 2011 and it was intended from what she understood to last around five years. We have the resources here to do a lot of these things internally. She noted that in order to stay accredited, the Police Department needs to do things such as anticipate long term needs and future development. Development is flourishing in here in Novi, both from a residential and business standpoint. They have to look at changes in population and demographics. We have an aging population and a very diverse population. Long term strategies will allow Public Safety Departments to anticipate these needs and address problems before they arise. She knows that now we have a current goal enhancing Paid-on-Call, Auxiliary recruitment and hiring. We have been discussing for many years the need to do something with Fire Station No. 1 to include a potential of relocation. All of these things can be addressed with a long term strategy. Last August we received a recommendation from Chief Molloy and Chief Johnson on hiring a third-party consultant to help renew and refresh the prior long term strategy again which was done in 2011. She was looking for feedback from her colleagues on how we can accomplish this goal.

City Manager Auger said everything the speaker just stated is in the works. He cleared up accreditation; the DPW is not going through accreditation at this time. We are starting with our dispatchers and the 911 Center to go through accreditation. It is a long process to get through accreditation. There is a lot of internal work that we have to do to get to that stage. Part of that process is a comprehensive self-assessment, as well as a strategic plan. All of those things will have to be done prior to getting into the accreditation which can take three to five years. If you have further questions Chief Johnson and Chief Molloy would be happy to answer them. It also is a monetary commitment to go through that. We will have to go over the budget numbers and get back with Council on those. One of the things that we are continuing to do is to review all of our policies that need to be revised. The last numbers that he saw was 30% of the departmental policies that need revision. We have to do all of that work before we get to bring accreditors and get through the process.

Mayor Gatt asked Chief Molloy to give them the status of the Fire Department at this time. What is your overall assessment and where is it going. What does the City need to do and what time frame are we talking about. Chief Molloy said he wanted to reference the memorandum from August 2019 and what we have accomplished at the Fire Department. If you look at 2009 when we completed the ICMA Study they had 20 recommendations on what we should do to enhance the Novi Fire Department. He said they have completed 19 out of those 20. He said 95% of that work is done. The reference to the strategic plan that we did in 2011 is still kind of the overarching document that we use today and that had 89 action items that of which 83 they have

accomplished which is about 93% of that work. He said right now as City Manager Auger indicated we have a lot of policies. Our policies are reviewed on an annual basis; many of them are in need of updating. Before we are to enter any strategic plan or any accreditation policy we would have to make sure those policies are up to date and they are accurate and lawful. That was, in his opinion, the most number one thing that we have to focus on before we look at any strategic plan or accreditation. We are also in the middle of a re-accreditation with the Police Department. As City Manager Auger just indicated we just began the accreditation process for the 911 Center. Many of the same resources from our budget analysts and our performance measurement analyst and all of our administrative support staff they are busy working on those initiatives right now, so we don't have the resources right now to entertain getting involved in accreditation. Right now we are focusing on many of our safety issues in the fire service. The Michigan Act for Fire Fighting for protecting our firefighters, we are also looking at the NFPA 1500 Program that is about the wellness and safety of the firefighters. Those two initiatives along with our policies and procedures are pretty much our number one focus right now in terms of process.

City Manager Auger said the Chief Molloy hit the nail on the head. Our Fire Department has taken great strides especially if you go back and read the ICMA Report that he believe that they said we a dysfunctional department to the first class operation that we have today. Our response times are down, our ISO Rating is one of the top in the state, and once we get to the accreditation stage which we are all focused on getting, not just to get an award on the wall, but to reassure ourselves that we are doing the best that we can be. We will be one of only four Fire Departments in the state with that accreditation. Our team is looking forward to that day. Chief Johnson just got the assistance he needed as an Assistant Chief this year. He was the only administrative staff person in the Fire Department doing the administrative duties that he still has to keep this plane flying when we are doing all of these other items. The Assistant Chief that has been promoted has been there now for four months. He talked to Chief Johnson and he said it is making a world of difference on what they can get done. He was looking forward to the progress we keep making in the Fire Department.

Mayor Gatt said at the last meeting they did set some goals and the majority of Council decided the goals that they set would not exceed any two years before an election. One of their goals was to focus on the robust Auxiliary and Paid-on-Call Program, to enhance that anyway possible. Accreditation is in the future. It certainly will not happen this year or next year. It is something that the next Council after the 2021 election will have to deal with.

Member Breen appreciated the updates and to Chief Molloy she thanked him for the excellent work. We have an incredible Public Safety Department. One thing she wanted to make clear is the process of getting accredited and a long term strategy are two separate things. A long term strategy would be the precursor to help prepare to get accredited. She understood there would be a financial investment that they would need to make eventually. A long term strategy would also and she knew that the Police Department does work on this it calls for the anticipating the future needs of

our City. Our population has grown by about 16% over the last decade. We are going to be about 64,000 people according to numbers projected by SEMCOG. Our staffing during the day is somehow lower which could be a testament to the changes and efficiencies that have been made. With a changing and evolving population it would seem prudent to start the process with a long term strategy so we can address these issues. We will have more seniors, and we will have a large foreign population here. Why would we want to help our Fire Department prepare for these changes and those needs for the future? The policies that are being updated are fantastic that has to happen anyway. This is part and parcel with a long term strategy. It seemed to her that the most prudent and effective thing to do would to put this all together with a cohesive plan in order to bring the department forward. Just like the Police Department, Library, Parks and Recreation Department are anticipating the future needs of the City. We are talking about Public Safety. She didn't see the need to mess around with it. If a lot of things can be done internally that is great. We had a recommendation last August and it is to her understanding that although things have been sort of moving forward, the recommendation last August was to hire a third party consultant to help the City accomplish some of these issues and bring together a cohesive plan so we can keep our citizens safe not just now but into the future. She wanted to hear from other colleagues to see what they have to say.

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt asked Chief Molloy if they are prepared to do the long term study will they notify City Council at that point. Chief Molloy said we are always planning for the future. We have a three year budget cycle where we are constantly looking at new apparatus, equipment, and what new technology do we need. To indicate that we are not planning for the future is not quite accurate. We have no long term strategy; we have no long term strategic plan in the Police Department. Like any of our other assets whether it is Police, Fire, or 911 Dispatch or Emergency Preparedness we are constantly looking forward to see what the next issue is going to be. We are rapidly growing with senior housing, one on Twelve Mile, one on the north side of Twelve Mile across from Twelve Oaks Mall and accessing that and meeting with their private partners with Superior Ambulance to discuss their strategy. We are looking for a more mobile strategy for them to strategically locate their rigs they can respond in a timely fashion. They are looking forward to the future, but not as part of a strategic plan per se.

Member Mutch said Chief Molloy touched on a couple of key points. The 2009 and ICMA Study and 2011 Strategic Plan, most of the goals and objectives have been achieved and the Chief has noted that some of those things are ongoing. Clearly some are a work in progress that evolves over time. We switched from Community EMS to Superior so that had some impact. That study is nine years old. A new strategic plan that would be put into place we are looking at ten years on. That is really beyond due in terms of getting that updated. In our Parks Department they do a strategic plan every five years. Clearly Public Safety, like the Fire Department has a lot of internal moving parts that are evolving that need to be reviewed and updated. The Chief addressed that, the department that exists today is much different in the details than the department of 2009. Many of those are a result of the strategic plan and

improvements that came about by implementing that. What he didn't want to see was us lose that forward momentum of improvement and change in the department that is driven by the department back in 2011. The challenge he was having with the information that was shared with City Council is that he wasn't clear on direction and timeline. The Chief sent the City Manager a memo in August that was shared with City Council that seemed like we were marching forward with implementing a strategic plan, discussion to bring on board outside consultants, next steps to taking it to the Consultant Review Board. Now it is February, six months later. He didn't hear the forward momentum; we have to go through all of these policies that have to be updated, which is good. He wondered how we went from moving in a direction that felt like we were on path to updating strategic plan to putting it into a holding pattern. That is the impression that is being left with him. He thought it would be helpful to City Council is to get information from City Administration and Chief Molloy indicating what the timeline for the Fire Department specifically to get through the process, he isn't worried about the accreditation. He understood that is a very involved process that requires all hands on board to make that happen. It sounds like we are not ready to take that step. He thought we were ready to update the strategic plan to address all of the changes that have happened within the department. More importantly to look forward to the future and address some of the things that has been mentioned that evening. He was looking for a realistic timeline that says these are the steps that need to happen for the City Administration to accomplish the goal of getting a strategic plan done in the Fire Department. It may require funding, that was the recommendation to hire an outside consultant to assist with that. We are coming up on budget so that is the perfect time for us to have that conversation. We can't have that conversation if we don't have the information that helps them understand where they are in the process and where we need to go to get to that point. He felt it was clear that fire safety is a critical service in the City. The City Council has shown over the years has shown their support for that in terms of investment in facilities, and equipment, but we need to invest in this as well. Mayor Gatt confirmed with Member Mutch that he would like City Administration and Chief Molloy to come up with a plan and have an outside company to study that plan. He said in his mind, he is one of seven that is like saying I don't care what the Council said last week about foregoing the goals that we had on the books and starting fresh. Mayor stated that Member Mutch wanted that goal that was made last year to carry forward. Member Mutch said he was requesting a timeline that would show us what it would take to get to a strategic plan. He said to the Mayor's point, whether the goal that was adopted supersedes this goal, he was agnostic in terms of what happens within the context of the strategic plan. He was not up there advocating that we have a strategic plan for the Fire Department that gets us to a full time Fire Department or a Fire Department that takes on basic EMS or some of the things that were in that previous goal. If the direction of the majority of Council is that they want to keep the current structure, he wasn't one of those that voted for that particular goal in terms of implementing that. He didn't have a strong opinion sitting there today that he didn't want to a strategic plan happen unless it along the lines of what he thought should happen. He wanted to have the best possible Fire Department in the City of Novi. He thought in order to do that we need an updated strategic plan. He thought they were going off in two different directions. We are associating the

strategic plan concept with the previous goal. That is where it came from, but he didn't think anyone up there would say that the department doesn't need to update their plan; it is almost 10 years old. The Fire Department has changed significantly in terms of their operations over the last 10 years. We know this community is changing significantly. Let's get a plan in place. He stated that nothing is going to happen to the Fire Department in terms of staffing and operations without a majority of City Council approving a budget that we are going to spend this much to do this.

Mayor Gatt thanked him for answering his question and stated that all seven Council Members want the best Fire Department. He thought we already had that. He had complete confidence that Chief Molloy and Chief Johnson and doing their due diligence and making sure that department stays that way. He said we heard the Chief, they have a three year budget, and they have a plan in place. Every day things change in the world that may change that plan. He believed that we had the finest command staff that money can buy. We have a great Police and Fire Department. They are constantly changing and strategizing with each other and the command staff to find how to make it better. What he was a little fuzzy on was that they talked about this two weeks ago. The majority of the Council did say we want to keep the present system. That is why we made the goal of embracing and enhancing the Auxiliary and Paid-on-Call Fire Department. Mayor Gatt stated that we paid around \$100,000 to the ICMA Corporation back in 2009, and they said the Novi Fire Department was "dysfunctional." He said he can guarantee that the Fire Department was not dysfunctional today with the present Director and Chief. He said he will listen to everyone talk.

Member Casey stated that asking for a strategic plan is not implying or meant to infer that there is something that we want to fix with the Fire Department. Have a strategic plan is what businesses and what forward-thinking organizations do to help them continue to grow. She said the frustration she was starting to feel herself was, yes this was a goal that was set last year, yes we have a memo from August that gave a recommendation to hire an outside consultant, hearing the Chief indicating all of the changes with policies, and this has been a goal in their red box. Yes, we just canceled it two weeks ago, but where was this information about the policies being updated and the vision for accreditation that should have been communicated to this Council before the goal was changed. She said until two weeks ago they have been marching towards a goal of doing a strategic plan without all the knowledge that has been going on in the department for the last couple of months needing to update the policy. She felt a disconnection with what they have asked for and what they are now hearing. She firmly believed and communicated for some time the power of strategic plans. She said she was interested in seeing this come back as part of the budget. Let's have it as a budget item that we can vote on at the table in terms of having a strategic plan for the Fire Department.

Mayor Gatt said that it was nice that she wanted to include this in the budget, but Council voted as a majority two weeks ago not to bring that as a goal. That is what

goals are for, to tell City Administration what to prepare in the budget. That was not included. He said now two or three Members are saying that they want it. He thought it may serve a purpose if someone would make a motion to say that they want that in the budget, have a second, and then we can vote on it.

CM 20-02-019 Moved by Casey, seconded by Mutch; MOTION DENIED: 3-4

That the City Council directs City Administration to include a line item in the budget for 2021 not to exceed \$50,000 with the intent of hiring an outside consultant to help the Fire Department create a strategic plan.

Member Breen asked the maker of the motion to make a friendly amendment that in addition to that, Council be given an update as to what has transpired since the last memo. The memo had directives to reaching out to members of the department to find out what the department needed to do as well as reaching out to members of the community on what they need to do. She wanted to see an update regarding some of those directives as well as an outline as to where we are at with the Fire Department so we can discuss a potential budget item. Member Casey accepted the friendly amendment.

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt said he was going to vote no for this very simple reason. He asked the Director of Public Safety a very simple question, will you come to us when you want this strategic plan put in place, and he did not hear that he wanted it. He will rely on our Public Safety Director Molloy, City Manager Auger, and Fire Chief Johnson. He will not rely on Council's will on something that is an operational and organizational issue. If it comes back into the budget he will only support it when he hears that the City Manager and Police Chief want it added to the budget.

Member Fischer said he was trying to find the long term plan for the Police Department which the Chief said now doesn't exist. He said on the website there are about 20 police directives and there is one fire directive. He wanted some light on that. Chief Molloy said about a year and a half to two years ago they began posting some of their more open and transparent policies. We cannot share all of our policies; some have safety and risk issues. Our goal is to get all of our policies that we can possibly share on the website. We want our community to understand them. In the age of open and transparent government there are very few police or fire agencies across the state that is actually doing that. He was proud that we are able to do that. His goal is to get all of them out there that we can share for safety purposes. We are not there yet. The City Manager alluded to 30%, we are constantly working on that. We have a sign that goes out to our command staff, our full time captains and lieutenants under the direction of the Assistant Chief to insure that those are done in a timely fashion. Member Fischer said these are important. He thought that we are not ready for this. He thought in the context of the memo this was a study that was supposed to analyze the staffing model which there is a whole new Council and he didn't know if that would get support. We are going to consider basic life support, he didn't know if that would get support. We

are going to spend \$50,000 on a third party which he didn't support at this point because the memo talks about how other cities in the State of Michigan did this in-house. We need to focus on we are doing a great job. Our Police Chief has put in a lot of important measures over the last several years to improve this department. We are not to the point where he thought Council has provided what we think the Fire Department should look like and we are to turn it over to a third party for \$50,000 so they can tell us what we need to do. He thought it was a premature emotion at this point and he said he would not support it. He would rather have more discussions at Council to give direction of what they want. Specifically some of the things in the memo he would revisit because he doesn't think they have support anymore.

Member Mutch wanted to clarify that the August 19, 2019 memo specifically states that Novi Public Administration recommends hiring a third party consultant through a bid process similar to our Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services and the Novi Public Library. The independent study would focus on a strategic plan for the Novi Fire Department with the key areas set by the City Council goals in 2019. As Member Fischer noted there have been some changes to those goals so obviously that would have to be readjusted. He said once City Council set the goal; it was the Public Safety Administration that took the lead on it. They were the ones that recommended the consultant, they were the ones who thought it would be better to bring in somebody from the outside, they were the ones who set the \$14,000 to \$50,000 estimated price on the research that they did. It wasn't City Council. Member Casey put that number out there probably because she picked the high end of the numbers that were given so we didn't have to have a rehash of that. The memo said at the end that they looked forward to next chapter and the new roadmap of continuous improvement for the Novi Fire Department. This is our Public Safety Administration providing direction to Council. Member Casey stated that there has been a disconnection in what we were told in August and where we are at today. He said they need clarity on what need to happen. Even if we do not choose to make a decision that evening or budget time or in the near future, this City Council still needs to have that information to insure that they know what is happening within our Public Safety Department in terms of moving these items forward in the near term or the long term.

Roll call vote on CM 20-02-019

Yeas: Mutch, Breen, Casey

Nays: Fischer, Gatt, Staudt, Crawford

2. Human Trafficking Education and Training for City Employees

Member Breen stated the human trafficking is the second largest criminal enterprise in the country other than drugs. Last year she and Member Casey worked with Commissioner Markham along with Representatives from the Attorney General's Office, Oakland County Sheriff's Department and other elected officials to discuss the scope of the problem with members of the community. She said the Senator Runestad has worked on this non-partisan issue to make it easier for law enforcement to help identify victims and get them the help that they need. At the county level we have a Human Trafficking Task Force that both Commissioner Markham and Commissioner Kowall serve

as members. She wanted to be clear when she talked about human trafficking we are not just talking about sex trafficking, we are talking about labor trafficking. The biggest culprits for labor trafficking are ethnic restaurants, hair and nail salons, and massage parlors. Michigan has the second highest human trafficking rate in the country. Oakland County is not immune. She said Council did discuss this last year. One of the things discussed was the fact that City employees are in a unique position to spot signs of human trafficking. She said four years ago we had a horrific fire in Novi and ultimately five young men tragically died. The Attorney General ultimately decided to pursue different charges and she has very good information that labor trafficking was not pursued only because all of the witnesses were dead. While we want to believe that human trafficking does not exist in Novi and may not be active at the moment, we need to be proactive and ensure that this horrific practice does not enter our City's boundaries and that we everything we can to make sure that we can help identify victims and get them the help they need. She said we have seen those crazy Facebook posts where they might say something about someone getting following at Twelve Oaks or crazy abduction. There is a lot of misinformation out there. She understood that our public safety employees have gone, or will be going, to some training. Given the unique position that many City employees are in, we asked staff last year to come to them with a plan to bring education and training to Novi. Our Police Department has been involved in some operations and training. A memo from the Police Department noted that there is a FBI Southeast Michigan Trafficking and Exploitation Crimes Task Force that offers to come out and provide training to community groups. This seems like a reasonable and effective means to bring awareness to Novi about this horrific practice and keep it out of Novi. She wanted to hear from her colleagues on their thoughts on this on the particular direction we can help to educate our community on this issue.

Mayor Gatt said they would have to make a motion if there is to be discussion and then we can vote on it. This is something again that we talked about a couple of weeks ago. It wasn't supported by the majority and it isn't a goal.

Member Breen said she would be happy to make a motion on it, but under Mayor and Council it does say specifically that the purpose of having these discussions is to discuss it amongst Council and come to a consensus to give staff direction. She said she has an idea, but she would like to hear from the rest of Council to see what we might be able to accomplish as a City to move this into the public spotlight.

Mayor Gatt said we can make a motion on this. He asked City Manager Auger to weigh in on this issue.

City Manager Auger asked Director Molloy to come to the podium. He is concerned how we label different items and it might give the general public a reason to be overly scared or nervous or not know what is going on just by some language to colorful. We did have an unfortunate incident where some illegal immigrants were illegally employed and they died in a fire. He asked Director Molloy to shed light on how it was charged, and why it wasn't labeled human trafficking.

Director Molloy said the Novi Police Department engaged with Homeland Security. He explained that they conducted hours and hours of follow up investigation. They worked with the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan. They reviewed the entire case file. The defendant and his spouse were charged with harboring illegal aliens for financial gains. There were five counts of that and one count of conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens for illegal gains. That's what they were convicted of. One of the case agents was a Department of Homeland Security Agents and formally worked on a workforce for human trafficking and they did not meet that threshold in terms of standards of proof to convict. What they did learn was that each one of these gentlemen was here voluntarily, they crossed the border illegally, and they were making upwards to \$2,000 a month in cash which they were sending back to their families. They were driven to and from work, but even the night that they perished they were out shopping at the local Walmart picking up supplies, beer and cigarettes. He said to indicate that they were held against their will is inaccurate.

City Manager Auger said people aren't being pulled off the street in Novi. There isn't an epidemic in Novi. He stated that as far as training with staff, the Police Department is trained in depth. Human Resources is continuing to put down things that our staff might see doing their job, such as elder abuse. Any crime that any of our 270 employees while they are out doing their job, they aren't turning the other way. He said if there is a trash can in the road, we move it. He gets nervous when we get painted in a light that there is this epidemic of things happening and yet the numbers don't add up. We work with our federal and state partners every day. They are housed in our Police Department. They have experience in doing all types of different investigations. If we had something like this going on the City Council would know about it as soon as it happens. Mayor Gatt said, in his opinion, we have the finest Police and Fire Department in the State of Michigan. Everything that is happening tonight is sending a false message to the people watching on television and in the audience that there is something unsavory with the Police and Fire Department. That is not the case. He saw on Facebook or some kind of social media a posting from one of our own colleagues. He said they posted a picture of the federal prosecutor talking about this tragedy that happened in Novi. He said it was so sad what happened in that fire that day. The federal prosecutor was Barbara McQuade, a democrat, a very staunch law and order person, and the person who put Kwame Kilpatrick in prison for 45 years which was the hardest sentence known to any elected official. She is the one who was overseeing this case and she didn't charge human trafficking. It didn't meet the threshold. In the posting today it was insinuating that they were all victims of human trafficking. He wanted people to know we live in in a very, very safe community. Not to say that nothing bad can't happen tomorrow because it can happen anywhere, at any time. Our Police Department is the best trained, best equipped. Back in 1975 the Police Chief said all Police Officers had to have a four year college degree. That was long before any Police Department in the country ever thought about something like that and today all of our police officers are smart and educated and ready for anything that comes their way. We are proud of them and we are proud of the work they do. If human trafficking did start in Novi, we would respond within seconds to that incident.

We don't live in an unsafe community. Not for fire, not for police. A lot of this is politics. We should keep politics away from this Council table.

Member Breen said she wanted to make it clear that she did not paint an image of rampant crime or a Public Safety Department that is less than stellar. She is talking about preparation and prevention. She was not making any issues political, at no point had she made any reference to any political position or any partisan position. If anything she has said that these are issues that are non-partisan. She mentioned others that are involved and they include people across all spectrums of the political divide that agree that this is an issue. It is an issue in Novi, in Oakland County, in Michigan and in this country. She didn't say we have rampant human trafficking in Novi. She said it does exist in some shape or form and we need to do all that we can to make sure that we, including our community know what to look for. She wanted to make a motion to have City staff come back with a plan on educating employees on what human trafficking is, how to identify it, get victims assistance, and incorporate community involvement so we can help residents know signs and how to respond.

CM 20-02-020 Moved by Breen, seconded by Casey; MOTION DENIED: 3-4

To have City staff come back with a plan on educating employees on what human trafficking is, how to identify it, get victims assistance, and incorporate community involvement so we can help residents know signs and how to respond.

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt said this is not an issue about human trafficking. This is an issue of City Council imposing its will on our public safety professionals. He agreed that human trafficking is a horrible thing. He agreed the City of Novi should make every effort humanly possible to root out any human trafficking that is incurring in our community or around it. However, this tonight has been an effort to impose personal will on our public safety professionals to do what somebody wants done on their schedule. He is completely confident in our Public Safety Department and that our Chief has this in his mind and is fully capable in taking this on without City Council imposing a deadline, limit, or plan. He said he believed it had gone too far. We need to stop pushing our City Administration to do things that they want as a Council. It is clear there is a group that completely disagrees with this way of doing business. They can have all these speeches and everyone can talk and wring their hands. In the end this has nothing to do with human trafficking. This has to do with a group wanted to impose their will on our City Administration. He said he will not vote for it.

Member Fischer thanked Director Molloy for the background on the terrible tragedy that happened. He said there were comments tonight regarding the Attorney General's Office. He wondered if Director Molloy was aware of anything. Director Molloy said the only information he was aware of was that when Member Breen hosted her forum here at the City, the representative from the Attorney General's Office

indicated they had never had an investigation of human trafficking in Novi. He stated that the Michigan Attorney's General's Office was not involved in the Mystic Forest case at all. Member Fischer asked if the Police Department participated in the forum. Director Molloy replied no, they did not. Member Fischer asked if there were any ongoing investigations relating to human trafficking in Novi or any in the past. Director Molloy said no, not to his knowledge. In recent weeks he has had discussions with Homeland Security and other task force leaders. The FBI is convinced that human trafficking does exist in Michigan. They believe it exist mainly along the I-75 corridor from Toledo to Detroit, to Pontiac to Flint to Saginaw. They have not had one instance of anything being reported going back to the Auto Show last year. Many of our new recruits they get human trafficking awareness training in the recruit's school. The Commission on Law Enforcement Standards mandates it. They are constantly updating their curriculum to ensure our younger police officers get this training. We have been participating since 2016. We were approached to participate in a training video for medical personnel, doctors, and nurses, on the signs to look for. This is not something new; it is something we have constantly looked at. We are participating with Homeland Security with the Blue Campaign. In terms of Michigan and their ratings, when people throw out that we are the number two county in the state, that is for reported human trafficking instances. That is not for documented, only reported instances. There are not documented cases. We have colleagues that work in other departments involved in prostitution stings all the time, they do it under the guise of we are fighting human trafficking. He can tell you they do not issue human trafficking charges in those cases, they are prostitution charges. We have arrested multiple prostitutes in the last several months in the City and our investigative resources interview them to the fullest extent to determine that they are not victims of human trafficking. Much like the illegal aliens that perished in the Mystic Forest case, they were here on their own volition. They like the money that they are making and we will do everything to move them out of the hotels that we have in our community. Member Fischer mentioned language in the motion that reference resources for victims, if the Police Department were to encounter someone under these terrible circumstances do we have the resources to help that victim recover and get back on their feet. Director Molloy said they can enlist the services of Haven, caseworkers from Homeland Security, and training our detectives on what to look for. They offer our services to any victims immediately. Member Fischer said we are in a unique circumstance where we have federal partners right in the building with you and that assists us in these investigations. Director Molloy said not only do we have agents from Homeland Security, but we have our own Novi assets assigned to other federal task force under the operation of management at the Federal Bureau of Investigation and that is what allows us to have these relationships so we know the real time information. Our federal partners have ensured us that they cannot conduct a human trafficking investigation in our community without our assistance. He cannot detail what our assistance might be. Member Fischer said if they needed any resources from this Council he would support it. Member Fischer agreed with the Mayor Pro Tem and he believed we are overstepping our role as Council Members. We are getting to a point where we are directing people on what type of training and when they need to do training. He said next week it could be someone that wants to direct that all City employees have to train on watching for

the signs of suicide. We could talk about training for the opioid crisis or bullying; these are all very serious topics. At a certain point we need to keep in mind, we have professionals and we have experts that are running these departments and we need to rely on their opinions. He believed that if human trafficking training was necessary and would help the cause; our departments would put that in place. Second, he didn't believe Council should be directing that type of specific employee interactions because we are overstepping our role. The Charter clearly defines our role. He will not support the motion.

Member Mutch asked Director Molloy about the specific incident in Mystic Forest fire. He asked if any of those individuals were on the radar prior to that fire. Director Molloy replied no. Member Mutch said these were people illegally in the United States illegally working in our community and we were unaware of they were here. Member Mutch said we had incidents of massage businesses in the community where we had folks arrested and discovered that some of those folks were here illegally. We can discuss whether those folks were here voluntarily or not. He said there is discussion that a lot of those folks are forced here. Were those people on our radar prior to whatever tipped off our department that they were here illegally in the community? Director Molloy said he wasn't sure of the case that he mentioned. He said they have made a lot of prostitution arrests and when they get on our radar we do something about it. It typically is an undercover event and we arrest them. Once they are on our radar we do something about it. Member Mutch said his concern is when they are making comments up there, they are unaware that those folks might be in our community and that isn't a problem. We learned from the Mystic Forest tragedy and the Mayor referenced his post which he didn't have a problem with his post, he didn't want to get into a debate about it. It technically didn't have to be by a legal standard in federal court human trafficking or not. What was going on there was that people were being exploited because of their illegal status. The fact that they were making \$2000 month doesn't change the fact that they were being locked in the basement of this house. They were not free to come and go as they want that anybody here legally would experience. His point was that we don't know what is going on in hotels; we don't know what is going on in some of the businesses that provide certain services. These gentlemen were not on anybody's radar. We have to be careful to paint a picture that there is not a problem. There is a problem in every community. He shared Member Breen's point that people are making posts and someone is looking at me the wrong way. That isn't human trafficking. That is what gets to the education point both for our staff and for the community to help them be aware. This is the missing piece for him. What was going on in Mystic Forest there should have been enough red flags that someone in the community if they had realized that this activity was illegal might have been able to tip off our Police and Fire Department. We have to do more in that regard. As to the point in terms of providing direction, this City Council provides direction on a lot of issues. Some future meeting City Council will be telling City Administration to do this and that, a different majority of folks. We are not going to be up there wringing their hands how they are doing something they are not supposed to be doing. If it is a priority for our City organization and we as a Council want to see our staff act on that it is appropriate for them to provide that direction. We are not telling

them what training to take or how to do it. They are just saying this issue is important to us as a community and a Council and we would like to see it addressed in that way.

Member Casey said there was a comment made that this has become a political issue. She wanted to change the conversation a little bit. The first issue was regarding a previous Council goal and it was appropriate to have this Council weigh in again on whether or not this was something this Council wanted to proceed with. This issue also has been discussed at the table, but the issue in the request to have employees have training was made at the table under Mayor and Council. Again it came from a previous Council, yes, but we have seen no action on that at all. She thought what was happening at the table tonight we are bringing up issues that previous Councils have raised and several of us were on those Councils at the time. We are trying to get direction to staff and carry forward and honor what was asked by previous Council or not. If you are not seeing action on something that was asked we are going to follow up and find out what is happening. She supported the motion from that perspective. She asked Director Molloy said the memo they received from Detective Sergeant Gilmore back on January 15, 2019 referenced the FBI and SEMTEC Task Force and how they do community training with organizations. She wondered if we could ask the FBI to come in and give a public training on human trafficking, making it an educational session for our community. Director Molloy replied yes, but he also believed that we are leading them down the road that we have a huge issue that we need to deal with. Having the discussion we are creating a moral panic that we have to do something because it such an issue. He is not naive to the fact that we don't have human trafficking going on in this region. We are not seeing it in our community, his federal partners are not seeing it here in Novi and our local assets are not seeing it in Novi. When they interview many young ladies who are from other countries they are not being held against their will they are doing it for the money they are being paid. Member Casey said her remarks were not intended to drive that. Member Breen reference a Town Hall that was held in May of last year. One of the attendees was Lavonia school teacher and the reason she came to the Town Hall was because she wasn't hearing any information anywhere else. She was looking for us to take a leadership role in seeing the FBI in to do a broad community training, not because we are having a problem in Novi, but because there is a lot of misinformation that gets out there in the public. She wondered if we could take a leadership role in coordinating a session that is open to residents from all sorts of communities, just for education.

Roll call vote on CM 20-02-020

Yeas: Mutch, Breen, Casey

Nays: Gatt, Staudt, Crawford, Fischer

COMMUNICATIONS: None

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS FOR COUNCIL ACTION:

- C. Approval of resolution in support of Lakes Area Homeowners Association's request to participate in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Goose Nest Destruction Program for Walled Lake.

- D. Approval of resolution in support of Lakes Area Homeowners Association's request to participate in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Goose Nest Destruction Program for Shawood Lake.

CM 20-02-021 Moved by Gatt, seconded by Staudt; MOTION CARRIED: 6-1

Casey stated that her comments address both of these items. She appreciated all of the information from residents regarding the challenges and health concerns. She said that she pulled it because she personally cannot destruct wildlife. She has been consistent on that issue. She had no disrespect for the residents; she has been a vegan for 23 years.

Approval of resolution in support of Lakes Area Homeowners Association's request to participate in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Goose Nest Destruction Program for Walled Lake and the approval of resolution in support of Lakes Area Homeowners Association's request to participate in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Goose Nest Destruction Program for Shawood Lake.

Roll call vote on CM 20-02-021

**Yeas: Gatt, Staudt, Breen, Crawford, Fischer,
Mutch**

Nays: Casey

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 P.M.

Cortney Hanson, City Clerk

Robert J. Gatt, Mayor

Transcribed by Deborah S. Aubry

Date approved: March 2, 2020