



CITY OF NOVI  
Finance and Administration Committee Meeting  
**December 17, 2024, 5:00 p.m.**  
Novi Special Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road  
(248) 347-0445

**CALL TO ORDER:** 5:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Mayor Fischer, Council Members Casey, Staudt

**STAFF LIAISON:** Victor Cardenas, City Manager  
Carl Johnson, CFO

**ALSO PRESENT:** Danielle Mahoney, Assistant City Manager  
Jeff Muck, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services  
Jeff Herczeg, Director of Public Works  
Rob Petty, CIO  
Barb McBeth, City Planner  
Katherine Oppermann, Recording Secretary  
Gary Becker, Planning Commissioner  
Michael, Planning Commissioner  
Todd Fenton, Vice President, Plante Moran Realpoint  
Greg VanKirk, Partner, Plante Moran Realpoint

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion Casey; Seconded Staudt; Approved 3:0

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – November 21, 2024

Motion Casey; Seconded Staudt; Approved 3:0

**PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

1. Public Safety Building Progress Update  
*with Plante Moran Realpoint*

City Manager Cardenas introduced Mr. VanKirk and Mr. Fenton as representatives from Plante Moran Realpoint (PMR) who staff have been working with for approximately two months.

Both representatives briefly introduced themselves and said that they will be giving a brief summary of the work they have done so far. They have been reviewing the bulk of documentation that City staff has provided to them regarding the Redstone report, millage history, strategic plans, etc. Two items have been added to the scope of work: a facility assessment and site selection services. Site selection services were added as they concur with the Redstone assessment that the current sites for Fire Stations #2 and #3 are too small, both stations should be on 2 acres or more.

MR. VanKirk continued that one of the things that needs to be done is to clearly explain to the public why the new buildings are needed. All of them are well maintained but for him one of the biggest "aha moments" was that the buildings are not adaptable due to the way they were constructed (very sturdy steel and concrete). So part of the why is that the buildings are not adaptable and cannot live up to the current and future needs for Public Safety. This will be the foundation of the ballot proposal. The scope reconciliation was the first thing they did and they will note the cost differences shortly.

Mayor Fischer said that in his conversations with Councilmember Thomas she was unconvinced that the current land intended for the Public Safety Headquarters (combined Fire Station #1 and Police Station) so he also asked PMR to look into other available sites that could accommodate the station in addition to potential sites/confirmation of sites for Fire Stations #2 and 3.

Councilmember Staudt wanted to clarify his assumptions. He expects that all of the existing buildings will be knocked down as part of the process. Repurposing them would be a different discussion but thinks that it should only be considered from the point of an empty lot. As far as he is concerned there is no option for reusing the buildings. Mr. VanKirk said that he wants to ensure that we've thought of all possibilities so that we can respond to any questions that may arise in the process as needed. That said, he agrees that the buildings are probably best demolished. He also stressed that everything needs to be done no later than May in order to go forward with the August Ballot Proposal. They can provide all the information needed for the proposal without engaging an architect with a schematic. Councilmember Staudt thinks that we just need to ensure the work gets done to get on the August Ballot, including some drawings to show. It will take years to decide on and draw facilities, we're selling a concept.

Mr. VanKirk emphasized that for a City Ballot Proposal we cannot say to vote yes or no, it must stay purely educational. He thinks that currently most residents would not think that there is anything wrong with the existing facilities but that, once they know the full story, they would support the proposal. Mayor Fischer thinks that we have a clear basis for the Ballot Proposal, we are just looking for PMR to guide us in how to present all the information we've gathered to the community. Mr. VanKirk agreed that all PMR wants to do is set up the City for success on making this endeavor go. They just have to keep asking questions to ensure everything is considered. PMR plans to have a full presentation for their plan recommendation to the City in January.

Mr. VanKirk asked for clarification on the type of monetary request the proposal will be. Mayor Fischer briefly noted that previously there had been considerations of bundling the Public Safety Building Project along with other capital items (like roads, parks, etc.) but ultimately decided against it since that would make the story too convoluted. Public Safety is a clear and solid need for an ask, while the other items are more nebulous. A dedicated debt instrument for Public Safety only is where he is leaning.

Mr. Johnson took a moment to note that there is an option, as opposed to a dedicated debt service millage, a millage for Public Safety. A Public Safety millage,

essentially an operating millage, to cover both debt service as well as operating cost. That would give the extra operating mills to cover the operations which would otherwise come from the existing budget. Mayor Fischer appreciates this as a point and option. He is confident the City Manager will ensure that we are efficient with the budget for operations. Ultimately we need to look at the numbers and the appetite of Council (as well as ultimately the public) for the appropriate number of mills to propose.

Councilmember Staudt stressed that whatever we decide it needs to be determined by March so that we can start getting the information out to the Public well in advance of the election. He also noted that for an August ballot he thinks the majority of voters will be over 60 years old and the information should be tailored in part to them. Mr. VanKirk agrees but also thinks that it is a whole new world with the new automatic absentee ballots.

Mayor Fischer asked when they will have the presentation to City Council. Mr. Cardenas noted the date options, the regular meetings on January 6<sup>th</sup> and January 27<sup>th</sup> as well as the Council Workshop date of January 21<sup>st</sup>. Mayor Fischer said he would like the information at the workshop date since this would bring the other four Councilmembers on board as an independent voice. From PMR, he will want the number on funding, the funding mechanism, a plus/minus on the timing, etc. Mr. VanKirk said that he understands the ask, he will bring the other Councilmember up to date. Mr. Fenton said that they have very accurate numbers regarding police stations from working with another client recently.

Mayor Fischer said that if other things come up he will be happy to call PMR and give his thoughts, he also hopes that this meeting was helpful to them. Mr. VanKirk said that yes, it has been helpful, and thanked the group for inviting them to meet.

## 2. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Discussion

*With Planning Commissioners Gary Becker and Michael Lynch*

City Planner Barb McBeth and Planning Commissioners Becker and Lynch joined at approximately 5:52 p.m. for the CIP Discussion.

City Manager Cardenas stated that for years the CIP Committee only worked together once a year. Mayor Fischer, at the last CIP meeting, requested that an additional December meeting be held for the group so that they could receive updates on the last year's projects, therefore reducing any surprises when the group regularly convenes in January/February. He shared that, for the most part, everything has been going swimmingly, and asked Mayor Fischer if there were any specific items he wanted to hit upon or if discussion should be opened to the Committee. This is to be the first incarnation of that effort. Mayor Fischer noted that, primarily, he wants to be able to reconcile what has happened in previous years as the approach the more deliberative discussion for the next CIP cycle.

Commissioner Becker asked about the various lines associated with the Salt Dome. Mr. Herczeg explained that the Salt Dome project draws from several different funds, each of which is represented by the different lines.

Commissioner Lynch asked about the Fire Truck/Apparatus. Mr. Johnson stated that it was discussed as an item to be pulled forward but that they have not yet determined a mechanism to do so. As such it currently remains in the 2027 year.

Mr. Cardenas briefly noted the Civic Center event quarters, stating that they have completed the lighting updates needed and are now looking at sound/audio capabilities based on how often the space is used for events needing it. Mr. Muck concurred.

Mr. Herczeg talked about the Beck Road widening project, especially how the environmental process is key to the project funding. We risk losing the funding if we cannot keep it within the close timeframe, therefore requiring working in parallel in order to secure it. A draft was submitted to MDOT for their review which will go to Federal in February. Asking Federal to be able to do a MDOT review concurrent with theirs to meet timing for funding and going full steam ahead to get the earmark obligation. They have been in conversation for the last 12 months and the recent letter is the most movement Mr. Herczeg has seen in a while.

Mayor Fischer asked if the Sidewalk Repair Program changes will go into a future CIP. Mr. Herczeg responded that the Mobility Committee signed off on a 5-year program for approx. 1 million dollars' worth of construction. This program has been built to be similar to the Novi Sidewalk Repair Program pilot that ran over the last two years and provided all of the data. Commissioner Lynch asked if that means that he, as a homeowner, would no longer be responsible for sidewalk repair. Mr. Herczeg explained that past practice has been for the City to repair anything over a 2-inch deflection. This has been lowered to a ¾-inch deflection. They are currently still using the PASER rating but are looking at a company that has an AI program that will go over and assess sidewalks. Commissioner Lynch also clarified with Mr. Herczeg that the money for the program comes from the municipal road fund. Commissioner Lynch wondered if there was a good way the City could market the new program. He thinks the City often doesn't take credit for good projects like this and it wouldn't be bad to take credit since it shows that we have done what we said we would and that it is a good use of homeowner funds. Mayor Pro Tem Casey agreed that advertising a good story like this could be a boon. Mayor Fischer said that he thinks no one wants to know what the City does until they have a problem with it, since everyone is so busy with their own lives. He does like the idea though and would be open to hearing how the story could be marketed, perhaps in a "bite-size" package.

Councilmember Staudt stated that one of the things that most stands out to him is how little is being funded by the General Fund. This means that we have very limited funds for projects of this type will be more difficult to get done in the future. Commissioner Lynch agrees, he thinks things are changing and that the correct decisions are being made with regards to rezoning uses. There may be additional things that they can do on the Planning Commission level when approving certain projects that could help reduce impacts/drawn on resources like Public Safety. There

is always a long-term cost and tradeoff with rezoning. We have to consider what the public benefit is to projects, such as the newer high-density multiple family ones coming in now. Things will change in development just as they have done before. Novi is still an ideal place to have a headquarters, we have to be careful about using up all of our land. It's nice to get revenue and development but there's always tradeoffs to consider.

Mayor Fischer asked if there were and further questions the group had on projects. Mayor Pro Tem Casey said that she had noticed Chapman streambank stabilization item and wanted more information on it. Mr. Herczeg noted that there had been a memo that went out on the study for project. The cost of the project would have far outweighed doing regular dredging. As such the amount planned for it was instead spread among several other projects.

Mayor Fischer requested that, when we get the new, full plan, to have an indicator of new projects as well as large material changes to previous projects. He thinks this will help the group to be able to more easily hone in visually. Commissioner Lynch agreed that such an indication would help save a lot of time. Mr. Johnson affirmed that Finance staff will do that and also summarize any new changes.

Seeing no further questions or audience comments Mayor Fischer moved to adjourn the meeting.

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS** - None

**ADJOURNMENT:** 6:28 p.m.

Motion Fischer; Seconded Casey; Approved 3:0