

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVI
SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026 AT 9:30 A.M.**

Mayor Fischer called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

CM 26-01-001 Moved by Casey, seconded by Smith; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

To approve the agenda as presented.

**Roll call vote on CM 26-01-001 Yeas: Casey, Gurumurthy, Heintz, Martinez,
Smith, Staudt, Fischer
Nays: None**

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

PRESENTATIONS: None

CITY MANAGER REPORT: None

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT: None

AUDIENCE COMMENTS:

Tina Miller, 1957 West Lake Drive, said she is the chairperson of the Walled Lake Improvement Board and she's a member of the Lake Area Homeowners' Association. She said she understood the goal of the meeting is to set priorities for the budgeting process. She wanted to add two items for the Council to consider that are not large dollar amounts, but they would benefit the Walled Lake homeowners and the Novi residents that visit pavilions in Lake Shore Park. At the end of September 2025, water levels were low and residents had issues leaving their docks or removing their boats for the winter season. The Oakland County website shows that Walled Lake was held at a legal lake level. They requested a review of the legal lake level that was established in 1984 because they believe it should be higher. She said the second request is to install or deliver gravel (or a different material) to stabilize or help restore an eroded shoreline near the dam on the southwest corner of Walled Lake. Currently, the water leaves the lake and creates a wetland on easement that circumvents the dam. It's a low level so the dam is no longer holding its purpose. That is just west of Old South Lake. On a personal note, Ms. Miller said That Novi is considered a "Bee City". That was in a meeting in April of 2025 where they had a student, Ananya Gupta, present on bees and pollinators. They

had that award. She asked for the City to take a look at the easements that are owned around the lake and see if they can improve a "no-mow" zone, allowing natural vegetation to grow and to deter waterfowl. This would reduce e-coli contributions to the water quality and erosion along the shore.

Dennis O'Rourke, 371 Osprey Street in Walled Lake, introduced himself and said he is the Walled Lake Representative for the Lake Board and an active member of the Lake Area Homeowners' Association. He was just elected to the Walled Lake City Council. He came to support what Ms. Miller said. They work in partnership with Jerry Anderson (from LAHA) for the lake quality. He supported what she said and said it was the truth. There are some serious issues containing the lake water. Oakland County is repairing the dam. They are taking the metal blockades on the dam and replacing them with boards to help control the lake level. The overrun is having a negative effect on the shoreline. He invited each of the Council members to meet out there and take a walk so they can see what they're talking about. There is more boat traffic than ever before, and the boats are getting bigger and larger. He said it's very rare to see a new boat that has a 70- or 90-horsepower engine. The new boats have 150, 200, 250 or even a 300-horsepower engine in them. He said this matters because it significantly increases the amount of water waves across the lake—especially on the weekends. He had to put in a seawall because some of the wakeboards eroded over 3.5 feet of his shoreline. He said when you're looking at the sheer volume of recreational boating, it has a significant effect on the shoreline. He said it's time to take a look at it. As a Lake Board representative, he invited each Council member to look at the situation. He said they had invited the Council in Walled Lake to come look, too.

Jerry Anderson, 127 S. Pontiac Trail, introduced himself as the President of LAHA (Lake Area Homeowners Association). He said they represent the riparian owners on Walled Lake and on Shawood Lake. He said Walled Lake is interesting because 2/3 of it is in Novi. The support and enjoyment of the parks is based on the water level and the quality of the level. With the Lake Board, they have gotten rid of the invasive weeds. With Council's support, they try to control the geese population the best they can. He said Walled Lake is a unique lake. It is the third biggest lake in Oakland County. It's 670 acres, about a square mile, but the average depth is only 12.7 feet and 42% of that is only five feet deep. He said when they lose inches, it sounds very little, but one inch of water on the size of this lake is 18 million gallons of water. The established lake level was done in 1984. In 1988, they went to a different method. He said without getting into the nerdy things, they believe they are losing four inches of water. In cooperation with Oakland County, they would like to coordinate a survey to understand if they can gain some water. He said since 1984, most of the homeowners have put in seawalls or other things to protect their property. They believe it would be reasonable to review this situation. He said the survey would be great—especially because it goes hand in hand with the shoreline erosion. If they can't keep the water in the lake, it creates a really bad situation. They normally need spring water rain to get them through the drier month of August. Regarding the shoreline erosion, he said the water is now leaving the lake before it even reaches the lake level which makes the dam almost useless. He said there are a couple of factors. He said

they're not looking for boardwalks back there; they're looking for some shoreline stabilization.

Bill Halvangis, 2020 Austin Dr on Shawood Lake. He lives there with his wife, Karla. He stood to support the previous statements requesting an investigation or look for lake level, in particular. He has two measuring points—his dock and his seawall that help him keep an eye on the lake level of Shawood. This past year, the level has fluctuated as much as 14 inches. There is a stand from the high of spring to the low of fall in September and October. He said that water level exposed the gravel bed at the base of their seawall. He bought this house in 1984, and he has never seen that gravel bed. He said Shawood Lake and Walled Lake are connected. He said that lake level is of concern. He encouraged Council to put this issue on a docket and pay attention to the gem Shawood Lake, which is, of course, connected with Lakeshore Park and Pavillion Park.

Gary Zack, 359 S. Lake Drive, said he agrees that there has been a lot of fluctuation in the lake level. He has been living there for 35 years, and he has seen this happen many years. He said oftentimes, when there's a drought in the fall, you have trouble getting your boat out. It's been that way. He wanted to present the other side of the story. He said down at the southwest side of the lake, there are several houses—including his—that are in the lower spot of the lake. It's one of the lowest spots. Parts of Pavillion Shores on the corner by that gray house are in that area. This April, they had water over topping their seawall. It's a \$20,000 seawall and it's washing out the land behind it because the lake was running so high. He agrees that at the end of the year, it was low, but he doesn't believe the answer is to raise the level—especially in the spring. He said there are also a couple of houses near Pavillion Shores that have been flooded all the way around them with lake water. Some people have had damage to HVAC equipment that's there. He agrees that this needs to be thought about and he asked Council to please take into account the people who live at the lowest part of the lake. He agreed that there is fluctuation and the control structure should be the main control of the water going out of the lake.

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS AND APPROVALS:

CM 26-01-002 Moved by Casey, seconded by Gurumurthy; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

To approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

- A. Approve Minutes of:
December 15, 2025 – Regular Meeting
- B. Approval of claims and warrants – Warrant 1194

Roll call vote on CM 26-01-002

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

MATTERS FOR COUNCIL ACTION:

1. Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Clerk Hanson said Marc Jappaya was appointed to the full term on the Zoning Board of Appeals and Yogesh Kumar was appointed to the alternate position.

2. City Council Goal Setting Session

City Manager Cardenas said this is very similar to years past. Council has had access to a mechanism to which they can add their goals. He said the mayor would begin and then each Council member would have the opportunity to explain their high level of expectations and their thoughts behind them. In years past, there have been many different buckets they entered goals into. This year, they structured it so that there are two buckets with five opportunities. The first bucket is City Services and Community Experience. The second bucket is Infrastructure, Economic/Community Development and Financial Stewardship. Council will be weighing in on those two buckets, each member adding five goals to each bucket. Then, they will enter those goals, go into discussion refinement and then into voting.

Mayor Fischer said each member would get between three and five minutes to share their thoughts on their goals, highlighting the ones that they are pitching to everyone and make their case. He said they would do one round of that and then move into a discussion. He said if any questions arise from Council members, they would answer them and then move into the voting process. He clarified the timing of when these new goals will kick in. He said this meeting used to be called the "Early Budget Input Session." It was a time when members would bring up ideas for the budget before the April discussions and the following fiscal year. It was a way for the City Manager to get these ideas into the budget before those discussions took place in April. He believes things have shifted to an every-other-year exercise right after the election. This is meant to set the goal that the current Council session sees—not just for the next budget year, but also what those of us who will be here for the next two years expect of the city staff regarding the budget policy and otherwise. He said they would vote that day, staff will clean up the goals and then Council will formally approve the goals. The expectation is that staff will start running with the goals as soon as they are formally approved. This is not a time for early budget input; this is the City Council session's strategic goals for the next two years. He wanted to set those expectations up front for Council and for staff.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey began by saying she typically comes to this activity with a very long list of goals and objectives that she continues to reinforce over the next couple of years. This year is different for her because Novi is in the process of working on the Novi 2050 long-range strategic plan. They will be talking with residents and businesses to come up with strategic objectives, each of which will have a series of goals over the years to help the city get from this year to 2050. The city can't do it all in the first couple of years, so we'll be timing it out. Council knows this is coming. They know they're going to get some objectives. They know they're going to get some things that they are going to need

to accomplish from that plan. They're here now and each of them will be laying out what matters to them. As the plan gets completed, they'll have some conversation about the goals they've set, how that fits into the plan and what doesn't fit into the plan. They'll need to prioritize those things because they can't do everything. They might come up with a long list of objectives coming out of 2050. They might have 6-10 goals coming out of this session. They're going to have to figure out between themselves and then working with the administration how they are going to balance all the things that are going to be asked of the city and of the staff. She said they're going to define some goals today, but they also need to recognize that when 2050 is done, they may need to have some conversations about what gets done and what needs to be re-prioritized.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said when she comes in with objectives, she focuses on them for the next couple of years. This year, she didn't come in with anything super big strategic because she's expecting 2050 to be that. As a bit of a surprise for her, she didn't have anything related to the older adults which is normally a very high and continued focus for her because she knows they're going to get significant input from the older adults when they do 2050. She's going to let those conversations and those insights drive the goals instead of her drive what she thinks should be done. She also knows that they are planning to reinvigorate and kind of create a new older adult advisory board that will be an output of the 2050 plan. They'll be charged with helping Council figure out how to execute some of the information they get. She's not bringing up anything to do with older adults, but that's not because they don't have her clear focus. She said regarding the 2050 plan, she's expecting that they're going to get a lot of feedback about the Novi residents with disabilities. She's hoping that even by bringing it up, she'll encourage the people with disabilities or their caretakers to be conscious of how accessible to our residents and visitors our city is. This will be a continued focus for her, although she is holding off setting goals for that at this time because she believes they'll get some input from the 2050 plan and they'll have appropriate goals set at that time. She said she focused on looking at opportunities to find areas that she doesn't expect to come out of 2050. She's trying to come up with a way to walk the talk about public art. She's also looking for ways to continue the modernization of the city boards and commissions they started over the last couple of years. Those are the target areas for her this year.

Member Heintz said it's easy to write different goals because they have more ambition than there are hours in the day. He tried to look at things they are actively doing or things that they've been working towards. One thing he put on the list is something that he believes may come up more formally from the Environmental Sustainability Committee: a compost drop-off pilot program. He would like that to start as early as the end of spring. He believes this could be a wonderful way to support a green Novi and really help Novi move forward. It would have a lot of different impacts like reducing organics that go into a landfill and produce methane gas. He would like Novi to create a Sustainable Plant position within the City of Novi. He said Novi does so many different things within the city across different departments. Everyone has their bits and pieces that have an environmentally sustainable impact. This could consolidate and free up staff time. He believes this would be a nice benefit to many, including staff and city residents. He said he would love to see a review of the wetland ordinance as well as other potential

ordinances described by residents here today, looking at potential “no mow” zone areas or other ordinances that could be reviewed and/or updated. This could be currently developed spaces or areas that are yet to be developed. Novi is 91% built out, so we don't have that much opportunity to impact the remaining potential development. He wants to make sure they are best serving anything that will be done as well as the current residents living in those areas. In terms of planning, Member Heintz said he would love to develop a plan for what's going to be done in the current space where the police station is located. He'd like to move forward with something that's going to be put in that area once the new police station is up and running. He would like to work with Parks and Recreation to look at different opportunities such as the island space with Shawood Lake and the Lakeshore building. He'd like that building to be useful for the community, especially in the Community Experience bucket category. He said regarding community experiences, Member Heintz said he'd like to work with the Novi Community School District and their future enhancements and plans for the high school renovations. He is especially interested in the field house (the building that will be separated from the school itself) and the possibilities that the community may have there. He'd like there to be a strong plan for once that building is up and running. Member Heintz said he is impressed with how Julie Farkas, Novi's Library Director, has values and missions for the Library Board. He appreciates how the library is embodying what Novi is and what Novi's values are. He would like the City of Novi to formalize six or so values to use as guideposts that staff and residents can use for daily decisions and processes to lead us into the future.

Member Martinez said he came to this process as the newest Council member. He is still onboarding with a lot of the city departments and staff. He comes with equal parts measured and aspirational. He focused on things that he believes are attainable. He believes the idea of community education on the different roles that different commissions and different boards play and how they relate to City Council is important, especially within the planning realm. One of the goals he proposed is to conduct at least one joint meeting between the City Council and the Planning Commission with the goal of improving the public understanding of the planning, zoning and development processes and to have some sort of plain language summary or infographic that can be given to people in the community. This would be helpful when projects come up. One would know which projects are going to planning, which projects will go to City Council, what the requirements are for each project and how one can determine what goes where. He said in some cases, that's easier said than done, but he likes the idea of having a conversation or a forum where residents can come and learn about it. He believes that would be beneficial. He said one of the goals he has for the CIP millage renewal plan would include considering the possibility of expanded facilities and spaces to help Novi's Parks and Recreation programming. He would like to have a prioritized project list and to try to locate private community partners wherever they can to maximize the impact of the millage proceeds. He believes this will help the Parks and Recreation Department continue to be top tier in what they do. Member Martinez added on to what Mayor Pro Tem Casey said about starting the work of developing a citywide public arts strategy where they can integrate Planning, Community Development, and Parks and Rec. He believes this would enhance the character of Novi's city centers and expand public art opportunities. In his mind, this might include revisions or amendments to Novi's zoning

ordinance so Novi can incentivize the opportunity for private developers who may come to our city. It would say, "We consider public art a public benefit in Novi." He believes we should encourage people to use some of those mechanisms so we can continue to expand the availability of public art in the City of Novi. He said he wants to learn more about this next goal when he talks with the Public Safety Department. From what he does know, he wants the residents to get the full value of their public safety bonds proceeds. He said the voters really came through in supporting the public safety bond, \$120,000,000. He wants to make sure there is a plan in place for hiring and staffing so they can reduce the number of shifts in the new buildings that will be unstaffed. It's not that he believes the city is unsafe, but, in his mind, if Novi is going to spend this investment and build the buildings, Council needs to make sure there are people working in them. He said he supported the idea of having a joint meeting or collaboration between City Council and the Novi Community School District. This would help identify future partnership and collaborative opportunities to maximize community benefits and reduce duplicative services and offerings that may be done by both entities. He recognizes this is a mammoth goal. It sounds simple, but from his experience of having worked with the school district, he believes it will take a bit of work. He also believes it can happen. He'd like to have that conversation and he'd like there to be an open dialogue with the Board of Education partners. He said as a member of the Public Utilities Committee, he believed the conversation about public broadband/municipal broadband should be continued. He'd like to see some form of a feasibility study to evaluate regional partnerships with neighboring communities who are offering gigabit internet to their residents, public/private partnership models or even the possibility of city-owned fiber with competitively contract services delivered under that by a provider selected by Council. Member Martinez said he'd like a conversation about developing a city-wide grant strategy, hiring at least a part-time staff person who can seek out and apply for writing these grants so Novi can increase external funding for priority city projects. It could be a pilot program when they need to test things out.

Member Gurumurthy said she is grateful for the experience she has from having set goals with Council in the past. She is also grateful for the campaign experience where she got to talk with residents to find out and understand their priorities so she can propose some of the initiatives today. She thanked city staff for continuing to work on the goals that were set last time. One thing that is very critical to her is that you identify goals, track them, report on them and make that information available to the public. She believes city staff has done an amazing job of putting this information on the website. You can go there, see the progress and keep us accountable. She said she learned that certain things take more time, certain things are out of control, you need to take the budget into consideration and make things achievable within two years. She looked at the goals from two angles: operational and future. In terms of operational goals, she would like to improve resident access to the utility and infrastructure service information. She would like to see how the utility companies are doing, what can be shared, making it readily available so we can keep them accountable. It might be a dedicated webpage that consolidates all the resident focus information related to DTE, Priority Waste, GLWA and internet providers. When you make this information available in terms of how they are doing such as how many missed pick-ups, for example, people become more

accountable. She would also like preventative plans to be available. If the parter companies have maintenance coming up, it would be great to have it readily available, so the residents know what is coming. She would also include high-speed internet options, too. There are pockets of areas in the city where not just the internet, but high-speed internet is not available. She'd like to figure out what they can do in terms of making sure they know what is available and then work on top of that. Lastly, she'd like the city to host one public town hall with the utility partners, so the residents have easy access to ask questions. Member Gurumurthy said the second thing under operational outreach is to continue expanding the outreach with diverse populations in Novi. She said the city continues to do an amazing job with this. One thing she'd like to see within the boards and commissions, volunteering and activities is increasing the participation of our diverse communities. She said Novi is doing a phenomenal job, but she'd like to understand Novi's baseline today, where Novi is in regard to involvement and then increase the participation by 25%. She said Novi does a great job with translations of materials, social media and council meetings. She would like to see translations in the top three spoken languages in Novi. Additionally, Member Gurumurthy mentioned the Diwali festival last year. She would like to see a multi-cultural celebration once a year, hosted by the City, to bring all the different communities together. Being a member of the Sustainability Committee, she said everything takes time. When you put an environmental action is place, it takes time. She wants to make actionable goals. She said Novi, again, is doing an amazing job. Novi is gold certified in terms of My Green communities. She would like there to be an assessment of where we are today (gold) and figure out how to get to platinum. This will indirectly identify everything Novi can do such as wetland and woodland ordinances because sustainability has to be integrated in order for Novi to reach that level. Her goal is to figure out what they need to do to get to platinum whether it's policies, governance or budget costs. They can assess it as the Council and then execute it. That makes it actionable. For strategic goals, she said she'd like to understand where Novi is in terms of our current housing, meaning the different types of housing that exist in Novi, the gaps that exist, what the needs are, etc. Knowing this information will help them put a kind of guideline and framework for Council's discussions about future housing needs and how they want to balance Novi's housing stock and housing types. She said her second goal is the downtown. She said she will be expanding upon this during the detailed discussion, but she wanted to bring it up and clarify what they are looking for in terms of creating a strategy about where they want to take the downtown and how they are going to execute their goals. She said her third goal is economic development. She would like an assessment of where things are currently because Novi has different industries, corporations and businesses. She believes there are opportunities for Novi to go to the next level of improving or enhancing its economic development by retaining, attracting and bringing more businesses into Novi. Regarding Smart technology, she said there should be a goal about how we integrate it into our city. She said her outcomes are simple like an AI-powered chat or an app that residents can use to get information quickly versus calling or having to be there. She said the EV-charging assessment is another measurable outcome. She would like to see an assessment and see if Novi can do a pilot. She would also like to have a smart way to prevent utility issues, if that's possible. These ideas would all help Novi become a Smart city down the road. She said her last goal is to do a study of what Novi needs in terms of a community center.

She has a measurable outcome--a study versus what Novi needs, what the community is asking or looking for and itemized costs so they can have better discussions. She said all her goals will have measurable outcomes for Council to use.

Member Smith said he will be joining the Long-range Strategic Planning Committee this year. He acknowledged that some of the items he will mention will change depending on what comes from that process. He said all the things Council is wishing for came down to a budget. Things have to get paid for. There are bunch of things the City *has* to do and then there are things the City *would like* to do. A lot of the things he will be speaking about are things the City *would like* to do. To fund them, the City should bring on a grant writer. He has been the Novi representative for the Smart communities (SEMCOG). He has spoken with a lot of communities' representatives in SEMCOG that have grant writers that have been very successful at bringing money from either public or private sources into their community for projects. As an example, the land around the old racetrack in Northville received public and private funding for a lot of development of opening the river. They don't have a grant writer, but they do have Brian Turnbull who is a unique case. He said this is a good time to do a community and recreation center study. There will be open land at the police station when that comes down. He said there are a couple of blank slate pieces of land for parks. The ITC east, the 90 acres east of ITC and then the Bosco back 40 properties are available. Having a community center and places where people can gather was something that came up quite frequently when he was out talking to people this past election. He said he liked the idea of the Joint Council and Planning Commission meetings. He thinks it would be helpful for the community to understand the process better. It's complicated. There is a lot of stuff going on. He believes the more the community understands, the better feedback Council can get from residents about what they want and what they think Council should be doing. He said SMART and mobility are important to him. He'd like to expand what they're getting from the SMART millage. He believes we need bus stops to start with. Beyond that, there is micro transit that they're doing. We can expand routes and talk about doing specific special event kind of routing. For example, if something is going on at Suburban Collection Showplace, they could do something about that. For mobility, he said they currently have the sidewalk prioritization that came out of the Mobility Committee. They have the Active Mobility Plan, and they recently approved joining the 9 Line Coalition for the cross-county, non-motorized transit across Oakland County and around 9 Mile. He said they need to get those things aligned so they have a better plan about what they're doing. He doesn't believe there are a lot of gaps, but a better plan would make sure they have all those things going toward the same goal. He said residents talked to him this summer about high-speed internet access. He said it could be fiber or some other technology, and it could be public or use existing IST providers that are already in Novi. He believes in having a goal of making sure that everyone at least has access to gigabit or higher internet—even if they don't choose to use it. He believes this is an important thing going forward. He said they are continuing the work of the Environmental Sustainability Committee. As mentioned, they are talking about doing food waste recycling, a proposal that was very well received this summer. He said it's a big hit that may not cost a lot of money.

Member Staudt said his goals this year are incredibly simplistic. They include things like having our City staff have the same zealous attitude toward City facilities and businesses regarding ordinance enforcement as they do with residential properties. He said we need to clean up a lot of things in Novi and Council has to set an example. He would like Novi to have the attitude of when they see something, they fix it. For example, if there is a pothole, the City shouldn't be waiting for residents to report potholes that we're driving over every day as City employees. They should be fixed immediately. That attitude has to change throughout the city. These are simple things and they don't cost any money. Member Staudt said Novi's biggest challenge during the next two years (probably in the next five to seven years) is figuring out how they're going to pay for the employees they already have. Employee costs and benefits have become extraordinarily expensive. As time goes on, the portion of Novi's incoming revenue that's dedicated to this is increasing exponentially each year. One of his goals is to have a five- to seven-year study on employee compensation and how we anticipate paying for that. He said they do a three-year budgeting process, but that's not good enough because they're signing off on agreements with labor unions that add a lot of costs to the budget without the reflected amount of additional revenue. He said they have been talking about grant writing for as long as he has been here. He said they do a pretty good job of reaching out for grants as they become available. He said they probably know less about certain grants for traffic and roads and things like that. He said everything is not a revenue solution. He said the message from Novi's City Manager regarding this meeting mentioned some discussion about how Council needs to consider starting to reduce their costs. Everything has gone up hugely since COVID, but the biggest thing that's gone up is employee costs. Nobody wants to reduce the size of our City staff, but we are reaching a point where we're going to have a difficult time paying for the number of employees we currently have. He said he has been preaching this for the last three or four years. He believes it's becoming a reality sooner than later. He said they're not asking for additional revenue from the taxpayers through the millage for operations. He said he doesn't believe residents have a flavor for it right now. He said goals are all fun. He's sure they'll create some goals that sound great and they'll be far reaching, but they all have a cost associated with them. He encouraged Council to be really cognizant of making sure how they're going to fund the goals. He said he hears things like filling up our fire stations with staff. He doesn't know if there has been anything that Council has focused on harder over the last seven years than filling the police and fire departments with the necessary staff. Some of these decisions are being made because we have new people on Council that haven't been through these things. He said again that Council really needs to think about how they're going to fund the goals that are selected. He said he doesn't think there was anyone sitting out there who wants to write another check for increases in City operations. He said he'd be interested in seeing what kind of goals Council approves and what kind of vision they have for the future. They are in the process of making a long-term strategic plan which will be helpful in defining the next 5, 10, or 15 years. He said the next two years are going to be a major challenge. They're already getting information that they're going to have a reduction in revenue sharing from the State. He said when you start losing \$6, \$7 or \$800,000 when 70-80% of your operating budget is personnel, tell me where that's going to be taken out of. He believes the budget discussion this year is going to be quite a challenge. He said there are some goals that they have that he

would like to see removed because they are things Council is moving forward with already. He said goals should be something new and exciting—not things already in progress.

Mayor Fischer said he believed Mayor Pro Tem Casey and Member Staudt hit a lot on the head with regard to his perspective on this goal-setting session. The things he'll be pushing forward are less transformative than things he's pushed in the past. They just pushed forward a public safety bond which will take a lot of staff's resources and time over the next couple of years. They also have the 2050 plan that will produce longer-term strategic goals. For him, this is more about tweaking things around the edge of where Council can focus over the next couple of years. They did a good job of changing the framework. He said they had 20-25 goals from their last session, so focusing on 6-10 makes sense with all the other things going on. He said he often tells people when they apply for boards and commissions that not everyone gets chosen but they keep at it. He reminded the newer Council members that not all goals will be chosen because they'll choose 6-10. It doesn't mean that some of their goals can't be carried forward during committees or other work that Council does. There are a lot of good things that were brainstormed. He doesn't agree with all of them, but things can be carried out in different ways. He said that's his way of telling colleagues these are the high-level, overarching, cross-functional, strategic goals for the next two years that could be carried forward through committee work. He said they got an email about whether it be state-shared revenue, other revenue declines or their revenue isn't coming in as robustly as they thought from their taxable revenues, they have an obligation to make sure they are doing the core City services the best they can and how the City residents deserve them. Goal setting gets into some of the wants. He said Council, as the deliberative body, the legislative body, has the obligation to figure out the funding for these goals--especially because they have gotten information that the revenue will likely plateau or decline over the next year or two. He said if they are talking about a brand-new recreation center, Council had better be prepared to go to the voters and ask for that one, two or three million dollars. If they're talking about adding to public safety, then they'd better throw the millage amount on the ballot because it is not on City staff to do that anymore. Staff is doing the best they can with the money they have, and Council needs to stop having unfunded mandates for them. Mayor Fischer said he will be pushing a couple of things forward. One of his goals is to bring back the biannual citizen survey. He said Council sits up there and talks about the people they've been talking with, the residents they've been talking to and the things that people want. There used to be a process where every two years, they would get a report card of all the different City services and the trends of how they were going. Council has gotten away from that formal process. He believes that information was invaluable to the decision-making process for them. He'd like to see that process brought back. He said his second goal is the CIP renewal which he believes is of upmost importance. He knows that is something that is technically in process, but he believes it should be an actual goal and not something to be taken off the goal list. He said they all know that brings in \$4 - 5 million which funds fire trucks, all sorts of police and fire responses and things we want to do in the Parks and Recreation department. He said if they were to lose this funding source this year, it would be detrimental to the general fund bar none. This is an absolute top priority and something he will be supporting. He said there should

be a renewed emphasis and effort on economic development. He said they have recently seen a lot of proposals on the residential front. He said they used to do a good job of talking about diversifying Novi's tax base, making sure they had a good component of retail, residential and commercial such that if Novi did see recessions, if they saw a change in taxable value, they had a good diversity that would offset things if the other sectors fell apart. He believes they have gotten away from that. He said that given some of the messaging they've gotten on the revenue side, it's time to renew the efforts to bring in some commercial and larger corporate citizens. He said those are his three goals that he'll be putting forward.

City Manager Cardenas explained that they would go through the goals in each category and decide collectively if similar goals should be grouped as one or left separate. Once grouping was completed, Council ranked the goals in each category (*see attached*).

City Manager Cardenas said the goals will be brought to Council at the next meeting for final review and approval. Mayor Fischer said he thought there were a lot of really good ideas that were presented and they can be carried forward in committees and other things. He advised City Manager Cardenas to do his best to incorporate all aspects of both goals into one goal. Each criterion of each goal should be encompassed into one. That was the intent of combining these this year.

CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS: None

AUDIENCE COMMENT: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

MAYOR AND COUNCIL ISSUES: None

COMMUNICATIONS: None

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 11:21 A.M.

Cortney Hanson, City Clerk

Justin Fischer, Mayor

Transcribed by Diana Charles
Customer Service Representative

Date approved: January 26, 2026