

**CITY OF ST CLAIR, MICHIGAN
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026- 6:00 P.M.**

Meeting Called to Order at 6:00pm by Mayor Cedar in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 547 N. Carney Drive, St. Clair, Michigan, 48079.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited.

PRESENT: Mayor Cedar, Members Gottler, Kuffa, LaPorte, Paul, Volz, Westrick

ABSENT: None

ADMINISTRATION: James T Downey, Kane, Clemons, Joachim and Downey; Steve Duchane, City Superintendent; Donovan Ennis, Police Chief; Annette Sturdy, City Clerk.

AUDIENCE: There 16 people in attendance.

CONSENT AGENDA – Kuffa moved, Paul seconded, CARRIED, to approve Consent Agenda items A. and B. as presented.

- A. City Council Minutes of January 19, 2026 Regular Meeting: Approved
- B. Planning Commission Minutes of September 9, 2025 Meeting: Received

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Resolution (26-01) Poverty Exemptions and Guidelines-

A RESOLUTION FOR THE ANNUAL ADOPTION OF GUIDELINES FOR POVERTY

EXEMPTIONS WHEREAS, the adoption of guidelines for poverty exemptions is required of the City Council; and WHEREAS, the principal residence of persons, who the Board of Review determines by reason of poverty to be unable to contribute to the public charge, is eligible for exemption in whole or part from taxation under Public Act 253 of 2020 (MCL 211.7u); and WHEREAS, pursuant to PA 253 of 2020, the City of St. Clair, St. Clair County, adopts the following guidelines for the Board of Review to implement. The guidelines shall include but not be limited to the specific income and asset levels of the claimant and all persons residing in the household, including any property tax credit returns, filed in the current or immediately preceding year; To be eligible, a person shall do all the following on an annual basis:

- 1.Be an owner of and occupy as a principal residence the property for which an exemption is requested.
- 2.File a claim with the Assessor or Board of Review, accompanied by federal and state income tax returns for all persons residing in the principal residence, including any property tax credit returns filed in the immediately preceding year or in the current year or a signed State Tax Commission Form 4988, *Poverty Exemption Affidavit*.
- 3.Produce a valid driver's license or other form of identification if requested.
- 4.Produce, if requested, a deed, land contract, or other evidence of ownership of the property for which an exemption is requested.
- 5.Meet the federal poverty income guidelines as defined and determined annually by the United States Department of Health and Human Services or alternative guidelines adopted by the governing body providing the alternative guidelines do not provide eligibility requirements less than the federal guidelines.
- 6.The application for an exemption shall be filed after January 1, but one day prior to the last day of the December Board of Review. The filing of this claim constitutes an appearance before the Board of Review for the purpose of preserving the right of appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal.

7. The Board of Review shall follow the guidelines of the local assessing unit in granting or denying an exemption.

8. Persons applying for a hardship exemption will be encouraged to meet in person with the Board of Review in order to answer any questions relative to their application. Applicants or their authorized agents may have to answer questions regarding such subjects as financial affairs, health and/or the status of people living in their home at a meeting that is open to the public.

9. A person who files for a hardship exemption is not prohibited from also filing an appeal on the assessment and/or taxable value.

10. The applicant must also meet the Asset Guidelines in accordance with PA 253 of 2020 as adopted by the City of St Clair (which are attached). NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Assessor and the Board of Review shall follow the above stated policy and guidelines in granting or denying an exemption.

LaPorte moved, Kuffa seconded, CARRIED, to adopt Resolution (26-01) as presented.

Ayes: LaPorte, Paul, Volz, Westrick, Gottler, Kuffa, Cedar

Nays: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED

Resolution (26-02) Nuisance-

A RESOLUTION TO DECLARE THE PROPERTY AT 1617 VINE STREET A NUISANCE PURSUANT TO CITY ORDINANCE 1994-03; TO ORDER THE NUISANCE ABATED WITHIN TWENTY-ONE (21) DAYS; TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY ATTORNEY TO INITIATE CIVIL PROCESS TO ABATE THE NUISANCE ABSENT THE PROPERTY OWNER'S COMPLIANCE; AND TO CHARGE THE COST OF ANY SUCH ABATEMENT ACTION AS A SINGLE-LOT ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE PROPERTY PURSUANT TO CITY CODE SECTION 46-28. A RESOLUTION of the City Council of the City of St. Clair adopted at a regular meeting of said Council held at the St. Clair City Council Chamber, located at 547 N. Carney Drive, St. Clair, Michigan, on the 2nd day of February, 2026 at 6:00 P.M. **WHEREAS**, the City of St. Clair Building Department has conducted an investigation of the property located at 1617 (the "Property") beginning in March 2023; and **WHEREAS**, the City adopted Code §10-36 *et seq.* in January 2024 prohibiting the harboring of cats that damage neighboring private property; and **WHEREAS**, since the effective date of the ordinance, the Building Department has conducted a code enforcement investigation of the Property; and **WHEREAS**, the Building Department's investigation has resulted in the issuance of a criminal charge against the property owner, which is currently pending in the Seventy-Second District Court under Case No. 25M-02888-OM; and **WHEREAS**, the Property remains non-compliant with the City Code in February 2026, where stray cats continue to be sheltered and fed at the property, causing damage to neighboring private property in violation of the City Ordinance; and **WHEREAS**, the owner of the Property has ignored or failed to respond to violation notices provided by City administration; and **WHEREAS**, City administration has notified the owner by first-class mail of City Council's consideration of this matter at tonight's regular meeting; and **WHEREAS**, City Ordinance 1994-03 authorizes City Council to take action to abate nuisances such as those presented at the Property where code violations continue persistently without response from the owner of the Property; **NOW, THEREFORE**, it is hereby **RESOLVED** by the City Council of St. Clair, County of St. Clair, State of Michigan, as follows:

1. That the property located at 1617 Vine Street is a public hazard or nuisance that is detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the inhabitants of the City.
2. That the property owner must abate the nuisance and bring the Property into compliance with all City Codes within twenty-one (21) days.
3. That the City Attorney is authorized to initiate civil process to abate the nuisance absent the property owner's compliance.
4. The cost of any abatement action initiated by the City Attorney shall be charged as a single-lot assessment against the Property pursuant to City Code Section 46-28.

LaPorte moved, Cedar seconded, CARRIED, to adopt Resolution (26-02) as presented.

Ayes: Paul, Volz, Westrick, Gottler, Kuffa, LaPorte, Cedar

Nays: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED

Resolution (26-03) Financial Policies-

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT BUDGETING, REVENUE, RESERVE, ACCOUNTING, FINANCIAL REPORTING, AUDITING, INVESTMENT, DEBT AND CAPITAL BUDGET POLICIES WHEREAS, policies provide a framework for fiscal management and guide both current and future decisions and it is in the best interest of the City to adopt formal written financial policies to ensure compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and **WHEREAS,** these financial policies include budgeting, revenue, reserve, accounting, financial reporting, auditing, investment, debt and capital budgeting; and **WHEREAS,** all policies should be reviewed annually during budget preparation to ensure relevance and compliance with laws and accounting standards; and **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** the city adopts the budgeting, revenue, reserve, accounting, financial reporting, auditing, investment, debt and capital budgeting polices as presented effective February 1, 2026, and will provide copies of the policies to the City Auditor, Bond Rating Agencies, and post the policies on the City website and publications as appropriate.

Volz moved, Kuffa seconded, CARRIED, to adopt Resolution (26-03) as presented.

Ayes: Volz, Westrick, Gottler, Kuffa, LaPorte, Paul, Cedar

Nays: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED

REPORTS FROM ADMINISTRATION

City Superintendent – Special meeting scheduled 2/16/26 at 5pm for a workshop. ZBA meeting 2/16/26 at 5:30pm. Regular Council 6pm agenda will include a SEMCOG award. Discussion occurred on Waste Management contract and concerns.

City Attorney- None

City Departments- None

Authority, Board, Commission, Committee Chairman or Council Representative – None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS -None

NEW BUSINESS

Approve Palmer Park Restation Project

Kuffa moved, Westrick seconded, CARRIED, to approve Palmer Park Restation Project as presented.

Ayes: Westrick, Gottler, Kuffa, LaPorte, Paul, Volz, Cedar

Nays: None

CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS – January 21 & 28, 2026

Check registers listing the bills for the period ending January 21, 2026 (check number 62925-62966) in the amount of \$157,529.43 and January 28, 2026 (check numbers 62967-63042) in the amount of \$124,323.97 were presented for Council review.

LaPorte moved, Kuffa seconded, CARRIED, to approve payments of January 21 & 28, 2026

Claims and Accounts as presented.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS – None

MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – Thank you St. Clair Chamber of Commerce for the Icy Bazaar and Fireworks show.

ADJOURNMENT at 6:22pm.

Annette Sturdy, City Clerk

Bill Cedar, Jr., Mayor