

City of Albion
Special Session Minutes
October 30, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Council Members Maurice Brown (1), Lenn Reid (2), Sonya Brown (3), Marcola Lawler (4) Jeanette Spicer (5), and Andrew French and Mayor Brown.

STAFF PRESENT:

Sheryl Mitchell, City Manager; Cullen Harkness, City Attorney; Jill Domingo, City Clerk; Stacey Levin, Assistant City Manager; Scott Kipp, Chief Public Safety; John Tracy, Director Planning, Building & Code Enforcement; Tom Mead, Finance Director; Jim Lenardson, Director Public Services and Larry Williams, Recreation Director.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Persons addressing the City Council shall limit their comments to **agenda items only** and to no more than three (3) minutes. Proper decorum is required).

Public comments were received from Ed Kernish, 903 Cram Lane; Wes Dick, 700 E. Michigan Avenue; Mary Slater, 517 E. Michigan Avenue; John Face, 812 N. Eaton St; Dianne Guenin-Lelle, 422 Elizabeth St; Bob Dunklin, 707 Huntington Blvd; Nels Christensen, 915 S. Superior St; Lonnie Brewer, 1200 Hillside Dr; Keena Williams, 414 N. Huron St; Mike Bearman, 11016 2 Mile Rd; Sheila Lyons-Sobroski, 1433 E. Michigan Avenue; Shawna Gamble, 618 N. Ann St and Chad Baase, 1021 Burr Oak St who all spoke in favor of reaffirming Albion's City government and retaining Dr. Sheryl Mitchell as Albion City Manager.

IV. Request Approval Resolution # 2017-41, A Resolution to Reaffirm Faith in Albion's Government (RCV)

Comments were received from Council Members Reid, Lawler and Mayor Brown.

Council Member Barnes called for point of order.

City Manager Mitchell asked for personal privilege and read the following;

Thank you...EVERYONE for your tremendous outpouring of love, prayers, and support!
I have never experienced such An immense demonstration of voices united

together. I am truly humbled and deeply moved by everyone who has taken the time to share your fears and your hopes.

Let us take a moment to reflect on what we find upon us in our City right now. We are divided. We are frustrated. Many of us are angry.

But **as your Public leaders** we have a duty. We have a duty to listen to the voices of the people who are speaking out -- as so many Albion residents, organizations, and businesses have been doing these past few weeks.

I praise you for your courage and I want to tell you that **I hear your voices.**

I hear your concerns that my leaving the City Manager position would derail the forward momentum that we have all **worked so hard for -- to positively transform our community.**

Since high school, I have known that I wanted to be in government – although at that time my focus was **to** become the President of the United States.

But there have also been detractors – such as my high school counselor - people who have tried to stand in the way of what I truly believe is my calling.

Yet, I have was fortunate to have people encouraging me to pursue my dreams to be a public servant. **And, Young people are indeed watching what happens today.**

How can we lead by example?

According to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “true leadership” is not bestowed, but rather...

“You must earn it. True greatness comes not by favoritism but by fitness...If you want to be important—wonderful. If you want to be recognized—wonderful. If you want to be great—wonderful. But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. That’s your new definition of greatness...You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love. And you can be that servant.”

I did not come to Albion because I needed a job. I did not come to Albion because I considered the City Manager position a stepping-stone to something else.

I came to Albion because I wanted to serve.

And I am proud to be not only Albion's City Manager, but also the first African American Woman to hold the City Manager position in Albion...**and one of the few in this State.**

I have remained in Albion because I care deeply about the people. **Our Albion. Our community.**

But we are at a crossroads in our community.

We need leadership that will step forward to instill confidence that we can move in a positive direction **and rise above this bitter climate.**

Our stability inside City Hall, **and particularly within this chamber**, is critical to the stability outside of it.

Yet we must also understand what lies ahead. There is much work to be done.

We must heal. We must recover from the wounds that have affected healthy operations at City Hall and build anew.

Despite the pain, we must RISE UP! We must all RISE UP AND make a promise to **work together openly and respectfully.** We must all make this promise—**every one of us.**

We must not give up on the idea that we can be a thriving City with healthy leadership. Anger only fuels more anger. Let's get back to what is most important – the people of Albion and the City business that needs our most urgent attention.

Our City deserves this. The people of Albion deserve this.

And so, **the** Mayor and each Council's approval of the **Resolution to Reaffirm Faith in Albion's Government**, and, the Mayor and each Council's approval of the

Resolution to Reject the Resignation of the City Manager, means that they commit to this promise.

In good faith, I too commit to this promise by hereby officially rescinding my letter of resignation, effective immediately.

A standing ovation was received for City Manager Mitchell.

Barnes moved, French supported, CARRIED, To Approve Resolution # 2017-41, A Resolution to Reaffirm Faith in Albion's Government as presented. (7-0, rcv)

- V. Request Approval Resolution # 2017-42, A Resolution to Reject the Resignation of the City Manager (RCV)

Comments were received from Council Members Lawler, Spicer, Barnes, French and Brown; Mayor Brown; City Manager Mitchell and City Attorney Harkness.

Council Member Spicer asked for the following amendment to Resolution # 2017-42, A Resolution to Reject the Resignation of the City Manager to the following:

- 1) Put measures in place to create a healthy working environment, including governance training, information sessions and pathways to healing,
- 2) At a date determined by the City Manager, Mayor, and City Council, as part of the Manager's regular performance review, enter into contract negotiations, and put into her contract plans to create a healthy work environment,
- 3) Work diligently to meet the needs of our City Manager as outlined in our City Charter.

French moved, Brown supported, CARRIED, To accept the above amendments to Resolution # 2017-42, A Resolution to Reject the Resignation of the City Manager. (7-0, vv)

Barnes moved, Reid supported, CARRIED, to Approve Resolution # 2017-42, A Resolution to Reject the Resignation of the City Manager with the above amendments. (7-0, rcv)

- VI. Approve/Discuss Plan for Acting City Manager and Transition

French moved, Barnes supported, CARRIED, to Remove Approve/Discuss Plan for Acting City Manager and Transition from the agenda. (7-0, vv)

- VII. Request Approval Resolution # 2017-43, Requesting Corroboration of Alleged Harassment and a Hostile Work Environment (RCV)

Comments were received from Council Members Lawler and Barnes, Mayor Brown and City Attorney Harkness.

Council Member Barnes asked for Point of Order.

Lawler moved, Brown supported, CARRIED, to **TABLE INDEFINATELY** Approval of Resolution # 2017-43, A Resolution Requesting Corroboration of Alleged Harassment and a Hostile Work Environment as presented. (7-0, rcv)

French moved, Brown supported, CARRIED, To move the Discussion of Corroboration and Alleged Harassment and a Hostile Work Environment to a Closed Session with the City Manager and Council. (7-0, vv)

VIII. Motion to Excuse Absent Council Member (s) (VV)

No action was necessary as all members were present.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Persons addressing the City Council shall limit their comments to no more than three (3) minutes. Proper decorum is required).

Comments were received from Lonnie Brewer, 1200 Hillside Rd; Marva Powell, 116 W. Pine St; Chad Baase, 1021 Burr Oak St; Alfredia Dysart-Drake, 1016 S. Superior St and Council Member Barnes.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Brown moved, Lawler supported, CARRIED, to ADJOURN Special Council Session. (7-0, vv).

Mayor Brown adjourned the Special Session at 8:40 p.m.

Date

Jill Domingo
City Clerk