

CITY OF CHARLOTTE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
111 E. Lawrence Ave., Charlotte, MI 48813 (517) 543-2750
Regular Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.
February 23, 2026

CALL TO ORDER:

By Mayor Fullerton on Monday, February 23, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Fullerton, Council members Christensen, Scott, Chin and Neumann were present. Mayor Pro Tem Rodriguez and Council member Brumette were absent. A quorum was met.

City staff in attendance; Interim City Manager Pastue, and City Clerk Smith, DPW Director Stephanie Whitney

INVOCATION:

Dwight Ezop for St. Mary's Catholic Church led the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Led by Mayor Fullerton.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. Three corrections were identified. Council Member Chin noted that on page 2 of 5, the minutes incorrectly attributed a planning committee report to him; the correction was that the Brownfield Redevelopment Committee had no quorum, not the planning commission
- b. Council Member Neumann noted his last name was misspelled on page 3 of 5.
- c. Mayor Fullerton noted that page 4 contained several paragraphs of public comment from a December meeting that did not belong, as there was no public comment at the February 9th meeting.

Motion by Council Member Scott to approve the minutes as corrected. Seconded by Council Member Christensen. Motion Carried.

ABSENCE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Mayor Fullerton reported that Council Member Brumette's father-in-law had passed away and he was attending visitation. Council Member Rodriguez had called to indicate he was delayed at work and would arrive approximately 10 to 15 minutes late.

Motion by Council Member Christensen to excuse both absent members. Seconded by Council Member Neumann. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment. The clerk was unable to confirm whether anyone was participating online.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Council Member Neumann seconded by Council Member Scott, to approve the agenda. Motion Carried

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. City Manager report

The Interim City Manager reported that the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and Local Development Finance Authority need to be reactivated due to prior process

breakdowns, likely from staff turnover. He explained that a \$90,000+ payment to Shift Industries covered a 2023 obligation, with a similar payment expected at the end of the current tax season. After those payments, approximately \$150,000 is projected to remain in the Brownfield account, and he emphasized the need to reconcile the funds and restore committee operations to support studies, planning, and potential remediation efforts.

He also reported that city manager search proposals were due the next day and a review meeting may be held on Thursday. He noted that if additional council members attend, the meeting will be publicly posted in accordance with a State Supreme Court ruling requiring notice even when fewer than a quorum is present.

The Manager stated he plans to proceed with updating job descriptions and compensation for non-union department heads to ensure internal equity and market competitiveness. He estimated the study would cost \$15,000–\$20,000 and could be funded through savings in the manager’s budget.

He reported that a Title VI complaint received in December was completed under the old policy, but future complaints will be sent directly to MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration rather than handled internally, with a resolution to formalize the change planned for the next meeting. He also noted the City Attorney is finalizing the zoning update, with readings before Council and Planning Commission anticipated and adoption targeted by the end of April.

b. Staff Report

No staff report was presented separately.

c. Council member committee reports

Council Member Chin reported that the EATRAN board offered the interim manager a permanent position and will begin a search for a new finance director. He also noted the Brownfield Redevelopment Committee meeting was cancelled due to the state presenter’s absence and will be rescheduled.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The Consent Agenda included:

- a. approval of Claims and Expenditures totaling \$382,274.83
- b. approval of the renumbering of 2026 resolutions to correct a clerical error
- c. approval of a request to apply for a Body Camera Grant for the police department
- d. approval of Resolution 2026-09 to close the 100 block of East Harris Street for the Needful Things Anniversary event from May 8 to May 10, 2026.

Motion by Council Member Chin, seconded by Council Member Neumann. Motion carried.

BUSINESS AGENDA:

- a. Consider approval of Adoption of Community Development Block Grant Procurement Policy

Council Member Neumann commented that the policy read well and reflected the direction the city had been working

toward over the past year, describing it as moving in the correct direction.

Mayor Pro Tem Rodriguez arrived for Council Meeting.

Motion by Council Member Scott, seconded by Council Member Christensen. Motion Carried.

- b. Consider approval of Sole Source Authorization – Flow Monitoring and Hydraulic Modeling (Fishbeck)

Director of Public Works Stephanie detailed the project, noting the Lansing lift station services a growing area including new apartments, the industrial park, and Michigan Can Line. The study will assess the station's capacity for growth and guide upgrades, with costs not exceeding \$52,000. Council Member Rodriguez questioned the certainty of developments and the spending. Stephanie confirmed the study is necessary for any area's expansion. Council Member Scott highlighted developer interest, and Christensen emphasized, "If it won't flow, can't grow," supporting the study. Rodriguez worried about potential upgrade costs estimated at \$1,000,000, possibly covered by grants; otherwise, the water and sewer fund would be used. Scott mentioned benefits across systems, while Neumann defended Fishbeck as the lowest recent bidder and caretaker of the city's GIS system, thus favoring sole source. Chin backed the study but resisted the sole source, citing lower costs with competitive bidding. Public commenter Jody supported Fishbeck's seasoned expertise, noting they might be treated as a sole source due to lack of other bids.

Motion by Council Member Christensen, seconded by Neumann. Motion carried 5-1, with Council Member Chin voting no.

- c. Consider Approval of Requested Input for Councils Professional Development Budget

Mayor Fullerton noted the professional development budget was reduced to \$5,000 last year, spent, and required an additional \$1,900, with another \$2,000 needed. The Clerk will manage conference registration records, and by March 3, council members should submit training plans to establish next year's budget figures. Council Member Christensen shared his conference schedule, while Rodriguez questioned further spending without evidence of training's impact, preferring staff development over council training. Council Member Scott linked training to recent votes, and Chin supported the conference schedule, adding numerous free online sessions. Chin also agreed with reporting benefits post-conference.

Council members will share plans with the Clerk, with no motion needed.

- d. Discussion of FY 2026-27 Budget Priorities

The Interim City Manager summarized council-submitted budget priorities, highlighting infrastructure, financing, community place-making, housing, economic development, and organizational concerns. The General Fund has a \$2.75 million balance, exceeding both the 17% and 25% target minimums. About \$1 million could potentially be used for one-time expenses like an HVAC replacement. The Major Local Street Fund has a \$2.5 million balance, well above its target, allowing \$2-\$2.5 million for street work. Reith Riley might maintain current rates for spring. The city requires a maintenance plan due to worn parking lots. PA 425 agreements with townships dating to 1998-2000 are in place, but the city has lost the processing guide for new agreements. Revising lapsing agreements may be necessary. The Manager emphasized the difficulty of increasing

millages due to the charter cap and Headlee Amendments. The city's pension and retiree health care funding goals include 60% by 2030 for pensions—current funding almost reaches this—and 40% for retiree health care by 2031, with current funding in the low 20% range.

Council Member Chin suggested narrowing priorities, proposing a town hall or online survey for resident input. Council Member Scott supported this idea for increased public engagement. Council Member Rodriguez requested a proposed budget timeline. The Manager plans to develop the budget, bring decision items to the council, and incorporate public input through hearings.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jody commended Mikayla for her role during the clerk vacancy, praised the transparency of the city manager report, and inquired about whether storm and sanitary sewer systems are separate. Mayor Fullerton confirmed they are separate and explained the 1980s smoke-testing program used to detect and fix improper connections.

STAFF COMMENTS:

No staff comments were presented.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Council Member Christensen attended the soft opening of Viking's Edge, noting a ribbon cutting for Friday at 4 PM, and encouraged attendance at the Nordic Fire Festival. He reported

attending a pipeline safety program by MISS DIG 811, mentioning the requirement to call 811 before any digging.

Council Member Scott supported holding a town hall meeting outside City Hall to encourage broader participation, noting the council's rare interactions with the public outside formal meetings.

Council Member Chin announced State Senator Anthony's visit to discuss state budget matters and expressed concern over proposed state House bills shifting zoning authority away from local governments. He called for a review of the city's policy on Flock cameras and compliance with TIF agreements, requested an update on audit findings, noted the governor's budget impact, inquired about the Tom Barrett federal funding application, and suggested lowering the purchasing bid threshold.

Council Member Rodriguez shared concerns about TIF compliance, opposed Flock cameras without proper policy, and asked for a proposed budget timeline from the Manager.

ADJOURN:

Motion by Council Member Christensen to adjourn. Seconded by Council Member Neumann. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

Adjourned at 8:43pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia A. Smith

City Clerk