CITY OF LAWRENCE

**Common Council**

# January 7, 2019

**Regular Meeting**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Council Members Lisa Chavis, Tom Shevlot, Joe Williams, Bob Jones, William Tyrrell Giles, Rick Wells and Becky Parker and were present.

ALSO PRESENT: Clerk Kathleen Walton and Attorney Christina Bruno (Bose McKinney & Evans LLP)

STAFF PRESENT: Controller/Deputy Mayor Fenwick, Police Chief Hofmann, Fire Chief Batalis, Deputy Fire Chief Hardie, Deputy Fire Chief Wallace, Battalion Chief Griffin and Firefighter Ambers were present.

Council President Lisa Chavis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and announced a quorum was present.

The election of President of the Lawrence Common Council was opened for nominations. Councilor Shevlot nominated Lisa Chavis. Councilor Jones nominated Rick Wells. Councilor Chavis announced that, there being no further nominations, nominations were closed. Paper ballots were distributed for voting. The Clerk tallied the votes. Seven votes were cast, 5 votes for Lisa Chavis (Councilors Chavis, Shevlot, Parker, Williams and Giles) and 2 votes for Rick Wells (Councilors Wells and Jones). The Clerk announced that Lisa Chavis was elected President of the Common Council.

The election of Vice President of the Lawrence Common Council was opened for nominations.

Councilor Giles nominated Tom Shevlot. Councilor Williams nominated Rick Wells. Councilor Chavis announced that, there being no further nominations, nominations were closed. Paper ballots were distributed for voting. The Clerk tallied the votes. Seven votes were cast, 5 votes for Tom Shevlot (Councilors Shevlot, Chavis, Jones, Parker and Giles) and 2 votes for Rick Wells (Councilors Wells and Williams). The Clerk announced that Tom Shevlot was elected Vice President of the Common Council.

COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: Councilor Shevlot expressed the hope that Councilor Freeman will experience a speedy recovery for her recent surgery. He went on to congratulate Jeff Williams and to thank him for his 28 years of service to the Lawrence Fire Department and the citizens of the City of Lawrence. Councilor Williams renewed his concerns about his constituents walking on 56th Street and over the bridge on German Church Road to reach shopping and other areas within the community. He said that his concern is to protect citizens from something catastrophic that could happen. He also addressed the trash scattered along Pendleton Pike near the Steak N Shake restaurant. He identified the need for filling pot holes in his district. He went on to ask for an update on the plan for repaving 56th Street and German Church Road south of Pendleton Pike. Councilor Jones requested information about a bridge on Carroll Road and a nearby drainage ditch in the area west of Carroll Road and north of 65th Street. He further requested an update on the plans for the area surrounding 46th Street and Franklin Road. He also requested information on an inter local water agreement in the area surrounding 50th Street and Mitchner Avenue. Councilor Wells asked about the role of the Common Council in the recently awarded $5.8 million Arts for Lawrence grant from the Lilly Endowment for the City of Lawrence. He is interested in the input required of the Common Council, whether the Sterrett Center is involved with the project, and when the Common Council will vote to move the

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project forward. In general, he requested an administrative update of where we are in the process. Councilor Chavis said she would request an update on the Cultural Campus at Fort Harrison to be presented at the next council meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Councilor Parker moved to approve the minutes of the regular meetings on December 4, 2017 and December 20, 2017. The motion was seconded by Councilor Jones and carried by a unanimous vote of the Council.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS: None

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES: Councilor Jones informed the Council that a Zoning Committee meeting was held tonight at 6:00 p.m. to consider Petition No. 2018-ZON-135, 10410 East 52nd Street. Councilor Jones moved on behalf of the Zoning Committee, that the Council hear Petition No. 2018-ZON-135 at a Special Council meeting on February 4, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. Councilor Shevlot seconded the motion. By a show of hands, the vote carried by the unanimous vote of the Council.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS: Fire Chief Batalis presented a detailed briefing on the December 17, 2018 3- alarm fire at the Benjamin Court Apartments. He expressed awareness of comments being made about the quality of the response to the fire. He reminded everyone that there were no fatalities and no injuries as a result of the fire. He also clarified that he had asked the Mayor to put Station #40 on the back burner to deal with various issues such as mold remediation, a rotation plan to replace aging equipment, and resolution of various plumbing issues. Essentially, the goal is to address those issues and others prior to moving forward with Station #40. In the meantime, the Fort Ben area is well served with response times in the range of 4 to 5 minutes City wide for all apparatus. For instance, the first battalion chief arrived in less than 2 minutes and the first fire engine arrived on the scene in 3 minutes and 27 seconds at the Benjamin Court Apartments fire. The presence of an engine at Station #40 wouldn’t have changed the outcome. It has been his goal to place health and safety issues as the highest priority. As part of that process, he has since 2016 submitted a series of vouchers to address the issues. The Common Council has approved each of those vouchers over the past 3 years. He then responded to questions from the Common Council.

Police Chief Hofmann then addressed rumors and comments made about the discharge of firearms on New Year’s Eve. He said that this practice has been a major concern for him for a long time, especially since he has seen people shot and cars damaged by the practice. As to what the police are doing about the problem, there is simply not a lot that they can do because of the wide spread practice within the City of Lawrence and in communities nationwide. The ownership of guns is constitutionally protected. Many people have guns in their homes and fire those weapons where they are not visible. All we can do, and what we do, is to encourage people not to fire their weapons within the City limits on New Year’s Eve or any other time. Once again, this is a major concern that we don’t take lightly. We are doing our best and will once

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again, next December mount a major push to remind gun owners that the practice of firing weapons in celebration is reckless, dangerous, and illegal. In response to a question, Police Chief Hofmann assured all members that the Lawrence Police Department has been working with apartment managers to ensure safety. Police Chief Hofmann responded to questions from the Common Council.

CITIZENS COMMENTS: The following citizen addressed the Council:

* Linda Moore, 4909 Leone Drive

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m., by the unanimous vote of the Council.

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Lisa Chavis, President Kathleen A. Walton, Clerk

These minutes are not intended to be verbatim. They are a summary of discussions held, with the exception of the motions. An audiotape is made which provides a detailed record.