

Financial Health Review Team

Citizens Communication and Services Group

Ray Vlasin, Sue Haka, Michael Moquin

East Lansing Financial Health Team

Appointed Members

Michael J. Moquin, Chairperson

Former Chief General Counsel for the Michigan Municipal Retirement System

Jill Rhode, Vice Chairperson

Director of Financial Services, Ingham County

Douglas Jester

Principal at 5 Lakes Energy; Former Mayor and City Councilmember, City of East Lansing

Susan Haka

Ernst & Young Endowed Professor of Accounting, Eli Broad College of Business at MSU

Aaron Harris

Financial Advisor at Northwestern Mutual

Tricia Foster

Senior Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer, CBRE/Martin

Jeffrey Hicks

Vice President/Commercial Banking Officer at Mercantile Bank of Michigan

Raymond D. Vlasin

Distinguished Professor Emeritus, MSU

Mary Schulz

Associate Director for the MSU Extension Center for Local Government, Finance and Policy

Robert J. Kleine

East Lansing City Council: Mayor Mark Meadows, Mayor Pro Tem Ruth Beier, Erik Altmann, Shanna Draheim and Susan W. Woods.

Background & Scope

Communication and Services Group met multiple times to address both city communications and the cost of services in order to formulate recommendations. The Group also hosted Citizen Forums at the Hannah Center on June 15 and 29, October 20, November 14 and the 28th. The Group approved the recommendations on November 5th, as did the FHT subsequently on November 14, 2016 by unanimous vote.

Recommendations

- **Citizen Communications**-in order to improve citizen communications, we recommend the city undertake a review of the accessibility of its website to community members (particularly in light of potential reductions in citizen communications-see budget information). Citizens believe the website is not user friendly. The possibility of getting volunteer help to review and make recommendations to improve website communications capability (perhaps through a volunteer citizens group...see bullet point three below) would yield benefits for the citizens and city staff.
- **City Services** – City staff members were asked to provide proposed budget reductions at 5% (see attachment A) and 10% of city service personnel and programs to maintain the viability of the city budget moving forward. The City Manager's office, Police Department, Fire Department, General Finance, Library, Human Resources, General Fund, and Parks & Recreation all provided details regarding the impact of the two levels of reductions on city services and personnel. All components of the city must stand ready to contribute to the serious shortfall in City revenues. As a result we recommend a five percent budget cut managed by the city manager in consultation with the above units. We do not recommend 5% cuts across each unit, but suggest cuts be chosen to minimize the impact on East Lansing citizens and city staff.

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- **Consultants** – City will establish a volunteer network of East Lansing residents and other interested parties who are capable of assisting the city to find and implement creative cost savings through the use of volunteers (see Attachment B for a proposal).

Attachments

- [Attachment A: East Lansing Services – 5 % cuts](#)
- [Attachment B: Professional Knowledge, Skills and Experience](#)