



CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
1087 Newell, White Cloud, MI 49349 (NC Commissioners Boardroom)
Minutes for July 21, 2025

A. Meeting Called to Order

The Special Meeting of the White Cloud City Council was held on the above date. Mayor Miller called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

1. Roll Call

Council Members Present: Damon Anuci, Amy Barnhard, Herm Becker, Candice Dault, Brian Miller, Jeff Murchison, Lori Shears

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: April Storms, Don Barnhard, Samantha Waite, Kelli Arnold

Sign-in: Pam Miller, Laural Auw, Joann Chandler, Catherine Musselman, John Nelson, Donna K, Carole Lovas, Laura Watkins, Ken Follett, William Doering, Marva Shears, Gene Towne, Leslie Anderson, Barry Anderson, Joe Fox, Ashley Dekker, Pieter Dekker, D DeRuitter, Jay Fox, Tori Nader, Kay Scott, Mindy Mench, Durwin Plotts, Herman Sutherland, Rhonda Sutherland, Sheila Reed, Mark Bacon, Rich Wheeler, Marce Hansen, Amy Stockwell, Donna Nichols, Annette Gilbert, Jamie Steffes, Patty Steffes, Maranda Lee

Via Zoom: Anthony's iPhone, April's iPhone, D, DW, Ed, George, H. Bowman, iPhone, iPhone 9, John Sasta, Keith T, Lance Climie, Larry Damico, Laura's iPhone, Dave, Lisa, Mark G, Nadine Longergan, Nicole Woodward, Patricia Burke, Samsung SM, Shane Micklatcher, Shari, Sharon Davis, Shimian Ussery, Tim Deater, Vicki Burke, WZZM 13, Zoom User, 12319244297

2. Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Agenda for the Special Meeting July 21, 2025.

Motion by Dault, **Supported** by Barnhard to approve the special meeting agenda for July 21, 2025.

Vote: Ayes-All Nays- None Absent- None

Motion Carried

3. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Murchison

B. New Business

1. Stacy Hissong, Attorney with Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes (FSBR), specializes in municipal water resources shared a PowerPoint presentation along with Aaron Snell of Streamside Eco. Streamside has been assisting with the EGLE permitting & regulatory regulations during the dam drawdown. Thomas Horak of the Dam Safety Unit was at the meeting representing EGLE and available to answer any questions regarding the dam water drawn down.

The PowerPoint presentation was an overview of the Dam Feasibility Study results, drawdown status, liability concerns, alternatives and next steps followed by questions & comments.

The White Cloud Dam has a high hazard dam rating; That rating according to MCL 324.31503(11) is: A dam located in an area where a failure may cause serious damage to inhabited homes, agricultural buildings, campgrounds, recreational facilities, industrial or

commercial buildings, public utilities, main highways, or class I carrier railroads, or where environmental degradation would be significant, or where danger to individuals exists with the potential for loss of life. Because of a high hazard rating, an inspection is required at least every 3 years.

In 2022 EGLE inspected the dam, and the stability and structural condition was rated “fair” but overall had a “poor condition” rating. Due to overtopping issues, the hydraulic capacity of the dam requires reevaluation to ensure adequate capacity.

MCL 324.32518(5) states: If an inspection report discloses the need for a more detailed investigation or evaluation of certain dam features for the purpose of determining the condition of the dam, the department may order the completion and submission of that detailed investigation or evaluation at the expense of the owner.

MCL 324.32518(6) states: If an owner does not submit an inspection report as required by subsection (1) or conduct additional investigations if required by subsection (1) or conduct additional investigations if required by subsection (5), the department or any person who would have life or property threatened by a breach of the dam may have a report prepared and recover the cost of preparing the report in a civil action commenced in a court of competent jurisdiction.

As a result of the 2022 Dam inspection, a feasibility study was required. EGLE provided two grants to assist in funding the study that was completed by GEI in February 2025 and provided reconstruction/removal options.

The Feasibility Study showed that the dam fails to meet current capacity requirements, there is earthen embankment erosion, seepage and safety concerns, saturated conditions of embankment that could lead to dam failure and the primary spillway has concrete deficiencies, as well as stability and structural concerns.

After Feasibility Study submittal: April 1, EGLE order requesting plan/timeline to address deficiencies. April 4, GEI recommendation letter recommending immediate drawdown due to “elevated risk of dam failure”. April 15, City responded to EGLE with GEI recommendation letter attached. April 18, EGLE correspondence requiring accelerated drawdown based on GEI recommendation.

MCL 324.31518(7) states: If, based on the findings and recommendations of the inspection report and an inspection by the department, the department finds that a condition exists which endangers a dam, it shall order the owner to take actions that the department considers necessary to alleviate the danger.

Repercussions if drawdown did not occur: EGLE would have administered the drawdown and charged the City its costs, Civil fines/criminal charges or fines (\$10,000/day), costs of restoration of any impact to natural resources.

June 25th the EGLE permit for drawdown was issued. Streamside ECO was retained to assist with the drawdown that was initiated on June 25th, the proposal from Streamside ECO to coordinate the drawdown process with EGLE not to exceed \$15,000.00. The total drawdown is 7 feet, the intent was to lower approximately 1 foot per day, completed by July 3rd. Due to rain events and turbidity issues, the schedule has been slowed.

There are time constraints following the drawdown. There are approximately 2 years before the exposed area qualifies as a wetland, once a qualified wetland, restoring the water body could become legally and environmentally unfeasible. A plan for long term remedial action is due to EGLE by November 3, 2025; this must include “a repair or removal plan, or a proposal for an alternative dam modification project that would address all deficiencies with the dam and avoid and minimize environmental impacts.”

There is no right in Michigan law to require a dam owner to maintain lake for other property owner’s benefit.

The GEI Feasibility study provided two alternatives as next steps:

Dam Rehabilitation or Dam Removal

Dam Rehabilitation according to the study (pages 40-48; Appendix H) shows between \$8.55 Million to \$10.77 Million in construction only which would include the engineering, permitting and construction Plus \$11.2 Million to \$18.6 Million in Construction and Maintenance/Operations for the 50-year life cycle cost of dam (in 2024 dollars). Funding opportunities for rehab include special assessments, a lake level district and/or cost of project to property owners plus interest payments. Grants to fund rehab are extremely unlikely. According to the study, Dam Removal (pages 48-55; Appendix H) shows a passive approach to dam removal with minimal stream restoration at \$9.3 Million. An active approach of dam removal costs with stream, upland and floodplain restoration shows \$12.7 Million with no increase in costs during "life cycle". Funding opportunities for dam removal include grants through EGLE, stream rehabilitation grants and recreational grants through the Michigan DNR Fisheries Habitat grant program, Great Lakes Protection Fund, Trout Unlimited, and Fremont Area Community Foundation.

Received

C. Public Comment

Gene Schotanus, John Stump, Don Clary, Pat Hedlund, Dennis Hult, Mary Wydeck, Herman Sutherland, David Meyers, Ken Follett, Mary Eggleston, Tori Nader, Robin Heykoop, Joe Fox, Joseph Fox, Tanya Debski, Cheryl Hult, Rhonda Sutherland, William Sessler, Leonard Westcomb, Laural Auw, Steve Smith, Barry Anderson, Leslie Anderson, Marce Hansen, Gayle, Lenny Kurello, Rich Reynolds, Barry Flinton, Pam Driscoll, Debbie Russo, Dave Dean, Pieter Dekker, Lola Boucher Kuhn

Received

D. Council Member Comments

Anuci, Barnhard, Becker, Miller

Received

E. Adjourn

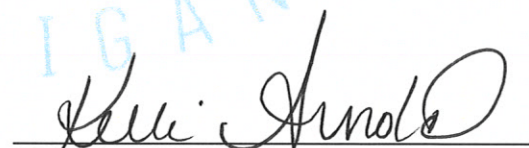
Adjourn the special meeting.

Motion by Shears, **Supported** by Barnhard to adjourn the special meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Vote: Ayes-All Nays- None

Motion Carried


Brian J. Miller, Mayor


Kelli Arnold, Clerk
Approved on 8/05/2025