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— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

Thanksgiving and a message of hope ...

By Greg Kowalski

There didn't seem to be much to be thankful for that Thanksgiving.

In one sense, it was a time of uncertainty; in another, the future seemed inevitable – and it wasn't good.

November, 1940, should have been a time of hope and promise. The Great Depression, de-

spite some setbacks, was easing, and the economy was rebounding.

The number of people on government assistance was at its lowest level since 1932, with "only" 689 active cases in Hamtramck. Unemployment was down, although much of that was due to the increasing number of men joining, and being

drafted into, the military.

That went to the core of what was wrong.

It had been more than a year since World War II began on Sept. 1, 1939, and things had only gotten worse in Europe and Southeast Asia as the Germans and Japanese expanded their grips of tyranny.

The horrors of the Na-

zis were especially meaningful in Hamtramck, because so many residents had family members still in Poland, which by this time was being devastated by the Germans and Russians.

In desperation, many Hamtramckans appealed to Congressman Rudolph Tenerowicz to find out what was the state of

their loved ones in Europe. Tenerowicz said the German and Russian embassies would be contacted to find information, but it doesn't appear that he had much success.

Still, life went on.

"Are we excited!" exclaimed an ad for the 1941 Packard cars that were ready to hit the streets for prices any-

where from a mere \$907 to a choke-inducing \$5,500. These were offered by the Dick Hughey Co., on Jos. Campau, one of the many car dealerships that were regaining strength after the Great Depression.

"Things are good in Hamtramck," Liberty State Bank proclaimed

Continued on page 2



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Thanksgiving and a message of hope ... Continued from front page

as it urged people to save in case of an emergency. And the O.K. Beauty Salon at Jos. Campau and Belmont was offering “Holiday Beauty Specials,” including “A genuine O.K. permanent” for only \$3.50. (They usually cost \$5.) Max’s Jewelry was celebrating its 27th year in business and giving away gifts to customers.

The ever-popular Sweetland Confectionary just moved to a new location at 10209 Jos. Campau. And Jimmy Durante, a long-time singer-comedian-actor who was a huge star back then, was packing them in for his performances at The Bowery Nite Club. But something was wrong.

This Thanksgiving, in 1940, was still more than a year before the war began for the United States on Dec. 7, 1941, but already it was clear that we were moving towards the conflict.

The draft was in full effect, although so many men were enlisting in the military that the draft quota for November was 627 men for the entire state. There were 500 men of draft age in Hamtramck alone at that time. And there were other seemingly minor, yet telling, items:

- Six Hamtramckans were in a Marine Corps Reserve unit called up for “special services” and sent to Quantico, Va.
- The common council gave permission for the Greek War Relief Association to solicit money in Hamtramck to help Greece in its defense against the invading Nazis.
- A vicious political ad showed the image of President Franklin Roosevelt rushing to join the ranks of Hitler, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and Japanese Emperor Hirohito.
- Movies depicting the threat of the Nazis, such as “After Mein Kampf,” are shown at area theaters.
- A newspaper article featured a young draftee praising life in the Army. “It’s far better than

I’ve ever expected,” he said.

And on it went. The coming conflict could not be ignored. “Thanksgiving Day Not the Same” was the headline on the front page of The Citizen newspaper on Nov. 15, 1940.

The story beneath related how the date of the holiday had been moved up a week to help businesses extend the holiday shopping season, which traditionally begins on the day after Thanksgiving. And, the story noted, “The big food item on the Thanksgiving menu – turkey – will be bigger, better and cheaper this year than in recent years...”

But it’s the end of the story that resonates with the spirit of Thanksgiving, and makes a pointed message that matters even today. In his annual Thanksgiving proclamation, then-Mayor Walter Kanar poignantly noted:

“I believe that this year especially we have good reason to be grateful and count our blessings, when we compare our peaceful lives and return to prosperity with the suffering, misery and hunger which exists abroad as a result of the greed and

schemes of dictators.

“I believe that we should realize that the many privileges and comforts which we enjoy are the direct result of the form of democratic government which we have, and do our utmost to protect and safeguard the principles on which that government is founded by

uniting solidly behind our flag, and not allowing minor differences and petty ambitions to cause any rift in our united front.”

Happy Thanksgiving.
(Mr. Kowalski is the Executive Director of the Hamtramck Historical Museum, and he has written several books about the history of the city.)



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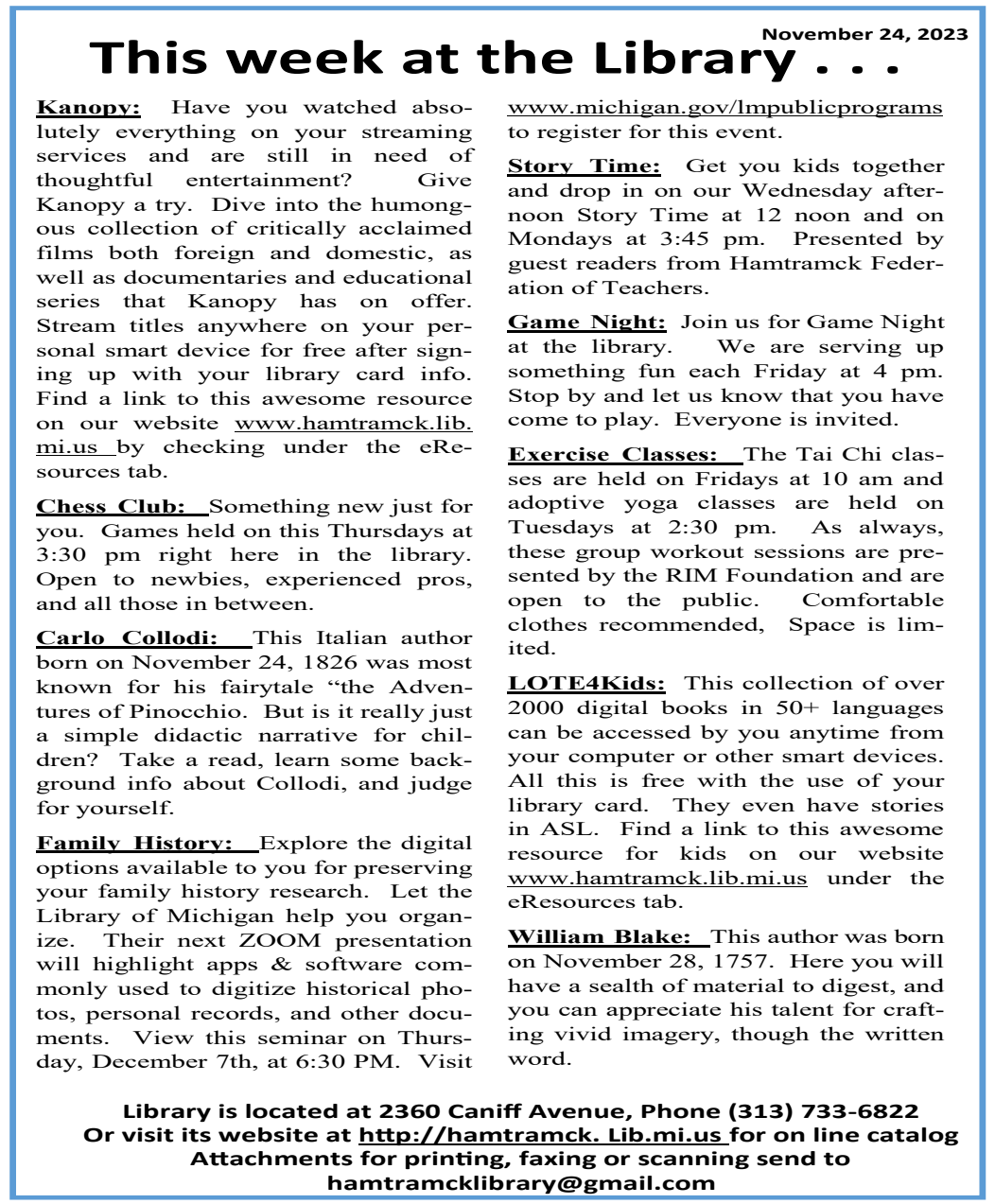
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This week at the Library ...

November 24, 2023

Kanopy: Have you watched absolutely everything on your streaming services and are still in need of thoughtful entertainment? Give Kanopy a try. Dive into the humongous collection of critically acclaimed films both foreign and domestic, as well as documentaries and educational series that Kanopy has on offer. Stream titles anywhere on your personal smart device for free after signing up with your library card info. Find a link to this awesome resource on our website www.hamtramck.lib.mi.us by checking under the eResources tab.

Chess Club: Something new just for you. Games held on this Thursdays at 3:30 pm right here in the library. Open to newbies, experienced pros, and all those in between.

Carlo Collodi: This Italian author born on November 24, 1826 was most known for his fairytale “the Adventures of Pinocchio”. But is it really just a simple didactic narrative for children? Take a read, learn some background info about Collodi, and judge for yourself.

Family History: Explore the digital options available to you for preserving your family history research. Let the Library of Michigan help you organize. Their next ZOOM presentation will highlight apps & software commonly used to digitize historical photos, personal records, and other documents. View this seminar on Thursday, December 7th, at 6:30 PM. Visit www.michigan.gov/Impublicprograms to register for this event.

Story Time: Get you kids together and drop in on our Wednesday afternoon Story Time at 12 noon and on Mondays at 3:45 pm. Presented by guest readers from Hamtramck Federation of Teachers.

Game Night: Join us for Game Night at the library. We are serving up something fun each Friday at 4 pm. Stop by and let us know that you have come to play. Everyone is invited.

Exercise Classes: The Tai Chi classes are held on Fridays at 10 am and adoptive yoga classes are held on Tuesdays at 2:30 pm. As always, these group workout sessions are presented by the RIM Foundation and are open to the public. Comfortable clothes recommended, Space is limited.

LOTE4Kids: This collection of over 2000 digital books in 50+ languages can be accessed by you anytime from your computer or other smart devices. All this is free with the use of your library card. They even have stories in ASL. Find a link to this awesome resource for kids on our website www.hamtramck.lib.mi.us under the eResources tab.

William Blake: This author was born on November 28, 1757. Here you will have a sealth of material to digest, and you can appreciate his talent for crafting vivid imagery, though the written word.

Library is located at 2360 Caniff Avenue, Phone (313) 733-6822
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Review: Opinion Page

In Our Opinion

Thanksgiving: A time to reflect on what unites us

This Thursday is Thanksgiving Day. Yes, the holiday season is upon us. And yes, we wish you, dear reader, a happy and healthy Thanksgiving. Hamtramck is a small town, but we are large in spirit. People care about each other, although we squabble here and there. Thanksgiving, though, is a time to give thanks and be thankful. It's a day we can rest and count our blessings. We like to think Hamtramck has a lot to be thankful about. Yes, this year has proven to be divisive both politically and culturally. And, yes, it looks like these divisions will only widen for the immediate future. But despite our occasional setbacks, we are survivors here. And we are also quick to lend a helping hand to our neighbors. That is community spirit. And, that is Hamtramck. There is a true sense that we are all in this together here. And that means working together, and not working against one another. So, on Thanksgiving Day, take time to reflect – and ask yourself: how can I help better our community? On the business side of things, the holiday will mean government offices and banks will be closed. The Review went to press early this week, and we hit the streets on Wednesday. Stay safe everyone! Oh yeah, and Go Lions!

For now, it's unknown what the HPS will do about tax loss

By Charles Sercombe
Now that voters have rejected, for the second time, a request for a school millage renewal, what's next for the public school district? The short answer is, it's unknown. Hamtramck Public Schools Superintendent Jaleelah Ahmed is not answering emails. Neither are Board President Jihan Aiyash nor Board Vice President Salah Hadwan. The voter rebuff of the 3 mill renewal will translate to a loss of \$750,000 a year for the district – money that is earmarked for ongoing building maintenance. The district could keep asking voters to pass the renewal, but from the looks of it, voters here

are overwhelming against it and will remain so. One reason for this no-tax stand can be traced to the number of homeowners who have complained about how their house values have been re-assessed higher, which has resulted in an increase in how much they pay each year in property taxes. The city council formed a sub-committee several weeks ago to look into the issue, but there has been no follow-up from the committee. The public might have gotten some insight into what the superintendent and board members were thinking about the loss of the renewal two weeks ago at their regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Nov. 8, but that meeting was previously

cancelled, although no reason was provided for the cancellation. However, Superintendent Ahmed wasn't totally silent on the matter. She posted this statement on the district's Facebook page: "Moving forward, we remain dedicated to providing the best educational experience and opportunities for our students. We will continue to seek solutions, to adapt, and to overcome challenges with the same resolve we've always had. Your feedback, involvement, and advocacy for our schools are critical as we navigate the path ahead. ... "Let's view this not as a setback, but as a stepping stone to engage in deeper conversations and to explore new avenues for progress."

The only feedback to Ahmed's statement on the district's Facebook page took issue with the district's lack of a campaign to sway voters. "Next time you need to start earlier. You need to make sure that there is translated materials. You need to canvas and phone bank," said Angela Chen. "You need to work with local organizations that have been trying to help. Not start the week before Election Day, especially since there is early voting."

Odds & Ends

Salute!... One of Hamtramck's favorite sons got a proper Hamtramck sendoff. On Saturday morning, a number of friends of Richard 'Rocky' Radtke gathered at Baker Streetcar Bar on Jos. Campau for a final toast to their old friend, who had recently died after a brutal battle with cancer. Rocky used to own Baker's, and was one of the city's beloved barkeeps. He was also well known for his alley barbecue grilling, and he served up great steaks. When Rocky came into a room, he really knew how to fill it up – always jovial and ready to make quick friends with strangers. If you heard loud laughter in the room, it was likely coming from Rocky and those around him. On Saturday, over a dozen of his pals stood outside of the bar to give Rocky one final toast of "Jezy" (of course) as the funeral procession drove by. The procession paused for a moment to allow his family to join in the final toast. A large part of Hamtramck is now gone. Rocky, may you rest in peace, and thanks for making Hamtramck such a fun and unique place to live in and visit.



Friends of Richard "Rocky" Radtke gathered Saturday morning at Baker Streetcar Bar for a final toast to their friend who recently died after a battle with cancer.

together nourishes our soul. Especially during time-honored celebrations like Thanksgiving!" To donate, call them at (313) 871-7443. **Oh deer...** Deer season is still ongoing in Michigan until Nov. 30. That means a number of Hamtramckans are out in the fields across Michigan, and elsewhere, taking aim at the critters. Even if you are not interested in deer hunting, state officials advise that you stay keenly aware while driving near fields and woods. That's because deer are awfully jumpy this time of year, and are known to run out on to roads and crash into cars. This is no small matter. In 2022, 1,633 people were injured, and 11 people were killed, in deer-involved crashes. That's up from 2021, when such crashes resulted in 1,449 injuries and 10 deaths. The Insurance Alliance of Michigan (IAM) recommends following these precautions:

- Watch for deer, especially at dawn and dusk when they are most active.

If you see one deer, approach cautiously, as there may be more out of sight. Deer often travel single file, so if you see one cross a road, it's likely more are nearby waiting to cross. When startled by an approaching vehicle, deer can panic and dart out from any direction. Slow down when traveling through deer-populated areas. Always wear your seat belt. If a crash with a deer is unavoidable, brake firmly, hold onto the steering wheel with both hands, come to a controlled stop and then proceed to steer your vehicle off the roadway.

Obituaries

WOJTOWICZ

Raymond W Wojtowicz, 96, died November 17, 2023. Dear husband of the late Marie for 63 years and loving father of Raymond (Michelle), Ruth (Ken) Kondrat, Patricia Kiraga, Lisa (Christopher) Rewald, and the late Deb (Carl) Nevinski and Linda (Paul) Showalter. Ray is also survived by grandchildren; Paul, Stephen, Theresa, Patricia, Carl, Christina, and Sophia and Great grandchildren; Clyde, Eve, Jack, Raya, and August. Ray served in the United States Army during World War II. He then went into the automobile industry where he was a self-taught engineer and became a Draw Development Expert. He was very talented with his mind and his hands and built his cottage in Attica where he enjoyed boating, fishing, and golfing

with his family. Committal Service with Military Honors. Monday, November 27, 2023, 10:30 a.m. Please meet at the cemetery by 10:15 a.m. Great Lakes National Cemetery, 4200 Belford Road, Holly, MI 48442. The family asks that donations be made in Raymond's name to the Wounded Warriors Project.

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The Hamtramck Review

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November 24, 2023

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What's on this coming week?

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Exclusive Conversation with Mayor Amer Ghalib,
ESL Classes for the 2023-24 school year
Local events, Library programs,
Interviews, Council meeting highlights,
Evenings with authors, and more.....

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By Charles Sercombe

This week's Crime Log covers Nov. 7-16.

Tuesday, Nov. 7

- At about 11 p.m., officers responded to a call from a woman in the 12000 block of Dyar who was screaming into her phone.
- Officers investigating an allegation of a parental kidnapping in the 3800 block of Evaline determined that the child in question was with their grandmother.
- An assault was reported in the 9400 block of McDougall.
- A neighbor dispute was reported on Mitchell.
- An incident of fraud was reported on Florian.

Wednesday, Nov. 8

- A fight was reported in the 3100 block of Caniff.
- A theft from an auto was reported in the 12000 block of Selfridge.
- Following a traffic stop, a driver was arrested for being wanted on a Hamtramck warrant, and for having an improper license plate.
- A break-in was reported in the 11600 block of Jos. Campau.
- An auto theft was reported in the 11500 block of Nagel.
- A theft was reported in the 11600 block of Fleming.
- An illegal dumping was reported on Holbrook.
- A hit-and-run accident was reported on Buffalo.
- An assault was reported on Evaline.

Thursday, Nov. 9

- At almost 3 a.m., officers responded to a call about a male suspect who refused to leave the porch of a residence in the 2600 block of Pulas-ki.
- A hit-and-run accident occurred at Neibel and Mackay.
- A break-in was reported on Holbrook.
- A theft was reported at a business on Jos. Campau.
- A break-in was reported on Trowbridge.
- A suspect with a semi-automatic handgun robbed a person at Falcon and Evaline. The suspect fled in a silver Nissan.
- A domestic assault was reported on Fleming.
- Retail fraud was reported at a business on Jos. Campau.

Friday, Nov. 10

- A disorderly person was reported at Jacob and Conant.
- Family trouble was reported in the 5000 block of Trowbridge.
- A hit-and-run accident happened at St. Aubin

and Caniff. Another hit-and-run accident occurred at Caniff and Klinger.

- A business on Jos. Campau reported property damage.

Saturday, Nov. 11

- No incident report was available for this date.

Sunday, Nov. 12

- Gunshots were reported in the 2000 block of Caniff.
- A trespassing complaint was made in the 12100 block of Conant.
- A theft was reported in the 3500 block of Caniff.
- A loose dog was reported on Poland.

Monday, Nov. 13

- At 2:30 a.m., officers investigating an incidence of a man, in the 3500 block of Caniff, who had been stabbed in the hand by his girlfriend, arrested the suspect.
- An assault was reported in the 5200 block of Belmont. An assault was also reported in the 3100 block of Jacob.
- A complaint was made about an animal on Belmont.
- An incident of fraud was reported on Roosevelt.

Tuesday, Nov. 14

- At almost 11 p.m., a male in the area of Char-est and Carpenter reported that he had been robbed at gunpoint by two male suspects wearing ski masks.
- An assault was reported in the 2600 block of Florian. Another assault was reported in the 12100 block of Nagel.
- A hit-and-run accident occurred on Holbrook. Another hit-and-run accident was reported on McDougall.

Wednesday, Nov. 15

- A person reported being bitten by a dog while in the 2600 block of Cas-mere.
- A fight was reported in the area of Belmont and Alpena.
- A woman was arrested in the 2600 block of Botsford for domestic violence.

Thursday, Nov. 16

- A bike was reported stolen at Holbrook and Latham.
- A theft was reported from a business on Jos. Campau.
- Officers assisted a stranded motorist on Jos. Campau.
- A resident on Mitchell reported a theft.
- A resident on Holbrook reported an assault.
- A runaway juvenile was reported on Edwin.

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Coming Events

SATURDAY, Nov. 18, 3:30-5:30 p.m. – Drive-thru Take-out Polish Dinner at Holy Cross P.N.C. Church, 2311 Pulaski at Fleming. \$13 Adult/\$6; Child 12 & under. Menu: Pork Chop, Kielbasa, Pierogi/sour cream, Sauerkraut, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Dessert. Cars will be staged in parking lot for delivery in front of church.

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City Hall Insider ...

What is our City Council up to these days?
We have the highlights of the latest council meeting.

By Charles Sercombe

The city council met on Oct. 24, and all councilmembers were in attendance.

Mayor Amer Ghalib announced that it was his birthday, and fellow councilmembers wished him a happy birthday. Councilmember Khalil Refai joked: “You turned 21.”

Ghalib is in his 40s. A proclamation was read in honor of Hamtramck Police Reserve Deputy Chief Richard Dobek, who died on Oct. 21. He was still an active member of the reserves, and served with the organization for 55 years.

He was 78 years old. The proclamation read, in part:

“... It is with heavy hearts and profound sorrow that we, the City of Hamtramck, gather today to pay tribute to a man whose unwavering dedication to our community exemplified the highest ideals of public service; and Richard Dobek, a devoted and steadfast guardian of our city, joined the Hamtramck Police Reserves in 1968, demonstrating a commitment to the safety and well-being of our citizens that endured for over five decades; and Richard Dobek's service to the Hamtramck Police Reserves

was marked by a tireless pursuit of excellence, unwavering dedication, and a passion for upholding the law, earning him the respect and admiration of his colleagues, the Police Department, and the entire community he served. ...”

City Manager Max Garbarino, who is a former Hamtramck Police Chief, said that Dobek “will be greatly missed.”

The newly appointed Executive Director of the Hamtramck Parks Conservancy, Tom Habitz, introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the organization.

He said the Conservancy is supported by various grants, and that soon fundraising efforts will be underway.

The Conservancy was formed in 2020, and works in conjunction with the city and the public school district to improve parks and recreation programs.

At hamtramckparks.com, you can view a 200-page plan for the group. Habitz said the goal is to transform 26 acres of park and recreation area into being the “heart of the city.”

John Hennessey, the city's contractor engineer, discussed the upcoming reconstruction of Can-

iff, from Jos. Campau to Conant. This will be the third and last portion of the street to be rebuilt.

The project will begin sometime next spring or summer, and it will cost over \$1.8 million. Hennessey Engineering will complete engineering plans for the project, for a cost of over \$120,000.

Funding for the project comes mostly from federal funds, although a small portion also comes from the state road repair fund. Councilmember Refai said it's important for the businesses on Caniff to have at least one lane of traffic open.

Hennessey said he is aware of the need, and that the street should have been resurfaced at least 20 years ago.

“We're here to improve the quality of life,” Hennessey said.

The council approved an \$800,000 grant from the Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance, to be used for training officers in de-escalation techniques.

Training will be provided by the Eastern Michigan University Center for Health Disparities Innovation and Studies.

This will be a three-year program.

The Fire Department also got the OK to hire a

contractor to replace part of the fire station's roof, for a cost of \$70,575.

The roof is 50 years old, and it's well past its life expectancy.

Councilmember Mohammed Alsomiri questioned the cost, saying he's had larger roofs replaced for less cost.

The area in question is 4,500 square feet. The job includes a complete tear off of the old roof.

City Manager Garbarino said the complete replacement is a better plan that just encapsulating it.

“We like to do it right the first time – not just patch it,” he said.

In a resolution that was added onto the agenda at the beginning of the meeting, the council called for a cease-fire in Gaza.

The resolution read, in part:

“... Millions of people are facing dire circumstances, lacking access to essential necessities such as shelter, clean water, food, electricity, and medical supplies; and there exists a substantial risk that this conflict may further destabilize the Middle East and potentially spill over into neighboring regions, posing a threat to global peace and security; and every individual residing in that part of the world deserves the right to live in an environment marked by peace, freedom, dignity, justice, and the same

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+ tax

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Public Health

City Hall Insider ...

Continued from page 5

fundamental human rights enjoyed by people world-wide. ...”

The resolution also called for “President Biden and all elected officials and policymakers in our government to employ their influence and authority to advocate for an immediate cease-fire. We also implore them to facilitate the unrestricted flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza, with the dual purpose of preserving innocent lives, reinstating peace and stability, and preventing the further proliferation of violence to neighboring regions. ...”

Councilmember Mohammed Hassan criticized those who always criticize the council for its policy on public comment but did not show up for this meeting to voice their concern in the conflict.

“Shame on you guys, always coming, talk ‘oh I need to talk,’” he said. “We don’t hear your voice today. ... Shame on you guys who always say ‘I want to speak, my voice matters.’ Your voice doesn’t matter? Because you’re racist? You don’t worry about anybody else. You worry about yourselves.”

Hassan also lashed out at President Biden, saying he won the 2020 Michigan presidential election by only 20,000 votes. Hassan said the Muslim

community in the state controls 30,000 votes.

(Editor’s note: Biden won Michigan by over 154,000 votes. There are approximately 200,000 Arab-Americans in the metro area, according to the Arab American Institute.)

Hassan said that Biden’s support of Israel could cost him votes in 2024.

“We can change Michigan,” Hassan said, “including the governor.”

Both Democratic and Republican administrations have been supporters of Israel. Biden has cautioned Israel to use restraint in retaliation against Hamas and also to not send ground troops into Gaza,

Mayor Ghalib said, in response to Hassan, “We understand your frustration.”

Ghalib also cautioned about the sources of news reporting on the Israel-Hamas war, saying that there have been “fake” reports. One report was about the initial Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7. Some news reports said that babies had been beheaded and that women

were raped.

That, he said, “turned out to be a lie.”

(There were conflicting media reports about the Hamas attack.)

He also said that the hostages who have been released by Hamas said they were treated well.

Councilmember Abu Musa also criticized President Biden, calling him “sleepy Joe.”

Adding to the criticism of Biden was Councilmember Refai.

“I’m sick of our current administration. ... Sleepy Joe, I think he hasn’t woke up from his sleep,” Refai said.

(Biden’s political rival, Donald Trump, and apparent Republican presidential candidate for 2024, has nicknamed Biden as “Sleepy Joe.”)

Refai also questioned why the regular public commentators who come to council meetings are not in attendance.

Councilmember Nayeem Choudhury said “the Gaza people don’t deserve this war.” He called for “allowing food and medical supplies to be distributed in Gaza.”

He said he is not against Israel, and that “we need a common ground.”

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