

February 4, 2015

The City Council held a Work Session meeting on the above date. Mayor Randall Simonson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The following were present: Mayor Randall Simonson, Council members Bob Hegland, Dan Lee, Chris Ness, and Jim Schneider. Staff present: City Administrator Kristina Handt, Public Works Director Tim Kieffer and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Simonson noted an addition to the agenda: 11) Council member Hegland's reimbursement. **Ness, seconded by Hegland moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried 5-0.**

POLICE SERVICES, WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Administrator Handt introduced Washington County Sheriff Bill Hutton, who was invited to attend the Work Session to discuss Scandia's contract for police services. Last December, Council member Schneider suggested looking into the need for a contract and questioned the level of service the County would provide if the contract was ended.

Sheriff Hutton explained that the level of service provided by the full-time deputy assigned to Scandia per the contract with the County would drop from 100% to 20% without contracted services. Police calls from Scandia would be covered by the County's north car, which provides coverage for the northern third to one-half of the County – the car could be coming from Stillwater and response times would be increased. Crimes against a person such as assaults or burglaries in action would receive an immediate response, but there would be a delayed response for reports of theft or fraud according to the time that the County could fit in the investigations. Ordinance violations and reports of barking dogs would be very low priority and most likely not handled as they are now with the contract. Hutton listed the benefits of having an assigned deputy such as building relationships and trust with residents and business owners.

Hutton explained that the annual contract of approximately \$110,000 is the real and true cost for an assigned deputy and includes the car, supervision, support services and supplies. Hutton noted that Scandia's per capita cost of \$28 to contract for police services is one of the lowest in the County. By having a contract, Scandia also has the support of resources with nearby contracted cities such as Hugo, which can provide additional service when needed.

County Commissioner Fran Miron addressed the Council and stated that he understands having to make budget cuts, but that the need for public safety must be a balanced outcome. He gave an example of the immeasurable value their services provided in the aftermath of the Hugo tornado in 2008.

Gregg Krentz, Scandia Elementary 6th grade teacher, spoke on the highly valued DARE program that the contracted deputy teaches each year, of which 1,500 students have graduated from over past 8 years. A strong rapport and trust is built with the students which has a huge influence on their interactions with police. Krentz strongly urged the Council to continue to support this service.

Dennis Seefeldt, former Mayor and Town Board Chair of Scandia, offered a history of the police coverage in Scandia. The contract began in 2000 with federal funding assistance the first two years. Seefeldt noted the reduction in petty crimes and speeding once a police presence was in town 40 hours per week. He stated that residents appreciate the public safety and services a contracted deputy offers.

Mayor Simonson said that he would have concerns on the negative impact to the community if there were no contracted police service. He would not want the town to go backwards, and police protection acts as a deterrent to vandalism and speeding. Simonson questioned how you can put a price on safety and security.

Council member Hegland stated that he feels better having a patrol in the City and felt that the Council is doing its diligence in reviewing contracts. He said that there should be no change to what the County is providing.

Council member Schneider said it's a money issue to him. Is the contract worth \$10,000 a month? He had dozens of phone calls asking him to not support a contracted police service. They should look at what the City's priorities are – the annual cost of the contract could go a long ways towards road improvements. He said that Scandia has the County's north car to respond to police calls on off-duty hours as it is.

Council member Lee stated that he feels residents think the cost of the police contract is best for the City.

Mayor Simonson thanked Sheriff Hutton and the public for coming out and answering questions and offering information. The contract for police services will continue as is.

COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAMS

Duane Hebert of Novel Energy Solutions was present to share information about community solar programs. They are working with Xcel Energy to promote Community Solar Gardens, which are a central array of panels that any Xcel customer may subscribe to and have the benefit of cost savings on their electric bills. Due to positive changes in solar production and financing, subscribers may be credited for more than what they pay for energy produced through the CSG. He described the benefits to the city if they were to provide a location on city property to construct an array – a 200 kilowatt system could operate on one acre.

Mr. Hebert also explained the 2015 Made in Minnesota Solar Incentive. Benefits include electric savings and reduced demand charges for city buildings with a quick payback of 7 years. There are no costs to apply; applicants will be chosen by lottery after the February 28th deadline. Mr. Hebert explained that a location could be determined after notice of being a participant in the program. The flat roof of the Public Works/Firehall building would be a good location he said, able to support a 20 kilowatt system.

The Council was in consensus to participate in the Solar Incentive lottery this year – if not chosen, the City could reapply again next year. Administrator Handt asked for clarification that there are no fees to apply, and stated that the City could continue to explore a community solar garden in addition to a stand-alone system on the firehall roof.

Simonson, seconded by Lee, moved to direct staff to prepare the documents for application to the 2015 Made in MN Solar Incentive program. The motion carried 5-0.

Council member Schneider asked if there are any ordinances that address solar panels and their location. Staff will research this.

CHANGE ORDER, 201 IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT, AUTOMATIC SYSTEMS

At the January work session, Council directed Public Works Director Tim Kieffer to continue to research options for a solution to the problems of signal transmission from the 201 sewer system to the master control panel at the Public Works building. A hill is blocking the telemetry, which was not made known until after installation of the system. Kieffer explained that mounting an antenna to an existing cell tower would not be cost effective, as the installation would be almost \$25,000 and there would be ongoing leasing costs. Use of VHF radios would have ongoing FCC licensure costs and may not address transmission from the Bliss site.

Kieffer continued to recommend the Automatic System's bid to install a 40-foot pole at the Anderson-Erickson drainfield which was guaranteed to work by a path study and would allow the Bliss to be added at a later date. Administrator Handt noted that the estimate for survey work to obtain an easement could be lowered by \$1,000 to bring the cost for the proposal down to approximately \$11,000.

Council member Schneider stated that he was against it altogether since the system should have been guaranteed to work in the first place. Kieffer explained that the other bids did not include a path study and there would have been unknown costs with those anyway – Automatic Systems has cut the cost to install the pole and equipment, and being able to add in the Bliss is the big selling point. Schneider asked if it was feasible to install a 40-foot antenna on the warning siren pole. Kieffer said that this most likely would not be approved by an engineer to be structurally sound. Schneider asked if a remote station could be set up so that transmission to the Public Works building would not be needed. Staff explained that it needs to be in a safe location that can be monitored when there is a problem, and a work station at Public Works makes the most sense.

Mayor Simonson noted that Automatic Systems showed that the A/E drainfield pole will work. Kieffer stated that they did the path study at their own expense, and if other options were to be considered, the City would need to fund this cost.

Simonson moved to support Kieffer's recommendation to install the necessary equipment at the A/E drainfield for the radio upgrade. There was no second to the motion and the motion was defeated.

Council continued to discuss the 201 budget and costs for the project. Council member Hegland suggested the City do their own path study so that they have the needed information to make the best decision.

Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved to support the recommendation to install a 40' pole at the Anderson/Erickson drainfield for radio upgrades as performed by Automatic Systems. Mayor Simonson called for a roll call vote: Lee – yes; Ness – yes; Schneider – yes; Hegland – yes; Simonson – yes. The motion carried 5-0.

UNION NEGOTIATING TEAM

Administrator Handt reported that Union representatives have requested a meeting to begin contract discussions for representation of the full time Maintenance Workers. Handt explained that a proposal will come back to the full Council in a closed meeting session. Handt recommended one or two Council members join her in meeting with Local Union 49.

Simonson, seconded by Lee, moved to nominate Council member Schneider to be on the negotiating team. The motion carried 5-0.

Ness, seconded by Hegland, moved to nominate Mayor Simonson to be on the negotiating team. The motion carried 5-0.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR BIG MARINE LAKE ASSOCIATION'S AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION AID GRANT APPLICATION

Administrator Handt reported that Big Marine Lake Association has applied for an aquatic invasive species prevention aid grant and has asked the City for a letter of support to be included with their application. Council was in consensus to support the application in the form of a letter signed by Mayor Simonson. Handt explained that the County will share the list of all applications within Scandia after the deadline and will ask for feedback – there may be other lake associations that apply.

REGIONAL WATER ISSUES UPDATE

Council member Ness reported on the regional water meetings he attended on January 29 which addressed the DNR-White Bear Lake lawsuit and the ramifications it could have on cities within the Groundwater Management Area. Cities are pushing back and suggesting alternative solutions. For example, St. Paul is the biggest user of groundwater and is not part of the coalition that has been directed to move to the use of surface water.

Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved to direct staff to prepare a resolution for the February 17 meeting in opposition of the settlement agreement of the DNR and White Bear Lake lawsuit. The motion carried 5-0.

DISCUSSION OF BUILDING PERMIT FEES

In preparation of the transition to contracting with Hugo for building inspection services, Administrator Handt recommended that Scandia's ordinance for building fees be amended to adopt plumbing and mechanical permit fees that are similar to Hugo's, such as amending the chart based on total valuation and including per fixture fees for plumbing. Scandia has been charging flat fees for some types of work based on the former Building Official's practices that were not in line with the ordinance. Mechanical and plumbing permits are being charged a \$50 fee, and combination roofing, windows and/or siding permits at \$125.

Council member Schneider stated that there should be no fees lower than the minimum \$99.50 as that is what was adopted in the ordinance. Hugo is being paid \$58 per hour for inspections and these costs need to be covered. Council member Hegland suggested a base fee of \$75 as long as there is a positive cash flow.

Schneider, seconded by Ness, moved to make no changes to the existing ordinance and that the minimum permit fee be \$99.50 for all types of permits. The motion carried 5-0.

LOG HOUSE LANDING IMPROVEMENTS

Council member Ness requested that former Log House Landing Improvement Committee members be allowed to provide additional information on the project. Committee Chair Christine Maefsky presented alternative pavement surfaces that she would like the City to consider in place of asphalt on the 205th Street roadway that would provide a strong, non-eroding surface with a natural appearance.

Maefsky also presented a list of suggestions from the Friends of the Log House Landing that would meet their desire to keep the road as close to its rustic state as possible. The suggestions included eliminating curb and gutter from the upper section, use alternative surfaces for parking, reduce parking width to 8.5 feet, stagger the bottom pull-out and parking lane to avoid being directly across from one another, make the curb inconspicuous by use of a color coat and minimal profile, designating an area for a picnic table on the landing, and maintaining the gentle curved opening of 205th onto Quinnell.

Mayor Simonson stated that he understood the corrections to the erosion problem at Log House Landing were first addressed by the Carnelian-Marine Watershed and that he would like to see factual information on the extent of contamination from the gravel road to justify this project. He suggested the project be halted for one year to collect the data to prove whether or not a problem really exists. Simonson noted that the Watershed has now indicated that it will not be as big a partner in funding the project as the City had hoped.

Simonson, seconded by Hegland, moved to table the project for one year to allow the Watershed to collect and study sediment data.

Steve Kronmiller, Watershed Board member, agreed that there was no quantifiable study of an erosion problem. They used modeling information and an estimate that the City was putting

down 5 tons of gravel each year that was being eroded away. He stated that it couldn't hurt to get accurate numbers. The Watershed is working on a memo of understanding to address the funding parameters. Paving the upper section of 205th Street did not seem to fit into the formula that they were using to fix the issue of water quality into the river, Kronmiller said.

Council member Lee asked what would happen if the City ceased maintenance of the road. Public Works Director Kieffer stated that the road would go down to bedrock and would erode much quicker.

Council member Ness stated that one can see washouts in multiple places to verify the extent of erosion. He asked if the Watershed would contribute to the cost of paving. Kronmiller said that the Watershed is focusing on water quality funding and haven't decided exactly what part of the project will be funded.

Council member Schneider said that he is not willing for the project to drag on – there is gravel going into the river.

Simonson called for a roll call vote on the above motion: Ness – no; Schneider – no; Hegland – yes; Lee – no; Simonson – yes. The motion failed 2-3.

Maefsky asked if the City would be willing to explore the pieces that she had brought forth, as it is significant to keep the roadway rustic and these alternative paving materials have been used in other historic parts of the country. Schneider said that this is too much after the fact; they should go with the plan just as it was approved. Handt referenced the City Engineer's comments that there would still be erosion with the bound gravel and the cost of the pervious pavers would be 3 times the cost of asphalt.

Ness stated that the project should move ahead as planned. If approved by MnDOT with a variance to receive the grant, perhaps changes could then be made. He would be willing to explore the possibilities as suggested by the Friends of the Log House Landing.

Handt recommended the Council clarify the level of funding that is expected from the Watershed. The motion passed last month based acceptance of the project on State and Watershed support. Handt explained that it had been understood that the grant would cover 50% of the costs, and the City and Watershed would split the remaining costs 50/50, resulting in the Watershed funding 25% of the project costs.

Ness agreed that the City is expecting this level of participation from the government units, and the Council was in consensus with this statement. Kronmiller stated that he will relay this back to the Watershed Board.

COUNCIL MEMBER HEGLAND'S REIMBURSEMENT

Council member Hegland attended the Newly Elected workshop hosted by the League last month in Cohasset rather than Brooklyn Center due to a scheduling conflict he had.

Administrator Handt asked the Council to discuss his reimbursement of travel costs to attend the outstate conference.

Hegland submitted reimbursement of the \$315 registration fee, \$119.76 for hotel and \$212.75 in mileage.

Schneider, seconded by Ness, moved to reimburse Hegland a total of \$500 for costs to attend the Newly Elected conference last month. The motion carried 5-0

ADJOURNMENT

Ness, seconded by Schneider, moved to adjourn. The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk