

January 8, 2014

A Work Session meeting of the City Council was held on the above date. Mayor Simonson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The following were present: Mayor Randall Simonson, Council members Dan Lee, Jim Schneider and Chris Ness. Council member Sally Swanson arrived at 6:32 p.m. Staff present: City Administrator Kristina Handt, City Engineer Ryan Goodman, Director of Public Works Tim Kieffer and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund. Fire Chief Mike Hinz arrived at 6:50 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Ness, seconded by Lee, moved to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion was unanimously adopted by those present.

MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PILAR, PERKINS, PARIS AND PENFIELD

City Engineer Ryan Goodman presented a report for discussion on maintenance improvements to Pilar Road and the adjoining roadways. Goodman explained the work necessary to rehabilitate and maintain this network of gravel roads, along with cost estimates. Tree trimming, clearing and grubbing, ditch excavation, culvert maintenance/replacement, erosion control improvements, and long-term maintenance were addressed. Project costs for restoration improvements to each road were broken down, for a total estimate of \$366,500. Goodman explained that the project could be tackled in phases over a 5-year cycle, either by scope of work or by road segments. He stated that generally the scope of work approach is the most cost effective, where a project task is completed along the entire roadway.

Council members agreed that improvements need to be done to address the safety issues along these roads, with tree trimming and clearing as the first step. They asked staff to look at project costs over 5 years, and to compare some of the tasks being done in-house versus contracted out. This will be reported on at a future Council meeting.

SNOW REMOVAL/PARKING ISSUE ON OLINDA TRAIL

Administrator Handt reported that there have been on-going complaints about parked vehicles in the Village Area along Olinda Trail that prevent the County plow trucks from fully clearing the roadway and leaving large piles of snow, resulting in difficulties for the businesses on this street. The City had tried to resolve this problem in the past through a “gentlemen’s agreement” with a landlord and tenants of an apartment, but the problem has continued into this snow season. Handt explained that she passed this concern on to the Washington County Highway Dept. since Olinda Trail is a county highway. The previous City Attorney had indicated that Scandia’s parking ordinance does not apply to County roadways.

Wayne Sandberg, Washington County Engineer, and Corey Farver, Chief of Highway Maintenance, were in attendance to discuss potential solutions to the problem. Mr. Sandberg gave examples of parking regulations enforced in other communities and presented options for Scandia.

Mayor Simonson stated that he would like to keep parking restrictions locally regulated rather than draw the County in, but there is no intent to make life difficult for anyone. He said there needs to be consistency and impartiality for everybody.

Administrator Handt recommended an update to existing Ordinance No. 43 and presented language prepared by City Attorney Vivian which would amend the language to “streets located within the City” to allow enforcement along County roads. Between November 1 and April 15, on-street parking shall be allowed as long as it does not interfere with snow removal from City streets. If a vehicle is in violation, the vehicle will be issued a citation and towed at the owner’s expense. Handt reported that accommodations had been made with the tenant to move their vehicles during snow events. Ms. Rodsjo joined the meeting and confirmed that tenants have been given permission to park in the lower church lot. Deputy Majeski agreed that this amended ordinance will be enforceable and it makes sense to move the vehicles when it’s snowing and to allow for curb to curb clearing.

Mr. Farver recommended the season be extended to April 30th due to potential for late season snow events. Council members agreed to pursue this amendment to Section 3 and to remove Section 2 from Ordinance No. 43 completely (banning parking for more than 60 minutes between 2 am and 6 am).

Mayor Simonson recognized past problems with recreational vehicles parking on the sides of roads for long periods of time. Handt suggested adding a limit of 24-hour parking of recreational vehicles (boats, trailers, RV’s), as this could happen on occasion. Parking which blocks access for postal delivery has been a problem in the Village Area. Handt suggested language to ban parking within 15 feet of mailboxes on Monday through Saturday. Council members agreed that this is reasonable.

The Council will consider adoption of the parking ordinance amendments at their January 21 meeting.

FIREFIGHTER RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Administrator Handt and Fire Chief Hinz have worked to modify the department’s operational policy to require minimum response requirements as requested by the Council at the August 27 meeting. Council had suggested that fire department members must respond to at least 25% of calls in a year. Hinz explained member’s concerns about being unavailable during work hours and that it would be administratively prohibitive and burdensome to calculate data over a full year for those that are close to this level. Not being in town does not penalize a firefighter’s level of response, and timing of calls and work hours would have to be looked at over an entire year. Hinz stated there is a very small number that may be in need of disciplinary action due to low response numbers, and recommended a 15% call response.

After much discussion on addressing the data collection issue, Council agreed to a 20% call requirement and noted that this could be a motivational tool for the department to add to their operational policy. This will be a Consent Agenda item for the January 21 meeting.

SCANDIA FIRE AND RESCUE EMT REQUIREMENTS

Several months ago, members of the Council questioned whether EMT certification for Scandia firefighters was still necessary given Lakeview's ambulance service being stationed at the fire hall. Potential cost savings and recruitment advantages were noted.

Fire Chief Hinz explained the benefits of having members certified as EMTs on the department's roster. Having the knowledge and abilities to react to emergency situations benefits the community in many ways. Once a firefighter makes the commitment to EMT certification, Hinz estimated they would continue with the department for many years. Captain Skarja confirmed the need for training and tools for emergency responses and stated that the department is not losing out on people due to the EMT requirement but the overall commitment to being a firefighter.

Hinz presented information that grant funds are available to reimburse the City for initial and refresher training courses as provided through Regions, available to departments which assist ambulance services. Hinz stated that all EMT and medical direction costs could be covered by grant funds collected through the state's seat belt law. Hinz also reported that the department has been granted variances to administer some drugs on site without an ambulance, and anticipate receiving allowances for diabetic treatment and IVs. At least two EMTs must be on scene to administer these drugs. Administration of these drugs can make a big difference during a critical situation for a patient.

Hinz noted that if changes occur with the ambulance service and it's no longer stationed in Scandia, the department will be behind in emergency response requirements that they have worked for years to acquire. Council members discussed these findings and concluded to support Fire Chief Hinz's recommendation to make no changes to the current EMT requirements. Ness stated that the department needs people with a commitment to the department and completing the EMT certification shows this dedication. Lee said that they ought to continue to explore other ways to cut department costs. Schneider noted that surrounding communities that do not have EMT requirements seem to have no problem retaining dedicated firefighters.

Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved to make no changes to the current EMT requirements as listed in the Scandia Fire Department Operational Policy. The motion carried 5-0.

REPLACEMENT OF 1997 FORD 8000 DUMP TRUCK WITH PLOW

At their November 6th Work Session, the Council voted to continue with three main snow plow routes. Earlier in the year, the Council approved an Equipment Certificate of which \$200,000 was added to pay for the purchase of a new dump truck. Public Works Director Kieffer presented pricing from the state contract for the purchase of a Mack single axle dump truck with Towmaster plow attachments, at a cost of \$189,822. This would replace the 1997 Ford Dump Truck which is becoming unreliable due to breakdowns during snow removal operations. Kieffer noted that repair costs continue to rise and plowing operations become inefficient during breakdowns.

Ness asked if the truck would be used during the off-season. Kieffer explained that it could be used for ditching work and pulling the paver equipment during road repairs.

Schneider stated that he has been against purchasing a new truck all along and this is a bad idea. Two trucks were used to clear snow for many years and he sees no reason to add to the fleet since there is limited space for additional equipment. He said that the grader could be used for the third route. Lee agreed with Schneider's position and stated that the funds should be spent otherwise, such as a backhoe that could be used year around.

Kieffer explained that residents are getting better service with the addition of a third route. The trucks are salting roads as they are plowing, which a grader cannot do. Swanson stated her agreement and noted that the aged Ford truck is becoming less safe to operate.

Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved to add the purchase of a dump truck to the January 21 Council meeting agenda. The motion carried 3-2, with Lee and Schneider opposed.

COMMITTEE/ COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Forest Lake Cable Commission

One application was received for the vacancy on the Forest Lake Cable Commission.

Simonson, seconded by Lee, moved to appoint Dan Swanson to a three-year term on the Forest Lake Cable Commission. The motion carried 4-0, with Swanson abstaining.

Parks and Recreation Committee

Three applications were received for the two vacancies on the Parks Committee.

Simonson, seconded by Swanson, moved to appoint Brad Borg and Ryan Jinks to five-year terms on the Parks and Recreation Committee. The motion carried 5-0.

Planning Commission

Three applicants will be interviewed on January 21 at 6 pm, just prior to the Council meeting. An appointment will be made at the meeting.

Wastewater Advisory Committee

One application was received for the vacancy to represent an A/E user on the Wastewater Advisory Committee, but the applicant did not meet the criteria of being a user of the system. It was recommended that Council member Chris Ness continues to serve on the Committee.

Simonson, seconded by Schneider, moved to appoint Chris Ness to a five-year term on the Wastewater Advisory Committee. The motion carried 5-0.

Council Liaison Positions

Simonson, seconded by Schneider, moved to continue the current Council liaisons for 2014: Parks and Recreation – Dan Lee; Planning Commission – Chris Ness; Forest Lake Cable Commission – Randall Simonson. The motion carried 5-0.

Acting Mayor

Council was in agreement to appoint Council member Dan Lee as the Acting Mayor for 2014. This will be on the January 21 Consent Agenda.

Council member Swanson volunteered to draft a letter on behalf of the Council to all outgoing Committee members to thank them for their dedicated work.

ADJOURNMENT

Ness, seconded by Lee, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk