

October 1, 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, Chris Ness, Jim Schneider and Sally Swanson. Staff present: City Administrator Kristina Handt, Public Works Director Tim Kieffer and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Ness, seconded by Lee, moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried 5-0.

EGINTON GARAGE AND STRUCTURES, 2ND STREET VACATION

Administrator Handt explained that before a decision on the request to vacate an unopened street in the Vasa Plat could be determined, the issue of structures in the right of way needs to be addressed. Mr. Eginton, 16930 197th Street, just recently provided a copy of his deed which will be sent to the City Attorney to review. If the entire road had been deeded to Mr. Eginton's parcel years ago, then that would solve the concerns about vacating 2nd Street.

Lee, seconded by Ness, moved to table the issue until a review by the City Attorney is provided. The motion carried 5-0.

DOUG BERGLUND, WASHINGTON COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Doug Berglund, Emergency Director to the Washington County Sheriff's Office, presented information on the county and city's roles during a natural disaster event. His department carries out overall coordination and support of emergency response activities after incidences or disasters. Mr. Berglund offered information on grants that are available to fund purchases of emergency equipment such as warning sirens and generators, and offered to provide assistance regarding the City's inquiry into applying for these funds.

PART-TIME, PARKS AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE WORKER JOB DESCRIPTION

Administrator Handt explained that 2015 draft budget includes funding to bring back a part-time year round parks and maintenance position which was not filled after a retirement in 2008. Handt noted the difficulties in recruiting for part-time positions and the expenses that are incurred in filling these with each new hire. A job description was prepared that allows for 24 to 28 hours per week, with tasks that include grounds maintenance, ice rink preparation and maintenance, and snow plowing as needed.

Council member Schneider stated that he is totally against filling this position as there is enough staff to perform this work and it could end up including medical insurance coverage.

Schneider, seconded by Lee, moved to take no action on a part-time year round position and to advertise for a seasonal ice rink maintenance worker.

Discussion followed in which staff addressed the three seasonal positions that this job would cover, along with the limited hours and pay scale, set at \$10-\$12/hour. Public Works Director

Kieffer explained the consolidation of the summer and winter temporary jobs and the benefit of employing one person year round who does not need to be trained in with each position. Handt and Kieffer stated that, although it would vary with the season, hours are carefully watched in order to not exceed the upper limit of 28 hours per week. Health insurance coverage is avoided by limiting hours to less than 30/week. Handt noted the additional park maintenance duties which have been added with the development of Lilleskogen Park and expanded Vinterfest activities.

Mayor Simonson asked about unemployment costs. Handt answered that the City has paid on average \$2,000 per year for claims of seasonal employees.

Mayor Simonson called for a roll call vote on the above motion. Lee – yes; Ness – yes; Swanson – yes; Schneider – yes; Swanson – yes. The motion carried 5-0.

2015 HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

Administrator Handt reported at the September Work Session that health insurance premiums would be increasing by 40% in 2015, and Health Partners must be notified by November 7th if the City wants to change plans. Following a meeting with the City's insurance agent, Handt confirmed that there would be very little change in premium if the City switched providers. She provided several options which the Council could consider such as changing the employee contribution and/or the HSA, or providing a stipend for an employee to find coverage if the Council wanted to make changes.

Handt explained that changes to the budget were made at the last work session to accommodate the \$10,000 increase to the General Fund.

Council member Lee stated that he did not want to threaten anyone's health insurance coverage given the short notice to make changes. Swanson agreed, while Schneider stated that now is not the time to change, but at some point the City will need to put a cap on its contributions to health coverage. Simonson noted that there is uncertainty in costs across the nation and agreed that the City should stay the course.

Lee, seconded by Swanson, moved to direct staff to prepare a resolution to stay with the current plan and contributions. The motion carried 5-0.

2015 BUDGET

At the September Work Session, the Council certified the maximum preliminary levy at a 2.14% increase over 2014. Administrator Handt asked for direction on any further changes to the budget before the public hearing on December 3rd.

The Council discussed the purchase of a generator for the Fire Department/Public Works. Handt stated that the 2014 budget included this at a cost of \$36,000. The portable generator has not yet been purchased. Kieffer explained that a stationary generator may be a better choice because he could rent a portable generator to run lift stations if needed. Council member Swanson agreed that a powerful enough generator at the fire station would be needed to operate the well and the

building as a command center in case of a disaster. Further discussion about kilowatt needs and costs continued and it was agreed that further research is needed.

Council member Lee stated that he is okay with the budget as it stands. The Council was in consensus to proceed with the budget as it is.

OCTOBER 28, 2014 BUDGET WORK SESSION

Ness, seconded by Swanson, moved to cancel the October 28, 2014 Budget Work Session. The motion carried 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk