

March 8, 2011

A work session meeting of the City Council was held on the above date. Mayor Simonson called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. The following were present: Council members Connie Amos, Chris Ness, Jim Schneider, Sally Swanson and Mayor Randall Simonson. Staff present: City Administrator Anne Hurlburt, City Attorney Dave Hebert, Building Official/Maintenance Supervisor Steve Thorp, and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

PLOW TRUCK REPLACEMENT

Administrator Hurlburt presented a report on the replacement of the 1997 Ford Dump Truck with Plow. This is project PW-006 in the Capital Improvement Plan for 2011. The plow truck is 14 years old with 96,000 miles on it. It recently went through a DOT inspection and was quarantined by the inspector until repairs were made. Building Official/Maintenance Supervisor Thorp presented pictures showing the rust and wear conditions of the truck. It is getting increasingly expensive to repair the parts that are failing. Thorp reported that the tires are nearing replacement age.

The City is able to purchase a new truck under the state contract pricing. The CIP Committee recommended the purchase of a tandem-axel truck, for the increased hauling capacity. The maintenance staff has evaluated three models that are available: Mack, International and Freightliner.

Council member Schneider stated that as the plowing season is nearing the end, replacement is not an immediate need and a decision to purchase a replacement truck could be delayed at least a year.

Council requested additional information on the condition of the truck and also recommended that County staff be consulted on selecting which model of a plow truck to purchase.

Council member Swanson suggested that her husband review the condition of the truck prior to the next work session. Mr. Swanson is a certified DOT inspector.

Administrator Hurlburt presented several financing options. Consensus of the Council was not to make a cash purchase, which would essentially drain the Equipment Replacement Fund, but rather to pursue a lease purchase from the dealer or by means of an equipment certificate.

Council directed staff to investigate disposal of the old truck. The truck has a \$15,000 trade-in value. It may be possible to acquire a higher value through an auction service.

At the April 5 work session, Maintenance staff will be available to conduct a viewing of the Ford truck as requested by the Council. Staff will prepare an in-depth appraisal of the truck's condition and the requirements for a new replacement truck as gathered from other operators.

REVIEW PROPOSALS, UPTOWN SEWER SYSTEM

On January 18, the Council issued a Request for Proposals to prepare a Master Plan for the City's Uptown wastewater treatment system. Nine proposals were received by the February 25 deadline. Council discussed the proposals and selected four of the consultants for interviews. Interviews will be conducted at a Special Council meeting on March 22, 2011 with the following firms: Bolton & Menk, TKDA, Wenck Associates, and WSB & Associates.

The property owners of the system users will be invited to attend the meeting.

POLICY FOR REMOVING DEAD TREES FROM PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY

Council member Ness requested that the Council discuss a policy regarding the removal of dead trees in the right-of-way. He and the Mayor were recently contacted by a resident who was not satisfied with staff's response concerning a dead tree in the right-of-way adjacent to her property. Staff, along with a local tree contractor, examined the tree and determined that it is not an immediate threat to her private property. Mayor Simonson presented pictures he had recently taken of the tree, and it was not entirely evident if the tree is dead. The policy in practice is that dead trees or branches that fall into the right-of-way, or are a threat of causing damage to property or being a traffic hazard will be removed.

Attorney Hebert explained that this right-of-way is an unopened street from a very old plat. The City's policy can be stated that dead trees on unopened streets are not removed.

The Council directed staff to monitor the tree. If it becomes a hazard or threat to the resident, Maintenance staff should top off the branches. Council member Swanson stated that removing trees that are not an immediate threat could set a precedent, something the city shouldn't get into.

Building Official/Maintenance Supervisor Thorp will contact the resident explaining this decision.

NO PARKING SIGNS ON LAKE LANE (OFF OF LOFTON COURT)

Mayor Simonson recently met with a resident who uses Lake Lane, a short single lane road that serves as an easement to Bone Lake, as access to his property. The resident has requested that the City post this narrow road with "No Parking" signs to prevent the issues he has had with vehicles blocking his access to Lofton Court. Council discussed support for this request, as it will not restrict access for others. The posting of "No Parking" signs has been done in similar situations around Big Marine Lake.

Administrator Hurlburt will prepare a resolution for approval on the Consent Agenda at the March 15 meeting.

GROUNDS AND COMMUNITY CENTER MAINTENANCE

At the February work session, Council directed staff to prepare budget amendments to reflect the change in hiring a temporary seasonal grounds maintenance worker rather than a regular, year-round part-time maintenance position (which is in the 2011 budget). City Administrator Hurlburt requested that a proposal from The St. Paul Turf Club be reviewed before proceeding with the

hiring of a seasonal grounds worker. The proposal would provide grass mowing services for \$300 per week during the growing season. Hurlburt presented a cost comparison of the contractual service versus the hiring of a seasonal employee, which showed a difference of less than \$1,000. Hurlburt explained the advantages of hiring an employee, which would give the city more control over the work and the flexibility to assign jobs that are not covered by the contract.

Council supported the recommendation to decline the offer from The St. Paul Turf Club and proceed with the authorization to offer the part-time position to the employee who previously held the job.

FOREST LAKE CABLE COMMISSION UPDATE

City Administrator Hurlburt reported that a joint meeting with representatives of the City of Forest Lake, City of Columbus and City of Scandia is scheduled for March 30 at 7:00 p.m. at the Forest Lake City Hall. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the future of the Forest Lake Cable Commission and the concerns the Board has with the responsibilities of public access television.

ADJOURNMENT

Ness, second by Schneider, moved to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk