

April 1, 2020

A work session meeting of the Scandia City Council was held on the above date with modifications. Due to the health advisory issued by the State regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, to avoid public gatherings and limit social contact, the meeting was conducted over an electronic platform. All council members and staff who joined the meeting remotely could hear each other and contribute to discussions. City Administrator Cammilleri and Deputy Clerk Eklund were present in the Council Chambers. Cammilleri was the presenter and displayed the meeting materials for participants to view on their remote screens.

Mayor Christine Maefsky called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll call was taken. The following were participants to the meeting: Council members Jerry Cusick, Steve Kronmiller, Chris Ness, Patti Ray and Mayor Christine Maefsky. Staff participating: City Administrator Ken Cammilleri, Attorney Chris Nelson, Fire Chief Mike Hinz, Public Works Director Adam Hawkinson, and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Maefsky announced the following additions to the agenda:

- 8a) Local Board of Appeals and Equalization meeting scheduling
- 8b) Mayoral declaration of local emergency and resolution to extend
- 8c) Computer infrastructure upgrades
- 8d) Maxwill Avenue road repairs

Ness, seconded by Ray, moved to approve the agenda as amended. Roll call vote: Ray – yes; Cusick – yes; Ness – yes; Kronmiller – yes; Maefsky – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

DISCUSSION ON CONTRACT FOR ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES

Deputy Clerk Eklund explained that animal control services in Scandia have been absent since the retirement of longtime Animal Control Officer Sherrill Reid in early 2018. A need for animal control for dogs at large has been a topic of research for staff which resulted in a proposal for services from Britney Harmon, Companion Animal Control, presented to the Council.

Ms. Harmon participated in the meeting and answered questions from the Council. In addition to the agreement for animal control services, the City would need to enter into an agreement for impound services with an animal shelter. Council member Ray stated that she sees a definite need for animal control in her neighborhood.

Staff was directed to research proposals for impound services from both Northwoods Humane Society and Otter Lake Animal Care Center for further discussion at a future meeting.

DISCUSSION ON PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT TRACTOR AND MOWER EQUIPMENT FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Director Hawkinson explained the quotes for replacement of the 1999 John Deere tractor and roadside mower that was continued from the March 17th meeting. Hawkinson noted that \$9,000 in repairs were made to the tractor last year, and tire replacement is imminent this

year. Replacement with a new John Deere model with rear flail and side boom mowers was quoted at \$130,954.

Mayor Maefsky stated her concern that this is a large expense with an uncertain economy at this time and the City should consider repairing the tractor for this year instead of replacement. Council member Ray stated her agreement that large repairs were made last year and the purchase should be held off for this year; perhaps the cost would drop in the meantime. Council member Ness stated that since delivery will take at least 3 months and the tires need to be fixed for continued use, he is in favor of delaying the purchase until next year. Council member Kronmiller concluded that it's a bad time for the City to make such a large expense and would send a poor message.

Council member Cusick countered that delaying the purchase for a year does not help the department to effectively do their work. Breakdowns lead to down time from mowing and other necessary jobs. Most of the roadside mowing is down after the month of June and the new equipment is needed as soon as possible. Cusick recommended Hawkinson work with the dealer to retain the trade-in value as initially quoted until delivery of the replacement.

Ness, seconded by Kronmiller, moved to delay the purchase of a replacement tractor and mowing equipment for one year. Roll call vote: Ray – yes; Cusick – no; Ness – yes; Kronmiller – yes; Maefsky – yes. Motion carried 4-1.

DISCUSSION ON FLOWER BASKETS IN VILLAGE CENTER – PW DIRECTOR TO PROVIDE COSTS

At the March 17th meeting, Council member Ness said he was dismayed to learn of the additional expenses needed to support the flower baskets that were approved by the Council in February and have since been ordered from the nursery. PW Director Hawkinson was directed to detail these costs for this meeting. A watering tank and pump, fertilizer and brackets for the hanging baskets approximated a cost of \$1,616.00.

Mayor Maefsky noted that these fixed costs will not be repeated next year, and it's not appropriate to back out of the order with the nursery at this late time. Council member Ray said overall it's a small investment now for continued use in years ahead. Ray stated that there were many positive comments on the winter decorations, and this seasonal décor will be good for the community.

Council member Cusick said he was dismayed that the Council voted down a tractor but is now spending money on flowers that are not part of Public Works jobs. Cusick said costs were not discussed when approval for ordering the flower baskets was made but should have been. Cusick asked if volunteers can be solicited to help with watering the baskets. Mayor Maefsky said that should be considered.

Council member Kronmiller said he too was disappointed that they didn't see the entire costs of the flower baskets, and recommended more thoroughness in the future.

DISCUSSION ON WEBSITE REDESIGN

Office Assistant Bee Stignani prepared a report on options for redesign of the City's website, last updated in 2017. Costs, service providers and tiers of packages, along with links to example websites were provided in the report. Council members agreed that the current site is difficult to navigate, cluttered, not mobile friendly and not helpful enough for residents to communicate their concerns.

Council directed staff to move ahead with the project for more discussion at a future meeting.

DISCUSSION ON HERITAGE ALLIANCE AGREEMENT

Attorney Chris Nelson explained minor changes made to the agreement with the Scandia Heritage Alliance for development on the city's south ballfield property. Nelson said he sees no issues and the agreement appears to be in final form for consideration at the next Council meeting.

CONSIDERATION OF PROVIDING LETTER OF SUPPORT TO MIDCO COMMUNICATIONS FOR CONTINUED EXPANSION OF BROADBAND SERVICE AND FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

Council member Ray recommended the City provide a letter of support to Midco for continued broadband expansion efforts in this next round of the DEED grant program. The Internet Action Committee proposed the City provide a financial commitment of \$165,000, similar to that previously made in which the City was a recipient of a DEED grant in 2019. Ray explained that this support will continue the momentum of broadband expansion and could allow for up to 80% coverage by 2021 if another grant is awarded from the state to Midco. Participation from the City was a very important factor in the last grant application.

Ray, seconded by Ness, moved to provide a letter of support to Midco with a financial commitment of \$165,000 if approved for a DEED grant. Roll call vote: Ray – yes; Cusick – yes; Ness – yes; Kronmiller – yes; Maefsky – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

City Administrator Cammilleri recommended a motion to amend the Capital Improvement Plan budget to include this expenditure.

Ray, seconded by Kronmiller, moved to amend the Capital Improvement Plan budget for an allocation of \$165,000 for broadband expansion. Roll call vote: Ray – yes; Cusick – yes; Ness – yes; Kronmiller – yes; Maefsky – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

LOCAL BOARD OF APPEALS AND EQUALIZATION MEETING SCHEDULING

Given the Covid-19 health emergency, City Administrator Cammilleri provided several options for conducting the Local Board of Appeals and Equalization meeting scheduled for April 6, 2020 at 5 p.m. Mayor Maefsky was against hosting the meeting at City Hall given the state's shelter in place order, and conducting it as a virtual meeting with call-ins would be too cumbersome. Postponing until a later date in May, in order to complete the statutory requirements by May 31st, is too much of an unknown on whether or not the pandemic conditions will be better by then.

Council member Cusick favored the option to hold the meeting on April 6th with safe social distancing in place. Maefsky said it's too risky to expose the public to any type of gathering in a public facility at this time. Council member Ray agreed it would be reckless to put citizens at risk. Maefsky questioned if they could delay the meeting now and then cancel later if needed. Cammilleri advised that option #3, to cancel the meeting and revert property owner appeals to the County Open Book process in June would best ensure that property owners receive an in-person hearing on their appeals.

Ray, seconded by Ness, moved to cancel the local board of appeal and equalization due to the Covid 19 crisis and refer the process to the County. Roll call vote: Ray – yes; Cusick – no; Ness – yes; Kronmiller – yes; Maefsky – yes. Motion carried 4-1.

MAYORAL DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY AND RESOLUTION NO. 2020-12 TO EXTEND

Mayor Maefsky signed Mayoral Declaration M-2020-1, Declaring a Local Emergency, effective March 31, 2020. Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director Mike Hinz explained that this allows for appropriate actions on the behalf of the City Administrator and Emergency Management Director without the need for special Council meetings, and for potential funding of necessary protective gear and equipment that may be purchased during the Covid-19 outbreak. Hinz said he is participating in regular updates with state and county staff.

A resolution was prepared with language to extend the effectiveness of the declaration until revoked and/or terminated by action from the Mayor or City Council.

Kronmiller, seconded by Ness, moved to approve Resolution No. 2020-12, Extending the Effectiveness of the Declared Local Emergency. Roll call vote: Ray – yes; Cusick – yes; Ness – yes; Kronmiller – yes; Maefsky – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

COMPUTER INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

City Administrator Cammilleri provided a list of computer network infrastructure upgrades that have been identified at City Hall, the Community Center and Firehall/Public Works to improve safety and backup of critical records. Equipment is beyond or nearing the end of its useful life. As well, the city's data must be protected from users on the Community Center's wireless public network.

Minimum improvements fall around \$2,100 while full-scale implementation was estimated at \$5,000. Cammilleri noted that recent computer purchases have expended the office equipment budget for 2020 and budget amendments would be needed to proceed with the upgrades.

Council member Kronmiller said he was involved with this recommendation as an off-shoot of the Internet Action Committee's recommendation to open the Community Center to public wireless access; secure private infrastructure must first be in place. Much of the City's equipment is inadequate and in need of necessary upgrades to address significant issues. A full-scale upgrade rather than a band-aid is necessary for a secure and protected network. Council member Ray agreed that it is urgent to take action; this is a past due and concerning situation.

Cammilleri noted that qualified, volunteer installation will provide a cost savings and put the project closer to the \$3000-\$4000 range.

Kronmiller, seconded by Ray, moved to proceed with full-scale implementation for computer network infrastructure upgrades and authorize budget amendments to the general fund line item 101-41000-570, office equipment. Roll call vote: Ray – yes; Cusick – yes; Ness – yes; Kronmiller – yes; Maefsky – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

MAXWILL AVENUE ROAD REPAIRS

City Administrator Cammilleri recommended the discussion of road repairs on Maxwill Avenue be tabled until the City Engineer can lead the discussion.

Maefsky, seconded by Ness, moved to table the discussion of Maxwill Avenue to a future meeting. Roll call vote: Ray – yes; Cusick – yes; Ness – yes; Kronmiller – yes; Maefsky – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

CLOSED SESSION

At 8:27 p.m., the City Council entered into a closed session pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 13D.05 Subd.3 (b) to discuss litigation subject to attorney-client privilege regarding the matter of Curtis J. Peterson and Patricia L. Peterson vs. City of Scandia.

The Council meeting reopened at 9:10 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Ray, seconded by Cusick, moved to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote: Ray – yes; Kronmiller – yes; Ness – yes; Cusick – yes; Maefsky – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk