

December 11, 2012

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 Connie Amos, Chris Ness, Jim Schneider, Sally Swanson and Mayor Simonson. Staff present: City Administrator Kristina Handt, Maintenance Superintendent Tim Kieffer and Treasurer Colleen Firkus. Frank Langer, the City's Assessor, was also present in another room to answer any questions about individual property taxes.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

PUBIC MEETING ON 2013 BUDGET AND TAX LEVY

Administrator Handt gave an overview of the 2013 budget pointing out the highlights. After a calculation error of health insurance costs was corrected, the levy decreased \$4,097. Handt suggested allocating \$3,000 for the purchase of netbooks for the council chambers in 2013 to go to a paperless agenda format. After obtaining actual costs for turnout gear, the Fire Chief Finnegan requested a \$3,000 decrease in the Turnout Gear & Uniforms line item. The new proposed levy is \$2,171,074, a 5.64% increase.

Mayor Simonson opened the floor to public comments. Rod Negus, 23120 Melanie Trail, offered a suggestion to give the residents more understanding of the budget process by disseminating more information on the rationale behind purchasing decisions, like the new fire truck. It was noted by the Council that all that information is available at the public meetings held during the budget process. Mr. Negus suggested posting something on the website.

Council discussed the netbooks idea and how that would work. The devices would stay in the council chambers and be loaded by the staff with all the agenda items that are normally mailed to the Council the Friday before a meeting. Agenda items would be emailed instead providing quicker access for the Council. The netbooks would also be used by the Planning Commission and Park & Rec Board in the same manner. Administrator Handt estimated five hours of staff time is required to copy and compile packets each week. Combined staff costs, paper, ink and postage bring expenses over \$3,000 per year for using paper packets.

Mayor Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved to set December 18, 2012, as the date to adopt the Final Budget and Levy. The motion carried 5-0.

BANKING ISSUES

The Council discussed changing banks because of problems the city has experienced using direct deposit for payroll with its current bank. Greg Isaacson, President of Security State Bank of Marine, addressed the council recognizing that although they changed procedures at the bank after the first time the payroll deposit was not made in a timely manner, it still happened two more times since the city started direct deposit in 2009. Isaacson suggested city staff wait at the bank when dropping off the data until confirmation is received from the Marine branch that the data had been received. Council questioned why the data cannot be transmitted electronically.

Isaacson indicated the data could be emailed, but staff had been previously informed by the bank that email would not be a secure way to transmit sensitive employee bank account information. Isaacson stated the bank does less than 10 direct deposit payrolls and the expense of purchasing an Internet Business Module to allow electronic deposits is cost prohibitive. Isaacson suggested staff email the information and follow-up with the bank to see that it has been processed. Mayor Simonson suggested that we continue with the bank for six months to see if it can be done electronically by then. Schneider said he wants to keep the city business with the local bank, but is very concerned about the security of emailing employee bank information. Ness agreed he would like to keep bank business local, but does not like to see city staff waiting at the bank for confirmation. Payroll disks are returned to city staff who then erases the data and reuses the disks. It was decided to continue using Security State Bank where city staff will drop off the payroll disk, get a receipt or written acknowledgement that it was received, and the bank will send a confirmation email to the Administrator and Deputy Clerk when it has been processed.

DRAFT CONTRACT FOR LEGAL SERVICES FROM ECKBERG LAMMERS

Nicholas Vivian of Eckberg Lammers was present to answer questions. Mayor Simonson suggested changing the termination notice clause from 60 days to 90 days. Other council members had no objection. Council discussed the \$3,000 being paid to cover services from December 18 to February 19. Vivian indicated he estimated 20 hours at \$150 per hour to get up to speed on the city's issues, but expects to spend more than 20 hours. He thought the amount was equitable for a cost sharing arrangement during the transition period. Council directed staff to put the contract in the Consent Agenda for December 18 with the change to 90 days.

DRAFT CONTRACT FOR JANITORIAL SERVICES FROM TOP NOTCH

Council approved the contract for the next Consent Agenda with the change to ask them to list the city as an additional insured.

NEW RATES FROM HILLCREST ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Council approved the contract with new rates for the next Consent Agenda.

RESPONSE TO MPCA LETTER ON BLISS COLLECTOR SYSTEM

Council directed staff to send a cover letter along with a copy of Pete Ganzel's letter to the MPCA responding to violations of records on the Bliss Collector System.

WASHINGTON COUNTY AGREEMENT FOR SUBSURFACE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM INSPECTION SERVICES

Council would like to take this on as soon as staff has the training. Staff estimates it will take a year to get licensure. Council asked staff to check with Keith Wille to see if we could contract with him to provide inspection services. The County contract is for two years. Council directed the staff to ask if the contract could be changed to one year and put the contract on the General Business Agenda for the December 18 meeting.

2012 EMPLOYEE PAY RATES

Council agreed to the pay rates and directed staff to put on the Consent Agenda for 12/18/12. Council member Swanson asked if employee reviews are being done. Handt indicated that this is a priority for her to initiate in 2013. Superintendent Kieffer has his review next week.

HOLIDAY HOURS

Mayor Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved to close the office on Christmas Eve, Monday, 12/24/12, with eligible staff taking PTO. Motion passed 5-0.

FIRE CHIEF REAPPOINTMENT

Council directed staff to put reappointment of the Fire Chief on the Consent Agenda for 12/18/12.

LAKE LANE DISPUTE

Mayor Simonson, seconded by Swanson, moved to send the draft letter as the City's official position on the ongoing Lake Lane dispute to the parties involved. The motion passed 5-0.

FUTURE WORK SESSION ITEMS

Possible future work session items include Committee and Commission appointments, credit card policy and other policies, fees for wetland applications, investigating an EDA Committee, and a resident who wants to rent out his barn for weddings.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Firkus
Treasurer