

March 12, 2013

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, Sally Swanson (late) and Mayor Simonson. Staff present: City Administrator Kristina Handt, Attorney Andrew Pratt, Maintenance Superintendent Tim Kieffer and Treasurer Colleen Firkus. Fire Department members present: Chief Jim Finnegan, Assistant Chiefs Mike Hinz and Bill Havener, and Captain Peter Nora.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Kieffer asked to add Road Striping to the agenda. Lee, seconded by Ness, moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried 4-0.

ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE-CATS

Councilmember Lee proposed changing the wording in the animal control ordinance from “dogs” to “domestic animals,” which will include cats, so that the city’s animal control officer, Sherrill Reid, may pick up domestic cats. Reid offered to cut her fee from the current \$90 per dog pickup to \$50 per animal. There is also a daily boarding fee of \$17.50 for five days at Hillcrest Animal Hospital. Reid is currently working for eight cities, four of which allow cat pickups. In 2012 she picked up a total of six cats for all eight cities. She does not pick up feral cats, only domestic ones.

Lee, second by Swanson, moved to include cats in the animal control ordinance and change the per animal fee to \$50. Ness & Swanson requested more information regarding possible veterinarian fees, how cat litters are counted, and other fiscal impacts. Lee would like to try it for one year to give Reid more options to deal with cats humanely and help protect the bird population. The motion failed with Lee voting yes and Ness, Swanson, Schneider and Simonson voting no.

REVIEW FIRE ENGINE SPECS

Replacement of Engine 5180 has been scheduled for 2013 in the Capital Improvement Plan. It was acquired in 1988 and has an estimated useful life of 25 years. The City’s Fire Department needs two engines to maintain its 7/10 ISO rating. Councilmember Schneider asked if they couldn’t just fix what is wrong on the fix-it list and save a lot of money. Finnegan indicated the rust is encroaching on the outer panels. Swanson said it doesn’t make sense to put a lot of money into a rusted body. Hinz expressed concern that repairs will become costly and the engine wouldn’t be available for service when needed. Havener stated the department has a schedule of replacements to space out purchases and have always put aside money each year for future replacements. Lee asked how many of these options are “mission essential.” Chief Finnegan explained that fire trucks come bare bones and they are customized to each departments needs, so the options are not really optional, just the necessary equipment for a new truck. The fire department is keeping and transferring to the new truck any equipment that they can.

Council discussed whether or not or to spend the balance of the Equipment Replacement Fund, purchase Equipment Certificates or some combination of each. The consensus was to not deplete the Equipment Replacement Fund and to purchase Equipment Certificates since interest rates are so low. Also, Administrator Handt suggested the City consider refinancing some current bonds at a lower interest rate which would realize additional savings.

Lee, seconded by Swanson, moved to direct staff to place the purchase of a new engine as specified on the agenda for the next meeting and direct staff to proceed with purchasing equipment

certificates and bond refinancing. Ness stated it is not a good idea to put a lot of money into an old vehicle and the options in the specs are not excessive. Motion passed 5-0.

WARNING SIRENS FROM FOREST LAKE

The 2013-2017 Capital Improvement Plan includes the purchase of one warning siren each year for the next six years and assumes FEMA grants to cover 75% of the costs. However, staff has recently learned that the FEMA grants are no longer available. The City of Forest Lake will be decommissioning two sirens and have offered to donate them to Scandia. Scandia would be responsible for removing the sirens and the installation in Scandia. Chief Finnegan will obtain quotes on the cost of doing so. Suggested locations are by Big Marine Lake and Bone Lake, which are higher density population areas with more outdoor activities in the vicinity.

Lee, seconded by Ness, directed staff to pursue the donation of the two warning sirens from the City of Forest Lake and their removal and installation. Motion passed 5-0.

FIRE DEPT COMPENSATION

The 2013 Budget included a \$1/hour increase for firefighters. The last wage increase for firefighters was 2009. Chief Finnegan has asked that firefighters from this point on be treated as City employees and have the same compensation plan as City employees.

Swanson, seconded by Schneider, moved to direct staff to place the resolution to give firefighters a \$1/hour increase on the consent agenda for the March 19th meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

ACCOUNT BEING SET UP FOR LARSON FAMILY

Chief Finnegan informed the Council that the Lions Club is establishing an account at Security State Bank to accept donations on behalf of the Larson family. They are proposing a presentation of the funds to the family at the April meeting. A separate raffle will also occur at the chicken dinner fund raiser to raise additional funds for the Larsons.

PURCHASE OF F-550 TRUCK FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Superintendent Kieffer presented the spec and options for a new F-550 diesel truck. Swanson questioned the need for a diesel engine as it brings the purchase price over the \$50,000 budget and has higher fuel and maintenance costs. Kieffer restated his preference for a diesel engine as his experience is gas trucks wear out quicker when used to pull heavy loads. Life expectancy is 10 years, or 100,000 miles, to maximize trade-in value.

Ness, seconded by Swanson, moved to pursue the purchase of a gas engine F-550. Kieffer said he will get new specs for a gas engine for the next meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

RECAP 2012-2013 ICE RINK SEASON

On December 28th regular full-time staff began maintaining the skating rink during regular working hours. Seasonal part-time staff flooded the rink and worked weekends and holidays. On January 28th the Zamboni broke when used to remove 4 inches of snow off of the rink. Procedures to use the John Deere blower to remove heavy snow were not followed. Kieffer suggested part-time staff be trained to use the John Deere blower for snow removal and closer supervision in following procedures for snow removal. Initially it was thought the Zamboni had a broken axle. It was close to the end of the season, so staff decided to not fix the Zamboni and clear snow with the John Deere blower. Since that time, Kieffer has found a place that works on Zambonis and carries parts. Taking the Zamboni apart further revealed it was

a spline that was broken which is less expensive to fix. However, the u-joint and fuel pump also need replacing. Staff will continue to assess the cost of repairing and maintaining the Zamboni.

ENGINEERING PROPOSALS

The Council reached a consensus to interview three of the four proposed engineering firms; Bolton & Menk, Stantec, and WSB. Interviews set for Wednesday, March 27 starting at 6:30 p.m.

SPEED STUDY DISCUSSION

Mayor Simonson asked council members to think about where the City might want to request speed studies from MNDOT and discuss at a later date.

COMPENSATION PLANS

Administrator Handt presented information on several different types of pay plans for Council consideration in establishing a clear, consistent compensation policy. She also reported that the City was in compliance with Pay Equity requirements. Consensus was to apply a consistent pay system to all departments by assigning jobs a grade and having steps for each grade; with more frequent steps and lower increases than is currently in place, and step increases tied to performance. Council instructed Handt to proceed with updating the compensation policy.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING POLICIES

Council instructed Handt to remove EAP language for DOT employees and for non-DOT employees to include language for "Reasonable Suspicion Testing," and to finish updating the Personnel Policy with all the changes before bringing to the Council for approval.

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Simonson, seconded by Ness, moved to approve the Communications Policy as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

GUIDELINES FOR PAPERLESS MEETINGS AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Guidelines for Electronic Communications between Council Members as provided by the League of MN Cities have never been formally adopted by the Council. Handt provided a draft guideline to include procedures for paperless meeting packets, use of netbooks and electronic communications during and outside of Council meetings. Council directed staff to place the guidelines on the consent agenda for the March meeting.

ROAD STRIPING

Kieffer presented a map of streets that are proposed to be striped with double yellow lines, but no white fog lines. It will be less costly to have double yellow lines the entire roads as breaking them into passing lanes will require purchasing and installing signs for passing and no passing zones. Cost to be approximately \$2,000.

Simonson, seconded by Lee, moved to approve contracting with Washington County to stripe the roads indicated on the map presented with double yellow lines. Motion approved with Simonson, Lee, Swanson and Schneider voting yes, and Ness voting no.

EDA DRAFT RESOLUTION

City Attorney Andrew Pratt presented a draft set of Bylaws and Resolution that may be considered by the Council for establishment of an Economic Development Authority (EDA). Pratt advised this is another unit of government that will require liability insurance and can be used to levy taxes and use eminent domain. The Council will need to decide on the number of Commissioners and how many are to be Council members. Establishment of an EDA will require a public hearing process. Handt recommended

language be added so that eminent domain could not be use without council approval. Further discussion will be held at the next meeting.

FUTURE WORK SESSION ITEMS

There will be a presentation by Crabtree Companies for digital document scanning and further discussion on speed studies. A compensation plan may also be ready for review. Ness will be absent.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Firkus
Treasurer