

September 6, 2017

The City Council conducted a Work Session on the above date. The following were present: Council members Bob Hegland, Steve Kronmiller, Chris Ness and Jim Schneider. Absent: Mayor Christine Maefsky. Staff present: City Administrator Neil Soltis and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund.

Acting Mayor Schneider called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Discussion on firefighter recruitment was added as Agenda Item 5b. **Ness, seconded by Hegland, moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried 4-0.**

### **PRESENTATION BY FOREST LAKE CABLE COMMISSION/LAKES AREA TELEVISION**

Paul Peterson, new Access Coordinator at Lakes Area Television (LATV10 and 20), updated the Council on the station's direction and goals as it works with communities and schools within the Commission's membership with Forest Lake, Columbus and Scandia. New equipment purchases using the PEG fee revenue has improved productions quality and Peterson is producing more documentaries and short films highlighting events and people in the communities to create awareness to local residents, such as the progress of building the Veterans Memorial at Lilleskogen Park. Peterson said that he would like to discuss Scandia's partnership with the cable station going forward.

Administrator Soltis provided information on Scandia's exit from the Joint Powers Agreement effective June 2018, and the decisions which will need to be made regarding providing access to public meetings. Options include rejoining as a member of the JPA, contracting for video services, or purchasing its own equipment. Council member Schneider stated that he would be hesitant to get back into the Commission based on past problems, but would be interested in contracting with the station's services. Council member Kronmiller, the City's representative on the Commission, said that if Scandia takes on the PEG fees, what services will be provided to the residents; more PEG fees are available by staying on as compared to exiting and then starting with \$0. Council member Ness said that he is a cable subscriber and is satisfied that he is getting his money's worth without the need for LATV 10 programming, but it appears that the station is going in the right direction. Peterson said that by producing more special interest stories in a story-telling manner, the station is promoting local highlights not seen before. He noted LATV is web-streaming programming that is available to all viewers, not just cable subscribers.

Council members asked staff to research a contracting package for video services for future discussion.

### **DISCUSSION OF SHIP GRANT APPLICATION FOR BIKE REPAIR STATION**

Administrator Soltis explained that it was recently made aware that grant funds up to \$2,600 for a bike fix-it station and 2 bike racks could be made available to the City through the County's SHIP grant program. However, the agreement and purchase needs to be completed by October 31, 2017, the end of the grant cycle. Due to the short time frame and since the equipment must be installed on public property, Soltis recommended delaying a grant submission until there is a commitment to develop a comprehensive cycling amenity in the right location to support cyclists.

Janie O'Connor and Marlys Johnson, representing Cycling Scandia, were present and stated that they agreed with that approach, especially until more is known about the future Gateway Trail connection. Their group is analyzing survey results taken in August with 62 cyclists riding through Scandia that will help to build a plan around. O'Connor reported that Cycling Scandia is working towards 501c3 non-profit status so that it will be able to apply for grant funding for their mission of making Scandia a cycling destination. O'Connor said she will keep the Council informed as their organization progresses.

#### **PRESENTATION OF FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL**

Assistant Fire Chief Ian Skarga presented a proposal to construct a circular patio area and sidewalk in front of the Fire Station near the John Morrison memorial bench. The pavers would be engraved with names of past and present firefighters, with a plan to engrave future bricks for new members. The Fire Relief Association would provide all the funds for this project.

Council was in consensus to approve of the installation on city property.

#### **FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT**

Fire Chief Hinz requested approval of a recruitment schedule this fall for new members of the fire department. A timeline to take in applications, beginning with a booth at Taco Daze on September 9<sup>th</sup>, interviews and physicals was presented, with an anticipated start date of November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Council was in consensus to approve of the recruitment schedule for new firefighters.

#### **DISCUSSION ON DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH SCANDIA TRAIL SOLAR LLC**

Administrator Soltis reported that the Development Agreement for the community solar garden at 11480 Scandia Trail has been drafted by the City Attorney, with a few outstanding items to be received before releasing the building permit. Soltis asked for Council approval of the form of the agreement with the condition that the agreement can be executed once all submittals required by the CUP and Developers Agreement are found to be sufficient.

Council was in consensus to approve the form of the Development Agreement as presented and allow the execution of the agreement by the Mayor and Administrator once all submittals are completed.

#### **PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE VACANCY**

In early August, Susan Rodsjo resigned from the Parks and Recreation Committee. No applications to fill her term, expiring February 28, 2022, were received by the August 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Administrator Soltis offered continuing to solicit applications through the City's website and facebook page, or to make an appointment without seeking applications.

Council discussed the role of the PRC and the purpose they serve, and the possibility of disbanding the committee. It was agreed to have the Committee operate with 4 members and to evaluate and restructure the role they play in acting as a sounding board for projects before park items go before the Council.

**DISCUSSION OF 2018 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET AND ESTABLISHING  
A MAXIMUM PROPERTY TAX LEVY AMOUNT**

Administrator Soltis presented a draft of the 2018 budget that incorporated budget assumptions presented at the August Work Session that results in a 5.8% increase to the 2018 tax levy over last year's levy amount. The maximum tax levy must be certified to the County by October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Council reviewed the expenditures identified to affect the steady state budget and made the following changes:

- Remove quarterly newsletters -- \$1,500
- Remove ordinance codification -- \$8,000
- Reduce Council travel and conferences to \$1,000 (from requested \$2,500)
- Remove purchase of chromebooks for Council chambers -- \$2,500
- Remove purchase of radio equipment for Public Works -- \$13,200
- Reallocate radio fees to cell phone allowances for Public Works
- Remove EDA tourism development -- \$10,000
- Remove levy earmarked for undesignated Park improvements -- \$11,000

Budget items identified for future discussion:

- Withdrawal from JPA/Lakes Area TV -- franchise fees retained approximately \$4,300
- Increase Fire Chief position to part-time status -- \$33,000

Council member Hegland advocated for charging non-residents for fire and rescue response costs to offset the increase to the Fire Chief's position. No decision was made and Council will continue to discuss this at a future meeting.

It was estimated that the changes would reduce the 2018 levy amount to a 4% increase over the 2017 amount. Council directed staff to prepare the resolution to adopt a maximum tax levy with the noted changes to the budget for the September 19, 2017 Council meeting. Council has until December to adopt a final tax levy.

**ITEMS FOR FUTURE WORK SESSIONS**

The Comprehensive Plan will be discussed at the October 4<sup>th</sup> work session, along with Fire Department staffing.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Ness, seconded by Kronmiller, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 4-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund  
Deputy Clerk