

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
April 19, 2010
5:00 Closed Meeting City Hall Council Chambers
6:15 Continuation (Immediately following council meeting)

PRESENT: Council Member-at-Large Anderson, Council Members Austin, McAlister, King (6:15 p.m.), Clennon, and Pacholl.

ABSENT: Mayor Stiehm, Council Members King and Martin.

STAFF PRESENT: City Attorney David Hoversten, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, Public Works Director Jon Erichson, Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert and City Administrator Jim Hurm.

ALSO PRESENT: Public, KAAL TV-6, Austin Post Bulletin, and Austin Daily Herald.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson opened the meeting at 5:00 pm.

Item #1. – Closed Session pursuant to M.S. 13D.03 to discuss labor contracts: Motion by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Pacholl to open the meeting.

Motion by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Pacholl to close the meeting under M.S. 13D.03 to discuss a labor contract. Carried 5-0.

See DVD of closed meeting.

Motion by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Pacholl to re-open the closed meeting. Carried 5-0.

Item #2. – Austin Area Drug Taskforce presentation – prescription drug disposal program:

Council Member King opened the discussion as a liaison for the program by introducing fellow Taskforce members, including Bonnie Rietz and Police Detective David McKichan. Council Member King stated the Taskforce is now dealing with another potential problem within the community, prescription drugs. Often times people do not use the entire prescription, but they do not know what to do with the remaining pills. We do not want these in the landfills, and people are starting to steal them from residences now. Council Member King noted Rice County is now doing this, but the annual cost could be in the range of \$5,000 annually. Council Member King would like to see the City and County each chip in \$2,500 for this, as it may be installed at the LEC such that the drugs would be deposited into the closet of the Mower County Sheriff's office.

Taskforce member Bonnie Rietz noted this could help us get rid of drugs that are not being used. Detective Brian Krueger stated the Southeastern Minnesota Drug Taskforce is also very interested in this, and we are working with Rochester to eventually use their incinerator to save on disposal costs. Detective David McKichan stated there is plenty of street use and we want to eliminate this from our community, as we have seen a huge uptick in the abuse.

Council Member McAlister questioned privacy issues related to people dropping off their bottles of prescriptions. Ms. Rietz stated the citizens should remove the labels off of all drugs being deposited. Council Member McAlister questioned issues with something like a vet clinic or pharmacy could drop off massive amounts and then we get stuck with the cost of removal. Detective McKichan stated the pharmacies have been great supporters of our programs in the past. Council Member McAlister questioned why the entire project could not be paid for with the forfeiture money. Detective Krueger stated the Southeastern Minnesota Drug Taskforce needs every dollar they receive to pay for people like Detective McKichan.

After further discussion, motion by Council Member Clennon, seconded by Council Member Pacholl to recommend approval to Council, funding from the Contingency line item for \$2,500. Carried 6-0. Item will be added to the next council agenda.

Item #3a. – Lansing Township sanitary sewer project – project schedule: Mr. Erichson discussed a proposed timeline for moving forward the Lansing Township construction schedule:

- May 11 and May 13 – bid openings for advertised project.
- Calculate final assessments based on bids.
- May 20 – Public informational meetings to review assessments.
- May 24 (week of) – Schedule special council meeting to pass resolution to finalize assessment hearings. This has to be a minimum of 2 weeks prior to assessment hearing.
- June 21 – Final assessment hearings.
- July 19 – Council act on bids (assuming the above are all approved).

Item #3b. – Lansing Township sanitary sewer project – assessment policy: Mr. Erichson discussed a proposed policy for the assessment of this project including that 100% of the cost of the project will be assessed to the participants. Assessments are proposed to be based on residential equivalency units that the project will serve and will not be greater than 15 years in length. Interest rates established by council will be 2% above the rate that would be incurred by the City if the funds were borrowed by the City. Additionally, property that currently has compliant sanitary sewer systems will not be required to hook up immediately, and would be allowed up to five years to connect to the system (however the assessment starts immediately). Vacant property would be assessed the same cost but could be deferred for up to five years at an interest rate equal to the rate plus the calculated interest cost to the city. Other items of the policy were also reviewed.

Council Member McAlister stated that at the council meeting comments were made by the elected body that “we can work with you”, but any property that is not assessed their full share will result in that cost being dumped on somebody else.

After further discussion, motion by Council Member Clennon, seconded by Council Member Pacholl to recommend to council the approval of the assessment policy for Lansing Township. Carried 6-0. Item will be added to the next council agenda.

Item #4. – Quarterly goals review: Mr. Hurm handed out a six page document titled 2010 Austin City Council Goals. Mr. Hurm noted as part of this packet reports from Austin Main Street Inc., the DCA, Community Development Director, and Parks and Recreation department have been included. Mr. Hurm briefly discussed the cover page outlining council’s specific

goals, including a 0% increase in wages for 2011 (accomplished with the recently approved LELS labor agreement).

When it comes to prioritizing city services, Mr. Hurm handed out some surveys that had been done internally at Mower County for staff to prioritize what they do. The concern is that citizens may not have an in-depth knowledge of the services each department does. Council Member Austin stated we do not have to do anything this in-depth, maybe 5-10 general topics to hear discussion on. Council Member Clennon noted a lot of city's have prioritized their services through a citizens committee.

In other areas, Mr. Hurm noted a leaders group meets monthly on state mandates among other things, flood grants are still being pursued, and the Watershed support is ongoing. Bike corridors were also briefly discussed.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson stated we could have more discussion at the next work session if so desired.

Adjournment: Motion by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Dankert