

**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION**  
**January 21, 2020**  
**City Hall Conference Room A**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Stiehm. Council Members Steve King, Laura Helle, Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Joyce Poshusta, Jason Baskin and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Park and Recreation Director Kevin Nelson, Library Director Julie Clinefelter, Police Chief David McKichan, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace and Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum

**ALSO PRESENT:** Brenda and Kurt Potach, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

**Item No. 1 – Belleman’s Sanitary Sewer – Kurt Potach**

Public Works Director Steven Lang discussed a request from Kurt and Brenda Potach to allow them to hook into the sanitary sewer that was installed for Belleman’s Addition a number of years ago. Belleman’s Addition and Mapleview are the only two areas that we have allowed to hook up and receive our sewer service without being annexed into the City. Our goal has always been to annex these properties in before we would allow hooking into our sanitary sewer. Special circumstances years ago created the sewer service in Belleman’s Addition, with the agreement no additional homes would be allowed to hook up. Mr. Potach has now requested action such that he can burrow under the road and hook into the sewer service, all at his cost, as his septic system is having some major problems. The Association that runs Belleman’s Addition has agreed to allow him in, if the City would also agree. Since no other parcels in this area have been annexed into the City, it would be staff’s recommendation to allow for an amendment to the agreement to allow the Potach’s to connect into the City sewer system, as clean water has always been our number one goal. Mr. Lang noted that down the road, the City might choose to annex these properties in, but that could be many years from now.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin to allow Mr. and Mrs. Potach to hook into the City sewer system through an amendment of the agreement with Belleman’s Addition. Carried 7-0.

The matter will be placed on a future Council Meeting once the amended agreement with Belleman’s Addition is drafted.

**Item No. 2 – Boulevard Trees**

Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum discussed the past construction season whereby 111 trees were removed from street projects, at a cost of approximately \$164,400. When the streets are widened, there is sometimes a need to remove the trees. Additionally, if we have to remove part

of the roots of a tree, the insurance company has advised us that the entire tree should be removed as it might eventually rot and cause branches to break off into the public right-of-way.

Mr. Wenum noted we are planning on the 2020 street projects and wanted to ensure that Council was still okay with removing trees. Discussion ensued regarding Emerald Ash borer and if these trees should be removed.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, recommending removal of all ash trees if they are on a project (whether they are diseased or not). Carried 5-2 (Council Members Baskin and King = Nay).

The item will be on the February 3, 2020 Council meeting.

Council Member Helle noted her support for staff to bring back a proposal to be able to replace all trees removed on a one-to-one basis. Council Member Baskin noted his agreement, adding that it might be a five-year process to do this because of budget constraints, but that we should at least try to replace them somewhere in the City. Mr. Wenum and Parks and Recreation Director shall work on the proposal together.

### **Item No. 3 – Street Project Incentives**

Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum discussed some past street projects noting contractors are having a hard time getting the projects done on time, offering up a suggestion that maybe we should incentivize contractors to get the job done earlier. This proposal would cost some money, but in the end might reduce the number of complaints by citizens affected by the street project. Council Member Waller noted it took way too long for her street project in 2019 and inconvenienced her and her neighbors for longer than they expected.

Mr. Wenum discussed a proposed chart he had prepared indicating an option to give bonuses to contractors that got the job done early and how he would propose to incentivize the projects, including a daily bonus for each day the project is completed before the scheduled end date. Mr. Wenum estimated in a worst-case scenario, that the City could have an additional \$40,000 of costs for the 2020 projects.

After further discussion, motion by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member King to approve of Engineering including some sort of incentive program for contractors to complete the 2020 street projects. Carried 7-0. Council requested staff just include this in the bid documents, of which the contract would then be approved by Council at that time.

### **Item No. 4 – Administrative Report**

City Administrator Craig Clark noted staff met with PFA last week on financing for the wastewater treatment plant upgrades. We are currently working on legislation to help with getting state grants to help pay for the project.

Council Member Baskin noted that Austin was not specifically listed on the Governors proposed bonding bill list for funding. Mr. Clark noted that was correct, however there is funding to agencies that provide wastewater treatment plant grants. So, hopefully we can get included in any allocation from those agencies.

## **Item No. 5 – Open Discussion**

Parks and Recreation Director Kevin Nelson noted there may be some opportunities for some fundraising for Christmas decorations. Public Works Director Steven Lang said he has been working on that, but put it aside to concentrate on the other work session discussions. Mr. Lang noted he will work on that for an upcoming work session.

Council Member Fischer questioned if the City is getting complaints from the plow drivers on garbage cans in the road. Mr. Lang noted it is sometimes a problem, and we work with the garbage haulers and not the residents to inform them about keeping garbage cans off of the streets. The garbage haulers have a way to “blast” message and phone calls to customers about these sorts of things, so that is why we work with them instead of the many residents.

Mr. Lang noted the watershed district met and approved our requests for variances from the permit requirements for both the wastewater treatment plant flood wall and the Riverview area improvements.

Mayor Stiehm noted he wanted to schedule a closed meeting for 5:00 on Monday February 3, 2020 to discuss the negotiations and Comp and Class study. No objections noted.

City Administrator Craig Clark noted we might need a new date for the Council Retreat, as March 9 is also the Library Board meeting night. Library Director Julie Clinefelter noted if that date works for all Council, then she would just change her Library Board meeting date. All Council indicated that March 9 would work for the retreat.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adjourning the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Ann M. Kasel  
City Clerk