

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
October 19, 2020
City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Stiehm. Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin. Council Member Jason Baskin.

MEMBERS APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Council Members Steve King, Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Laura Helle, Joyce Poshusta

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan, Park and Rec Director Kevin Nelson, Library Director Julie Clinefelter and City Clerk Ann Kasel

STAFF APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, Public Works Director Steven Lang

OTHERS APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Austin Daily Herald, Mike Postma, Oballa Oballa

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Cedar River Watershed District Flood Project Update

Public Works Director Steven Lang presented a video from the Cedar River Watershed District highlighting their progress over the last 5 years of projects funded in part by a \$3.2 million Hormel Foundation grant. There has been a 10% reduction in storm water flow into the City saving 400 tons of sediment and 300 pounds of phosphorus from entering into East Side Lake and connecting rivers.

For Council information only, no additional Council action needed.

Item No. 2 – Waste Water Treatment Plant Design Update

Public Works Director Steven Lang provided an update to the Waste Water Treatment Plant design. He stated the City has been working with SEH for the last 9 months or so and plans to bid the project in the summer of 2021. He reviewed a map of the area and highlighted the changes to the plant.

He stated the current budget for the project is \$80 million.

For Council information only, no additional Council action is needed.

Item No. 3 – 2021 Capital Improvement Plan

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert presented the 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Plan. The plan identifies approximately \$155 million dollars in capital improvements for the City, some of which are contingent on receiving grant funds. The purpose of the work session was to review and ask questions about any of the proposed items. Then the Council will approve the document in December 2020 which authorizes the staff to purchase the 2021 items that are indicated in the CIP. For years 2022 and beyond, the document serves as a guide for the future but is subject to change as the City's needs change.

Police Chief David McKichan discussed the Police Department's capital improvement plan and noted that there are three marked squad cars and an unmarked car budgeted for 2021. The Department has been using funds from the forfeited vehicle reserve balance to outfit the vehicles. He also noted other computer upgrades and other equipment purchases over the next five years.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert on behalf of Fire Chief Jim McCoy presented the Fire Department's capital improvement items. The Fire Department needs to replace vehicles, a Fire Engine in 2022 at a cost of \$470,000 and the ladder truck in 2025 at a cost of \$1,839,000.

Library Director Julie Clinefelter presented the Library's portion of the capital improvement plan. In 2021, bathroom renovations are planned and a facility remodel in 2022.

Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert stated the Nature Center asks for most of their capital improvements though the Hormel Foundation or the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center with projects scheduled in 2022.

Mr. Nelson reviewed Parks and Recreation requests noting various upgrades to parks including roads, playground equipment, buildings, signs and accessibility. The Park and Rec equipment fleet is also older and various purchases of vehicles and equipment are scheduled over the next five years.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert discussed Administration's capital improvement projects stating that funds are being budgeted for public works equipment, a new copier, computers and other engineering equipment. Each year \$20,000 is set aside for computers and associated equipment.

Steven Lang reviewed the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) noting the repairs and upgrades scheduled for the future. The City is waiting for the final permit from the MPCA to determine upgrades in the future. The WWTP is an older facility and continual upgrades are needed to keep it flowing smoothly. The proposed cost to upgrade the WWTP is \$77 million over 4 years.

Steven Lang presented on the proposed improvements to the Central Garage. The older vehicles get rolled down from supervisors to the crew and the vehicle causing the most problems gets sold from the fleet. Vehicle replacements are scheduled for 2021.

Steven Lang stated the Waste Transfer Station is in need to some repairs over the next few years including a new compactor in 2021. The City entered into an agreement for the lease of the transfer station so additional improvements may be made in the future.

Steven Lang stated the airport has been upgraded recently so most of the capital improvement items are maintenance issues. In 2021 new lighting improvements and fuel tank upgrades are planned. Many of the airport projects are contingent upon grants from the FAA or MnDOT.

Steven Lang reviewed the non-MSA streets, noting that these are not supported by the state gas tax. These are local projects paid for with local tax dollars and assessments in order to fund the construction. Each year the street department looks at the proposed streets to see if they need to be reprioritized based on deterioration. In 2021, \$2.2 million dollars in projects are scheduled.

Steven Lang discussed the MSA streets that are funded with approximately \$1 million of state gas tax money each year. The City assesses all of these property owners under the same assessment policy as non-MSA residents. This assessment policy eliminates the favoritism for one street of homeowners versus another. The projects scheduled for 2021 total \$800,000 dollars

Steven Lang discussed the upcoming trail projects. There are three additional trails slated for the City of Austin through 2025.

Steven Lang noted the Sanitary Sewer capital improvement plans. Each year funds are allocated for manhole replacements; for inspection of all City mains and inspection of all private lines and plumbing; and for replacement of mains with street construction projects. Lift stations are also scheduled for reconstruction.

Steven Lang noted Miscellaneous Street projects scheduled for 2021 including an LED lighting conversion. There are also additional lighting projects scheduled through 2023.

Steven Lang discussed the items under Miscellaneous Other Projects including tile line installation, sidewalk and pedestrian upgrades, hazardous building removal, Ramsey Dam. Other arena improvements are also scheduled.

Steven Lang discussed the storm water utility district noting that there are various projects scheduled over the next five years to the current system. There have been drainage issues identified that will be addressed through these projects.

Steven Lang presented on the City's Flood Mitigation efforts. The City will continue scattered site acquisitions in 2020 and a levee at the Waste Water Treatment Plant in 2021. There are no grant dollars for the project at this time and LOST funds may have to be allocated for the project to be completed.

Mr. Dankert noted that the housing initiative funds were removed from the lax levy for 2021.

Mr. Lang presented some economic development areas including 8th Avenue NE redevelopment and Port Authority property clean up.

Mr. Dankert concluded the discussion stating he would make minor modifications to the capital improvement plan and bring it back to the Council for adoption in late 2020. No additional Council action needed at this time.

Item No. 4 – 2021 Budget Discussion

No Council discussion.

Item No. 5 - Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark stated the City is working with Austin Utilities on the right of way discussion.

Item No. 6 – Open Discussion

Council Member Helle stated she is working on the staff appreciation from the Council. She stated there is City budget for employee appreciation but the Council agreed that they would like to contribute their own funds instead of using City funds.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adjourning the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk