

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
December 21, 2020
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Stiehm. Council Members Steve King and Jason Baskin.

MEMBERS APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Council Members Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Laura Helle, and Joyce Poshusta and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan, Park and Rec Director Kevin Nelson, City Attorney Craig Byram, Library Director Julie Clinefelter and Fire Chief Jim McCoy

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

OTHERS APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Oballa Oballa, Mike Ruzek, Greta Anderson, Sara Karki, Gretchen Ramlo, Steve Kime, Elaine Hansen, Austin Daily Herald

Mayor Stiehm called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving the agenda. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving Council minutes from December 7, 2020 and Truth in Taxation minutes from December 9, 2020. Carried.

Recognitions and Awards

The Mayor recognized the following City Employees that retired in 2020:

Terry Corkill – January 25, 2005 - March 13, 2020 Parks, Recreation & Forestry
Mike Goetz – June 11, 1990 - June 18, 2020 Parks, Recreation & Forestry
Jeanne Steinbrink – April 10, 1984 - July 31, 2020 Library & Police Department
Darla Tufte – January 27, 1997 - December 31, 2020 Library

Sara Karki with the Human Rights Commission recognized Mayor Stiehm for all his efforts he has made to embrace the many ethnic communities that make up the residents of Austin.

Oballa Oballa presented the Mayor with a certificate from the Human Rights Commission and thanked the Mayor for making everyone feel welcome.

Council Member Steve King read a proclamation thanking Mayor Stiehm for his years of service and dedication to the City of Austin.

Mayor Stiehm stated it has been a joy to be the Mayor of the City.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a proclamation honoring Mayor Thomas A. Stiehm. Carried 7-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member King, approving the consent agenda as follows:

Licenses:

2021 License Renewals

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of bills
- b. Financial and Investment Reports.

Carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing was held for the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert presented the document stating that the items for 2021 will be given approval for purchase with Council approval and it serves as a planning tool for future years.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adopting the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. Carried.

BID OPENING AND AWARD

The City received bids for 2021 tree services. Parks and Recreation Director Kevin Nelson stated the City received the following bids:

Austin/Albert Lea Tree Service	\$122,500
Morem Tree Service	\$148,500

Council Member-at-Large Austin noted there are hours of work submitted in the bids. He stated the bids are for approximately 500 hours of services.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member King, awarding a bid for 2021 tree services to Austin-Albert Lea Tree Service. Carried 6-1 with Council Member-at-Large Austin voting nay.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert requested the Council approve the 2021 tax levy at \$7,436,000, which is 4% higher than the 2020 levy. He noted it was approved unanimously at the December 9, 2020 Truth in Taxation Hearing.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution approving the tax levy for 2021. Carried 7-0.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert requested the Council approve the City's budget for 2021 at \$36,489,461.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member King, adopting a resolution adopting the budget for 2021. Carried 7-0.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert requested the Council approve the cancellation of certain ad valorem tax levies for 2021. He stated the City does not need to levy these funds to the taxpayers because it has other revenue sources.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adopting a resolution authorizing the cancellation of certain ad valorem tax levies. Carried 7-0.

City Clerk Ann Kasel requested the Council approve 2021 liquor licenses.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution granting 2021 licenses for sale of hard liquor on-sale, Sunday hard liquor on-sale, Sunday wine on-sale, and 3.2 beer on and off-sale. Carried 7-0.

City Administrator Craig Clark presented a proposed ordinance for the sale of surplus property and a proposed policy for the donation of surplus property. He stated the ordinance hasn't been modified for quite a long time and it is prudent to increase the threshold from \$500, which currently requires Council approval.

The new ordinance would allow staff to sell or dispose of any items under \$5,000. Items between \$5,000 and \$25,000 would require Council approval and could be sold only by auction. Items over \$25,000 would require Council approval and publication of the sale.

Mr. Clark also proposed changes in the policy for donation to a non-profit. This threshold would also increase to \$5,000 and items would need to be approved by Council.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member King, adopting a policy for the donation of surplus equipment. Carried.

The Council reviewed an ordinance for the disposal of excess personal property.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Fischer, for preparation of the excess personal property ordinance. Carried.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baskin, for adoption and publication of the excess personal property ordinance. Carried 7-0.

The Council reviewed an ordinance amending the vacant property ordinance. Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace requested additional language for an unoccupied building.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member King, adopting a resolution for preparation of the amendment to the vacant property ordinance. Carried.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution for adoption and publication of the amendment to the vacant property ordinance. Carried 7-0.

The Council reviewed an ordinance repealing Sections 6.51 and 6.52. City Clerk Ann Kasel stated the sections are obsolete with the adoption of the right of way policy. Excavators and concrete contractors will be licensed under the new regulations.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Fischer, for preparation of the repeal ordinance. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baskin, for adoption and publication of the repeal ordinance. Carried 7-0.

Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann requested the Council approve wage rates for seasonal, temporary and part-time employees.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution setting positions and wage rates for seasonal, temporary and part-time positions not covered by a labor agreement. Carried 7-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang requested the Council order a feasibility report for the 31st Street SW road realignment project. He stated this will be a joint project with Mower County.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member King, adopting a resolution ordering a feasibility report for the 31st Street SW road realignment project. Carried 7-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang requested the Council approve a farm lease with Loucks Farms for the Anderson Farm. The lease would be for three years at \$5,600 per year.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving a farm lease with Loucks Farms for the Anderson farm. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Baskin, approving 3rd and 4th quarter payments to the Austin Community Recreation Center. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member King, approving the following appointments and reappointments to City Boards and Commissions:

Appointments:

Vickie Spyhalski to the Human Rights Commission, term ending 12/31/23
Laura Helle to the Human Rights Commission, term ending 12/31/23
Andrew Klenner to the Planning Commission, term ending 12/31/22
Brad Lindberg to the Planning Commission, term ending 12/31/24
Jwokamer Debock to the Library Board, term ending 12/31/23
Jana Norman to the Planning Commission, term ending 12/31/24

Reappointments

Jerry McCarthy to the Port Authority, term ending 12/31/26
Gregg Gaffney to the Cable Television Committee, term ending 12/31/23
Paul Spyhalski to the Fire Civil Service Commission, term ending 12/31/23
Steve Kime to the Police Civil Service Commission, term ending 12/31/23
Sarah Hartman to the Human Rights Commission, term ending 12/31/23
Melissa Bonorden to the Library Board, term ending 12/31/23
Edward Hinchcliffe to the Library Board, term ending 12/31/23
Chris Grev to the Park and Recreation Board, term ending 12/31/24
Michael Stoll to the Pillars of the City Board, term ending 12/31/23
Daphne Wagner to the Pillars of the City Board, term ending 12/31/23
Steve Kime to the Pillars of the City Board, term ending 12/31/23
Herve Idjidina to the Culture and Arts Commission, term ending 12/31/23
Yang Liu to the Culture and Arts Commission, term ending 12/31/23
Laura Helle to the Culture and Arts Commission, term ending 12/31/22

Carried 6-0 with Council Member Helle abstaining.

REPORTS

Elaine Hansen thanked the Mayor and Laura Helle for their service to the City.

Council Member Baskin thanked the first responders of the City for the recent situations in the City. He also thanked Ms. Helle and the Mayor for their time on the Council.

Council Member Helle reviewed some of the projects she had been involved with on the Council. She stated it has been an honor to serve the community.

Council Member Waller thanked Council Member Helle and the Mayor for their service.

Council Member King thanked the law enforcement and fire personnel for their hard work in the last few weeks. He thanked the Mayor for his time on the Council and enjoyed working with him. He also thanked Council Member Helle for her service on the Council.

Council Member Poshusta thanked Council Member Helle and the Mayor for his service to the City. She stated she is looking forward to Mike Postma and Oballa Oballa joining the Council and Steve King as Mayor. She thanked the City employees for all their hard work.

Council Member Fischer thanked Council Member Helle for her time on the Council and Mayor Stiehm for his leadership.

Council Member-at-Large Austin thanked Council Member Helle and Mayor Stiehm for their service to the community. He also thanked the first responders for their hard work.

Mayor Stiehm thanked the police and fire departments for their hard work and dedication to their jobs. He thanked the Council for their service and City staff for their guidance.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member King, adjourning the meeting to January 4, 2021. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:23 p.m.

Approved: January 4, 2021

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____