

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
October 4, 2021
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Oballa Oballa, Michael Postma, Jason Baskin, Joyce Poshusta and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Council Member Rebecca Waller

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan

STAFF APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Public Works Director Steven Lang, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Park and Rec Director Kevin Nelson, City Attorney Craig Byram, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann and City Clerk Ann Kasel

OTHERS APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Austin Daily Herald

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

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Baskin, approving the agenda. Carried.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baskin, approving Council minutes from September 20, 2021. Carried.

RECOGNITIONS AND AWARDS

Mayor King welcomed Kris Heichel as the newest Honorary Council Member.

Ms. Heichel stated she is looking forward to learning more about the City Council.

Mayor King read a proclamation declaring October 4, 2021 as SPAM Post 570 day.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of bills
- b. Financial and Credit Card Reports.

Carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

City Clerk Ann Kasel noted the public fall assessment hearings on the agenda. For each type of assessment, the individual property owners were mailed a notice of hearing and a public notice was also published in the Austin Daily Herald.

A public hearing was held for the assessment of Turtle Creek 2 sanitary sewer assessments.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adopting a resolution declaring the cost of improvement for Turtle Creek 2 sanitary sewer assessments. Carried 6-0.

Moved by Council Member Poshusta, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting the assessment roll for Turtle Creek 2 sanitary sewer assessments. Carried 6-0.

A public hearing was held for assessments for miscellaneous sidewalk and driveway projects.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution declaring the cost of improvement for miscellaneous sidewalk and driveway projects. Carried 6-0.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting the assessment roll for miscellaneous sidewalk and driveway projects. Carried 6-0.

A public hearing was held for the assessment of 2021 snow removal.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution for assessments for 2021 snow removal. Carried 6-0.

A public hearing was held on assessments for 2021 junk and garbage removal.

There were no additional public comments.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution for assessments for 2021 junk and garbage removal. Carried 6-0.

A public hearing was held for the assessments for 2021 grass and weed removal.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Oballa, adopting a resolution for assessments for 2021 grass and weed removal. Carried 6-0.

A public hearing was held for assessments for administrative citations.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Oballa, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution for the assessment of Park and Recreation administrative citations. Carried 6-0.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adopting a resolution for the assessment of zoning administrative citations. Carried 6-0.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution for the assessment of rental housing administrative citations. Carried 6-0.

Moved by Council Member Oballa, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution for the assessment of storm water administrative citations. Carried 6-0.

A public hearing was held for the assessment of unpaid vacant property fees.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution for the assessment of unpaid vacant property fees. Carried 6-0.

A public hearing was held for assessment a senior deferral for sanitary sewer.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution for the assessment of a senior deferral for sanitary sewer. Carried 6-0.

A public hearing was held for the review of a five-year tax abatement requested by Lee and Joni Hansen. City Administrator Craig Clark stated the couple plans on building a home valued at approximately \$700,000 in NE Austin. He requested approval of the tax abatement.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving a five-year tax abatement for Lee and Joni Hansen. Carried 6-0.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated the City has approximately \$3.6 million in excess fund balance as of December 31, 2020. He stated this is due to CARES act funding and unspent budgeted funds. Staff and Council had debated using some of these funds to balance the 2022 budget but that would result in a higher percentage of tax levy in future years.

Mr. Dankert stated the funds are going to be used for one-time projects including \$1.5 million for a fire truck replacement, \$250,000 for Library renovations, \$80,000 for siding and windows at Ruby Rupner and other projects. Mr. Dankert stated after the project are funded then the fund balance will be in the acceptable range of 42-48%.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Oballa, approving budget adjustment number 5 – fund balance usage. Carried 6-0.

Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert stated the City received bids for the replacement and upgrade of the audio visual equipment in the Council Chambers. He stated the current equipment is over 10 years old, with the exception of the new microphones. The new setup will include drop down microphones, streaming content to YouTube, new cameras, tvs, monitors and electronic components. The new system should make broadcasting easier with less technical difficulties.

The City would like to award the contract to EPA Audio/Visual in the amount of \$135,341.54. They are not the lowest bidder on the project but the City recommends their contract because of the experience with the current setup, maintenance and trouble shooting policy and the City's excellent experience with them over the last 25 years.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, approving a contract with EPA Audio Visual for AV upgrades in the Council Chambers. Carried 6-0.

Police Chief David McKichan requested the Council approve a Toward Zero Deaths grant agreement in the amount of \$15,325 with the State of Minnesota.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Oballa, approving a Towards Zero Deaths grant agreement with the State of Minnesota. Carried 6-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang reviewed the City's draft ADA transition plan. He stated the City has adopted a schedule to make the right-of-way more accessible with the goal of being 80% compliant in 2050. He stated there is 125 miles of sidewalk in the community and 2,086 pedestrian ramps which are classified currently on their level of compliance. He stated the plan includes a public outreach group and website information. He stated the plan has been open for public comments for two weeks and has received no comments.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting an ADA Transition Plan. Carried.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the Council has discussed the 4th Street bridge replacement multiple times and recommended the single point bridge design at the September 20, 2021 work session.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, recommending the single point bridge design for the 4th Street NW bridge. Carried 5-1 with Council Member Postma voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, authorizing the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 1010 4th Avenue NW, Ruble Property. Carried.

REPORTS

Council Member Oballa thanked Kris Heichel for being an honorary Council Member.

Council Member Baskin noted the KSMQ groundbreaking on Thursday, October 7th. He also stated he will be serving on the LGA property tax committee.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Oballa, adjourning the meeting to October 18, 2021. Carried.

Adjourned: 5:50 p.m.

Approved: October 18, 2021

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____