

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
October 4, 2021
City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Jason Baskin, Michael Postma, Oballa Oballa, 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 PRESENT
ELECTRONICALLY: City Attorney Craig Byram, Parks and Recreation Director Kevin Nelson, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann and City Clerk Ann Kasel

OTHERS APPEARING
ELECTRONICALLY: Austin Daily Herald

Mayor King opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Item No. 1 – 2022 Fire Apparatus Purchase

Fire Chief Jim McCoy stated the Fire Department has an apparatus group to evaluate the needs of the Department and make recommendations for the operations of the department. He stated the group has recommended to replace unit 301 with a truck and trailer. The trailer will be designed with heat and air to remove fire victims and firefighters from the elements. This would be purchased in the 2022 CIP.

Also, the group recommended to trade engine 305 towards the purchase of a mini pumper. The mini-pumper has the same pumping capacity with half the replacement cost of a full-size engine and lower maintenance costs.

Chief McCoy requested Council permission to contract for the mini-pumper in 2021 to lock in a lower price but the funding would not come until 2022. He added that the last two purchases were done in this manner.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated there is \$470,000 in the 2022 budget for the purchase.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, recommending approval of the purchase of a mini-pumper fire apparatus for 2022 with a contract being signed in 2021. Carried.

The item will be on the October 18, 2021 Council Agenda.

Item No. 2 – EQ/Digester Cover Replacement Agreement

Public Works Director Steven Lang presented a proposed contract with Hormel Foods for the EQ/Digester Cover Replacement. The cover collapsed in January of 2021. The agreement would allocate 100% of the costs to Hormel Foods. The estimated cost of the project is \$1,575,000 and would be utilized after the scheduled Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrades.

He stated the bids for the project would be opened on November 4th and the final agreement would be on the November 18, 2021 Council agenda.

Council Member Poshusta asked how Hormel Foods pays for the project.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated Hormel either pays cash for the project or the City can bond for the project. Mr. Dankert added that the options will be presented to Hormel Foods.

The item will be placed on the November 15, 2021 Council Agenda for final approval.

Item No. 3 – Storm Water Utility Rates

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City established a storm water utility fee in 2003 to help fund existing stormwater programs and new mandates from the state and federal government. The rates were adjusted in 2012 and Mr. Lang stated it is appropriate for another rate adjustment.

He recommended a \$1 increase to the residential rate, to a total of \$5 for residential, and a \$6 per acre to the commercial rate. This would increase the yearly revenue from \$675,000 to \$800,000 and the increase would be effective on January 1st.

Council Member Baskin asked why the increase because it looks like an excess balance.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated there are other costs, including staffing, that are paid from those fees also.

Council Member Postma asked if it would make sense to do the increase incrementally instead of a larger increase.

Mr. Lang stated the same conversation occurred in 2012 but it is hard to recommend an increase when there is plenty of funds in the budget. So, the increases are taken as needed when there are projects identified.

Council Member Baskin asked why not do a \$1.50 for the increase to stay ahead.

Mr. Lang noted the comparison with other cities rates and the higher rates with the communities that experience flooding.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Fischer, recommending approval of a rate adjustment in the amount of \$1.50 for residential and to the storm water utility rates. Carried.

The rates would be set on the City's 2022 rate schedule.

Item No. 4 – 2022 Budget Discussion

None.

Item No 5 - Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark stated the City has received \$20 million in LOST funds since April of 2007.

He also stated the Velocity Group will be in town November 8-10th.

Item No. 5 – Open Discussion

None.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adjourning the meeting at 6:33 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk