

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
January 18, 2022
City Council Chambers

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

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

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

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald,

Mayor King opened the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Item No. 1 – 4th Street NW Traffic Discussion

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the Council recently discussed traffic on 4th Street NW and felt that the left turn merge onto 4th Street NW was the major traffic issue on the road. He stated that 4th Street NW is the busiest road in Austin. He reviewed many different options to improve traffic flow on the roadway. He recommended eliminating parking on the south side of 13th Avenue and stripe a dedicated turn lane.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Oballa, recommending eliminating parking on the south side of 13th Avenue and stripe a dedicated turn lane.

The item will be on a future Council meeting as part of the overall project. No additional Council action needed at this time.

Item No. 2 – 4th Street NW Roadway Design

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated when the 4th Street bridge is replaced by MnDOT, there is a section of road which the City will be responsible to replace. There are options for this including 1) using the MnDOT consultant to design the segment of road and include it in the overall project; 2) have the City design the plans and negotiate a cost with the bridge contractor

after the MnDOT project has been awarded; or 3) have the City design the work and bid the work separately.

It is likely that the first option will be the most expensive but Mr. Lang recommended going with that option due to the efficiency it will create and reducing the impact to the public and local businesses. The MnDOT contractor, SRF, has submitted an hourly cost of \$74,575.04 for the design services. The City would also be responsible for the reconstruction costs, which would be eligible for reimbursement from the State Aid Account.

Item No. 3 – Natural Gas Prepay Opportunity

Austin Utilities' General Manager Mark Niabur stated Austin Utilities has the opportunity to prepay for some of its natural gas purchases with Minnesota Municipal Gas Agency. He requested that the Council approve of the contract via ordinance.

Moved by Council Member , seconded by Council Member , recommending approval of Austin Utilities' natural gas prepay opportunity.

The item will be on the January 24, 2022 Council agenda.

Item No. 4 – Fitness Room Contribution

Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann stated the Police Department currently has a weight room that the department contributes to the upkeep and replacement of the equipment. The Fire Department also has a weight room which has outdated equipment. She proposed the City provide \$10,000 to each department for new equipment and maintenance.

Moved by Council Member , seconded by Council Member , recommending approval of \$10,000 for the Police Department exercise room and \$10,000 for the Fire Department exercise room with funding coming from 2022 contingency funds.

Item No. 5 – 2020 Census Redistricting

City Clerk Ann Kasel provided an update for the census redistricting process. She stated the census was completed in 2020 and the state must complete their redistricting by February 15, 2022. Then the City Council must take action to redistrict the City by March 29, 2022.

Austin's official population in the census was 26,174 and that must be divided as evenly as possible amongst the City's three wards. Ms. Kasel provided the proposed boundary lines. She noted that the City is still working with the County to finalize those numbers and she will bring back the final version in March.

For Council information only, no additional Council action needed.

Item No. 6

Moved by Council Member , seconded by Council Member , to close the meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05 Subd. 3 (3) to develop or consider offers or counteroffers for the purchase or sale of real property identified as 34.185.0421 at

See DVD of Closed Session

Item No. 7

Moved by Council Member , seconded by Council Member , to close the meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05 Subd. 3 (3) to develop or consider offers or counteroffers for the purchase or sale of real property identified as 08.026.0120 at

See DVD of Closed Session

Item No. 8 - Administrative Report

None

Item No. 9 – Open Discussion

None.

Moved by Council Member , seconded by Council Member , adjourning the meeting at p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk