

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
November 7, 2022
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Council Member Jason Baskin

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Park and Rec Director Dave Merrill, City Attorney Craig Byram, Library Director Julie Clinefelter, and City Clerk Ann Kasel

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, Gail Dennisen, Dr. Robert Clarke, Hormel Institute Staff, Laura Helle, Honorary Council Member Alexander Stoltz

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

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

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving Council minutes from October 17, 2022. Carried.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Robert Clarke thanked the City for 80 years of the support for the Hormel Institute and presented the Mayor with a piece of art from the Institute.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Claims:

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

Carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing was held for the assessment of sanitary sewer costs. City Clerk Ann Kasel stated the three property owners on the assessment roll signed waiver agreements and were mailed notice of the hearing.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution declaring the cost of the sanitary sewer assessments. Carried 6-0.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution adopting the sanitary sewer assessment roll. Carried 6-0.

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement application from New Horizon Homes. City Administrator Craig Clark stated the builder is proposing the construction of a property valued at \$395,000. The application is in conformance with the City's tax abatement policy.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving a five-year tax abatement application from New Horizon Homes. Carried 6-0.

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement application from Bigelow and Lennon Construction. City Administrator Craig Clark stated the builder is proposing the construction of a property valued at \$437,000. The application is in conformance with the City's tax abatement policy.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, approving a five year tax abatement application from New Horizon Homes. Carried 6-0.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving two full time tree trimmer positions. Carried.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert requested the Council adopt a resolution to decertify tax increment district number 11 effective December 29, 2022. He stated the tax increment financing obligations will be fulfilled by the end of 2022. He added that the Council recently approved the transfer up to \$548,465 from the district to be used for an affordable housing project.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution decertifying Tax Increment Financing (redevelopment) District No. 11. Carried 6-0.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert requested a change order in the amount of \$2,405 for additional lighting in the City Hall lighting replacement project.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution approving change order number 1 to the City Hall lighting replacement project. Carried 6-0.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution accepting donations to the City of Austin. Carried 6-0.

City Administrator Craig Clark requested the Council approve a contract with Flashing Thunder Fireworks for the 2023 Freedom Fest display.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution approving a contract with Flashing Thunder Fireworks in the amount of \$33,000. Carried 6-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated as part of the 4th Street NW bridge replacement project, approximately 250 feet of 4th Street NW will need to be replaced at the City's cost. The City desires to have that portion of 4th Street designed in conjunction with the overall project. He requested the Council approve a design services contract with SRF in the amount of \$74,283.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution approving a contract with SRF and MnDot for design services on 4th Street NW as part of the I90 corridor project. Carried 6-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang requested the Council approve an individual control mechanism agreement with LL Parks, LLC for their strong waste discharge. The agreement would be for three years and sets forth the limitations and conditions of sanitary sewer discharge.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution approving an individual control mechanism agreement with LL Parks, LLC. Carried 6-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City desires to participate in a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency voluntary program for per- and polyfluoroalkyl testing at the waste water treatment plant. Mr. Lang stated the MPCA will provide funding for the first two rounds of testing. He requested the Council approve a memorandum of agreement with the MPCA.

Council Member Baker asked if there are any businesses in Austin that may be producing the chemicals.

Mr. Lang stated there are businesses in Austin that do produce the chemical.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution

approving a memorandum of agreement with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Carried 6-0.

Library Director Julie Clinefelter requested the Council approve a contract with Armon Architecture for library construction services in the amount of \$21,500.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution approving a contract with Armon Architecture, Inc. for Library construction services. Carried 6-0.

Moved by Council Member Poshusta, seconded by Council Member Waller, granting a gambling premise permit for the Fraternal Order of the Eagles at the Windrift Lounge, LLC. Carried 6-0.

City Administrator Craig Clark presented the three proposed health insurance plans for 2023 through the new provider Medica. Two of the plans are representative of the City's current plans as required in the labor agreements and the third plan is a new option with a lower premium and higher deductible. He requested the Council approve the plans and adopt a resolution for non-bargaining employees along with MOU's for each bargaining group.

Mayor King allowed one representative from each bargaining group to make comment about the insurance.

Tom Schulte with the IAFF expressed his concerns about the City's process of the health insurance renewal and suggested the reallocated the funds from the HSA to lower the insurance premium. He stated that lower premiums are the key to getting more employees back on the insurance plan.

Holly Wallace with the AAO organization stated that the proposal as presented to the employees is unsatisfactory. She stated her group presented an amended MOA to the City.

Ernie Schlichter stated the cost to the employee for the insurance policy is too much and other surrounding communities pay 80% of the health insurance premium. He stated the insurance is greatly out of balance to the employee.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adopting a resolution approving 2023 City health insurance plan options. Carried 5-1 with Council Member Poshusta voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adopting a resolution approving employer contributions and plans for non-bargaining unit employees. Carried 5-1 with Council Member Poshusta voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution approving 2023 health insurance memorandum of agreement with Minnesota Public Employees Association (MNPEA). Carried 5-1 with Council Member Poshusta voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution approving 2023 health insurance memorandum of agreement with Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS). Carried 5-1 with Council Member Poshusta voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adopting a resolution approving 2023 health insurance memorandum of agreement with International Association of Firefighters (IAFF). Carried 5-1 with Council Member Poshusta voting nay.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution approving 2023 health insurance memorandum of agreement with Austin Associates Organization (AAO). Carried 5-1 with Council Member Poshusta voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution approving 2023 health insurance memorandum of agreement with Austin Employees Association (AEA). Carried 5-1 with Council Member Poshusta voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution approving 2023 health insurance memorandum of agreement with United Auto Workers, Local 867 – Street & Sewer. Carried 5-1 with Council Member Poshusta voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adopting a resolution approving 2023 health insurance memorandum of agreement with United Auto Workers, Local 867 – Waste Water Treatment Plant. Carried 5-1 with Council Member Poshusta voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution approving 2023 health insurance memorandum of agreement with United Auto Workers, Local 867 – Parks. Carried 5-1 with Council Member Poshusta voting nay.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, granting the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 302 4th Street SE, Johnson Property. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, granting the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 304 4th Street SE, Evergreen Ventures Property. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Fischer, granting the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 1200 3rd Avenue NE, Carlos Property. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, granting the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 911 13th Avenue NE, Walker Property. Carried.

REPORTS

Parks and Recreation Director David Merrill encouraged the Parks master plan survey closes on Thursday, November 10th. He also noted there has been some vandalism around the City in the parks.

Council Member Poshusta noted election day is November 8th and encouraged residents to vote.

Council Member Postma noted the City will host a junior championship golf event.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adjourning the meeting to November 21, 2022. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:06 p.m.

Approved: November 21, 2022

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____