

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
December 4, 2023
City Council Chambers

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Council Member Joyce Poshusta

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert and Police Chief David McKichan
Public Works Director Steven Lang, Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann and City Clerk Ann Kasel

APPEARING IN PERSON: Mark Nibaur, Austin Daily Herald

Mayor King opened the meeting at 5:58 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Agreement for Transfer of Service Territory

Austin Utilities Director Mark Nibaur stated Austin Utilities has come to an agreement with Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative for the transfer of service territory to Austin Utilities. The City Council must approve the agreement and then it will be filed with the Minnesota Public Utility Commission. He stated Austin Utilities will compensate Freeborn Mower over ten years for their loss of revenue.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, approving an agreement for an expansion of service territory for Austin Utilities with Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative. Carried.

The item will be on the December 18, 2023 Council Agenda.

Item No. 2 – Public Safety Aid Budget Adjustment

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated during the last legislative session \$210 million was approved for public safety aid with \$1,159,298 expected to come to the City of Austin. The Police Department has requested \$104,300 for new squad car cameras and the remainder of the funds would be deposited into the Fire Fleet fund to help pay for the \$1.6 million dollar fire truck in 2024. He stated if the Council agrees with that proposal then they would move \$725,000 out of the Fire Fleet Fund into the CIP Revolving Fund for other Council approved projects. He stated those changes would be on the next Council meeting.

Also in 2024, he proposed additional changes to the Fire Department finances by renaming the Fire Fleet Fund to the Fire Equipment Fund. He also would like to close the Fire PERA Fund and transfer the balance into the Fire Equipment Fund.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, approving transfers of funds relating to the Public Safety Aid funding. Carried.

The item will be on the December 18, 2023 Council Agenda.

Item No. 3 – Waste Water Treatment Plan Change Order Update

Public Works Director Steven Lang detailed the change orders to the Waste Water Treatment Plant project. He stated the total change orders will result in a \$357,398.75 cost increase to the domestic budget and a \$116,594.25 increase to the industrial budget. He stated the change orders have been approved by SEH and Hormel Foods.

Council Member Baker stated he would like more information on the \$186,000 Scada update.

Council Member Baskin asked where is the change order funded from.

Mr. Lang state existing funds in the WWTP budget would be used to cover the change orders and if those funds weren't sufficient then it could go on the PFA loan.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baker, approving change orders on the Waste Water Treatment Plant project. Carried.

The item will be on the December 18, 2023 Council agenda.

Item No. 4 – Administrative Report

None

Item No. 5 – Open Discussion

Council Member Helle requested the discussion questions for the Council listening sessions be resent to department heads.

Council Member-at-Large Austin stated he wished additional Council Members could attend the sessions. He noted the session with Park and Rec and Council was dubbed as "information gathering" and was not noticed.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adjourning the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk