

M I N U T E S  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
April 1, 2024  
5:30 PM  
Council Chambers

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Park and Rec Director Jason Sehon, Human Resources Director Tricia Wiechmann, and Library Director Julie Clinefelter, and City Clerk Brianne Wolf

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, KAUS Radio, Honorary Council Member Miguel Garate, Robert Sicora from the Sicora Consulting Group

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He stated that the audio and video system is down and they will record this and the IT department will upload the video to the internet at a later date.

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

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Baskin, approving Council minutes from March 18, 2024. Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Licenses:

Lodging Establishment: JP Jorgenson Realty LLC, 2406 10th Avenue SW  
Lodging Establishment: Charming Family Home, 806 9th Street SW  
Sign Installer: Reagan Outdoor of Rochester, Rochester, MN  
Mobile Business: La Borinqua, Albert Lea, MN  
Mobile Business: Classic Kitchen, Austin, MN  
Temporary Liquor: VFW Post 1216 on April 5 & 6, 2024  
Temporary Gambling (raffle): Marcusen Park Baseball Association on September 1, 2024  
Temporary Gambling (raffle): United Catholic Schools Foundation of Austin on June 21, 2024

Right of Way Contractor: Volt Electric, Austin, MN  
Tree Service: Ted Janning Tree Service, Blooming Prairie, MN

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of bills
- b. Financial Report.

Event Applications:

Stepping Out for Autism Walk, 208 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, April 21, 2024

Carried.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement hearing requested by Bigelow and Lennon Construction. They are proposing to build a single-family home at 1309 18<sup>th</sup> Street NE valued at approximately \$437,000. City Administrator Craig Clark stated the application is in conformance with the City’s policy for tax abatement.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving a five-year tax abatement for Bigelow and Lennon Construction. Carried 7-0.

**AWARDING BIDS**

Public Works Director Steven Lang spoke about the bids for 2024 Asphalt Street Reconstruction Projects and stated that ICON, LLC came in with the lowest bid.

<b><u>Contractor</u></b>	<b><u>Bid</u></b>
ICON, LLC	\$3,999,175.07
Ulland Bros, Inc.	\$4,081,180.59

Mr. Lang recommends that we award that bid to Ulland Brothers.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution awarding the bid for 2024 Asphalt Street Reconstruction Projects to ICON, LLC. Carried 7-0

**PETITIONS AND REQUESTS**

City Administrator Craig Clark introduced Robert Sicora from the Sicora Consulting Group. Mr. Sicora presented a PowerPoint about the proposal for the assessments on leadership and employee engagement.

Council Member Baker asked how this benefits the tax payer. Mr. Sicora stated when you look at excellence being the output, this methodology looks at this and creates efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr. Sicora went over the timeline for the upcoming activities planned. He stated participants would include the Sicora Leadership Team, the Senior Leadership Team, the Extended Leadership Team, and the Elected officials as needed. An employee focus group will also be included in parts of the process.

Mr. Sicora stated that information will be kept confidential and their participation rates are around 90%. The first phase of the process or “Discovery Phase” will run April through June and the second phase or “Delivery Phase” will run April through January. He went over the cost analysis and the program deposit is 50% of Phase 1 to initiate the services which would be \$26,120. Total cost would be \$137,400.

Mayor King thanked employees Sarah Steinhoff, Chad Heard, and Sam Schuweiler for their participation in selecting the consulting the group. He appreciates the employees and their work in this procedure and he is hopeful employees will trust this process.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adopting a resolution approving the agreement with Sicora Consulting. Carried 7-0

Director of Public Works Steven Lang spoke about the detours that will be coming up with the upcoming bridge closures. He stated that when the bridge over I-90 on HWY 105 or Oakland Ave West is under construction, HWY 105 traffic will be detoured north onto 14<sup>th</sup> St NW to access I-90. Mr. Lang stated that as a result of this, the State will reimburse the City for wear and tear on the local road way.

Mr. Lang requests that we approve the MnDot detour agreement and accept the payment in the amount of \$9,696.39.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution approving the HWY 105 Detour Agreement. Carried 7-0

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, to adopt a resolution accepting donations to the City of Austin. Carried 7-0

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, to grant the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 802 14<sup>th</sup> St NE, Serrano Property. Carried.

## REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Director of Public Works Steven Lang spoke about the I-90 and Oakland Avenue West bridge project and stated that construction will begin April 19<sup>th</sup> through August. Mr. Lang spoke about all of the other bridge projects that will take place over the upcoming years and let council know if they wanted updates, they could visit the MNDOT website to see all of this information and sign up for updates.

## COUNCIL REPORTS

Council Member Baskin stated that from a Port Authority standpoint there will be a press event at the State Capital tomorrow for the Bioimaging Center at the Hormel Institute. He stated that they will be speaking about the importance of this project, not only for Austin but for the State as well.

Council Member Postma stated that the Holiday Inn has rebranded as a DoubleTree and this will be a great asset to the community. He stated that tomorrow Discover Austin will be premiering Jim McGivern's Main Streets playing at the Paramount Theatre.

Council Member Helle stated that having a performance review is not a punishment and if people think this, that is a sign of a broken culture. She is very excited for the approved contract with the Sicora Consulting group and wants to thank the wellness committee for getting started even without a consulting team on board. She stated that a guide post for her is that we have to start talking and thinking and acting like we are a team. She wanted to affirm her commitment to working on this and taking the next step.

Mayor King stated to come out to the Paramount Theatre tomorrow to view the movie. He stated that the doors open at 5:30 p.m. Mayor King read off the April anniversary.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adjourning the meeting to April 15, 2024. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:26 p.m.

Approved: April 15, 2024

Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_

City Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_