

M I N U T E S
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
AUGUST 16, 2010
City Hall Conference Room
6:35 pm

PRESENT: Mayor Stiehm, Council Member-at-Large Anderson, Council Members Austin, McAlister, Martin, King, Clennon, and Pacholl.

ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Public Works Director Jon Erichson, Fire Chief Mickey Healey, Parks and Recreation Director Kim Underwood, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert, and City Administrator Jim Hurm.

ALSO PRESENT: Public, Judy Enright, Joe Fuhrman and Jacob Vela from the Welcome Center, Roger Boughton, Lisa Baudler and David Kallman from the Community Band, Sandy Forstner from Austin Chamber of Commerce, Austin Post Bulletin, and Austin Daily Herald.

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:35 pm.

Item #1. – Outside Agency – Welcome Center: Welcome Center Treasurer Joe Fuhrman noted one of the big accomplishments for this year was the receipt of a \$35,000 Great Lakes Foundation grant to take juniors and seniors from our high school to visit colleges and to help them study for the ACT test. A similar grant was received from the Blandin Foundation for those citizens of African descent for college entrance. Mr. Fuhrman stated the annual budget for the Welcome Center is \$160,000 and they certainly appreciate the city's support in this venture.

Jacob Vela, Executive Director of the Welcome Center stated they have helped 1,187 people in the past year, with 266 of those clients being new ones.

Mayor Stiehm questioned the breakdown of the different populations that the Welcome Center has served. Mr. Vela noted that in 2009 the number one population served was the Hispanic population at 947. The Sudanese population had 30 members serviced, while the Caucasian population came in third.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson questioned if they receive funding from the Initiative Foundation. Mr. Fuhrman stated they have received some support in the past, but nothing for the last fiscal year.

Council Member McAlister confirmed with Mr. Furhman that the grants that were mentioned earlier (Great Lakes Foundation and Blandin Foundation) are private dollars and are not government funded.

Council Member King asked what the Welcome Center does the most to help. Mr. Fuhrman stated mostly daily operations are steering people in the right direction.

Council Member Austin stated in 2010 the Welcome Center received \$5,000 but in 2011 the request is now \$10,000. Mr. Fuhrman stated two years ago the City gave more, and if we don't ask for the funding we certainly won't get it. Council Member Austin questioned why the City should support this program. Mr. Fuhrman stated the support the Welcome Center gives people is the same support you would have had growing up in Austin. We would like to be self-sufficient, but we will be asking for continued support for awhile. Council Member Austin questioned if the employee turnover has been remedied. Mr. Fuhrman was hopeful that things are good for awhile. As far as funding goes, Mr. Fuhrman also noted Mower County eliminated their funding some time ago, but said the City's continued funding would be the right thing to do.

This is for informational purposes only as the budget will be discussed later.

Item #2. – Outside Agency – Community Band: Roger Boughton thanked Council for their prior support of the program, noting this would not exist without the city funding. Mr. Boughton noted in 1985 the city resurrected the \$2,500 of funding for this program, and a few years ago the funding was reduced to the current level of \$2,052. The \$2,500 request for 2011 would allow us to purchase some new music for the program.

Lisa Baudler noted she has three family members that play in the Community Band, and they have a loyal following for their great summer concerts.

David Kallman noted he was a charter 1985 band member, and a previous band director in 1965 for this program.

Council Member Austin questioned if the \$2,500 request is the entire budget of the Community Band. Mr. Boughton stated it was, and the Community Band is made up of 25 to 35 citizens.

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Item #3. – Temporary position – Street Department: Mr. Erichson noted we are down two employees in the Street Department, one on an unresolved medical leave while the other spot is vacant due to the termination at the beginning of the year. In the interim, we hired three college students to help out, but they are now getting ready to go back to school. We would like to hire a temporary person to fill the medical leave vacancy.

Council Member Pacholl asked there would be enough time if official council action did not take place until the September 7 meeting. Mr. Erichson stated it would.

Ms. Wiechmann stated we would advertise for the position as full-time temporary.

After further discussion, motion by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King recommending to Council the hiring of a full-time temporary Street Department replacement. Carried 7-0. Item will be added to the next council agenda.

Item #4. – Timeline for Lansing Township sanitary sewer project: Mr. Erichson reviewed a timeline they are following for getting the sewer system in for the newly annexed Lansing

Township area. Mr. Erichson stated he and Steve Hovey from the City Attorney's office have been in the Twin Cities interviewing appraisers, a contract for which should be on the September 7 council agenda.

Council Member McAlister questioned how it would be determined if a system is compliant or not. Mr. Erichson stated they would have to rely on Mower County's card recordkeeping system, but it is safe to assume (according to Mower County's Angie Knish letter that went out to the affected area) that if the records indicate a system was put in between 1970-1980, the system is now non-compliant. Systems put in between 1980 and 1990 are questionable. Really, Mr. Erichson stated, only systems put in within the last five years would meet today's compliance standards. Mr. Erichson stated he does not intend on having official inspections, just a review of the Mower County records and dates.

Council Member Austin questioned if there were any objection withdrawals. Mr. Erichson stated one had come in today. Mr. Erichson also updated Council stating that the Hormel Foundation grant request, if funded, would only be offered to those that have an assessment on file in the area. Any objectors would not qualify for the proposed program.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson questioned if the property owner had to get their own documentation for this process. Mr. Erichson stated there is something in place through the County anytime property is sold that indicates that the septic system is compliant.

After further discussion, the consensus amongst the council was to mail out the proposed timeline to the 60 objectors so that they remain informed of the process.

Item #5. – Scheduling tour of 2010 projects and Public Works facility: Mr. Erichson questioned if Council wanted to tour the projects that are being done, as well as the Public Works facility that was supposed to be toured last year. Mayor Stiehm requested the tour be done on a non-council meeting night.

After further discussion, the tour was set for August 23 at 5:30 leaving from City Hall. Those council members that want to attend should show up then.

Item #6. – Budget discussion: Mr. Dankert noted the agency allocations are scheduled to be discussed tonight, so council decided to go through each one, as follows:

- Volunteer Recognition, \$800. Moved by Council Member Austin seconded by Council Member King to approve of the \$800 allocation. Carried 7-0.
- Human Rights Commission, \$3,500. Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson to approve of the \$3,500 allocation. Carried 7-0.
- Welcome Center, \$10,000 request. Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King to approve of \$5,000 for the Welcome Center. Carried 6-1. (Council Member Pacholl – Nay).
- Memorial Day wreath, \$150. Moved by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, seconded by Council Member King to approve of the \$150. Carried 7-0.
- 4th of July, \$6,000. Moved by Council Member Austin seconded by Council Member King to approve of the \$6,000 allocation. Carried 7-0.

- Community Band, \$2,500 request. After much discussion about this entity getting other grants besides the City of Austin, moved by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, seconded by Council Member Austin to approve \$1,000 for 2011. Carried 5-2. (Council Members Pacholl, King – Nay). Council Member King stated the extra \$1,000 is minuscule in the total picture here.
- Local Artist, \$500. Moved by Council Member Martin, seconded by Council Member King to reduce the funding to \$100. Carried 5-2. Council Member Clennon, Council Member-at-Large Anderson – Nay).
- Austin Symphony, \$2,500. Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin to approve the \$2,500 allocation. Carried 4-3. (Council Members McAlister, Pacholl, Martin – Nay).
- Christmas in the City, \$855. Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson to approve the \$855 allocation. Carried 7-0.
- Employee Appreciation/Wellness Program, \$1,500. Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King to approve the \$1,500 allocation. Carried 7-0.
- Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, \$46,800 estimation. Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King to approve the \$46,800 allocation. Carried 6-1. (Council Member Clennon – Nay).
- League of Minnesota Cities, \$15,625 estimation. Moved by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, seconded by Council Member Austin to approve the \$15,625 allocation. Carried 7-0.
- KSMQ, \$15,000 requested allocation. Moved by Council Member McAlister, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson to approve the original \$12,500 budget. Carried 7-0.

Mr. Dankert briefly discussed the proposed 2011 budget noting we had some discussions with Council Member Clennon on a question or two, and other council members had stopped in with questions, but nothing officially was sent to us to request a detailed discussion on any budgeted items. Furthermore there will be some time for further budget discussions up to our Truth In Taxation meeting date, so changes can be made to the budget, but the tax levy may not be increased.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson questioned why the flowers budget was \$30,000 and not the \$10,000 she had thought. Mr. Dankert clarified that Council Member-at-Large Anderson was looking at the budgeted revenues of \$30,000 from contributions (page 19 of the budget book), but there is \$40,000 of expenditure budget (on page 21 of the budget book). The net between the two is our \$10,000 subsidy/support. However, Mr. Dankert stated based on the contribution levels of 2010, this expenditure (and revenue) amount will need to be reduced as the \$30,000 contribution level was not met for 2010.

Council Member Pacholl questioned the Mill Pond Boat expenditures. Mr. Hurm and Ms. Underwood noted this is balanced with the revenue. Additionally, staff is no longer filling the boat up with gas on our time. However, staff is still getting the boat into and out of the water each season.

In conclusion Mr. Dankert noted the \$1,452 of reductions council made tonight to outside agencies will be added to the Contingency line item to balance out the budget. Mr. Dankert reiterated that additional changes will be discussed as they are made from September to

December, so there is still time to alter the proposed budget. Mr. Dankert asked council again if there was something else within the budget they would like to further discuss, otherwise the amounts as proposed would stick for the preliminary amounts for the September 7 council meeting. Nothing noted by council.

Council Member Austin stated he wanted to thank all of the staff for putting together a comprehensive balanced budget within the parameters given. Council Member Austin noted the documents put forth are easy to understand and very comprehensive showing all of the detail if any council member wants to see some history. Council Member King and Mayor Stiehm noted their agreement with Council Member Austin.

Item #7. – Council goals review: Mr. Hurm reviewed the council goals, as follows:

- LGA – Reductions Due To Deficit – the 0% pay increases have been completed for one bargaining unit, and others are expected to be on the same level. Prioritizing city services was decided by council not to do, and reducing mandates by the State of Minnesota is part of the Leader's Group discussions.
- Flood Mitigation – the look and description of the berm have been discussed by Council, and we believe to be in the final weeks of our grant review by the EDA. The Cedar River Watershed was also discussed as part of this at the last council work session.
- Economic Development – The DCA and Craig Hoium are always working on marketing the Cook Farm site. The downtown burned out site still has no resolution. We have also been working on the comprehensive plan to reduce the needed maintenance of flood buyout lands.
- Green Initiative – We are not doing so well here, as more involvement from Mower County may be needed to advance some recycling initiatives. Bike corridors and racks have been discussed, with some new bike racks being ordered through a grant.
- Establish a Regional Development Commission – The SEMLM seems very impressed with what we have in Austin.

Item #8. - Administrators Report: None.

Item #9. Matters In Hand: None.

Item #10. Open Discussion: Mayor Stiehm stated he is still working on a rental ordinance as developing the needs are being reviewed right now.

Council Member King stated the open house at the new justice center is scheduled for September 11 and September 13.

Council Member Clennon updated Council on her attendance at the League of Minnesota Cities' Policy Services Committee noting they are looking at some of the current laws. Council Member McAlister requested the comp worth law be added to the list for review by the committee.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson stated she heard a citizen fell on our bike trail, but could not really tell the ambulance where they were on the trail system. Mr. Hurm stated mileage markers are being ordered/installed on the bike trails system.

Adjournment: Motion by Council Member McAlister, seconded by Council Member Austin, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Dankert