

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
August 6, 2012
City Hall Conference Room

PRESENT: Mayor Stiehm, Council Member-at-Large Janet Anderson, Council Members Jeff Austin, Roger Boughton, Brian McAlister, Judy Enright, and Marian Clennon.

ABSENT: Council Member King.

STAFF PRESENT: Fire Chief Mickey Healey, Nature Center Director Larry Dolphin, Police Chief Brian Krueger, Public Works Director Jon Erichson, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, and City Administrator Jim Hurm.

ALSO PRESENT: Sandy Forstner (Chamber of Commerce), Malcolm McDonald (Council Member candidate), Joey Miller (Mayoral Candidate), John O'Rourke (Hormel Foundation), Public, Austin Post Bulletin, and Austin Daily Herald.

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Item No. 1a. Outside organizations – request for funding – Community Band– Council Member Boughton noted as a member of the Community Band they are asking once again for \$1,000 from the City of Austin to continue their performances. This is in addition to funding Freedom Fest gives us the band for playing at the 4th of July ceremonies.

Item No. 1b. Outside organizations – request for funding – Chamber of Commerce– Mr. Forstner noted their request is the same as the past with \$855 going to Christmas in the City and another \$6,000 that goes towards the fireworks on the 4th of July. Additionally, Mr. Forstner noted his appreciation for the help of the different departments of the city during the events.

Item No. 1c-1e. Outside organizations – request for funding – Welcome Center/KSMQ/Human Rights– Mr. Hurm noted these three groups have been invited to this work session or the next one to present their funding requests. As of now the proposed budget includes the same funding allocation as was given for 2012.

Item No. 2. Phone Bid - Mr. Dankert noted the city has \$50,000 allocated to replace the current telephone system at city hall, the Library, Parks and Recreation, and the Fire Department. Mr. Dankert noted we will be presenting bids for the monthly service directly to Council at the August 20 council meeting, but in correlation with that we have received three bids for new phone equipment at the above mentioned departments. Mr. Dankert noted the telephone quotes directly from Ideacom and Five Star Technologies are only part of the installation costs, as fiber installation, and terminating the ends at the Library are in addition to the bids. Mr. Dankert noted we received the following bids:

- Five Star Technologies \$36,327.18 for primarily digital phones
- Ideacom = \$46,775.36 (plus tax) for an IP phone system
- Ideacom = \$38,994 (plus tax) for a digital phone system

Mr. Dankert noted the IP phones are a newer and “better” technology, but when you add in our other installation costs this system would be over our \$50,000 budget. Mr. Dankert noted the Five Star Technologies after all installation and a \$5,000 contingency balance would still come in under the \$50,000 budget and recommended approval of such. Mr. Dankert stated these digital phones should last a minimum of 15 years, like the current system has lasted.

Council Member Enright stated the IP phones are pretty expensive and for the most part, people cannot even use them to their full capabilities.

After further discussion motion by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member Boughton to recommend to council the bid from Five Star Technologies for the phone equipment bid. Carried 6-0. Item will be added to the next council agenda.

Item #3. Amendment to Comprehensive Plan future land use map – Mr. Hoium reviewed our current land use maps noting there has been a request to change the land use of two parcels that are currently west of the Walgreens Drug Store. One of the parcels is the former Comforcare land and the other is the current AMC West facility. The request for the Planning Commission is to amend this land use to be an arterial commercial area as there is high traffic count on this street, as there may be a strip mall development looking at the area.

Council Member Boughton questioned what the neighbors think of this proposal. Mr. Hoium stated the neighbors were just notified of the Planning Commission hearing on the issue.

Mr. Hoium stated this is for informational purposes to the city council right now, as the Planning Commission will have to hear the request first, but it then could go onto the August 20 city council meeting.

Item No. 4. – Review Individual Control Mechanism agreements – Mr. Erichson discussed some of our current Individual Control Mechanisms (ICM) as these impact our permitting process at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). Mr. Erichson stated we currently divert waste from the Industrial side of the WWTP to the Domestic side during peak flows, and we bill Hormel Foods Corporation extra for this. We are now being required to create a new agreement as part of the permitting process, with the new agreement being brought back to council later in 2012 for their review.

Council Member Enright asked if Hormel has changed some internal procedures so we don’t have to treat all of the extra waste. Mr. Erichson stated yes, they have been doing some things, including studying if it is better for us to treat the waste or them. Mr. Erichson stated ideally Hormel may want us to treat their waste, and then pay for it.

This is for informational purposes only at this point.

Item No. 5. – Hormel Foundation grants – discussion and ranking – Mr. Hurm requested that council rank the Hormel Foundation grant requests, and then he will add Steve King’s priority before he emails the results out to council (Council Member King’s ranking is included below).

John O’Rourke represents the City of Austin on the Hormel Foundation Board and noted that in 2012 \$5.1 million was allocated out, with 51% of this going to the Hormel Institute. 2013 is expecting the same results as far as funding availability, with the City of Austin receiving \$283,000 for the 2012 funding year.

Council Member Clennon questioned why the Army Corps of Engineers won’t help with the Cedar River dam. Mr. Erichson stated it would not qualify for their funding. We are proposing to create a portage and fix the falling wall as this is a trail head.

		Council Members								Total
		BM	J AUS	SK	JA	RB	JE	MC	TS	
a.	One-card feasibility	1	2	9	3	1	1	14	13	44
b.	Bike safety helmet program	8	10	1	2	2	4	13	7	47
c.	Cedar River Mill Pond dam enhancement	7	11	14	8	12	12	5	12	81
d.	City website redesign	6	1	2	7	7	13	1	5	42
e.	Commercial/retail economic development fund	11	9	10	6	4	9	2	11	62
f.	Fire prevention education	10	7	3	10	5	7	12	10	64
g.	Main Street project	12	6	12	9	9	10	8	9	75
h.	Mill Pond fountain	4	12	11	5	11	11	3	6	63
i.	Nature Center educational program	5	13	6	13	8	8	11	2	66
j.	Nature Center pedestrian trail	2	8	7	4	10	14	7	4	56
k.	Police medical bags	13	5	5	11	14	5	4	1	58
l.	Police security camera program for downtown	9	4	13	12	3	2	6	14	63
m.	Library summer reading program	14	14	8	14	13	6	10	8	87
n.	Ruby Rupner tables and chairs	3	3	4	1	6	3	9	3	32

Item No. 6. – Preliminary budget review – Mr. Dankert discussed the cover memo located on pages 1-4 of the budget booklet. Mr. Dankert noted council gave staff direction to increase the levy a maximum of 4% from the current levy and to start the process by assuming all of the projects we fund in 2012 will continue into 2013. Mr. Dankert noted the budget has been balanced based on a preliminary tax levy increase of 3.14% to \$4,100,000. Mr. Dankert noted that after September 15 the tax levy cannot be increased, but the budget could be increased with another funding source other than taxes. Mr. Dankert briefly discussed the other agencies we fund that are also included in the discussion at tonight’s work session. Mr. Dankert noted there were two staffing level requests that are not included in the 2013 budget for which council will need to review, as follows:

- Park and Recreation – Fill the administration position with an employee instead of hiring temporary personnel through a temp agency. The additional cost is \$30,000.
- Zoning Administration – hire a new-twenty-hour per week employee to handle the number of zoning violations and complaints. Additional estimated cost is \$30,000.

Mr. Dankert noted pages 17-196 are the departmental line item budgets and pages 197-208 include the capital outlay requested. Mr. Dankert went through the capital outlay requests in each fund.

Council Member Enright noted her support for adding the two requested positions to be funded with a tax levy increase of \$60,000 (another 1.5%) for 2013, noting that the city is growing and we need more staff to handle the growing issues. Additionally, Council Member Enright noted support for hiring the Storm Water Utility District employee that was discussed during the budget discussions last year.

Council Member Boughton questioned what would be cut to pay for the two new employees. Council Member Enright stated she would not cut anything as citizens are clamoring for the services; she would raise the tax levy. Council Member Enright noted she deals with this every day at Riverland College noting the cost of business is only increasing. Council Member Boughton questioned why this would be done this year as over 50 businesses appealed their valuation to Mower County, we had a 13% increase for 2012, and our LGA probably won't change anytime soon. Council Member Enright stated we have to run the city to attract new businesses and citizens into our community and we are elected to take care of this town. Council Member Enright noted her support for an additional 1.5% tax levy increase above the 3.14% as is being proposed.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson stated that as the city grows, these are real problems and we need real people to support and address the issues. Council Member-at-Large Anderson noted her support for Council Member Enright's 1.5% additional tax levy increase.

Council Member McAlister stated he struggles with the zoning issues, and questions how authoritative we want to be on pools and junk. He suggested enlisting the Police and Fire Departments to once a month go around town and turn in suspect properties.

Council Member McAlister stated we could eliminate funding for every outside organization and save \$23,000 right away. The Chamber of Commerce's \$6,000 request for the 4th of July is the only economic development request that he would support.

Council Member Enright stated the website is also ugly and needs to change. If the Hormel Foundation does not approve this request Council Member Enright stated she wanted this also put into the 2013 budget.

Council Member Clennon stated we need downtown bathrooms with the activities that are now going on in the area. Mr. Erichson stated we are in the process of planning on tearing the ones down that we have as it would be expensive to repair and the annual operating costs can exceed

\$20,000 every year. Mayor Stiehm requested that Mr. Hurm touch base with the downtown associations and gauge their support for the bathroom facilities.

Mr. Dankert noted we are still working with estimates from Mower County, so some items may change a little to balance the budget out. Mr. Dankert requested that council come back for the August 20 work session and be prepared to discuss a tax levy and budget that needs to be adopted at the September 4 city council meeting.

Item No. 7. – LMC Conference follow-up discussions – Council Member-at-Large Anderson discussed the sessions she attended including the city’s website being an asset and the importance of community engagement. Additionally, Council Member-at-Large Anderson stated LED lights and their feasibility should be studied again.

Item No. 8. – Administrative Report – None.

Item No. 9a. Open Discussion – Local Purchasing Policy – Council Member Enright stated the school district just adopted a policy promoted by the Chamber of Commerce which encourages departments to buy local if possible. Mr. Dankert noted all departments try to buy local as much as possible without having formal policies on the books.

Item No. 9b. Open Discussion – Detour – Council Member-at-Large Anderson stated she has been receiving some complaints about the detour around 11th Street and 11th Avenue noting trucks are hitting tree branches on 8th Street and 8th Avenue because of the Walgreen’s street closure. Council Member-at-Large Anderson stated she would contact those citizens that have complained to see specifically what their issues are.

Item No. 10. Matters In Hand – No discussion.

Motion by Council Member Austin seconded by Council Member Enright to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Dankert