

M I N U T E S
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
September 16, 2013
City Hall Conference Room

PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Stiehm, Council Members Roger Boughton, Jeremy Carolan, Steve King, Michael Jordal, Judy Enright, Jeff Austin and Council Member-at-Large Janet Anderson

ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, City Administrator Jim Hurm, Police Chief Brian Krueger, Park and Recreation Director Kim Underwood and City Clerk Ann Dunlap

ALSO PRESENT: Austin Daily Herald

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

Item No. 1. Five Year Capital Improvement Plan

Mr. Dankert began the discussion on the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) stating we are proposing to spend \$100 million over the next five years on capital projects in the City of Austin. The purpose of the work session was to review and ask questions about any of the proposed items. Then the Council will approve the document in December 2013 which authorizes the staff to purchase the 2014 items that are indicated in the CIP. For years 2015 and beyond, the document serves as a guide for the future but is subject to change as needs change.

Pages 5-8 - Police Chief Krueger discussed the Police Department and noted that there are two police squad cars budgeted for 2014 and 2015. This is down from three cars per year in the past few years. There are no unmarked cars or CSO vehicles budgeted for 2014 but they will be needed in the upcoming years. He reported that the Law Enforcement Center remodel is within budget and some of that additional money may get used up in LEC parking lot project. The animal shelter plans are getting close to completion and Chief Krueger is working with Steven Lang and Craig Hoium to keep that process moving forward. The Chief also reported that the contract with Law Enforcement Technology Group (LETG) was approved at the Council meeting earlier in the evening. The cost for the system came in under the \$225,000 that is currently budgeted in the CIP for 2014. Finally, the Armer 800 MHZ tower for transmitting police, ambulance and fire radios will need to be operational by 2016. The proposed KSMQ site West of town had been deemed to be out of range for the radios to properly work downtown in certain concrete buildings. It is a goal of the City to partner with Austin Utilities and/or KSMQ for a joint tower in a central Austin location to be determined at a future date.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson questioned the height of the proposed Armer 800 MHZ tower. Chief Krueger stated that it is approximately 180 feet. Council Member Carolan added that the fire department radios do not work properly now and this new system is a much needed upgrade.

Council Member Carolan also questioned the life of the squad cars and if they are having mechanical issues at 100,000 miles. Chief Krueger stated that the Crown Victorias had problems at that point in their life. The newer squad cars are Ford Tauruses but do not have that many miles on them yet.

Mayor Stiehm questioned if the detectives take the unmarked squad cars home. If they don't they should as that would alleviate some of the parking issues in the LEC lot. Chief Krueger stated that the Detectives take their car home when on duty. No unmarked cars are being replaced this year and the unmarked cars have a 10-12 year life span.

Pages 9-10 – Mr. Dankert reported on the Fire Department CIP items in the absence of a fire chief. There are currently no items being funded in 2014 for the Fire Department because the City would like to wait until the new fire chief takes over to assess the greatest needs of the department. The concrete replacement, replacement of some station furnishings and rural tanker replacement are all scheduled for 2015; a utility fire truck is proposed for 2016; and the replacement of a fire engine at a cost of \$450,000 is scheduled for 2018. The tanker replacement may need to be purchased sooner as the tanker has been in need of some repairs.

Council Member Carolan added that the tanker is a 1985 GMC that was converted from a milk truck. The transmission is wearing out, the power steering is out, the tank was leaking and there are no baffles in it. This tanker is primarily used for rural mutual aid fires in Austin and Lansing Township where water needs to be brought to locations where there are no fire hydrants. Its replacement was originally scheduled for the 2012 budget but it has been extended.

Mr. Dankert added the Council may want to consider moving up the date of replacement and there is enough money to be able to do so. Council Member Enright added that the City should wait for the new chief but the tanker should be replaced if the old one fails prior to that time.

Page 11 – Mr. Dankert presented on the Library's portion of the CIP. The library has minimal capital improvement needs for the next few years. The items identified are computers and tables/chairs in 2014 and interior painting in 2017.

Council Member Enright noted that an energy audit is currently being done on the building and there may be some additional needs based on the results of that audit.

Page 12 – Ms. Underwood stated the Nature Center asks for most of their capital improvements though the Hormel Foundation or the Friends of the Hormel Nature Center. A new Visitor Center display is proposed for 2016 at an estimated cost of \$75,000.

Steven Lang added that due to the flight pattern for the airport, some of the buildings currently located at the Nature Center are non-compliant and would not be able to be rebuilt in the same place.

Pages 14-16 – Mr. Dankert discussed Administration stating that funds are being budgeted for new chairs, carpet replacement, public works equipment, a new server and computers. Each year \$20,000 is set aside for computers and associated equipment. The computers are rotated from high end users to lower end users and then to the Youth Activity Center. The pay plan review has been included in the 2015 budget, a state mandated Comprehensive Plan update in 2014/2015 and a new mailing machine in the 2018 budget.

Also planned for 2014 is a replacement. This server supports all of the data for the financial records for the City.

Council Member Carolan questioned the server replacement and if there was a more cost effective way to store the data. Mr. Dankert replied he had contacted LOGIS about doing off-site storage at the LOGIS facility in Golden Valley but it was determined that the connection would not be reliable to adequately meet the City's needs.

Pages 17-22 – Steven Lang reviewed the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) noting the digester repairs and upgrades scheduled for 2014 and 2015. The EQ Digester Overflow & Splitter Box Repair in the amount of \$200,000 scheduled for 2014 and the Sludge Storage Building Expansion in the amount of \$2,000,000 scheduled for 2015 may be modified or eliminated due to Hormel Foods current 25 million dollar project that will improve waste quality from their facility. The WWTP is an older facility and continual upgrades are needed to keep it flowing smoothly.

Pages 23-25 – Steven Lang presented on the proposed improvements to the Central Garage. A wash bay was originally included in the plan for the Central Garage but was deleted for budgetary reasons. The wash bay is now being proposed for 2014 at an estimated cost of \$300,000. City vehicles are exposed to very corrosive agents and the proper cleaning will add to vehicle life expectancy. Also in 2014, \$20,000 is budgeted for painting the trusses of the Central Garage as they are also exposed to a corrosive environment. There are also various vehicles being replaced as need. The older vehicles get rolled down from supervisors to the crew and the vehicle causing the most problems gets sold from the fleet.

Pages 26-27 – Steven Lang stated the Waste Transfer Station is in need to some repairs over the next few years including office and bathroom upgrades in 2014, pavement upgrades in 2015, and a new loading dock in 2016. The user fees cover the cost of the operations and capital replacement.

Pages 28-30 – Steven Lang stated the airport has been upgraded recently so most of the capital improvement items are maintenance issues. The items for the 2014 budget are a fuel tank upgrade in the amount of \$30,000 and an airport apron and taxiway sealing for the 2015 budget. An upgrade to the city hangar has been proposed for 2018 at a cost of \$50,000.

Pages 31-33 - Steven Lang reviewed the non-MSA streets, noting that these are not supported by the state gas tax. These are local projects paid for with local tax dollars and assessments in order to fund the construction. Each year the street department looks at the proposed streets to see if they need to be reprioritized based on deterioration. In 2014 1.2 million dollars in projects are scheduled.

Pages 34-36 – Steven Lang discussed the MSA streets that are funded with approximately \$1 million of state gas tax money each year. The City assesses all of these property owners under the same assessment policy as non-MSA residents. This assessment policy eliminates the favoritism for one street of homeowners versus another.

Council Member-at-Large Anderson questioned the progress of the MN Department of Transportation's discussions with Vision 2020 in regard to the entry bridge design into the City

and if the City would be involved in that process. Mr. Lang replied that the City is involved in that process and will also act as the financial agent for the process. The CIP may be amended to include this additional project once it is progressing through MN Dot.

Pages 37-39 – Steven Lang discussed the upcoming trail projects including the East Side Lake Bridge Trail and the Main Street Connection (Wildwood Park to Mill Pond) that are both indentified for 2014. There are seven additional trails slated for the City of Austin through 2018.

Council Member Enright noted the Riverland Trail and suggested that if it is scheduled to be completed in 2016, the negotiations with the State of Minnesota should begin soon.

Pages 40-44 – Steven Lang noted the Sanitary Sewer capital improvement plans. Each year through 2018 the following funds are allocated: \$25,000 for manhole replacements; \$50,000 for inspection of all City mains and inspection of all private lines and plumbing; and \$150,000 for replacement of mains with street construction projects.

Another notable project is the NW Austin Township Annexation Area 1. This project is scheduled for 2014 and would extend sanitary sewer to 25 parcels immediately adjacent to Austin on 31st Street NW at a cost of \$700,000.

Pages 45-47 – Steven Lang noted Miscellaneous Street projects scheduled for 2014 including Street Lights on Oakland Place SE, Street Light Conversion and Downtown Plaza Revitalization. There are also additional lighting projects scheduled through 2018.

Pages 48-52 – Steven Lang discussed the items under Miscellaneous Other Projects including alley repairs. The majority of the City's alleys need to be reconstructed as they have only been maintained through the years. Alleys are paid out of capital improvements instead of special assessments. It is suggested that in order to preserve the reconstructed alleys a policy should be adopted that garbage trucks cannot use the alley ways for residential or commercial garbage pickup. This would prevent wear on the alley ways by eliminating heavy truck traffic. Sidewalk reconstruction is also scheduled on a yearly basis.

Riverside Arena is also scheduled for significant upgrades. It was constructed in 1973 and much of the heating and cooling system is original. This year, with the recent high temperatures, it was very difficult to make ice for the Bruins in August. The estimated cost for this project is \$1 million dollars. Additionally, there are other Riverside and Packer Arena improvements scheduled including upgrades to bathrooms, doors and other essential equipment.

Pages 53-57 - Ms. Underwood reviewed the Park and Recreation requests specifically noting the pool upgrades. The pool bottom is scheduled to be repainted in 2014 at a cost of \$5,000; the diving well heater replacement is also scheduled for 2014 at a cost of \$35,000; and the pool diving well climbing wall was requested for 2014 via a Hormel Foundation Grant. The Murphy Creek Subdivision has requested a basketball pad and hoops which is proposed for 2015 at a cost of \$20,000.

The Park and Rec equipment fleet is also older and various purchases of vehicles and equipment are scheduled over the next five years.

Pages 58-61 - Steven Lang discussed the storm water utility district noting that there are various projects scheduled over the next five years to the current system. There have been drainage issues identified by the Hormel Institute, Ellis ditch area and 10th Drive SE that will be addressed through these projects.

Page 62 – Mr. Dankert presented the purchase of a new air conditioner at the Senior Center in 2015. This item has been requested through the Hormel Foundation but is scheduled in the budget in case it is not funded by the Foundation.

Page 63-64 Steven Lang presented on the City's Flood Mitigation efforts. The North Main Flood Project Phases 3-7 bid will be awarded on September 18, 2013 at a special City Council Meeting. The completion date for this project is July 1, 2015. In addition, the Turtle Creek area is slated for acquisition and structural work.

Alley way restrictions on garbage trucks will be discussed at a future work session and placed on the Pending and Potential Work Session list.

The Capital Improvement Plan will be voted on at the December 16, 2013 City Council meeting.

Item No. 2. Administrative Report

No discussion.

Item No. 3. Open Discussion

Council Member-at-Large Anderson presented additional information on the League of Minnesota Cities training offered to City service groups. It would be an estimated cost of \$545-\$875 based on two people coming down to speak to services groups.

Motion by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, seconded by Council Member Boughton to fund the League of Minnesota Cities training for service groups in Austin. Vote: 3-4 Motion failed with Council Members Jordal, Carolan, King and Austin voting nay.

No further action needed.

Council Member King would like to discuss the possibility of a rental ordinance by January 2014. The item will be placed on the Pending and Potential Work Session list.

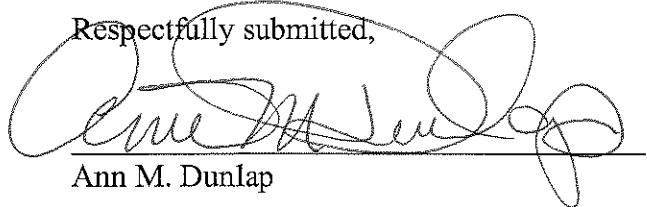
Council Member-at-Large Anderson would like to revisit the ordinance prohibiting signage that does not face a right of way. There were two sign appeals at the Council meeting earlier in the evening. The item will be placed on the Pending and Potential Work Session list.

Item No. 4 Matters at Hand –

No discussion.

Motion by Council Member Austin seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann M. Dunlap". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath it.

Ann M. Dunlap