

M I N U T E S
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
December 2, 2013
City Hall Conference Room

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

ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang and City Clerk Ann Dunlap

ALSO PRESENT: Austin Daily Herald

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Review and Discuss Waste Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Replacement

Public Works Director Steven Lang presented on the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) Superintendent replacement plan. The Waste Water Treatment Plant is the single largest asset of the City with a replacement value of \$75-100 million dollars. It is operated by 17 employees and has an annual budget of \$4.5 million dollars.

The domestic plant was built in 1925, has had various upgrades through the years and serves over 9,000 households. There are over 100 miles of sanitary sewers and 20 lift stations that convey an average of 4 million gallons of waste water to the domestic plant every day.

The industrial plant was built in 1960 and has also had various upgrades. That plant serves 2.2 million gallons per day created by Hormel Foods.

The plant is highly regulated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and due to the complex treatment process, having a solid management team is very important. The current WWTP superintendent, Jim Samuel, has been with the City for 40 years and announced he is retiring at the end of February 2014.

As part of succession planning, Chad Heard was promoted to Operations Supervisor in January 2013. Chad has been with the City for 12 years and has completed the necessary schooling to hold a Class A license, which is required for the WWTP. He has also shadowed Jim Samuel for the last year and it is recommended that Chad be promoted to the Superintendent position upon Jim's retirement.

That would create an opening for the Operations Supervisor which Norb Eggert, currently an environmental technician, is an excellent fit for. He has worked for the City of 23 years and also works with the Waltham treatment ponds. He has managed the biosolids applications program for the past 8 years and it is recommended Norb be promoted to Operations Supervisor.

That additional promotion would create an opening for environmental technician and that position would be advertised for.

Steven Lang also provided a copy of the Public Works employee chart and highlighted that by promoting Chad to Operations Superintendent it would surround him with experienced individuals in the WWTP structure.

Council Member Boughton questioned if the City needed to advertise for these positions. Steven Lang replied that they did not need to do so. Promoting from within is an asset in this case because of the specialized positions at the WWTP.

Council Member Enright questioned if the unions would object to the promotions and if these positions had probationary periods. Steven Lang stated the union would not object to this process and that there is a 6 month probationary period with each position.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, to promote Chad Heard to Superintendent and Norb Eggert to Operations Supervisor of the Waste Water Treatment Plant effective March 3, 2014.

The matter will be placed on the December 16, 2013 Council meeting.

Item No. 2 – Setting time for December 16, 2013 Law Enforcement Tour

The Law Enforcement Center remodel has been completed and Police Chief Krueger has invited the Council for a tour on December 16, 2013.

The tour will be at 4:30 p.m. and take approximately 30 minutes. Council Members King and Enright will plan on being at the Conversations with the Council at 5:00 as they have already toured the building. The remaining Council Members will come immediately after the tour.

Item No. 3 – Administrative Report

None.

Item No. 4 – Open Discussion – New Topics from Conversations with the Council

Ralph Peters attended the Conversations with the Council and requested a pedestrian crosswalk sign by the YMCA as this is a dangerous intersection. Steven Lang is going to look into purchasing a sign for that area.

Item No. 5 – Open Discussion-Fire Chief

Council Member Boughton requested an update on the hiring of the fire chief. Mayor Stiehm stated all the required testing has been completed and the City is waiting on final acceptance from James McCoy. It is anticipated that he will start in January 2014.

Item No. 6 – Open Discussion-LEC Dispatcher

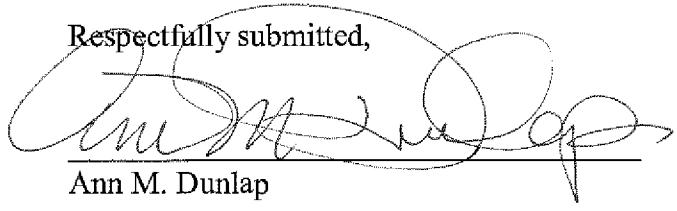
Council Member-at-Large Anderson questioned a memo provided by the City Administrator regarding the hiring of an additional part time dispatcher at the County.

Mayor Stiehm stated the County is planning on hiring an additional another half time dispatcher to supplement the current staff.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert added dispatch has had staffing issues due to leaves of absences for multiple employees the same time. The City would pay half the cost of the new dispatcher which is currently part of the operating budget. The Council has no say over hiring and firing at the County and therefore no Council action is needed on this matter.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King, to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Ann M. Dunlap