

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
January 20, 2015
City Hall Conference Room

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

ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang and City Clerk Ann Kasel

ALSO PRESENT: Austin Daily Herald, Steve Kime, Mark Nibaur, Post Bulletin, David Krenz, John Haymond, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Mower County Historical Society Update

John Haymond the executive director of the Mower County Historical Society gave an overview and introduction to the Historical Society. The Society is a non-profit entity with a paid staff of three individuals. They are trying to increase their standards to the national level to obtain a higher status and additional funds. They are also trying to reach out to outlying areas of Mower County. They offer a variety of programs throughout the year. The Society has the goal of building and bathroom upgrades for 2015. They are also looking for volunteers and memberships.

For informational purposes only, no Council action required at this time.

Item No. 2 – Vision 2020 Trail Bike/Walk Request

Public Works Director Steven Lang and Steve Kime, the Vision 2020 Bike-Walk Committee Chair, presented a request for the remaining \$7,300 for the funds allocated for Vision 2020 in 2014 be carried over into 2015 and allocated for a Welcome to Austin trail monument located near the Nature Center. It would be constructed near 21st Street & I-90 and would feature benches, bike racks, information and maps. The Vision 2020 group will work to obtain additional funding for the project.

Mr. Kime stated this would be a great representation for the City's trail system.

Mr. Lang stated there is additional directional signage being placed throughout the City that will have QR codes on the sign for map access.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, allow 2014 Vision 2020 funds to be carried over to 2015 for the project. Carried.

The item will be placed with the other 2014 carry over items at a future Council meeting.

Item No. 3 – Austin Utilities Building and Funding Request

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert and Austin Utilities Director Mark Nibaur presented on the Austin Utilities' new facility and related issues.

Bonding Request for New Building

Mr. Nibaur requested the Council's approval for bonding for the new Austin Utilities' facility and asked the Council if they had any questions about the building. They would like the facility to be completed by the fall of 2016.

Mr. Dankert stated the debt may be issued in two separate bonds but that will be determined on bond pricing and market rates. The City's liability doesn't change if it's one issuance or two separate bonds.

Mr. Nibaur stated the Utilities did raise their rates beginning on January 1, 2015 to help cover the cost of the new facility.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin, to support the issuance of debt on behalf of Austin Utilities for the Austin Utilities' new facility. Carried.

The IRS requires a resolution by the City of Austin to for code compliance since the City is required to issue the debt. Mr. Nibaur requested the Council to pass this resolution.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin, approving a resolution relating to the financing of the Austin Utilities' facility. Carried.

The items will be placed on the February 2, 2015 Council meeting.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes

Austin Utilities pays a specified amount of each utility service provided instead of paying taxes to the City of Austin. The amounts were originally set in 1982 and are proposed to be increased as follows: Electric at .0039 per KW; Water at .0326 per ccf; and Gas at .2031 per mcf. The new payment amounts would be effective immediately and would help offset the increased utility cost due to the increase in rates for the new building.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin, approving an increase to the Payment in Lieu of Taxes from Austin Utilities. Carried.

The item will be placed on the February 2, 2015 Council meeting.

SMMPA Sales Contract

Austin Utilities is requesting the City sign a modification to Austin Utilities' current power sales contract with Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency. The proposed contract puts a ceiling on the power that the Utilities can purchase from SMMPA thereby allowing the Utilities to purchase additional power on the open market instead of buying all from SMMPA. The

power sales contract is required to be signed by the City because it is a long term contract. The matter was approved by the Austin Utility board.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, seconded by Council Member Hagen, approving a modification to the SMMPA sales contract. Carried.

The item will be placed on the February 2, 2015 Council meeting.

Item No. 4 – City Administrator Goal Setting

City Administrator Craig Clark invited Austin Public Schools Superintendent David Krenz to speak to the Council regarding communications. Mr. Krenz stated communication is critical to a successful organization. He encourages the School Board members talk to staff if they have questions but to communicate with him regarding those topics so he is informed.

Council Member Enright noted that is the structure of Riverland Community College also.

Council Member Enright presented City Administrator goals based on her research and provided a goal list for the Council to review. She stated she would like Mr. Clark evaluated on the criteria.

Council Member Jordal stated he would like the Council and Department Heads to review the City Administrator also.

After additional discussion, the Council would additional time for the City Administrator goals and would like Human Resources to review the goals. The matter will be placed on the February 2, 2015 work session.

Item No. 5 - Administrative Report

None.

Item No. 6a – Open Discussion – 2015 Council Goals

Council Member Enright also provided a handout of goals that she had researched on the internet for the 2015 Council Goals. Item will be placed on February 2, 2015 work session.

Item No. 6b – Open Discussion – Flood Wall Plaques

Mayor Stiehm would like each Council Member to provide a name or two for the nominating committee at the next Council work session so the criteria can be established for the flood wall plaques.

The item will be placed on the February 2, 2015 work session.

Item No. 6c – Open Discussion – Miscellaneous

Council Member-at-Large Anderson attended the Human Rights Commission event and would like to see more Council involvement with the committee.

Mayor Stiehm suggested they come presented at a work session in the future.

Council Member Jordal noted he would like a City-wide mailing for education on the rental ordinance.

Moved by Council Member Hagen, seconded by Council Member Enright, adjourning the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk