

**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION**  
**February 1, 2016**  
**City Hall Council Chambers**

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

**ABSENT:** Council Members David Hagen

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Police Chief Brian Krueger, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jennie Knoebel, Belita Schindler, Lance Hoeflin, Alice Holst, Jim Burroughs, Dave Sylte, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 5:54 p.m.

**Item No. 1 – Detective Office Space Request**

Police Chief Brian Krueger stated the department is adding a new detective this January and needs to create office space for the person. He proposed a modification to the current detective area and the installation of a door and a wall at a cost of \$3,000-\$4,000. The project would be funded by Police PERA funds and the County has approved the project. He stated he received some informal bids for the project and expects to be well under the requested amount.

Mr. Dankert noted it should be approved as a budget adjustment so the PERA funds can be moved.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson to recommend approval of a modification of the current detective area with funding coming from Police PERA funds, budget adjustment number 1. Carried.

The matter will be placed on the February 16, 2016 Council Meeting.

**Item No. 3 – 2016 Sanitary Sewer Rate Adjustment**

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City needs to increase its sanitary sewer rates to accommodate increased costs and future upgrades to the sanitary sewer collection system and lines and the domestic waste water treatment plant. The last increase to the rates was in 2014. Mr. Lang proposed increasing the connection charge from \$7.98 to \$8.78 effective April 1, 2016 and an additional increase to \$9.18 on January 1, 2017. He also recommended increasing the flow charge from \$2.04 to \$2.24 effective April 1, 2016 with an additional increase to \$2.35 on January 1, 2017.

In addition, he also proposed increasing the sanitary sewer access charges to the following:

	Current	Proposed
Sanitary Sewer Permit Fee	\$500	\$500
Sewer Later Development Charge:		
Gravity System	\$11,375	\$14,200
w/grinder pump	\$12,925	\$16,700
w/ lift station	\$12,925	\$14,200
Sewer Service Charge:		
4" service	\$700	\$1,000
6" service	\$880	\$1,200

The increases to sanitary sewer hookup fees would get the hookup fees closer to the actual construction costs.

Mr. Lang compared Austin's fees to surrounding communities and found our rates are below surrounding communities.

Mr. Lang noted there may be additional rate increases down the road if the MPCA has additional regulations.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member Enright, seconded by Council Member King, approving sanitary sewer user fees and sanitary sewer access charges. Carried.

The matter will be placed on the February 16, 2016 Council Meeting.

### **Item No. 2 – Paramount Expansion Request from AACA**

Jennie Knoebel, the Executive Director of the Austin Area Commission for the Arts, presented on behalf of the group and requested the City to donate the property it owns next to the Paramount Theatre to the group. They are wanting to acquire the Park and Rec building to the west of the theatre and an additional 50 feet to the east of the theatre.

Mayor Stiehm asked how much it cost for the utilities to be moved the last time.

Ms. Knoebel stated it cost about \$150,000 for the utilities to be moved last time and they would plan on paying for the proposed utilities relocation. That cost is not known. She stated right now they are asking for the Park and Rec building and the land to the east to be donated to them at no cost.

Mayor Stiehm stated there may be an additional development in the area and asked City Administrator Craig Clark if that would impact the potential development.

Mr. Clark stated the City doesn't know for certain if it would impact that development.

Mayor Stiehm stated he would be fine with the Park and Rec office but wouldn't want to lose out on the development.

Council Member Enright asked if there is a timeline on the development to the East.

Mr. Clark stated he hoped to hear back from the developer soon.

Jim Burroughs stated the proposed development would include an expanded lobby, handicapped bathrooms, orchestra area, office area etc.

Belita Schindler stated other groups have expressed interest in using the property if expanded.

Alice Holst encouraged the Council to go to the theatre and see the theatre layout. She stated they have turned down larger groups due to lack of space.

Council Member King spoke in support of the expansion stated the Paramount is an asset to the community.

Mr. Dankert noted there are statutory limitations in gifting land to non-profits.

Mayor Stiehm asked City Administrator Craig Clark to speak with the other proposed developer and report back to the Council.

The matter will be tabled to a future Council meeting.

#### **Item No. 4 – Ramsey Mill Dam**

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated Hormel Foods is interested in transferring the Ramsey Mill Dam to the City of Austin since they no longer have use for it. The dam would be an asset to the City since the City relies on it for flood control and it may have additional recreational activities. It provides a 36% reduction in flow to the City during flooding events. The dam had a failure during the last flooding event and requires \$650,000 worth of repairs. Hormel Foods would donate the \$650,000 along with title to the dam. Also, transferring ownership of the dam to a public entity opens up additional funding sources for maintenance including State bonding funds, Outdoor Heritage Funds and Local Option Sales Tax. Mr. Lang requested accepting the donation of the dam, annexing the property and completing improvements on the site. He added that the City may look at additional improvement to the dam.

Mr. Lang added that the County is looking to acquire a DNR grant to be used in conjunction with Hormel Foundation funds, to acquire some flood property around the dam. This property may be annexed into the City.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Enright, accepting the donation of the dam, annexing the property and completing improvements on the site. Carried.

The matter will be placed on a future Council Meeting.

**Item No. 5 – Oakland Place Bridge Discussion**

Removed.

**Item No. 6 – Administrative Report**

No report.

**Item No. 7 – Open Discussion**

City Administrator Craig Clark requested the Council approve a voluntary assessment by the CGMC of \$9,057, or \$1 per sewer connection, to fund legal challenges for city sewer systems.

Mayor Stiehm noted that many cities in our area have agreed to the voluntary assessment and spoke in support of the assessment.

Council Member Enright asked where the funds would come from.

Mr. Lang stated it would come from WWTP funds.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member Enright, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Anderson, to approve a voluntary assessment in the amount of \$9,057 to the CGMC. Carried.

The item will be added to the February 16, 2016 Council agenda.

Council Member King stated he received a complaint about the smoke from Palleton.

Mr. Lang stated that issue is regulated by the Fire Chief and the complaint would be forwarded to him.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Carolan, adjourning the work session at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Ann M. Kasel  
City Clerk