

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
April 4, 2016
City Hall Conference Room

PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Stiehm, Council Members Steve King, Michael Jordal, Jeremy Carolan, Jeff Austin, Judy Enright, David Hagen 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, City Clerk Ann Kasel

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Oscarson, Joy Kanne, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

Item No. 1 –True County Assessing

County Coordinator Craig Oscarson stated the County Board is considering a True Assessing proposal where all the assessing in the County is administered by the County Assessor's office. This would create equality among all property types and consistency in assessing standards.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated the City pays the County approximately \$190,000 year to assess Austin properties. The Council then adopts a board of review where citizens can contest the valuation of their properties if they wish to do so. The City wouldn't lose control of that board of review and the process for assessing would stay the same except the County would include it in their tax levy instead of the City.

Mower County Assessor Joy Kanne stated the City currently contracts with 13 cities and 3 townships for assessing and the remainder of the townships have local assessors. This allows for different standards for assessing and the change to one assessor would promote equity among properties as the County would be assessing all of the properties.

Mr. Oscarson added that there are currently two methods counties apply to appraise properties, either using local appraisers or the true county system. The legislature recently changed a law stating that appraisers would need to be certified by the State and after that law is enacted it will be more difficult for counties to find qualified appraisers. He noted that the County is looking for input at this point and would make a recommendation to the Board by December. He also stated that most cities in Southern Minnesota use true county assessing.

After additional discussion, the Council generally supported the idea and spoke in favor of it. No official Council action was taken.

Item No. 2 –2017 Budget Discussion

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert discussed the process the City has used for the past few years to prepare the yearly budget. He asked if the Council would like to review individual department spreadsheets for the 2017 budget.

Council indicated they would not like to review the itemized department sheets. However, they would like to review the overall budget with input on increased/decreased staff, increased/decreased programming and increased/decreased tax levy.

Item No. 3 – Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark stated he is working on the Council goals.

Item No. 4 – Open Discussion

Council Member-at-Large Anderson asked for an update on the rec center.

Mr. Clark stated the details are still being worked on.

Moved by Council Member Austin, seconded by Council Member King, adjourning the work session at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk