

**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION**  
**January 4, 2021**  
**City Council Chambers**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King, Council Member Oballa Oballa and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Council Members Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Jason Baskin, Joyce Poshusta and Michael Postma

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert and Police Chief David McKichan

STAFF APPEARING ELECTRONICALLY: Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum, and City Clerk Ann Kasel

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

**Item No. 1 – 2021 Assessment Rates**

Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum presented the 2021 assessment rates stating it is the City's goal to assess adjacent property owners 50% of the costs of street projects and in 2020 the City assessed 26.1% of the project costs. He proposed increasing the assessment rates for urban and commercial streets 5%. Therefore, the rate for 2021 will increase from \$49.09 per lineal foot to \$51.54 per lineal foot for residential street reconstruction and \$70.09 per lineal foot to \$73.59 per lineal foot for commercial properties. Other rates would also be increased slightly. He noted that construction rates are increasing at a greater rate than the City has increased the assessment rates. He stated that the City guarantees that the road will last 35 years and the City has policies in place for different types of properties.

Council Member Baskin asked how much the assessment rates increased last year.

Mr. Wenum stated they were increased by 5%.

Council Member Poshusta asked how they are going to reach a 40% assessment percentage when in 2020 they only assessed 26.1%.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated that construction costs are outpacing assessment increases and that the City is trying to establish an assessment rate that the City can justify. The assessment has to increase value of the property by the amount that is being assessed.

Mr. Wenum stated he estimates that in 2021 the City will be about 29-30% with a 5% increase in assessment rates.

City Administrator Craig Clark stated some communities have gone away from assessments but then it goes in the tax levy.

Council Member Postma asked what size city would have their own crew to do street reconstruction work.

Wenum stated no cities do their own work.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer to increase assessment rates for 2021 by 7%. Carried with Council Member Waller, Poshusta and Council Member-at-Large Austin voting nay.

The matter will be placed on the January 19, 2021 Council Meeting.

### **Item No. 2 – 2021 Boards and Commissions**

The Council made the following Council assignments to Boards and Commissions for 2021:

#### **AUSTIN/MOWER COUNTY HOMEOWNERSHIP BOARD**

*Meets January, May, October – 5:30, City Hall Conference Room*

1. Jeff Austin
2. Paul Fischer

#### **BLAZING STAR TRAIL JOINT POWERS BOARD**

*No set meeting times*

1. Joyce Poshusta
2. Rebecca Waller
3. Jeff Austin

#### **CABLE TV COMMITTEE**

*No set meeting times*

1. Mayor King

#### **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD**

*Meets first Tuesday – 8:00 am, Chamber of Commerce*

1. Craig Clark

#### **CITY/COUNTY HEALTH BOARD (County Appointment)**

*Meets at least three times per year, Health and Human Services*

1. Steve King

#### **COMMUNITY EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

*Meets every other month at 3:00 pm*

1. Oballa Oballa

## **CULTURE AND ARTS**

1. Joyce Poshusta

## **DISCOVER AUSTIN, MINNESOTA**

*Meets the fourth Tuesday of the month – 1:00 pm, various business locations*

1. Mike Postma

## **DCA BOARD**

*Meets the third Tuesday in February, May, August and November – 11:30 am, Town Center Conference Room*

1. Jason Baskin

## **FAMILY CONNECTIONS**

*Meets as needed, ARC-Mower County*

1. Steve King

## **HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD**

*Meets the third Thursday of the month – 4:30 pm, HRA*

1. Oballa Oballa, First Ward
2. Mike Postma, Second Ward
3. Paul Fischer, Third Ward

## **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

1. Jeff Austin

## **LEC COMMITTEE**

*No set meeting times*

1. Mayor King
2. Jeff Austin
3. Craig Clark
4. David McKichan
5. Jim McCoy

## **LIBRARY BOARD**

*Meets the second Monday of the month – 4:30 pm, library*

1. Joyce Poshusta

## **MOWER COUNTY WATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

*Two times per year - daytime*

1. Steve King

## **ONE WATERSHED ONE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

1. Steve King

## **PARK AND RECREATION BOARD**

*Meets the first Wednesday of the month – 5:15 pm, Park & Rec office*

1. Rebecca Waller

## **PORT AUTHORITY OF AUSTIN**

*Meets fourth Wednesday of the month in January, April, July, October (plus special meetings as needed) – 4:30 pm, Council Chambers*

1. Jason Baskin
2. Jeff Austin

**SALVATION ARMY BOARD**

1. Paul Fischer

**SENIOR CENTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*No set meeting time – Mower County Senior Center*

1. Joyce Poshusta

**SMART Transit Advisory Committee**

*Meets quarterly, various times.*

1. Paul Fischer

**SUSTAINABILITY TASKFORCE**

*Meets second Wednesday of the month at 4:00 pm, City Hall Conference Room A*

1. Rebecca Waller
2. Paul Fischer

**YELLOW RIBBON COMMITTEE**

1. Joyce Poshusta

**Item No. 3 - Administrative Report**

No Report.

**Item No. 4 – Open Discussion**

Council Member-at-Large Austin stated a lot of conversation is lost on zoom conversations. He stated we would like to meet in person.

Council Member Poshusta stated she doesn't have a problem meeting in the Council chambers.

Police Chief David McKichan stated the County Board has dividers between the Council members.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adjourning the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Ann M. Kasel  
City Clerk