

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
October 7, 2024
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Steve King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Laura Helle, Jason Baskin, Michael Postma, Geoff Baker, Joyce Poshusta and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Park and Rec Director Jason Sehon, City Attorney Craig Byram, Human Resources Director Tricia Wiechmann, Library Director Julie Clinefelter, and City Clerk Brianne Wolf

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald

Mayor Steve King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Baskin, approving the agenda as amended. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving Council minutes from August 12, September 19 and September 16, 2024. Carried.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Police Chief McKichan recognized Detective Patrick Retterath on his recent retirement from the Austin Police Department with the City of Austin. Mayor King presented Detective Retterath with a plaque from the City Council and Mayor thanking him for his years of service.

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving the consent agenda as follows:

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of Bills
- b. Investment Report
- c. Credit Card Report

Events:

Downtown Trick or Treating on October 26, 2024

Carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement requested by Cedar City Builders. They are proposing to build a single-family home at 1804 13th Place NE valued at approximately \$400,000. City Administrator Craig Clark stated the application is in conformance with the City's policy for tax abatement.

There were no comments from the public.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Baskin, approving the tax abatement. Carried. 7-0.

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement requested by Bigelow & Lennon Construction. They are proposing to build a single-family home at 1308 17th Street NE valued at approximately \$320,000. City Administrator Craig Clark stated the application is in conformance with the City's policy for tax abatement.

There were no comments from the public.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, approving the tax abatement. Carried. 7-0.

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement requested by Hteet La Powl. They are proposing to build a single-family home at 1305 18th Street NE valued at approximately \$363,000. City Administrator Craig Clark stated the application is in conformance with the City's policy for tax abatement.

There were no comments from the public.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baker, approving the tax abatement. Carried. 7-0.

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement requested by New Horizon Homes. They are proposing to build a single-family home at 1801 13th Place NE valued at approximately \$460,000. City Administrator Craig Clark stated the application is in conformance with the City's policy for tax abatement.

There were no comments from the public.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Baskin, approving the tax abatement. Carried. 7-0.

City Clerk Brienne Wolf requested a continuation for the public hearing for fall assessments due to the need for proper notification of the property owners and the time needed for publications.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving the continuation of the fall assessments public hearing to October 21, 2024. Carried.

BIDS AND AWARDS

Director of Public Works Steven Lang received bids for replacement of the rubber surface of the flat roofs at the Riverside Arena from two bidders; Allweather Roof and Kiker Bros. The low bid came from Allweather Roof in the amount of \$135,156. Mr. Lang stated the budget for this project is \$175,000. He recommends awarding the bid to Allweather Roof.

Council Member Baker questioned the large discrepancy between the budgeted amount and the final bid. Mr. Lang noted they used a Kiker Brothers Estimate from the previous year to set the budget.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving a contract with Allweather Roof for replacement of the rubber surface of the flat roofs at the Riverside Arena. Carried. 7-0.

Planning and Zoning Director Holly Wallace received bids for the removal of asbestos containing material at 308 12th Avenue SW. This structure was deemed as a hazardous structure. There were two bids received. The bids received were from Asbestrol, Inc and JMax Specialty Contracting. The low bid came from JMax Specialty Contracting in the amount of \$4,485. Ms. Wallace recommends awarding the bid to JMax Specialty Contracting.

Council Member Baskin asked how these types of projects get paid. Ms. Wallace stated the City pays for it up front and then it gets assessed to the property.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baker, approving a contract with JMax Specialty Contracting for removal of asbestos at 308 12th Avenue SW. Carried. 7-0.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert requested the Council approve an annual insurance document stating that the City does not waive the statutory tort limits for liability.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, authorizing the City Recorder to sign a waiver stating the City does not waive the statutory tort limits. Carried.

Human Resource Director Trish Wiechmann requested the Council set insurance rates for the 2025 health insurance amounts. She also requested the Council approve the rates for non-bargaining employees and union groups.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution approving health insurance plans, qualification and rates for 2025. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution approving health insurance premium contributions and terms for non-bargaining unit employees. Carried 7-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang requested approval of the Change Order Number Five in the amount of \$491,698. Which includes 12 work change directives. This is a \$249,293.99 cost

increase to the domestic budget and a \$242,404.01 cost increase to the industrial budget. This is a 3.11% increase to the domestic budget and a 1.63% increase to the industrial budget. Mr. Lang recommends approval of Change Order Number Five.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, approving a resolution for Change Order Number Five for the Waste Water Treatment Plant Project. Carried 6-1. Baker-Nay.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City applied for and received a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to use toward PFAS source identification and reduction. The grant was in the amount of \$13,945 and requires a 10% match. The City can use in-kind services as a match and will purchase equipment to do testing of samples at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Mr. Lang requests approval of this grant.

Council Member Baskin asked if there any additional strings attached to this grant where this may cost us more money in the future.

Mr. Lang stated no, as this is testing we are required to do.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, approving a MPCA PFAS grant agreement for the Waste Water Treatment Plant Project. Carried 7-0.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated for the last couple of months Council and the Public Works Department have been reviewing in detail the topic of PFAS. Current and historical PFAS testing indicates the leachate that the Wastewater Treatment Plant accepts from Waste Connections landfills are the primary contributors to the Wastewater Treatment Plant's high PFAS test results. Through the discussions about PFAS the Public Works Department has come up with the recommendation for the new ICM agreements with Waste Connections for the discharge of leachate.

They recommend the City would accept leachate that has been treated for PFAS removal to a level meeting drinking water standards.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving a PFAS removal agreement for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Carried.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the Salvation Army required two appraisals on the thrift store property. The company commissioned by the City was Warfield Appraisal and the amount they appraised the building at was \$352,000. The company commissioned by the Salvation Army was Robinson Appraisal and the amount they appraised the building at was \$340,000.

The City was able to meet with the Salvation Army and recommend a purchase price of \$346,000. The funding for the purchase would come from the local option sales tax. Additionally, there will be asbestos abatement, demolition, legal recording, and other fees associated with this project. This would bring the total project costs to around \$431,000.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Baskin, approving the purchase agreement of the Salvation Army Thrift Store. Carried. 7-0.

Police Chief David McKichan stated there were grants available for local police agencies to obtain new radios. The Austin Police Department was able to obtain a grant in the amount of \$40,000 for their radio systems with a 5% local match of \$2,105.26. The Austin Police Department is hopeful they will be able to purchase seven new radios with these funds.

Police Chief McKichan requests approval of this grant.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baker, approving a 2024-2026 ARMER MDPS grant agreement. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution accepting donations to the City of Austin 4th Grade Jr. Fire Program. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution accepting donations to the City of Austin. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution approving a MOA with UAW Street and Sewer Maintenance for health insurance. Carried 7-0.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Director of Public Works Steven Lang announced that temporary stop lights have been installed on 14th Street NW. These are trailer mounted lights and are rented. The Public Works Department will be placing wood pole mounted lights up in the future. On Friday, October 18th, the 4th Street NW bridge will close for prep work and the interstate will close for demolition and there will be detours in place.

Council Member Helle thanked the staff that brought grants forward. She stated this is an extra thing staff is doing on top of all their other job duties.

Council Member Postma also thanked the staff that brought grants forward. He reminded the public that this Wednesday, October 9th, the Fire Department will be hosting an open house.

Council Member Poshusta thinks it's great that the tax abatements are coming in for single-family homes.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adjourning the meeting to October 21, 2024. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:02 p.m.

Approved: October 21, 2024

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____