

City Council Proceedings

Regular Meeting/Work Session

August 8, 2005

Pursuant to due call and notice, a regular meeting/work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, August 8, 2005, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Hellquist, Lehmann, Meuers, Markeson, Johnson, Downs, Erickson.

Staff Present: Minke, Felix, Eischens, Oakes, Mack, Freeberg, and Murphy-Schuett

Mayor Lehmann stated that the purpose of the meeting is to review the 2006 Preliminary Budget.

Minke stated that the preliminary budget must be certified by September 15 to the County Auditor's office.

DEPARTMENT REVIEWS:

Administration Department:

Minke reviewed the administration department noting that staff and department heads appreciate having a point person on human resources issues. Key issues: long-range planning, implementation of 15 year growth mgmt plan, revenue stability, implementation of city's top five priorities, developing an organization culture that reflects Council's vision, document imaging and management. Goals: implement performance management system with ICMA and comprehensive Annual Report on "state of the city" Spring 2006. 2005 Accomplishments: identifying the city's top priorities, Bemidji Leads steward and SE Lake Bemidji Community, certified as ICMA credentialed manager, transition of City Clerk and creation of Administrative Assistant/HR Technician and Personnel Policy updated.

Lehmann asked where the recodification of the City Code. Minke replied that it is getting closer and the responsibility has been transitioned to the Assistant City Attorney.

Finance Department:

Eischens stated that the Finance Department is responsible for developing, maintaining and supporting systems that provide accurate and timely financial information for strategic planning, operational management and decision support to elected officials and management. Key issues: long-range financial planning, financial plan for future annexation areas and employee transition in particular through retirement and succession planning. Goals: develop staff training for department heads related to purchasing and financial internal goals and increase use of auto pay program and automation. 2005 Accomplishments included completed computer conversion, no material findings in Audit Report and utility cash flow analysis.

Building Department:

Eischens stated that the biggest issue for the Building Department is staying on top of the workload during the summer. Rental inspections have been contracted to a third party and are back on track.

Liquor Stores:

Eischens stated the City's liquor stores have more competition due to increased liquor stores neighboring the City. Several improvements are planned for the liquor stores, which includes an upgrade to the entryway at Lakeview Liquor Store, new carpet at Bemidji Discount Liquor and exterior face-lift on both stores. Hellquist asked if the City's liquor stores compare price wise with neighboring liquor stores. Eischens stated he was not aware; however, the City's stores sell the highest amount according to suppliers. Johnson asked how the Northern Liquor Store being annexed in the future will impact the City's liquor stores. Felix replied that he is reviewing the grandfathered aspect caused by annexation and will provide a more thorough report in the future.

Legal Department:

Felix reviewed the legal department stating that the Assistant Attorney has assumed full responsibility of petty, misdemeanor and gross misdemeanors. Key issues: criminal charging decisions and general discharge of prosecutorial responsibilities, legal oversight of land use and other real property matters involving the City. 2005 Accomplishments: Paul Bunyan Trail bonding and trail development efforts.

Public Works:

Mack reviewed the functions of the public works department which includes streets, sewerline, wastewater treatment facility, parks & arena, and water & light. Mack stated that they are exploring contracting water meter reading with the contractor that reads electric meters for Otter Tail Power. Key issue for all departments is the need for a public works facility.

Engineering Department:

Freeberg stated that 40% of staff funding comes from General Revenue and 60% from project and utility related funds. Goals include: GIS program create a web presence – mapping and parcel information and adopt revised special assessment policy. In order to meet GIS expectations and demands, a temporary GIS intern is required for routine data entry. Minke commented that management struggles with balancing long range planning and meeting the day to day needs. Discussion continued on new sewer and water utility locating requirement which will have a significant impact on the public works department.

Planning Department:

Oakes reviewed the key issues for the Planning Department which include long range planning for growth management of the City, including community development and economic development, continue to integrate technology by utilizing new air photos and the ability to print parcel maps and maps of specific geographic areas for residents. Goals: continue involvement with the Planning Committee and HRDC/Committee development of a new land use plan and ordinances for the City and two Townships and explore possible grant applications. Oakes commented that Paul Bunyan Transit is running smoothly and ridership has increased in the last couple of months.

Discussion continued on the wastewater treatment facility expansion in the future and its impact on the city garage.

2006 BUDGET:

Minke reviewed the summary of changes from original proposed budget. Revenue increase from Local Government Aid for 2006 is \$205,869. Based on Council consensus, Lehmann directed staff to finalize the 2006 Preliminary Budget including the summary of changes as presented.

Library Request:

Minke reviewed the 2006 levy request from Kitchigami Regional Library in the amount of \$99,130. An increase of this amount will have a substantial impact on the City budget. The County is exploring alternatives to the Kitchigami Regional Library system and has scheduled a meeting for August 16.

Parking Ramp:

Discussion continued on the parking ramp. Eischens commented that a number of unresolved issues need to be answered, which include: 1) County purchasing of future permits, approximately \$12,000 annually or 23% of total, 2) potential event center – location and how does it change parking needs, 3) potential sale of parking Lot 9 to County – use of proceeds?, 4) alternative surface parking options and costs, 5) use of special service districts, 6) conduct parking study using parking enforcement officer and 7) get opinion from bond counsel regarding City participating in financing. The consensus of the Council was that the questions raised by Eischens require answers prior to the parking ramp construction. Felix stated that he has contacted bond counsel which will begin review next month.

Hellquist asked what would happen if the DDA gave the management of lots to the City. Eischens stated it depended upon the level of administration that the City would give to parking. It could require a part-time position to take care of managing the lots. Downs commented that the City Council supports the partnership with the downtown businesses.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, motion by Meuers, second by Downs, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Murphy-Schuett
City Clerk