

**CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**  
**BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA**  
**Work Session – July 26, 2010**

Pursuant to due call and notice, a work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, July 26, 2010, at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Lehmann, Johnson, Negard, Downs, Meuers, Hellquist Absent: Waldhausen

Staff Present: City Attorney Alan Felix, City Clerk Kay Murphy

Other Present: Phil Carlson, Bonestroo; Brad Peterson, CGMC Representative

Mayor Lehmann called for any amendments to the agenda.

**Motion by Johnson, seconded by Hellquist, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

Solar Energy Presentation

Phil Carlson, Director of Planning with Bonestroo, reviewed the feasibility study which analyzed the potential for a solar photovoltaic (PV) system on the Bemidji Regional Event Center (BREC) to generate electricity from the sun to offset some of the electrical use by the geothermal heating and cooling system in the building. He stated that they have been working with the City's Sustainability Committee and City staff to ascertain available grants for the PV system and to work through the basic analysis. A federal grant administered by the Minnesota Department of Commerce Office of Energy Security was identified that appears to be a good fit. There may be other grants or contributions available that can offset the remaining cost of the PV system. Carlson stated that the grant will match 40% of the total project cost, up to \$100,000, but the City does not need to identify at this time what the source of the remaining 60% is. The estimated total cost of the ground-mounted system is \$250,000.

Carlson reviewed several locations on and around the BREC, both ground and roof mounted, for the PV system. He stated that the Sustainability Committee recommends a ground-mounted PV system in the front parking lot of the BREC, consisting of 104 250-Watt panels designed as a canopy over a section of 10-12 parking spaces. This option was selected for the following reasons 1) visible as an educational tool; 2) cost less than the roof-mounted system; 3) easier to expand if the City wanted to add capacity to the system; 4) provides shade for cars in that location in the summer; and 5) preferred ground location for better security from vandalism.

Hellquist stated he has experience with similar projects and expects that the technology in the field will improve in the next 10-15 years. He noted that the system would not be tied directly to the BREC as any energy garnered would be fed back into the Otter Tail. Hellquist raised concerns about the cost of maintenance of the solar panels once they are installed. He commented that the solar panels could go anywhere in the City and that this was just a "token measure". Council discussion continued on the pros and cons of installing the solar panels.

Carlson stated the Bonestroo will continue to work on additional grants to help with the 60% match.

**RESOLUTION NO. 5636:** APPROVING AN APPLICATION TO THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE OFFICE OF ENERGY SECURITY (OES) FOR THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT RENEWABLE ENERGY GRANT PROGRAM FUNDED BY THE AMERICAN REINVESTMENT AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2009 (ARRA) AND LAWS OF MINNESOTA 2009 CHAPTER 138 FOR A GRANT TO PURCHASE AND INSTALL A PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM ON THE BEMIDJI REGIONAL EVENT CENTER (BREC) was offered by Councilmember Meuers, who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Downs was passed with the following vote: Ayes: Meuers, Lehmann, Johnson, Downs. Nays: Hellquist, Negard

CGMC Legislative Update

Brad Peterson, lobbyist with Flaherty-Hood which represents the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, stated that the need for Local Government Aid (LGA) remains. Lobbying for LGA has been one of the Coalition's top priorities for years. He recommended that the Council budget for 2011 as though the City will be getting LGA but have a backup plan, i.e., budget for capital improvement items. He stated that the question for those that are running for governor or legislative offices is how they will solve a \$6 billion state budget deficit, if they will raise taxes and how much, and about LGA and state/local relationship.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, motion by Johnson, seconded by Hellquist, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay M. Murphy  
City Clerk