

# **CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**

## **BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA**

### **January 7, 2003**

*Pursuant to due call and notice, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Tuesday, January 7, 2003, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.*

*Upon roll call, the following Council members were declared present. Lehmann, Johnson, Downs, Erickson, Zachman. Absent: None.*

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Minutes of the December 16, 2002, Regular Council meeting were presented. There being no additions or corrections noted, motion by Johnson, second by Downs, to approve the minutes as presented. All voted aye. Motion carried.*

#### **OATH OF OFFICE**

*City Clerk Sherman administered the Oath of Office to re-elected officials Richard Lehmann (Mayor) and Jerry Downs (Councilmember Ward 4) and newly elected officials Roger Hellquist (Councilmember Ward 2) and Barbara Meuers (Councilmember-at-large).*

#### **RESEATING OF THE COUNCIL**

*Mayor Lehmann reseated the Council and the meeting continued.*

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*The consent agenda was presented for approval. Councilmember Erickson asked that Item D, Committee Appointments, be removed from the Consent Agenda so that it could be discussed in more detail. Motion by Johnson, second by Erickson, to approve the remaining Consent Agenda items. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes: Lehmann, Hellquist, Downs, Johnson, Erickson, Zachman, Meuers. Nays: None. Absent: None.*

- (A) Annual Permits and Licenses (see list)
- (B) Designation of Mayor Pro-tem
- (C) Designation of Official Newspaper of Publication
- (D)
- (E) Council Travel Expense for LMC Leadership Conferences and LMC Legislative Update
- (F) Resolution No. 5023 Designating Depositories for City Funds in 2003
- (G) Resolution No. 5024 Condemning Structure(s) at 923 Bemidji Ave N.
- (H) Claims as Submitted by Finance Office
- (I) Transit Vehicle Lease Agreement
- (J) Transit Facility Lease Agreement
- (K) Resolution No. 5025 Authorizing MnDOT Partnership Agreement

#### **BEMIDJI YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

*Danielle McAllister provided an update on BYAC activities. She noted that the committee is working on a letter of support for the Parks & Trails sales tax initiative. Planning is continuing on the open forum – date and location are not firm as yet.*

#### **BSU STUDENT SENATE REPORT**

*No report.*

#### **OLD HIGH-SCHOOL REUSE PRESENTATION**

*Richard Jaranson and Dick Rose updated the City Council regarding current efforts to try to save the old high school buildings. The major components of the plan are as follows:*

- ◆ Establish a non-profit corporation to take ownership of the buildings and facilitate development.
- ◆ “Mothball” all unused buildings to prevent deterioration and to minimize maintenance costs.
- ◆ Solicit proposals from developers for private development.
- ◆ Place the historic “A” building on the National Register of Historic Places.
- ◆ Evaluate buildings for re-use including youth club, non-profit agencies and other complementary uses.

Discussion followed regarding timelines, project development, funding, phasing, etc. Councilmembers were generally supportive regarding the efforts of the committee for private development, but expressed a negative attitude about the possibility of using city funds or Tax Increment Financing for the project.

**PUBLIC HEARING: Annexation of Bardwell Park/HiWay Acres Areas**

Pursuant to mailed and published notice, copy of which was placed on file in the City Clerk’s office, a public hearing was held regarding annexation of the Bardwell Park/HiWay Acres areas. Mayor Lehmann opened the public hearing and invited anyone present to address the Council on this issue.

David Bewley, 2103 Anne Street, noted he had not received mailed notice of the hearing and wondered if his property was being included in the proposed annexation. It was acknowledged that Mr. Bewley did not receive notice. He noted that he recently put in a new septic system and wanted to know if he would be required to connect to City services if his property is annexed to the City. It was noted that current City policy allows a deferral of up to 15 years, depending upon the age of the septic system when City sewer is made available. The City would require connection immediately if the property owner experiences problems with the septic, which would entail installation of a new system prior to the expiration of the deferral.

Rich Blomberg, 2408 Tracy, asked for reasons why the Council wanted to annex the Bardwell Park area. Asked how he would benefit from annexation. It was noted that the entire area will benefit from improvements such as water, sewer, and road maintenance. It was noted that the City already provides fire and police protection to the area and should receive tax monies for those services. It was further noted that the City boundaries completely surround this area.

Steve Solien, Co-owner of CBS Fitness, suggested that the proposed annexation would provide no benefit to their business. In his opinion, the proposed annexation would mean higher taxes, which would only benefit the City.

There being no further discussion, the public hearing was closed.

**ORDINANCE NO. . 2<sup>ND</sup> SERIES:** AN ORDINANCE ANNEXING PROPERTY TO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF BEMIDJI (Bardwell Park Area/HiWay Acres) was given a final reading and passed by the following vote: Ayes: Johnson, Hellquist, Meuers, Zachman, Erickson, Downs. Nays: Lehmann. Absent: None.

**NON-UNION SALARIES FOR 2003**

The City Council was asked to consider a 2003 cost of living increase for non-union employee. City Manager Minke noted that in some ways this issue is linked to last years’ Resolution #4909, which provided for a cost of living increase for non-union employees and established an internal Personnel Committee to review and approve recommendations for position upgrades. Minke suggested that before doing anything about the 2003 wages, he felt it was appropriate to at least highlight the fact that the personnel committee idea has not progressed from “on paper” to reality. Minke further noted that, based on the city charter and city code, the City Manager has the authority to fill vacancies and establish lines of authority.

Councilmember Erickson noted that at the time the resolution was passed, there was some concern about how upgrades were initiated and evaluated. The intent of the personnel committee was to review upgrades internally, with personnel who are familiar with job responsibilities and save the cost of having a down-state labor management firm evaluate new and upgraded positions. In light of the City’s new management, Erickson expressed her willingness to place the establishment of a personnel committee on hold at this time.

Minke noted that it is his intent to make some recommendations to improve and strengthen the organization and has been working closely with key staff on how to do that. He assured the Council that changes to the organizational structure will be presented for Council's review. Minke also discussed pay equity and the need to look at the system we currently use to evaluate positions. He suggested another system might be necessary to establish a better comfort level of how and why points are assigned for job duties.

Mayor Lehmann suggested that the issue of establishing an internal personnel committee be allowed to remain status quo, to be revisited at a future date, and the City Manager be authorized to continue to pursue recommendations to improve and strengthen the organization and to recommend another evaluation system for pay equity. Councilmembers expressed agreement.

**RESOLUTION NO. 5026:** A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING NON-UNION SALARIES FOR 2003 was offered by Councilmember Downs, who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Hellquist, was passed by the following vote: Ayes: Lehmann, Meuers, Zachman, Hellquist, Erickson, Johnson, Downs. Nays: None. Absent: None.

### **CONSIDERATION OF FIRE MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS**

Councilmembers were provided a copy of the proposed format for future Mutual Aid Agreements. Motion by Erickson, second by Zachman, to approve the model for future Mutual Aid Agreements. All voted aye. Motion carried.

### **CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSAL FOR INSPECTION OF WATER TOWERS**

Council considered a proposal from KLM Engineering to perform a detailed inspection of the City's two (2) existing water towers at a fee of \$7,200.00. The inspection will break down in detail the interior and exterior coating and structural conditions, indicate any unsafe OSHA conditions, make recommendations for repairs and provide cost estimates. Motion by Zachman, second by Moen, to accept the proposal from KLM Engineering in the amount of \$7,200.00 to inspect the City's two (2) existing water towers. All voted aye. Motion carried.

### **CONSIDERATION OF PARKS & TRAILS SALES TAX ISSUES**

City Manager Minke noted that the Parks & Trails Sales Tax committee has been struggling with several issues and asked for Council clarification of their position on the following issues:

1. The use of a "cap" on the amount of the local sales tax that can be collected on any one individual item.
2. Whether the City advocates issuing bonds for the improvements or to adopt a "pay as you go" approach.
3. Whether the Council will ask the legislature to include an excise tax on motor vehicles.
4. Appointment of an ad-hoc committee to establish a decision-making process to recommend improvements at particular parks and trails.

Motion by Erickson, second by Johnson, that there be no "caps" on the local sales tax; that the Council make every effort to use the "pay as you go" approach and not bond for improvements; that the motor vehicle excise tax be exempt from the local sales tax option; and that an ad-hoc committee be established to begin the planning process for particular improvements. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes: Meuers, Hellquist, Johnson, Downs, Erickson, Zachman, Lehmann. Nays: None. Absent: None.

It was suggested that the ad-hoc committee include appointment of a council member, a representative from the Parks & Recreation Commission, Joe Vene, David Minke, Dan Haluptzok and other interested citizens. Interested persons were invited to contact City Hall to express their willingness to serve on the ad-hoc committee.

### **DISCUSSION/REVIEW OF THE JOINT CITY/TOWNSHIP STUDY – MANAGING GROWTH & PROVIDING SERVICES IN THE BEMIDJI AREA**

In July 2002, the City Council approved a resolution authorizing a contract with the HRDC for Managing Growth. In August 2002, the Council approved a resolution authorizing a grant application to the Northwest Minnesota Foundation (NWMF). In

September 2002, the grant application was placed on hold but there was no time frame on the hold. City Manager Minke noted that the NWMF is still holding the grant and HRDC is willing to proceed with the initiative if the city is interested. He noted that the grant would require a \$3,000 contribution from the city and that the money is still available. Motion by Meuers, second by Hellquist to revive the grant application and move forward with a joint City/Township study for managing growth and providing services in the Bemidji area. Motion carried by the following vote: Ayes: Hellquist, Meuers, Lehmann, Johnson, Downs, Erickson, Zachman. Nays: None. Absent: None.

### **COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Mayor Lehmann presented a list of committee appointments for the year 2003. Councilmember Erickson noted that two committees needed to be added to the list, namely the Shoreland Ordinance Committee and the Gang Task Force Committee. Mayor Lehmann added those two committees and recommended Council representatives Downs and Erickson serve on the Shoreland Ordinance committee and Johnson and Erickson serve on the Gang Task Force Committee. Motion by Zachman, second by Erickson to accept the Mayor's recommendations for 2003 committee appointments. All voted aye. Motion carried.

### **REPORTS – STAFF/COUNCIL**

City Manager Minke noted that Senator Skoe will be in Bemidji on January 18<sup>th</sup>. He suggested that Council members may want to meet with him to review the sales tax issue or other municipal issues.

Councilmember Zachman asked that future condemnations include the property owners name on the paperwork that Councilmembers receive.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the timeline for Paul Bunyan Telephone to broadcast Council meetings.

### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business presented for discussion, motion by Downs, second by Johnson, to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted*

*Shirley J. Sherman, City Clerk*