

**CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**  
**BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA**  
**Regular Work Session – April 9, 2007**

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, April 9, 2007, at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

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

Staff Present: John Chattin, Alan Felix, Rita Albrecht, Curt Oakes, Kay Murphy  
Others Present: Tim Flathers (HRDC)

Mayor Lehmann stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the City's financial obligation to the Joint Planning Board (JPB) and Joint Planning Commission (JPC). Lehmann explained the JPB and JPC will take over the roles and responsibility for planning and zoning currently handled by the three entities individually.

Erickson asked why City planning staff estimated only 40% of their time for planning. Albrecht responded that not all their time is spent doing JPB related activities and part of their challenge is identifying what is related to the joint planning. Oakes commented that staff is keeping better track of their time.

Markeson asked what the implications are of the budget provided and what is required of the Council.

Hellquist stated that the Council needs to get together on what they would like to see happen with the joint planning process. There are a number of items that need to be decided by the JPB including but not limited to personnel, storage of records, location of meetings.

Lehmann stated that one of the thoughts is the JPB would have an employee; perhaps one of the township clerks would take that position.

Johnson commented that he felt the airport was a good example of joint powers and he envisioned something of that nature for the JPB.

Hellquist expressed concerns that some JPB members are discussing which City staff they would hire and felt that this would be done soon. He hoped that the City could come up with their position before that happened. Discussion continued on Milender's duties and pay. Albrecht observed that comparing the city and townships is like comparing "apples and oranges" as City planning staff has additional duties of enforcing the zoning ordinance and the fee revenue source is different. In addition, Milender's pay is covered by land use permits and the City uses building permit fees. Discussion continued regarding building permits and whether the townships should adopt to the Uniform Building Code.

Flathers stated that the City costs are going to remain the same for budgeting and staff will be tracking the expenditures over the next nine months. Flathers observed the biggest issue he sees is that the City is in partnership with a couple of townships and operating as one community but the three single communities function in different ways. They are zoning as a single community but they are doing planning stuff individually and some jointly. The two townships are planning for a broader community but it is not reflected in their budgets. He felt that this confuses some of the discussion. The JPB members should be concerned about future staffing and they should think about what they will be paying for wages and the costs per hour will be higher on the townships' side of the ledger. Flathers stated that the townships will not find another Milender and will need to hire professional staff.

Hellquist commented that the JPB does not have the structure to write checks.

Lehmann stated that for the next nine months the City and Townships will continue as is. At some point the JPB will stand on its own. How that impacts staffing in the three entities and exactly how that will look has not been worked out.

Albrecht stated that how we will serve the constituency should be one of our goals.

Discussion continued on management of the airport. Erickson noted that the airport is managed smoothly now under its own management and that the joint planning is as important as the airport to our community. She envisions that someone should be totally dedicated to the Board.

Felix stated that in the JPB agreement everyone would be responsible for payment of their own staff costs, etc., for the first year. Subsequent years the JPB prior to August 1 in coordination with their governing bodies would prepare an operations budget and estimates. He stated that this could be interpreted that by August 1, 2007, the Council should be planning so the JPB could be operational by January 1, 2008.

Albrecht pointed out that it is not just personnel costs but facility cost, computer cost, technology costs and central files. It does not seem wise to separate from City Hall as it exists here and why recreate this somewhere else. There may be some economy to be had by using what the City has and figuring out the value.

Oakes commented that it is essential for staff to be located at City Hall as there is interaction with other City staff. Mayor Lehmann stated that there may be room in City Hall to meet the JPB needs when the Public Works Facility is completed.

Johnson reiterated that the City must keep in mind providing customer service. There seems to be logic in keeping the JPB centrally located and televising the planning meetings. He suggested that the Chambers could be altered to meet the JPC needs by using PEG fees.

Chattin commented that the JPB needs to make a decision on what they will look like in the future. Staff perspective cannot develop without direction. In the short-term, staff needs to deal with the basic process. Chattin stated what has been created is revolutionary but it is a messy process getting to where it needs to go. Chattin commented that the JPB should have their own staff and the City should advocate for that staff to be located in City Hall.

Johnson stated that the JPB members have regressed to being a bit territorial. He suggested that HRDC as a neutral party guide the JPB through the next phase.

Hellquist stated that the issue is that the Council has never stated what they would like to see happen with the JPB and direction needs to come from the City.

Downs asked how the eight members were arrived at for the JPB. Hellquist replied that he had suggested four members made up of the three council members on the Public Affairs Committee and the Mayor and two from each of the townships on the Board.

Meuers stated that it is crucial that the JPB think of themselves as one group, -- as the City of Bemidji.

Downs agreed that it made sense to locate at City Hall as it is centrally located.

Erickson asked what the advantage is for the townships to hold the planning commission meetings at their town halls. Johnson stated that some individuals in the townships felt they were losing their control. Erickson stated that just experiencing what it will be like to have a meeting at each hall will give everyone an idea about location.

Flathers stated that it is how the questions get framed -- if you ask, how do you provide the best customer service, perhaps a different answer would be arrived at.

Felix asked what the Council can do to help the JPB members with a vision of what the City wants the planning department to look like in two years. Markeson commented that he would like to find the most efficient way to provide the services and sees it much as it is today.

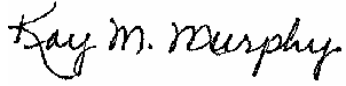
Johnson suggested that the Council appoint an alternate JPB member that would attend the meetings when a full-time member is unable to attend. Felix will check the Joint Powers Agreement. The Mayor will discuss this at the next JPB meeting.

Albrecht stated that the planning staff would like to continue to work for the City of Bemidji.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, motion by Meuers, second by Johnson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kay M. Murphy".

Kay M. Murphy  
City Clerk