

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
Regular Meeting - January 3, 2006

Pursuant to due call and notice, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, January 3, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

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

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

Lehmann called for any amendments to the agenda. The following addition was requested:

10a. 2006 work sessions topics

Motion by Meuers, second by Downs, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

MINUTES

Minutes of the December 19, 2005 regular meeting was presented for approval. Motion by Erickson, second by Meuers, to approve the minutes with two corrections as noted. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following Consent Agenda items were presented for approval. Motion by Downs, second by Johnson, to approve the Consent Agenda items as follows:

1. Approved Claims submitted by the Finance Officer in the total amount of \$618,556.53.
2. Approved miscellaneous business licenses.
3. Approved designation of Jerry Downs as President Pro-tem.
4. Approved designation of Bemidji Pioneer as the official newspaper of publication.
5. Approved **RESOLUTION NO. 5293** designating depositories for City Funds in 2006.
6. Approved **RESOLUTION NO. 5294** declaring part-time police officer status for two new part-time police officers and requesting PERA membership.
7. Approved **RESOLUTION NO. 5295** approving an application for gambling permit for the American Legion Post No. 14.

Motion carried by unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Work Session Schedule for 2006

Lehmann reviewed the work session schedule for 2006 and subject to change as the year progresses.

Johnson asked if the topics to be scheduled were hot issues. Minke stated that topics to be scheduled are topics that he thought the Council should devote a work session or portion of a work session to in 2006. He stated that for refuse in particular, the Council should go through a detailed analysis of our costs and expenses and look at a long-term plan. Discussion continued on the library and the next steps. Meuers stated that the Public Affairs Committee will discuss the library issue at their next meeting on January 10.

2006 Labor Negotiations

Lehmann reviewed the council agenda item regarding 2006 Labor Negotiations. He commented that Minke and Eischens have offered to take the lead on the negotiations and he felt they have built a good relationship with the unions and the Council.

Erickson stated that every so often the City should consider an outside negotiator or an external negotiator. She stated that it provides a disinterested party who comes from outside and does an independent negotiation for the City. Erickson commented that she felt the Coalition's fees are not exorbitant. The Coalition informed her that they average 16-25 hours per negotiation. She stated that in visiting with the Coalition they stated they have access to additional data that the City would normally not have during negotiations, they are practiced negotiators and negotiate for other cities as well.

Lehmann stated that the City has had good success and have built a positive relationship with our unions using staff to negotiate. He commented that it will take a similar amount of staff time to negotiate contracts whether we have an outside consultant or we use staff. Lehmann commented that staff has a good handle on the City's finances and the wishes of the Council. Lehmann stated that he would like to see the Council continue negotiations using staff.

Minke stated that one should use an outside consultant to do that which your in-house staff cannot do as well, otherwise you are wasting money. If there is a union that staff can settle relatively easily within the parameters set by the Council, you would not pay someone. This would not be the best use of City resources. He stated that in the past when the City came into a situation either because of an area of labor law or they get to the point of mediation and arbitration, staff has made that call to bring in the expertise of a labor attorney and has wisely spent the City's money to get that expertise where it is needed without spending it where it is not.

Erickson commented that this Council does not know what it is like to have an outside negotiator.

Lehmann responded that he has had experience using an outside negotiator and found they were no further ahead or further behind then when staff started doing the negotiating.

Markeson asked if the City had any access to information about what the City has done as opposed to what other cities have done.

Minke replied that the City has access to comparative data. He stated that the Council should have at least one work session before negotiations begin to identify what the Council wants. Minke stated that if the Council wants good negotiations, then it must be prepared.

Erickson commented that the Council was presented in the past a historical percentage of pay increases over the years and suggested that this data would assist Council in making decisions. Comparing what has happened in recent history and how things were handled in the 90's when there was an outside negotiator.

Downs commented that he would like to see a "report card" on how the City has done over the past few years.

Eischens commented that the Council adopted a revised pay schedule and the City developed comparable cities for this study. This pay equity study was for all city positions and he recommended that the Council use the same cities as used for pay equity study for negotiations.

Motion by Downs, second by Erickson, to hire an outside consultant to do the negotiations for the upcoming union contracts. Motion carried with the following vote: Ayes: Erickson, Downs, Markeson and Johnson. Nays: Hellquist, Meuers and Lehmann.

Lehmann directed staff to do a Request for Proposal to hire a consultant to do negotiations for union contracts.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- January 9 work session – Pre-Audit Discussion

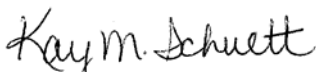
COUNCIL/STAFF REPORT

- Minke reviewed the brochure on Open Meeting Law. Commissions and committees will get this brochure at their first meeting of the year. Heritage Preservation will be doing a strategic planning on January 17. He commented that there will be an appreciation open house for commissions/committees on January 23 at City Hall 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- Lehmann stated that the Governor will be in Bemidji on January 6 at the Northwest Technical College.
- Markeson stated that Bemidji Day at Capitol is March 28.
- Erickson commented that the Deer Committee met recently and the estimated number of deer per square mile is 93.
- Johnson asked how 24th Street process is proceeding. Felix updated the Council stating that he has been attempting to meet with the property owners and will bring an update to the Council in the future.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Downs, second by Markeson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay Murphy-Schuett
City Clerk