

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Work Session – January 12, 2015

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, January 12, 2015, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Albrecht presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Albrecht, Meehlhause (arrived at 5:40 p.m.), Hellquist, Johnson, Olson, Erickson, Larson

Staff Present:

City Attorney Alan Felix, Finance Director Ron Eischens, Public Works Director/City Engineer Craig Gray, Fire Chief Dave Hoefler, Police Chief Mike Mastin, Parks & Recreation Director Marcia Larson, GIS Coordinator Brett Case, City Clerk Kay Murphy

Mayor Albrecht stated that the purpose of the work session was to review the 2016 Financial Management Plan with city staff.

What is a Financial Management Plan

Eischens stated that the Council approved the 2015 City budget and the discussion is beginning earlier because the Council had expressed interest in developing a longer term budget focus. He stated that the “budget process” should be referred to as a Financial Management Plan (FMP). The term budget implies a less sophisticated as well as year to year process. The goal is to plan a longer term approach to operational costs as well as the CIP. He outlined the advantages of FMP which integrates the Capital Improvement Plan; the current and future debt, staffing needs, future operating expense and growth assumptions and projected future tax base growth. Benefits include:

- Focus on the big picture and policy issues
- Allows the Council to focus on long-term financial health of the City
- Identify funding source for projects/items that are considered a priority
- Evaluate financial impacts on taxpayers

Eischens stated bottomline this is a plan. If the Council sets priorities and assumptions, completing the budget is a less stressful process for all. Projects get completed and the City has a vehicle to inform residents on the goals of the City.

Current Issues

Eischens prepared a list of items that City staff have on their radar in the near future, along with a brief explanation. No decisions were being asked for at the meeting but Council discussion.

Neilson Reise Arena

Eischens stated that the facility is in need of major repairs and renovations in the future. Costs to renovate and upgrade the facility range from \$2.2 million to \$3.5 million depending on desired outcome.

Parks & Recreation Director Larson stated that the arena’s floor was replaced in 2005 and is in good shape. As far as day to day operations, her staff is keeping a closer eye on the plant.

Johnson suggested that partnering with the community arena or adding another sheet of ice on the Sanford Center. He stated that the rink generates revenue for the community and perhaps the hospitality tax would be supported by the Chamber if it was not just for the Sanford Center.

Erickson stated that the Council needs to have a formal vote on whether to keep the arena. Gray commented that the Council will have an opportunity to vote as they consider replacement of the dehumidifier and purchase of a Zamboni.

South Shore Marina/Day Docks

Eischens noted that \$100,000 has been set aside to complete Phase I of a marina/day dock in 2015 with an additional \$100,000 included in the CIP for future expansion.

Erickson stated that there has never been a formal vote on a marina or day dock and was not in favor of a marina. She would support a day dock for the public to use.

Gray observed that with the potential funding for cleanup of the lakebed, installation of docks should wait until after that is completed. He recommended that the 10' access trail to the bike trail from the parking lot area be completed.

It was the consensus of the Council that the Public Works Committee discuss and make a recommendation on the marina/day dock options.

Sanford Center Water Leak

Felix provided a brief update on the status of the water leaks at the Sanford Center. He stated that hopefully one has been addressed and work continues on the other two. Estimated costs are unknown at this time.

Personnel / Union Contracts

Eischens stated that union contracts will expire the end of 2015 and asked what, if anything, the Council wanted the interim management team to do in preparation. **Council directed staff to gather settlement information from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities as well as get a proposal from Springsted to do a market value pay scale comparison.**

Council discussed the following items:

- **South Shore Park** – Legacy funding that the City applied for was not granted and the development of the park on the south shore is unlikely to occur until funding is available.
- **Land Bond Payments** – Eischens noted that long-term the vacant land for sale might not generate the \$6 million necessary to make the remaining bond payments.
- **GIS Website Update** – GIS Coordinator Case stated that is important to explore other website development and maintenance options as the current internet mapping service is obsolete and difficult to maintain. Council agreed that Case should continue to work with the County on exploring options this year and implement end of 2015.
- **Police Body Worn Cameras** – Chief Mastin recommended waiting until litigation on data requests are resolved in other cities.
- **Overtime** – Chief Mastin stated that because of turnover and retiring police officers the police department budget absorbed overtime. Mastin stated that the police department will be requesting an increase of \$70,000 in overtime, back to the 2008 level.
- **Fire Marshal Position** – Fire Chief Hoefler stated that a Fire Marshal would provide a more effective fire prevention program through education and code information. The Fire Chief was asked to explore fees to assist with the cost of this position. This issue will be discussed with the Rural Fire Association.
- **Fire Station #2** – It was noted that the building cost is \$1.2 million and will not require additional staff or equipment. Chief Hoefler believed that it would be a “wash”.
- **Outdoor Warning Sirens** – Chief Hoefler stated that the study for the outdoor warning sirens is back and he will be bringing information to the February 2 Council meeting.
- **Bar Closing Time** – Discussed potentially changing the bar closing time from 2 a.m. to 1 a.m. Staff will prepare an ordinance for Council's consideration.

City Manager Search Update

City Clerk Murphy provided an update on the search for a new city manager. The City Council all will be involved in the review of the top ten candidates selected by Springsted. Copies of applicant resumes and screening questions will be sent to individual Council members to review. The final candidates will be selected and interviews by the Council and a couple staff members.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Hellquist, seconded by Olson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay M. Murphy
City Clerk