

# **CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**

## **BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA**

### **Regular Meeting – January 20, 2015**

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 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Albrecht presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Albrecht, Meehlhause, Johnson, Hellquist, Olson, Erickson, Larson

Staff Present: Public Works Director/City Engineer Craig Gray, Finance Director Ron Eischens, Parks & Recreation Director Marcia Larson, City Clerk Kay Murphy

#### **STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS**

Mayor Albrecht gave the annual State of the City Address stating the state of the City of Bemidji is strong and vibrant. There are opportunities and challenges for the city. She stated that we have opportunities for business expansion and growing regional clout. But the City also has challenges to fund services and manage the problems and expectations of a regional city. The full "State of the City Address" is on file in the Clerk's office.

#### **AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

Mayor Albrecht called for any amendments to the agenda. The following item was requested to be added to the agenda: A Resolution in Opposition of Proposed Legislative Levy Limits.

**Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Hellquist, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

#### **MINUTES**

The following minutes were presented for approval:

Council Meeting	January 5, 2015
Work Session	January 5, 2015

**Motion by Johnson, seconded by Meehlhause, to approve the minutes as prepared. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

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

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer in the amount of \$4,055,923.74
2. Claims Submitted by Venworks for the Sanford Center in the amount of \$107,459.37
3. General Business Licenses Renewals for 2015
4. 2015 Committee/Commission Appointments or Reappointments
5. **RESOLUTION NO. 5931:** Accepting Donation – Police Department
6. Travel Authorization – Bemidji Day at the Capitol – February 11 – Johnson, Albrecht, Meehlhause, Larson, Olson
7. Travel Authorization – Greater Minnesota Parks & Trails Legislative Action Day – February 10 - Olson

**Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

#### **CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA**

Kevin Waldhausen, 1428 Bixby Avenue NE, stated he was available to speak to the dehumidifier at the City arena when the Council got to that item.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORT**

Bemidji Youth Advisory Commission – Kelsey Cobenais, BYA representative, reported that four new members have been added to the Commission. The Healthy Living Event held on Saturday, January 17 had a number of good vendors but the attendance was low due to the weather.

**OLD BUSINESS****Nymore Area Small Cities Program**

Tim Flathers, HRDC, provided an overview a program to provide rehabilitation assistance to 15 low and moderate income home owners in a 43 block neighborhood in Nymore. In 2012, the tried to get resources for the Nymore neighborhood and were not approved as well as 2013. In 2014 the response was the application was “marginally competitive”. The proposal is due in late February and a public hearing will be set up prior to the application submission. Flathers stated that in visiting with the State they suggested two things: 1) narrow the target area which will improve the score; and 2) leverage other resources that are available. He stated that USDA is a federal agency provides grant funding for essential home improvements for populations 62 and over. People that are eligible for these funds the State would like them encouraged to use the USDA funding. Flathers stated that funds will be provided to 15 homeowners and leveraging for \$400,000. Discussion continued on who received the notice as well as number of homes in the target area.

**2015 Work Program**

Dave Hengel, Greater Bemidji, stated that the City of Bemidji makes an investment with Greater Bemidji in the amount of \$25,000 annually. He highlighted the focus on driving economy in Bemidji which fits nicely with what the City feels important. He highlighted 2014 accomplishments which included the purchase of the Mayflower building, land sales in the south shore and assisted with the application for the cleanup of the south shore lakebed. He updated on the progress being made at the Mayflower building which will be open March 1.

The 2015 work program initiatives include:

- Coordinate economic development working with the city as its economic development arm.
- Partnership with City’s real estate broker to market the city’s development properties, include the south shore and rail corridor properties.
- Test the concept of an entrepreneur “LaunchPad”. Begin a pilot project in 2015.
- Marketing “True North” and take advantage of the “halo effect” of the Gigazone announcement.
- Recruit targeted companies with a focus on data center and woody biomass.

**Neilson-Reise Arena Dehumidifier**

Parks & Trails Director Larson reviewed a proposal from Steven’s Engineering for design and construction services of a dehumidification system. The proposal includes replacement of the existing mechanical dehumidification system, replacement of ventilation and heating system and repairing door seals and caulk cracks in the envelope which allow humidity to infiltrate the building. Steven’s Engineering has extensive experience in design and construction services for all types of rink projects and has been involved in project at the Neilson Arena and the Sanford Center. The Parks & Trails Commission reviewed the proposal at their January 13 meeting and recommended the Council approve the proposal from Steven’s Engineering. The fee for professional services for design and construction is \$36,600 and reimbursable expenses not to exceed \$4,000.

Hellquist inquired if the dehumidification system would lessen the strain on the plant. Director Larson responded that without dehumidification working properly in the building the plant has to overcompensate and hopefully there will be energy benefits realized.

Councilor Larson asked what the big ticket items will be needed in the near future to keep the arena running. Director Larson responded the plant will need to be replaced in the future. Cost to upgrade the current facility range between \$3 million to \$4 million. A new facility is estimated to cost in excess of \$7 million.

Discussion followed on other options for ice in the community. Waldhausen stated that the Bemidji Community Arena (BCA) has considered summer ice but the arena was not designed for it. He further stated that the BCA have hopes and dreams to build a second sheet of ice that perhaps could provide summer ice. He stated there is a lot of rental pressure at the City rink year-round.

Hellquist asked if the community arena could accommodate figure skating club. Waldhausen replied that, in his opinion, he highly doubted it even if there was a second ice as the youth hockey utilizes all four sheets of ice available in the community.

Meehlhause stated that BFSC President indicated to him that there would be no figure skating club if the City arena closed. Waldhausen agreed the use of the arena is beyond hockey there are camps that come from Canada as it is the only summer ice available in the

region and stated that the arena has a significant economic impact. Discussion continued regarding the skating club and funding.

Erickson stated that this is just the start of the cost for this facility and there is no funding. Erickson commented that not all residents realize economic impact as many of the residents are on fixed income.

Meehlhause commented that the mission of the City of Bemidji is: “provide essential services and fun for our regional community”.

Johnson believed that an economic impact study would be helpful in getting support for the idea of a hospitality tax. Discussion followed regarding potential monies that might be available from a Mighty Duck grant.

Erickson noted that the current system is 50 years old and way past its life according to the study. She observed that the Council has never taken a “formal” vote on whether it is going to save the arena. Erickson asked if the dehumidification system was replaced, would that extend the life of the plant. Director Larson replied that the plant is monitored closely and maintained to ensure it operates efficiently but she could not say if it will last 5 years or longer.

Hellquist asked if Neilson Foundation had been approached for funding. Director Larson stated she has not and would be glad to when directed by the Council. Mayor Albrecht suggested that a more thorough plan be in place before approaching potential partners.

**Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Olson, to approve a contract with Steven’s Engineering for a fixed fee of \$35,600 for design and construction and reimbursable expenses not to exceed \$4,000. Motion carried with the following vote: Ayes: Larson, Meehlhause, Olson, Albrecht, Johnson. Nays: Erickson, Hellquist.**

#### Meeting Time

**Motion by Hellquist, seconded by Olson, to change the Regular Council Meeting time to 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. effective February 2, 2015. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### Northern Dental Access Center

Jeanne Edevold Larson, M.S., Executive Director with Northern Dental Access Center, briefly reviewed their proposal to build a new facility to better serve the community and requesting the City of Bemidji support their official application for State Capital Appropriation in the 2015 Legislative Session.

**RESOLUTION NO. 5932: A Resolution Supporting Official Application for State Capital Appropriate in the 2015 Legislative Session for the Development and Construction of a Facility for the Mississippi Headwaters Area Dental Health Center Doing Business as the Northern Dental Access Center and is Located in Bemidji was offered by Councilmember Hellquist, who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Erickson was passed by unanimous vote.**

##### Proposed Levy Limits

**RESOLUTION NO. 5933: A Resolution in Opposition of Proposed Legislative Levy Limits was offered by Councilmember Meehlhause, who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Johnson was passed by unanimous vote.**

#### **ORDINANCE**

Pursuant to published notice, a Public Hearing was held to receive input regarding an Ordinance Amending an Uncoded Section of Bemidji City Code Pertaining to Alley and Street Vacation (Old MnDOT Site). Mayor Albrecht opened the Public Hearing at 8:49 p.m., hearing no comments the public hearing was closed.

**AN ORDINANCE** Amending an Uncoded Section of Bemidji City Code Pertaining to Alley and Street Vacation (Old MnDOT Site) was given a second reading.

#### **UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- Monday, February 2      6:00 p.m.      Council Meeting
- Monday, February 9      5:30 p.m.      Work Session – City Manager Search

#### **COUNCIL/STAFF REPORT**

- Council members provided updates on current events and meetings.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, motion by Olson, seconded by Meehlhause, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay M. Murphy  
City Clerk