

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Regular Meeting – January 22, 2019

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 22, 2019 at 6:05 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Albrecht presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Albrecht, Meehlhause, Beard, Johnson, Rivera, Erickson, Thompson

Staff Present: City Manager Nate Mathews, Finance Director Ron Eischens, City Attorney Alan Felix, Public Works Director/City Engineer Craig Gray, Assistant City Engineer Sam Anderson, Parks & Recreation Director Marcia Larson, City Clerk Michelle Miller

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

Mayor Albrecht called for any amendments to the agenda. Rivera requested that the Gemmel Avenue street improvement project be added for reconsideration. **Motion by Johnson, seconded by Thompson to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

MINUTES

The following minutes were presented for approval:

Council Meeting: January 7, 2019
Annual BEDA: January 7, 2019

Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Thompson, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Erickson requested the payment to Greater Bemidji from the City of Bemidji Bill List be pulled for discussion. The following Consent Agenda items were presented for approval. **Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Rivera, to approve the Consent Agenda items as follows:**

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer in the amount of \$3,572,462.22
2. Claims Submitted by VenuWorks for the Sanford Center in the amount of \$59,481.37
3. General Business License Approvals for 2019
4. Annual Appointments and Reappointments for City Boards/Commissions
5. Approve Interest Rate Reduction on Senior Citizen Deferred Connection Charge
6. Purchase of Tractor and Mower from JD Hansen Construction (\$91,318)
7. **RESOLUTION NO. 6208:** Amending Taxicab Fares for First City Taxi
8. Approve Transfer of Liquor License from Rautio Industries Inc. to Winkk Inc.
9. Travel Authorization – Experienced Officials Leadership Conference (Plymouth), February 1-2, 2019 – Johnson
10. Travel Authorization – Experienced Officials Leadership Conference (Brainerd), February 22-23, 2019 – Albrecht
11. Travel Authorization – Newly Elected Officials Leadership Conference (Brainerd), February 22-23, 2019 – Beard & Rivera

Motion carried by unanimous vote.

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

No appearance

REPORTS

Bemidji Youth Advisory Commission – No appearance.

Greater Bemidji – Dave Hengel, Executive Director of Greater Bemidji provided an update on economic development projects Greater Bemidji has helped implement and the impact those projects will have on the tax base. He also provided a list of businesses that were helped by the Launchpad program as either an expansion or a start-up. Hengel also provided an Action Plan for 2019. Hengel sought input from the Council regarding challenges it faces as well as topics that Greater Bemidji should focus on.

Council discussed the following:

- Albrecht stated that the water and the waste water capacity issues will be a challenge for the city in the coming years.

- Rivera suggested rejuvenating a day labor program.
- Albrecht identified the need to reduce the taxpayer share on supporting the Sanford Center and having a more sustainable funding source, which might include the potential of a hospitality tax, and the Council would like support from Greater Bemidji.
- Meehlhause identified the conversation regarding racial diversity in the community.
- Rivera suggested diversity of board membership.
- Meehlhause suggested that conversations around an “amateur sports commission” should include all forms of sports as well as academics.

OLD BUSINESS

Gemmel Avenue Street Improvement Project

Motion by Thompson, seconded by Rivera to reconsider changes to the Gemmel Avenue 2019 Street Improvement Project. Motion passed by the following votes: Ayes: Meehlhause, Beard, Johnson, Rivera, Erickson, Thompson. Nays: Albrecht.

Rivera and Thompson commented on the concerns from residents regarding the narrowing of the street, in particular the corner of Gemmel Avenue from Highway 197. Anderson, Assistant City Engineer, provided a map showing the proposed narrowing of the street. Off of Highway 197 the road is currently 35’ and most of that will remain at 35’ going up the hill and around the corner of Gemmel Avenue and then narrow to 30 feet for the remainder of the street.

Mayor Albrecht opened for additional comments at 7:13 p.m. with the following comments:

- Linda Lemmer, 155 Gemmel Avenue, expressed concern for the narrowing of Gemmel Avenue going up the hill and around the corner and is asking that the 35 feet street width continue for a longer distance passed the corner.
- Adam Steele, 189 Gemmel Avenue, expressed opposition to the reconstruction of Gemmel Avenue, narrowing of the street and calendar parking.

Hearing no further comments, Albrecht closed the additional comment period at 7:29 p.m.

Motion by Rivera, seconded by Thompson to direct staff to design the width of Gemmel Avenue to match the existing width. Motion failed by the following vote: Ayes: Rivera, Thompson, Meehlhause. Nays: Erickson, Beard, Johnson, Albrecht. Absent: None.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss 2019 Legislative Priorities

Mathews noted that with the 2019 CGMC Legislative Action Day coming up, he thought it would be a good idea to discuss what priorities the city would like to focus on with legislators. Albrecht noted items of importance include: LGA Funding, infrastructure, street improvements, clean water and child care.

Discuss Appointments to Joint Planning Agreement Renewal Committee

Albrecht stated that at the January 9, 2019 meeting with Northern Township both LGUs conveyed that they are interested in continuing the joint planning relationship and that the joint planning renewal committee should begin meeting to discuss the terms of that agreement. In the past, Albrecht and Erickson sat on that committee and it is recommended that they continue. Consensus of the Council was to appoint Albrecht and Erickson to the Joint Planning Agreement Renewal Committee.

Greater Bemidji Payment

Erickson stated that she pulled this payment to state that although she supports paying this bill this year, with the decision to hire a community development director, future budget allocations to Greater Bemidji might have to be used to support the costs of the community development director.

Motion by Erickson, seconded by Meehlhause to pay the Greater Bemidji invoice in the amount of \$30,000. Motion carried.

ORDINANCES

Ordinance Amending the City of Bemidji Council-Manager Charter Amending Section 2.03 (Council Composition and Election)

Felix stated that over the past year the Charter Commission has researched and discussed a proposal to increase the Mayoral term from two year to four years. Additionally, if passed, the term would coincide with the Presidential Election, beginning in 2020, which has a higher voter turnout than midterm elections. Erickson stated that she will not support this Charter Amendment and believes that this kind of amendment should be changed by the voters.

Albrecht stated that running every four years instead every two years can help “de-politicize” the position by not having to be in campaign mode every two years.

Having no council support to conduct the first reading of the Ordinance Amending the City of Bemidji Council-Manager Charter Amending Section 2.03 (Council Composition and Election), the ordinance was sent back to the Charter Commission for additional review and consideration.

AN ORDINANCE Amending Chapter 12 of the Bemidji City Code, Article XIX Entitled “Tobacco”, related to Minimum Age for Sales of Tobacco-Related Products was given a first reading.

AN ORDINANCE Amending an Uncoded Section of Bemidji City Code Pertaining to Alley Vacations (Lot 9, Finseth’s 2nd Addition to Nymore) was given a first reading.

Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 of the Bemidji City Code Entitled, “Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places” by Adding Section Relating to Permitting of “Special Events”

Felix and Erickson stated that the Public Works Committee had an opportunity to meet and discuss with various event organizers regarding their questions and concerns with the proposed Special Events ordinance. Concerns that came out of the meeting dealt with the requirement of obtaining “consent” for the street closure, the number of cones needed and posting of no parking signs.

Pursuant to published notice, a continued Public Hearing was held to receive input regarding an Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 of the Bemidji City Code Entitled, “Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places” by Adding Section Relating to Permitting of “Special Events”. Mayor Albrecht reopened the Public Hearing at 8:19 p.m.

- Deb Pfaff, 1411 America Avenue, representing the Bemidji Chamber, expressed the need for more time to review the proposed ordinance and to obtain input from all community event leaders
- Josh Peterson, 3170 Snowmass Drive, representing the Jaycees, expressed concern for the required number of cones for street closures
- Char Blashill, Jaycees, also expressed concern or the required number of cones for street closures and is also requesting more time to review the proposed ordinance
- Gary Johnson, Paul Bunyan Communications, expressed needing more time for event organizers to review the ordinance. Johnson will also contact Felix with some suggested changes to the ordinance.

Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Thompson, continuing the public hearing and second reading of an Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 of the Bemidji City Code Entitled, “Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places” by Adding Section Relating to Permitting of “Special Events” to March 4, 2019. Motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance Amending Chapter 14, Article II, Section 35 of the Bemidji City Code Entitled, “Rules and Regulations Governing Public Parks”

Pursuant to published notice, a continued Public Hearing was held to receive input regarding an Ordinance Amending Chapter 14, Article II, Section 35 of the Bemidji City Code Entitled, “Rules and Regulations Governing Public Parks”. Mayor Albrecht reopened the Public Hearing at 8:36 p.m., hearing no comments the public hearing was closed at 8:37 p.m.

AN ORDINANCE Amending Chapter 14, Article II, Section 35 of the Bemidji City Code Entitled, “Rules and Regulations Governing Public Parks” was given a second reading.

UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Monday, January 28 5:30 p.m. Work Session – Ice Feasibility Study
- Monday, February 4 5:00 p.m. Council Pictures
- Monday, February 4 6:00 p.m. Council Meeting
- Monday, February 11 5:30 p.m. Work Session – Snow Removal/Sidewalks
Community Visioning/Engagement
- Tuesday, February 19 6:00 p.m. Council Meeting
- Monday, February 25 5:30 p.m. Work Session – Railroad Corridor

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORT

- Council members and staff provided updates on current issues and meetings.
- Erickson stated that Beltrami County reduced its share to the Library budget.
- Mathews advised of potential concerns with the Greater Bemidji Alliance and how it might affect the Visit Bemidji contract with the City.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Rivera, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle R. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk