

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
Work Session – Monday, October 22, 2018

Pursuant to due call and notice, a special work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, October 22, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of City Hall, Mayor Albrecht presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Albrecht, Meehlhause, Hellquist, Johnson, Lehmann, Erickson, Larson. Absent: None.

Staff Present: City Manager Nate Mathews, City Attorney Al Felix, Public Works Director/Engineer Craig Gray

Mayor Albrecht stated the purpose of the work session was to discuss an Ottertail Power 40kw solar array project and community visioning discussion.

Ottertail Power 40kw Solar Array Project

Mathews stated that over the past few months he has been discussing possible sites with Roger Garton of Ottertail Power for a 40kw solar array project to be constructed and owned by Ottertail Power. Additionally, the City has an opportunity to construct a publicly owned 40kw solar project on the same property which Ottertail would pay up to 50% of project costs. The two potential feasible sites is near the Sanford Center on 1st Street E and one is west of Paul Bunyan Drive, south of the Candlewood Inn and Suites. Ottertail Power would be seeking a low cost land purchase or lease arrangement for the chosen site. The list price on the South Shore property is \$282,000. They hope to construct the project in 2019 with a 25 year project life. If the City chooses to construct their own solar array, it would own and maintain it and if located near the Sanford Center, Ottertail Power would net meter it to the Sanford Center for approximate utility savings of \$3,600 per year. The cost to the City would be \$57,750 plus the value of the land. Felix stated that BEDA would need to transfer title to the City if council decides they would like to partner with Ottertail. More information is needed before the City can make any decisions. Felix suggested having a BEDA meeting with the broker to discuss the value of land on 1st Street East.

Community Visioning Discussion

As a follow up to the Bemidji Alliance presentation made on October 1 and the council retreat on October 3; it was suggested to have a larger community discussion regarding a comprehensive Bemidji Visioning and Community Engagement initiative. Hellquist and Meehlhause stated that the city has some major decisions to make in the near future but sees the importance in a community visioning discussion to engage the community on the issues the city is facing and how to move forward. The benefit of a "Bemidji Alliance" could help with engagement and getting the word out to the community. Albrecht suggested that the City might take the lead on conducting a community visioning/strategic plan process.

Adjourn

There being no further business, motion by Lehmann, seconded by Meehlhause, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk