

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
Special Meeting/Work Session – November 28, 2016

Pursuant to due call and notice, a special meeting/work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, November 28, 2016, 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, Johnson, Hellquist, Olson, Erickson, Larson

Staff Present: City Manager Nate Mathews, City Attorney Alan Felix, Public Works/City Engineer Craig Gray, Finance Director Ron Eischens, City Clerk Kay Murphy

JPB Staff Present: Planning Director Casey Mai, Assistant Planner Corey Boushee

Others Present: School Board Members – Ann Long Voelkner and Jeff Haack; ISD #31 Director of Business Services Chris Leinen, Karvakko Engineering Mike Karvakko

Mayor Albrecht stated that the purpose of the special work session was to discuss the Gene Dillion elementary school proposed to be built on Division Street in Grant Valley Township.

Mathews provided background and noted that the County has established seventeen (17) conditions as part of the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the Gene Dillion School. He suggested that the Council discuss the following three items: 1) review the utility extension costs and determine if interested; 2) annexation timeline and desired area; and 3) the level of involvement by the Joint Planning Board in this project.

Gray reviewed the estimated cost to extend water and sewer utilities from BHS to Adams Avenue. Initially, the cost was estimated to be \$400,000; however, the County since has informed him that they will not be removing all of the blacktop between Adams Avenue and the Hwy 197 ramps. The cost for estimated additional road work is estimated at \$60,000. In addition, he noted that there are six parcels on the north side of Division Street that currently do not have services from the existing watermain from the High School to the ramp. The estimate to provide services lines to these parcels is \$48,000. The new estimated total is \$508,000. He noted that one unknown is the cost of dewatering, if needed.

Gray described the extension of the utility mains to the new school site utilizing the shoulder of the road for the sewer line and the ditch for the watermain. If the City were to extend those services, it would cost an estimated \$902,000 of which \$281,000 is the City's costs, i.e., fire hydrants and service lines to adjoining properties.

Johnson stated that he felt that only annexing the road and the school site was "shortsighted". Johnson further stated that there is logic to look at extending services to the school site as it will benefit the school district.

Mayor Albrecht stated that she sensed growth will not happen due to the school but will be impacted due to the increase of the traffic on Division Street. She suggested that perhaps the city would be willing if the school is willing to participate in some of the cost.

School Board Member Ann Long Voelkner stated that she would be willing to bring back the request to share in the cost to the school's facilities committee and discuss it further with the School Board.

Gray stated that if the utilities are extended to the school and all the services lines, both would belong to the City and maintained by the City as well as the lift station within the right-of-way.

Further discussion followed regarding extension of city utilities to the school site. Concerns were expressed by various Council members regarding the cost of extending services to the school site which could result in large rate increases to city utility customers. Consensus of the Council was to extend the water and sewer utilities to Adams Avenue. The extension of water lines to Adams Avenue is in the CIP in the amount of \$400,000. Eischens suggested

that additional funds needed for the project could be a combination of future rate increases or the Council could defer another CIP project.

Felix noted that the school is a public entity and as such is required to follow state statutes and cannot pay more than they would benefit.

Motion by Erickson, seconded by Hellquist, to extend City water and sewer to Adams Avenue and no further. Motion carried with the following vote: Ayes: Meehlhause, Erickson, Larson, Hellquist, Olson, Albrecht. Nays: Johnson.

Annexation

Mayor Albrecht asked the Council to consider when the annexation of the school site be required to be annexed into city limits, immediately or later.

Felix stated that there are two methods of annexation. First method is an orderly annexation agreement with Grant Valley Township and the second method, would be property owner petition.

Discussion continued regarding the CUP issued by the County and the what the difference the requirements are between County and the Joint Planning. Mathews recently reviewed the CUP with County and Joint Planning staff.

Casey Mai provided a letter to the Council outlining a list of proposed zoning considerations that could be included in an agreement for annexation or the extension of utility services to the site. Some of the concerns were exterior storage, landscaping requirements, lighting and parking standards.

Mayor Albrecht commented that the school chose this location as Grant Valley doesn't have zoning requirements. She further stated that she was disappointed that the County was not willing to apply for a grant to create pedestrian ways.

Long Voelkner stated that the move was not to avoid zoning but to provide the best location for the elementary school. Chris Leinen stated that annexation of the site would create additional fees as well as the half cent sales tax on building materials. He noted that the school district can meet 90% of the described zoning requirements and other requirements noted were not insurmountable. Bids for the new building will be opened on December 8 with a start date in the spring.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Larson, to develop a municipal services agreement with the School District, including input from Joint Planning Board staff, that would require annexation of the school property to occur prior to hookup to municipal utilities. Motion carried unanimously.

Casey Mai will bring a draft municipal services agreement to the next Joint Planning Board meeting for their review.

Discussion regarding another meeting was held and the City Manager was asked to arrange another meeting between the City, School District and County.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Olson, seconded by Meehlhause, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay M. Murphy
City Clerk