

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Regular Meeting – December 16, 2013

Pursuant to due call and notice, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, December 16, 2013 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, Olson, Erickson, Thompson Absent: Hellquist

Staff Present: City Manager John Chattin, Public Works Director/City Engineer Craig Gray, Finance Director Ron Eischens, City Clerk Kay Murphy

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

Mayor Albrecht called for any amendments to the agenda. The following item was added to New Business: Consider a request from the Beltrami County History Center.

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

MINUTES

The following minutes were presented for approval:

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| Council Meeting | December 2, 2013 |
| Sp Joint Meeting | December 2, 2013 |
| Work Session | December 9, 2013 |

Motion by Erickson, seconded by Thompson, to approve the minutes as prepared. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. Claims submitted by the Finance Officer in the total amount of \$439,438.71
2. Claims Submitted by Venuworks for the Sanford Center in the amount of \$105,224.32
3. Approving Miscellaneous Business License Renewals for 2014
4. Liquor License Renewals for 2014
5. **RESOLUTION NO. 5863:** Establishing Non-Union Salaries and City Pay Scale for 2014

Motion carried by unanimous vote.

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

No one appeared.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Bemidji Youth Advisory Commission – Meehlhause stated that the Commission discussed with the Mayor developing a “Mayor’s Youth Award” which would recognize outstanding youth in our community. In addition, they are having a membership drive with a mid-year application which is available on the City’s website.

Sustainability Committee/GreenStep Cities

Erika Bailey-Johnson, Sustainability Coordinator BSU, provided some background information stating that the City of Bemidji passed Resolution No. 5647 in February 6, 2012 authorizing the City to participate in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities Program.

Sara Dennison, Green Corps Living Green Member, reported on the current achievements in the GreenStep Cities Program. Bemidji is at Step 2 and the goal is to complete Best Practices 20, 24 and 25 this year. Discussion continued regarding the reduction of grease in wastewater. Their goal is to reduce it by 10% and they are working with the staff at the wastewater treatment facility.

Mayor Albrecht suggested that the Sustainability Committee provide a quarterly report to the City Council.

BSU Student Senate – Kari Cooper, Co-President, stated that their goal this year is to be more engaged civically. She listed a number of initiatives that the Senate is working on including promoting sustainability by reducing the use of water bottles, collecting box tops for education, etc.

PUBLIC HEARING

Capital Improvement Plan

Pursuant to published notice a public hearing was held regarding input on the 2014 to 2018 Capital Improvement Plan. Mayor Albrecht opened the Public Hearing at 7:26 p.m.

Eischens stated that the CIP is a long term planning guide for construction projects and equipment purchases over a five year period. He noted that next year the Capital Improvement Plan will include capital expenditures for the Sanford Center.

With no further comments Mayor Albrecht closed the public hearing at 7:28 p.m.

RESOLUTION NO. 5864: Adopting the 2014 to 2018 Capital Improvement Plan was offered by Councilmember Erickson who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Meehlhause was passed the following vote: Ayes: Erickson, Johnson, Thompson, Albrecht, Olson, Meehlhause. Absent: Hellquist.

NEW BUSINESS

Final 2013 Tax Levy Collectible in 2014

RESOLUTION NO. 5865: Establishing the Final 2013 Tax Levy Collectible in 2014 in the amount of \$4,169,936 was offered by Councilmember Meehlhause who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Thompson was passed by the following vote: Ayes: Meehlhause, Thompson, Erickson, Johnson, Olson, Albrecht. Absent: Hellquist.

2014 Final Budget

RESOLUTION NO. 5866: Approving the 2014 Final Budget was offered by Councilmember Erickson who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Olson by the following vote: Ayes: Thompson, Albrecht, Johnson, Meehlhause, Olson, Erickson. Absent: Hellquist.

Bemidji Pioneer Fire Department Relief Association

Bill Batchelder, President Pioneer Firefighters Relief Association, on behalf of the members of the Association respectfully requested the City Council to ratify an amendment to their by-laws which would provide a pension increase of \$250 per year of service effective January 1, 2014. He stated that at the present time the fund is 118% funded and with the proposed increase the Special Relief Fund is expected to maintain a minimum reserve of at least 5%. The current pension level is \$5,100 per year of service and if approved, the pension benefit level would be adjusted to \$5,350 per year of service.

Erickson asked why that the Pioneer Firefighters Relief Association comes to the City for ratification. Batchelder responded that it is not necessary but it would be irresponsible for our members to go into uncharted water without the City's oversight. Erickson stated it is possible for the Relief Association to not come before the City taxpayer but then the City would not guarantee their benefit should their mutual fund or investments not cover the amount of the pension. Batchelder agreed.

Erickson stated that the last time they came before the Council was 2007 and it was a \$950 per annum increase. The City is backing their pension benefit around \$2 million. If the market completely tanked, the taxpayer must, on an annual basis, make sure their funds are whole on an annual basis. The risk to the taxpayer for 40 on-call firefighters is a substantial amount and she stated she could not support their request.

Albrecht stated that the fund is funded at 118% currently and asked what their funding goal is. Batchelder stated they are working a pension benefit reserve policy. The policy statement will be an average of three years. Discussion continued regarding the history of funding and assistance by the City of Bemidji.

Motion by Johnson, seconded by Meehlhause, to ratify an amendment to Appendix A of the Bemidji Pioneer Relief Association by-laws to reflect a pension benefit increase of \$250 per year of service. Motion carried with the following vote: Ayes: Thompson, Johnson, Meehlhause, Albrecht, Olson. Nays: Erickson. Absent: Hellquist.

New Fire Station

Fire Chief Hoefer stated that the Fire Department's capital improvement plan includes the construction of a southeast fire station in 2016. The Department has completed a site assessment process to identify a suitable location for the station. Criteria used in selecting a site included location and access to good quality roads, access to city water and sanitary sewer and a minimum of one acre in size. After looking at approximately two dozen sites, a site was located at 312 Lake Avenue SE that meets the selection criteria and a purchase offer of \$28,500 has been made.

Chattin noted that the cost of proposed assessments for the two parcels total approximately \$8,300 and will be added to the cost as well as the water and sewer costs.

RESOLUTION NO. 5867: Authorizing purchase of property for a Fire Station (312 Lake Avenue SE) was offered by Councilmember Erickson who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Olson by the following vote: Ayes: Olson, Meehlhause, Thompson, Erickson, Albrecht, Johnson. Absent: Hellquist.

VenuWorks Business Plan 2014 Annual Budget

Curtis Webb, VenuWorks Executive Director, reviewed the 2014 Business Plan and Budget for the Sanford Center. He noted that the FY 2014 Budget for the Sanford Center reflects a \$22,403 lower subsidy for 2014 than in 2013. The total budget deficit is \$349,288. He reviewed highlights for the new fiscal year that include: Bemidji Axemen Indoor Professional Football, better quality concerts, increased economic driving events and increased weddings, meetings and banquets for 2014.

Olson asked Webb if he thought that the deficit for the Sanford Center will be decreased further. Webb responded that he could not promise a lower deficit but staff continues to do everything they can to run the facility efficiently. Discussion continued regarding the benefits that the Sanford Center brings to the community as well as employing 16 full-time and 72 part-time people.

Motion by Thompson, seconded by Johnson, approving the 2014 Sanford Center Business Plan and Budget. Motion carried unanimously.

Consultant Services - Paul Bunyan/Library Park

Parks & Recreation Director Larson stated that the Master Plans for Library/Paul Bunyan Park and South Shore Park were adopted by the Council on July 9, 2012. Based on available funding, priorities were identified by the Council on August 12, 2013. A request for professional services for the final design and construction of the Paul Bunyan/Library Park Project was sent out and four proposals were received. A Selection/Review Committee reviewed the applicants and recommend WSB/Widseth Smith Nolting as the consultants for the project. She stated that experience in regional park projects as well as waterfront projects were factors taken into consideration in selecting the consultant.

Erickson noted that although WSB/Widseth Smith Nolting was not the lowest bidder they were the lowest responsible bidder.

Motion by Erickson, seconded by Meehlhause, authorizing staff to enter into a consultant agreement with WSB and Associates, Inc. for design and bidding services in the amount of \$109,718 and construction services needed as identified by the Parks & Recreation Director. Motion carried unanimously.

Phone Upgrades - Library

Eischens noted that the phone system is included in the 2013 library budget.

Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Johnson, to authorize purchase a new telephone system for the Bemidji Public Library in the amount of \$4,501 from Arvig. Motion carried unanimously.

Beltrami County Historical Society

Mayor Albrecht relayed a request from the Beltrami County Historical Society for a Council liaison to their board which meets on the third Thursday of every month at 4:00 p.m. She asked that interested councilmembers let the City Clerk know.

UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Monday, January 6 5:30 p.m. Work Session – Senator Saxhaug
- Monday, January 6 7:00 p.m. Council Meeting

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORT

- Council members provided updates on current events and meetings.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Thompson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay M. Murphy
City Clerk