

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Work Session – Monday, December 9, 2019

Pursuant to due call and notice, a work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, December 9, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. in the 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, City Engineer Craig Gray, Community Development Director Steve Jones, City Attorney Al Felix, Park and Recreation Director Marcia Larson, Park Programming and Special Events Assistant Chris Richardson, Deputy City Clerk Bobbi Karpinski

Others: John Knorr, Bemidji Regional Airport Authority Chair

Mayor Albrecht stated the purpose of the work session was to get an update from the Recreation Department, discuss the Airport Authority and review information from Greater Bemidji.

Airport Authority

John Knorr spoke to the council asking if there was an interest from the Council to add two non-elected appointed members to the Airport Authority Board. He states the current board consists of four elected officials and one appointed. With five people on the board the potential for not having a quorum is possible. He also notes there is the possibility of having four newly elected members come to the board with no previous aviation knowledge or experience. Also, the at-large member is the chair and there is no mechanism to train anyone to step into that role. He will also be meeting with the County to discuss the matter.

Felix stated under the Airport Authority law, it is possible to have non-elected members be on the board. Prior to the Airport Authority there was an Airport Commission, made-up of five elected officials. Legislation created the opportunity to have an Airport Authority giving them the ability to have taxing authority.

Johnson stated the City has an alternate member so not having a quorum is rarely an issue. Concerning the terms of the elected officials, this could be a consideration when appointing those members to the board. Additionally, the Airport Advisory Commission provides support to the board.

Erickson stated that taxing decisions be made by a majority vote of non-elected officials which is the responsibility of elected officials and belongs in their hands. Although she is not in support of adding members, she wouldn't oppose it if the majority of the council felt there would be a benefit from this.

Consensus of the council was to not support the addition of two at large non-elected members and feels with the current management, Advisory Commission and Board are running efficiently; however, encouraged Mr. Knorr to speak with the County and get their thoughts.

Recreation Update

Marcia Larson, Parks and Recreation Director, presented an update on recreation activities over the past year. Kids in motion summer day camps continues to see the most growth with waiting lists for all 10 weeks. Next year the department will be offering two locations; City Park and Diamond Point Park. They continue to build relationships by partnering with area businesses and organizations. Over the past year the department received five grants and accepted donations from nineteen local business. Other accomplishments this year have been successfully updating the online application process with Rec Desk, the addition of a new full time staff member, new signage for easier access to the building and utilizing the Carnegie for programs and events.

Looking forward to 2020 they plan to offer a new Drumfit class, continue with more Rec on the Go events, continue to expand and pursue partnerships with area organizations and other townships, analyze current facilities and begin the process of finding new and better spaces to run programs more efficiently.

Greater Bemidji

Council proposed an MOU to Greater Bemidji who rejected the document and in return submitted a copy of Beltrami County's application without the financial information.

Council identified the following concerns and comments:

- \$30,000 has been budgeted for Greater Bemidji in 2020.
- Accountability of the recipient is crucial and quantifying economic development is difficult.
- The Council has talked about having an application for economic development dollars to create a formal process, increasing the money and opening it up to other organizations.
- The MOU attempted to formalize the communications framework and alleviate potential issues. If increasing funding were approved and open to other organizations it could be a universal document.

Mathews stated staff is seeking advice as to whether or not council wants an application process. Felix suggested the council has four options:

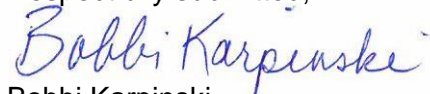
- Do what we have always done.
- Create a formal process with a contract.
- Develop an application process.
- Agree to an MOU.

Upon discussion council agreed to accept an application submitted by Greater Bemidji with the condition all financial documents indicated in the County application are also submitted. In 2020, council will re-visit creating an application process.

Adjourn

There being no further business, motion by Erickson, seconded by Meehlhause, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bobbi Karpinski
Deputy City Clerk