

# CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

## BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

### Regular Meeting – February 18, 2014

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, February 18, 2014 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, Hellquist, Olson, Erickson, Thompson

Staff Present: City Manager John Chattin, Finance Director Ron Eischens, Parks & Recreation Director Marcia Larson, City Clerk Kay Murphy

#### **AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

Mayor Albrecht called for any amendments to the agenda. **Motion by Johnson, seconded by Thompson, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

#### **MINUTES**

The following minutes were presented for approval:  
Council Meeting February 3, 2014

**Motion by Johnson, 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 Meehlhause, to approve the Consent Agenda items as follows:**

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer in the amount of \$488,235.24
2. Claims Submitted by Venuworks for the Sanford Center in the amount of \$67,624.71
3. General Business Licenses Renewals for 2014
4. **RESOLUTION NO. 5879:** In Support and Commitment for the East-West Trail Project and Authorization to Submit a Grant Application to the DNR Regional Trails Grant Program
5. Approval of a Phased Retirement Option Request
6. Approval of RFP for Public Art Project at the Wastewater Treatment Facility
7. Travel Authorization – Chamber Dinner (St. Paul) – February 25 – Albrecht
8. Travel Authorization – Bemidji Day at the Capitol 3/26/14 – Johnson, Meehlhause, Albrecht

**Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

#### **CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA**

No one appeared.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Bemidji Youth Advisory Commission – Vanessa Fairbanks, BYA representative, reported on their recent event, Valentine's Day Skate, which netted \$80. They plan to make this an annual event and will be doing a skate drive.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### Nice Ride

Tony Desnick, Director, Greater Minnesota Strategies Nice Ride Minnesota, stated that Nice Ride is coming to Bemidji this spring and will be the first pilot city in Greater Minnesota. He gave a brief overview stating that this is Nice Ride's fifth year in business. BC/BS, as part of their center for prevention, is very interested in spreading the benefits to this region. He stated that there will be five bike locations in Bemidji operated by a full-time staff person. One of their goals is to "drive" tourist traffic to Bemidji as a cycling destination.

Curt Wayne, HRDC Transportation Planner, stated that he is working with the local stakeholders, which includes BSU, the City, and Bemidji Downtown Alliance, in identifying routes and locations for the additional bike parking. A bike sharing like this is very unusual and there are a number of details. He noted that the Bemidji Downtown Alliance has submitted a letter to the City indicating their support for the "Nice Ride Bemidji" program.

The Committee is currently working with City staff in identifying locations for wayfinding signs and additional bike parking downtown.

Councilor Hellquist asked if Nice Ride would be promoting the use of helmets. Desnick responded that all bikes have headlights and taillights but the goal is to get people out riding bikes as it promotes better health. Discussion continued on the bike parking, rental costs, winter storage, etc. Mayor Albrecht stated that the Nice Ride Bemidji is good for Bemidji on many levels.

#### South Shore Survey

Madison Lewison and Chris Vinderslev, from Marketing Assistance and Research Solutions (MARS), Bemidji State University, jointly presented the results from the South Shore Survey. The City hired MARS to perform research to obtain community input about the proposed South Shore Park. Working with the City they developed a questionnaire. The questionnaire was mailed to 3,056 Bemidji residents. There were 824 responses which is a 29.96% response rate. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the respondents indicated they favored Option A. The swim beach was the highest ranked amenity, while the performance area the lowest priority. A picnic area was the most frequent requested item in the other amenity category. The average age of respondents was 58.35 years of age.

Councilor Olson stated that 27% of the respondents took the time to write in “do nothing” and asked if that would have been a higher response if it had been on the questionnaire? Dr. Dave Smith, BSU, responded that this option was not on there as the Council promised to deliver a beach.

Hellquist noted that of the 25 pages of written comments there were only 16 positive and 326 negative comments. Hellquist observed that one phone call equals one vote, one e-mail equals 10 votes and one written comment equals 100 votes. He asked if there was any credence that could be added with the written comments.

Vinderslev responded that the comments were compiled to give more information to the Council to base their decision on. Vinderslev further commented that each comment was from one respondent and each paragraph is one person.

Erickson asked if there was any way to relate the comments to the 27% that didn't want to do either option? Dr. Smith responded that the comments stood alone and there was no way to connect them or to know for sure.

Mayor Albrecht asked if the Parks & Trails Commission had any comments about the survey. Parks & Recreation Director Larson responded that the survey results were shared with the Commission but they have not discussed it yet.

#### Northwest Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Jamie Meyer, Program Director for NW Small Business Development Center, stated that their purpose is to provide resources to area businesses. She stated that they provide 1,000 hours of consulting to the Bemidji region and assist businesses by providing start-up assistance, financial projections, business plan development, business operations, cashflow management and financial analysis, as well as other services. These services are available at no cost to the businesses.

Tiffany Fettig, Headwaters Regional Development Commission, stated that she utilizes the SBDC for services for the City revolving loan fund as well as the HRDC. She further commented that the SBDC provides an invaluable service to our area.

Erickson noted that the City has a moratorium on giving to non-profits and wondered if this would be a similar request. Discussion continued and it was generally felt that this was different as the SBDC provides resources for small businesses that are important to Bemidji's economy.

Mayor Albrecht commented that she would like to see the director's time spent on other activities and not on fundraising. Bemidji relies on the services of the SBDC. In addition, they provide mentoring or coaching to businesses that are struggling.

Eischens suggested that funds are available in contingencies or economic development if the Council chooses to support the SBDC.

**Motion by Thompson, seconded by Olson, to support the Northwest Small Business Development Center in the amount of \$5,000 and designated the funds come from the economic development budget. Motion carried unanimously.**

**UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Mayor Albrecht asked the Council if they felt that they still wanted to meet on February 24 for a special work session regarding the City Manager's performance. Consensus of the Council was yes.

- Thursday, February 20      7:00 p.m.      Joint City/Rural Fire Annual Meeting
- Monday, February 24      5:30 p.m.      Special Work Session – Follow-up  
Performance Review with City Manager
- Monday, March 3      7:00 p.m.      Council Meeting

**COUNCIL/STAFF REPORT**

- Council members provided updates on current events and meetings.
- Erickson questioned the City Manager's planned vacation for the month of March. She asked Chattin if he had designated a replacement during his absence. Chattin responded that the City Charter states that he may designate a replacement which he does not plan to do as he will be available via e-mail and phone.
- Hellquist reported that the Airport Commission has narrowed down the applications for Airport Manager to two applicants.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Thompson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kay M. Murphy  
City Clerk