

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Regular Meeting – August 19, 2019

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, August 19, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council 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 Attorney Alan Felix, Finance Director Ron Eischens, Public Works Director/City Engineer Craig Gray, Community Development Director Steven Jones, Assistant City Engineer Sam Anderson, City Clerk Michelle Miller

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

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

MINUTES

The following minutes were presented for approval:

Work Session: July 29, 2019
Council Meeting: August 5, 2019
Special Meeting: August 8, 2019

Motion by Beard, seconded by Johnson, to approve the minutes of July 29, 2019 Work Session and August 5, 2019 Council Meeting, as presented and to not approve the minutes from the August 8, 2019 Special Meeting. Motion carried with the following vote: Yeas: Beard, Johnson, Meehlhause, Thompson. Nays: Rivera, Albrecht, Erickson.

Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Rivera, to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2019 Special Meeting. Motion carried with the following vote: Yeas: Meehlhause, Thompson, Rivera, Albrecht, Erickson. Nays: Johnson, Beard.

CONSENT AGENDA

Albrecht called for any amendments to the consent agenda. The following Consent Agenda items were presented for approval. **Motion by Rivera, seconded by Thompson, to approve the Consent Agenda items as follows:**

- 1) Claims Submitted by Finance Officer in the amount of \$1,505,169.52
- 2) Claims Submitted by VenuWorks for the Sanford Center in the amount of \$44,165.83
- 3) General Business License Approvals for 2019
- 4) Approve Temporary Liquor Permit Requests
- 5) Approve Special Event Permit for Neighborhood Block Party (Street Closure)
- 6) **RESOLUTION NO. 6236:** Approving the Site and Alcohol for 2019 BSU Home Football Games
- 7) **RESOLUTION NO. 6237:** Approving Temporary Off-Premises Alcohol Permits and Street Closure for the 2019 BSU Homecoming Street Dance
- 8) Accept DNR – Fire Assistance Grant (\$3,750)
- 9) Approve Liquor Store Inventory Procedures
- 10) Approve Invoice from Bessler Electric for the Bemidji Industrial Park Underground Wiring Project in the amount of \$73,275.26
- 11) Approve Amendment No. 4 for Verizon Wireless Tower Lease

Motion carried by unanimous vote.

CITIZENS NOT ON AGENDA

Elaine Clark, 2590 Ridgeway Avenue NW, stated that she works for the Bemidji Public Library and has a work grievance against the library manager. She was advised to speak with Stephanie Johnson, the Executive Director of the Kitchigami Regional Library System regarding this matter.

OLD BUSINESS

Trunk Highway 197 Corridor Study – Approve Implementation Plan

Gray stated that this is a follow up from the August 12 work session; that the city council is not being asked to make any final decisions at this time and there is a year and a half of design, among other things, to be completed if the implementation plan is approved. MnDOT

is asking for council concurrence that it would like MnDOT to proceed with phase one. Future approvals from council will be needed before construction would begin.

Albrecht acknowledged the number of spectators in Council Chambers. An opportunity for public comment for both in favor and in opposition will be given; but will limit the total comment period to 10 minutes. Albrecht opened the public comment period at 6:15 p.m.

- Muriel Gillman, advocate for bicyclists and pedestrians, spoke in favor of phase one which will provide better access to shopping centers and the airport.
- Arch Simonson, 1820 Paul Bunyan Drive NW, asked for a compromise to the plan to include the roundabout at Hannah Avenue in Phase 2 rather than Phase 1.
- Wes Hegna, 1317 Paul Bunyan Drive NW, expressed a desire of the council to decline the plan entirely.
- Kevin Williamson, Super 8, expressed concerns against the project.

Hearing three opposed comments and hearing no further favor comments, Albrecht closed the public comment period at 6:21 p.m. Darren Laesch, MnDOT Regional Manager, addressed the concerns expressed from the public comments as well as concerns and questions with Council. Laesch, stated that through the geometric study process, more detailed work regarding design will be conducted, as well as working with business owners and their concerns. Council members discussed the pros and cons of the proposed reconstruction project.

Motion by Meehlhause, seconded by Rivera, stating that the City concurs with MnDOT's Phase I Implementation Plan for the Trunk Highway 197 Corridor Study. Motion failed by the following vote: Yeas: Albrecht, Meehlhause, Rivera. Nays: Beard, Johnson, Erickson, Thompson.

Consider Quotes for Deep Rock Townhomes Water Main Project

Gray stated that at the June 3 Council Meeting, the council agreed to participate in a partner project to repair a section of water main in the Deep Rock Townhome development at a city cost not to exceed \$30,000. Staff obtained quotes for both a fall completion date and a summer completion date of the project. Three quotes were received with Reierson Construction submitting a fall and summer quote at a cost of \$89,246.25. Staff had originally thought the project could cost approximately \$60,000. With the city's contribution of \$30,000 and the townhome association contribution of \$30,000 leaving a shortfall of approximately \$30,000. Gray stated that the association has agreed to increase its share of the project to \$45,000; additionally Freeberg & Grund has agreed to contribute \$10,000 leaving the city's share of the project at \$35,000. Funding for the city's share will come from the water utility fund.

Motion by Thompson, seconded by Erickson, awarding the quote for the Deep Rock Townhome Development Water Main project to Reierson Construction in the amount of \$89,246.25 and approving the city's share of the project of \$35,000 to be paid from the water utility fund. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Stormwater Alley Improvement Project

Anderson stated that staff was approached by a property owner at 309 3rd Street NW regarding an ongoing issue regarding stormwater runoff being trapped in the back of their property, causing property damage. Staff would like to complete this project in 2019 using stormwater utility funds. The estimated cost of the property is approximately \$70,000. Staff is seeking council approval to proceed with the project, obtain quotes and complete construction of the project.

Motion by Erickson, seconded by Meehlhause, authorizing the design, receipt of quotes and construction of the Alley Stormwater Project at 309 3rd Street NW up to the amount of \$70,000 to be paid from the stormwater utility fund. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Consider Changes to Business Subsidy Policy No. 104

Jones stated that the City has pledged TIF as a match to its Redevelopment Grant proposal for the Rail Corridor Project. Additionally, developers have inquired of the city's TIF policies. Staff is recommending that the Business Subsidy Policy be expanded to include Special TIF Criteria in anticipation of future requests and to provide better direction to staff and developers. However, Jones stated that the City is under no obligation to accept TIF or tax abatement requests.

Motion by Rivera, seconded by Beard, approving the changes to the Business Subsidy Policy No. 104 as presented. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Consider Proposal from HRDC to Provide Grant Writing Services to the City for SCDP

Jones stated that after working with the HRDC for the past several months, to review the possibility of applying for a small cities grant. They looked at several opportunities, including commercial rehab grants, rental rehab grants and homeowner grants. Staff believes the best chance of getting a grant would be for an owner occupied rehab grant. The amount being applied for is \$600,000 and staff expects to fund 15-20 projects in the proposed grant area. If awarded the grant, HRDC would also help with administration of the grant.

Motion by Rivera, seconded by Johnson, approving the agreement with the HRDC to provide grant writing services to the City of Bemidji for the Minnesota Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) at a cost of \$4,000 to be paid from program income. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Consider Change to Fee Schedule – Credit to On-Sale Intoxicating Liquor License Establishments Upon Completion of Annual “Safe Bars” or Similar Approved Training

Jones stated that the city has been approached by Kori Nelson of Support Within Reach regarding implementation of its “Safe Bars” program with intoxicating liquor license establishments. This program offers free training to these establishments to help identify, intervene and response to sexual violence. The hope is the number of sexual assaults can be decreased due to enhance awareness. The reduction in the liquor license fee is seen as an incentive to the business owner to allow them to offer the training to their employees. Additionally, the establishment will be allowed to display the “Safe Bar” logo and advertise their business as a “Safe Bar”. The reduction would be given in the subsequent year the training is completed.

Motion by Erickson, seconded by Rivera, approving a change to the 2020 fee schedule by allowing a \$200 reduction of on-sale intoxicating liquor license fees upon completion of “Safe Bar” training. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Monday, August 26 5:30 p.m. Work Session (Police Dept. Strategic Plan & Council Committee Discussion)
- Tuesday, September 3 6:00 p.m. Council Meeting (Chat-About: Rivera)
- Monday, September 9 5:30 p.m. Work Session (2020 Budget/2020 Sales Tax Proposal)
- Monday, September 16 6:00 p.m. Council Meeting

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORT

- Council members provided updates on current events and meetings.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Rivera, seconded by Meehlhause, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk