

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING

City of Bemidji and Beltrami County

Tuesday, August 20, 2013

A special meeting of the Bemidji City Council and the Beltrami County Board was held on Tuesday, August 20 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Administration Building.

Councilmembers present: Albrecht, Meehlhause, Hellquist, Johnson, Olson, Erickson
Absent: Thompson

Board members present: Fairbanks, Frost, Anderson, Vene, Lucachick

Staff Present: County Administrator Kay Mack, County Attorney Tim Faver, MIS Director Ron Pula, Environmental Services Director Bill Patnaude
City Manager John Chattin, Deputy City Clerk Michelle Miller

County Commissioner Anderson opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. with the purpose of the meeting to discuss items of mutual interest.

Technology Support

Ron Pula provided an update on the collaboration with the City and the County providing MIS support and technology needs for the City. Pula highlighted the relationship that has grown with the City and the advancement in technology, including e-mail, software and virtual servers. Areas of improvement include:

- No reduction of performance
- Linking of all buildings which has helped the following:
 - Watching videos at the Wastewater Treatment Facility
 - Checking liquor inventory
 - Ice scheduling for the arena
- Extended wireless and hardwire technology
- Laptops for parks employees to conduct field work
- Cell phone technology
- Tablets and iPad expansion
- Police Department support
- Shared costs in software, security and updates

Commissioner Vene asked about the new cloud technology and if that would be an appropriate system. Pula stated that cloud technology is different in that the servers are located in Iowa and all information is retrieved from those servers. The servers that Beltrami County and the City of Bemidji use are located here. As an example he stated that the State of Minnesota utilizes cloud technology and their systems have been down at least six times over the past year and when they are down they do not have any control of how long their systems are down. Some companies have tried going to the cloud technology and have since switched back to their previous systems.

Albrecht inquired about the ability to use an FTP site for large documents. Pula stated there are two FTP sites available for use; however, they are not utilized because they are not secure and he felt they would more useful if all councilmembers were able to use that technology and not just a few.

Chattin and Mack stated it has been an outstanding collaboration and they look forward to continuing with this partnership.

Library Funding

Albrecht stated that the City has committed 50% of the cost of a full-time staff person at the library and is hoping the County will support the other 50%. Lucachick questioned how to equitably divide the costs of all partnerships between the City and the County. As of now it seems everything is divided 50/50 but he questions if that is always the most equitable way. He suggests looking at all partnerships and how funding should be split.

Hellquist suggested that City residents are already being taxed through the County and felt they are being taxed twice for the same service. Mack stated for library services there are different tax rates to remove library services so that there is no double taxation for library services. Erickson stated that the City's responsibility for the building cost and maintenance

should also be factored into any formulas for shared funding. Albrecht stated that having a viable and vibrant public library is an important asset to our community.

Recycling

Albrecht stated that she and other council members receive phone calls asking why there is no curbside recycling and her response is that the disposal of solid waste and recycling is a county function. Patnaude stated Beltrami County receives \$110,000 of SCORE funding, of which 95% is paid under contract to Waste Management which leaves \$5,000 for Beltrami County to use for recycling efforts which is not enough to fund a curbside recycling program. Olson recalls there being curbside recycling in the City of Bemidji 5-6 years ago and was wondering what happened to that program. Chattin stated that in 2007 he discovered that the City did not receive SCORE funding, therefore; he terminated the curbside recycling program. His hope at that time was to receive SCORE funding from the County in order to re-establish curbside recycling but that has not happened. Chattin stated that SCORE funding is supposed to be for recycling. Patnaude stated that there is a misconception that the County is not recycling. He stated there are roll-offs located in the County and in the City of Bemidji. Residents also have the ability to bring recyclables to the transfer station in the Industrial Park. However, many of recyclables in the roll-offs are contaminated due to people using them as dumpsters. Albrecht commented that recycling is not free and does not pay for itself. If there is a program it costs money for someone to pick it up, sort it, etc.

Update on Old Fairgrounds Property Marketing Efforts

Mack stated there is no update and they have not actively marketed the property. Mack said she met with the economic development representatives in the area three months ago.

Aquatic Invasive Species Plan and Funding

Mack stated a committee was formed to develop a process for screening, inspection and education. It allows for lake associations to staff inspections by volunteers and also allows lake associations to apply for grants with the County acting as the fiscal agent for any grants or paying individuals (through a lake association) for inspections, screening and education and area lake accesses. Although most feel it is the responsibility of the DNR to educate, screen and inspect, area lake associations and the committee formed by the County are going to work hard to raise money and be proactive to keep invasive species from entering our area lakes. Albrecht inquired of any initiatives that the City and County could partner to lobby for funding for greater Minnesota DNR AIS prevention efforts.

Trails and Wellness Program

Albrecht commended the work done between the County Wellness Committee and the City Wellness Committee on the downtown walking routes and coordination of trail connections with the County.

Old Pilings in Lake Irving

The City and the County contributed a combined \$5,000 to remove pilings in Lake Irving. A dive team was brought in and cut off the pilings at the bottom of the lake. This has widened the channel and significantly improved the safety of boaters in that area of Lake Irving.

Future Meetings

After discussion, the County and City members agreed to try to meet every six months or as needed.

ADJOURN

Motion by Olson, seconded by Hellquist to adjourn at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
Deputy City Clerk