

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL/NOBLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
JOINT MEETING-WORK SESSION, JULY15, 2015**

Mayor Mike Kuhle and Commissioner Matt Widboom called the work session to order for their respective Boards at 1:03 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers with the following members present:

City Council - Diane Graber, Rod Sankey, Scott Nelson, Mike Harmon, Larry Janssen.
County Commissioners - Gene Metz, Don Linssen, Marv Zylstra, Bob Demuth, Jr.

Staff present - City - Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Brad Chapulis, Director of Community/Economic Development; Mindy Eggers, Assistant City Clerk.
County - Tom Johnson, Nobles County Administrator; Steve Schneider, Nobles County Engineer.

Others present: Justine Wettschreck, KWOA; Julie Buntjer, Daily Globe.

DISCUSSION

County Aid Streets and Maintenance Agreements - Steve Robinson stated that a new maintenance agreement between the City and County is currently being updated which will include the trail system and the areas affected by the turn-back from the State. Steve Schneider provided information on turn-back agreements between the state and the County/City which have not occurred but should by the end of the year. Mr. Robinson noted that the City has received a grant for \$7,500 for benches. The benches have arrived and will start to be installed along the new part of the trail system. Mr. Schneider stated that eventually there will be trees planted along the trail by the benches. Mr. Schneider also provided information on the ditch systems in Worthington, at this time there are no grants available for improvements for ditch systems.

Economic Development - LDO/WREDC - County Administrator Tom Johnson explained that the County had approximately ½ million dollars of federally derived funds for economic development but the dollars had so many restrictions that there had only been 1 loan in the last 7 years. DEED determined that there was a way to de-federalize the money by declaring a Local Development Organization (LDO). WREDC met all of the qualifications to become an Local Development Organization so the County applied to DEED to get WREDC declared the LDO to maintain the funds. The federal funds have been turned over to WREDC and to date loans have been given to Purnet, Inc. and Sailor Plastics. Going forward WREDC can use the funds for only qualified loans that meet the criteria for economic development.

Mall - Steve Robinson informed the group that the City gave a one year loan for the purchase of the mall property. The property is approximately 37 acres with 7 different parcels. Mall demolition is planned for late summer.

Housing - Mayor Kuhle stated that the Rising Sun Estates 48 unit market rate project is nearing completion. At this time all units should be ready to rent by August 15th. Tom Johnson explained that The Nobles County Initiative program has been successful as approximately 30 homes have been built and there are two years left for the program. Discussion was held on what types of housing needs to be constructed and what can be done to encourage it.

Collaboration - Discussion was held on areas of potential collaboration between the City and Nobles County, including IT Staff, Facilities Manager, PJC Garage, and a joint public works building.

IT Staff - Tom Johnson stated that the County is in the process of hiring an additional IT person and at that point there would be a possibility of some service sharing with the City.

Facilities Manager - Steve Robinson explained that he had been contacted by an entity on interest of sharing a facilities manager, a possible collaboration between the City, County, and the YMCA would create a new position to have one person be a facilities manager.

PJC Garage - Tom Johnson explained that research needs to be done to address the PJC garage and what each entities needs are. This will be directed to the Joint Operating Committee for further research and bring in a professional to define those needs.

Public Works Shop - Steve Robinson explained that there is interest in collaborating with the County and possibly the State in the next five to ten years to share a public works shop.

Joint Planning Commission - Tom Johnson stated that there is a Joint Planning Commission for any property within ½ mile of City limits. Kathleen Kusz, Nobles County Attorney brought to Tom's attention after having to use the Joint Juridical Ordinance for a case that it is very difficult to work with and there are items within the ordinance that contradicts other items within the same ordinance. Brad Chapulis, Director Community/Economic Development noted that the City's Orderly Annexation Agreement dates back to 1972 and does not reflect the current growth pattern of the City and should also be updated.

Tax Forfeited Properties - Tom Johnson informed the group that the new tax forfeited list came out on Monday and five more properties across the county with one of them being in City are on it. After the last sale there were three vacant lots in Worthington that cannot be built on and were not sold. Tom stated that he talked to the Nobles County Extension Service about possible opportunities that would be available on those lots possibly incorporating a master gardener program. At this time no details are available but the Extension Office is meeting with the SHIP Committee on potential opportunities.

Law Enforcement - Major Incident - Steve Robinson stated that a meeting was held a couple of weeks ago with the Commissioner of Public Safety on an Emergency Plan for major incidents. There is nothing in place at the City or State level to respond to anything major at this time. The City is in the process of coming up with a plan in the case of a major incident.

Dispatch - Tom Johnson stated there was a multi county meeting last week, at this time the group is not interested in getting together but would like the Sheriff's from each county to get together and meet. Communication is not a problem but there are four different types of software being used and are not compatible so information cannot be shared between counties at this time. Tom and Steve will continue to pursue further options.

Golf Course - Steve Robinson informed the group that the City is waiting to receive a water study from Wenck & Associates. The Long Range Planning Committee will then meet to determine a recommendation on the future of the golf course.

Miscellaneous - Council Member Nelson explained there is a long wait time when you need to have title work done with a vehicle. There is a person in Jackson that inputs the information to the State which takes 2 to 3 weeks compared to 2 to 3 months when you go over to the County office. Tom Johnson will look into it.

NEON Broadband - Tom Johnson stated that the NEON Committee received news that the broadband feasibility study has made it through committee and will need the rubber stamp from the Blandin foundation so the study can be done on getting fiber to every home in Nobles County. A grant has been received so that nine internet hot spots will be available throughout the County. Classes will be offered this fall at MN West on broadband, scholarships will also be available.

Armory - Commissioner Metz stated that the County will be hiring a firm to do a feasibility study on the Armory Building to determine the best use for the building. The County will also be looking at possible collaboration from the City on certain areas.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Council Member Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Zylstra and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

Mindy L. Eggers, MCMC
Assistant City Clerk