

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 16, 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Mike Kuhle with the following members present: Larry Janssen; Alan Oberloh; Chad Cummings; Amy Ernst; Mike Harmon.

Staff present: Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Jason Brisson, Assistant City Administrator/Director of Economic Development; Todd Wietzema, Public Works Director; Nate Grimmus, Public Safety Captain; Mindy Eggers, City Clerk.

Others present: Ryan McGaughey, The Globe; Justine Wettschrek, Radio Works; Jason Larsen, Chad Nixon, Brian Spittle, Wade Roesner, Worthington Fire Department; Sara Wahl, SW Crisis Center, Dulce Willardson, Child Advocacy Center.

**CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER**

Heard a presentation on the Southwest Crisis Center's Child Advocacy Center that will be based out of their Worthington office. Representing the Southwest Crisis Center was Executive Director Sara Wahl, Dulce Willardson, who will serve as program manager for the Child Advocacy Center, and Worthington Police Department Captain Nate Grimmus.

The child advocacy center will facilitate collaboration between various entities available to help victims. A soundproof room will be built inside the Crisis Center for forensic interviews, so that while one interviewer converses with the victim, the other key players confer in another room. The construction is slated to start in the next couple of weeks and December 1<sup>st</sup> is the target date to open the center. Ms. Wahl stated eventually the Advocacy Center would like to become a non-profit and find a separate location. Ms. Willardson explained the role of the Advocacy Center will be to provide a forensic interview, witness interview, evidence collection and then coordinate the case review with all team members including law enforcement, prosecution, child protective services, and others. The ultimate goal will be to provide mental health services, working with the families to assess resources and provide support as the case moves through the justice system.

**AERIAL FIRE TRUCK**

Steve Robinson, City Administrator, stated the Worthington Fire Department's 100-foot aerial fire truck, a 1994 model purchased used in 2008, has experienced mechanical difficulties with the ladder mechanism rendering it unstable and unsafe for continued use. It is believed that the 54-inch bearing that the ladder turret turns on needs to be replaced. The cost of repair is estimated to be \$80,000 without assurance that the problem has actually been identified. It will take approximately five to six months for the repairs to be completed.

Jason Larsen, Fire Chief, said the current aerial truck was used in New York prior to its purchase by the City of Worthington. The truck was purchased site unseen and has experienced multiple

problems since the city took ownership and has been out of service more than it has been in service. It is also very cumbersome to maneuver on the City streets.

Mr. Robinson explained the Department's equipment revolving schedule has this truck scheduled for replacement in 2039 (when it's 45 years old) and has \$223,409 in reserves for this truck. A new aerial truck will cost in excess of \$1 million while used trucks that are 8-10 years old will likely cost anywhere from \$500,000-\$650,000. He said that buying this truck will definitely have an impact on future purchases but the City does have several options:

- Invest another \$80,000-\$100,000 in our current truck,
- Spend in excess of \$500,000 for a used truck, or
- Spend in excess of \$1 million for a new truck

Mr. Robinson said in any of the options, the reserves will be spent for repair or purchase. Additional funding can come from an internal loan to be paid back over time through general fund levies.

Council Member Oberloh asked how often the aerial truck is used. Mr. Larsen said rarely but it is due to the mechanical problems that it has. Members of the Fire Department in attendance agreed a new truck is definitely needed.

Council Member Oberloh asked if leasing a new truck would be an option over purchasing one. Council Member Cummings said that there are many manufacturing companies that could offer this option. Council Members agreed that a lease should be considered and another work session should be scheduled to discuss further options.

### **PLAN TO UPGRADE CITY HALL TELEWORK CAPABILITIES**

Mr. Robinson stated staff has been exploring options to improve our internet services to City Hall. He said Worthington Public Utilities and Nobles County partnered in the development of a fiber optic network in 2009. The City and ISD 518 declined to join the consortium at that time. The investment total would be \$150,000 that would allow the City to join the group by paying a user fee of \$150,000 and have fiber service at City Hall which will vastly improve our service and alleviate many of the problems we've experienced with the common practice of remote meetings. With this investment it is expected that fiber service can also be provided to additional City facilities in the future.

CARES Act funding allows government entities to spend their funds to "Improve Telework Capabilities of Public Employees".

A motion was made by Council Member Oberloh, seconded by Council Member Ernst and unanimously carried to approve the upgrade telework capabilities.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

The motion was made by Council Member Ernst, seconded by Council Member Janssen and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 4:46 p.m.

Mindy L. Eggers, MCMC  
City Clerk