

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING, NOVEMBER 21, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 a.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Mike Kuhle with the following Council Members present: Larry Janssen, Alan Oberloh, Chad Cummings, Amy Ernst, Mike Harmon.

Staff present: Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Brian Kolander, Finance Director; Jason Brisson, Director of Community Development, Planning, Zoning and Building Services; Todd Wietzema, Public Works Director; Janice Oberloh, City Clerk.

Others present: Justine Wettschreck, KWOA; Karl Evers-Hillstrom, The Globe; Jason Vote, Mark Thier; Tammy Makram; Bill Wattering (6:49 a.m.); Tom Johnson (6:53 a.m.).

**CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS**

It was decided that Item B.1. *Community Growth Sub-Committee Progress Report* would be moved to later in the agenda to allow for server access when maintenance on the server was complete.

Prairie View - Boy Scouts Progress Report - Todd Wietzema, Public Works Director, provided an update, noting that 3.4 acres are needed for the Boy Scouts at the former Prairie View site. He will work with the attorney to see what we need for a lease. The Administrator and he met with the Okabena-Ocheda Watershed Board - they are interested in taking over the remaining land at Prairie View, and doing a land swap for property they own south of Highway 60. They will work with the Scouts regarding the trails and other amenities. Mr. Wietzema also recommended the area for the Boy Scouts be increased up to 5 acres.

Council Member Oberloh requested that if we're going to sit down with the Boy Scouts we should also sit down with the Watershed people and get some guarantees that there will always be trails, and some perpetuals things to protect it - to be sure it is never farmed.

Council Member Janssen said he would be against the land swap as it is not in City limits.

Council consensus was to increase the area for the Boy Scouts to five acres, which includes the right-of-way.

**Community Growth Sub-Committee Progress Report**

Pavilion - staff displayed a concept drawing of the proposed pavilion on the City-owned lot at the intersection of 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Second Avenue. The cost is still "in flux" and needs to be fine tuned. The proposal includes four restroom facilities, with two of them heated for year-round use. The original estimate was close to \$1.9 million, but revised estimates are still questionable. The will be meeting next week to try to fine tune those costs.

Beach Nook - Steve Robinson, City Administrator, displayed a concept drawing of the

proposed new Beach Nook building, noting the current facility would be operational during construction. It includes an outdoor shower area, and a year-round family style restroom. Estimated cost is \$830,220.61. The retail area will be the same the current facility, with approximately 400 square feet of storage space that could potentially be used for an additional business, such as kayak rentals. The larger restrooms will close for the winter months. A splash pad is not included at this time. Trail lighting is being looked at on two of the walk trails, Olson Park around to Bay Street, and Centennial Park out to Oxford Street.

Memorial Auditorium Seat Replacement Project - Tammy Makram, Memorial Auditorium Manager, said the new seats they were looking at are four inches wider than the present seats and deeper. With the additional size, one row of seats would be eliminated for certain, possibly two, and a seat at the end of each row would also be lost. Balcony seating is still confined by the concrete slabs there, resulting in the same number of rows but fewer seats. It would take eight weeks of production time for the seats, and a five week process to replace them. Total estimated cost is \$298,750. Installation of tile flooring was proposed, but consensus was to go with concrete and epoxy. There will be a wheelchair ramp in the rear on the main floor, and rails will be installed in the balcony. Number of seats will be reduced from 735 to 625. Staff reviewed the project schedule, noting they would start to put it together in December or January to advertise for bids in February and award in mid-March. Construction would begin in June. The funds are on hand.

Worthington Regional Economic Development Corporation 2018 Budget - Bill Wetering, President of WREDC, mentioned the previous de-funding conversation, but if the City doesn't think it's working for them, that's a decision they need to make. Mr. Wetering said the organization has a long and successful legacy here. The City needs WREDC - they are looking to reduce the funding when they should be increasing it. Council Member Oberloh said there is no other mechanism in place to provide the services that WREDC provides - he would vote to keep funding in place. Mayor Kuhle said Council dedicated \$4 million in funding for economic development at their last meeting, but it wasn't directly to WREDC. He would propose to reduce the \$86,000 in funding to WREDC by 25% to be held by the City. WREDC could apply for the funds if they had a special project. Council Member Harmon noted that consensus of the Water and Light Commission was to not reduce their funding to WREDC, but formal action had not yet been taken. Council Member Oberloh said WREDC needs to get the private sector to step up.

The motion was made by Council Member Oberloh, seconded by Council Member Cummings and unanimously carried to keep the 2018 level of funding for WREDC the same as in 2017.

Library - Community Education Collaborative Project Update

Tom Johnson, Nobles County Administrator, reported to Council that, after the initial study, the cost estimate for the collaborative project is \$26 to \$30 million - adding that, for any of us entities, it won't be possible to come out of our pockets. He did speak to Lt. Governor Tina Smith's staff about

getting the project in the bonding bill. Mr. Johnson said if we wish LHB to continue and put that package together for presentation, it will be a commitment of \$6,000 to \$10,000 or up to \$3,300 per each of the three entities. Council Member Ernst said she was in favor of spending a couple thousand dollars if it could get us several million in funding. Council Member Oberloh said he was not behind the project at all at this point as the City has needs of its own. Perhaps in a different location, but not here because of the soil remediation. Council Member Ernst said it is a positive thing for the city, and doing it collaboratively will be a cost savings. Council Member Janssen concurred. Council Member Oberloh said he isn't against the collaboration, but not at that location and at that level. Mayor Kuhle said he thought it would be a minimal investment to at least look at it further. Council Member Harmon agreed with Council Members Janssen and Ernst. Council Member Cummings said he agreed with Council Member Oberloh on some of this - we have needs. Also, he is on the Chamber Board, and following a study, they decided this was not the location they want to be in, or the collaboration to be part of, for the Chamber/CVB. He doesn't have an issue with \$2,000 or \$3,000 to look at one more step, but then is there another, and then we keep putting money into it and extending the time line. He sees the benefit of the site being something different, but is it worth the time and money with what the City will get out of it.

The motion was made by Council Member Harmon and seconded by Council Member Janssen to commit up to \$3,300 to go to the next step, with the following members voting in favor of the motion: Janssen, Cummings, Ernst, Harmon; and the following members voting against the motion: Oberloh. Motion carried.

### **FAIRGROUNDS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**

Todd Wietzema, Public Works Director, said he and Council Member Cummings met with representatives from District 518, the County Fair Board, the Historical Society and Nobles County regarding the fairgrounds entrance road, based on interest expressed by Council at a previous budget meeting. There was no commitment, it was informational only - looking at doing a part of the road until permanent funding could be found. The County Engineer will provide more accurate soil testing, and a cost estimate to perform the repairs in pieces and fully. Options for funding were discussed.

The motion was made by Council Member Oberloh, seconded by Council Member Cummings and unanimously carried to have Todd Wietzema to work with the County and bring numbers back to full Council when available.

### **LAKE AMENITIES GROUP**

Mayor Kuhle was requesting formation of a group to identify potential amenity projects for Lake Okabena to come up with a vision and a plan if possible - where do we want to go, how do we get there, and what type of funding is available. Suggested committee members were: Council Members

Cummings and Oberloh, Chad Nixon, Jay Milbrandt, Mark Thier, Jason Vote, Scott Rall.

Jason Vote, President of the Lake Okabena Improvement Association, provided a brief background on that organization, noting that he and Mark Thier, who was also present at the meeting, have spent countless hours talking about the vision for the lake and the things that could be done. It all comes down to money. Jay Milbrandt has also had that discussion with him. He commended the group for moving forward with a focus group. Mr. Vote said we need to have part of a new half-cent sales tax dedicated to the lake, and noted he would very much be willing to be part of the focus group. Mark Thier said he could help more on the cleaning and dredging of the lake, taking samples, etc.

The motion was made by Council Member Harmon and seconded by Council Member Ernst to set up the committee as listed. Council Member Oberloh noted that Jay Milbrandt be put on as an ex-officio if it is an official City committee, as that would require him to be a resident. He also requested that the Committee be tasked with figuring out what the main reason is that we're on an impaired waters list, and do what we need to upstream before we do anything to the lake. E.O. Olson would be our first funding source. The motion was unanimously carried.

#### **PBK REAL ESTATE PURCHASE AGREEMENT**

Steve Robinson, City Administrator, reported that Rebecca Kurtz, Ehlers and Associates, had confirmed that the proposed purchase agreement as submitted to PBK, including offering a rebate on a portion of the purchase price upon completion of the project, did not conflict with business subsidy statutes. He forwarded the agreement to PBK November 6<sup>th</sup> but has not heard back from them. The agreement has a closing date of December 31, 2017.

#### **AG LEASE UPDATE**

Steve Robinson, City Administrator, noted the terms offered to the Lessee have been accepted, the Attorney is working on the paperwork.

#### **COUNCIL UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH A POTENTIAL RESTAURANT DEVELOPER**

Steve Robinson, City Administrator, said he has had some discussions with a group from central Minnesota looking to potentially open a bar/restaurant here. The challenge is the number of employees needed - which may determine their decision.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The motion was made by Council Member Janssen, seconded by Council Member Cummings and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

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Janice Oberloh, MCMC  
City Clerk