

ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 27, 2019 – 5:30 PM

Ashland City Hall Council Chambers

Please silence all cell phones during the meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Tuesday, August 27, 2019 Ashland City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Debra Lewis, in the Ashland City Hall Council Chambers at 5:30 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Roll call was taken, a Moment of Silence was held, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PRESENT: Holly George, Matthew MacKenzie, Sarah Jackson, Kate Ullman, Ana Tochtermann, Wahsayah Whitebird, Kevin Haas, Charlie Ortman, Liz Franek, Dick Pufall, Jackie Moore

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Deb Lewis, City Administrator Brant Kucera, City Clerk Denise Oliphant, City Attorney Tyler Wickman, Police Chief James Gregoire, Planning Director Megan McBride, Finance Director Julie Vaillancourt, Planning Intern Lucas Phillips, and other concerned citizens.

B. Moment of Silence

C. Pledge of Allegiance

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Haas moved, seconded by Pufall to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of the August 13, 2019 City Council and Committee of the Whole meetings

A. August 13, 2019 City Council and Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Moore moved, seconded by Franek to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2019 City Council and Committee of the Whole meetings. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PERIOD

The Clerk read the Rules for Citizen Participation, and the following offered their comments to the Council:

Zygmund Jablonski Jr, 916 6th Avenue West, spoke regarding the debt service limit.

Eric Lindell, 204 1/2 West Main Street, praised the investments of the City and the future of the community, and commented about a conversion therapy resolution which the City of Superior recently passed.

John Kovach, 718 East 11th Street, stated that although in favor of a new police facility, he disagreed with the site selection.

Jim Gregoire, spoke to Council regarding the time spent to date discussing the construction and financing of a new police facility, thanking them for their hard work and consideration, and asked for a decision at tonight's meeting.

5. MAYOR'S REPORT

A. Announcements

Lewis congratulated Officer Janecek on her recent marriage, and Officer Ovaska on the newest addition to their family. PW Director John Butler intended to supply a memo to Council but as he has been on vacation, he plans do this by the next Council meeting. Lewis passed out a handout from the UW-Madison Extension program and NWRPC inviting the community to a meeting on September 16, 2019 at the Bayfield County Court House to discuss a proposed grant application sought to fund the housing study. Lewis attended a kick-off along with Pufall earlier in the day to celebrate a grant which BART Transport Services received to fund two new electric buses and charging stations. Northland College is expecting its largest class with a record enrollment, and she welcomed these new citizens to our community. The Clean Sweep event went well last week at WITC-Ashland, and Lewis thanked those who volunteered their time to work that day.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Operators' Licenses

The following individuals applied for an operators' license:

Kathrine Gurske
Emily Willoughby
Jean Hahn-Thomas
Taylor Lund
Casie Ehlers
Tammy Pufall

B. Miscellaneous Minutes

Franek moved, seconded by Haas approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Approve a Resolution Authorizing the Construction of a New Police Facility to Replace the Existing Facility Located in City Hall, by Pursuing General Obligation Promissory Notes with a Ten-Year Term Which Includes a Balloon Payment in Year Ten, and Allows an Additional Ten-Year Term for a Total of Twenty (20) Years (Roll)

Summary Statement: On August 13, 2019 at Committee of the Whole meeting, the Finance Director was available to answer questions regarding the preference of a general obligation note with a 10-year balloon option. This item was brought back to the Committee of the Whole agenda due to the various questions regarding the lending options, before moving to the Council agenda for a final vote. Moore moved, seconded by Haas to approve to direct Administration to pursue a General Obligation promissory Note with a 10-year term, which includes a balloon payment in year 10 which allows an additional 10-year term for a total of 20 years, to forward to Council for approval on August 27, 2019. The motion carried 10-2 by roll call vote; opposed were Whitebird and Ortman.

The deficiencies in the police facility on the basement patrol level at City Hall and the 3rd floor Administrative space within City Hall were many and well known. An incomplete tabulation of the “well known” deficiencies included:

- Inefficient and limited communications between the police patrol division in the basement and the administrative offices on third floor;
- The lack of public access to the police facility during off hours;
- Frequent flooding of the basement following heavy rains that results in the presence of mold at times;
- Inadequate space, especially for large coordinated meetings with outside agencies, i.e. FBI, State of WI Department of Criminal Investigation, and others;
- Separate shower space for men and women officers is not available;
- Evidence processed on the third floor hinders response times for officers attempting to respond to calls from the evidence processing room;
- Existing evidence processing room as well as evidence room is not vented for officer safety when processing dangerous drugs such as Fentanyl and Methamphetamine;
- The condition of the existing basement facility is a health and safety hazard for employees and visitors to the station;
- The call volume and number of arrests has risen dramatically in the past few years while the number of officers has remained the same, creating greater pressure for efficiency.

To overcome these shortcomings, Council had been proactive in actively laying the groundwork for moving forward with a new station since 2015. City Administration continued to search for grants that may be applicable to the construction of a new station. The City attempted to work with our congressional delegation and state government in providing relief to local taxpayers in providing the needed facilities.

Cost: Discussions with the architect and engineer that the City had been working with on this project for the past few years, C&S Design, indicated that the approximate 9,900 square foot police facility and 4,950 square foot garage could be constructed for an estimated \$4.3 million. The structure as designed would incorporate sustainable features such as low energy windows and solar panels to generate electricity for the building, thus saving on utility costs in the long term. The City had been awarded a \$99,000 grant from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to assist with financing of the solar installation. For that cost, the City would be provided a structure that would have a lifetime of 50 – 70 years.

Construction Timetable: Conversations with C&S Design indicated that if authorization to begin the project were forthcoming from the Council, bidding of the project would be undertaken in December 2019, with bid opening approximately mid-January 2020, and with construction beginning in the Spring of 2020. The building would take approximately 12 months to complete and could be occupied by early 2021.

Financing Timetable: The City would work with Ehlers, Financial Advisors, to prepare a pre-sale report for issuance of the G.O. promissory note issue. Arrangements for the bidding were to begin before the end of 2019 and bid opening would be coordinated with the construction bid opening in mid-January 2020 as well.

Financing: The proposed financing plan would accomplish a number of items:

- It provided for the construction of a badly needed police facility
- It took advantage of historic low interest rates that would not continue forever
- It maintained a municipal G.O. debt borrowing capacity for unanticipated expenditures or emergencies at a reasonable level

Recommendation: To initiate the construction and financing of the long awaited and needed police facility in 2019/2020 to replace the outdated and unsafe facilities currently utilized by the department and consolidate them into one 21st century structure at a time of record low interest rates that should help mitigate the impact of the project on taxpayers. Adoption of the resolution would provide instruction and direction to staff to move forward with the police station project.

George moved, seconded by Haas to approve the resolution authorizing the construction of a new police facility to replace the existing facility located in City hall, by pursuing General Obligation Promissory notes with a ten-year term which includes a balloon payment in year ten, and allows an additional ten-year term for a total of twenty years. The motion passed 6-5 by roll call vote; opposed were MacKenzie, Whitebird, Ortman, Franek, and Pufall. **File #17523**

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approve to Retain a Qualified Firm for Wetland Delineation Services of the City-Owned Former Timeless Timber Site at 2200 Lake Shore Drive East (*Planning*) Roll

Summary Statement: Quotes were being solicited to retain services for wetland delineation of the City-owned former Timeless Timber site located at 2200 Lake Shore Drive East. All proposals received to date included a final report with findings, maps and all supporting information which were included in future Request for Qualifications/Proposals and also informed City plans for marketing the site. The proposals also included proper reporting of found wetlands to the WDNR and a site visit with WDNR staff if requested. Funding was not budgeted to perform these wetland delineation services in 2019, and therefore Common Council approval was needed to allocate funding to enter into an agreement with the qualified firm who submitted the lowest bid.

The City issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the site in 2018 in an attempt to attract a qualified developer who would submit a phased, comprehensive plan for the entirety of the site. No submissions were received in response to this RFQ. Having detailed information about the wetlands present on site would provide a clear picture of the buildability of the site and inform future marketing strategies. The Timeless Timber site was located in TID #9, which was the City's least successful TID and therefore the most in need of quality, substantial development. Since the last year for expenditures in TID #9 was 2021, it was important to get the wetland delineation completed in a timely manner so the Planning Department could work on actively marketing the site in 2020.

Moore moved, seconded by Jackson to approve to retain a qualified firm for wetland delineation services of the City-owned former Timeless Timber site at 2200 Lake Shore Drive East. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Moore moved, seconded by Whitebird to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise Oliphant,
City Clerk

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