

ROLLING MEADOWS CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
May 18, 2010

Mayor Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:44 pm.

COUNCIL IN ATTENDANCE: Mayor Ken Nelson, Aldermen John Pitzafarro, Barb Lusk, Larry Buske, Brad Judd, Glenn Adams, John D'Astice, Jim Larsen

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: City Manager Sarah Phillips, Public Works Director Fred Vogt, Community Development Director Valerie Dehner, Fire Chief Ron Stewart, Senior Accountant Rob Fredrickson, City Attorney Jim Macholl, Assistant City Manager Barry Krumstok

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**1) Refuse Operations**

Mayor Nelson: This is not a public hearing and we will not be opening the floor for debate. This is a very preliminary discussion.

Alderman Buske: Does not believe that we have enough information for this discussion. There is no information for cost comparisons.

Ms. Phillips: It was her understanding that this discussion would precede going out for bids.

Mr. Vogt: Believes that this discussion will direct Staff on what direction Council wants to go and what specifications for the bids. The bulk of the information is a summary of the current refuse operations. Also included is the FY2010 budget.

Alderman Larsen: Can he quantify the cost of the analysis back in 1996 in today's dollars?

Mr. Vogt: He is not prepared to quantify that. It was all done in-house.

Alderman Larsen: Would like a sense of how big a thing this is we are getting into. Also, to what degree does Staff that works on refuse collection also work on other duties? If we were to outsource, would we still need to keep the personnel?

Mr. Vogt: It is safe to say that we are probably talking in the hundreds of hours of work time.

Alderman Larsen: We need to have a discussion on what we are getting bids on.

Mr. Vogt: There are many different options on refuse collection.

Alderman Larsen: Asked for input from the rest of Council and would like hard numbers from other communities that have privatized refuse collection.

Alderman Lusk: The residents have spoken...they are happy with their services.

Alderman Buske: He thought Council would be getting more information. He received many calls and no one said they wanted to change, although 2 or 3 thought it would be good to look into it. One suggestion he would make is to lower the rate for senior citizens and "snow birds". Also, there are some homes that are overcrowded and have 10 bags out a week. He wants people to pay their fair share.

Alderman Pitzafarro: First, he would pay significantly more to keep our refuse operations. That said this meeting was called for cost purposes. He believes that the discounts have some merit, but talk about cutting revenue makes him nervous. Wonders how many "snow birds" we have in Rolling Meadows. A good place to start is to poll some other cities. Some residents he spoke with did not know what was going to happen tonight. He explained that this was strictly a discussion. A significant number of residents were all interested in having a discussion about this subject.

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Alderman Adams: Also expected to see more information in the packet. Personally, it is not necessary to go out for formal bids. The recycling company we use also picks up refuse and could have given us an estimated cost. We could have gotten some numbers from SWANCC. He is in favor of looking into this and getting numbers. Council receives many calls from residents complaining about fees and believes that having this discussion is looking out for the residents.

Alderman D'Astice: Does not believe that we have a clear majority of the residents against this proposal. A lot of people have said "keep our services". If we do nothing whatsoever, next year these costs will be raised \$3.00-\$4.00 per month per household. Suggested a referendum asking the residents what they want. He will vote for what the residents want. He would like to see more information and comparisons.

Alderman Judd: Alderman D'Astice brought up some very valid points. We are looking at significant cost increases. This has nothing to do with the quality of service; it is purely a cost projection. The bottom line is that we have some pretty expensive costs. There is one finance person in this part of the budget. There are a lot of services that we provide. Do we want to change some of these services? He is trying to find ways to keep from raising fees. If the residents are okay with their rates going up, he will be okay with that.

Alderman Pitzafarro: He agrees with Alderman Judd that it is fair and right to look at this. If there is some cost savings we will need to weigh that with the quality of service we get. We really have no information on making any decision tonight.

Mayor Nelson: Suggested a survey of communities.

Ms. Phillips: We can use the services of SWANCC to do this survey. We just need to make sure that we are comparing apples to apples.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Agreed that is very important.

Alderman Buske: How are we so far off in the budget? Where did all the money go?

Ms. Phillips: In 2007, \$300,000 came from a bond issue. Without the bond we would have been negative. In 2008, there was a large purchase.

Mayor Nelson: We approved a budget with the deficit built in.

Alderman Larsen: As a follow-up to some comments, he advocates a referendum on this issue. He appreciates all the input from residents.

Mayor Nelson: Has no problem with a referendum.

Alderman Larsen: He is sympathetic to the "snow birds". We need to get some definitive comparisons.

Alderman Judd: Would like to get some direction for the Staff as to exactly what we are interested in. He would like to get some information from communities whose contracts are coming up and are negotiating new ones. He would also like the costs of what is refuse and what is not.

Alderman Lusk: Does not think we will do better contracting out. Has no objections doing a comparison, but does not believe it will change people's opinions.

Alderman Pitzafarro: We keep bringing this back to fairness. The reason some people like the service is because they do throw out a lot of garbage. If we want to be fair....the stickers are the fairest way to go. He, personally, does not want to go with stickers.

Mayor Nelson: Instructed Staff to do a survey of surrounding communities and include a variety of services and come back in 6 weeks or 2 months. Is okay with SWANCC doing the survey, but also believes that Mr. Vogt could speak with other communities.

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Mr. Vogt: Believes that it would be good to do both.

Mayor Nelson: Suggests putting survey together and coming back as a discussion item.

## 2) **ComEd Annual Report**

Mr. Jeff Batara, External Affairs Manager for ComEd presented the ComEd Annual Report.

Alderman Lusk: Why are we still above average on the SAIFI?

Mr. Batara: There are various reasons. For example, there was an increase in animal related outages.

Alderman Lusk: It concerns her that we are starting to go above average again.

Alderman Adams: Customer Service: Complaints that he receives is a) the ability for residents to get through to find out when the power will be turned on, and b) the accuracy of the information. The residents would like to see some honesty so they can make up their mind on how they are going to deal with the situation.

Mr. Batara: Agrees with him 100%. In general, the CSR's are using general statistics. The information they provide is only as good as the intel they are getting from the field. They are always looking for ways to improve in that area.

## 3) **Brookwood Condos Detention/Drainage Issue**

Mr. Vogt: There have been 3 meetings with the Association. Much of the focus has been trying to locate old records. Information was passed out to Council. A concept plan was presented at a cost of \$70,000. He spoke with Brookwood representatives and they believe that they should not have to be responsible for any of this. From a staff/engineering standpoint, action needs to be taken soon. It is on private property and we are looking at the betterment of other properties that are flooding. A Special Service Area was discussed. A neighborhood meeting is another suggestion. We could also look at it as a property maintenance problem and look at it from an enforcement standpoint.

Mayor Nelson: With regards to a Special Service Area, are condos considered each unit as a separate property owner?

Mr. Macholl: Each condo is an owner of record.

Alderman Buske: This is private property. We are treating this like it was a residential area that would benefit more than two areas. Is the majority of the problem in their area?

Mr. Vogt: When Brookwood was first constructed as apartments they had to provide storm water management. About 15-20 years later when the Jody Court/White Oak subdivision was built they expanded that detention area and they do store a goodly amount of water which all drains through that Brookwood detention area.

Alderman Buske: Would like to see a Special Service Area.

Alderman Lusk: A big part of their problem in taking on costs is that drainage is coming upstream. Have we broached the Jody Court area also sharing in the costs?

Mr. Vogt: There have been informal discussions with a couple of the homeowners.

Alderman Lusk: They are unwilling to disrupt the vegetation. Obviously some of the vegetation has to go.

Mr. Vogt: Correct.

Alderman Lusk: Thinks we need to give them a time limit and include Jody Court.

Alderman Larsen: He definitely wants to pursue discussions with Jody Court and other areas that are affected.

Mayor Nelson: Next step; meeting with neighborhood to discuss solution and cost sharing.

**4) Commuter Drive Phase I Report**

Mr. Vogt: Presented the anticipated project schedule.

CIORBA Group: Presented plans for Commuter Drive Reconstruction / Bicycle Path.

Alderman D'Astice: Do a lot of people ride their bike to the train station?

Mr. Vogt: 5 – 50 daily.

Alderman D'Astice: Put the bike path south of Harvest Bible Chapel and let them keep their spots. If they are coming from the north they are not Rolling Meadows residents.

Alderman Buske: Whose property would this be on?

CIORBA: IDOT's property.

Alderman Buske: Agrees with Alderman D'Astice.

Mayor Nelson: Suggestion is to go with the south alternative and get this thing going.

Alderman Judd: Is Palatine paying for any of this?

Mayor Nelson: No. The property is in Arlington Heights and Rolling Meadows.

Alderman Judd: Agrees with Alderman D'Astice that if Palatine is not going to chip in, without being too mean, why do we care? The bike path is \$525,000 with our cost at \$130,000.

CIORBA: That is the bike path cost.

Mr. Vogt: The bike path has been the genesis from a funding standpoint. They are really tied together at this point.

Alderman Judd: It just seems like a lot of money for a bike path at this time.

Alderman Larsen: In all likelihood there are a limited number of people who will use the bike path. There are also a limited number of people who use a playground. There is no perfect way to do these things. If getting the bike path helps you get the road then what is the problem getting the bike path?

Mayor Nelson: What is next step?

CIORBA: Went over anticipated schedule.

**5) Utility E-Billing**

Ms. Phillips: This has been discussed several times in the past. We have been working on this. MSI seems to give us the best product. We did not note that we are currently upgrading our MSI system. If everything goes thru with the upgrade, MSI will be able to go forward with this in June. There is some cost savings to us.

Alderman Judd: This all looks good. The monthly hosting fee of \$3540 would be divided by 12?

Mr. Fredrickson: Correct.

Alderman Pitzafarro: What is the annual CC portal fee?

Mr. Fredrickson: To maintain the portal thru the website.

A discussion took place on different forms of payment.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Would like to further discuss charging a convenience fee.

Ms. Phillips: When we decided not to do that it was a cost savings to us.

**6) Sign Ordinance Change**

Mr. Macholl: There is a provision in our code that allows the Police Chief some authority to allow temporary signs. There are various options that the City has. 5 years ago he wrote a recommendation prohibiting these signs because if we vest in the Police Chief certain discretionary authority to allow some signs and not others then we start to regulate content. If we are going to allow signs we will not be able to regulate content and allow all of them.

Mayor Nelson: But we can continue to require them to come before Council?

Mr. Macholl: Yes, but it would be difficult to allow one organization to post a sign, but not another.

Mayor Nelson: Could we limit it to not-for-profit organizations?

Mr. Macholl: Believes there is a way, but he would have to look into it further.

Alderman Buske: Would agree to look at it.

Alderman Larsen: We could have a not-for-profit hate group that requested the posting of a sign.

Mayor Nelson: Correct.

Alderman Pitzafarro: If we don't do anything what would be the problem?

Mayor Nelson: Under our current practice we can't say no to anyone that comes before Council.

Alderman Judd: Can we make it automatic that if it is a charitable organization they would only need to fill out a permit?

Mr. Macholl: Yes, we could do it on an administrative level.

**7) Billboards**

Ms. Phillips: There are two issues related to the proposal. In 2007 Council decided to not proceed with billboards. When Sam's closed, this came back up as a revenue source. She presented two options: 1) area on both sides of Route 53, 2) create overlay district on west side Route 53. Recommendation would be to limit it to the west side of Route 53.

Alderman Lusk: Prefers to keep it to the one side.

Alderman Judd: Does this open us to any litigation?

Mr. Macholl: There is always that possibility.

Ms. Phillips: The law is somewhat on our side.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Is for as many signs as we can do.

Ms. Phillips: We would not get any money from billboards on the east side.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Is for as many as WE can do.

Alderman Adams: Let's just go with the west side, but we need to be prepared for problems that may arise.

Mayor Nelson: Consensus is to move forward with the overlay on the west side.

Ms. Phillips: Originally there was one proposal that came into us at \$175,000 and they are not willing to negotiate. We went out for an RFP. A spreadsheet is provided. Staff is recommending the \$400,000 up front payment proposal.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Would like further elaboration on the proposals.

Ms. Phillips: Elaborated further.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Are we expected to make a decision now?

Mayor Nelson: We want to give direction to Staff.

Alderman Lusk: Likes the middle option....\$305,000 up front.

Alderman Judd: Do we have the present value of the money?

Ms. Phillips: We can present those numbers.

Mayor Nelson: Direction to Staff is to provide present numbers for further discussion next week.

**8) Public Works Personnel**

Ms. Phillips: There will soon be a vacancy in Public Works. Mr. Vogt has made a recommendation and she has approved that recommendation.

Mr. Vogt: A superintendent will be retiring next month. We would like to eliminate that position and create a supervisor position and, at the end of the year, also establish a new Maintenance C position creating a net savings of about \$40,000 this year with approximately a \$48,000 in 2011.

Alderman Judd: Why can't we have the water operations foreman take over those duties?

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Mr. Vogt: The duties of that position don't equate with the ability to supervisor the activities in that operation. It would be premature to do that at this point. We could have private discussions about that.

Alderman Judd: Would like to have those private conversations to get the information he is looking for.

Alderman D'Astice: He is not in favor of this. He would like to amend the budget to eliminate the remaining funds from this position and requests that it be put on the agenda for next week.

Alderman Buske: Agrees with Alderman D'Astice.

Mayor Nelson: That would require a 2/3 vote.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned at 11:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa M. Hinman, City Clerk

May 18, 2010 Committee of the Whole minutes approved by Council on May 25, 2010

  
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Lisa M. Hinman, City Clerk