

ROLLING MEADOWS CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
June 15, 2010

Mayor Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

COUNCIL IN ATTENDANCE: Mayor Protem Larry Buske, Aldermen John Pitzafarro, Barb Lusk, 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, Police Chief Dave Scanlan, Senior Accountant Rob Fredrickson, City Attorney Jim Macholl, Assistant City Manager Barry Krumstok

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1) FEMA Grant

Chief Stewart presented representatives from FEMA, Ms. Judy Hampton and Mr. Steve Pasetti

Ms. Hampton: Presented some facts about the Station Construction Grant. One criterion was the unemployment rate. Another is whether the project is shovel-ready. Also, would the grant money improve response times? Over 6,000 applications were received. There was an intensive screening process and only 700 applications went to the panel. The Review Panel took a closer look and made recommendations. About 112 awards have been given out (less than 2%). Rolling Meadows met the criteria very well. Grant funds have to be spent. We need to show progress. The Award was made in September and there has been discussion about whether to go forward with the station. If the decision is not to go forward with the project they will need that decision fairly quickly to be able to award the funds to another community. She will answer any questions Council may have regarding the Fire Station grant.

Alderman Lusk: What is fairly quickly?

Ms. Hampton: Preferably by the end of this month.

Alderman Lusk: Should we decide to proceed, do we have a "start by" date and "end by" date?

Ms. Hampton: We are already into 1/3 of the award period (36 months). We will need to see a more detailed budget, and once approved, construction could begin.

Mr. Pasetti: Commented on the EHP timeline. He estimates that we are about 3 months behind on the project.

Alderman Lusk: What is the average time for building a fire station?

Mr. Pasetti: Is not sure.

Chief Stewart: Probably 9 – 12 months would be reasonable.

Alderman Lusk: Our earliest ground breaking would probably be January 2011?

Mr. Pasetti: It depends on how quickly the bid process would take.

Chief Stewart: Some of the tasks will take place simultaneously. As the Environmental study is going on we could also be starting the bid process.

Alderman Lusk: There are some circumstances for an extension. If we are well into the project and find we will be 30-60 days past deadline, does he see an issue getting an extension.

Mr. Pasetti: Does not see a problem getting an extension with that short of a delay.

Ms. Hampton: Agrees, as long as the project is moving along.

Mayor Protem Buske: What is the time of the public meeting on Saturday?

Chief Stewart: 10:00 am in Council Chambers. The meeting from last Wednesday was taped and is being rebroadcast. Any questions should be directed to Chief Stewart.

Mayor Protem Buske: When is this coming back to Council for vote?

Ms. Phillips: Based on the recommendation by the Grantors, we will bring forth legislation next week.

Alderman Judd: If we change the location, would that cause a non-extension?

Mr. Pasetti: At this point in time, we would not approve a location change.

Alderman Judd: If we do not go forward with this, how would it impact us should we apply for another grant?

Mr. Pasetti: Awarding grant money is based on past grant performance. It could affect future awards.

Ms. Hampton: As far as we know there will not be another Fire Station Construction Grant program. Changing the location would negate the reasons Rolling Meadows was awarded the grant in the first place.

2) On-Street Parking

Mr. Vogt: The Traffic Review Committee met with regards to parking in cul-de-sacs. It was determined that any street wider than 21' would allow for traffic to flow through with parking on both sides. Any street or entrance into a cul-de-sac or in the cul-de-sac itself that is 21' or less in width, we are requesting parking on one side of street.

Mayor Protem Buske: Received a call from a resident who lived in a cul-de-sac and they claimed they had a street wider than 21' and were told that there would be parking on one side of street.

Mr. Vogt: The only correspondence he has received was regarding the methodology used in determining the width of the street.

Alderman Lusk: Believes that most streets in town have restrictions for parking on one side of the street in the cul-de-sac.

Mr. Vogt: That is correct. We looked at the cul-de-sacs very carefully.

Alderman Lusk: Believes that at least 95% of the streets are restricted to parking on one side. She does not see that this is any different from most of the streets in town.

Alderman Larsen: What about posting the sign at the "throat" of the cul-de-sac.

Mr. Vogt: It may cause some confusion.

3) Ethics Ordinance

Alderman Lusk: Felt it was time that we dusted off the Ethics Ordinance as we will have 5 seats up at the next election.

Alderman Adams: With regards to the "behavior and conduct in and out of meetings" on page 1. What are the sanctions?

Mr. Macholl: This is a working document and those would need to be discussed.

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Alderman Adams: Do we have an Ethics Ordinance in place for employees?

Mr. Macholl: Yes.

Alderman Adams: He would recommend that we combine the employee code with the City Council Code.

Alderman Lusk: Does not know if that would be in the best interest. We each have strict rules of governance and responsibility.

Alderman Larsen: We should review the employee Code of Ethics as well, but does not believe that they should be one and the same with the Council Code of Ethics.

Alderman D'Astice: Agrees with Alderman Adams. What is good for one will have to be good for the other. Feels that some things are ambiguous. Is not comfortable with this as currently drafted.

Mayor Protem Buske: Is it possible to get the employee Ethics Code?

Ms. Phillips: We can get a copy to Council.

Alderman Larsen: Is the Code of Ethics treated as laws or guidelines?

Mr. Macholl: More as a set of guidelines.

Alderman Larsen: Thinks we may be making much ado about nothing.

Mayor Protem Buske: What are we doing with this?

Alderman Lusk: It needed to be updated and this was the first draft.

Mayor Protem Buske: Suggests getting a copy of the employee rules and regulations to Council for review and bring back for discussion at a future Committee of the Whole.

Alderman Judd: Would like to see the current Code of Ethics to compare to the draft.

Alderman D'Astice: Does not see Cannon 15 as being part of ethics at all and would like to take it out.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Every department head in the City has told him to call them about anything. If that is against our current code, then that is a problem that should be brought up with Staff.

Ms. Phillips: The City Manager has the ability to suggest that Council talk to the appropriate department head. We are not changing that.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Feels that we need to be real clear about what is expected of us.

Alderman Larsen: Again, much ado about nothing. This is a guideline.

Alderman Lusk: Explained that this is saying that Council is not allowed to direct services. Council is allowed to pick up the phone and discuss a matter with the department head.

Mayor Protem Buske: We need to see a copy of the current Code of Ethics for Council members.

4) Vacation/Sick/Holiday

Alderman Judd: In an effort to continue to look at the cost structure of the City, one thing that has bothered him is the issue of Vacation/Sick/Holiday time. We give vacation time to the employees and that is fine, but he does not agree with vacation carryover, the same with sick time. Currently, they can accumulate 35 weeks of sick time. He does not understand the rationale. The costs of the City continue to escalate and these are hidden costs that many do not know about. \$2.3 million in the budget is accrued for sick time. The entire accrual is \$4.8 million for vacation and sick time. He does not understand why we continue to do this or the justification for carrying over sick days. With regards to holidays, and the 24 hour employees – The day after Thanksgiving is not a holiday, Christmas Eve is not a holiday. Would like to know Council's opinion.

Mayor Protem Buske: Everything is under union contract?

Ms. Phillips: The majority of the employees are covered under union contract.

Mayor Protem Buske: The time to discuss this would be union negotiations.

Alderman Lusk: Everything Alderman Judd has brought up has been approved by previous Councils. Believes this should be shelved until union negotiations.

Alderman Larsen: Believes that Alderman Judd just wants to put the issue out there. We are at a point where the taxpayers are having a hard time paying for this stuff. Believes it is an appropriate time to revisit this.

Alderman D'Astice: Agrees with Alderman Judd on many things. Does not think we should wait until 2011. We should direct City Manager to look at these things and come back to Council with some possibilities knowing that it would be implemented at union negotiations.

Mayor Protem Buske: Is this something that should be closed session or open session?

Ms. Phillips: Open session.

Alderman Larsen: Is there anyone on the Council who objects to having the City Manager present some suggestions?

Mayor Protem Buske: There is more discussion.

Alderman Adams: Agrees with everything that has been brought up. We need to take a look at each one of our policies.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Commented that the City Manager is a full time employee of the City. Thinks that she may come up with things that we would not think of. Agrees with Alderman D'Astice that the City Manager should come up with some suggestions.

Mayor Protem Buske: Is there a problem with her coming up with ideas and Council sending her any ideas they have?

Alderman Lusk: Has no problem reviewing current policies and procedures. We need to look at what other public communities are doing because we could run the risk of losing our employees.

Alderman Judd: Does not think it would be out of line to ask the union to eliminate the accrual of vacation and sick time as of a specific date. We would not be asking them to give up any time that they have already accrued.

5) Billboards

Ms. Phillips: We have been discussing this issue for a few weeks. We are waiting on some legal clarifications with the Park District. Next meeting will be the first reading of the overlay district. Also up for approval will be a contract with a billboard vendor. Staff recommendation is to go with Lamar. Feels that our budget needs the influx of cash for this year.

Mayor Protem Buske: The sign would be going up on Park District property?

Ms. Phillips: The Park District came to us with a concern that a billboard at this location would block their current digital billboard. They are requesting that we relocate the billboard on another parcel of their property. It is a pretty good option.

Mayor Protem Buske: Agrees with Ms. Phillip's recommendation for the immediate cash flow.

Alderman Lusk: Also supports her recommendation.

Alderman Pitzafarro: The shortage from Sam's Club is on-going unless someone else takes over that space?

Ms. Phillips: Correct.

Alderman Pitzafarro: This is going to be an on-going situation, so just trying to get as much money up front could be shortsighted. With any of these vendors, if they went bankrupt, would that sign become ours?

Mr. Macholl: Does not believe so.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Is there a way to structure it so it would be?

Mr. Macholl: We could not make them give us the sign. We could try to negotiate something into the lease.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Is not sure going with the influx of cash now is the way to go and giving up the money 20 years down the road.

Alderman D'Astice: Remembers a clause with 3Com that should they default we would get our money back. We need to have some kind of protection for the City.

Alderman Judd: Taking the \$400,000 is nothing different then a transfer between funds. It's a band-aid. It is not the solution.

Alderman Adams: Why not go both sides digital on the sign?

Ms. Phillips: This would give the billboard company the best of both worlds.

Alderman D'Astice: The whole idea was to get money now to help fill the hole in our budget. If we don't fill the hole, where are we going to get the \$200,000? Yes, it's a band-aid, but if we don't do this how are we going to fill the hole?

Alderman Judd: Has never been in favor of using this money to fill the hole.

Alderman Buske: Agrees with Alderman D'Astice. The only reason he agreed to this was to fill the hole in the budget.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Does not agree that the only reason we did this was because Sam's Club closed down. Thinks this is the easy, quick way to fix the problem. The expenses don't go away. We need to be prudent with the assets we have.

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Alderman Larsen: Agrees that the reason we got into this discussion was because of the loss of Sam's Club. He appreciates Aldermen Judd's and Pitzafarro's concerns.

Alderman Buske: Agrees with Alderman Larsen.

Alderman Lusk: We need \$300,000 up front. Would like to go with Lamar Group.

Alderman Adams: When we lost Sam's Club, we made changes in the budget. Could not recall what we still need to fill.

Ms. Phillips: We cut about \$285,000 from the budget.

Alderman D'Astice: Didn't we save \$71,000 last week?

Ms. Phillips: That was in the Utility Fund not the General fund.

Alderman D'Astice: We were supposed to have a conversation this week about chargebacks. He believes there is an over-chargeback going out of the Utility Fund. We need to look at that, because that could be \$100,000.

Ms. Phillips: That wouldn't necessarily go into the General Fund.

Ms. Phillips: Suggests putting together a Resolution that would allow Council to choose one of these options based on current budget numbers and how each of these options would fit into it.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Do we have any idea what the Park District will be looking for?

Ms. Phillips: No.

Alderman Pitzafarro: Thinks we should wait to see what the Park District wants.

Alderman Buske: Agrees.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa M. Hinman, City Clerk

June 15, 2010 Committee of the Whole Minutes approved by Council June 22, 2010


Lisa M. Hinman, City Clerk