

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
Monday, April 18, 2016

The Worksession was called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Council President Duval with the following members present: Mayor Powers, Harrington, Odom, Niemeyer, Krings, Hoops, Skutnik, Goebel

Other Staff Present: Joe Patterson (City Administrator), Dave Ptak (City Attorney), Peter Kortum (Police Chief), Amy Hafer (Library Director), Rebecca Matticks (Museum Director), Kent Gilbert (Fire Chief), Kimberly Jacobitz (City Clerk), Dave Wacker (City Engineer), Jeff Hassenstab (Park & Recreation Director), Barb Adler (City Treasurer), Kim Woolery (HR Technician)

Moved by Niemeyer, seconded by Skutnik to adopt the April 19, 2016 Worksession Agenda.
Roll Call: Ayes: John Harrington, Phil Odom, Michael Krings, Sarah Hoops, Ginny Skutnik, Everett Goebel. Kathy Duval, Chuck Niemeyer Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

Council President Duval stated that meeting notice was posted on Friday, April 15, 2016. Pursuant to the Nebraska Revised Statute Section 84-1412, the public is advised that a copy of today's agenda and all reproducible written material which will be discussed at today's meeting is available. Also, a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted and accessible to members of the public.

Discussion of Chapter 32 of Hastings City Code.

Council President Duval established how the meeting would be run. This is not a public hearing. She invited representatives from the Library Board, Museum Board, and Board of Public Works to speak for 3-5 minutes. If a board member disagrees with the position stated by the board representative, they will also have three minutes to speak.

Council President Duval invited Museum Board President, Mike Howie, to speak. He stated that the Museum Board has not met to decide on an official position. There have been informal discussions, but no objections have been voiced to the ordinance as presented. The Museum Board will continue to support the Museum Director. The ordinance, as proposed, reduced the board size and term limits from what is in the Museum bylaws. He asked the Council to please look at Section 27-102.

Library Board President, Brad Beahm, stated they have also had informal discussions but have no official position at this time. He does not believe it is in the best interest of the Hastings Public Library to make the Library Board advisory. There is a long history of great cooperation between the Library Board and City Council and wants to continue that relationship. He believes the library is better served by the Library Board.

Jeanette Dewalt, Acting Chairperson of the Board of Public Works, stated it is premature for action on this item without further discussion between Board of Public Works and City Council. Representatives are in attendance from PPGA(Public Power Generation Agency) and NMPP(Nebraska Municipal Power Pool) Energy, who have a large interest in what is going on with Hastings Utilities.

Council President Duval invited board members who disagreed with those comments to speak. No one stood to speak.

Councilmember Goebel, liaison to the Board of Public Works, commented that Hastings Utilities is functioning well with the present structure and turning the board into advisory would hamper it. He suggested a need for more cooperation and better communication.

Councilmember Odom, liaison to the Board of Public Works, agreed with Goebel. The Novak Study has many good ideas. We need to move forward with some of those items. He proposed to move City Hall up to the Hastings Utilities building to combine employees into the same building and build off of that. We need to discuss how things can be done better.

Councilmember Niemeyer stated the Novak Study contained 79 items. The Board of Public Works is a major issue. If the city owns Hastings Utilities, he wants to have input in the decision of who is hired to be the new manager. The Council may not change all boards to advisory, but change how they operate. He suggested a better line of communication with the Board of Public Works to get a clearer grasp of what is going on at Hastings Utilities.

Mayor Powers stated a change in structure needs to be discussed. A committee needs to be formed for hiring the new manager at Hastings Utilities.

Councilmember Harrington stated we need to make a change. There has been ongoing conflict, which needs to be addressed. It can be addressed by a change in structure. The Board of Public Works would have an important advisory function, like the Planning and Zoning Commission, which brings critical study that is valuable to decision-making. We need to look at the best long-term solution for Hastings. We have suffered for the lack of cooperation and need to move away from having two departments at every level. By eliminating those inefficiencies, we could improve. We need to do something to improve the structure that keeps value of the board, with expertise and good advice. He made the point that most decision making from Hastings Utilities comes from staff and the director now.

Councilmember Skutnik stated that reading the ordinance, not much has changed between what is done now and what will change. All duties, responsibilities, decision-making and recommendation processes stay the same. She asked without the top being fixed, how can we merge Human Resources and IT?

Councilmember Krings stated our intent is to gain efficiency in government. It would be difficult for City Council to do as efficiently as boards do now. We can work through Novak Study changes without the drastic change in the governing structure at this time. He would like to make changes incrementally instead of drastically.

Dave Ptak, City Attorney, stated the two major things the Board of Public Works does that impacts citizens are done by recommendations only. They recommend their budget and rate structure to the City Council. City Council approves those by ordinance. That will not change.

Councilmember Skutnik referred to #4 (Rules and Regulations). She asked if that is put in place so that we don't have our employees live under different sets of rules?

Mr. Ptak stated there are different rules that apply to the groups, as he has seen while representing both bodies in the past few years. He drafted the ordinance from what came out of the council retreat. What this ordinance attempts to do is to treat all boards and commissions the same and level the playing field with regard to the governance model for the city.

Mayor Powers stated the issue will be on the agenda next Monday night. He asked the Council to come with possible amendments to the ordinance. He wants to share equipment, people and ideas freely under one roof, by moving City Hall up to the Hastings Utilities building.

Mayor Powers has not appointed the fifth board member on the Board of Public Works, because we need to decide the governing structure first.

Councilmember Hoops asked if it is possible to change the ordinance to make the structure of boards change in 18 months? She is interested in slow incremental changes so there is not trauma to the organizations involved.

Councilmember Odom asked for the City Administrator to sit in on all Board of Public Works meetings. We need communication going back and forth.

Motion by Michael Krings, seconded by Ginny Skutnik to go into executive session at 6:42p.m. for negotiations. Roll Call: Ayes: John Harrington, Phil Odom, Michael Krings, Sarah Hoops, Ginny Skutnik, Everett Goebel, Kathy Duval, Chuck Niemeyer. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Krings, seconded by Hoops to go out of executive session at 7:05p.m.
Roll Call: Ayes: John Harrington, Phil Odom, Michael Krings, Sarah Hoops, Ginny Skutnik, Everett Goebel, Kathy Duval, Chuck Niemeyer. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Krings, seconded by Skutnik to adjourn the worksession at 7:05p.m.
Roll Call: Ayes: John Harrington, Phil Odom, Michael Krings, Sarah Hoops, Ginny Skutnik, Kathy Duval, Chuck Niemeyer, Everett Goebel. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.