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

The Worksession was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Council President Duval with the following members present: Kathy Duval, John Harrington, Phil Odom, Sarah Hoops, Ginny Skutnik, Everett Goebel, Michael Krings, Chuck Niemeyer.

Others Present: Joe Patterson, Dave Wacker, Dave Ptak, Jeff Hassenstab, Kim Woolery, Barb Adler, Kent Gilbert, Carol Crecelius, Lori Hartman, Willis Hunt, Jeanette DeWalt, Chuck Shoemaker, Jeff Kully, Al Meyer, Lee Vrooman, Mike Howie, Kevin Schawang, Bob Davis.

Moved by Ginny Skutnik seconded by Michael Krings to adopt the July 18, 2016 Worksession Agenda. Roll Call: Ayes: John Harrington, Kathy Duval, Phil Odom, Chuck Niemeyer, Michael Krings, Sarah Hoops, Ginny Skutnik, Everett Goebel. Nays: None. The motion carried.

Council President Duval read the Public Notice - Notice posted on Friday, July 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 possible organizational and code changes for the City of Hastings.

Council President Duval began by stating she felt they need to look at the top priorities regarding the Novak Report and focus on structure, efficiency and looking towards the future. She indicated they would like to hear from the committee on the hiring process for the utility manager position at some point. She reviewed with Council an informational sheet (attached and made part of original minutes) regarding the Council’s top priorities regarding the Novak Report’s Hastings Utilities recommendations.

Councilmember Goebel stated he felt they really need to get the structure there first and determine how the utility board and manager will function. He felt they needed to fill board member positions but felt it was unfair when they didn’t know how the board will function.

Councilmember Odom agreed that they need clarification within current code and to decide where they want to be in relation to the Board of Public Works.

Councilmember Krings stated he felt that who the manager reports to is the main question.

Councilmember Harrington talked about getting an ordinance in line for clarification, however, he felt it is complicated enough that it is going to have to be done in stages. He indicated that they tried to get it done before it got political but that didn't happen and now they are four months from a new mayor and new councilmembers. He suggested it might only be fair and right for the new mayor and council to get their teeth into it and if they need to move forward with minor changes, begin with the responsibility for hiring the manager position and leave the utility board as is. He suggested just deciding the one question.

Councilmember Niemeyer stated he was tired of retracing the same ground and felt no one was capable of making a decision.

Discussion was had by Council regarding the hiring process for the utility manager position and it was stated that a search committee had not been put together.

Dave Ptak, City Attorney, stated that Resolution No. 2016-19 passed by City Council states that the utility manager would be employed as a department head which means he would be appointed by the Mayor for the Mayor's term in office and subject to reappointment, however, if the hiring authority is the Board of Public Works, the manager would not be subject to reappointment.

Discussion was had by Council regarding the Board of Public Works and the responsibilities they should have.

Councilmember Harrington reminded Council not to fall under the assumption that there aren't better ways to do things.

Council discussed the hiring resolution they approved and the City Code not being consistent.

Mr. Ptak stated he felt they got bogged down with the question of the discharge of the utility manager but stated he couldn't believe there wouldn't be discussion between the Board of Public Works and the City Council if this situation arose.

Councilmember Odom stated he felt they may be at a place where they need to make a decision and vote on the issue.

Discussion was had on fixing the hiring and firing issue and whether the utility manager was different from other City department heads. Council discussed the duplication of some City and Utility departments such as IT, human resources and finance and how they might be consolidated.

Council President Duval suggested they attempt to put this together in an ordinance one more time in order to get things moving again.

Councilmember Krings stated that he felt it might be time for this to simply come to the Council for a vote.

It was suggested that an ordinance be prepared that follows what the hiring resolution the Council passed states and that it come to the Council for a vote.

Councilmember Krings asked about the Administrative Services Director position.

Joe Patterson, City Administrator, stated the position is already in the budget under the title "Assistant City Administrator". He stated he questioned the timing of hiring a utility manager now with a new mayor and council coming in with the individual being appointed by the current mayor and having to be reappointed by a new mayor. He suggested leaving the current interim manager in until after the new mayor and council come in and stated they could be limiting the talent pool if they hire right now.

Councilmember Hoops read committee minutes and updated the Council on the progress being made by the joint committee and stated they were trying to come up with some direction for the city administrator during budget time, they had conversations with staff on consolidating departments, discussed insurance and payroll department responsibilities, and talked about employee management and operational management. She went on to explained position exemptions and indicated they see an opportunity to bring departments together.

Council President Duval questioned if this committee would continue.

Jeanette DeWalt, Board of Public Works and committee member, stated they will continue to move forward with communication and stated she didn't feel they were done.

Jeff Kully, Board of Public Works and committee member, stated human resources is the biggest issue to tackle and get aligned and they would like to at least put place marks in the budget so they can move forward if they decide to.

Council President Duval stated she would like a report to continue to come back to Council from the committee.

Councilmember Goebel stated he felt they needed to fill the vacant position on the Board of Public Works and bring it up to five members.

Councilmember Niemeyer stated he felt the next mayor and council needs to make that decision and what would it hurt to wait at this point.

Councilmember Odom asked Mr. Ptak if he understood what the Council wanted and needed in an ordinance or did he need more information.

Mr. Ptak stated he would work on a draft and send it out to Council and they could tell him if he was in the ball park.

Moved by Ginny Skutnik seconded by John Harrington to adjourn the Worksession at 6:57 P.M. Roll Call: Ayes: John Harrington, Kathy Duval, Phil Odom, Chuck Niemeyer, Michael Krings, Sarah Hoops, Ginny Skutnik, Everett Goebel. Nays: None. The motion carried.