CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
Monday, August 19, 2019

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Worksession of the City Council of the City of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted at the Hastings Public Library, 314 North Denver Avenue, on August 19, 2019.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in Worksession by Council President Hamelink with the following members present: Matt Fong, Paul Hamelink, Chuck Rosenberg, Scott Snell, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm, Corey Stutte. Absent: Butch Eley. Utility Advisory Board members present: Shawn Hartmann and Jeanette Dewalt.

Others in attendance: Dave Ptak (City Administrator), Clint Schukei (City Attorney), Kevin Johnson (Utility Manager), Roger Nash (Finance Director), Kim Jacobitz (City Clerk), Keith Leonhardt (Engineering Director), Don Threewitt (Development Services Director), Lee Vrooman (Operations Director), Brian Strom (Customer Accounts Manager), Lori Hartman (Human Resources Director), Jeff Hassenstab (Parks & Recreation Director), Kevin Schawang (IT Director), Al Meyer (Assistant Utility Manager), Robin Ginn (Accountant).

PUBLIC NOTICE - Official Notice of the Worksession was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday, August 16, 2019. Pursuant to 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 proposed 2019-2020 City Budget and Utility Budget.

Dave Ptak, City Administrator, informed the council of the requirement to submit the budget to the State Auditor by September 20, 2019. The Salary Schedule under the Pay Plan tab includes all city positions, arranged alphabetically. Personnel Schedule tab includes a department breakdown, personnel authorization schedule, followed by Personnel Services breakdown. The Fee Resolution is shown in track changes, so changes made for 2019-20 can be seen easily. An updated Fee Resolution was handed out to council.

Dave Ptak explained items under Capital Projects. Some departments put together a multiple year capital program. The BAN Fund was discussed, focused around the North Park Common development. Code rewrite is budgeted for Chapters 34 and 38. The budget includes an amount for the 16th Street overpass engineering design, no matter which way the council decides to go on tearing the bridge down or repairing it. A meeting is scheduled with railroad personnel on August 29th, to discuss Quiet Crossings. Staff plans to talk to the railroad at that time on the issue. Dave Ptak reported on alternatives on how to fund the viaduct decision. Mayor Stutte stated that staff needs direction from council in order to move forward.

Roger Nash reported we budget for many unknowns and some things do not happen. We budget expenditures on anything that could happen and conservatively on the revenue side. Part of the increase in revenue is a decrease in debt service, and part is property taxes.

A railroad spur project has been budgeted for Project FLINT. The Self Insured Health Fund continues to be a challenge. We are looking at options, including a High Deductible Health Savings Plan and Referenced-Based Pricing, as we cannot sustain the PPO plan, as it exists. Cemetery road repairs are budgeted and expected to take 4-5 years for completion. The Fire Department will look to purchase a Quint and take the ladder truck out of service. A few additional highlights of the budget are the ERP implementation, improvement of 42nd Street West to Baltimore Avenue, and North Park Commons.

Kevin Johnson, Utility Manager, presented the Utility Department's budget. He reported on developer projects, including 42nd Street, North Park Commons, Industrial Park North, Lakeview 6th, FLINT, and Highway 6. He reviewed electric production, natural gas, water, sewer, administration, and consolidations of staff. The Capital Improvements Budget was discussed section by section.

Bids for the North Denver Station Business Office renovation were significantly higher than expected. They did not want to compromise security or customer service, so they talked to the architect, and came up with plan revisions, to get closer to the budgeted amount. A rate study and cost of service study is needed for Electric and Natural Gas. There is a recommendation for Natural Gas rate increase of 5%. There will be an increase in operating expenses for the Aquifer Storage & Restoration (ASR) Expansion project. Favorable, but preliminary, results have been received on the ASR. Utility Department is still addressing nitrate issues. There was debate about not recommending increase with Water and Sewer within the Leadership group. We want to take a longer look out, so rates are not low-high, low-high. On the Administration side, we are budgeting 5% more than last year, primarily in salary and benefits, with health care going up. Utility Department is taking a three-year look at personnel numbers, aggressively managing head count. Job positions are re-evaluated every time someone retires or quits. The staffing count of 202 this year includes 4 summer interns. We are trending in the right direction with efficiencies. We are working towards process improvement. It will look like numbers are the same. We have an aging workforce and have a significant challenge in multiple areas. We are looking at developing people, but need to do more. Human Resources will help with this challenge.

There was a discussion on Fisher Fountain safety concerns and an evaluation to be completed by an independent consultant.

Moved by Ginny Skutnik seconded by Scott Snell there being no further business to adjourn at 7:42p.m. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Paul Hamelink, Chuck Rosenberg, Scott Snell, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: Butch Eley. The motion carried.