CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
Monday, August 17, 2020

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Worksession of the City Council of the City of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 220 N. Hastings Avenue, on August 17, 2020.

The Worksession was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Council President Paul Hamelink with the following members present: Butch Eley, Ginny Skutnik, Ted Schroeder, Chuck Rosenberg, Scott Snell, Matt Fong, Jeniffer Beahm.

Utility Advisory Board Present: Jeanette Dewalt, Shawn Hartmann, Bill Hitesman.

City Officials Present: Mayor Corey Stutte, David Ptak, Clint Schukei, Jeff Hassenstab, Kevin Johnson, Adam Story, Brad Starling, Lee Vrooman, Roger Nash, Erik Nielsen, Robin Ginn.

Others Present: Mikki Shafer, Michael Krings.

Moved by Ginny Skutnik seconded by Scott Snell to adopt the current agenda for the August 17, 2020 Worksession. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Paul Hamelink, Chuck Rosenberg, Scott Snell, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. The motion carried.

Official Notice of the Worksession was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday, August 14, 2020. 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 2020-2021 City Budget and Utility Budget.**

Dave Ptak, City Administrator, reviewed with Council the property tax distribution proposed for the 2020-21 fiscal year *(Attached and made a part of original minutes.)* He indicated there are three funds that affect the tax asking and those are Museum Fund (entitled to 7 cents of the levy), General Fund and the Debt Service Fund. He reviewed the Pay Plan for the City and Utility employee positions for 2020-21. He indicated that Police and Fire salary schedules will be given to Council but were not complete at the time the budget book was put together. Mr. Ptak discussed the capital projects asked for by each department for fiscal year 2020-21 and what fund is going to be used to pay for it. A lot of the capital improvements are funded by sales tax, grants or outside income other than property tax. He reviewed the General Fund Summary which lists the funds that generate some type of income during the year.

Roger Nash, Finance Director, explained that when you budget for government, you budget for what you are allowed to spend. He told Council a balanced budget is when revenues and cash reserves equal expenditures. He indicated they need to look from year to year to see that cash reserves are not being depleted.

Mr. Nash reviewed bond expenditures *(Attached and made a part of original minutes)* and stated the tax asking for debt service should remain about the same. Councilmember Skutnik asked about issuing more debt with some of the projects coming up. Mr. Ptak indicated that is to be decided. He reviewed the Street Fund and the 42nd Street Project and the matching monies required as well as the Highway 6 Project. Mr. Ptak told Council the levy has remained the same for the last five years at .4497 per hundred dollars of assessed valuation.

Councilmember Schroeder asked what the current debt is right now.   Mr. Ptak indicated the City currently has about $5.5 million in indebtedness.

Mikki Shafer, Hastings Chamber of Commerce President, reported on projects the Chamber is involved in.  She told Council about their capital campaign, Shop Hastings, running from October through December.  She indicated of the $30,000.00 that they receive, $18,000.00 is used for advertising and $12,000.00 is used for marketing and data research.  She said they reached out to businesses looking to expand to Hastings, started the Hastings Strong campaign to help with COVID relief and began the gift card program.  She went on to talk about future plans for advertising, quarterly round tables for local businesses, seeking new businesses and working with local developers regarding turnkey buildings.

Michael Krings, HEDC Executive Director, explained they were a private corporation with a board of directors well represented by the City and Utilities Department.  He said they have an operating budget of $300,000.00.   He told Council they focus their attention on serving as a business liaison, recruitment, talent initiative, entrepreneurship, non-profit development funds and property development.  Mr. Krings reviewed North Park Commons development and the Industrial Park North development.

Councilmember Rosenberg asked about the Forest Property.  Mr. Krings stated there have been continued communications in a positive direction.

Councilmember Skutnik questioned Library items in the fee resolution and if they really needed to be there since there were no fees listed.  They would do some checking with the Library Director on the fees.

Councilmember Beahm questioned the public records request processing fee of $60 per hour and how that fee was arrived at.  Mr. Ptak stated they looked at an average cost per hour that was fairly representative of staff time.  Councilmember Beahm asked how it compares to other cities of our size.  Mr. Ptak stated he didn't know.  She indicated she didn't think it was fair for those who don't have the funds.  Mr. Ptak stated they wanted it to be a serious request because it can be very time consuming.

Councilmember Rosenberg questioned where the maintenance of the City Hall was listed in the budget.  Mr. Ptak stated there is not a maintenance department and that they relied on various departments to help when there was a need at City Hall.   He stated that the City Hall repairs are more than just cosmetic and they would need to decide how they will be done.  If the cost would be bonded or cash reserves used to deal with the cost of repairs.  He stated that is a decision that is up in the air but will be a discussion for the elected officials to decide moving forward.  Looking at developing a maintenance department would have a budget impact if that is something the Council chose to do.

Councilmember Fong questioned the code re-writes.  Mr. Ptak indicated these re-writes are regarding the comprehensive plan and zoning codes last updated in 2008.  He said they are not very user friendly or well written and they are looking to make them more user friendly for the development as well as land use communities with the re-writes.

Councilmember Skutnik asked about the Parks' boom truck and stump grinder they requested. Jeff Hassenstab, Director of Parks and Recreation, indicated that it was boom truck repairs required for certification and the stump grinder they currently have does work but is just old.

Kevin Johnson, Utilities Manager, presented 2020-21 budget overview of the City of Hastings Utilities Department. *(Attached and made a part of original minutes.)*

Mr. Ptak told Council they would approve the budget at the September 14th City Council Meeting.

**Discussion of ballot language for 16th Street viaduct vote.**

Mr. Ptak told Council they had until September 1st to certify the ballot item to the Adams County Clerk to be placed on the November 3rd general election. He indicated they would like feedback from Council on the ballot language resolution which will be on the August 24th City Council Meeting agenda. He stated that a forensic assessment had been done with costs to rebuild at $7 to $7.5 million and that does not include the Union Pacific Railroad costs. Mr. Ptak indicated the railroad won't tip their hand as to charges until we actually have a plan in place of what is going to be done. He stated he is looking for the dollar amount that Council is comfortable asking of taxpayers to pay for the rebuilding of the viaduct.

Clint Schukei, City Attorney, reviewed with Council the resolution regarding the 16th Street Viaduct question to be placed on the November ballot.

Councilmember Eley questioned the word "repair" when the viaduct is not repairable and he said he thought the options were removal or replacement. Mr. Schukei indicated the reason for "repair" is the language that was in the petition was “repair”. Mr. Ptak indicated that now that they have the forensic results, rebuild would probably be a better word than repair. Councilmember Eley stated that he wanted people to be aware that it is a complete rebuild. Councilmember Rosenberg stated that a vote against was a vote for demolition. Mr. Ptak stated that if the vote failed it would be up to Council to make a decision on what it wanted to do. He stated there would be a cost from the railroad whether the viaduct is demolished or repaired. He told Council they don't want to underestimate but rather shoot high to be safe, but not too high as to scare people. Councilmember Schroeder threw out $10 million as a dollar amount. Councilmember Rosenberg suggested keeping the number lower at $5 million. Councilmember Eley suggested $12.5 million as a dollar amount. Councilmember Hamelink stated that the number has to have integrity and the project needs to be able to be accomplished for that number. It was the consensus of the Council to use $12.5 million as the not to exceed amount in the resolution regarding the ballot language on repairing the 16th Street Viaduct. Mr. Ptak indicated the $12.5 million would be the amount that would be put in the resolution that will be presented to Council, however, it can be amended if the Council wishes. Councilmember Schroeder asked what could be done so that citizens knew the amount of tax increase they would be looking at per household. Mr. Ptak stated our fiscal agent can tell us the tax implications on a $12.5 bond issue. Mr. Ptak stated that they can educate but not advocate.

Moved by Ginny Skutnik seconded by Matt Fong to go into closed session at 7:22 P.M. for the discussion of litigation. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Paul Hamelink, Chuck Rosenberg, Scott Snell, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Butch Eley seconded by Ginny Skutnik to resume open session at 7:51 P.M. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Paul Hamelink, Chuck Rosenberg, Scott Snell, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Ginny Skutnik seconded by Jeniffer Beahm there being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting be adjourned at 7:51 P.M. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Paul Hamelink, Chuck Rosenberg, Scott Snell, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. The motion carried.